JAPANESE ANIME AND WOMAN'S GENDER-ROLE CHANGING

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Feminism is a fast growing phenomenon in recent years. This paper started with the historical conflict of marriage and feminism, then researched the connection between anime and gender-role. Since Japanese anime was imported to China in 1980s, it has influenced the generation born in 1980s and 1990s in many aspects of their growth. These well-educated people perceived the Japanese culture and values through anime. This study connected gender stereotypes and marriage, and how Chinese well-educated anime fans interpret the gender-role portrayals from anime. Eight well-educated young people born in 1980s and 1990s participated in this study through semi-structured online interviews. This study not only tested their standard of choosing spouses, but also employed a qualitative method with cultivation theory. Furthermore, it introduced a new perspective of comparisons between females' and males' opinions of feminism.

The result of this study has shown anime has a strong cultivation for participants' recognition of both genders; Males and females have different views of the choice of work and marriage and the mismatch of male's and female's standards of choosing spouses. The outcome of this study suggests males need more awareness to put feminism in practice more than in theory.

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1   INTRODUCTION

With the development of the animation industry in Japan and its popularity worldwide, the word "anime" was created to specify the genre of Japanese animation. In the Oxford English Dictionary Online, anime is defined as "A genre of Japanese or Japanese-style animated film or television entertainment" (Anime, Def. 3). As an abbreviation of the Japanese word *animēshon*, anime emerged in the 1910s (Fan, 2001) and developed into today's distinctive form in the 1960s (Mangels & Hamill, 2003). One of the earliest animated TV series in Japan was *Tetsuwan Atomu*, which broadcasted on 1 January 1963 on Fuji TV. Later in that year, the US network NBC bought the syndicated package and renamed it *Astro Boy*. That was the first step when anime flew across the seas. From 1993 to 2003, according to Tsutomu Sugiura, director of the Marubeni Research Institute, an economic think tank, Japanese cultural exports tripled in value to $12.5 billion, "a growth rate almost unheard of anywhere else" in Japan's export sector (Frederick, 2003, p. 23). In 1992 and 1993, 58 percent of the world's animated films were exported from Japan (Iwabuchi, 1995). In 2003, one third of the world media market was occupied by anime and its related products (Nakamura, 2003). Today, anime fan clubs exist on almost every continent and the fandom is continuously growing.

Although China is one of the geographically closest countries to Japan, the first anime was imported by CCTV quite late, in the 1980s. Coincidentally, the first imported anime was also *Tetsuwan Atomu*. The followed decade was the golden period for imported anime. Several popular anime were imported and aired by central and local televisions. The generation born after 1980 could tell some names of popular anime from that decade more or less. For example, *Saint Seiya* (1986), *Sailor Moon* (1992), *Dragon Ball* (1986), *Slam Dunk* (1993), etc. There were two reasons for the blossom in the golden period: 1) Television was the only entertainment tool; and 2) Censorship was not as strict as today. The 1980s is the

first generation to know anime, to accept anime, and to be fond of anime. In China, a survey in 2008 of 119 Chinese university students found a high index of Japanese anime consumption which was 96.6 percent (Cooper-Chen, 2012); Ge (2009), who surveyed 302 males and females aged 20–37, found that 70 percent of the anime consumers prefer Japanese anime. Today in any urban kiosk in China, usually four or five anime fan magazines are featured. Chinese youngsters' love of Japanese anime has rapidly spread a wide range from Internet anime fan websites to offline anime groups. A strong anime culture exists among young adults in China, nearly every university and many high schools have anime clubs (Cooper-Chen, 2011). Due to the popularity of foreign cartoons, especially Japanese anime, Chinese authorities have made a series of moves to protect China's own animation industry. By 2000, television slots for animation were dominated by anime (Mu, 2006). Even after a ban on foreign animation was introduced in 2006, 82.7% of Chinese students favoured Japanese animation; in contrast, only 8.8% favoured animation from Europe or the US, and 8.5% favoured Chinese animation (Chen & Song, 2009).

By the end of June 2013, the number of Internet users in China reached 591 million, the Internet penetration rate was 44.1 percent, 29.5 percent of the users were between 20-29 year-old, which made it the largest user group (China Internet Network Information Center, 2013). This means, nearly 175 million Internet users were born in the golden period of anime. More important is that they are mature individuals who are able to take responsibility for their activities from an economic and legal aspect. As a consequence, their attitudes toward anime have a deep impact on the whole society's attitude towards anime. For example, one of the biggest Chinese ACG video sharing websites *Bilibili* was founded by a 1989-born ACG (anime, comic, and game) fan. The culture influences of Japanese anime have emerged in all aspects of Chinese daily lives. Especially among the new generations, their communication styles and the words they use have changed. Typing in 妹抖 (mei dou, "maid", a created

Chinese word from Japanese word メイド) on the Google search engine, for example, yields 14,700, 000 hits, even more than what you get for 女仆 (nü pu, "maid") at 6,140,000.

Because of the solid fan foundation of anime in China, any new fashion or cultural atmosphere in anime will project into the reality and bring out unpredictable consequences, in a good way and bad way. In this paper, the influence of anime's gender-role attitudes is the main focus. This paper will discuss how women's role changes from "mothers", "wives", and men's appendants to natural independent individuals. Drawn more on women's gender portrayals, this paper tested Chinese young well-educated people's attitudes of job and marriage, the standards of choosing spouses which focus on the portrayals of opposite genders, and the cultivation effects for their own genders. Previous studies of cultivation of Japanese anime in China focus on violence and sexual contents and its influence on children. Research of cultivation process between anime and gender roles in China has never been done before. Moreover, the object of study focuses on well-educated Chinese young people who were born in 1980s and 90s, and the research method of qualitative methodology in cultivation theory are the first time used in this paper.

This paper comprises eight sections: introduction, reviews of women's role, gender roles in anime, theory, methodology, result, discussion, and conclusion. The first chapter reviews the historical factors of women's status in China and Japan, shortly describes why Japanese influence is important, and the overall work-family conflicts in Japan is explained. The second chapter briefly discusses gender-role portrayals in different anime genres. In the theory and methodology section, the semi-structured interview method is explained and the qualitative methodology of cultivation theory is specified. In the empirical section, the research process and the profiles of participants are explained. And then, the data is analyzed and interpreted, which leads to the conclusion and discussion sections. In addition, the limitation of this paper is discussed and suggestions for further studies are proposed.

2   WOMEN'S GENDER-ROLE IN JAPAN AND CHINA

2.1   A historical overview

Women's study is not a new subject in communications. Especially, eastern Asia is one of the most focused areas. Influenced deeply by Confucianism, Japan and China shared a common image of women's traits for a long time. In Confucianism, *yin* and *yang* cosmology is prominent, all things female, dark, weak, and passive are attributable to *yin*, whereas *yang* is characteristically male, bright, strong, and active (Fang, 2012). Women were expected to demonstrate obedience and live as an accessory to the male members of the family. After centuries of female imprisonment, women were eager to free themselves under the impact of western politics and cultures. Similarly to the emergence of the feminist movement, the Meiji Restoration happened in Japan and the May Fourth Movement (in larger scope calls New Culture Movement) burst out in China.

The Chinese women in feudalist times had a long history of degradation, abasement, and prolonged oppression. A traditional Chinese woman was shackled with feudal ethics known as "the three obediences and the four virtues". The "three obediences" refer to obedience to her father and brother before marriage, to her husband after marriage, and to her sons if she was widowed. The "four virtues" are fidelity, physical charm, good manners, and efficiency in needle works (Su, 2003). Therefore, to be a filial woman, a dutiful wife and a good mother became a woman's highest life value and standard of moral excellence (Lin, 2000). The May Fourth Movement is the turning point. The "New woman" first emerged in China after the May Fourth Movement (4th May, 1919) as a creature of the intellectual reformers' radical challenge to Confucian China and its "traditional woman" among the pages of magazines such as *New Youth* (Harris, 1995). Those intellectual reformers who studied overseas brought "Mr. Sci" (science) and "Mr. De" (democracy) back to help Chinese people breaking the feudal shackle. Although the pioneers made efforts to release Chinese women from feudal

rules, still the main concerns of the new woman's movement were only limited to win equal rights for women in family law, national politics, and educational and career opportunities during the 1920s to 1930s (Edwards, 1999).

It was not until the founding of the People's Republic of China that thousands of years of feudal oppression and enslavement of women finally ended. The new government policy on gender relations was egalitarianism (Edwards, 2002), and it propagandized that women were hailed as "holding up half the sky". The Marriage Law was implemented in 1950, which was praised as "the first indispensable step toward dismantling the system of oppressive patriarchal authority" (Evans, 1995, p. 361). Besides releasing women from inequal family relationship, the government gave women equal shares of land in the same year and later in 1953 the Electoral Law stipulated women enjoy the same electoral rights as men (Luo & Hao, 2007). Thus, women's equality in economics and politics also has been guaranteed legally. Until 2002, the enrollment rate of primary school girls was 98.53 percent across the country; in 2011 the number of women who were employed reached about 46 percent of all employees; and there were female representatives in 83.9 percent, 86.5 percent and 89.8 percent of the leading bodies at the provincial, city (prefectural), and county levels, respectively (Information Office of the State Council, 2013).

Along with the improvement of women's social status in education, economic, and politics, more conflicts happened for women to balance their careers and families. Although there are several laws to protect female workers' right, employers still have methods to circumvent these laws and provisions. For example, some companies will ask young female applicants if they have boyfriends or newly married in the interview. If the answer is yes, those employers have a higher chance of declining the application because of predictable maternity leave. Also, the pressure from the traditional concept of woman is another big obstacle that stops them pursuing success in careers. A considerable amount of the older

generation still believes that for a woman, "a good husband is better than a good job",

"marriage and family is the final destination", and "a married out daughter is like spilt water"

etc. Large numbers of Chinese women choose to give up their further promotion

opportunities in career and get married. However, more and more Chinese women step out of

the families and become professional women. In 1982, just 5 percent of urban Chinese

women in their late 20s were single; but by 2012, the figure has risen to 27 percent (Larson,

2012). Today's Chinese women are struggling between the traditional family-first concept

and modern self-worth concept.

　　　Ancient Japanese women were similar to Chinese women because of the influence of

Chinese manners and institutions, also the influence of Confucian values (Gilbreath, 1975).

In the eighth century, the introduction of social laws based on the Chinese family system and

the support of Confucian belief made women relegated to an inferior position. By the

fifteenth century, Buddhism was even teaching that woman was "an agent of the six devils

and born to prevent man from following the way of Buddha" (French, 2008, p. 88). The Meiji

period (1868-1912) was Japan's industrialized era when Japan strived to adopt Western

technology and science. Shortly after the turn of the new century, capitalism had reached a

fairly advanced stage, and European naturalistic literature was at a high point of popularity

and influence. These factors facilitated the appearance of Japanese intellectual liberalism and

stimulated feminist movement (Varich, 1966). In 1911, Raicho Hiratsuka, a Japanese

feminist wrote the "Japan's first literary journal created by women for women" in an attempt

to empower Japanese women (Craig, 2006, p. vii). The spark of women liberation spread

rapidly within female class. However, the woman's movement was only a small aspect of

Meiji liberalism and it has not devoted much attention from a state level. World War II and

post-war period were the time that women's right really got attention. After Japan was

defeated in WWII, Constitution of Japan was promulgated under the pressure of Allies

(mainly US). Influenced by western politics and values, it first time admitted the equal right of women. The new constitution first guaranteed equality between two sexes, freedom of spouse choosing, and the sex equality within marriage (Upham, 1993). And the Labor Standards Act of 1947 specially prohibited wage discrimination based on sex and created a wide range of protections for women workers (Upham, 1993). Post-WWII period was the American occupation period for Japan. Thus, most scholars (e.g. Darling-Wolf, 2003) considered that the implementation of the laws was heavily influenced by western culture.

Similarly, the conflict between marriage and career has become one of the salient problems for gender equality in Japan. In 2005, 59 percent of Japanese women in their late 20s and 20 percent of Japanese women in their 30s were not married – a 5 percent increase in the last 5 years and a two-fold increase over 1980 figures (Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2002, 2006, 2007). Despite the increase, staying single for Japanese women is still seen as nontraditional or abnormal. Remaining single is counter-normative in many cultures (Budgeon, 2008; Chasteen, 1994; Paradise, 1993) and this is particularly salient for Japanese women (Goldman, 1993; Rosenberger, 2007). Several labels are used to illustrate those single Japanese women. Most of them are combined with negative meanings, such as *urenokori* ("left unsold", refers to older than 25 year-old single Japanese women like the Christmas cake after 25th December, no one wants it), *parasaito singuru* (parasite single, describe adult children live with parents like dependents), and *makeinu* ("loser dog", as opposed to a "winner" who is a married mother). Traditional *ie* [ee-ye] or the *ie* system is the most prominent concept concerning Japanese families, which determines that women were valued and accorded status only as it related to their role as mothers (Hsia & Scanzoni, 1996). Although the *ie* concept was formally abolished in 1947, the core value of gender stereotypes still persists in every stage of Japanese society. For instance, mothers often tell daughters not to be "too educated" as it likely hinders the ultimate goal of being

happily married (Ishii-Kuntz, 1993).

