



THIS&THAT A JOURNAL OF
LITERATURE
& CULTURE

COLLEGE OF
INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION
HKBU

VOLUME 2



THIS AND THAT: VOL 2
A JOURNAL OF
LITERATURE AND CULTURE

College of International Education
Hong Kong Baptist University

Each year through the student clubs, students from Cultural Studies and Bilingual Language and Literature Studies form a team to vet and edit student essays and creative work submitted to *This and That*. The journal celebrates the College of International Education's writing talent. The Journal is headed and produced by the CIE English Team.

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POETRY

A Valve and a Blood Meter

Ng Hoi Tong, Tony

She screws a valve and a blood meter
upon my heart.

“It’s all for your own good.”
She shuts off the valve
to make sure my heart doesn’t pump.

“So that you can pray peacefully before bed
with me.”
“So that you run out of oxygen to think too much else
but me.”

So that I will be calm in front of God,
and be the son of Jesus Christ
to gain your approval.
So that I can be a senseless robot in front of ladies,
and do not have any blunders
between my legs.

She checks the meter every day
to see whether it has ticked.

“Of course not, honey. It only ticks for you.”

Of course not, honey. I just met a plumber,
by chance.

The Broken Banjo

Kwok Cho Fung

A cowgirl in her dungaree,
Checked the tags on the cups of flummery.
Worked at a dime store 9 to 5,
This is how she gained her daily bread
For life.

Prince Charming went down to the bar
At night.
A wallflower with her banjo on stage,
She found her knight.
Coy, submissive but smart,
That guy saw her wild heart.

Taught him how to play the banjo
With her fingertips;
He stared at her glossy lips.
Kisses at the yellow cornfield;
Turned the pink chamber into a battlefield.
Every touch of him
Like a tattoo on her skin.

Till she received a call from a mansion
One day,
Her screams scared

Ode to a Friend

Aretas Starlet

The donkey in the farm
A deep loud bray.

Sweet talk, lies and betrayal.
She gazed at Virgin Maria's portrayal.
The loss of her chastity was disgraceful.
Prayers of Hail Mary,
Couldn't erase that scenery.
The moth no longer
An innocent caterpillar.

Ms. Lucifer traded herself
With the devil.
The fallen angel
Decided to accompany with
Cruella De Vil.

She wanted
Salvation
And sing the song of
Redemption.

You don't recall,
how
we actually knew
each
other.

You dialled the speed call
and started
crying
I was having a nap
not knowing anything
I knew you wanted
comfort
or
condolence.

We spent
a day around
a lake
Our skins burnt under
our

infinite
laughter.

In the fall,

I
grew
up
and
so
did
you.

We some
how

parted.

Our

infinity

ends.

I saw you

in the

far end

of the corridor

I greeted voicelessly

There were no argument no conversation no eye-to-eye no goodbye.

We parted with

each

other

as

simple

as that.

To My Parents

Pang Cheuk In, Chery

I was raised by a wolf and a tiger.
They decided everything for me.
People say that I'm still using a diaper.
Stop putting me in a cage and let go of me.

I don't need to hunt,
I don't need meat.
I won't do cruel things that make my nails blunt,
Like killing my friends and letting myself eat
Because I prefer vegetables than flesh.

Keep my fur white but not red.
I just want to jump freely over the wide grassland.

FICTION

Bed Partner

Ho Man Yi, Mandy

Twelve at night, time for bed.

I turn off the table lamp, close my eyes and pull up the quilt to my neck. I can feel there is someone else under the same quilt.

“Hey! It’s me!” He taps my shoulder.

“Okay, dude. I know you are trying to be friendly but I really need to get some sleep.”

“Ab-ba! Of course you need to sleep. English literature presentation in the morning and two quizzes in the afternoon. Am I right? Oh, you also need to make an appointment for the consultation. Have you sent the email? Have you checked your mail box? How about the meeting with your groupmates?”

“It’s fine. Just let me sleep.”

“I know, busy day tomorrow, right? Okay, okay. Take a deep breath and fall asleep. I won’t harass you anymore, believe me. Are you ready? Come on, one, two, three, breaaaaaaaaatbe in and four, five, six, breaaaaaaaaatbe out. Can you follow? Follow me. One two...”

“Shut up!”

I turn around and show him my back.

“Eh! Have you locked all the doors?”

“What? Umm, yea. I’m pretty sure I’ve done that before I...”

“Are you SURE? I mean the door of the living room, including the gate. If I were you, I would go and check for one more time.”

“Damn.” I sit up and turn on the lamp. He puts the clock next to his smiling face and I want to punch him. Two o’clock. I endure my anger and leave my bed for the final check. The gate is locked, the windows are closed and even the doors of the kitchen and the bathroom are shut. Everything is done.

I get back to my bed and try to ignore him. He is pressing on my pillow.

“Don’t you think your pillow is too soft?”

“Oh I hate the pillow in the hotel. It’s freaking soft.”

“You will hurt your neck and have cervical spondylosis.”

“Add it to your check list: buy a new pillow.”

“Ugh!”

I slap my pillow to ensure it is firm enough.

“And now it’s too flat.”

I put aside my pillow. No more pillow issue.

“Can I ask you a question?”

“NO.”

“Do you roll your eyes when you sleep? Or are your eyeballs just looking at your eyelid? Can you feel that? How do you breathe when you fall asleep? Which do you use, mouth or nose? Or both?”

“I have NO idea.”

“Do you want to have some novels? Some Mozart? A cup of warm milk?”

“Nope!”

“Can you hear that patter? Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock...”

“I need silence!”

“I wanna talk to you about Mark.”

“None of your business.”

“You haven’t replied his message. You are playing a game, aren’t you? I think he already knew.”

“I know that you haven’t checked his Facebook and Instagram today. Do it now!”

“Don’t forget his Twitter and Snapchat!”

“Also! Check whether Katy is still flirting with Mark. I know you’re bothered about that bitch. Just grab your phone and have a look!”

“NOT TONIGHT. GET YOUR ASS OUT OF MY BED.”

“Calm down, girl. You look ugly when you are mad.”

*

There is some chirping outside and I know that time has passed.

“Hey, have you set the alarm yet?”

“Gosh.” I check my phone and I realize that there is only an hour left before I have to get up. I need to get rid of him.

“My dear, you know you can’t kick me out of your mind.” He jumps on my bed as if it were a trampoline. It pisses me off. I am tired of that bastard. My rage just sobers my brain up and I feel clearer, which only makes me angrier.

“Can you leave me alone? I am begging for your mercy, Insomnia. I am really tired. I WANT TO SLEEP!”

“Okay, babe. You can enjoy your bed time now and...”

“Get some sleep. Thank goodness.”

“Nope. Take a nap, for ten seconds.”

BEEP BI BEEP BI BEEP BI BEEP BI BEEP BI

WHAT'S WRONG

Jiang Xiao Lin

The sky was a grey blanket. The pace of cars became heavier and slower.

Pauline entered with a bright smile. Greg helped her fetch the umbrella and the white cane.

“Oh!” Greg hurried to her. There were messy shoes around her. Her forehead was furrowed.

“Oops! I was too busy to put away the shoes,” he apologized and helped her.

“It’s OK.” Her dark-blue eyes of gloomy shadows were looking at the wall beside him. “My shoes are too wet.”

“Did you wear the flats I bought you?”

“Yes, they fit perfectly.”

“Here are the slippers.”

“They are a bit too tight.”

Greg bowed his head. “Oh my god! They were my wife’s.” He then took out the ones he bought that morning in a flurry. “Here is

another pair.”

“New ones?”

“Yes.”

“Uh.” She rubbed her palms. “I want to wash my hands. The shoes are covered with mud.”

Greg guided her to the washroom. “The soap is on your left.” He leaned on the door and kept his eyes on the exquisite face in the mirror.

“Yes, I got it.” Pauline put the soap under her nose. “Oh, Dove, the same as mine.”

“Really? Our tastes are similar.” Greg laughed.

“Maybe.” A faint smile flickered across her lips. “May I have a drink?”

“Would you like some coffee?”

“Yes. May I just walk around your apartment?”

“By yourself? But it’s the first time...”

“Oh it’s fine,” she interrupted him and told him to get on with making coffee.

“All right. Be careful.”

“Don’t worry.”

The thick grey pillows covered the sky tightly without any gaps.

Greg came in with coffee and found Pauline sitting on the sofa. She

was squeezing her pocket.

“The coffee is ready.”

