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Each year through the student societies, 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. It is headed and produced by English lecturers at CIE.

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Culture

The king's realm on the wall – graffiti and the mentality of Hong Kong people

Faith Cheung Shun Nok



Tsang Tsou Choi, the late "King of Kowloon" (九龍皇帝), had left countless calligraphic graffiti at the corners of urban public space in Hong Kong. The self-proclaimed "King" is probably the most well-known, as well as the most controversial graffiti artist in Hong Kong: from being dismissed as "insane" himself and therefore arousing public disturbance with his "nonsensical" words, to being turned into an iconic "mobile artist" whose "art" people demand preservation of and consider them as collective memories. Such subversive changes in social reception of his intricate "scrabbles" seem to have taken place over the Handover in 1997, reflecting people's concern over the necessity of memory and identity – those calligraphic graffiti resonate with people in Hong Kong.

First, the "King" and his calligraphic graffiti have aroused Hong Kong people's craving for the local identity. There had been an emergence of local identity over the 1997-Handover: "For those who could not or did not want to leave, the need to establish something we could hold on to, an identity, increased. For a city with an ambiguous cultural existence, the urgent necessity of establishing such an identity before the deadline of July, 1997, was apparent." (Ho, 1998). Tsang's calligraphic graffiti became the representation of "Hong Kong-ness" or Hong Kong localness as a result. Indeed, many art and cultural scholars have observed this phenomenon. Clarke (2014) points out such a dimension: "In these years, at first in artistic contexts and then in a wider way, Tsang Tsou Choi was becoming one of the most established symbols of Hong Kong cultural identity. An interest in promoting such a sense of local consciousness had been common amongst Hong Kong artists in the run-up to the 1997 handover but Hong Kong identity was more broadly a matter of concern in the period which followed the return to Chinese sovereignty." Kato (2007) shares similar insight: "As demonstrated by the popularity of Tsang among the local artists who chose his calligraphy as the provenance of local identity, Tsang's writing thus has come to be the representative expression of Hong Kong people." "Today," as echoes Soon (2016), "Tsang's ink writings have come to represent Hong Kong in the broader cultural imagination." It can be reflected that Tsang's works are being recognized as a

kind of the collective memories. This tendency shows the "attempt to form a (mis-) recognition of an identity in both the individual (Tsang as an artist) and the collective (Tsang as a cultural representative of Hong Kong) forms" (Pan, 2014). His works were written in all kinds of urban situations like streets, pavements, lampposts and pedestrian subways. With reminiscing "Kui Wong" (plumber king) whose iconic advertisement slogan '9226 3203 渠王通渠免棚' can be seen on many walls of Hong Kong urban places, the "location the King chooses for his ads are also unusual: bollards, retaining walls, alleyways, street curbs. Yet the low-profile settings work to their advantage. When you see them in such unexpected places, they stay with you." (DeWolf, 2010). People are familiar with those works as they live in the environment that is surrounded by these graffiti. "Being in a place' is connected with the need of identification, while experiencing the space requires movement from one place to another" (Tuan, 1977). From walking the same location of the graffiti works, people easily connect such urban graffiti with the city and they hence build up the sense of belonging out of these connections, and this is the process of urban space recognition. The notion of "being in a place" means "something more than localization but results from identification with the place by feeling its character, which can be 'natural', 'human', or 'spiritual'. The phenomenological experience of the character of environment, regarded as *genius loci*, combines simultaneous perception of visual structure of enclosure with identification of its cultural and symbolic meaning" (Schulz, 1999). The calligraphic graffiti was recognized as an urban landscape in Hong Kong, and "[l]andscape in Hong Kong has always been changing, like in a year's time, you won't find the place anymore. When you come back, you cannot find romance in the street of Hong Kong, except you found the words of the king still be around somewhere at the corner. It is one of the things you can recognize as Hong Kong" (Shen & Egan, 1998). That is why, as Kato (2007) suggests, "[h]is writing has lent street aesthetic form to "their otherwise contained identities" (to borrow Tricia Rose's words in the context of New York graffiti) on the space that duly belonged to them."

Second, Hong Kong people's changed attitude towards the King's art can be seen as reflecting a sense of "disappearance" from the temporal works. According to Abbas (1997), the sense of disappearance or *déjà disparu* is the problematic nature of visuality which the visual is merely seen, while there is a problem of reverse hallucination by not seeing what is there. Before 1997, for example, Hong Kong people and the colonial government regarded his works as public disturbance and vandalism: "[h]e dirties places and makes them unattractive" (Shen & Egan, 1998). Paralleling the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997 which indicates a catalyst of change, people fear what they are holding on,

the local identity for instance, will disappear. However, after 1997, many people have demanded a preservation of his works. "Besides the artification [sic] and productization, appeals are getting louder to regard the few surviving works by Tsang in urban public space as cultural heritage to be protected by the city of Hong Kong" (Soon, 2016). Until now, only four outdoor works of Tsang still exist, two are protected with plastic casting put up by the authority and the other has been faded with time or removed by the government with white paint. It illustrates the speed of radical desynchronization that with more images to the point of visual saturation going together with a general regression of viewing, as Tsang's graffiti works (which are supposed to be temporal and short-lived) demonstrate, people are bound to be able to only respond to its "disappearance" later. In other words, we may only lament a "culture of disappearance" through reproduction of their images due to political and, most often, commercial purposes.

Third, the method of self-expression in his works has influenced the development of activism in Hong Kong. He repeatedly expressed his conviction that Hong Kong had belonged to his ancestors and therefore insisted that he's the King of the territories. This kind of reclaiming can be read as a typical signifier of doubt and hopelessness among Hong Kong people who have complex feelings towards the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997. Hong Kong people have been pessimistic and dubious about their uncertain future as they could not decide it and it was not in their control. Perhaps this feeling corresponds to Kwong's (2011) observation: "The 1997 issue was associated with apprehension as it connoted a sense of helplessness and anxiety over the future. They felt that the future of Hong Kong was decided by Britain and PRC, and they had very little say about their own future. Hence produce the feeling of helplessness." Tsang's works voice out the thought of Hong Kong people regarding the handover. As a reporter once asked the King: "You have been writing for so long but never managed to get back the land, so why continue?", and Tsang answered: "To show people" (Shen & Egan, 1998).

Tsang provoked his discontent and protested his loss in those calligraphic graffiti. It can be regarded as a subversive strategy infiltrating the city as it is in line with a lot of different sorts of activism against urban convention targets by addressing urban infiltration of both permanently concrete issues and trivial, insignificant subject matters like Queen Elizabeth II & Donald Tsang. Graffiti became a medium expressing Hong Kong people's feeling and a way for them to set out. The "Free Ai Wei Wei Campaign" is such an example: "Many artists, political activists, and average citizens of Hong Kong joined forces in producing urban art images to express their anxiety about Ai Weiwei's well-being. The Ai

Weiwei incident exemplifies how Hongkongese who are not actively involved in creating images in the urban public space, can still be inspired to do so when an event makes them feel the need to participate in a debate and other means are not powerful enough" (Valjakka, 2015).

Banksy, an anonymous street artist who is well-known for displaying controversial graffiti on the public visible surfaces in England, once said that "Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable." Tsang's works can be considered as both art and anti-art in this sense, as they irritate people's anxiety, distress and tension out of facing the inevitable return of sovereignty to China in 1997. The fundamental political challenge triggered the people who once viewed Hong Kong as a stable place with economic prospect, while this kind of belief has become vacillating regarding the uncertainty in the outlook and future of Hong Kong. Hong Kong people at this moment seem to identify themselves with and find a connection to Tsang's works, and inscribe his "nonsense" as a representation and symbol of Hong Kong's socio-economic landscape. This is perhaps what Banksy really means when he said "Graffiti ultimately wins out over proper art because it becomes part of your city, it's a tool" (2001).

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Is “Hong-Konger” only an illusion? Seeking identity in *Days of Being Wild* (阿飛正傳) (1990)

Eloise So Wing Ki



“Hong-Konger” is a concept that is related to localism in Hong Kong, having been widely discussed recently. But is it only an illusion? Through the searching of Yuddy’s biological mother in *Days of Being Wild* (1990), this article aims to demonstrate how Hong Kong people identified themselves during the colonial period, and how they have gradually built up the term “Hong-Konger” in order to represent themselves. Just like Yuddy who never gives up looking for his biological mother and his real identity until his biological mother slams the door in front of him, Hong Kong people were confused about their actual identities during the British colonization, that is, whether they are British or Chinese. After struggling for a long time, the name “Hong-Konger” is created to represent themselves as a group of people who are neither British nor Chinese.

