

A scene from the 1986 Japanese anime 'Journey to the West'. On the left, Sun Wukong (the Monkey King) is depicted with his characteristic orange face and yellow robe, holding a staff. In the center, Tang Sanzang (the Monk) is shown with a long white beard and a red robe, looking towards the right. On the right, Zhu Bajie (the Pig) is shown with a large, pig-like face and a black robe, looking towards the center. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a path.

# Journey to the West and its adaptation throughout movie and television media

By Laura Kobs

# Intro

- Journey to the West (JTTW) is a 16<sup>th</sup> century novel that was written and published by Wu Cheng'en during the Ming Dynasty in China, and it is widely considered to be one of China's greatest classical novels.
- JTTW heavily uses a combination of Chinese mythology, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Chinese folk lore for world building and the symbolism found within the book.
- Even with the heavy religious meanings and political allegories within the text the book is widely considered an adventure story that includes humor, satire, character growth, and offers a satisfying conclusion.



# Background

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- Movies and Television are a more modern form of interpreting stories that allow what was only viewed within the audience's minds is to be seen visually for a shared movie going experience.
  - Not every adaptation stays close to the interpretation of the original JTTW as some may take smaller elements of the story and greatly exaggerate them in order to express their version of JTTW.
  - As such this is where we must draw the line in whether a good adaptation of media must be faithful in order to be successful or perhaps it has the ability to stand on its own.
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# Goal

- This study's goal is to identify how successful and well-received JTTW movies and television shows have been throughout the years
- The goal is to record a consistent dependent variable (DV) such as movie/television profit and income while comparing it to independent factors (IV) such as genre, rating, budget, medium, etc.
- If the movie can be just as good as the book or if the film can be good while not being faithful to the book, then how well has modern media adapted a long classic novel of JTTW into film and television into something general audiences have accepted?



# Predictions

- JTTW movies more likely have higher gross margin compared to TV shows.
- Animation will have higher budget than Live-action, leading to less income comparison.
- Country of origin will likely not have a huge influence on how well the media pieces as revived.
- Production budget will likely have little connection to its income gross.
- Reviews will likely have little effect of the general outcome of the gross.
- Rating of the movies will have a significant effect on the pieces of media as well.
- Adaptions of the movies such as re-telling likely to be the most successful when it comes to income gross as this would be the majority of JTTW adaptations





## Design

- In order for a simple and comprehensive analysis of these to understand these pieces of medias' income grosses, it is best to use a linear regression model to do this.
- This will be done by using R studio and the mechanisms of the system shall perform this study through linear regression cluster gathering
- The income gross will be our DV as that is the quantitative measure we use and from there we shall see how the other IV interact and if there are any significant relationships.



# Data Collation

- The dataset consists of 374 different television/movie adaptations of JTTW material from the year 1927 to 2022
- This study would mostly consist of artifactual study and design as the media being examined is to be considered the primary resources and the reported IV are to be considered the secondary sources as the studios release their information to the public
- The sights in question that were used were IMDB.com, chinesemov.com, lujuba.cc, worddisk.com, and hkcinema.ru, some of these sights have to be translated into English for the sake of this study.
- The reviews will be based on only critic scores.
- Income gross will be based on the international set as some of these pieces of media
- When it comes to what kind of adaption the piece of media is that will have to be based on subjective personal definitions created for the sake of this study and subjective interpretation of the material.