“I can smell it.” She held the cup and kept rubbing the handle.

“Are you cold?”

“No,” Pauline snapped, “Your bedroom is messy. I helped you pick up the things on the floor.”

She just nodded to everything that Greg said and kept wringing her hands.

The rain dropped heavily on windows. A flash of lightning slashed the dark blanket.

“It just dawned on me that I have another plan so I’m afraid this is it.” She rose up and fumbled her way out by touching the walls.

“But it’s time to go to the restaurant. I promised you a celebration on your birthday.”

“It’s raining outside.”

“So let me send you there.”

“No, thanks.”

“But dear, you look tired.”

“Dana will come get me.”

“When will we meet again? Tomorrow?”

“No.” She took a deep breath. “I will call you.”

And she grasped the umbrella and the white cane.

“Oh. I forgot,” she turned back and reached her hand out with a pen, “and here’s the pen I just picked up in your bedroom.”

“But...” Greg wanted to stop her and grasped her arms. But Pauline flung away and the pen fell down to the ground.

“My dear Carolyn, my beautiful wife...” Greg’s voice suddenly rose from the pen.

A little smile, half a grin, flickered on her face as she stumbled out. The door closed.

WONDERFUL LIFE

Chiu Kin Kwan, Alan

“Would you like to hear my story?”

You see, the ceiling is extremely white. There is no decoration. I feel so bored here. Yes, you are right. All people love colorful and beautiful things, including me. I love blue and green. I like nature and the clear sky. I don't like things to be so pale. Oh! Let's not waste time and get started with my story. My life is very wonderful. Listen, and see if you agree or not.

When I was young, about sixteen to eighteen years old, I was not a clever student in class but I worked hard. Since the first day of school, I prepared for the public exam every day. I went to the study room after class and left around eleven o'clock. Finally my efforts paid off. I had a chance to study at one of the “big three” universities in Hong Kong. Also, I graduated from the university with honors. I hung the certificate on the wall in my living room. I was so proud of myself.

Don't you think that is awesome? There are many students wishing to study at university. They had to try their best to pursue this goal but not everyone can do that. But I did it. You don't agree that is awesome? It doesn't matter. It was just the beginning of my wonderful life. Let me share about the following part with you... Ahhhh...I don't know why these days I keep on feeling so tired. But it's okay, I must let you know how wonderful my life is.

After I graduated from the university, I had a problem. I could not find any job at the beginning, even though I had a high education level. One day I found a job request for a financial manager position in an international company. It was a great job. Most of my classmates were jealous of me as they thought my job was so attractive with its high salary and low working hours.

Don't you think it is wonderful? It was a great job. I could earn a lot of money. You still don't agree with that? Wait a second. The woman just came in. Yes, she is annoying. She needs to change the water package and sting my right hand again. Yes, it is painful. Just wait until she leaves first.

Okay, she has finished her work. We can continue with my story.

Where were we just now? Oh yes. I remember. I was talking about my career. I had so many plans and goals. I wanted to be the top one in the company. I wanted to earn more money. I wanted to have more authority in the company. I planned to achieve all my goals in just three years.

Yes, you may be right. There were things I couldn't control. Oh, I am sorry. Please wait a second, again. There are a few women coming in. They look like they are rushing to seek for help. A man in white just came in. He must be the one they are searching for. The women look much calmer now. They start to push my bed out of the room. Please follow me. We may not have enough time to finish the story.

I had a happy family. I married a beautiful woman and I loved her very much. I met her in the college. We were attracted to each other as soon as we got to know each other. We got married after we finished our university courses. We usually shared different things with each other and had long phone calls. We had a daughter. She was very adorable. I took a lot of photos with her. You have looked at them before. Yes, her little smile face always warmed my heart.

Where are they? I guess they are coming. They will arrive very soon.

So many people in white are surrounding me. The light is very strong. I can barely open my eyes. They seem anxious about something and they are sweating. They put two irons on my chest and I feel electricity. It hurts and I am shaking. My body shakes again and again but I keep on hearing a long beeping sound from the side. After a while, they give up and shake their head.

They leave.

Hey, my soul. Will you answer my question?

Is my life a wonderful life?

FOUR MISSING CHILDREN

SUen Wai Lam, Alison

A woman was talking to Mr. James in the school's playground. She was beautiful to look at, from the grey wide-brimmed hat to the high heeled shoes and ivory pearls around her neck. The woman sat down on the bench and cried. She was the fourth elegant parent looking for Mr. James this week. Mr. James tried to calm her but he failed. He stopped consoling her and just sat next to her.

Mr. James always was a nice teacher. My son had filled a test tube with cola to drink, boiled a spider with the beaker and cheated in the science test twice. Mr. James did not blame my son harshly and revised with him after class. I had even talked with him on the same bench when my little boy passed away. I could smell the sweat from his jersey.

I was hanging out in town and passed by Isabella's flower store. Isabella always gave handmade cakes and candies to children. She never raised her voice even if a few wicked boys always stole flowers from her shop and ran off. She closed her shop for a day after the incident. Most people believed that she was too upset to work.

Mr. James came out of the flower store and locked the door with a key. It surprised me. I had begun to observe the town since my little boy was killed. He was so cute and lovely that someone was jealous of me and took him away from my embrace. The principal encouraged a no-smoking policy and smoked in his office anyway.

My neighbor has a pregnant wife and dated with a young lady with pink feather handbag last night. But I didn't notice the relationship between Mr. James and Isabella. A teacher is supposed to have a lesson in the morning. Why did he have the key of this store?

I followed the teacher and entered a narrow path. He heard the rustling footfalls from the brown leaves behind him. He stopped and looked back. He saw no one as I hid behind the tree. He walked faster and I followed more carefully. We reached Isabella's house.

Mr. James knocked on the door with a three-long-two-short pattern. Isabella opened it and kissed his cheek. I stepped forward and squatted under a window after they entered the house. I smelled some sweet potatoes and a meaty odor. Why did a couple have to be so cautious about their relationship? We would be happy for them.

*"Four little children go to play
Know my secret and run away
Now I lock them up in my house
Aren't they like the mice in my paws?"*

Isabella was singing. I peeped into the house. Four children were tied up and gagged on chairs. Their eyes were covered with a black cloth.

"What is the next step?" Isabella asked.

"Send letter to their parents for ransom," Mr. James replied. "Be fast. The collectors had come to school yesterday."

"Promise me this is the last time."

Mr. James bent back Isabella's head across his arm and kissed her, from her right eye to chin. His tongue forced through the wall of her lip and she responded to him. Mr. James held Isabella closer and kissed harder. Then his right hand took something bright from the pocket and inserted it directly into her waist. She screamed and took a step back.

Mr. James took out the knife and the blood spread on the white lace-embellished dress.

"Only the dead keeps secrets. Please forgive me, sweetheart."

ESSAY

EGO CONSTRUCTION IN BLACK SWAN

Lo Ting Fung, Kelvin

Lacan uses the theoretical methodology developed by structuralism to reread Freudian psychoanalysis. He proposes that human psychology is constructed by the Imaginary and the Symbolic. In this article, critiques on the ideas of Lacanian psychoanalysis will be demonstrated by the film *Black Swan* (2010). I would like to raise the following points in this article: 1) we recognize and misrecognize ourselves in the process of articulating the Real; 2) our self-images are constructed by culture which represses the subject's desires; 3) we will forever be trying and failing to fill the "Lack" and; 4) reality is just Fantasy.

Black Swan is about a girl who looks fragile and vulnerable from the eyes of others but she actually is not. In the process of rehearsing for the main role in the ballet *Swan Lake*, she goes through many stages of self-identity formation and discovery. She does things she has never done before until her subjectivity unravels.

First, people recognize and misrecognize themselves in the realm that Lacan calls "the Imaginary". The "Mirror Stage" is important for subjectivity formation. We first recognize ourselves in the mirror but

at the same time knowing very well that we are not exactly the same as the image in the mirror. "Ego" evolves in this constant back-and-forth process of recognition and misrecognition. It is not quite the same as the stable notion of self-identity that we would normally have and certainly it is nothing like the Real that Lacan has in mind. Eagleton (1983) says: "The Imaginary for Lacan is precisely this realm of images in which we make identifications, but in the very act of doing so we are led to misperceive and misrecognize ourselves." (p.165). Through identification, the ego is constructed. He further explains that "the ego is just this narcissistic process whereby we bolster up a fictive sense of unitary selfhood by finding something in the world with which we can identify." (p.165) This process of ego formation is an unceasing process in which we try to both articulate and cover up the Real – something in us that escapes and resists symbolization in both the Imaginary and the Symbolic order.