The colonial Hong Kong had been a treaty-port ceded and leased to the British since 1842. In 1997, the Hong Kong sovereignty was returned to the People’s Republic of China, which is seen as a mere “resumption of China’s exercise of sovereign rights” to the China government. Before the 1970s, Hong Kong people were Huaren (華人) with pan-Chinese cultural identity, but being ruled under the British sovereignty, so they struggled about where they truly belonged to. Pan-Chinese cultural identity refers to any Chinese living in foreign countries, and although they are natives or citizens of other countries, they are also seen as Chinese. In the early colonial period, Hong Kong was ruled by the British government but Hong Kong people were aware of their the pan-Chinese cultural identity. Since the 1970s, the local identity Heunggongyahn (Hong-Konger) has emerged and it is not seen as a conflict with Chinese (Veg, 2017). Even now, the “Hong-Konger” identity is widely used and accepted by both Hong Kong and Mainland people.

During the colonial period, Hong Kong people had been confused about their identity for a long time, and created the identity of “Hong-Konger” to represent

their own existence. In *Days of Being Wild*, Yuddy is confused about his actual identity as he does not know who his biological mother is, and he has flings with different women so as to convince himself not to think about his belonging to nowhere. Similar to Yuddy, Hong Kong people are anxious about where they belong to, as they are confused about their true identity and do not know who their 'biological mother' is. The only solution of dealing with it is to create the identity of "Hong-Konger", so as not to be lost between being British and Chinese. According to Luo (2014), people who led the first wave of Hong Kong subjectivity were the 1960s-1970s baby boomers after World War II; they treated Hong Kong as their home but felt agitated about the uncertain future of Hong Kong. The first wave of Hong Kong subjectivity leads to the rise of "Hong-Konger", Hong Kong people were then starting to concern about the political issues in society and even China, such as seeing the "June Fourth vigil" as a possible solution to Hong Kong's status by first achieving democracy in China (Veg, 2017). Therefore, Hong Kong people's identity changed from refugee to "Hong-Konger" who emphasise their existence and interests. It indicates that Hong Kong people have created their own identity and taken part in local society and China in order to prove their existence and preserve their own interests.

However, the identity of "Hong-Konger" is not created to represent Hong Kong people only, but also to remonstrate against respectively the British and Chinese governments. The identity of "Hong-Konger" seems to be merely a representation of Hong Kong people in order to get recovered from their "loneliness" of being nowhere, like Yuddy. However, it is also a remonstrance towards both the British and Chinese governments. According to Luo (2014), Hong Kong people are not given any right to decide their destiny, but passively being imposed to accept the future politically decided by the British and Chinese governments during the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984. What the 1997 Handover referred to was actually Hong Kong people's future, but ridiculously Hong Kong people were not taken into both governments' consideration.

In *Days of Being Wild*, Yuddy finally finds his biological mother but he is rejected outside the door. And he says, "I know she must be watching me behind now, so I am not going to turn back. I only want to see how she looks like, since she rejects to see me, I would not let her see me too." He is sulking to his mother. The reason why Yuddy is sulking is that he really wants to have a reunion with his biological mother for many years since he discovers he is adopted. However, he is rejected outside the door in spite of his forceful desire towards his biological mother. Similarly, Hong Kong people are resentful to both British (foster mother) and

Chinese (biological mother) governments, just like what Yuddy does. Hong Kong is just like a son who is abandoned by the biological mother, after a long time, the Chinese government jumps out and claims the authority of Hong Kong without helping Hong Kong people re-recognise their revised identity after the 1997 Handover. Although Hong Kong's sovereignty is transferred back, Hong Kong people are still confused about their true identity as the 1997 Handover simply imposes the change of future to Hong Kong. So, the sense of belonging of Hong Kong people towards China is weak. Actually, Hong Kong people prefer a more valid reversion of their identity rather than only "literally" becoming Chinese again after a century. Besides, based on Law (2008), the British government had never had any consistent ideas about how Hong Kong should be "colonized". It indicates that the British government does not see Hong Kong as a part of their own country or Empire, but only a treaty-port which is beneficial enough to gaining a lot of advantages, just like the foster mother of Yuddy who does not really care so much about him but only keeping him around. Eventually, Yuddy is both mad at his foster mother and sulking towards the biological mother. Likewise, the identity of "Hong-Konger" is somehow built up to express sulkiness to both British and Chinese governments for not really caring about the future of Hong Kong people. The desire of Hong Kong people's sense of belonging is so strong that they would rather create their own identity and make the whole world believe in this pathetically unique existence.

To conclude, the identity of "Hong-Konger" has been built up to represent the existence of Hong Kong people ever since the 1970s. Like the former British "step mother", the Chinese government seems also detached from Hong Kong people's craving for a true identity. It is hence inevitably leading to the Hong Konger-son's sulkiness towards the Mother(land).

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Is "Asia's World City" a lie?

Sara Wong Siu Yung



After 1997, the SAR government adopted the "Brand Hong Kong – Asia's World City" strategy in order to diminish the identity of the colonial Hong Kong. With repackaging the image of Hong Kong, the brand of "Asia's World City" tends to blend the culture of the East and that of the West into building up a global city. However, many problems and the discontent of the citizens are raised in present Hong Kong, such as the Mainland-Hong Kong conflict and huge economic dependence on China. As a cultural product reflecting such a socio-economic dilemma, the film *Trivisa* (樹大招風) uses the stories of the three almost most infamous thieves of Hong Kong in the 1990s to disparage the present Hong Kong. The film implies that there is still a gap between the ideal of Hong Kong (already) being a global city and the true reality of Hong Kong at present. By examining related issues addressed in the film *Trivisa*, this essay interrogates a plausible 'lie' behind project of branding of Hong Kong as a world city.

To begin with, the Mainland-Hong Kong conflict ironizes the claimed harmony of Hong Kong society as Asia's world city. First, the key symbols used for branding Hong Kong contains diversity and harmony character. Promotional words like "cosmopolitan", "diverse" and "connected" (Asia's World City, n.d.) are mentioned as the attributes of Hong Kong as eligible to be called a global city. Hong Kong, which combines the culture of the east and west, has communion with her motherland China. With this intimate relationship, Hong Kong is represented as an intermediary between China and the world. It is assumed that the China-Hong Kong relationship is friendly and amicable in order to make Hong Kong the bridge for China to enter the global market. As a matter of fact, however, blindness and mistrust and even conflict have occurred in this relationship, as Hong Kong people want to eliminate the character of "Chineseness" (Chu, 2010). In the film *Trivisa*, Kwok-Foon Yip started the business of smuggling in Mainland China by bribing the corrupted Mainland officers. When Yip's products were robbed by the Chinese, the Mainland officer told him to forgive the crime of the robbers as the man was his ex-commander's son. The nexus between the robber and him was closer than Yip that Yip was considered as outsider to have the business trading despite his "Hong Kong" connections.

Although Hong Kong people have "guanxi" (關係) with China that enables them to make use of their illegal network to commit crimes in China (Lo, 2010), such as Yip's smuggling business, such kind of guanxi has to be terminated under the benefit of the social capital in China. This is what we call the blindness or bias between Hong Kong and China – even in the triad society. The identity of the British colony and the different levels of economic development had once caused Hong Kong people to feel different from the Mainland Chinese, leading to the gap between Mainland and Hong Kong, that is, the Mainland Chinese would consider Hong Kong people as 'foreign businessmen' and they would hence be more likely to help mainlanders than Hong Kong people. This reflects the mistrust of China towards Hong Kong. On the other hand, Yip as a Hong Kong thief was angry about being considered as a Mainlander when a Royal Hong Kong policeman said "Mainlanders are numskulls." Hong Kong people also have bias towards Mainland Chinese regarding the latter as the people with both low personal and social qualities. The Hong Kong people therefore want to remove the character of "Chinese-ness" in order to uphold its uniqueness of being an international city. With the mutual misunderstanding between both sides, Mainland-Hong Kong conflict has occurred, which seemingly shows that the symbol of harmony in branding Hong Kong as global city is a lie.

Furthermore, Hong Kong's heavy economic dependence on China becomes ironic when it claims to be a coordinator of the global economy as the Asia's world city. The role of Hong Kong is expected to be "a manager and coordinator of the global economy" (Asia's World City, n.d.). Hong Kong supposedly acts as the world city in Asia and has the same position of London and New York in the world in global economic activities, which is called "Nylonkong." Hong Kong is therefore deemed to be the main pillar of the global economy. However, in reality, Hong Kong is only counting on the benefits of Chinese economy. In the film, both three thieves went to Frengsam restaurant in Guangdong for their own business. Yip had turned to the business of smuggling in the Mainland and Ching-Hung Kwai bribed the Chinese for his robbery that showed they want to gain economic profit with the help of their Chinese 'guanxi'. Knowing the Handover of 1997, they only considered having a business in the Mainland instead of other cities in the world. Tze-Keung Cheuk was even arrested by the Chinese police for his plundering bombs from a China businessman. The business of Hong Kong people relies on the support of China, in terms of both labors, resources and the latter's economic development. China has developed policies for Hong Kong to boost its economic development, such as the individual visit scheme in 2003 (for Hong Kong to improve its economy through tourism and retail industries) and creating the Greater Bay Area in 2018 (for

Hong Kong people to start businesses in the Mainland). Since Hong Kong economy is more and more dependent on China's support, the symbolic role of being the economic coordinator or manager in the global business world in the branding Hong Kong project is doomed to be a lie.