2.2   Influence of Japanese culture

It is not difficult to find that, from a historical perspective, China and Japan went through a similar path in the women empowerment movement: Confucian and Chinese feudal culture of the concept of women in ancient time, the sparks of women's liberation under the influence of Western culture in late 19th and early 20th century, and the implementation of relative laws in the contemporary era. Although standing on the same root of traditional women's concept, Japan has moved earlier and further than China in the feminist movement. During the New Culture Movement, the Chinese revolutionary organizations flourished in Japan, where Chinese intellectual reformers learned democracy, science, and feminist liberalism. For example, Qiu Jin (1875-1907), the first woman to join the National Party (KMT), and the founder of the first China's feminist newspaper (*The Chinese Women's Journal*), studied in Japan from 1904 to 1906; Tang Junying, a student who had returned from Japan in 1912, founded the Chinese Suffragette Society, which attracted mainly educated urban women who participated in the republican revolution (French, 2008). However, more Chinese intellectuals, such as leaders of KMT (Chiang Kai-shek, Sun Yat-sen, etc.), leaders of CCP (Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, etc.), Lu Xun, Guo Moruo, etc., went to Japan to find out ways to save China in science, education, politics, or military during the New Culture Movement. The influence of Japanese culture was not reduced after the founded of the PRC, but increased rapidly along with China's "reform and opening up" policy.

In the Gender Inequality Index (United Nations Development Project, 2013), Japan ranks 21st and China ranks 35th in 187 ranked countries, which are at the 2nd and 3rd places in Asia. One century after removing the shackles of feudalism, both China and Japan have done a lot in promoting women's social status and improving their living conditions. Besides the

glorious achievements shown in statistics and government reports, new problems focus on the

conflicts between women's desires for career and the traditional role of mother are most

prominent in modern society. This problem is not a special case in Eastern Asia, but a

common situation around the world. For instance, the popularity of *Sex and the City* on one

hand shows how women yearn to break the shackles of marriage and family (Stillion

Southard, 2008). The trend toward later marriage usually seen in industrialized countries (e.g.,

Kiernan, 2000; Raley, 2000) is particularly pronounced in China and Japan in the past

decades (Raymo, 2003a; Retherford, Ogawa, & Matsukura, 2001; Wang, Li, Zhou, Zhou, Liu,

Zheng, & Hesketh, 2013).

As Confucianism has an enormous influence in China and Japan, the importance of

family and marriage of Confucianism affects people's behavior in both countries. It was an

agricultural society when Confucianism emerged and popularized, in which a conception of

gender roles that men are breadwinners and women are housekeepers was created. Along

with the social progress, this conception has been criticized by feminists. According to Ou

(2001), "Feminism sees the home as a cage of women under traditional meaning. In

additional patriarchy society, home is an ideology that control women and social environment.

In addition, women have to do housework and take care of children at home." (p. 19) WWII

was a significant time for Japan and China. Because of involvement in the war, the needs of

women laborers encouraged women gradually to emphasize their values at work places

(Yang, 2004). Although the stereotype of gender roles still exists in Asia, changes are

happening in all aspects of society along with industrialization, economic development, and

education. As the important role of marriage plays in women's life, freedom of marriage,

equality in marriage, and economic independence are the top three considerations in feminist

movements.

2.3   Work-Family conflict in Japan

Differentiate from the character "Iron Women" (A planned labour adjustment model which women became the first reserve labour force. The reserve labour mechanism was not voluntary in nature, it was accomplished by a considerable expansion of the occupation fields for women, thereby breaking gender boundaries in employment opportunities. See more: Jin, 2006; Min, Duo, & Landsberger, 2003; Evans, 2000; Chen, 2003; Croll, 1995) was propagandized in Chairman Mao's era, in today's China there are no longer slogans to push women throwing themselves into labour force. Along with the increasing of later marriages, it seems that more and more Chinese women choose to get more monetary gains than get married by their own determinations. A similar phenomenon is found in Japan, that women with higher educational attainment are increasingly less likely to marry (Raymo, 2003a; Tsuya & Mason, 1995); and findings from South East Asian countries suggest women's economic independence may be seen as a means of avoiding marriage to mismatched partner (Williams & Guest, 2005). However, higher educated and economy independent women are more likely to marry than women with fewer economic sources in America (e.g. South, 2001; Whelan, 2006; White & Rogers, 2000). Highly educated women face numerous contradictions and pressures in marital decision making (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2005); particularly focus on work-family conflict and its consequent problems.

Women's non-marriage or late marriage in Japan is a concession for women who against the discrimination in both workplace and family (Nemoto, 2008). Some Japanese researchers have pinpointed that the primary factor of non-marriage or late marriage rate was the decreased income caused by 90s' economic recession in Japan (Higuchi & Ota, 2004; Yamada, 2005). Meanwhile, demographers and Japanese feminists argue that surge in non-marriage devices from highly educated or high-income women's aversion to unequal household burdens in marriage (Ehara, 2005; Ono, 2003; Raymo, 1998; Tsuya, & Bumpass,

2004) or their aversion to low-income men and their desire for hypergamy (Raymo &

Ishikawa, 2005). Financial independence is emphasized by women as a means to rebel

against cultural norms of femininity. For many women, marriage continues to be seen as a

primary financial resource for those whose wages remain lower than men. This marriage

pattern (higher income men and lower income women) makes men pay more attention to

women's household abilities. Japan is clearly one society in which women encounter great

difficulty in balancing full-time work with family responsibilities (Yu, 2001). Faced with

responsibility for nearly all child care and domestic work (Tsuya, Bumpass, Choe, &

Rindfuss, 2005), a large proportion of Japanese women drop out of the labor force following

marriage or childbirth (Brinton, 2001). Ehara (2005) argues that Japanese women express

serious doubts about finding a man who will share, or at least help with, the housework.

Meanwhile, Japanese men express an aversion to marrying a woman who will explicitly

demand an equal sharing of housework. As a consequence, financial independence women

stay non-marriage to free themselves from heavy housework and enjoy alternative lifestyles

(Nemoto, 2008). Also for married women, when they return to the labor force, Japanese tax

policies provide a strong incentive to work part-time and limit earnings to qualify for

dependent status (Ogawa & Ermisch, 1996). The difficulty of remaining in full-time

employment for married women also leads economically independent women to postpone or

avoid entering "The onerous status of the Japanese wife and mother" (Tsuya & Mason, 1995,

p. 156).

However, contrary to the non-marriage and late marriage rate in Japan, recent studies of

the United States and other industrialized societies have consistently found that indicators of

women's economic resources (e.g., educational attainment, earnings, and employment) are

positively or insignificantly related to marriage (e.g., Blossfeld & Huinink, 1991; Bracher &

Santow, 1998; Goldstein & Kenney, 2001; Ono, 2003; Santow & Bracher, 1994; Sweeney,

2002). Comparing the distinct phenomena between Japan and US, it suggests that women's

economic resources reduce the benefits of marriage only when gender-asymmetric family

roles make it difficult for women to combine work and family (e.g., Blossfeld, 1995a; Ono,

2003; Raymo, 2003a).

Follow the trend of later marriage among higher educated women in Japan, and the

similar phenomenon found in China; first I will research if gender is the prominent factor of

work-family conflict in China as in Japan. Here is the first research question:

RQ1: What do well educated Chinese born in the 1980s and 1990s think about the

choices between work and marriage?

Through the reviews of women's gender role, it is not difficult to find that family is the

central issue of gender-role changing. Marriage can be a shackle for women, for getting

married often means fixing their gender role to mothers and wives. Joining the labour force is

the method to avoid falling into the traditional gender role, which breaks the heavy economic

dependency on men. This is why the marriage issue will be the core discussion and argument

in this paper. The following sections will propose two RQs about gender-role recognitions

under the influence of anime. The RQs will expand the gender-role issue within the big

framework of marriage. Still, women's gender-role is the main focus.

3   GENDER ROLES IN ANIME

Anime, comics, and games (recently includes light novels) all together compose a specific virtual world. In ACG industrial chain, anime usually is the destination or final output: only the most popular manga (game and light novel) could be turned into anime. On the other hand, the popularity of anime attracted more audience to read the original manga. In this section, I choose anime which are famous both in manga and anime.

Female portrayals have been quite a-traditional when it comes to manga and anime in Japan in the 80s and 90s, especially those targeted for *shōnen* (Japanese term for boy) readers. Original and typical shōnen anime is characterized by high-action, or sports competition featuring male protagonists, which involved only a few female characters. All the stories go with the development of male protagonists' abilities, skills, maturity, self-perfection, and honorable service to society, community, family, and friends. The heroic journey is always the pattern of shōnen manga and anime (Johnson-Woods, 2010). Women often play roles as mothers, sisters, and occasionally girlfriends in a secondary position. Most long-time popular anime and manga follow this rule, such as *Dragon Ball*, *Slam Dunk*, and *Saint Seiya*. Within the genre of shōnen anime, there is a sub-genre called harem. Many times, the harem manga and anime have multi-female characters that pursue the main male protagonist, who is considered a social defect (i.e. shy, less-then-masculine physical features, and emotionally "sensitive") in the story line. These wish fulfillment storylines for male readers and viewers have been a common trend in manga plot structures, which include popular serious such as *Ah! My Goddess*, *Tenchi Muyō*, and *Video Girl Ai*. What is interesting about this multi-female character structure is that each female exemplifies a certain aspect of an idealized female figure: the motherly character, the overtly sexualized character, the innocent virginal character, the powerful aggressive character, and the smart and wise character. All of these aspects combined would produce and ultra-idealized female character – a figure that has yet

to be created in Japanese manga and anime.

This idealized female character also appears in comics aimed for the *shōjo* (Japanese term for girl). Shōjo has two meanings in shōjo manga and anime: targeting the market of girls and protagonists are girls. In the early years (1950s and 1960s) of shōjo comic period, males vastly outnumbered the handful of females amongst the artists (Buckley, 1991). Although these male artists made a great contribution to the foundation of shōjo manga, they also brought the stereotypes of female portrayals from shōnen manga to shōjo manga. Many of the female protagonists in shōjo manga are highly appreciated, or recognized by the boy-of-their-dream when they accept and embrace the more private side of these males. This pattern of shōjo manga plot structure assumes to support the common plot structure of shōnen manga. Furthermore, storylines in shōjo manga usually revolve around issues of love and friendship, and is filled with unrequited love, love triangles, friendships forged through the trials and tribulations of high school life, and the like (Prough, 2010). Human relations, the drama of emotions, attachments, and inner feelings is always central to shōjo manga. In manga history, the late 1960s and early 1970s are considered the golden years of shōjo manga which women artists began to dominate the drawing/writing of shōjo manga. The most popular shōjo manga genres exist today were basically set during that time. After decades of development and the maturity of shōjo market, the genre has developed into several distinctive sub-genres.

To analyze gender portrayals in common is not impossible due to different genres, targeting groups, and acceptance readers. Next two sub-themes will be discussed separately according to the sexualized genres of shōnen and shōjo.

3.1   Genres of shōnen manga/anime

The largest segment of manga publishing and anime producing is shōnen manga and

anime. Despite being initially aimed at boys, the stories such as adventure, competition, and attractive characters made shōnen manga appealing to everyone.

Action/adventure manga is the first popular genre among all kinds of genres. These often fantasy, science fiction, or high-action contained manga always grasp readers' heart from their first appearances. Also, most of the stories are about good defeat evils. One of the most popular and long live manga of the genre is Akira Toriyama's *Dragon Ball*. Son Goku, the main character, is based on the Monkey King of the Chinese ancient book *Journey to the West* (Wu, 2003). But the story is totally different. The story begins with little Goku's journey looking for "dragon balls" which will enable holder to ask dragon to grant a wish. Along his journey, Goku makes several friends and battles a variety of villains, many of whom are seeking the dragon balls for bad uses. After Goku becomes an adult, the story becomes more serious, fight becomes more violent, and the stakes become higher. More enemies are coming to destroy the humans, the earth, even the whole universe; Goku and his friends are also trained stronger to fight against those evils. Endless fighting is always the mainstream in this genre. Among the best-selling manga, the best of the best-selling manga are falling into this genre. Such as, *Fist of the North Star* from 1983 to 1988, *YuYu Hakusho* from 1990 to 1994, *One piece* from 1997 to present, *Hunter × Hunter* from 1998 to present, *Naruto* from 1999 to present, *Bleach* from 2001 to present, etc.

Within the big framework of action/adventure genre, there are several sub-genres: 1) Historical manga often focus on samurai such as *Rurōuni Kenshin, Peacemaker Kurogane*, and *Gin Tama* etc. Samurai represent Japan just like the way cowboys represent America, it is the spirit of Japanese; 2) Horror manga such as *Death Note*, *Parasyte* etc.; 3) detective manga such as *Case Closed* (Detective Conan), and *Kindaichi Case Files*, etc.

Sports manga is one of the most popular genres (Schodt, 1997). Takehiko Inoue's *Slam Dunk* is a perfect example. It tells a story of the unlikely sportsman Hanamichi Sakuragi, who

resorts to baseless bragging of basketball to get the attention of a girl, Haruko. In order to prove his claim, he joins the basketball team, even though he has never played. However, his natural ability shows that he has the talent of basketball. With the story progresses, he finds his real interests in basketball and strives to be a better player for himself, for Haruko, and for the team. Besides basketball, stories like Hanamichi Sakuragi are written in soccer *Captain Tsubasa*, American football *Eyeshield 21*, tennis *The Prince of Tennis*, etc. Even more, sports manga are not only limited to typical sports. The martial arts manga *Baki the Grappler* relates how a young marital artist, Baki Hanma, labors to become the best at his fighting style; same as others, boxing manga *Ashita no Jō*, cycling manga *Yowamushi Pedal*, Go (Chinese: 围棋, weiqi; Japanese: 囲碁, igo) manga *Hikaru no Go*, board game manga *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, even cooking competition manga, *Chūka Ichiban!*.

Without giant robots (mecha) manga/anime, shōnen manga will never be completed. The most famous mecha manga is *Gundam* series anime. Gundam is often the names of protagonist's "Mobile Suits" (MS). MS are large, bipedal, humanoid-shaped vehicles controlled from cockpits by a human pilot. From the year 1979, *Gundam* series has developed into several relatively independent anime series. For example, *Mobile Suit Gundam* and its continuous series happen after U.C. 0079 (Universal Century); *Mobile Suit Gundam Wing* and its continuous series happen in A.C. (After Colony); *Mobile Suit Gundam SEED* and its continuous series happen in C.E. (Cosmic Era); And *Mobile Suit Gundam 00* and its continuous series happen after A.D. 2307; and so on. Although different series has different storyline, the overall framework is war. Involved with two or more camps, there were neither good sides nor evil sides.