It is true that when people identify themselves as something, they would also misidentify themselves as something else at the same time. In the film *Black Swan*, Nina acts like the white swan which is fearful and fragile at the beginning, but there is a lot more than what she seems. She starts to see things, becomes strange and do things which she has never done before. For example, she talks back to her mother, masturbates, gets drunk and has casual sex with her party friends, as if she were a living Black Swan, all lust and desires.

In the Imaginary order, the process of subjectivity formation is recognition and misrecognition in a sense that there are contradictory feelings between what Nina thinks she is, as the white swan, and what she thinks she is not, which is the black swan, embodied in the character of Lily as well as the the recurring motif of the haunting reflections of the mirror. There are some scenes in which Nina stands in front of the mirror, her movements and their reflections in the mirror are not exactly the same. It implies that both what she is and what she is not, and both what she wants and what she doesn't want, are constructing "who she is" in an unceasing process. The image in

the mirror does not always mimic her exact actions, just as she is never quite the person she thinks she is.

Second, the Symbolic Order as an intervention which constitutes what we normally call “culture” and this helps repress unarticulated desires in the Real. According to Lacan (2001), the symbolic loss of being is essential to import meaning. In order to take part in culture, we have to give up self-identity with our nature. (p.218) The Real is in this sense “destroyed” by the Symbolic. As Storey (2008) explains Lacan’s *Four Fundamental Concepts in Psychoanalysis* in 1989, “the kingdom of culture’ is superimposed ‘on that of nature’ ” (p.73).

It is true that culture constructs the Symbolic by repressing the desire of the Real. In *Black Swan*, Nina is affected by her mother and the universal ethical values. She listens to her mother and she is afraid to do things which are considered bad like taking drugs, drinking in a bar, opposing her mother and masturbating etc. But exactly because these actions are forbidden that she desires them. The stage for ballet is where she has to find herself. It is in this sense that ballet constitutes the Symbolic in her life. If she was no longer related to ballet, she would not be able to make any meaning out of her life. She does nothing else which is irrelevant to ballet. It shows how culture comprises the Symbolic and suppresses the desire of the Real.

Third, people would not stop shaping and reshaping themselves in order to fill the Lack and to pursue the repressed Real but necessarily fail. They are chasing after the l’objet petit a. As Lacan (1989) says, desire is always shifted from signifier to signifier - the ‘incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier’. (p.170) In *Black Swan*, Nina tries to face her repressed desire at Thomas’s suggestion. She masturbates and sees another side of herself she has never seen before.

Also, Nina is attracted to Lily. Lily looks like the role model whom Nina secretly desires. Nina fantasizes about being Lily and being bold, when Nina has sex with Lily or when they are arguing about

who should play the black swan. Furthermore, we can also see her unconscious hate for her mother. Her mother did not manage to be the leading ballerina in *Swan Lake* so she pushes Nina to do it in order to fulfill her own dream. Nina gets closer and closer to the fact that she hates her mother in the Real. When she fully realizes this unconscious hate, she suffers a mental breakdown in which she hallucinates that her legs have morphed into swan’s legs. It shows that the Symbolic represses the desire of the Real. However, when we get too close to the Real, we risk mental breakdown because the Real is so terrible and antagonistic to the ego.

Only in death can the Lack be filled. When Nina eventually grows into both roles of white and black swans, the Lack is in a sense filled when blood is gushing out from her self-inflicted wound on stage. It shows that the Lack can be filled and be one with the Real only in death.

Last but not least, Zizek develops the notion of “Fantasy” based on Lacan. Reality is always less real than the Real. Reality for us is actually like a ‘dream’ in which we construct a network of meanings, a ‘Fantasy’, that is true only for ourselves. As Zizek (2009) comments,

The fundamental point of psychoanalysis is that desire is not something given in advance, but something that has to be constructed – and it is precisely the role of Fantasy to give the coordinates of the subject’s desire, to specify its object, to locate the position the subject assumes in it. It is only through Fantasy that the subject is constituted as desiring: through Fantasy, we learn how to desire. (p.335)

In conclusion, we recognize and misrecognize ourselves as we try to construct our ego through culture and spend the rest of our lives trying to overcome the condition of the Lack and chasing after l’objet petit a. However, this Lack can never be filled except in death. Lacanian psychoanalysis is vividly shown to be valid in analyzing *Black Swan*. Zizek’s notion of Fantasy also helps us grasp how ideology is still at work at this day and age.

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MARXISM IN THE PILLOWMAN AND PAN'S LABYRINTH

Li Cho Man, Cassandra

The Pillowman is set in an unnamed totalitarian state while *Pan's Labyrinth* is set in a Fascist society during the Spanish Civil War in 1944. Both stories shared a similar theme, which is that the protagonist created their own unreal world or stories to escape from the realistic world. Behind the escape of reality, it can be demonstrated that they have some dissatisfaction towards the society. Throughout the comparison between the two stories, there are some Marxist ideas that appear in stories, which can show that both stories share similar messages: commodity fetishism, alienation and the fantasy concept that people will not be forgotten by society.

Firstly, both stories involve commodity fetishism in which marriage or family members are used as the means to achieve what they want. Commodity fetishism is a psychological theory, which makes people value things that have no objective value, and encourages people to regard their relationships with others primarily in economic terms. ("Political Theory - Karl Marx," 2014). In *The Pillowman*, Michal and Katurian are the means for their parents to achieve what they want. People stay together not purely because of love but for the personal wants behind it. Through the "artistic experiments" used by

Katurian's parents, Katurian's stories became better and better and even received a money prize. To a certain extent, we can see in the story how Michal accepted the torture and is willing to be used as a mean to let their parents achieve the results they want. Just like what Marxism criticized about capitalism, people stay together not because of love, but the financial reason behind it. While in *Pan's Labyrinth*, the story clearly brings out that Captain Vidal and Carmen's marriage was just a business transaction. Captain Vidal did not care about Carmen's situation but only the baby. Even though Carmen's situation was dangerous, Captain Vidal still simply asked the doctor to save the baby. Moreover, the movie implied Carman does not really love Captain Vidal. When she told Ofelia that life is not as good as fairytales, even if life is painful, we still need to accept it. It seems to indicate that Carmen felt her life is painful. Both stories shared Marxist critique of how commodity fetish is not appropriate in human life.

Secondly, alienation appears in both stories as there is disconnection between the character's duties and who they think they really are. Alienation is when the internal ability cannot engage in conscious self-directed activity, estranging humans from their own life and bodies (Raekstad, 2015). Alienation stifles art and leads to the artists having no time for creating artworks. We can see this happen in *The Pillowman*. Katurian's conscious self-directed activity should be writing stories but not cleaning in a slaughter house. "I don't cut stuff, I just clear stuff," said Katurian in the story, showing that there is job specialization involved. Katurian cannot do the artwork he wanted, as he needed a job to support his life. Alienation in capitalism suppresses Katurian as a storywriter. On the other hand, In *Pan's Labyrinth*, the theme of blind obedience is a kind of alienation in fascist society, which people only do the work requested by the command and lose the conscious self-directed activity. There are three characters who show the alienation: Captain Vidal requests people to obey the chain of command; Carmen obeys Vidal and burns the plant which seems to be related to her own life. Her words to Ofelia can imply she is unhappy with her life but all she can do is

to accept. The soldiers' expression when adding shots to dead people can show they cannot bear to do it, but what they can do is obey. Mercedes felt frustrated with her job in the first half of the movie, but as she cannot do anything to help the republican rebels, she can only serve Captain Vidal even though she hates it. The three characters above demonstrates alienation, the disconnection between the duties and their real-self due to the chain of command under the Captain Vidal. Both stories show alienation between the characters' real and ideal self.