Finally, Hong Kong people's fear towards China endorses the irony behind the claim being Asia's world city. The image-symbol of the branding Hong Kong project is a "flying dragon" which is apparently designed to represent a kind of dynamic power—as the red ribbon on the dragon also represents the "can-do" spirit of Hong Kong people. Hong Kong people seem to be calm when facing political changes. However, the feeling of fear among Hong Kong people towards China is noticeable. In the film, Kwai was called "old fox" (老狐狸) which means someone who has different identities and can change one to another frequently. Kwai burned his Hong Kong identity card when noticing the news of the 1997-Handover and killed these Chinese after the failure of robbery. Kwai was afraid to be noticed by others and felt hopeless from returning to China. He had the illusion that Hong Kong's uniqueness would be removed and 'would be slim pickings' if Hong Kong people live under the control of China. Kwai wanted to gain his greatest benefits by shifting different identities and avoided people to notice his original identity, i.e. a Hong Kong citizen. Cheuk also called the other two thieves to make the bombing on the anniversary of returning of China in 1997 in order to forget the identities of the British colony and China. The feeling of *deja disparu* (Abbas, 1997) and the fear of China are presented in the film. Hong Kong people's fear of China also emerges in the present for the limitation of political freedom as well as the anticipation of the Communist ideology having to be imposed on Hong Kong society 50th anniversary of returning to China. There are different movements having been held in recent years, such as the Umbrella Movement which can be seen as characterized by the fear of Chinese government's intervention in the Chief Executive election. Hong Kong people's fear of China, in short, highlights the irony hidden behind the slogan in question.

To sum up, Mainland-Hong Kong conflict, economic dependence on China, and the political fear of China show the irony arising from the Government's branding Hong Kong project, that is, the slogan "Hong Kong – Asia's World City" can only be a lie—as the film *Trivisa* incidentally touches on.

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Shaping of the Chinese language through cultural and social change

Sara Wong Siu Yung



The Chinese language is one of the major languages in the world, which has existed for dozens of centuries. Through historical events and cultural incorporation in the long course of Chinese history, the system of the Chinese language—including grammar system and vocabulary usage—has been influenced and negotiated by many different elements. This leads to an interesting interaction between social changes which have doubtlessly shaped the development of the language, and, in reverse, the shaping power of the language has also had great impact not just on China but also on the regional social and cultural developments. In fact, in addressing the causes of changing the Chinese language, one major viewpoint argues that language is affected by cultural and social exchange, while the other claims that language performs an active role in shaping our culture and society (Hamamura and Xu, 2015). The Chinese language has great influence on both local values and the languages and cultures of our neighboring countries such as Japan and Vietnam. This essay puts forward the claim that social development and cultural exchange have shaped the Chinese language, while the latter at the same time constantly contributes to the evolution of the former.

First, vocabulary usage and grammar system of the Chinese language are shaped by social motivation. As the Chinese language is a tool to reflect the phenomenon of society, the system of the Chinese language would be affected through the new politics of dominant power and social movements of contemporary intellectuals. With the influence of social and political change, the vocabulary usage of the Chinese language would be shaped by then. For instance, in Mainland China, word patterns and creation of new words were once being shaped under particularly significant social movements. For example, during the May Fourth Movement, creation of new words were raised through translation and promotion of Western ideas, and new ‘Chinese’ words like 德莫克拉西 (democracy) and 赛恩斯 (science) were incorporated into Chinese vocabulary

(Petrovčić, 2013). This shows the attempt to Europeanize the Chinese language to promote the Western civilization and to bring the idea of modernization to China. May Fourth Movement also promoted the idea of 'new culture' in relation to language reform in literary writings, that is, to replace the classical Chinese language with a vernacular one. With the overwhelming influence of May Fourth movement in China, the vocabulary usage of the Chinese language also tended to use Western loan words and its syntax, in order to simplify the highly intricate language system in the classical Chinese. With this fundamental reform of structure in Chinese language under social movements, the newly shaped linguistic systems had always become new orthodoxies of the Chinese language usage at particular historical moments.

Another reason why the Chinese language has been shaped abruptly by social changes instead of natural evolution is Western colonization (or semi-colonization). For example, in Hong Kong, a former colony of Britain, under the bilingual policy, Chinese grammar system would have been easily changed through the translation of official documents which are in English. Even after the colonial period, the Chinese language in Hong Kong are still further influenced under new language education policies such as "bilingualism" and "multilingualism". Syntactic structures, calque forms of the Chinese language are examples of integration of the English language (Shi, 2006). Thus, it is clear that the Chinese language, such as its creation of new words and grammar system, would be changed in different fields under various kinds of social and political influences. Furthermore, the word pattern of the Chinese language is shaped by cultural integration. As globalization is a prevailing trend in the world, cultural integration between East and West indeed influences the development of the Chinese language. Under the interaction with foreign cultures, for example, vocabulary usage and word patterns of the Chinese language are affected in the process of the reception of modern social values. As Western cultures and values have been prevailing during the past decades when the concept of modernization in Chinese society was established, the Chinese language reflects imaginably the modern Western or indeed global cultural and moral values, such as feminism and human rights. For instance, people would tend to use the first-person singular pronouns instead of plural pronouns in literary writing under the spread of individualist culture in America and Europe. In other words, individualist thought permeating foreign culture would change the Chinese language as simply as the use of pronouns, leading therefore to the decline of the use of collectivistic pronouns in Chinese literature (Hamamura and Xu, 2015).

Moreover, the usage of colloquial expressions in Chinese can be seen as another proof showing how Western social standard marked by the notion of

individualism is changing the Chinese language. While the ideal of individualism involves using verbal language, the rise of feminism also intervenes the use of vocabulary in a global linguistic context, certainly including usages in the Chinese language. In the case of Hong Kong, as Lee (2007) suggests, "[a]n increasing number of young people in Hong Kong agree that the generic he should be replaced by non-sexist singular they, especially when the antecedent has a strong plural meaning." Hong Kong young people have started to concern about gender neutral generic nouns under the influence of western feminist culture, which seems to imply that vocabulary usage of the Chinese language would be shaped by the trend of Western social standards under globalization at present.

Some may argue, instead of being shaped by foreign forces, that the Chinese language constructs the regional (if not yet global) cultural and social values through the spread of the Chinese language into other countries, because China had for a long time been the strongest cultural and political power in East Asia. For example, the Chinese language had in fact influenced the cultures of nearby countries like Japan. Ever since the introduction of the Chinese language into Japan in Tang Dynasty (4th century), the Japanese writing system has been founded on borrowing Chinese words. Alongside the language, Chinese cultural and religious thoughts like Confucianism and Buddhism also spread to Japan. It is true that the Chinese language would have shaped other countries' cultures and their social developments. However, cultural and social values have the mutual effect with system of the Chinese language influencing and being at the same time influenced by other cultures. "Languages evolve as a result of their learning and use, and that process of cultural evolution shapes the evolution of the capacity for language" (Smith, 2018). Language is only a tool to reflect the cultural and social values which act as the record of society through descriptions. In fact, the major function of the Chinese language is presenting various meanings of the society under its cultural and social integration in global.

Yet, technological development in the present is also an essential issue for the changing of the Chinese language, it even has a greater effect on the shaping of the Chinese language. "Language, technology and culture are changing permanently but the extension, alteration and changing the speed of technology is faster than language based on this (faster than) culture" (Abad and Hanifi, 2014). Under the technological advancement of society, language only performs the passive role of cultural and social change. Language depends on the social and cultural base instead of changing society. Therefore, the shaping of the Chinese language is only the tool of recording the social and cultural development in modern society which heavily depends on the ever-changing global social and

cultural trends.

To conclude, the shaping of the Chinese language is based on contemporary cultural and social development. Although there have been examples showing how the Chinese language had once affected neighboring countries' languages and cultures in ancient times, the cultural integration between the west and China's social movements in modern era as well as the enormous impact of the postmodern globalization have had greater influences on the status quo of the Chinese language.