# Analysis

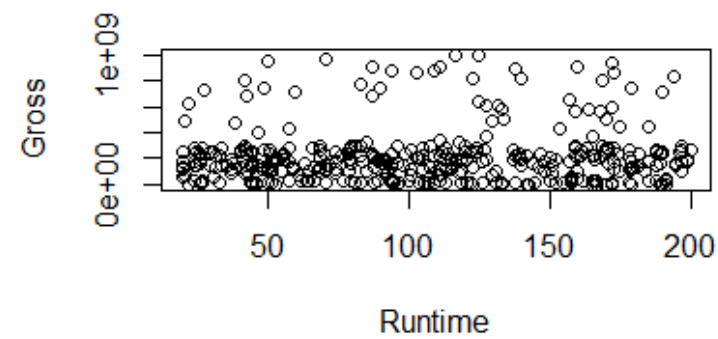
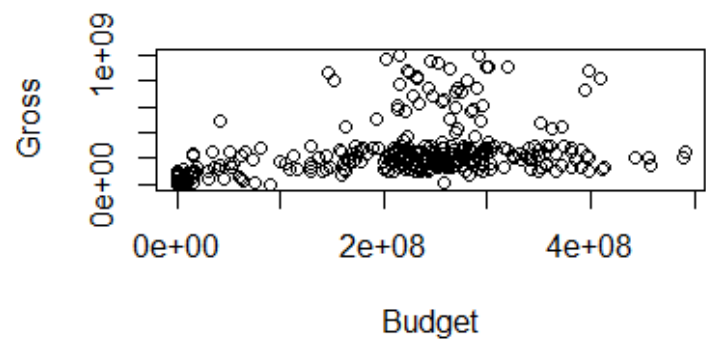
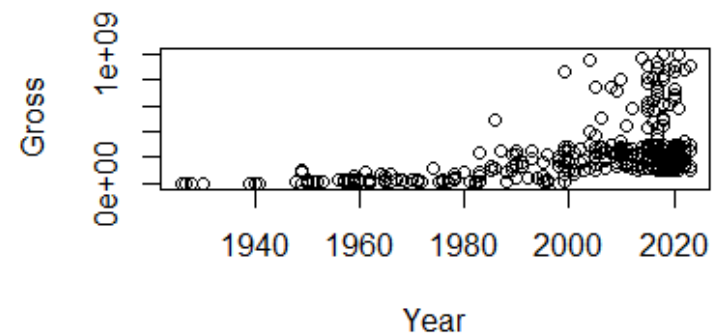
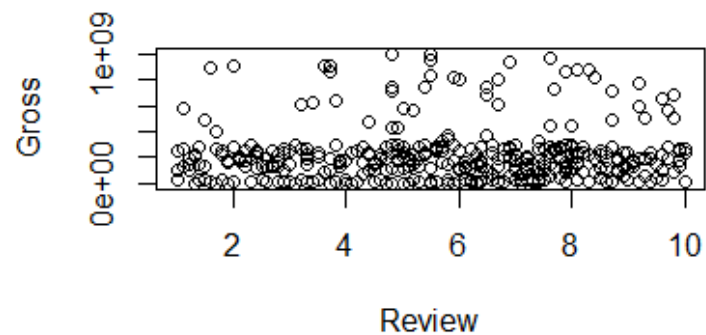
- The dataset we shall be using shall consist of the movie/television titles and directors in order to keep track of each JTTW media and from there are the other variables of international gross, budgets, rating, reviews, genre, production type, adaptation, year of publication, country of origin, number of episodes, and medium
- This is the end goal of to find an appropriate measure of how much progress in income gross each pieces of media has made when comparing the other factors.
- When it comes to the ticket/budget prices for these pieces of media there might not always be a clean or objective number to be given as a lot of this information is coming from secondary sources



# Findings: Gross

- Most significant relationship found was between Gross and Genre.
  - Fantasy genre was deemed to have some of the highest Gross consistently with Comedy coming in as notable but not as significant relationship while Drama, Action, Romance, and Horror had no notable relationships
- When crossing this information with Ratings to see if there was any was any pattern as well, it was shows that PG13 and G were to be there most significant when it comes to their connection with high Gross income
- Budget was added as a third variable to cross and it shows that PG13 and G were also giving the largest budgets for their media as well.

# GROSS PLOTS





# Findings: Adaption

- Adaption and Reviews as the re-telling adptions of JTTW are shown to have much higher reviews.
  - Nearly doubling the reviewing from any other adaptation review with appropriations, reimaging, and cross-overs having little to no relationship
- There was also a significant relationship between the Budgets and Adaptions, that being re-tellings were notable given the highest budgets and effected their relationship with Review.
- It was also noted that when crossed with Media, that the Reviews were best received when live action performances were used rather than animation, CGI, or puppets to better appeal to a wider audience
- Another variable that had significant impact was that Ratings impacted the Reviews that the PG13 rating had a significant relationship with higher reviews.



# Findings: Review

- While there wasn't a connection between Gross and Media there was a significant relationship between Media and Review
  - Showing that live action media was to be the higher reviewed with animation, CGI, and puppets coming with less impactful relationships
- Live action also had a strong connection with having the largest Budget as well.