Thirdly, both stories involve a fantasy world in which the protagonist would not be forgotten or expelled by others. In Marx's theory, Communism is not just an economic theory can be understood emotionally— it expresses a deep-seated longing that we always have a place in the world's heart that we will not be cast out. ("Political Theory - Karl Marx," 2014) The meaning of "have a place in the world's heart" refers to people would not be expelled by society. In capitalist society, the society will only be aware of those powerful or upper class people, and seldom aware of the lower class. So in both stories, this situation reflects the fantasy world they created. In *The Pillowman*, Katurian was dissatisfied with society and his life; stories are a kind of fantasy world for him to escape to. "The Pillowman" and "The Writer and the writer's brother" by Katurian reflected his problematic childhood and wish to have a creature to help. Also, "The Tale of the Town on the River" and "The Pillowman" reflected that there are people who are expelled by the society and somehow there will be someone to change the situation in Katurian's stories. While in *Pan's Labyrinth*, Ofelia's fantasy underworld and all those monsters appeared, showing that Ofelia would not be expelled and she had power and confidence in her fantasy world. Ofelia was not happy with the situation she was in as her stepfather, Captain Vidal, forced Ofelia and her mother to travel a long way and live in a village that was actually fighting with the rebels' army. And the insect known as the fairy labeled the start of Ofelia's fantasy world. In that world, Ofelia is the Princess Moanna, daughter of the underworld king. The ending showed that when Ofelia went back to her fantasy world,

people were happy with her existence and indicated that Ofelia should rule the underworld for a few decades. In Ofelia's fantasy world, she changed from a nervous girl to a confident girl, which can be shown when she explored in her missions. For example, in the first mission, in which she needed to take the golden key from the belly of a toad, the facial expressions, her voice and her actions become more decisive and confident. And in the fantasy underworld, Ofelia is never the one who can be cast out by society, she is the most powerful one and people are happy and aware of her existence. Both stories share a similar symbol of a fantasy world that can help the protagonists to escape from reality, and where the protagonists are no longer ignored by the society.

To sum up, there are three similarities of Marxist ideas shared between *The Pillowman* and *Pan's Labyrinth*: Commodity fetishism, alienation and the failure to engage in conscious self-directed activities, and the fantasy world built by protagonists reflecting their dissatisfaction with their society. From the above three ideas, we can see that similar Marxist thoughts appear in both works.

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NO ABSOLUTE EVIL

Wong Yat Kan

Evil is the practice of power. Power will make people dump their own sense of morality. History always shows powerful people will turn into dictators who just care for their self-interest but seldom become a god like savior. They have no choice because self-interest is an essential part of human nature which makes people compete for water and food in order to survive. It is called a competition when everyone has no difference in power because they have to follow the rule of the competition called "Morality". However, if people have power over others, they will seldom follow the rules of morality and use their power to build their happiness on others' pain. And that is evil. Being evil is a choice instead of a nature. In both *The Pillowman* and *Pan's Labyrinth*, people who have power always act evil, such as the Capitan and the police. However, we cannot say that they are completely evil. The Capitan may need to be cruel and evil to lead the whole army to victory. The two police abused Katurian because they hate evil from the bottom of their heart and want to find the missing girl. Therefore, there are no absolutely evil people. People will turn evil under particular circumstances.

The banality of evil

If a plan or system runs smoothly and people can gain profit from it, they will not question whether the plan itself is evil and harms others. It is the banality of evil, like people working in a capitalist society, who are actually enjoying the resources taken from the poorest people in the society. Producers and workers cannot gain what they deserve in the society even if they work very hard because they were treated as a tool to produce money for the rich. The rich buy the work of the poor at a low price and sell them for a high price. What they mean by making profit is actually exploiting the poor. However, the rich people do not feel guilty for their act of “taking part in this evil game of capitalism.” It is because capitalism can bring them a stable life and make all their life plans and goals run smoothly so they keep harming the poor without realizing their own evil. Many Hong Kong people hope to work in some big enterprise because it can guarantee a stable and high paying job. Although they are helping the enterprise to exploit the poor, no one will criticize them for that.

Ariel and Tupolski torture Katurian not because of their evil nature, but because they want to find the missing children from the bottom of their hearts. However, they tortured Katurian without any proof and Katurian was actually innocent for that case. It was because they accepted the evil nature of an autocratic government which arrests people with “dangerous” thoughts. They will still get paid for doing this. So they do not doubt when they torture an innocent person. On the other hand, in *Pan's Labyrinth*, people accept the evil rule of war, where killing and torturing will bring them to victory. So soldiers seldom feel guilty for their killing and cruel acts in war, and even say “Everything is fair in love and war” to justify their killing act. However, if you bring the rules of war to people who are not in war, they will realize the rules are wrong because they cannot gain anything good from a war.

Pressure will cause people to abuse their power

Sometimes, we know we should not abuse our power on other people. However, it costs us a lot if we do not do so in a real situation. The cost sometimes is not affordable for us. For example, we know we do not have the right to determine the fate of an unborn baby. However, if it happens to a teenage girl with no economic power to raise the child, everyone will think that the baby will suffer in the future so we should let him go in a more “humane” way. If we think carefully on this act, they are abusing their power (such as medical equipment) on a baby who has no say about his life.

In *The Pillowman*, Ariel and Tupolski could actually let Katurian go because they do not have enough proof. However, the cost of not being evil may be death. In a totalitarian society, thoughts and ideas which the government thinks will harm the society are forbidden and the government will encourage citizens to monitor each other to maintain social stability. In North Korea, everyone has to attend a meeting every week and they need to criticize themselves and others in the meeting. This would encourage North Koreans to spy on each other and scare people into not betraying the country. Tupolski and Ariel received an order from above to arrest and ask information about the missing girl from Katurian, who was said to encourage child abuse. If a fair and legal treatment could not make Katurian tell them the information they need, Tupolski and Ariel may be treated as followers of Katurian who want to help the “dangerous and evil” writer to escape. It may result in trouble for them. On the other hand, if they abused Katurian, at least they were politically correct even if they could not get anything from him. So Tupolski and Ariel had no choice but to abuse Katurian with their power.

In the world of *Pan's Labyrinth*, there was a war in a forest. Since everything was fair in love and war, no one could justify right and wrong in the forest. In such an adverse environment, being kind to any suspected enemy would put your friends and ally in a very deep trouble. Being an angel to your enemy was actually being a devil to

yourself and your friends. It left the Capitan no choice but to be cruel and evil to all of his enemies. Besides, he was the leader of the army. If he was kind and indecisive when facing the enemy, and in other words does not practice his power, his followers would think their leader was unreliable and the army would become weak. Therefore, Capitan had to do everything he could in order to win the war, including torturing and killing innocent people.

This reminds me of a quote from Harvey Dent in the movie *The Dark Knight*. "You either die a hero. Or you live long enough to see yourself a villain." If you do not die for morality, then you will survive because you choose to become evil.

If people know he is acting evil for the authority but not personally, they will do it because they do not have to be responsible for the act.

Like ISIS in Middle East nowadays or the Crusaders who started an invasion for their religion, they think they are representing their own god to kill and rape people. They put the responsibility of killing on something that is actually not responsible and cannot take the responsibility. In other words, they let something virtual to take responsibility for them in order to justify their evil act. People will eliminate their ego when they have the power to accomplish their duties and let the superego, which they are told to become, take over their mind. And their ego, which represent themselves, are not responsible for any action taken by the superego. This horrible thing happens especially when people are dressed in a uniform which makes them literally transform into that character.

In 1971, Philip Zimbardo, a professor of psychology in Stanford University conducted an experiment to study how the change of role will change people's personality. He set up a simulated prison in university and recruited student volunteers to become guards and prisoners. The guards, although not told to do so, abused the prisoners instead of just regulating them. The guards practiced their

power to become evil like they should never be forgiven. They abuse prisoners not because their egos are evil in nature. It is because their identity of superego as a guard "rampaged" in their mind. So they did not feel any guilt for those acts in prison. Because they were told to be a guard, dressed like a guard and believed themselves to be a guard and not themselves. So they could do all evil things without getting blamed. In *The Pillowman* the identity of the police takes responsibility of torturing for Ariel and Tupolski. In *Pan's Labyrinth* the identity of soldier or a government takes responsibility of killing for Capitan. That is why they did not feel guilty for their evil act. And they are not evil in their nature.

In conclusion, people are not evil in their nature. There are no absolutely evil people. They act in evil manners because of the nature of the environment, their given identity and most importantly, power.

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA AND GENDER REPRESENTATION

Cheng Lok Yin

For that masculine subject of desire, trouble became a scandal with the sudden intrusion, the unanticipated agency, of a female "object" who inexplicably returns the glance, reverses the gaze, and contests the place and authority of the masculine position.

Judith Butler

Hollywood has been a boy's club. However in recent decades, the film industry is developing an inclination to represent diversity in gender representation and strongly differentiate distinctions between male and female, regardless of Western and Eastern countries. "Gender" refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. The images of male and female have been socially constructed respectively as strong and weak, active and passive, narrative and spectacle.