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Literature

The change of oriental women throughout the decades: an analysis of gender and cultural stereotypes in *M. Butterfly* (1988) and *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018)

Crystal Chiang Ching



The oriental females of the 1950s to 1980s and those in recent years, have undergone many changes in their personality quality, career and authority in different contexts. The drama, *M. Butterfly* written by David Henry Hwang (1988), reflects the features of Asian women in the second half of the 20th century. The drama tells the story of a French diplomat who does not realize the masquerading of his Chinese opera singer partner throughout their twenty-year affair, until the diplomat faces judgement about his treason. Likewise, the more modern *Crazy Rich Asians* produced by Nina Jacobson (2018), also concerns the image and rights of Asian women. The film follows the story of Racheal Chu and Nick Young who encounter problems and obstacles in their romantic relationship. Traditional and cultural stereotypes of a Chinese family become the greatest obstacles to their union. This essay will discuss the stereotypes of Eastern women in their relationships with men, and how their lives are affected. Moreover, this essay contends that in comparison with Asian women in the 21st century, Asian women between 1950s-80s were more fettered by both gender and cultural stereotypes.

First, in the aspect of gender stereotypes, oriental women in the second half of the 20th century were regarded as "weak" and "obedient" in their relationships with men, while women in recent times appear to be "strong" and "dominant." The concept of "Orientalism" is central to explain this fundamental shift in perspective. Orientalism is the prejudiced worldview of some westerners that categorizes all Eastern societies into one singular group; a group distinctly different to Western societies. The East is seen as the negative inversion of the West, a view which has helped define Europe as contrasting in image, personality, ideas and experiences (Said, 1978, p.1). Through this perspective, oriental women are often classified as "Lotus Blossom", implying they are imposingly exotic, silent, dutiful, submissive, weak, naive and eager to be dominated by men. It refers to the "perfect woman" to westerners, one who loves

a male unconditionally no matter what he does to her.

Her exotic look provides her with a sense of inherent innocence, and it is the duty of the man to teach her how to think, act and behave. In the drama *M. Butterfly*, oriental women, including Song Liling, display all the characteristics of the 'Lotus Blossom', showing the oriental women in 1950s-80s were limited by gender stereotypes. To demonstrate, in Act 1 Scene 8, Song Liling says: "No dogs and Chinamen" in clubs in Shanghai before the Chinese Revolution of 1949... "but a delicate Oriental woman – we always go where we please. Could you imagine it otherwise? Clubs in China filled with pasty, big-thighed white women, while thousands of slender lotus blossoms wait just outside the door? Never. The clubs would be empty." (Hwang, 1989, p. 22) Song adds, "We have always held a certain fascination for you Caucasian men, have we not?" (Hwang, 1989, p. 22) and "Yes. It is always imperialist. But sometimes... it is also mutual." (Hwang, 1989, p. 22) In fact, Song Liling pretends to be the weak, submissive "Lotus Blossom" in order to please and bait Rene Gallimard into passing on classified information, which is then given to the Chinese embassy as spying work under the order of Red Guard, Comrade Chin. In the text provided, she mentioned that Eastern women were slender "Lotus Blossom" who were weaker, more delicate and obedient than white women at that time. In addition, Song Liling acted in accordance with how to please an imperialist man. This reflects the dominant and imperialist mentality of the males, as they wanted women to be subservient while also pleasing them. Hence, the texts show that oriental women were not respected by the males in 1950s-80s, as Song Liling had to attract and fulfill Gallimard's imperialist and dominant mind in their relationship. Oriental women were labelled and stereotyped as the "Lotus Blossom" and stood in a low, submissive position in their relationships with men. Another piece of evidence for oriental women in 1950s-80s being submissive can be found in Act 1 Scene 11, in which Song's letters reveal her anger at Gallimard not showing up to the opera:

"Did we fight? I do not know. Is the opera no longer of interest to you? Please come – my audience miss the white devil in their midst"; "Six weeks have passed since last we met. Is this your practice- to leave friends in the lurch? Sometimes I hate you, sometimes I hate myself, but always I miss you"; "Your rudeness is beyond belief. I don't deserve this cruelty. Don't bother to call. I'll have you turned away at the door"; "I am out of words. I can hide behind dignity no longer. What do you want? I have already given you my shame."

Additionally, the words of Toulon, "Want to know a secret? A year ago, you would've been out. But the past few months, I don't know how it happened, you're

becoming this new aggressive confident... thing. Congratulations.” These passages show that Gallimard gradually gained his superiority and dominance over Song in their relationship. Nevertheless, his power was achieved by rejecting and torturing Song, who had expected Gallimard to attend the opera. This reflects the dominant mentality of some males in the past, making women bow down and lose their dignity in a relationship. In recent Eastern societies, this mentality has partly persisted with people still holding social expectations that a woman should marry a man and depend on his property and ability to work (in order to feed the needs of a family). Eastern women from countries such as China, Korea, Philippines and Singapore are perceived to be the dutiful wife, often dependent and not strong or dominant in the family or relationship.

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However, the position of some females nowadays has changed, with some Eastern women becoming more dominant figures and fewer regarded as "Lotus Blossoms". In the film *Crazy Rich Asians*, the mother of the main male character, Eleanor Young, once relied on her husband's economic power and social status. Her reliance is revealed at the beginning of the film when a flashback shows Eleanor bringing her family to check in to a London hotel. In the scene, they cannot enter because a record of Eleanor's name for the room reservation cannot be found. After moments of struggling, Eleanor calmly calls her husband to resolve the problem. The hotel manager and staff do not block her entry due to the social status, financial power and reputation of her husband – the wealthiest businessman in Singapore. Whereas later in the film, Eleanor is far more independent and powerful. For example, after the death of her husband, she leads and preserves his business independently. She directs the business and copes with any troubles and problems. She also becomes the head of the company and has to maintain international operations.

Another example is that Eleanor is the second authority in her family, while the highest authority is Nick Young's (main male character) grandmother. She possesses the high social status in the top wealthy family over the state. She has supported her family when they encounter difficulties, and it is also legitimate for her to command the servants in the house. These two examples show that Eleanor Young is not a submissive individual or a "Lotus Blossom" in the relationship or indeed the family. She dominantly takes care of her husband's global business, as well as her rich family. She thus possesses high social status and economic authority and appears to be a strong, independent woman. Therefore, although Asian women sometimes depend on the economic power and social status of the males, they have achieved a stronger and more powerful position in their relationships during the 21st century. By contrast, Eastern women during the 1950s-80s seemed to be more limited and bound to play a submissive role, especially in the relationships with men.

Linking with gender stereotypes, is the aspect of cultural stereotypes. Oriental women in the 1950s-80s were seen by Western men as "the possession" and the providers of sexual pleasure; whereas present females are treated equally and respected by men. In the second half of the 20th century, Asian women were objectified by western males. For instance, in *M. Butterfly* Act 1 Scene 5, Gallimard's defines what he considers to be the "perfect woman": "She arrives with all her possessions in the folds of her sleeves, lays them all out, for her man to do with as he pleases. Even her life itself – she bows her head as she whispers that she's not even worth the hundred yen he paid for her." (Hwang, 1989, p. 10) Gallimard thus desired a submissive "Oriental" female who could give pleasure and fully devote herself to putting her own life below that of a man. This quote also conveys the idea that "Oriental women" were only treated as something a man could obtain and possess, like an object written on a list. Oriental women are treated as the provider of sexual pleasure who served to please the males. Conversely, in *Crazy Rich Asians*, Asian females are treated equally. They are not a kind of possession to please men; Asian women nowadays are capable individuals. Since there has been a rise in feminism throughout the world, the rights of women and the equality of the two genders has been increasingly significant.

One example in *Crazy Rich Asians* to demonstrate Asian women not being objectified or the source of sexual gratification, is that Nick Young (the main male character) believes Racheal Chu is an independent and knowledgeable lady. This can be seen from his conversation with her, as he asks about her willingness and opinions regarding their marriage.

He does not command Racheal to marry him, nor treat her just as a possession, nor ask her to please him, nor be under his protection or control. Racheal is treated equally by Nick, a true parallel love partner in their relationship. Hence, Asian women nowadays appear to be on a level footing with men. They are respected by males and have an increasingly equal status in society.

A further aspect of cultural stereotypes is that Eastern females in the second half of the 20th century rarely gained access to higher education or high-ranking work positions, unlike contemporary Eastern females who have obtained these rights. In *M. Butterfly*, Oriental women do not have high education or dominant working positions in society. At that time, mostly only men enjoyed these rights and opportunities. Mentioned in the play, many Asian women worked as prostitutes, such as Song Liling's mother. Moreover, there is only one female character who has a relatively high political position – Comrade Chin, the female Red Guard. In comparison to several male characters, like Gallimard as the French diplomat, Toulon as the French ambassador of China and other male diplomats in the drama, the number of female political leaders is significantly lower. By contrast, *Crazy Rich Asians* shows that females have the rights to enter high education and obtain high working positions. In modern societies, jobs and education are open and available to females. For instance, Racheal Chu is a Doctor of Economics. She teaches in a university in the United States. This expresses that modern Asian women could receive university education and become a university lecturer, and Eastern women nowadays are no longer denied from academia. Another example is that Eleanor Young (the mother of Nick Young) has been the head of the Southeast Asian business chain. This shows the actual possibilities that modern Asian women have the rights to own high positions in a variety of different industries.