As time passes when boys grow up become men, even though shōnen manga are still popular, their tastes sometimes may change to some degree. Then there appears *seinen* manga or "young men's" manga. These are characterized by mature storylines (some are dark,

negative, or antipathetic storylines), and by more graphic depictions of violence, sex or nudity (Drummond-Mathews, 2010). *Elfen Lied* is one famous seinen manga and some anime fans call it "masterpiece". The story goes around an ordinary university student Kohta and one escaped "Diclonius" (female human-like creatures with superpower) Lucy. After Kohta found Lucy who was amnesiac, they become involved with numerous attempts (often brutal) to recapture her by a special assault team and other Diclonius. Behind the main story, the conflicts between humans and non-humans, violence and innocence, moral and inhumane etc. make this kind of manga distinguished from normal shōnen manga. Same like *Darker Than Black*, *Trigun* and *Trigun Maximum*, *Black Lagoon*, etc.

Another popular genre of seinen manga is the harem manga. In these anime and manga, a young man is always surrounded by pretty girls who admire him and eventually he chooses one or more girls as his spouse/s. *Love Hina*, this extremely popular manga tells a story about Keitaro Urashima, who becomes the manager of a female-only dormitory. While he tries to study to fulfil a childhood promise that he made with a girl to enter Tokyo University together, he also attempts to perform his duties as the dormitory manager. And most important is that, his turbulent relationships the girls who live in the dormitory. After *Love Hina*, harem manga boomed and many of them has transformed into anime, such as, *To Love-Ru*, *Kiss × Sis*, *Monogatari (series)*, *Strawberry 100%*, and *School Days* etc.

In a typical shōnen manga/anime (refers to sports, action/adventure, and mecha genres), heroic journey is, and only, suits for male protagonists. Not only the writers, but also the readers do accept that only males will have grown, matured, and finally learned something to enrich himself and take responsibilities for the world around him. Females were performed in a secondary place just to fulfil male protagonists' personal life or act as a factor to foster storyline. Readers usually divided into two groups: male readers drive themselves in protagonists' heroic journey and enjoy the process of growing, learning, and having struggles

and overcome them; female readers are attracted by male characters' personalities, manhood, and sometimes handsome appearances. Seinen manga is also full of male protagonists, even harem manga shows the patriarchy of polygamy directly.

However, due to the market demands and the diversity of readerships, the late twentieth century and the start of twenty-first century saw a marked increase in female readership in what supposedly a masculine genre (Oricon: #1 Manga Mag for Japanese Girls is … Shōnen Jump, 2007). Female readers and writers become so influential to shōnen manga that they begin to shape the genre in their tastes. Female characters become stronger, take the places of protagonists, and sometimes fighting and striving hard just as male characters (Schodt, 1997).

3.2   Genres of shōjo manga/anime

Compare with flourishing genres of shōnen manga, shōjo manga was born as a single genre to include any other manga which focus on human relations (*ningen kankei*) besides shōnen manga. However, after decades of development, shōjo has recognized as an identifiable genre not only because of it is published in shōjo manga magazines, but also the particular narrative themes, aesthetic styles, and the technique of representation (Prough, 2010). Although shōjo manga has developed beyond the traditional high-school love drama, the human relations are still emphasized.

Not like shōnen manga genres, the essential shōjo manga has a vague boarder with various approaches: high-school drama, fantasy romance, and love stories etc. However, the mantra, "Shōnen manga is filled with more action – the drama and story are moved by action – whereas shōjo manga is driven by human relations" (Prough, 2010, p. 94), is still repeated by writers, editors, and readers countlessly. *Hana-Kimi* is a typical high-school drama. Mizuki Ashiya, a Japanese-American girl who was attracted to a high-school high jumper Izumi Sano from TV. To approach him, Mizuki leaves her family in US and enters an all-boy

high school with pretending as a boy. And the story developed with the romantic stories around her. Another popular manga *Sailor Moon* is a magic girl fantasy. A middle school student Usagi Tsukino befriends with a talking cat Luna, who gives her a magical brooch enabling her transform to Sailor Moon. Together with her four female guardians – Sailor Mercury, Sailor Mars, Sailor Jupiter, and Sailor Venus – fights with evils and finds her true love Tuxedo Mask. The majority shōjo manga fell into these love relationship or fighting evils friendship patterns. Just like all male protagonists in shōnen manga, the protagonists in shōjo manga are always young girls.

With the comparison to shōnen manga, shōjo manga has its opposite genres: josei manga (young women's) compares with seinen manga, and reverse harem manga compares with harem manga. Literally understanding, josei manga is written for females of late teenage and adult young audience with a mature storyline of realistic romance (opposed to the mostly happy-ending idealistic love in essential shōjo manga) or daily life of ordinary females. *Bunny Drop* is a typical josei manga which narrates a story of a thirty-year old man Daikichi becomes the guardian of Rin, the illegitimate six-year old daughter of his grandfather. The first half focuses on Daikichi perspective and his struggling with raising Rin. And the second part starts from ten years later, how sixteen-year old Rin deals with her feeling with Daikichi. Usually, josei manga are based on realistic life, rarely involved with fantasy or science fiction description. Reverse harem manga is a genre which framework is about one girl lives with several males. Same as the females' portrayals in harem manga, males' portrayals in reverse harem also represent in different types – an optimistic talkaholic, a silent cool guy, a cute childlike one, and a butler one. Recently, this genre is extremely popular among female audiences, such as *Fruits Basket*, *Ouran High School Host Club*, and *The Wallflower* etc.

There are two genres need to be particularly emphasized: magical girl (*mahō shōjo*) and boy's love (*BL*, *yaoi* or *shōnen-ai*). In the early years, the storyline of magical girl genre, such

as *Hana no Ko Lunlun* (Lulu, The Flower Angel), *Sailor Moon*, and *Cardcaptor Sakura*, could not break the pattern of princess-prince love relationship. These early series were like ordinary shōjo manga which just changed the scenes from real life to fantasy world. From the beginning of twenty-first century, a new genre of magical girls has been popularized, in which there were no "princes" any more. Stories developed only among female characters. *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*, an anime released at 2011 was criticized as the anime which deconstructed the genre of magical girl. It tells a story of a group of female middle school students who choose to become magical girls and battle with surreal enemies called witches. Numerous manga/anime have enriched the new magical girl anime, such as *Magical Girl Lyrical Nanoha*, *Strike Witches*, and *My-HiME* etc. Extends magical girls genre to a larger scope, there is a genre which narratives lesbian loves calls *Yuri* (literally means *lily*; also calls *Girl's Love*, GL).

Opposite the magical girl genre, boy's love manga is on the contrary side. Romantic stories of male-male love have a long tradition in Japan, especially focusing on priest and samurai spouses (Mclelland, 2000a). During the Edo period (1603-1857), the apogee of samurai culture, male-male love was genuinely regarded as a heroic virtue (McLelland, 2010). By the 1970s, the increasing number of female manga writers individually changed their interests from common male-male love to a special field called "beautiful boys" (*bishōnen*). Beautiful boys could simple and best described as beautifully androgynous. It is hard for unfamiliar readers to distinguish whether these beautiful boys are male or female – their hair is long and flowing, their eyes are big with long eyelashes, and their bodies are slim and delicate. These beautiful-boy style BL manga were popularized, such as *Zetsuai 1989*, *Gravitation*, and *Ai no Kusabi* etc. After entering the new century, BL manga has developed its own pattern of character slots. The two participants in a BL relationship are often referred to as *seme* ("top", means "to attack") and *uke* ("bottom", means "to receive"). Usually seme

is depicted masculine, while uke is more feminine with tender heart and sensitive mind which

fulfils the portrayal of traditional female. Instead of using beautiful boys to confuse gender

from appearances, today's BL manga writers are more directly using male-looking

appearances which just depict uke from his behaviors, languages, and mental activities, such

as *Junjo Romantica: Pure Romance*, *Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi*, and *Black Butler* etc. Because of

the extreme popularity of BL manga/anime among female audiences, when they

reading/watching other manga/anime genres they would like to imagine the romantic

relationship (or seme-uke relationship) between two ordinary male characters. This called

"shipping" (derived from relationship, friendship, and worship; or "coupling", "CP" in East

Asian contexts) activity is spreading rapidly in all kinds of media. Some popular CPs from

TV series and movies for instance, Sherlock Holmes and John Watson in BBC's crime drama

Sherlock, Captain America and Winter Soldier in Marvel's superhero movie *Captain America:*

The Winter Soldier, and so on.

    Beyond the homosexual girl-only magical girls genre and boy-only boy's love genre,

there exists a genre calls "cross-dressing" which genders are not fixed. Same as male-male

love has its social foundation in Japan, cross-dressing could derive from *Kabuki* and

Takarazuka Revue. The first famous cross-dressing manga was *The Rose of Versailles*

originally ran from 1972 to 1973. Background of the story happens in France during French

Revolution, a girl Oscar François de Jarjayes was raised as a man to become her father's

successor as leader of the Palace Guards. Another girl-to-boy cross-dressing manga

Revolutionary Girl Utena from 1996 to 1997 tells a story of a tomboyish teenage girl who

was so impressed by a kind prince in her childhood that she decided to become a prince

herself. Also, there are numerous boy-to-girl cross-dressing manga, such as *Princess Princess*,

Otome wa Boku ni Koishiteru, and *Maria Holic* etc. Besides these typical cross-dressing

manga, cross-dressing characters also appear in different manga genres. For example, Ranma

in shōnen manga *Ranma ½*, Hideyoshi Kinoshita in *Baka and Test*, and Haruhi Fujioka and her father in *Ouran High School Host Club* etc.

The complexity of main protagonists' genders in shōjo manga represents the ongoing feminist rebels against Japanese traditional gender paradigm (Ramet, 1996). Go back to the word shōjo which is ambiguous, Darlington and Cooper (2010) explain it as "A transitional period when the individual is free to experiment with nontraditional ways of being before settling into the circumscribed roles expected of Japanese adults" (p. 163). Thus, it is no wonder that shōjo manga often presents gender-ambiguous characters, gender-transformed characters, and homosexual romantic stories. In a culture like Japan, where adults' behavior are rigidly controlled that lead to heterosexual marriage and childbirth, females sometimes picture themselves in beautiful boys or cross-dressing girls as separate from the reproductive role to enjoy the romance of love. Because "It is only a male who can love another male as an equal" (McLelland, 2010, p. 87).

Although there are genres divide manga and anime in different types demographically, they are interpenetrated with each other and the readership is crossover by both males and females. Studies focus on interaction of anime and fans or interpretation of gender in anime have done many times in Japan and Western countries. For instance, Napier (2005) and Newitz (1995) claim that traditional Japanese gender roles are not only reinforced by anime, but also anime can reflect changing gender roles. American fans consume these images and yearn for "Social situations made possible by traditional gender roles" (Newitz, 1995, p. 5), implying anime may contain Japanese cultural context. And more, some anime contain Japanese interpreted western gender portrayals. For example, Grigsby (1998) writes that the *Sailor Moon* series includes "More idealized and stereotypical modern western . . . female gender characteristics than traditional Japanese female roles" (p. 76). Fennell, Liberato,

Hayden, and Fujino (2013) analyzed gender exhibition in *Bleach* and *The Wallflower* and indeed English-speaking fans received Japanese value of gender roles from these two anime. When it comes to China, here I will examine gender as a factor affects marriage which follows RQ1.

RQ2: Do gender portrayals in anime affect the standard of choosing spouses among anime fans?

This research question aims at examining whether gender roles displayed in anime affect viewers' conceptions of gender roles in real world. And if it is a factor affects anime fans' marriage time. For example, I will examine if anime fans would apply the gender portrayals from anime to real world, and if they will use these portrayals as models to evaluate the opposite genders as spouses. And if they could not find persons who are exactly according to their standards, how they will deal with marriage – delay it until find the ones or lower the standards in case to get married earlier.

4   CULTIVATION THEORY

From past few decades, studies around media and its contribution to individuals'
conceptions of social reality have often guided by cultivation theory. The core argument of
the theory is that the more time individuals spend watching television, the more likely it is
that their conceptions of social reality will reflect what they see on television (Gerbner &
Gross, 1976; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980, 1986). More specified, compared
with light television viewers, heavy television consumption contributes to provide television
answers to questions related to real world, referring the process of "cultivation" (Gerbner &
Gross, 1977; Gerbner et al., 1980, 1986; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan,
2002). The cultivation effects of television due to its stories-telling system in which values
reflected in its message (Gerbner et al., 1986; Morgan & Shanahan, 1997). Originally, the
theoretical approach of cultivation has three stages. The first stage, institutional level
analyzing how messages are selected, produced and distributed; the second stage, message-
system level analyzing how messages are delivered bias or partially such as stereotypes,
violence, gender roles, minority people etc.; the third stage, cultivation level analyzing how
television contributes to the cultivating process of individuals' conceptions of real world
(Morgan & Shanahan, 1997). In spite of the holistic analyzes in original strategy design, there
are more specific focuses on stage 2 and 3. Although many studies based on cultivation
theory are examining perception of, and attitudes toward, violence and crime, other research
have a wide range of topics as politics, science, health, religion, racial minorities, economy,
and gender roles etc. (Morgan, 1982, 1987; Signorielli, 1989; Signorielli & Lears, 1992).