In contemporary films, the male has represented authority, potency and heroism while female has been seen as inherently family-oriented and delicate. Also, in the early 1970s, Claire Johnston was one of the

first to draw on semiotics suggesting that the female is depicted as an object of desire. Judith Butler also criticized that the female and male should not have a fixed image and the female is not a steady symbol.³ Women have definitely been portrayed as a spectacle and have been sexualized by modern society. But in the twentieth century, Hollywood melodramas started to participate in interpreting and extending societal debates which concerned gender roles (Byars, 1991), such as the emergence of women leaving their homes for the workplace and showing their fearless side.

The Devil Wears Prada is a contemporary film which applies professional females as a theme of the film. It shows equality between sexes and remodels the image of the female. This is known as a postmodern film and successfully discusses female authority and how they practice and utilize it. The coordination of characterization, dialogue and accompaniment of using non-diegetic music exudes a high female status and remodels the female image which has been socially constructed.

The characterization of *The Devil Wears Prada* helps to rebuild a new female concept. Miranda Priestly (Meryl Streep) is the editor-in-chief of RUNWAY fashion magazine. She is drawn as a heroine and her toughness comes from a mixture of femininity and authority. When Miranda proposes some unreasonable request, her capricious, self-willed and potent image breaks the social construction of female which is normally blandness, passive and easily compromised. Meanwhile, it constructs the authority of the female but not the male. The power-holder is set as a female but not a male. This re-modifies the situation of male and female in traditional society. . One of the male characters, Nigel, who is subordinate of Miranda, is enslaved to her. Accordingly, the concessional image of Nigel overturns the traditional social construction of male and subverts it to being more passive and weaker. Moreover, the female character —Miranda — puts most her time on work but not the home. Unlike the traditional image of female, she is no longer coping with domestic affairs and turns into a working "super woman". Her divorce experience did not

affect her enterprise and she still holds a fashionable and strong image. This arrangement oversets the female and balances the economic status of male and female.

Furthermore, the clothing demonstrates a form of nobleness, successful and meticulous image of female. Fashion and famous brands are part of the image-building and have become a semiotic of urban women. Buckley stated that there is a relationship between women's fashion, female representation and femininity. (2002). Previously, females appeared on magazines, advertising and photography as a spectacle but now they appear as an expression and symbol of power and prosperity. After the rise of representations of fashionable femininity and their deep multiplication throughout the society, feminine identity is being found in fashion. The movie declares that people who are not familiar with fashion cannot integrate into society. The change of Andy underlines this thought once and shows how women connects fashion to power and social status.

Intrinsically, male norms in the psychoanalytic viewpoint prevent us from hearing and understanding the female voices. Inversely, "A Devil Wears Prada" extrudes the power of the female voice and its influence. In the scene where Miranda explains fashion to Andy, the image of the intellectual female is presented. The dialogue in the film fabricates a stressful workplace to emphasize female authority on language. In the scene of Miranda and Andy's conversation in the taxi, Miranda said "Everyone want to be us". This reveals the advancement of the status of women from feeble to strong. Also, when Miranda tells Andy that "you can choose for yourself", it represents the option and right of choice which are given to female but are not in the past society. Also, this film uses dialogue to manifest female power. Words from Miranda represent a truth which is unbreakable and unchangeable. For instance, when Miranda chooses to advance other subordinates but not Nigel, he said "When the time is right, she'll pay me back", this shows that as a male, Nigel is not supposed to work under a female but in the film, the male

image is overthrown to become loyal to the female. Whether Miranda has made any decision, he needs to comply with his superior. The representation of Nigel shows that Miranda is controlling the power.

Besides, in the film, Miranda always instructs and orders her subordinates—Andy and Emily to complete some unreasonable and difficult tasks and commands, like Andy is requested by Miranda to get Harry Potter's hand script for her son. When Emily cannot complete any instruction of Miranda, Miranda said "That' s all" to reply to Emily's apology. This shows how Miranda is unreasonable. This subverts the image of traditional female in the working place which is passive and kind. Nevertheless, females were not supposed to work in the past decades but in the last ten years, the film industry has started to add high status females in the working place, indeed even to the helm of the office. Until the last, the action of Andy to ignore Miranda' s call and throw her phone into the fountain represents a revolt of the female and breaks the social construction of the image of the female as submissive.

The accompaniment of driving non-diegetic music can extrude a high female status and visualize females anew. Non-diegetic music in *The Devil Wears Prada* constructs a stressful environment. For instance, when Miranda is coming to office, her secretary said "She is on her way", accordingly, the non-diegetic music—"She is on her way" is played as the background music. This non-diegetic music is a concerto in a minor key which makes a tense atmosphere which acted in cooperation in showing that Miranda is in power. This music pertains to brisk, rapid rhythm and strains the calmness into a speediness. When the music starts, all the staff in the office settle themselves and Miranda's secretary tidies up her table and prepares all of the stuff that Miranda needs. After Miranda enters the office, the background music stops immediately, this arrangement builds the tension. Meanwhile, the contrast of calmness and speediness was impressive. The representation of how the staff acts when they hear "Miranda is on her way", shows Miranda is holding the authority and how a female administers the office.

In conclusion, this film endows authority to females and weakens male power. Through characterization, we can see the setting of male and female is overthrown. Besides, the staff in the office are mostly female, despite the social construction that women are less acceptable in working places. The depiction of female and male in the film uses an innovative and new angle to establish gender representation. Males can be weaker and passive, meanwhile, females can demonstrate their talent and be active and strong in society. Therefore, *The Devil Wears Prada* successfully uses a new angle to observe the representation between males and females.

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INITIATION IN THE HISTORY BOYS AND THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER

Chen Leyi

The History Boys, a play written by British playwright Alan Bennett, is set in a boys' grammar school in the northern part of England in the early 1980s. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, an epistolary novel written by Stephen Chbosky, is set in the early 1990s revealing the complex adolescent psychology of the protagonist, a high school boy named Charlie. In literature, the process of initiation concerns a character that has undergone a life-changing experience and usually that character is an adolescent who finds a way to become mature from the experience. In *The History Boys*, principal character Posner is the youngest Jewish boy in senior secondary school, facing various contradictories in love and study. In *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, the protagonist Charlie is called a wallflower, who has been forced to the sidelines of any activities because of shyness and unpopularity. He is nervous when he becomes a high school student. After experiencing a lot during a year in high school, he gradually changes his personalities. Both Posner and Charlie have experienced a complicated process of initiation, they deal with "feeling like an outsider who remains outside of crowd." (Wasserman, 2003) Their personalities, interests and attitudes toward their history can be explored. Psychoanalysis will be applied to analyze the changing

process of initiation of Posner and Charlie, which includes isolation and the unconscious.

Isolation is defined as human beings separated from the whole of humanity, which makes people disoriented, debilitated or even makes us question our place in the world:

Isolation is the condition of being isolated that requires that one be detached from others through reasons not in one's control. Isolation produces devastating consequences for many people, leading to lifelong emotional problems and difficulty in relationships with others. ("Literary Isolation," 2012)

The definition of the unconscious is that it is "a storehouse of feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories that outside of our conscious awareness. Most of the contents of the unconscious are unacceptable or unpleasant, such as feelings of pain, anxiety, or conflict. According to Freud, the unconscious continues to influence our behavior and experience, even though we are unaware of these underlying influences" (Cherry, 2015).

The Onset of Initiation

Family background and personal history are important factors that influence personality of a person and his/her interpersonal relationship in a group. In the works, Posner and Charlie are shy and introverted because of their background and history, therefore they are marginalized and isolated in the group at the onset. In *The History Boys*, "I am a Jew; I'm small; I'm homosexual and I live in Sheffield," Posner says. (Bennett, 2004, p42) To a large extent, Posner is introverted and unconfident because of his background. The boys often play tricks on him, but he does not know how to express himself and handle relationships with the boys. Irwin has encouraged Posner to try and acquire the habit of contradiction, because he is in acquiescent mode frequently. That is why the boys do not care about Posner's feelings and continues to pick on him. When Irwin and the

boys discuss the fourteen foreskins of Christ preserved in class, the boys have a good laugh about how it is one of several things Posner does not have. Although a boy says it is not racial discrimination, just a race-related topic, the boys marginalize Posner in the group unconsciously, which makes Posner feel embarrassed about his identity. He is not always shy. He has tried to participate in the conversation in the boys' group, but the boys stop talking whenever he comes over. He thinks that he is growing up late, so he is not included in that kind of conversation and not supposed to understand but he actually knows a lot. (Bennett, 2004, p21) Not only do the boys misunderstand him, but Hector also does not treat him nicely. When Posner would like to go home with Hector, Hector rejects him without hesitation, which leaves him confused.