In the aspect of gender stereotypes, Oriental women in the second half of the 20th century had been subservient and had no authority in their relationships with men, but present-day women are independent and have a certain strength. Also, concerning the cultural stereotypes, Asian women in the former period were labelled as dutiful and powerless to the sexual gratification of males; on the contrary, modern females readily voice their opinions, and have equal status in relationships with males. Additionally, Asian women in 1950s-80s had scarce access to higher education or high-level jobs, while those in recent times have gained educational rights and are respected in society. In conclusion, Oriental women in the second half of the 20th century were far more confined by gender and cultural stereotypes than that of contemporary women.

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Men removing mountains in *Dead Poets Society* (1989) and *The History Boys* (2004)

Natalie Hui Po Ling



There is a well-known Chinese fable called, “Foolish Old Man Removes the Mountains” (The Myths and Legends Team, 2006). As the title suggests, the foolish old man endeavors to remove the huge mountains, even though everyone thinks it is an unachievable task. Keating, the teacher in *Dead Poets Society* (1989), and Hector, the teacher in *The History Boys* (2004), also face huge obstacles. Like Mr. Fool, they act as an agent who actively does whatever to change the situation. Marx and Engel (1970) claim that “the ideas of the ruling class are, in every epoch, the ruling ideas” (p.64), i.e. the class that is the ruling material force in society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. In both texts, the dominant class, which is represented by education, attempts to control students’ minds. It imposes an ideology that entering famous universities is the only goal for a secondary school student and that only a few can win in the examination. Under these rules, the majority become losers and the ruling class maintain their status and privilege. Even for those so-called winners, they are just outstanding students but not truly themselves anymore. They are alienated and reduced to machines of examination. The system is, no doubt, so rigid that everyone finds it difficult to fight against it. Yet no matter how hard it is, there are people who spare no effort to unveil the true ideology behind such a harsh system. This essay compares and contrasts the approaches of education through the characterization of Hector and Keating in *The History Boys* and *Dead Poets Society*. Both Keating and Hector adopt unorthodox pedagogies to defend the true meaning of education against traditional education systems, but only the former survives the battle.

Firstly, Keating and Hector disagree with the traditional mode of education which alienates students and makes them unable to appreciate true beauty and human essence. It is only concerned with the practical use of knowledge and that students can sell what they learn. The industrialized mode of learning adopted by traditional education just trains students to be part of an obedient labour force.

It secures them a nice job and makes them perform well in the workplace. Students then are no more than a well-functioning robot. This certainly contradicts the true meaning of education which should be about guiding students to find their own way. Hector and Keating both understand this pure meaning of education and disagree with the industrial factory model of education. They go against the flow to help the boys achieve their true potential. Hector always emphasizes that “all knowledge is precious whether or not it serves the slightest human use” (Bennett, 2017, p.5). In no way should knowledge be generalized into bullet points for convenient regurgitation in an examination. From this perspective, the process of learning and enjoying knowledge for its own sake is more important than anything else. Hector opposes reducing literature to “gobbets” and deploying them cynically in an essay to get a higher grade. From his point of view, the way education simplifies knowledge and disregards students as temporary tools to enhance a schools’ reputation is absolutely wrong. This ignores the interests and intrinsic values of the boys, and hence deprives them from engaging fully with knowledge, and learning about their own humanity. With all his might, Hector keeps reminding the boys that learning is not for entering an Oxbridge University, but instead for the joy of learning itself. And only in this way, can the boys be restored to sentient beings. Keating also believes that the ultimate aim of education should be nurturing one’s life, and not about earning money.

However, there is a minor difference with Hector’s approach. Keating allows students to participate in mundane works, the key point being that they need to preserve the soft heart deep inside their soul while doing so. He says, “Medicine, law, business, engineering, theseety at night, while keeping up with their studies in the morning. They are able to fulfil the social expectations on themselves, while being able to suck the marrow out of life” (Kleinbaum, 2012, p.144) at the same time. The most important goal for Hector and Keating is to return the boys to vivid human beings who have a sincere passion for learning. In their own unique ways, both manage to achieve this goal and lead the boys to the path of understanding the true nature of humanity.

In order to destabilize the system, Keating and Hector, as the authority figures, adopt heuristic teaching methods. Both help the boys regain the autonomy of their own voices. In *The History Boys*, Hector allows the boys to free style their own lessons, rather than follow the syllabus. The boys are the ones in charge of lessons, and they naturally discover their own interests with this high level of independence. In a traditional school environment, teachers only care about students’ achievement rather than their interests. Hector is therefore one of the only authority figures who asks the boys to focus on themselves and not to worry

about meeting social expectations. He lights up the world of literature by linking it to real life and in turn the boys appreciate its aesthetic beauty. They seem to love learning poetry and Hector's style of teaching has allowed them to enjoy it in the way the poets intended. They learn for themselves, not for the examination. This passion also wakes up every cell of their body and motivates them to search for more.

In *Dead Poets Society*, Keating asks the boys to write their own poems, instead of just memorizing famous poems. One of the boys gives up by just offering a factual statement, "The cat sat on the mat". As he thinks that he is just a normal person, there is no way to be comparable with those extraordinary literary people who compose brilliant work. This reaction seems to betray his inferiority complex; he writes a super ordinary poem frivolously to tell others his intention to be ordinary. What Keating tells him is that the most beautiful poetry could arise from a simple theme. He reminds the boys not to look down on themselves and conform to the grand narratives. Different from the traditional teachers, Hector and Keating endeavor to help students search for their true passion. Additionally, they help the boys regain control of their long-tamed bodies. From the Marxist perspective, literature is one of the many ways used by the ruling class to control people. However, Hector does not subscribe to this view, nor let his students become tainted by it. He never uses literature to teach morals or tell the boys what they should do in life; it should not be reduced to a mere message. Some of the boys' freestyle lessons involve acting, and this irregular mode of education allows them to emancipate their bodies and in turn their emotions. Instead of sitting on chairs and receiving messages, he asks the boys to act, to feel and to understand. It opens up senses of the boys that have long been repressed. For Keating, he asks the boys to feel comfortable with their own style. This liberates them from following others' footsteps and helps them realize their own uniqueness.

Obviously, the way Keating and Hector teach does not impose traditional rule on students. They go against the ruling class, who intend to discipline students' bodies and emotions and make them easily controllable. When the ruling class attempt to take away their voice and make them feel inferior, Keating and Hector encourage them to have their own opinions and stand out. They tell the boys that they should not box themselves in by the rules of the authorities; only they have the right to decide how to live their lives. The two teachers help break the rules and pave the way for the boys to realize their true selves.

At the end of the two stories, Keating survives the confrontation between conventional education and true learning, while Hector does not. For Keating,

he does not aim at nurturing the boys to be artists, but rather to have free minds. He is pragmatic and understands that it is unrealistic and unnecessary to battle against all parts of society. He reserves the power for protecting the most important thing which is a human heart. It is necessary to go against the system only for the aim of defending oneself. Neil, a student of Keating, realizes that being an actor is the only thing he really wants to be. When he realizes there is no way for him to achieve this goal, he resorts to committing suicide. The negation is the ultimate method to reveal his will. Besides, Todd, who is a shy boy, stands up against the injustice. When “workers of all countries, unite” (Marx, 1848, p.39), the boys can make the world a better place by removing injustice. Instead of obeying the rules, Keating empowers the boys to pursue their own dreams and uphold justice.

For Hector, he makes a whole-hearted attempt to protect the boys from being contaminated by reality. Posner, who is the only one following everything he says, immerses in the sadness. As a teacher, Hector believes that life is full of failure and literature helps the boys get over it. However, it turns out that Posner, while enjoying literature, also gets engulfed by the sadness of real life which is sometimes reflected in literature. This leads him to the point of constant breakdown and further pushes him away from reality. Making himself and Posner fully detach from the reality might be the root of Hector’s failure. The door he requests to close symbolizes the dichotomy of the conventional education system and self-actualization. There is no way for negotiation and just resistance. That arouses a conflict between Hector and the Headmaster, who finally grasps the chance to force him into an early retirement. Dakin, a student of Hector, successfully gets Hector reinstated out of sympathy, which is different from Todd’s defense of Keating out of justice. In the final moments of *The History Boys*, the lift for Irwin is a metaphorical scene where Hector is given a final chance to show his willingness to change. Regrettably, he fails to meet expectations as usual. When Hector gives Irwin a lift on his motorcycle, he goes around a familiar corner without adjusting for the new situation. As Irwin has never been on the back of a bike before, he has no idea that he should lean in, instead of leaning out when faced with a corner in the road. However, Hector neither communicates with Irwin, nor reduces his speed. He is just determined to keep his own way and refuses to make any modification. This parallels Hector’s attitude in the classroom; he has no intent to find a way which strikes a balance between his philosophy of education and the reality of the education system. The death of Hector implies that his way of teaching is no longer tolerated by the ruling class. For his complete rejection towards the reality, it reciprocates him with a complete rejection towards his way of teaching and also

his existence. They are both ousted by the reality in the cruelest way: death.