4.1   Development and Criticisms

The core assumption of cultivation theory is often regarded as an empirical hypothesis
and many scholars applied it as such in their studies. In fact, the hypothesis that television

exposure (stage 2) is a factor influencing how reality is perceived has been tested a plethora

of data collection techniques including non-experimental (Sparks, Nelson, & Campbell, 1997;

Sotirovic, 2003) and experimental designs (Mares, 1996). And also cultivation process (stage

3) has been supported by testing different audiences, including teenagers (Morgan &

Shanahan, 1991) and college students (Potter & Chang, 1990). By analyzing television

content, more scholars have found that unbalanced treatment to gender roles was widely

exists in movies, TV series, and commercials etc. On television's world, strength and power

are represented as male characteristics and grace is represented as a female one; and reversely,

masculinity is represented as hyper-masculinity or coldness and cynical attitudes, and

femininity is represented as beautiful, delicate, or need-to-be-protected characteristics

(Scharrer, 2001). Beyond the total exposure of television, more evidence is consistently

showing that exposure of specific types of programs have a stronger association with

cultivation effects (e.g., Hawkins & Pingree, 1981; Potter & Chang, 1990; Sparks et al.,

1997). These scholars' criticism was concentrated on the scopes of message-system level.

Gerbner and his associates claimed that the message elements leading to cultivation are the

ones that cut across most programs and genres and that, thus, overall television viewing is an

important theoretical construct and empirical measure (Gerbner et al., 2002, 1986). But the

criticism has asserted that overall viewing is not the most relevant factor because cultivation

effects could be "content-specific" and therefore, use of the genre-level measure is more

appropriate when testing cultivation hypotheses (Saito, 2007). Anime as a new "genre" of

mass media, scholars have tested its cultivation effects in several perspectives, especially in

the message-system level of gender roles (e.g., Hiramoto, 2013; Bresnahan, Inoue, & Kagawa,

2006; Newitz, 1995).

  The third stage of cultivation analysis, which mainly tested in North America, is the

most critical part of the theory. Although it has applied in some counties and regions

including Argentina (Morgan & Shanahan, 1991), Taiwan (Morgan & Shanahan, 1992),

Korea (Kang & Morgan, 1988), England (Piepe, Charlton, & Morey, 1990), Vietnam (Vu &

Lee, 2013), and Japan (Saito, 1999), some countries located Latin America were failed to

support the hypotheses such as Mexico (Huerta, Garagarza, & Villegas, 1999). Gerbner (1996)

has suggested that because of history and identity is not the same in anywhere, it is need to

test what happen when viewers in other countries expose to different television exposure

independently. Besides its non-universal applications, another most strident critic was

Hirsch's (1980, 1981) questions of spuriousness and controls. He argued that television is not

the main factor of cultivation process. His criticism, the main argument of the main critic,

was that a reanalysis of the same database with a better control of other variables yields no

cultivation effects. By using the same techniques as Gerbner did, he reexamined the

researched demographics of gender, age and income by introducing new variables and there

was no relationship between fear of reality and frequency of television viewing has found

(Hirsch, 1980). He concluded cultivation theory was unsupported, unwarranted, and

premature (Hirsch, 1980). The publication of the cultivation studies' findings in the early

1980s brought a new, and sometimes almost aggressive wave of criticism, described by

Morgan and Signorielli (1990) as "fierce, prolonged battles" (p. 21). Hughes (1980) and

Hirsch (1980) also reported that the relationships they examined were nonlinear. Hirsch

added to the usual light/medium/heavy viewing categories two additional categories—non-

viewers (those reporting "zero hours" on "an average day") and extreme viewers (those

watching more than 8 hours a day). He found that the non-viewers were often more alienated

and fearful than were the light viewers, whereas the extreme viewers were less so than the

heavy viewers. This appears to contradict dramatically the cultivation prediction of a

generally monotonic pattern across all viewing levels. More recently, Potter (1991b) also

claimed to show that cultivation relationships are nonlinear, based on data from 308

adolescents.

Actually before the time of 1980s, several scholars had criticized the theory from a more humanistic approach. Newcomb (1978), one of the earliest critics of cultivation, pointed out the supposed differences between a quantitative and qualitative approach. Newcomb argued that violence has had many symbolic meanings and that all viewers do not interpret acts of violence in the same way. In response to Newcomb, cultivation scholars justified the focus on the broad similarities that cut across program types. Cultivation theory, they claimed, does not assert that every act of violence observed on television means the same thing to every viewer. The relationships observed between amount of viewing and viewers' perceptions are precisely the test of whether the patterns and meanings inferred from message data are indeed absorbed by viewers. Potter (1994) also has reiterated Newcomb's argument. Gerbner and later his followers answered, that individual programs and variations in interpretation are interesting and valuable things to study, but cultivation research tries to illuminate broad patterns across large groups of people. The key distinction, they argue, is not humanism versus social science, or even qualitative versus quantitative; more simply, it is macro versus micro.

However, following Hirsch, several researchers have conducted extensive reviews of the literature and concluded that although the relationship is generally weak, television viewing may have a nonspurious influence on some aspects of social reality, especially perceptions relating to crime (Cook, Kendzierski, & Thomas, 1983; Hawkins & Pingree, 1982; Ogles, 1987; Potter, 1993). Along with the development of the research of the theory, more criticisms appeared such as the assumption of uniformity in media portrayals, the assumed linear relationship between TV viewing and beliefs, lack of clarity regarding the relationship between first- and second-order beliefs, potential problems with nonfalsifiability, difficulty in establishing causal relationships, and difficulty in accounting for selectivity in exposure and

interpretation of media content (Doob & Macdonald, 1979; Hirsch, 1980, 1981; Potter, 1993).

Also, many of the prior criticisms have been addressed or acknowledged in more current research. For example, Shrum and his colleagues offer evidence that overestimates of crime prevalence are likely the result of heuristic processing, which allows TV-based constructs to enjoy higher accessibility in the minds of heavy viewers (e.g., Shrum, 1995, 2001). That is, because heavy viewers are recently and frequently exposed to certain common images and themes on TV, those themes become more accessible in memory and thus more influential in making judgments. Therefore, scholars now routinely employ multiple controls in their analyses, many studies test for the linearity of relationships, and a great deal of research now examines cultivation as a function of exposure to specific types of media content rather than TV content generally.

Nevertheless, these criticisms raise important issues about how television viewing should be handled as a variable. Overall exposure measures can be expected only to indicate relatively more or less exposure to television. One should note that correlations should not be used with television viewing; even though it is measured as a ratio-level variable, it is usually not distributed normally (Weimann, 2000). As Potter (1991b) argued, the viewing measure "would probably be better treated as a categorical variable from a statistical point of view because the distributions do not meet the assumptions of normalcy" (p. 574). Thus, there was a trend that scholars tended to research cultivation theory in specific types and genres. Weimann, Brosius, and Wober (1992) studied viewers' choices and found four types. These were in fact four types of viewers that differed both in the amount of overall TV they viewed and in the degree of devotion to specific program types or genres. About half the viewers were found to be especially devoted to a specific genre. The study concluded that to understand viewing behaviors, and consequently the effects of TV viewing, we must consider the content that is viewed as well as the amount of overall viewing (Weimann, 2000).

4.2   Specific genres have specific effects on specific viewers

Kaminsky and Mahan (1988) suggest that TV genres differ in conventions regarding the type of protagonist, the location of the action, the people and objects that are portrayed, the ways in which the stories unfold, and the technical production conventions. Because of the genre conventions, aspects of social reality differed across genres. It is not that different genres present conflicting images of world, but focus on different aspects. Viewers devoted to programs of one genre are, therefore, exposed to different views of the world and therefore to different effects than viewers devoted to another genre (Weimann, 2000). If media content shapes viewers' attitudes and cultivates their images of the world, it seems that different media would shape different attitudes. It means, if TV can create a scary world, it also should be able to create a more trusting and friendly world. The importance of studying media cultivation effects by genres has been demonstrated in several studies. . Genre differences were found in a study of the effects of TV viewing on interpersonal trust and civic participation (Shah, 1997). Whereas an index of total TV viewing was associated with less interpersonal trust, friendship sitcoms and science fiction were associated with a higher level of interpersonal trust. Another study that found differential genre effects was conducted by Rubin, Perse, and Taylor (1988), who found that viewers of daytime serials had less faith in others and that viewers of action/adventure felt that they had less control in life and were less safe. Strouse and Buerkel-Rothfuss (1987) found sex- and topic-specific genre effects. Permissive sexual attitudes among female college students were associated with viewing of MTV and among male students with watching soaps. Cohen and Weimann (1998) conducted a study in Israel, among a sample 4,848 Israeli teenagers. The survey included questions about the amount of TV they viewed, their genre preferences, "scary world" beliefs about Israel, and their degree of interpersonal trust. The results suggest that TV's cultivation of

beliefs depends on viewer characteristics and genre preferences.

When narrow down the genres, the role of the media in gender role socialization has become an area of considerable concern and the topic of many studies during recent decades because of the women's movement, the convincing findings on bias and cultivation within this domain, and the emerging recognition that the media play a crucial role in diffusing, preserving, and cultivating images of gender roles. Recently, the notion of gender role stereotyping has broadened from the classical notion of differences based on gender to include an examination of the media reconstruction of femininity and masculinity (Weimann, 2000).

Studies of sexism on television were begun decades ago. The most basic gender bias, a clear asymmetry, is that there are far fewer women than men on television, whereas in reality, there is no question of their equal proportions. On American television, for example, there are three times as many men as women in prime-time dramas and four times as many in Saturday morning children's shows (see, e.g., Fejes, 1992; Greenberg, 1980; Levinson, 1975; Signorielli, 1989). Second, the stereotypical and traditional media presentations of male and female gender roles. For example, women on television were found to be presented as passive, emotional, dependent, and less valued than men. The overall image is traditional, in that women are presented as weak and dependent on men, seeking a man if unmarried or being nurturing mothers and wives (e.g., Busby, 1985; Levinson, 1975; Long & Simon, 1974). Scholars examined these sexisms in different genres, such as: commercials and advertising (e.g., Ferrante, Haynes, & Kingsley, 1988; O'Donnell & O'Donnell's, 1978; Skelly & Lundstrom, 1981), Children's Programs (e.g., Sternglanz & Serbin, 1974; Cobb, Stevens-Long, & Goldstein, 1982), movie (e.g., Mellen, 1977; Basow, 1992), and print media (e.g., Modleski, 1982; Weitz, 1977; Peirce, 1990).

Although it is relatively easy to find persistent gender role portrayals in various media,

the question of their effect is a far more difficult research problem and a less investigated one.

Started with the basic assumption of cultivation theory, it appears that gender stereotypes in

the media may affect us in powerful ways. Thus, the role of the media in gender role

socialization has become an area of considerable concern and the topic of a good deal of

research. Most research about the effects of television in gender role socialization focuses on

children and examines perceptions of sex-typed behaviors or personality traits and tendencies

to identify with specific characters. Miller and Reeves (1976), for example, found that

children selected television characters as people they wanted to be like when they grew up.

Reeves and Miller (1978) also found a strong tendency for children, especially boys, to

identify with same-sex television characters. Numerous studies supported the notion of

gender stereotypes cultivated by the media: In a study of 3- to 6-year-old children, Beuf

(1974) found that children who watched more television were more likely to stereotype

occupational roles. Gross and Jeffries-Fox (1978), in a panel study of 250 8th-, 9th-, and

10th-grade children, found that television viewing was related to giving sexist responses to

questions about the nature of men and women and how they are treated by society. Studies

conducted by Morgan (1982, 1987) and Signorielli (1989; Signorielli & Lears, 1992) found

that, among adolescents, television cultivates certain attitudes about gender roles. Also,

Signorielli (1989) conducted a study using a sample of adults and she found statistically

significant (although small) correlations between television viewing and certain attitudes

concerning gender roles. There are few studies examining this impact on adult populations.

Volgy and Schwartz (1980), in a study conducted in the southwestern United States, found a

positive relationship between viewing entertainment programs and acceptance of traditional

sex roles. Pingree, Starrett, and Hawkins (1979), using a small sample of women in Madison,

Wisconsin, found a positive relationship between viewing daytime serial dramas and

supporting traditional family values and family structures. Ross, Anderson, and Wisocki

(1982), using a sample of 78 college students and a group of 19 older adults, found that the amount of sex role stereotyping in self-descriptions was positively correlated with amount of viewing of stereotyped television programs.

Cross-nationally cultivation studies started from foreign immigrants in U.S. (Kim, 1980) and U.S. television exposure in foreign countries (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982), gradually expanded to local television and cultivation (Sweden: Hedinsson & Windahl, 1984; Hong Kong: Cheung & Chan, 1996; Japan: Saito, 2007), and foreign television programs (except U.S.) in cultivating locals (e.g., Korean soap operas in Vietnam, Vu & Lee, 2013). Cultivation effects also have been studied from different perspectives in Chinese context. Although there were studies about cultivation and anime, they fell into the narrow path of the relationship of violence and adolescents. Few researchers have examined effectiveness of cultivation process of adolescents and gender of television, and proved positive results (e.g., Yang, 2012; Wang, 2007). This paper aims at examining anime as a factor that cultivating gender cognition and construction which towards female-gender and marriage attitude. Specifically, I will examine how anime, as a media partly represents Japanese values, cultivates Chinese well-educated young people's gender attitudes in stage 3 of cultivation analysis.

RQ3: How anime affects Chinese anime fans' gender attitudes of their own genders?

5   METHODOLOGY

The data usually analyzed by quantitative methods such as T-test or ANOVA procedures when scholars using cultivation theory. They use time of television exposure as an independent variable to measure light and heavy viewers, or light, medium and heavy viewers. Then data were analyzed between the correlation of time and cultivation. In this paper, as the main intention of the study is to understand how Chinese anime fans interpret gender-roles from anime and think about gender attitude towards marriage, quantitative methods obviously were not suitable for collecting in-depth data. "Qualitative research is empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers" (Punch, 1998, p. 4). Qualitative research deals with developing deep understanding of how people perceive their social realities and in consequence, how they act within the social world. Beyond the television exposure and light or heavy viewers, I research how anime fans perceive gender stereotypes from anime and their concepts of gender roles from a long-term cultivation process. Although time of television exposure is not the focus of the research, the basic requirement of the participants is the age of beginning to watch anime, which means they have had a fairly long period of continuous watching experiences. More specific, the "fairly long" period covers the participants' adolescence.