In *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, Charlie's family and unfortunate experience influence his personalities significantly. The most critical reason for his present behavior is initiated by the departure of his aunt, Helen, because Charlie is strongly attached to his aunt in his childhood. After her death, Charlie feels guilty and develops a strong fear of abandonment, which he often writes about in letters. However, his father often tells him that "there are other people who have it a lot worse" (Chbosky, 1999, 6) which makes Charlie think that some people really do have it a lot worse than he does. That is why he does not share his unhappy experience in childhood with other. His brother and sister are busy with their activities, so he is not close with them. As he seldom expresses his happiness and sadness with his family, he starts writing letters to 'Dear friends', because he is about to start high school and he is really afraid of going. For a year he insists on writing letters.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, the unconscious stores painful experiences and emotions. Posner and Charlie are introverted, because they repress themselves and never share with others what they cannot handle by themselves. Gradually, negative emotions build up due to such repression in their mind, which makes them self-abased and isolated.

The Process of Initiation

Posner and Charlie are fond of literature and music, which help them tackle difficulties in the process of initiation. According to the isolation theory, on one hand, isolation can lead to lifelong emotional problems and difficulty in relationships with others. On the other hand, it can drive some people towards extraordinary creativity and innovation as a result of having been forced to rely solely on their own minds as a source for meaning. (“Literary Isolation”, 2015) When Posner and Charlie focus on literature and music, they indulge themselves and they do not need to care about communication with others.

In *The History Boys*, when Posner and Hector discuss Hardy’s poems, Posner has learned the poems by heart and he finds no sense of ‘sharing’ in the poems. He could find similar thoughts and feelings in literature that he could not find in reality. The boys often perform scenes from plays in Hector’s class. Although Posner is passive, he is keen on singing and performing to express his feelings in class. Literature is a significant lifelong learning for him. Compared with other boys, he truly enjoys literature, and not only just for exam purposes. He even finds his goal of life to become a teacher to pass on the love in education. “Of all Hector’s boys, Posner is the only one who truly took everything to heart, remember everything he was ever taught... the song, the poems, the saying, the endings; the words of Hector never forgotten.” (Bennett, 2004, p.108)

In *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, Charlie is not active in extracurricular activities at the beginning of his high school life and he prefers to read literature. He finishes reading many literary works that his advanced-English teacher, Bill, recommends him. Charlie favors English class and he is excited when he makes progress in advanced English. He even wants to be writer because of the satisfaction in this class. “I have decided that maybe I want to write when I grow up” (Chbosky, 1999, p.49) Inspired by the literature, he tries to write a novel: ‘I’ve been reading *The Fountainhead*... I thought that was very admirable, so I sat down and tried to write a story.’

(Chbosky, 1999, p.178) Bill appreciates Charlie’s talent and says that he is “one of the most gifted people” he has ever known. (Chbosky, 1999, p.194-195) Literature is an important part of Charlie’s life. He gives copies of all his favorite books as presents to his best friends, Patrick and Sam. There is no doubt that literature is as important as friends for Charlie. Charlie loves music as well, especially Smiths’ music, ‘I think maybe Smiths because I love their song Asleep.’ Maybe Charlie shares similar feelings with singers in the song. (Chbosky, 1999, p.22)

Introverted people often find it difficult to make friends who share similar interests. When they are isolated, they would deeply concentrate on literature and music as writers and singers could make them comfortable.

Results of Initiation

Posner is still passive in the boys group, while Charlie tries to participate and makes good friends with Patrick and Sam and overcomes his isolation complex. In *The History Boys*, Posner is afraid of being discriminated against because he is a homosexual Jew who lives in Sheffield. He thinks if he gets into Cambridge, Dakin might love him or he might stop caring, so he fights to get into Cambridge. However, he is still a shy and self-abased boy even though he thinks things will change with his endeavor. Even after he has got a job, his life is more or less the same. “He lives alone... he has a host of friends... though only on the internet, and none in his right name or ever gender.” (Bennett, 2004, p.108) According to Karlsen (2005), “studies have reported higher incidence rates of psychosis among ethnic minority groups in the UK compared with British white groups.” Posner could make an effort for his education achievement and career but he couldn’t change his background. If he does not face it positively, it would be difficult for him to overcome depression.

In *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, it is obvious that Charlie changes a lot at the end. As we can see from the first letter for “Dear friend”,

he is so nervous that he finds a stranger to talk with. Charlie is not good at participating initially, he often tells himself to try to participate in his letter. "I do not know if this is good or bad. Nevertheless, I am trying to participate". (Chbosky, 1999, p.31) Finally, in the last letter he says, 'so, if this does end up being my last letter, please believe that things are good with me, and even when they're not, they will be soon enough' (Chbosky, 1999, p.231). He believes that things will be better. Compared with Posner, Charlie is more positive because he gains more supports from his family and friends after some time in the hospital. He is capable of regaining and normalizing his psychology, which makes him believe that he should forget those unfortunate experiences and forgive his aunt who has hurt him. As Charlie says, "even if we don't have the power to choose where we come from, we can still choose where we go from there... try to feel okay about them." (Chbosky, 1999, p.225-226)

Posner's and Charlie's backgrounds are different, which makes their changes also different. It depends on whether they know how to face the unacceptable or unpleasant unconscious mind. Posner is still bothered by his identity and sexual orientation. Charlie overcomes his psychological problem with the help of family and friends.

Conclusion

To sum up, in *The History Boys* and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, Posner and Charlie have similar personalities and interests, however they change quite differently during process of initiation. Adolescents are often confused in the process of initiation. Their personalities and interests influence their behavior. If people are active in facing their confused lives, they may be able to overcome obstacle. Adolescents need care and help from school and family when they enter this confusing process of initiation.

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FEMINISM IN DAUGHTER OF THE RIVER

Yu Shuyang

Feminism is not only a body of academic texts and practices, but also a political movement concerned with women's oppression and how women empower themselves (Storey, 2008). *Daughter of the River* is an autobiography of a female author, Hong Ying. She tells how she identifies herself, controls her own body, becomes the subject to speak in her own voice, and changes the social mythologies and social relations for women to resist the patriarchal society. Hong Ying was born in the Great Famine in Chongqing, and she suffered the Cultural Revolution in her childhood. When she was 18 years old she wanted to unravel the secrets of her family and stand up for herself. After she had an abortion of an accidental pregnancy as a result of an affair with her history teacher, she left her family and became a writer during the "Reform and Openness" period.

First of all, the whole story portrays how the heroine identifies herself. As an illegitimate child which she initially did not know, she is looked down on by her neighbors, classmates and even her family members, which makes her suspect her identity. Therefore, she insists on unravelling the secrets of her family because she needs to know "who she is". Eventually her oldest sister and mother tells her

everything and then she meets her biological father. But her brothers and sisters do not put this to rest – they force her to choose which family she wants to join, after all they had made to raise her since she was small. She thinks, "I didn't like this family, but I didn't like other families either. I was a girl without a family. I didn't care who owed whom, I just wanted to be left alone." (Hong Ying, p.236) From then on, she is disappointed about the cold-heartedness of her family members. At that time in China, people are always defined by their family and social roles, but she refuses to be judged as a bastard in the discourse and "wants to be left alone". After having sex with her, her history teacher commits suicide for fear of punishment during Cultural Revolution. "Within half a month, a man who had left my life long ago suddenly returned and another who had made a brief appearance departed, as if my life were a lawn for them to cross at will. It was at this moment that I made up my mind to leave home", she thinks. (Hong Ying, p.244) Her yearning for a father figure is an urge to complete her identity. Her natural father gives her life but never accompanies her. She regards the history teacher as a 'father' but he just wants sex. Both fathers disappoint her. Then, Hong Ying realizes that she must create a new identity for herself, which is not a daughter of a father, but an independent person.