In conclusion, Keating and Hector as authority figures, do not help sustain the distorted education system. Instead, both adopt unconventional pedagogies, enabling students to understand the true meaning of learning. Compared to Hector's extreme approach of encouraging the boys to isolate themselves from the crowd, Keating instead advocates living among the crowd, yet not losing the self. The fable, "Foolish Old Man Removes the Mountains" subtly reveals the different endings of Keating and Hector. In the fable, the success of removing the mountain should be credited to the helping hand of God. It implies that arduous tasks can be accomplished with stubborn determination. Without the help of God, Hector's goals result in failure, as he confines the true learning to a particular way which must be detached from the contaminated reality. On the contrary, Keating does not only have determination, but he also allows different ways to achieve his aim. As a result, there is a buffer in Keating's teaching for balancing the reality and the ideal. In the end, they are undoubtedly eliminated by the dominant class for their disobedience. However, Keating is successful in sowing seeds in his students' minds; he empowers the boys to live as humans who retain their passion for life and speak up for justice.

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Gender and perspective: A comparative essay of *The History Boys* (2004) and *Mushrooms* (1968)

Kelly Leung Yi Yan



Literature is art constructed by the subjective view of people toward the world that they observe. Unavoidably, the approach of characterisation differs between genders. *The History Boys* (2004), written by male playwright Alan Bennett, displays a patriarchal society in which female characters are disrespected and treated as sex objects by men. While the poem *Mushrooms* (1968) by female poet, Sylvia Plath, goes against the patriarchy by acknowledging the secretive processes and successful rebellion of the mushrooms, which can be interpreted as the personification of women. Consequently, it can be argued that male authors tend to confine female characters in a patriarchal society; while female authors attempt to open an escape hatch for their liberation. The perspective of authors and the way they arrange their characters differ based on their gender, as seen in the portrayal of women, the attitude of women towards their treatment, and the outcome of their attempts to fight for their rights.

A writer's gender contributes to the contrasting treatment of women in their literary texts. First, *The History Boys* confines women in a patriarchal society, where women are inferior. As the only female character that speaks in the play, Mrs Lintott's experience implies that women in Bennett's world are unimportant and weak. In the play, Mrs Lintott is treated as an inferior member of the school and marginalised by other, more significant male characters. For instance, the Headmaster neglects her efforts in helping the boys achieve good results for their A-Level exam; instead he is more interested in the "charm" and "polish" the boys need for their Oxbridge interviews, qualities offered by the new male teacher, Irwin (Bennett 8-9). Mrs Lintott's marginalization is further illustrated in the play's later dialogue. She confesses that her gender consigns her to be the "safeguard against the onward transmission of information" (Bennett 68), implying her existence as a woman is only good for concealing men's secrets, while posing no threat to them.

Bennett also moulds Mrs Lintott into a gullible person, reinforcing the gender stereotype that women are easily manipulated and too weak to defend themselves. This is exemplified with the reason she provides for the breakdown of her marriage; she reveals her ex-husband, "told stories" (Bennett 22). In a patriarchal world, women's experiences are unimportant: even though Mrs Lintott's ex-husband cheated on her, Bennett is reluctant to offer any further details that might shape Mrs Lintott into a fully rounded character. To Bennett, Mrs Lintott's actions and reactions, and perhaps women in general society, are less important than men, despite their high achievements. Moreover, women are looked down on as sex objects in *The History Boys*. For example, the Headmaster's secretary, Fiona has no actual dialogue in the play and only appears during the boys' conversations about sex. Dakin sleeps with her and shares his sexual exploits in a rather degrading tone with Scripps. He uses a crude metaphor of warfare when explaining his physical contact with Fiona (Bennett 81). In addition, during their French lesson the boys act out an imagined scenario from a brothel, with Posner playing the role of a prostitute and Dakin playing a seduced "client". The ease with which they perform this humiliating scene so naturally reveals that, in their adolescent minds at least, women exist only for gratifying men's sexual impulses. The importance of women in Bennet's play is negligible, thus emphasising the idea of a resolutely patriarchal society.

On the other hand, *Mushrooms* deals predominantly with feminism. The poem describes the scenario in which mushrooms secretly "[i]nherit the earth" (Plath 1968), and the mushrooms can be interpreted as a symbol for women. It is unveiled in the use of the domestic image of women, in which the mushrooms are "shelves", "[t]ables" and "needles". Women resemble mushrooms that are weak and easily neglected, in their stereotypical image. However, in Plath's presentation, women can also be strong. Such contradictory qualities are observed through the use of oxymoron, "[s]oft fists" in stanza 4. Being the minority, women are expected to be weak and go unnoticed but at the same time hold their "fists" and fight back. Again, this contradictory quality that women are capable of being both weak and strong is further illustrated in the use of verbs that emphasise the aggressiveness of the mushrooms. The mushrooms first "[t]ake hold on the loam", "[a]cquire the air", then "make room" for themselves. The ferociousness of the mushrooms reveals that to Plath, women are strong forces in society. Echoing the feminist theme, the poet's motif is a driving force of this poem. Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) is a confessional poet, who uses the poem to espouse her feminist beliefs. Her feminist ideals partially come from her relationship with her husband and fellow poet, Ted Hughes.

Plath was expected to make [Hughes] happy: cook, play, read ... never accuse or nag - let him run, reap, rip - and glory in the temporary sun of his ruthless force" (Viner 2000).

Motherhood and her role as a housewife limited her literary career and development in academia, while Hughes was able to further his career instead. This inspired her feminist perceptions and led to her belief that women should fight for equal rights and opportunities. Though Plath could not physically devote herself to the feminist movement due to family commitments, she practices it in her literary works. *Mushrooms* is a great example. The poem challenges the patriarchal society, by portraying women who are as strong as men. It could also be interpreted as a response to the Women's Rights Movement after World War II. During the war, women took many jobs that had been vacated by men who had left for the battlefield. Most significantly, they were not paid the same as men, even though they had taken exactly the same work. This led to an outburst of women's disappointment regarding their unfair treatment and The Women Rights Movement was born (Constantakis 2010). Affected by this atmosphere, Plath wrote *Mushrooms* in support of the Movement, and notes when the mushrooms (women) "multiply, they will eventually gather their power and get what they deserve". By examining the female characters in these two works, and through the lens of feminist literary criticism (Napikoski 2018), it can be deduced that Bennett, as a male writer, creates a male-centered world where women are unimportant to the operation of society. Plath, as a female writer, believes that women should have their own career, get what they deserve for their hard work, and not be confined to family life. Plath poses a challenge to the male-centered society. Therefore, the different portrayals of female characters seem to be influenced, at least to some degree, by the gender of the writer, as well as their personal views on gender issues.

In both texts, the female characters show discontent with their treatment, yet they take different actions to fight for their rights. Mrs Lintott is not satisfied with her treatment as a social outcast in the school. In response to her low status, she delivers a monologue that reminds the readers that women have contributed more to society than merely being housewives. Through her rant, "[h]istory is a commentary on the various and counting incapacities of men...[h]istory is women following behind with the bucket" (Bennett 85), Mrs Lintott argues that women work hard behind the scenes and have been undervalued by incompetent men. For instance, Mrs Lintott conceals the secret of Dakin and Irwin's affair. She challenges the patriarchal view of history, that men contribute to the main events and women are merely subordinates. Though Mrs Lintott only voices her discontent and does not take action, she is still showing an attitude that women,

other than herself, should fight for their rights and for a status that justifies their devotions.