Interview generates deeply contextual accounts of participants' experiences and their interpretation of them (Schultze & Avital, 2011). Semi-structured interview is the most common type of interviews used in qualitative research (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). It is usually flexible, with open-ended questions and the chance to explore issues that arise spontaneously (Berg, 2009; Ryan, Coughlan, & Cronin, 2009). Interview questions are not fixed; in fact, prepared questions are only used as a guide which researcher is free to vary the order and wording of the questions (Power, Campbell, & Kilcoyne, 2010), depending on the direction of the interview, and to ask additional questions (Corbetta, 2003). In this research,

interview questions were designed around three main research questions, but during the interview processes, new perspectives and opinions have been inspired by interviewees. Information collected more than the questions design because semi-structured interview elicit narratives that can be more meaningful than interviews based on questions and answers, as it turns questions about a given topic into storytelling invitations (Hollway & Jefferson, 1997). The interviews were completed by online telephone method instead of traditional face to face interviews. In this study, because of the huge physical distance of participants (Chinese) and researcher (Finland), using online interviews obviously is the most effective and economical method.

The role of the researcher in the interviews is rather complex. The researcher has more than ten years anime watching experiences, and has more biases in researching the gender issues of anime. In the real society of China, anime fan is a marginal group which general individuals usually have a negative attitude. Because of the importance of building trust and establishing rapport between interviewer and interviewees, the author needs to show my own identity of anime fan to make interviewees feeling comfortable to answer questions honestly. Moreover, interview questions are about income, marriage, and gender which could easily offend some sensitive interviewees. In this kind of situation, the researcher needs to show his non-discrimination attitudes toward all involved issues. Also, during the interview processes, the researcher has found some participants' answers were too broad; then he needs to guide them to answer specifically.

5.1 Participants

This study is based on total of eight interviewees, four males and four females. A snowball sampling method is used in gathering participants. The basic criterion of the participants is 1980s and 90s born college/university graduates or undergraduates with long

time of anime watching experiences. All of the participants' anime watching time are longer than five years, which longest is 24 years and shortest is 7 years. The eight participants are coded by interview sequence from P1 to P8. Six of the participants are single while P3 is in relationship and P6 is married. Three are undergraduates while five are graduated and have jobs at present. All of them are still watching anime now, from one hour per week to six hours per week. Details of the participants are shown in the following (Table 1).

Table 1: Details of the participants

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female
Age	29	21	27	20	21	28	30	31
Year of born	1985	1993	1987	1994	1993	1986	1984	1983
Marital Status	Single	Single	In relationship	Single	Single	Married	Single	Single
Education	Bachelor's degree	Undergraduate	Bachelor's degree	Undergraduate	Undergraduate	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Bachelor's degree
Occupation	Architect	Undergraduate	Comptroller	Undergraduate	Undergraduate	HR manager	Accountant	Cashier
Years of anime watching	16	7	12	12	10	13	12	24
Frequency of anime watching now (per week)	5 hours	1 hour	4 hours	4 hours	4 hours	6 hours	3 hours	2 hours

5.2   Interview procedure

Interview began with an essential question of identity self-assessment which was verifying if interviewees took anime fan as one of their salient identities. Ting-Toomey (2009) has argued that identity is cultural, societal, relational, and individual images of self-conception. Once someone feels included within a certain ingroup, the rules, norms, and rituals will influence him/her from every aspect of communication styles. As a research on cultivation of anime, it is necessary to make sure that participants value the identity of anime fan. Interview questions were divided into three thematic parts according to the RQs. All questions were designed in English and then translated into Chinese.

Interview questions are based on Gerbner's (n.d.) Cultivation analysis questionnaire and have extended into gender specialty. RQ1 related interview questions contain three issues: choice of marriage and work, housework, and women's portrayals. Questions were modified according to participants' marital status. For instance, to undergraduates the questions were "How you think the choice of marriage and work after your graduation", to those who have jobs the questions were "If you have a chance of promotion and marriage at same time but you couldn't consider both, how will you choose". More importantly, questions were taken more consideration on women's side. RQ2 related interview questions concentrate on interviewees' opposite genders. The questions could be divided in three stages: images of their opposite genders, influence of anime, and their standard of choosing spouses. Also, questions are modified. RQ3 related interview questions focus on their own genders. They could be divided in three stages as RQ2: images of their own genders, influence of anime, and their acceptances of the influence.

The length of interviews varied from 30 to 50 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and translated by the researcher.

5.3   Data analysis

In the data analysis process, applied thematic analysis (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012) is introduced. "The ATA approach is a rigorous, yet inductive, set of procedures designed to identify and examine themes from textual data in a way that is transparent and credible" (Guest et al., 2012, p. 15). It is based on commonly employed inductive thematic analyzes, and it could be seen as a combine and extension of grounded theory and phenomenology. Its strength is that advantages in grounded theory and phenomenology are both contained. Moreover, the greatest strength is its pragmatic focus on using whatever tools might be appropriate to get the analytic job done in a transparent, efficient, and ethical manner (Guest et al., 2012).

Exploratory approach as a context-driven, inductive approach is implemented in data analysis, which emphasizes what emerges from the interaction between researcher and respondent. The content of that interaction drives the development of codes and the identification of themes (Guest et al., 2012). In order to present the exploration of data with an analytic strategy, themes are used to describe emerged textual segments in the structural topics. Beyond exploratory approach and themes, core method of the data analysis in this paper is thematic data comparison. Because of the comparative nature of genders, comparison analysis offers the most convenient and intuitive way to gather the data. Instead of qualitatively comparing the content of narratives and highlights similarities and differences between two or more data sets (groups), Guest et al. (2012) suggest "An analyst simply examines the differential expression of themes across groups and notes which themes/concepts are similar across groups and which are different" (p. 162).

Three major themes with subcategories are identified in the following (Table 2). Every theme has divided basically in two comparison groups by gender. Besides, in first theme there is a third group calls "How males think females should be".

Table 2: Themes

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
Job or marriage	Gender portrayals	Standards of choosing spouses
- Choice of job or marriage - Women's career and income - Housework and children	- The traditional portrayals - Their opinions - Perceived from anime - The contribution of anime for the portrayals	- Standards - Favorite anime character/s - The standards in practice

All the eight interview data are analyzed according to the themes above. Comparison between genders is emphasized. Quotations are used when appropriate.

6   RESULTS

6.1   Job or marriage?

One major agreement among seven participants out of eight was that job is prior than

marriage. The main factor was the economic sources. However, the concerns of the economic

sources were slightly different by individuals and genders. Quotations from participants are

used as subheadings.

6.1.1   "We need financial independence"

All four males regardless of age, marital status, and occupation emphasized the

"material base". Not only for their own livings, also for the marriage. P3 explained as

following:

> 工作是婚姻的，基础吧。应该以工作为先。就是，呃，没有好的工作，就没
> 有好的婚姻吧。工作为婚姻提供物质基础。长远来看，要是想要婚姻稳定，
> 还是得有一个，有一个工作，工作上先稳定吧。先在工作上取得一定的成绩
> 吧。
> Job is, the foundation of marriage. I think job is the priority. That is, uh, if you
> don't have a good job, (you) couldn't get a good marriage. Job offers a material
> base for marriage. In a long term view, (if you) want to have a stable marriage,
> (you) should have, have a job, a stable job. (You) should have some achievement in
> (your) career.

P1 stated that offering the material base as males' obligation in a marriage because of

the "common sense" of the society. Therefore, when talked about women's career and

income issues, there were no surprises that they would accept their wives or future wives do

not have jobs.

P1 said "It doesn't matters at all whether she has a job or not". P3 at first didn't accept

that if his girlfriend doesn't have a job or doesn't want to work because he thought he

couldn't offer her a good material base:

> 我觉得，男女之间，还是，嗯……在一定条件下还是平等的吧。这个婚姻，
> 不能靠一方，在选择上大家还是，还是应该以工作为先。……除非男方能，
> 能够完全负担生活，……那女性可以不用考虑，女性可以以生活为先。

I think, men and women, uh… are equal in certain conditions. Marriage, (it) shouldn't just depend on one side; in the choice (of job or marriage), (male and female) both should take job as the priority. …[pause] If the husband could, (he) could afford the living expenses,…[pause] then the wife can, (she) can choose marriage as priority.

P6 stated this concept in a more straightforward way:

呃，嗯，怎么说，……我从精神上能够接受，但是呢，现在从物质生活水平上不太能够接受。两个人，如果一个人没有经济来源的话，可能会，就是，嗨！说白了，可能就是我的收入还不足以支撑一个人不上班的这种，这种情况。如果，……物质上都满足的话，对，对对，我可以接受，完全可以接受。
Uh, ah, how to say it, …[pause] I can accept it mentally, but, (I) couldn't accept it from our material living condition. Two of us, if someone doesn't have an economic source, it could be, that is, alas! say it directly, that is my income is not high enough to support the family. If, …[pause] if economic issue is not a problem, yes, yes yes, I can accept, I can totally accept (she doesn't have a job).

Different from the coincident answers of males, females' responses to the choice of job

and marriage were varied by individuals, even though three out of four females chose job.

The central idea was the "independence" of finance.

P2 explained it as following:

工作，先工作。因为，我一直秉持的理念，就是，女性要首先经济独立，自己先要能养活自己，才能去谈，婚姻啊什么的。因为我不想，不想过分的去依赖未来的那一半，那样我觉得，在家没地位。
Work, work first. Because, the concept I always have, is that, females should first have financial independence, they could earn a living by themselves, then they can think about, [pause] marriage or anything else. Because, I don't want to, don't want to depend on my husband too much in the future, (if I do so) I will feel I don't have any status within the family.

Moreover, P7 has provided another view. It emphasized how job as a method to help her

improving herself and to meet people in a higher level:

工作就是一个完善自己的过程，只有你自己在工作中了解自己，建立自己的社会观，价值观，才能找到一个跟你相仿的人。经济也算是一个因素，但是不是那么一个重要的因素。可能，价值观这个方面占得更重一些。你要能够找一个互相能够理解的人。
Work is a process of improving yourself. Only after you have realized yourself from the process, you have established your own worldview and values, then you can find someone like you. Finance could be a factor, but it is not that important. Maybe, values weight more. You need to find someone who can understand you.

Both P7 and P8 are single and have worked for more than seven years. Their focuses of

job were not only limited in the view of economic issues. P8 emphasized the "self-esteem":

> （采访者：你怎么选择未来的升职和婚姻？）我想我会选择升职吧。怎么说
> 呢，这个机会稍纵即逝，我想我还是会牢牢抓住这个机会。经济上面肯定是
> 有一部分原因的，主要还是，自我价值的体现吧，这个很<u>重要</u>。
> (The researcher: how you think about your future promotion and marriage?) I think
> I will choose promotion. How to say it, [pause] the chance is rare, I think I will
> grasp the chance. Economic source is a factor, but more important is, the self-
> esteem, this is <u>important</u>.

P5 was the only female who chose marriage as the priority. But her concern was not about financial issues, she said: "I am afraid to miss the one. I can change jobs, but if I missed the one, I will regret lifelong!" When the researcher asked what you will do after get married with the one, she replied:

> 我觉得，如果是完完全全的家庭主妇，我不是很赞成。再怎么说，就算女生
> 要顾家的话，也要有一分稳定点，但是比较轻松，能顾家的工作。
> I think, if it is the completely housewife, I don't agree. No matter what, even if you
> want to be more family-centered, you also need a stable, a cushy job.

From the comparison of males' and females' responses, it is not difficult to find out that the meaning of job is different for them and the views of economic sources are also distinct. Males emphasized "Job is what I need to support the family" and for their wives or future wives it was "If I can earn enough money, you don't need to work". Meanwhile, for females, they said "I need to work, no matter how much you (refers to husband) earn" and "Working is the way to get in touch with the society". To address the first research question about how born in 1980s and 1990s well-educated Chinese think about the choice of work and marriage, the result is they choose work. Even the female who chose marriage as priority, she never thought of giving up working. However, the reason behind the choice is never the same.

6.1.2   "He should/need to/must share housework"

Inspired by the housework issues happened in Japan (e.g. Ehara, 2005; Nemoto, 2008), the researcher also conducted participants to think about their opinions of housework share.

On the other side, housework is an intra-marriage issue which challenges the gender

portrayals. The data shows an interesting result of the housework issue. Although four males

expressed their wills to share the housework at home, their words actually didn't say so:

> P1:可以帮忙做，而且视心情而定，心情好的话可以全部揽下来。视具体情况，如果就一般情况的话，我觉得是，没多大戏……（笑）
> P1: I can help with it, depends on my mood that day, if I feel good that day I can do all the housework. [pause] It depends, if you mean the general situation, I think, it won't happen (do housework)… [laugh]
>
> P3: ……有时候女生干不了，也累。（家务活）应该是平均的。……女性还是应该以婚姻与家庭生活为先，在家务上应该多分摊一些，……应该让男方以工作为先，女方以家庭为先，家务上应该倾斜一下。
> P3: …Sometimes she can't do it, it is hard work. (Housework) should be equal. …[pause] But females should concern more about marriage and family, spend more time on housework, …[pause] It should be, males take more responsibility on work while females take more on family, they (female) should spend more effort on housework.
>
> P4: 这个嘛，不好设想……毕竟，毕竟……我在家里做家务活还是比较少的。设想一下啊……应该，应该，应该还是会把。
> P4: It is uh, it is difficult to imagine, …[pause] after all, after all … I don't do much housework at home. Just imagine, …[pause] I think I will, will, will do housework (after get married).
>
> P6: 有，但是不算很多，可能大部分的家务活还是由她来承担。对对，我还是排斥做家务。大部分由她来做，可能跟，我做家务的水平不太够，主要跟这个有关吧。家务活不太会干，对（笑）。
> P6: Yes, I do housework at home, but not too much. Maybe most of the housework has been done by her. Yes yes, I don't like to do housework. She does do the major part of housework because of, maybe because of, [pause] I don't have enough skills to do housework. …[pause] I'm not good at doing it [laugh].