# Limitations

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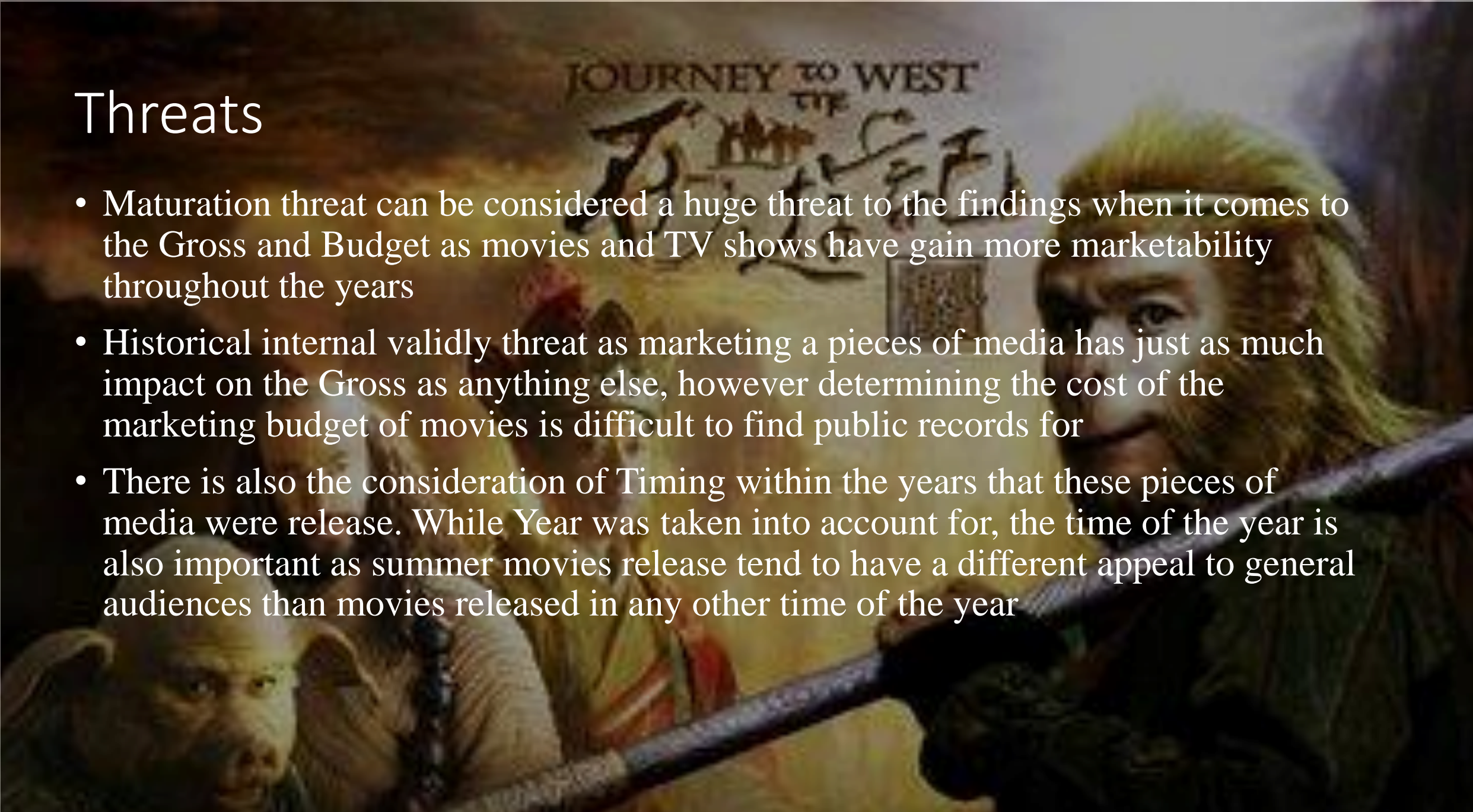
- The greatest limitation in this study would have to be the lack of detailed categories to account for more of the director's interpretation of the pieces of media.
  - A lot of the income gross and budget given were estimates from the IMDB and movie sights rather than an explanation of how much the production of the movie cost.
  - Another limitation is this study kept mostly to linear regression and while logistic regression was attempted to be used in this study, there were no conclusive findings to be account for.
  - Bootstrapping the data could have played a larger role in the development of the data but due to insufficient outputs the bootstrapping methods was not included in the final findings.
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# Threats

- Maturation threat can be considered a huge threat to the findings when it comes to the Gross and Budget as movies and TV shows have gain more marketability throughout the years
- Historical internal validly threat as marketing a pieces of media has just as much impact on the Gross as anything else, however determining the cost of the marketing budget of movies is difficult to find public records for
- There is also the consideration of Timing within the years that these pieces of media were release. While Year was taken into account for, the time of the year is also important as summer movies release tend to have a different appeal to general audiences than movies released in any other time of the year







# Future

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- There is much to be done for further research on JTTW pieces of media as there are more adaptations of the JTTW media beyond movie and television media that includes video game and novelizations as well
- There should be more IV categories on how faithful the pieces of media are to JTTW, such as retelling on perhaps a 1-to-5-point scale on accuracy verses inspiration to have clear picture on the director's intention.
- There should be further note of how well marketed these media were, as any media that isn't marketing properly cannot get a high Gross no matter how well received it may be to the general public
- There should also be note that if a piece of media was intended to be aimed for a domestic audience or was created for international audience as well