Likewise, Plath's work also conveys the same point of view. By secretly multiplying themselves, the mushrooms are gradually gaining power in the society. The multiplication of the mushrooms is emphasized in the repetition of "So many of us!". Not only do the chant-like sentences create an aggressive mood in the poem, but the use of the exclamation marks also generate tension because of the emergence of women in power. Further, the use of enjambment in stanzas 6 and 7 marks the continuous growth of the mushrooms over time. It also indicates that the path toward full gender equality is so long, and the use of enjambment prolongs the period of attaining it. Through multiplying themselves, women can fight for their rights, because the power of many is greater than the power of one. From Plath's vivid description of the multiplying mushrooms, it suggests that she agrees women should not accept the patriarchal society they are born into; they should instead stand up and revolt together. The female characters of Mrs Lintott and the mushrooms (women as a minority) share the same view that women are not to be restrained by a patriarchal society. Still, only Plath, as a female writer demonstrates the capability of women to stand up and fight, by describing the growth of the mushrooms. Bennett, as a male writer, leaves minimum space for women to revolt, limiting Mrs Lintott's role to a few short speeches. From a feminist literary point of view (Napikoski 2018), Bennett should construct Mrs Lintott as a stronger force in initiating a revolution in the world of *The History Boys*, so that the division of power could be less biased towards the male characters.

The female characters from the two texts also face different endings. Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, Bennett constructs a world with little space for women's empowerment, even though they are so displeased with their treatment. At the end of the play, Mrs Lintott celebrates the success of the boys and seems pleased that her teaching laid a solid foundation for the boys' successful university exams and interviews. However, the play only acknowledges Hector's devotion in teaching; the boys do not say a word to thank Mrs Lintott. This ignorance marks the failure of women in *The History Boys* in attaining more power in the society, especially in the micro-society of Cutlers' Grammar School. Bennett limits the influence of women, manifested in Mrs Lintott's restriction from making any actual changes in the world of *The History Boys*. Her diligent teaching is able to bring change to the boy's future prospects but contributes nothing to her own career advancement.

On the contrary, the mushrooms gain power at the ending of the poem, as they can "[i]nherit the earth" (Plath 1968), which marks women's gradual success. The use of biblical allusion, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5) implies that the minor force of the society will eventually succeed in getting higher social status. In the poem, the mushrooms represent "the meek"; while "inherit the earth" could be interpreted as their success in gaining greater influence in the society. Women have overcome the challenges posed to them. Stanza seven best reflects the difficulty of women's journey to emerge into power. The mushrooms have to diet on "crumbs" and "water" in the "shadow" (Plath 1968), which means they are in an adverse environment and lack resources to get what they want. However, the mushrooms can adapt to survive in the environment and their strong determination leads to an expansion of their realm with their "foot in the door". In other words, the use of biblical allusion implies they are receiving more recognition from society, instead of being downtrodden. Plath smartly compares this to the gradual success of the Women's Rights Movement, in which women were given the right to vote in some European countries like Britain and Belgium (Cheung et al. 64); federal laws were also passed in the US starting from the 1960s, so that women could earn the same as men (Constantakis 2010). The mushrooms' growth is compared to the women's rising rights of Plath's era. Mushrooms challenge the patriarchal society of men having intrinsic prestige and women being their belongings, it makes the case that woman can in fact be more skilful and powerful than their male counterparts.

Therefore, it is evident that Bennett restricts the female characters inside a deeply patriarchal world. He follows the majority of the society to place women in an inferior position. Women are placed in circumstances where they can not revolt no matter how devoted they are, and their position on the social ladder is low. Conversely, Plath conveys a message of empowerment and breaks the confines of society by letting the female characters (the mushrooms) "inherit the earth".

To conclude, from the above comparison, it can be interpreted that one's gender can significantly affect his/her perception of the world. Men, stereotypically being the breadwinner of a family, are born with pride and may regard women as their subordinates, even their belongings. A misogynistic view of women is exposed in male playwright Alan Bennett's *The History Boys* where women are downtrodden, belittled and treated as mere sex objects. Even though they attempt to express their dissatisfaction, they dare not take action, as challenging

the patriarchy could lead them to become even more browbeaten. Women are expected to dedicate themselves to family life but secretly hate how they are treated in the society. Through Sylvia Plath's "Mushrooms", it is portrayed that women are starting to fight together for their rights in the society. Their actions pose a serious challenge to the kind of patriarchal society described in the work of Bennett. To take a step further towards gender equality, both men and women should respect one another in order that gender issues can be adequately addressed without bias.

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Film and Moral Philosophy

Education for human clones in *Never Let Me Go* (2010)

Katrina Au Hoi Ching



Organ shortage remains a worldwide problem despite organ donation. In a bid to increase the organ supply, human cloning is suggested as an alternative for transplants as patients with organ failure can be cured by replacing their organs with their clones'. The issue has been discussed from the moral perspective in the film *Never Let Me Go* (2010). The story highlighted that a group of human clones were given limited indoctrination in a boarding school by instructing their obligation of life without mentioning the true purpose of their existence. It arouses the moral judgement of dehumanizing cloned humans when the ultimate purpose of creating them is to donate organs.

In this essay, I will challenge the way of treating clones by giving limited indoctrination to them with three arguments. First, the clones' rights to autonomy is restricted by not informing them about organ donation. Second, there is a gap between life and cognition of clones which bring more pain for them. Third, limited indoctrination gives clones a good feeling, but it is a means to control clones without respect. Therefore, giving limited indoctrination to the clones is inhumane when the purpose of creating them is for transplants.

First and foremost, the clones' rights to autonomy is restricted by not informing them about organ donation. At the beginning of the film, a group of clones were indoctrinated in the morning assembly that students in Hailsham were special and they were reminded to always keep themselves healthy. Throughout the entire assembly, Miss Emily, the presenter, never gave reasons why the clones should maintain their health in a good state. However the clones seemed to accept the school motto unconsciously without knowing the motive behind it. According to Kantian deontology, the act of Hailsham should be considered as immoral. In the first formulation of Categorical Imperative, concealing the real motive of creating clones from students in Hailsham is possible. The teacher-student relationships were not affected. They got along with each other without telling the truth of the clones' existence and went on their own lives in the

school. However, this act cannot pass the second formulation of Categorical Imperative. The teachers did not show their respect to the clones by concealing organ donation to them. The clones therefore could not have freedom to decide their roles when they did not know that organ donation was their obligation of life. A live organ donation should fulfil the basic requirement: a person should give consents to live organ donation under circumstances that he/she is willing to engage in the activity after being informed of the benefits and risks of organ donation, as well as the benefits, the risks and other treatment available to the recipient (Bagatell, Kahn & Owens, 2013). Therefore, as the consent of the clones to organ donation was never asked, the act of the teachers actually treated them as a means to achieve the desire of the society: saving lives of terminal illness by replacing the organs of cloned humans.

Secondly, there is a gap between life and cognition of clones which bring more pain for them. The three main characters, Kathy, Ruth and Tommy turned 18 and lived in the cottages with people outside of Hailsham. They finally discovered their identity as clones. Even worse, they knew that the clones were actually the copies of the lower class such as prisoners and prostitutes. This implied that the lower class was manipulated to produce their clones and get the clones' organs. The situation was similar to cattle ranching. More people from the lower class were used to make their clones and then the clones were cultivated for fresh organs. According to utilitarianism, manipulating the lower class and killing the clones was immoral as it produces more suffering. For the lower class, they suffered from being labelled as "trash" and used to create clones. As for the clones, they would face the destined death and the separation with their close ones, which caused them unhappiness.

In addition, from the viewpoint of J.S. Mill (1859), the limited indoctrination was molding people into a type of character that pleased the dominant power of the government (Glenn, 2003). Although it would be successful and efficient governance, it is considered as low quality of happiness. When the truth of the clones' existence was exposed, they still faced unhappiness or even greater pain. What they were told were lies and it caused confusion to them. At the end of the film, Kathy raised a reflective question: what is the difference between the clones and the organ recipients when all their lives end eventually? It showed that the indoctrination to clones failed to control their thoughts of life. Thus, giving limited indoctrination to the clones would bring them greater negative feelings and it should be immoral.

Although limited indoctrination gives clones a good feeling, it is a means to control clones without respect. Giving limited indoctrination to the clones is similar to lying. Supporters of such indoctrination may argue that it would be better not to tell the clones about the truth because it is foreseeable that they will reject organ donation. In this case, telling white lies would make the clones feel comfortable so as to achieve the goal easily. Thus, giving limited indoctrination is morally acceptable. Such argument is based on utilitarianism. However, according to Kantian deontology, consequences are always irrelevant to an act but the motive of an act matters. Thus, the prediction of clones rejecting organ donation is unreasonable. Although the purpose of creating clones is to increase the organ supply, it should not be the reason for giving limited indoctrination. As mentioned above, such act treats the clones as a means only, which is disrespectful to them. On the contrary, telling the whole truth to the clones implies treating them as human beings who have rational thinking. Thus, such act has higher moral worth than giving limited indoctrination to the clones.

All in all, giving limited indoctrination to the clones is immoral. It disregards the clones' feelings and thoughts and thus brings more suffering to the society. It also restricts the clones' rights to autonomy by treating them as a means. Therefore, the act is inhumane and undesirable.