When questions went further about how they think if females request to share

housework, their answer were "That's normal, I can accept". However, from their words it

seems like, they just "think of" sharing the housework rather than really "doing" housework

in real life. Compare with the duplicity of males, females had a strong psychological

resistance of doing housework all by themselves. They had a clear request of sharing

housework from different degrees. P5 had the weakest request of sharing housework:

> 我觉得，我希望还是，一块分担。但是，只有一个人做的话，你不要挑毛病就行了。可以一个人做啊，但是别指手画脚，指手画脚的话你自己去做。

I think, I hope, we can share housework. But, if I do all the housework, you (husband) should not criticize it. I can do it all by my own, but please don't criticize it, if you (husband) criticize it, do it by yourself.

P2 shows an "equivalent exchange" attitude:

……民主一点……前提是有时间的话，要公平吧……不可能一个人都做，但是，如果对方工作忙的话我可以全部承担，如果我工作忙的话对方可以全部承担。
… It needs to be more democratic... If we both have time, it needs to be equal… it's impossible to just depend on one person. But [pause], if he is busy with work I can do them all, and if I am busy with work he can do them all.

When P8 was answering this question, she was very angry and emotional:

因为家庭是两个人的，我是你<u>太太</u>，不是你的<u>保姆</u>，这个我们只能分担，不能我在外面忙了事业，回家了还要给你当<u>保姆</u>。<u>那我还有必要结婚吗</u>？
Family belongs to both of us, I am your <u>wife</u>, not your <u>caretaker</u>, we must share the housework. [pause] I can't be that not only working outside during the day, but also being a <u>caretaker</u> at home. If you think so, [pause] <u>why I need to get married</u>?

P7 thought further, she refused to negotiate with her future husband about housework. Instead, she said "I will find a man who has housework skills. I will not marry to a man who don't want to do housework, doesn't have abilities to do housework and lazy with housework".

The different attitudes of housework partly reflect three issues: 1) Chinese males' images of females in family – housewives; 2) conflict between Chinese males' attitudes of housework and females' changing attitudes – a strong demand of housework sharing; 3) one reason why some well-educated Chinese females still remain single. Housework issue is not isolated, it somehow connected with the choice of job. Females spend their time in working, relatively their time spend on housework will be less. Also from 4.1.1, males' attitudes of females' work and income reflected their thoughts: I earn money for you, you do housework for me. However, males never realized that females' attitudes have changed so fast.

6.2   Gender-role portrayals

This section contains the largest amount of data. In order to make them clear, this

section will be divided into four sub-themes: the traditional Chinese gender-role portrayals,

their opinions of modern gender-role portrayals, the gender-role portrayals learned from

anime, and anime's contribution to all of above three portrayals. Within each sub-theme, first

will be male's portrayal and then will be female's portrayal. And as above, the comparison

analysis between male participants and female participants will be used.

6.2.1   "Men manage external affairs while women manage internal"

Concepts of traditional gender-role portrayals are quite consistent with the social

common sense. "Men manage external affairs while women manage internal" (男主外女主

内) is a Chinese idiom means all the affairs out of family belong to men such as earn money,

maintain social relationships, and make decisions; all the affairs inside family belong to

women such as housework, take care of children, and support husband. This idiom has been

used by some of the participants to describe the traditional gender-role portrayals. Indeed, all

the descriptions have fallen in this idiom.

Male portrayals. Male participants' responses could use P6's words as representation:

以家庭为重，以国家为重，行侠仗义，敢作敢当，然后，保护他人，呃，就
是很富有正义感吧那种。我觉得，这是我心目中的传统男人的形象。对对，
支柱形象，顶梁柱嘛。
Take responsibility for the family, for the nation; chivalric and holding the sense of
justice; and, protecting others. Uh, characteristics like chivalry and knighthood. I
think, [pause] this is what I think a traditional man. Yes yes, the backbone.

Female participants' responses could use P8's sentence:

应该是属于那种，就在外面很厉害，能够撑起一个家，能够说一不二，权威，
他是一家之主嘛。
He is, powerful in the society, he has the ability to hold up a family, he can make
decisions, he is the authority, he is the backbone of the family.

Female portrayals. All the eight participants have used one word, "mother". Their descriptions of females just exactly the same as what has been reviewed in the chapter 2.1 of this paper, which is devoted their whole life to assistant husband and raise children.

6.2.2 Quite traditional male and self-reliant female

Male and female participants' impression of modern gender-role portrayals were quite the same just with different focuses. Male participants' focuses were more affair-oriented or from a macro scope of view; while female participants' focuses were personal-oriented or from a micro scale of view.

Male portrayals. Male participants' views of themselves were quite traditional. They viewed male as authority, power, and backbone. "Taking responsibility" is their central idea. P1 and P3 said "Take responsibilities, has some achievement in career, and has motivation to become better". P6 said that his opinion of what a modern man should be like was exactly the same as the traditional one. P4, as the youngest participant in the research, had an ideal model which perfectly outlined the portrayal:

> 应该是，不应该仅仅局限在自己的小世界里，然后，就是，对整个世界，整个外面的世界有一种兴趣，有一种，不管是做出贡献也好，干什么也好，就是，不能太局限于自己的生活。这应该是，一个好的男性的形象。
> He should be like, not limited himself in his own little world. Then, that is, he has the interests of discovering the outer world, the whole society. No matter what he has done, [pause] it should be contributions to the world, or anything else, he shouldn't limit himself just for him own. This is what I think, [pause] a good man.

Female participants viewed male from their perspectives of "being kind to female", "protect wife and children", and "share pressures from society" etc. However, P7 said her own feeling of the modern young males from a negative impression:

> 现在平辈的男性，就比较逃避责任，然后其实有的，有时候有一些眼高手低，而且，因为我平辈中的男性，会出现大部分的，独生子女，就会有很多的弊

病。比如，自我中心。其实有的时候，应该尽的社会责任啊，应有的绅士风度啊，都已经不太考虑这些了。

Some males of my age, they are avoiding responsibilities, and sometimes they have high aspirations but don't come up with good. Because most of them are the only child, they have a lot of disadvantages, such as, egocentricity. Actually sometimes, they don't even consider the social responsibilities, and or gentility.

Female portrayals. Surprisingly, male participants' impression of modern female is still traditional at some degrees. They all agreed that females can pursue their dreams, their own lives, and can do whatever they want as males. But when question went to marriage, they said "At least they should take the responsibility of raising children".

P1: 我认为，可以和男性一样啊，过自己的生活。就是说，你喜欢过什么样的生活，可以自己去追求，但是你要履行自己的基本职责。
P1: I think, (females) can live as males, enjoy their own lives. It means, what kind of life you (refers to female) like, just pursuing it. But, you need to take your basic responsibility.

P3: 我认为，女性独立自主，大家男女平等，在工作和生活的选择啊，……在相互理解的情况下平等。
P3: I think, females are independent and self-reliant, we are equal. The choice of work and personal life, …[pause] if we negotiate for a mutual understanding, we are equal.

P4: 每个人都可以做自己想做的事情。但是，起码她应该承担，承担这个抚养子女的义务吧。大概就这样，她们有这样的义务。
P4: Everyone can do whatever they want. But, they (refers to females) should at least take the responsibility of, of raising children. It is somehow like that, they have the obligation.

P6: 应该就是，怎么说，应该在社会上有基本的礼仪啊，就是或者说，能够处理好社会上的一些，人际关系。然后，同时会，做一手好菜，这个，以后要有孩子，能够教育好孩子。基本上就这样。
P6: It should be like, how to say it, [pause] she should have basic manners in society, or say in other words, she can handle some social relationships, personal relationships. And also, she can cook well, and if we have children in the future, she can educate them well. Just like this.

Females saw themselves as a combination of masculinity and femininity. At one side, they thought they should be independent and self-reliant, but at same time some of them said "Sometimes I also need a shoulder to cry" and "I think females are born with the talent of maintaining relationships of family members". Only one female said "Not at all, I can be

male, I can protect who I love". P2 said:

> 首先我要能自理，能自立，能经济独立，就是在没有外力的借助下我能自己
> 生活的很好，然后其次，我也需要一个肩膀，一个依靠，去共同生活，也需
> 要被别人照顾，被别人疼爱。
> First I need to be able to take care of myself, to be self-reliant, and financial
> independent. [pause] That is, I can live a good life without somebody's help. And
> then, I also need a shoulder to rely on, I also need someone to take care of me, and
> need someone to love me.

P7 emphasized females' pressures from both society and family. She complimented that

common modern females were used to bear these pressures. And she thought this is one spirit

that a modern female should have.

> 我觉得，现在的女性，都挺强的，尤其是心理素质，很强。在工作上要承担
> 很多压力，在家里也要承担很多压力，她们都能比较好的把这些压力转化了，
> 然后，不会产生矛盾啊，也能调节自己的心理啊。一个坚强的形象吧（笑）。
> I think, modern females are strong, especially in psychology, it is strong. They not
> only have to take a lot pressures in workplace, and also at home. They can release
> those pressures without hurting anyone else. And they are good at adjust their
> emotions. [pause] A strong portrayal [laugh].

In this sub-theme, it is difficult to define what "your opinion of modern gender-roles" is.

Participants' responses were more focused on their ideal models. That means, they were not

talking about a general image of gender roles. Therefore, the answers were extremely

subjective, especially when they talked of their own genders. Their views were limited in

their thought of themselves. They use their portrayals of themselves to generalize the concept

of the whole genders. But however, the common conceptions and differences were found

from those data. Moreover, because of the long times of anime watching, anime has affected

a lot for their recognitions of reality.

6.2.3   The "want-to-be" anime portrayals

The participants' descriptions of anime gender roles were somehow have fallen into the

categories of anime genres. And the major gender-role portrayals were coming from shōnen

anime genre. Characters from anime were used to help illustrating the portrayals. However, it

is not impossible to get an absolute neutral response of the general anime portrayals. The researcher has asked more about what characters they like and dislike. Here only shows the characters of their own genders, the opposite genders will be in the next theme.

Male portrayals. As in the two former portrayals above, males participants have illustrated a simplex image of male characters in anime. The male portrayal was as traditional as their two former responses. Responsibility, taciturnity, and powerful were mentioned several times. However, because of the need of a good story, all the male characters were not born with power. Therefore, the process of being matured was emphasized by the male participants. P3 said as following:

> 嗯……最能认同的，应该还是属于那种，初期比较弱小，然后这个，通过各种事情不断成长起来，最后能够实现自己最初的，或者后来形成的一些想法的那种角色。然后就是，基拉啊，基拉·大和啊。
> Uh… The characters which I like most, it will be, [pause] they were weak and small at the beginning, then they were getting matured through different kinds of adventures. At the end, they could achieve their goals which they held when they were weak and small or during their maturing road. [pause] It would be like *Kira*, *Kira Yamato*.
> (Kira Yamato is the protagonist of *Gundam SEED* and *Gundam SEED Destiny*)

P6 used his favorite character to describe his impression of males in anime:

> 就，这个《黑之契约者》嘛！黑嘛！我最喜欢的一直是他。因为他，就是那种话不多，甚至话很少，然后但是呢，很有自己的目标，很有想法，然后这个，能够做到保护需要自己保护的人，同时，就是该做什么事的时候，一定会能够做成什么事情，哪怕有时候会损伤到自己的利益，也无所谓。
> It is like, *Darker than Black*! *Hei*! He is always my favorite male character. He is like, like that he is taciturn, even he never talked too much. But however, he has his own goals, he has his thoughts deep inside. And then, he can protect others who need his protection, and he can achieve something if it needed to be done, even it would be harmful to his own benefits.
> (*Hei* or *Li Shunsheng* is the protagonist of *Darker than Black*)

As the contrast of the characters they like, they also described which kind of characters they didn't like. Most of the personalities they described were just opposite the personalities they like, such as, selfish, timidity, and chatter. Another phenomenon they have mentioned

was the feminine male characters. They did not dislike these characters. They said "it is

normal", "appearances and behaviors mean nothing" and "it also depends on their inside

personalities". P6 used a character to illustrate it:

> 我主要还是指的是他性格上的女性化，比如说，性格上优柔寡断啊，……像
> 是《海贼王》里面的 MR.2 啊，我就不讨厌。他只不过是打扮的比较女性化，
> 这点，其实是属于他的个人喜好，这无所谓。
> I mean femininities from their inside personalities, for example, irresolute and
> hesitant… Some characters for example *MR.2* from *One Piece*, I do not dislike. He
> just dressed femininely, this is just his personal like, it doesn't matters.

Female participants answered quite the same as what males answered. P2 said male

characters in anime "have distinct characteristics" and "are either white or black". P5 has

described exactly the same as male participants that "they are born weak and small, but step

by step they become strong and powerful". All the female participants agreed that all the

male characters they perceived from anime were positive and motivated, even the characters

were setting as bad persons.

Female portrayals. Females' portrayals in anime were not as simplex as males'. All the

eight participants have mentioned the different types of females. Female characters could be

"loli"(萝莉), "queen"(女王), and "tsundere"(傲娇) etc. The word loli was originally from

Vladimir Nabokov's book Lolita. It now means girls who are short and cute, and appearances

and attitudes like children. Queen could be understood as its literally meaning, strong,

powerful, and independent. Tsundere describes a girl who is initially cold and hostile towards

another person before gradually showing her warm side over time. However, they also

mentioned that female characters were shown more in a secondary place than male characters.