Secondly, her sexuality is awakened through sex with the history teacher and she practices to control her own body. According to Rosalind Coward (1989), "many contemporary novels focus on a newly liberated female desire, some using feminist consciousness-raising as a narrative device". In *Daughter of the River*, Hong Ying narrates the female sexual desire to express women's control of their bodies. The history teacher lends her a book about sex, which makes her feel erotic passion as a woman for the first time and this consciousness is the beginning of her womanhood: "My heart was racing as I buried my face in the pages of the book. A few seconds later, I raised my head and looked around to assure myself that I was alone. Then I turned to the book to study the genital illustrations. For the first time in my life I felt as if my labia were opening and a fire snake were squirming around in my vagina. It was unbearable." (Hong Ying, p.131). With the development of their

forbidden relationship, she has sex with the history teacher: “I didn’t struggle, I was ready to give myself to him, whether or not he wanted the gift I was offering him. Take me, I said inwardly, I’m yours completely.” (Hong Ying, p.191) She is just 18 years old. In the Chinese society at that time, she is free to express her sexual desire. She could choose whether to have sex with man or not and who to have it with. She is not forced to have sex with a man in an arranged marriage as most people do. Most women at that time have little control over their own bodies and their sexual desires. After the history teacher’s suicide, she thinks about whether she should deliver the baby: “My life would be ruined, and all because of this child.” (Hong Ying, p.252) For her ideal life, she chooses abortion. She does not want to be the mother of an unwanted child because of an accident. She illustrates how women should be autonomous with their bodies, not surrendering to the burden of bearing children.

Thirdly, Hong Ying chooses to be a writer to express her own opinions towards life and the world, because “coming to voice is an act of resistance” (bell hooks, 1989). When she is pregnant and thinks about death, she shouts out: “No, I couldn’t die, I must live on. I had no right to end my life now, not after surviving everything the world had thrown at me up to this point. Besides, I’d just begun to form an idea of what kind of life I wanted to lead from now on.” (Hong Ying, p.251) After having abortion, she leaves home and writes about her experiences, because “speaking becomes both a way to engage in active self-transformation and a rite of passage where one moves from being object to being subject” (bell hooks, 1989). Hong Ying is a representative of Chinese female writers born in 1960s to 1970s. This generation wrote about their lives to transform themselves to independent subjects, away from being objects of men’s desire.

Finally, Hong Ying fights for changing the social mythologies and social status of women. Hong Ying chooses another lifestyle which is different from that of her family members and escapes from the fate of poverty following her own will, breaking the myths that children could only follow in their parents’ footsteps and that women should be subservient to men. Meanwhile, in the society, “men have

monopolized, managed, and masculinized human activities, excluding women from many spheres of creativity and from many forms of amusement and leisure activities.”(Gilman, 1911). In the generations before Hong Ying, literature in China was mainly controlled by male authors. However, Hong Ying does not follow the rules made by male authors. “Rather than focusing on men’s images of women, they focus on women’s images of themselves and women’s stories about their own experiences” (Rakow, 1986). She uses feminine literature with her personal traits as her weapon to fight the patriarchal ideology. In this progress, Hong Ying changes her social position: she is not the little poor girl ashamed of herself now. She has become a famous writer around the world.

In conclusion, *Daughter of the River* is a story about how women fight for self-identity, control of their own bodies, fight for the right of speaking as subjects, for new social positions and mythologies for women.

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WOMEN IN THE HISTORY BOYS AND 3 IDIOTS

Pang Cheuk In, Cherry

The History Boys is a play written by Alan Bennett in 2004. It mainly focuses on eight high school boys pursuing sex, sports and a place at university. From the name of this novel and the female characters who appear in the novel, it shows that women are being isolated from the society at that time. *3 Idiots* is a movie that focuses on three boys, Farhan, Raju and Rancho, who are studying in an engineering college. All of them pursue engineering degrees because of different reasons. From the female characters who appear in the movie, it also shows that women are being isolated from the society. Women in both films cannot be independent from men completely.

Women need to follow men's instructions and they do not have the right to choose, which can be shown by Hector from *The History Boys* with his wife; and between Pia and her father and Pia with her fiancée in *3 Idiots* respectively. In *The History Boys*, it is known that Hector is homosexual. However, he still has his own family. He has an "unexpected wife" (Bennett, 2004, P.41). Also, Hector said that he "has no idea. What women know or don't know has always been a mystery to him" (Bennett, 2004, P.52). These examples show that there is no love between Hector and his wife and they do not know

each other well. However, his wife cannot choose to divorce as Hector did not say it. In the 1980s, women were more independent when compared to the past. They started to appear in workplaces. Yet, only few women were financially independent. They relied heavily on their husbands as they earned the greatest part of the income in families. (UN, 1991) Once they divorce, they can barely continue their lives as they cannot earn a living. Therefore, Hector's wife did not request a divorce even though both of them knew that there was no love between them.

In *3 Idiots*, Pia, the headmaster's younger daughter shows that women cannot be independent from men completely as they have to follow his father and fiancée's decisions. Viru Sahastrabudhe, "Virus", is Pia's father. Viru tells them that boys have to be engineers and girls have to be doctors. She chooses to follow and accept her father's decision: being a doctor. However, there is an internal conflict for Pia: she told Viru the reason her brother committed suicide. Her brother loves literature but Viru asks him to be an engineer. He cannot bear the stress and pressure, so, he decides to commit suicide. Pia used to follow Viru's decisions. However, when Viru tries to do something to stop the boys from pursuing their dreams, she stands up and points out Viru's faults. In one scene, Pia is asked to take off her mother's watch as her fiancée thinks that "it is an ancient piece of junk" and worries about how people see him. Even though she wants to wear that watch, she takes off the watch as she has to follow her fiancée's instructions and she has no rights to choose. She needs to care about how her fiancée feels. Later in the movie, when Rancho tells her that she should do what she wants and should not care about how her fiancée feels, she wears the watch again. A theory is applicable to analyze this point, feminist theory or feminism. It is the equality between male and female. Feminism has four basic ideas, including ending sexual violence and promoting sexual freedom, working to increase equality, expanding human choice and eliminating gender stratification. Expanding human choice can be used to illustrate this point. In this point, women have no rights to choose as they have to follow men's instructions. Pia is not allowed to develop her own interests and talents. She wants to wear her

her mother's watch. However, she took it off because of her fiancée's objection. It is not certain whether Pia wants to be a doctor or not. However, it is certain that Pia's father, Viru, told her that girls have to be doctors. These show that women cannot be completely independent from men as they do not have the rights to choose and they have to follow men's instructions.

As women have no rights to choose and have to follow men's instructions, they have lower social status than men and it is hard for them to get praised. It is more difficult for women in both films to get praised than men and they have lower social status. In *The History Boys*, Mrs. Lintott is the history teacher in the school. She "gives the boys an education and Hector gives them the wherewithal to resist it (Bennett, 2014, P.23). She helps the boys to build a better foundation on their knowledge on history. When the boys get into the best universities, Felix, the headmaster, congratulates the teachers for the outstanding performance: "Irwin, you are to be congratulated, a remarkable achievement. And you too, Dorothy, of course, who laid the foundations" (Bennett, 2014, P.97). She is praised less than the male teacher, i.e., Irwin. In some formal meetings or conferences, women seldom take part (Bennett, 2014, P.83-84). Even though women's social status was increasing at that time, women still have lower social status than men. In *3 Idiots*, women are sidelined in the whole movie. Imperial College of Engineering (ICE) is one of the best engineering schools in India. However, the majority in the school is male and only a few girls can get in. Women cannot receive as good an education as men. Some of the women even do not have a chance to receive an education. Even granted that they can receive education, they have lower chance to get into a better school. Moreover, in the job interview, among four interviewees, there is only one woman and she does not even have a chance to express her opinion and speak. For Raju's sister, she has to pay a car for a man as a dowry in order to get married. These show that women hardly get praised and have lower social status than men.

Women are treated as subservient to men and are used as a tool because they have lower social status. In both films women are used

as a tool and are treated as subservient to men. In *The History Boys*, Fiona is described as a sex object. Both Dakin and the headmaster show their sex interest towards Fiona (Bennett, 2014, P.22, 29) Also, Fiona is used as a tool by Dakin to receive information. Fiona tells some secrets about the school to Dakin, and Dakin thinks that Fiona wants to have sex with him. Therefore, Fiona is used as a tool to receive information and in return, Dakin has sex with her. In *3 Idiots*, Raji's mother is a highly educated woman and she was a teacher. After she retired, her husband gets a serious illness. Raju's mother uses all her pension to cure her husband and get the basic living for the family. She spends all of her time to take care of the family, especially her husband. Also, she did not buy clothes for herself for five years. These show that women are treated as subservient to men.