Three participants, two males and one female, have especially mentioned anime with female

protagonists. P2 said:

> 但是也有一些，应运而生一些逆的，出现一些强势的霸气的女性。像是女帝
> 啊，娜美啊，神乐啊。我觉得是为了弥补女性的弱势地位，他会去表现一些

强势的女性。
But there are some, as the contrast of mainstream anime characters, strong and masculine female characters. Such as *Pirate Empress*, *Nami*, and *Kagura*. I think they were created to remedy the low social status of females in reality.
(*Pirate Empress* or *Boa Hancock*, and *Nami* are characters from *One Piece*; *Kagura* is one of the protagonists of *Gintama*)

And P6 argued female characters not from characters themselves, but from the story of anime. He didn't talk about strong females or masculine female characters. He said:

比如说宫崎骏的一些动漫，他的动漫是，是反过来的，很多时候都是以女性角色为主。《千与千寻》啊，《风之谷》啊，反而这些都是关注女性，从女性视角来看社会。
For example, *Hayao Miyazaki*'s anime. His anime is reversed, most of the time he uses females as protagonists. *Spirited Away* and *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* etc., these anime are focused on females. These stories were created from females' views of the world.

All of them agreed that female characters were still supporting roles in most of the anime they have watched. These female characters are "no brains"(无脑), "weak"(弱), "little girls"(小女生) , and "keng die"(坑爹). Keng die, which has been used by some male participants, refers to hinder, drag, or pull something back. P3 has described the female characters he didn't like:

像那种优柔寡断啊，手无缚鸡之力，或者是，这种在很多选择的时候，举棋不定，出尔反尔的。说白了，就是那种，比较"坑爹"的。
Girls are irresolute and hesitant, couldn't make decisions, with no strength; or when facing multiple choices, they are indecisive or after made a choice they are regret and reneged. All in all, they are girls who are very "keng die".

P8 has explained the whole environment of anime from her point of view:

但是目前来说，看的最多的是萌妹子。就是那种很可爱，会撒娇啊，会给人一种，她很需要你的这种感觉的。就是那种处于，弱势的。
But at the present, most of the female characters are cute girls. They are cute, good at coquetting. You always felt that they need your protection. They always gave you the feeling that they need you. It is like, they are at the weak side.

Four female participants have stood in the same side of what characters they like. Their favorite characters have some same characteristics which were "important in the group", "independent", and "feminine but strong" etc. Moreover, P8 has a strong preference of the

"queenly" female characters. She said:

> 我就比较欣赏，很独立的那种。就是《进击的巨人》里面的"三爷"嘛，三笠。就是，很独立，很能干。……可以保护自己喜欢的人，还有《火影》小樱啊，纲手。
> I really admire female characters which are very independent. It would be like "bro. *Mikasa*", *Mikasa Ackerman* from *Attack on Titan*. She is very independent, very competent…. They can protect people who they love. And other characters like *Sakura Haruno* and *Tsunade* from *Naruto*.
> ("Bro. *Mikasa*" is what Chinese anime fans call *Mikasa Ackerman* because of the strong masculinity of her.)

Gender-role portrayals in anime have been discussed in the former section of this paper. From participants' responses, it is not difficult to find that male has an only portrayal as powerful, responsible, and motivated; while female has two distinct portrayals which are strong, independent, powerful and weak, dependent, feminine. This has partly reflected that anime has successfully achieved its effects of story-telling. Anime fans have actually received the values displayed in anime. Especially the role of females, all the participants have mentioned their contradictory feelings.

6.3   The standard of choosing spouses

The standards of choosing spouses in China are affected by numerous external factors such as pressure from parents, financial considerations, and social pressures etc. However, in a free modern society, the standards are more decided by individuals – what kind of person he/she wants to marry. Without considering the external factors, this theme analyzes the answers of the participants about how their standards influenced by anime. As the researcher has discussed in last theme, the standards will be explained from two aspects of appearances and characteristics. First will be males' responses and then female's.

6.3.1   Males' ideal wives

The four male participants' illustration started with the description of characters'

appearances. From appearances characters in anime could be divided into two categories: *loli*

and *onē*. Loli's appearances are usually cute and small, with babyfaces, and usually height

around 150cm or shorter. Onē is a Japanese term for "elder sister" or elder sister alike. These

characters usually mature, have nice female body shapes, and tall (around 165cm or taller).

And more, loli and onē also represent two different types of females (will discuss in

characteristic part). Although the participants' preferences differed, on the side of

appearances they were all fond of the onē type. Picture 1 uses *Taiga Aisaka* from *Toradora!*

and *Nico Robin* from *One Piece* to illustrate the two types.

Picture 1: Left: Taiga Aisaka (Loli); Right: Nico Robin (Onē). (Sources: official websites[1])

The four male participants described their dream-types were "long hair", "faces are

pretty", "big eyes", and "slim and fit" etc. The appearance of Nico Robin in picture 1 is one

of the examples. And P6 even said "All female characters in anime are very good, they were

designed properly. I really couldn't find one I don't like!" P3 has mentioned the influence of

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[1] Taiga Aisaka from: http://www.starchild.co.jp/special/toradora/, and Nico Robin from: http://www.j-onepiece.com/

anime could be first appearance and then characteristics.

> 动漫看多了，对大家这个，嗯，完美女性形象……首先，一个外貌上的影响，
> 大家会觉得，嗯，这个，大眼睛啊，比较苗条啊，长头发啊，一些动漫中比
> 较标准的动漫女性角色形象，会影响大家对现实女性的印象。其次，就是性
> 格方面，还是觉得女孩儿就应该，文静啊，温柔，懂事啊。主要就是这两个
> 方面。
> The longtime of anime watching affects our opinions of the "perfect girl"
> impression. …[pause] First, appearances. We will think some common appearances
> of female characters with big eyes, slim body shapes, and long hairs etc. are good.
> And then it affect us about how we accept the appearance of real females. [pause]
> Second, characteristics. I still think girls should be tender and quiet. [pause] I think
> mainly it affects us in these two aspects.

Although different participants had different preferences of their "perfect girls", the core

is still the same as what they have got from anime. The universal female character settings in

anime have shaped these anime watchers' view of beauties. Usually the appearances are

connected with their characteristics. For instance, females with loli appearances are innocent,

dependent, and acting as children; while females with onē appearances are sophisticated,

independent, and acting more masculinities. For the participants in this study, none of them

show a preference of loli type. Next will analyze each of their prefer types with

characteristics and pictures.

P1 said "I like the kind of character who has a generous heart. She can understand me,

support me. Just like a mother, or a sister. …[pause] Like *Kyou Fujibayashi*." Kyou is one

supporting role from *Clannad*. In this anime, she is actually an older sister. She is a

combination of masculinity and femininity. She is enthusiastic and strong, to protect her

sister. Meanwhile, she is good at cooking and has a tender heart for friends around her.

P3 has a "traditional" choice of his dream girl. *Belldandy*, an angel from anime *Oh My

Goddess!*. Hearing how P3 described her.

> 要说最喜欢，那应该还是《我的女神》吧，应该还是贝露丹迪那种。首先，
> 还是包容性吧，善解人意，比较无私……；二呢，她作为女神嘛，她自己有
> 能力，相对比较独立吧……
> If you say which I like the most, it should be *Oh My Goddess!*, it should be
> *Belldandy*. First, she has a generous heart, an understanding attitude, and she is

selfless. …[psuse] Second, she, as a Goddess, has abilities to do anything by her own. And independent. …

Belldandy is the main female character in the long run manga and anime Oh My Goddess!. This 26-year long series (1988 – 2014) has influenced one whole generation of their concept of Goddess and beauty. As it is included in the "magical girl" characters, Belldandy is an example of combining powerful abilities with feminine characteristics. She is kind-hearted to everyone equally, without exception. She can easily sense others' emotions and tries her best to be empathetic to all those around her. And of course most basically, she has an excellent domestic skills and the unchangeable loyalty to the main male character *Keiichi Morisato*. With these characteristics, Belldandy has been selected as top female character want to marry by Chinese and Japanese anime fans from she has been created until now.

P4 claimed that he was only watching anime with masculine female characters. His opinion of female characteristics in anime is strong, masculine, and sometimes even mighty.

> 我比较喜欢的，应该就是，比较聪慧的那种，比较冷静，比较靠谱啊，这种人物。《xxxHolic》里面，壹原侑子，《化物语》里面的班长，羽川翼，……《命运石之门》，牧濑红莉栖……等等。
> The characters I like are smart, calm, and with a rational mind. For example, *Yuuko Ichihara* from *xxxHolic*, *Tsubasa Hanekawa* from *Monogatari*, and [pause] *Kurisu Makise* from *Steins;Gate*, etc. …

These characters he illustrated were all belonged to onē type. Take Yuuko Ichihara as example, she is a powerful witch who could travel across time and space. She runs a shop in xxxHolic that grants wishes to customers in exchange for something of equal value to the wish. She is powerful and wise, at the same time she is free-spirited, drinking constantly, and making jokes of *Kimihiro Watanuki* the main male character.

P6 hasn't given an exact character as example, but he has given a description.

> 比较成熟，呃，话不多，呃，比较乖巧，嗯，然后，嗯，基本上是这样吧。就是她在，在处理事情的方法上，不会很冲动，不会很激进，然而在遇到她需要做的事情的时候，她又不会退缩。

She would be mature, uh, taciturn, [pause] uh, clever. Uh, then, basically like that.
When she handles something, she will not be impulsive or emotional. And if there
is something needs her to take responsibility of, she will not shrink back.

From the four participants' answers, their dream girls should have the characteristics of

the combination of independence and femininity. But before the characteristics, they

considered more of the appearances. Picture 2 shows *Kyou Fujibayashi* from P1, *Belldandy*

from P3, and *Yuuko Ichihara* from P4.

Picture 2. From left to right: Kyou Fujibayashi, Belldandy, and Yuuko Ichihara. (Sources: official websites[2])

From picture 2 it is not difficult to find some common designs of female characters.

Long straight hair, big eyes, sharp chin, slim body shape, and comparative tall height (From

original settings: Kyou: 160cm; Belldandy: 165cm; Yuuko: estimate around 170cm) are basic

elements of characters which the male participants were fond of. Although there are

numerous different types of characters, the participants chose this type. In fact, it is not a

coincidence. Looking back at picture 1, the two types of appearances are linked with two

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[2] Kyou Fujibayashi from: http://www.tbs.co.jp/clannad/clannad1/index-j.html; Belldandy from:
http://www.tbs.co.jp/megamisama/, and Yuuko Ichihara from: http://www.marv.jp/special/game/ps2/xxxholic/

different characteristics. As a consequence, the same preference of characteristics the

participants made results to somehow alike appearances. This pattern of appearances and

characteristics subconsciously leads male anime fans to judge females partially from the

appearances. And also, as mentioned above, this kind of universal character settings has

influenced anime fans' concept of beauty and beautiful.

6.3.2   Females' ideal husbands

Three female participants put characteristics as priority, only P8 emphasized her would

consider appearances at first. It didn't mean that they made characteristics more important

than appearances. It means that female participants' responses were started with the

descriptions of characteristics. From their descriptions, the characteristics of males were also

somehow the combination of masculinity and "femininity". Females emphasized most the

feminine part of the sensitiveness of caring others. The common sense of this sensitiveness in

Chinese society suggests males should not concentrate in this kind of "feminine" things. Last

theme of "Gender-role portrayals" has exhibited the male's portrayals from both genders and

it indicated that males took more responsibilities for outer world and neglected the domestic

human relationships. However, it didn't say the "masculine" part was not important. In fact, it

is the basic of basic standard and it is compulsory for being a spouse according to female

participants.

> P2 said she considered the "caring me" was most important.

> 海贼里面的山治吧，对女性特别体贴！还有，高野政宗，《世界第一初恋》
> 里的，他工作中特别认真负责，公私分明，但是对他喜欢的人特别的照
> 顾……我最看重的，还是对我体贴。因为，两个人在一起生活，图什么嘛，
> 最起码要关怀我照顾我。这个最重要。
> *Sanji* form *One Piece*, he is so gentle to women! And *Takano Masamune* from
> *Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi*, he is very responsible for his work, but at same time he cares
> his spouse so much. … The most I valued is if my spouse cares me. Because if I
> want to live with him, what I want to get from him? Of course it is the care. This is
> the most important thing.

What a kind of person *Sanji* is? From the anime and its original setting, Sanji has a strong sense of chivalry, because of which, he will never hurt a woman even if he dies. Also Sanji seems to keep this code regardless of a woman's appearances. And of course, he is strong, powerful and handsome. *Takano Masamune* is from the same-sex loving story *Sekai-ichi Hatsukoi* which means "The No.1 first love of the world". From P2's description, it seems she really had a lot of things to say about male's unfair treatment according to females' appearances.

P5 has divided her favorite characters in two periods. When she was young she was attracted by the "cool" boys, now she thought sunny boys attract her more.

> 阳光，开朗一些，比较积极向上。比较喜欢，有毅力，或者能够坚持做完某些事情，然后，比较，肯下功夫，能够坚持的男生。……路飞那样的，又温柔又强大的（笑）。
> More sunshine, positive, and optimistic, I like more of this kind of characters. They have strength, perseverance, and achieve things from the beginning until the end. … Characters like *Luffy*, powerful and gentle [laugh].
> (*Luffy* is the protagonist of *One Piece*.)

P5's favorite character is the typical hero character of shōnen genre. It fulfills all the conditions which a girl dreamed of. P7 has a special preference which is "Looking like a playboy, but inside he has faith, has his own insistence, and he can take responsibilities when some serious things happen."

> 举例子的话，就是《银魂》里面的银时了（笑）。《钢之炼金术师》里面的爱德华，《猎人》奇犽。（笑）我看少年系的比较多。就是，有可能表面上给人的感觉不好，但是内里是一个很好的人。
> For example, *Gintoki* from *Gintama* [laugh]. Or *Edward* from *Fullmetal Alchemist*, or *Killua* from *Hunter × Hunter*. [Laugh] I have watched more shōnen genres. It is like, looking like a bad guy from his appearances and behaviors, but deep inside he is a really good person.

The three characters mentioned by P7 are typical combination characters of masculinity and femininity. They had complicated histories when they were young, usually it is a heavy, miserable, or even painful history. With carrying these histories, they use a cynical attitude to face the life, acting as playboys. At the same time, deep inside their hearts they are not

yielded to these dark histories, they keep their goodness and kindness and look for a way to

rescue themselves from the dark history.

    P8 was the only female who made clearly claim that appearance was the most important.

After that she said the self-motivation of getting better was the second important

characteristic.

> 我记得，我初中的时候喜欢流川枫，长得帅嘛。……其他的，到了后来，还
> 是画风，就是长得比较帅的，会吸引我。然后，就是上进心了，他们必须有
> 一方面非常非常优秀才能吸引到我。
> I remember that when I was in middle school, *Kaede Rukawa* was my favorite,
> because he is so handsome [laugh]. … Now, it is still depends on the character
> designs, the handsome characters will attract me. Second, it is his motivation to get
> better, he has to be very very good at something, then he can attract me.
> (*Kaede Rukawa* is one of the protagonists from *Slam Dunk*.)

Female participants didn't draw much on the appearances. Although they had made

examples to illustrate their dream types, there were not a common standard of male character

appearances. The names appeared above have distinct character designs. From female

participants' views, it is the characteristics made them love the characters more than the

appearances. They also mentioned how appearances attracted them, but the concerns of

appearances were not as strong as males. For example, P5 has said "He needs to be clean and

sunny". On the contrary, female participants have made a clear claim that they didn't like

males who were acting as females, or too feminine. However, they couldn't describe exactly

what the sense of masculinity is. Their recognitions of masculinity were from "the common

sense of Chinese society" and from the underlying designs within Japanese anime.

    Comparing the standards presented by males and females, males' standards focused

more on appearances while females focused more on characteristics (except P8). The author

has found that when male participants answering what characteristics they like from anime,

they used simple sentences and some common symbolic words such as "independent",

"smart", and "mature" etc. While female participants described the characteristics, they used

long sentences and different words with complicated meanings. Males have a common standard somehow what kind of girls they want, both from appearances and characteristics. But from females' side, they have different demands of what kind of boys they want. One reason partly caused this result is how the gender-role portrayals have been presented in anime. From chapter 2.4 of this paper, we knew that anime has painted a virtual world of male characters with numerous characteristics and unique personalities while female characters with stereotyped images. As a consequence, male anime fans have more impressions of some common portrayals and images of females; meanwhile, female fans have received plenty of diverse male characters.

7   DISCUSSION

Japanese anime indeed has a great influence on viewers' concepts of gender roles. Especially changes the concept of female's gender-role. It not only redefines the meaning of being a successful woman for female viewers, but also changes male viewers' perspectives of woman. However, when woman's gender role came into marriage, male viewers' attitudes were somehow stayed traditional – a good mother and a good wife.

The interview data has shown a resistance against traditional female gender-role by female viewers. The dislike of being a traditional woman mainly originated from the witness of their mothers' lives. These female interviewees said, "all the family issues burdened her", "wake up early and prepare breakfast, come home from whole day's work and prepare dinner, clean room and wash clothes in the evening, that's my mom's daily life", "my dad never did any housework". These bad images of marriage have a strong influence towards their choices of work, self-images, and choosing spouses. Many researches (e.g., Miller & Reeves, 1976; Beuf, 1974; Gross & Jeffries-Fox, 1978) has indicated that children selected television characters as people they wanted to be like when they grew up. With the negative images from these female viewers' mom, they knew what kind of woman they didn't want to be and what kind of man they didn't want to marry to. But on the contrary, their ideal models for themselves and husbands were still vague when they were young. Anime, as one of the earliest media children have touched with, significantly contributes to viewers' gender construction and gender-role cognition. The four female viewers started to watch anime at their childhood or early teenage. It is not incidental that their ideal models were all from anime.

Self-reliance. The first and most important thing which female viewers emphasized was self-reliance. It contains not only economic independence, but also the equal social status compare with males. In a concrete way to understand, the equal social status means the

success of a woman shouldn't be judged only by her marriage, by her husband, and by her children. Women should share the criteria of judging successful men, which from their career, their abilities and talents, and their contribution to the society etc. In anime, many successful female protagonists encouraged them to pursue the success in real world.

Equality in marriage. The traditional concept of "Men manage external affairs while women manage internal" was criticized by females. Modern families and societies require both man and woman working to earn a living. Women enter the workforce, which share the duty of supporting families, the appeal of sharing housework and internal family issues with men is stronger and stronger. And on the other side, husband also should not impede his wife to pursue farther development in career. Marriage is man and woman getting together to support each other, it shouldn't be a prison for woman.

Powerful and gentle. Anime has given females viewers too many characters to set for their ideal husbands. Although different people have different tastes in choosing spouses, these female anime viewers had a common criterion. Their husbands should be somehow combinations of heroic spirit and tender heart. Out of the family, the man should be powerful and strong to fulfil the character of "hero"; meanwhile, within the family, he should be sensitive enough to care every little emotion of his love. This criterion was based on the reorganization of their own gender roles, which is not only a woman, but a social woman.

Feminism is not only concerned by females. It was also noticed by males, although it was just a new concept to Chinese males. But, noticing and realizing it does not mean they really understand and accept it. The vast majority of men still think feminism is equal with fighting with men, practicing feminism is equal with hating men. Thus, the "main-stream" of the patriarchic society shows a strong contradiction to feminism. These male anime viewers have moved further on understanding feminism than ordinary males. The virtual world

created too many characters to fulfil the ideal gender-equal utopia. Their understandings of feminism have shown in three aspects from re-location of their gender-role and recognition of female's gender-role to re-think marriage and the criteria of choosing wives. However, the result was not that optimistic. Knowledge of feminism and acceptance of feminism of male interviewees were still weak and limited, especially when it came to marriage.

Protector and supporter. Male is at the strong side in all social classes. Here the social classes could be simply divided by marriage. Out of the family, they are protectors who handle social relationships, earn money, and resolve conflicts; in the family, they are supporters who give full trust to their wives including hand in their salary, help with housework, and encourage their wives to pursue success in career. They unconsciously started to change their traditional gender roles which were heavy male chauvinistic.

Relative independent. Male interviewees agreed that women should be living in their own lives and pursuing their own dreams. However, the independence did not mean total freedom. Housework and raising children were still considered as women's essential duties. Besides they accomplished these "natural obligations", then they can enjoy their own lives.

Traditional wives. The top choice of wife by male anime viewers should have traditional female personalities and qualities, and with pretty faces. These male viewers did not expect their wives to be very successful, wealthy, or powerful. They want wives to be virtuous, understanding, and can be a backup for their career. In fact, the prominent criteria is the appearance.

The comparative qualitative analysis indicated mismatches of marriage from male's and female's opinions. Males chose work because they took the "material base" as the most important condition in an intimate relationship. The social common sense requires males to afford the cost of a family. And at the other hand, males take the responsibility of earn money

and they consider this responsibility as the only criterion. They thought if they have earned

enough money which would make them good husbands. Unfortunately, females didn't think

so. This result indicates that males still haven't noticed females' need of respect, the respect

for a complete mature individual at the same status as males. Financial independence is the

most effective and intuitive method of showing the need. For these well-educated males who

have sensed the importance of feminism, however, their answers indicated they still held the

traditional concepts of females deep inside. The underlying message of their answers was like

saying "I earn money for you, you do housework for me". Males' concepts of females were

changing far more slowly than females' concepts of themselves. These fell-behind concepts

deeply influenced males' preferences of wives. Males' preference of "beautiful" girls

indicated the discrimination and negation of female's independent personalities.

Subconsciously they valued the patriarchal system and put female in an accessorial place. On

the other hand, Chinese females have not exhibited an absolute exclusive attitude to be at the

secondary place in some situations. The thousands of years of Confucianism has educated

them how to find their places in the hierarchic society. They appreciate male's masculinity

and male's efforts to provide a better living condition. But more besides these, they are

hoping males to have more awareness of their needs for understanding and caring.

8   CONCLUSION

Following the trend of the late marriage from Japan, the qualitative data has indicated a similar late marriage choice among well-educated Chinese youngsters. In 2010, the average first marriage age in China was 24.85, for male was 25.86 and for female was 23.89 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2013). Five participants in this study were older than 27 years old and only one get married. Especially Two female participants were at age of 30 and 31 still remained single. Their choice of working is one of the reasons. For these well-educated people, the minimum age of getting a bachelor's degree is 22. It includes 9-year obligate education, 3-year senior school education, and 4-year college education which started legally at 6-year-old. The choice of working postpones the marriage due to the low salary and high living cost (especially for accommodation). It usually costs several years after graduate from college to accumulate a sufficient wealth to earn the participants called "material base". For females, the social pressures are even worse. However, besides these external issues, females show a strong willing of financial independence and rebel for the inequal housework share in family. As Nemoto (2008) has examined in Japan, from this research Chinese women also expressed distaste for cultural norms of femininity, which require women to be the assistants to men both at work and at home. Job is a perfect tool to exhibit their self-esteem as an independent individual.

Housework share was separately listed because it is one joint issue of the conflict between working and family life. Ehara (2005) and Nemoto (2008) have argued that housework issue was one important factor affected female's choice of work and marriage. From this research, the data has indicated that it was not a factor affects the time of marriage, at least among the well-educated people. Moreover, the opinion from male's side and the comparison of the data from both genders suggested that in the surface level of housework issue, male and female show an agreement of sharing housework. However, males were not

that sure if they would fulfill the commitments they had made. This kind of duplicity does not mean they are cheating or pretending. As the males said that they were not good at doing housework and they seldom doing housework. On the other hand, females actually don't really care if males could make their promises in practices. They just need the attitude of sharing and respect their efforts in doing housework.

The male's attitude of female's career and working life has changed by numerous factors. Anime has a minor influence for the changes. The developed female portrayals in anime result in the change of anime fans' attitude. Scholars have examined that anime indeed contains Japanese cultural elements from history, language, ethnic, stereotypes, and genders, and many different aspects (e.g. Fennell, 2013). China, as a country with similar history and social norms as Japan, Chinese fans are easier to get an empathetic feeling of the characters in anime. The participants in the study started to watch anime at a young age, anime attracted them with its fantastic story, simplified worldview and values, and the simple conflict of good fight evils. This easy-understanding entertainment fascinates children until the audience made it as a custom. When anime fans becoming adults, the longtime of anime watching experience has cultivated their values subconsciously, even if they are realistic enough. For instance, the gender-role portrayals in anime. Both male and female genders were becoming symbolic received by anime fans. Particularly female characters, which are divided in two extremes: extremely strong or extremely weak. Moreover, the standard of choosing spouses has been leveled up by anime. Although all the participants knew anime is virtual, ideal, and unrealistic, they still had dreams to find spouses according to their favorite characters. The real world is full of imperfections, everyone has his/her advantages and disadvantages. Seeking for perfection somehow hindered anime fans to find spouses.

Beyond these negative influences, does anime provide advantages for anime viewers? The answer is definitely yes. The data indicates a strong effectiveness for the participants'

own gender recognitions. Positive characteristics the ideal and perfect characters have in anime have enlarged by the viewers and applied in themselves. Males respect heroic characters. And those characters helped them not to get lost in the realistic sometimes even disappointed world, and remind them to keep their conscience, their dreams, and their motivations. Females found a different type of female characters which were distinct from what they have taught and have seen in real world. Those strong female characters gave them courage and confidence to pursue their own lives.

There was an interesting response when anime viewers answered how anime influence them: the influence was never a single-way process. It is bidirectional. One interviewee said as:

> 我的意思是说，我自己具有这样一点点的特质，然后我就对动漫作品中的这
> 类角色比较有好感，然后就可能去看更多的这类的动漫，反而又加强了自己
> 对这种特质的感觉。有点相互加强的感觉。
> I mean, I have some unique personalities, then I will be fond of the characters with
> the same personalities in anime. And then I will be looking for more anime with
> these characters. As a consequence, the anime strengthened these personalities to
> me. It is a bidirectional influence.

This mutual influence works along with other social influences, making participants' attitudes of gender-role portrayals. Male participants saw themselves as taking responsibilities, guardians, and backbones no matter from which level; Meanwhile, females differed themselves in their own opinions and anime as independent, self-reliant and masculine from traditional mother portrayals. The consistency of their own opinions and portrayals from anime indicated the mutual influence indeed exists. Because of the longtime of mutual influence along with participants' age gaining, it is difficult to distinguish whether anime affected the recognitions of their own genders or their recognitions of own genders affected the anime choices.

However in this study, it needs to be noticed that the chosen criterion of participants is "well-educated". All the conclusions have made were based on their own judgments. For

example, all the participants have somehow clarified their standpoint of anime. They were

able to clearly distinguish the difference between reality and virtuality, and they would not

get addicted to it. Furthermore, the good education has shaped their views of work-marriage

choice, gender-role portrayals, and gender-role recognitions in some degree. The cultivation

of anime is just one source which enlarges their already existed opinions. This is the biggest

limitation of this research. The limited and similar samples have blocked researcher to find an

overall view of the group of anime fans. After all, the group of Chinese anime fans has a

larger scope from different ages and different educational levels. The second limitation is the

region where the sample was found and studied. All the eight participants were living in

Beijing and had attended universities in Beijing. The author believes that the responses of

anime fans from urban and rural regions will make big differences.

For further studies, besides mentioned above two limitations, one aspect is the trend of

same-sex love stories and how they affected anime fans' attitudes toward choosing of spouses

and marriages. And furthermore, the peer influence of the BL/*yaoi* genre among female fans

and how male fans perceive it.

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