Women in both films are sidelined in the society. They have to follow men's instructions, they do not have rights to choose, they are hardly to get praised as they have lower social status, they are used as a tool and they are treated as subservient to men. All in all, they cannot be independent from men completely.

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADVERTISING SLANG AND CATCHPHRASES

Lam Wai Kit

With the unremitting effort of inventors, the popularity of advertisement has been widely increased across the globe - people can see it everywhere: on billboards, in magazines or on television. This omnipresence is a mixed blessing to different stakeholders because advertisement can enrich customers' understanding of a certain product, while it is also a way to increase the competitiveness against other companies. According to Geoffrey Leech (1972), the most important type of advertisement is called "commercial consumer advertisement", which is an advertisement for a mass audience with the aim of promoting a commercial product. In view of this, now that the advertisement has become an indispensable strategy for a company, it is significant for them to think of the effectiveness of advertising slang and catchphrases in terms of linguistic features.

Before discussing the linguistic features of advertising slangs and catchphrases, it is worth providing the definitions of the word "slang" and "catchphrase" as they are closely related to advertising language. The word "slang", also called colloquial speech, refers to a type of language including the informal and non-standard words or phrases. In essence, slang is more acceptable and faddish for people in speech

than writing because it deviates stylistically from language. The word “catchphrase” can be defined as an expression recognized by its repeated utterance. Also, catchphrase is commonly used to represent a specific group or idea in our society. That is to say, slang and catchphrase are different from written language.

In the wake of the above definitions, the typical linguistic features of advertising slangs and catchphrases will be evaluated here in detail. The first example is “醒目價”. People always employ it to arouse customer’s curiosity in supermarkets. The catchphrase “醒目價” is an equivalent to “an eye-catching price”. To illustrate this catchphrase linguistically, it is an example of compounding in word formation because “醒目價” is the joining of two separate words to form a single phrase. It compounds the adjective “醒目” (smart) with the noun “價” (price). Moreover, the slang “醒目” has an interesting etymology. It was found in a Chinese poem - 《永叔贈酒》：「一日復一夕，醒日常不眠。」 The extract means people’s attention is drawn by a beautiful scene and it makes them unable to sleep. In other words, the slang “醒目” refers to drawing attention in the past that is more or less similar to the meaning of eye-catching nowadays.

Another advertising catchphrase that involves linguistic features is “人氣口品”. People also employ it to stimulate customers’ interest because the meaning behind is a product with high popularity. To analyze this catchphrase linguistically, it is an example of borrowing in word formation in that “人氣” takes over a word from Japanese. As a matter of fact, it is also a loan translation as the Japanese use “人氣” to represent the meaning of popularity, where the elements of the word are directly translated to Cantonese. Other than borrowing, “人氣” also involves homonymy in lexical relation because it has two or more entirely distinct meanings. In Chinese pharmacology, “人氣” refers to yin and yang which is an important branch of trachea, while means popularity in entertainment industry.

The third advertising catchphrase that consists of linguistic features is “即時攞fun”. This catchphrase refers to “earning points immediately” and people always use it as a selling point to seek

attention. In semantics, “fun” is an example of homophony due to the same pronunciation of the Chinese character “分”. Based on the phonetic transcription, “分” can be translated into “/fen1/”. When people pronounce the word “fun”, they can interpret it as “分” in Chinese. Apart from homophony, “fun” is also a good demonstration of rebus writing because people use the English word “fun” to replace the Chinese character “分” thanks to their similar pronunciations. Therefore, it is easy for people to imagine the relationship between the word “fun” as well as the Chinese character “分”.

After discussing the major linguistic features of the above advertising slangs and catchphrases, the questionnaire survey in relation to the results and findings will be concretely stated. First of all, the aim of this questionnaire survey is to determine the effectiveness of advertising language. In a bid to analyze the data comprehensively, a quantitative method was used to ensure the objectivity in the study and a total of 40 participants were selectively asked for opinions. It is noticeable that the participants from overseas were not invited to do the survey because they might have difficulties in interpreting the advertising language in Chinese. Also, the questionnaires were distributed and collected in the public library and the data was calculated with the help of search engines. As for the design of this questionnaire, five general questions were set in the former part, which was followed by the evaluations of advertising language. attention.

Complete objectivity in a study depends on the ratio of target participants. Throughout the research, the ratio of female and male was five to five, which were 20 participants for each gender. Moreover, four age groups were divided in the questionnaire, namely 11 to 20 years old, 21 to 30 years old, 31 to 40 years old and 40 years old or above. Likewise, the ratio was equal in every group, which means 10 participants were in each age group.

Apart from the above general information in the questionnaire, there were three questions, which were more specific to advertising

language. The first question was set to ask about the influence of advertising language. 26 out of the 40 participants, which was more than half, said that advertising language was influential, while 14 participants deemed that it was ineffective. To further divide people who were influenced by the advertising language, a 10-level scale was set in the questionnaire. 11 out of 26 participants rated level 9, while 7 and 8 participants rated level 8 and level 7 respectively.

The second question was set to ask about the importance of slang and catchphrases in advertisement. 32 out of the 40 participants, which was eighty percent of them, opined that slang and catchphrase are indispensable in advertisements, while only twenty percent of the participants said that they were unnecessary.

The last question was designed to ask about how advertising language can help people remember the product. The results demonstrated that 22 out of the 40 participants did not remember the product and the advertising language, while only 2 participants remembered both of them. In comparison, 9 out of the 40 participants remembered the product rather than the advertising language while 7 participants remembered the advertising language rather than the product.

In the wake of the above general questions, the following three questions were the evaluation of advertising language. The choices in the questionnaire were all set in an equal price but one of them involved linguistic features as mentioned before. In the first question, 31 out of the 40 participants preferred choice A “震撼價” while only 9 participants chose choice D “特價”. It is noticeable that no one preferred choice B “只售” and choice C “售價”. To further analyze the data, the following table is the ratio of the preference between each age group.

| Age group | Choice A | Choice B | Choice C | Choice D |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 11-20 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 21-30 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| 31-40 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 40 or above | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 31 | 0 | 0 | 9 |

Likewise, in the second question, the result showed that no one selected choice A “新貨品” in comparison with choice B “人氣口品”. 29 out of the 40 participants chose it as their preference. However, only 6 participants picked choice C “最新運到” and 5 participants chose choice D “新登場”. To further analyze the data, the following table is the ratio of the preference between each age group.

| Age group | Choice A | Choice B | Choice C | Choice D |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 11-20 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| 21-30 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 31-40 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| 40 or above | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 0 | 29 | 6 | 5 |

In the last question, the result is predictable in that 4 out of the 40 participants selected choice A “購物儲分” while an overwhelming number can be seen in selecting choice B “即時擺fun”, with 28 participants in total. Again, only 3 and 5 participants preferred choice C “儲分獎賞” and choice D “送贈積分” respectively. To further analyze the data, the following table is the ratio of the preference between each age group.

| Age group | Choice A | Choice B | Choice C | Choice D |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 11-20 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| 21-30 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| 31-40 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| 40 or above | 1 | 8 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 4 | 28 | 3 | 5 |

The above data analysis from the questionnaire survey served as a basis for the research findings. The influence of advertising language is noted because 26 out of the 40 participants opined that it was influential. We can see the power of advertising language is

increasing in our society. Moreover, eighty percent of all participants pointed out that advertising language is indispensable in advertisement. It means that advertising language has become an essential tool in creating the advertisement.

However, about half of the participants did not remember the advertising language and the products. It is noticeable that 16 out of the 40 participants remembered either the advertising language or the product. However, only 2 out of the 40 participants were able to recall both advertising language and product. These might indicate that the advertising language nowadays is not always linked with the product behind. It is suggested that the company make the advertising language more related to the product so as to provide a closer linkage to the customers.

The statistics of the last three questions shows that the advertising language with linguistic features is more popular and preferable for people because they are more favored to advertising catchphrases such as “震撼價”, “人氣口品” as well as “即時擺fun”. People aged over 30 particularly favor these kinds of advertising languages. It is recommended that the company make good use of this strategy to gain more popularity if their target customers are aged 30 or above.

Due to the limited manpower of data distribution, it is difficult to create a larger survey for subtle analysis. Still, we hope this research can be a reference for companies to think of more workable and effective ideas when creating their advertisements. We believe that the more distinctive and meaningful advertisements they make, the deeper the understanding of a product the customers will have. Customers may then have more desire to purchase products in this competitive market.



2016