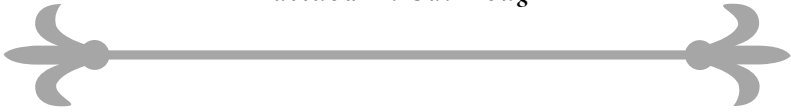
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Removal of memory is an inhumane act

Matthew Li Sui Hong



Introduction

Memory is one of the criteria for distinguishing a person from an object, (Herzog, 2005). However, there are still many people who want to avoid suffering from sorrowful memories, such as losing their beloved family members or breaking up with their lover. Indeed, in the future, with the help of technology, we may be able to eliminate the pain of the past by doing clear-memory surgery. Nevertheless, this future technology can bring serious dispute, with many medical professionals making recommendations, or even challenging it with certain concerns. In my opinion, it is unreasonable to avoid pain by clearing our memories, because the act of removing memories is self-disrespect, no one should stay away from understanding the meaning of pain in the past.

The benefits of clearing memories

Removing painful memories of the past can avoid suffering. As the utilitarians believe, such a method can avoid pain and achieve happiness as we can forget about the sadness or something terrifying. In the film, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004), after having a bitter quarrel, Clementine and Joel decide to erase their memories so that they can no longer recall the unhappiness produced by each other before. Since unhappy memories of the past will keep reappearing in the future, this can make both of them have a bad mood, or even quarrel over the same thing again and again, deteriorating their relationship. Therefore, it will increase their pain, making the greatest happiness difficult to be achieved. As a result, it does not conform to the core value of utilitarianism: minimizing pain or maximizing happiness. The utilitarians, therefore, believe that if painful memories are erased, the past will be forgotten, and Joel and Clementine will not recall their painful time spending with each other. Hence, erasing memories can minimize pain and increase the chance of producing more happiness, because they need not face painful emotional experiences from the past.

Pain is not worthless

Painful things are usually so impressive to people since they cannot be forgotten easily. However, precisely because of it, the pain of the past can also be valuable. As "valuable lessons can be learned from painful memories" (Grau, 2006), through which we can prevent making the same mistakes in the future, and ultimately build a better life than before. Indeed, Joel and his girlfriend successfully escaped from the painful past by clearing the memory. However, once removing the memory, they cannot know what mistakes they made in the past in real life. They even cannot remember the reason why they quarrel and how to solve the problem. Moreover, after clearing the memory, they will be unable to retrieve their past or have the opportunity to correct it as well. One of the plots in the movie is that Joel and Clementine meet at the railway station again, and at the same time they are fond of each other, but the difference is that they do not know each other before. On the other hand, clearing the memory does not mean that their own personality will be changed (Falzon, 2019). Therefore, Clementine who yearns for freedom and Joel who is introverted will certainly bring the same contradiction made in the past, because they never drawn lessons from past events, like thinking about what causes the painful beginning, and what makes them quarrel. In fact, the memories of the past will strongly connect to the current situation. What is more, since there will be some similar events that we have encountered in the past, we learn how to summarize past failures or painful experiences and get solutions from painful memories to avoid the same events. Thus, erasing memories is just "to cure the symptoms, not the disease" which means the fundamental problem has not been solved.

Removal of memory is a violation of human rights

With regard to human rights, it is immoral to erase memories as Joel and his girlfriend have used their memories to achieve something, and they show no respect for themselves. However, some people consider that "it is worth recalling that concept of autonomy is generally understood to refer to the capacity to be one's own person, to live one's life according to reasons and motives that are taken as one's own" (Lavazza, 2015). So they think deleting memory is their own choice and should be supported. Yet, in Kantianism, apart from the inability to use others, they cannot actually use themselves. For example, Joel and his girlfriend erase their memories for self-benefit, aiming to escape from the painful past, which shows that they use memories as means to achieve their goals (Grau, 2006). Hence, clearing sorrowful memories is a way of disrespecting yourself.

In fact, removing memory is the same as suicide, because people cannot realize their value as human beings. In this movie, Joel and his girlfriend cannot realize the value of past memories and they choose to forget it, so they do not respect

their past memories. When we regard ourselves as a means to achieve goals without respecting ourselves, it goes against Kant's theory. We have no right to harm our bodies, even clearing our memories is the act of hurting ourselves, because we cannot understand what happened in the past. Also, without complete memories, people may have spiritual destruction as they will keep focusing on the loss of precious memories in their lives. In Kant's theory, therefore, it is inhumane to erase the memory.

Conclusion

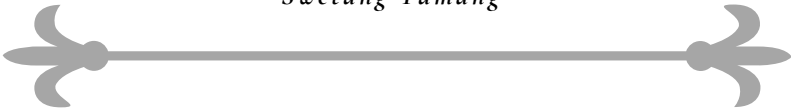
To sum up, I believe that clearing memories is not a good way to avoid pain. It can neither bring a lesson for people to learn from the past, nor be a guide to make us a better life, but it is a violation of human rights. Even if erasing memories can minimize the pain from the past, it cannot prevent or end the pain in the future. At the end of the film, Mary mailed "Lacuna records" to Joel and Clementine, this means that they will know the truth, also the unhappy memories of the past when they open the file. It is foreseeable that they will be even more painful when withstanding the reality. Therefore, the technology of erasing memory is not as perfect as we imagine, and once people remember the painful memories of the past again, it will no longer bring happiness, but greater sadness. As a result, removing memories is inhumane and parlous. What we should do is correct ourselves from the past, but not escaping from it.

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Neither consequence nor luck matters in making moral judgements

Swetang Tamang



Match Point (2005) is a psychological thriller movie arousing the topic of moral luck. It focuses on the story of the protagonist, Chris Wilton, who gets married into a rich family, but has an affair with his brother in law's girlfriend Nola Rice, which threatens his social position. Later on, he finds himself in a position of moral dilemma that leads him to commit a heinous crime by murdering Nola and an old woman next door, so he won't have to leave his wife, upcoming baby and the wealthy life. The movie is ended "luckily", because Chris has never found out about the crimes he has committed. This has challenged the utilitarian's importance on consequences because punishment does not only rely on moral luck, but what options a person has in face of a moral dilemma are dependent on luck. Accordingly, just because Chris didn't have to face any consequences doesn't mean it justifies his actions. Ultimately, an action is still to be considered as immoral even if a person gets lucky not to face his/her consequences.

Moral judgement is not always bound up with punishment because sometimes moral judgement cannot be proven. Kant's retributivism has usually mistaken our view of morality that with any crime committed, there should be punishment that follows. However, in the movie, Chris had committed a crime but was not punished accordingly because the officers didn't have any proof to make him guilty. Chris got lucky that the ring he had stolen from Nola's house didn't make it to the river when he threw it, and was found by a burglar who then bore all the crimes committed by Chris. Kant thinks consequence should not be considered when making moral judgement but a person's motive for their action because it is what truly shows their moral stand. In the movie's case, even though Chris is supposed to be punished from Kant's perspective since he had made a master plan with a high motive to murder, he didn't get punished because of lack of proof against him and especially his luck. This doesn't mean it justifies his actions, as what he did was still immoral. Therefore, moral judgements cannot always be proven even if a person has committed a heinous crime, where moral

judgements are not all the time bound up with punishments, but the actions are still to be considered immoral.

Circumstances beyond a person's control cannot change that person's moral standing as it merely helps for assessing it. Looking from Kant's perspective, if a person doesn't get punished even if he/she had committed a crime just because he/she got lucky enough, their actions are still not morally justified. Although, utilitarians might think the action done by Chris in the movie is morally justifiable as long as no one will find out about the truth and most people will not get hurt by it. However, the heinous crime committed by Chris is still immoral even though he got away from facing the consequences, which does not change his moral standing. The utilitarian's principle of an act being moral as long as it creates the greatest good for the greatest number still cannot justify Chris's action as moral. (Latus, 2000). Luck puts us in a better or worse position to evaluate a person's moral standing without really changing that standing. This means that Chris's luck of dodging consequences after committing such crime doesn't even so change the fact that he's a murderer and has committed an immoral action. Thus, luck cannot change a person's moral standing but actually helps to evaluate it.

No matter the circumstances are beyond a person's control or not, that person is still to be held responsible for immoral action he/she has caused. The utilitarian would judge the crime committed by Chris as morally justifiable as long as no one knows about it and is harmed. Nevertheless, Chris himself is responsible for being in such a position because he willfully gets into an affair with Nola, even though Nola had warned him not to do it as he already had a wife. In addition, Chris deliberately had sex with Nola, knowing that they didn't have any protection, which got Nola pregnant. Even with constant pressure from Nola to confess about their relationship, he intentionally chose not to confess about his affair to his wife. He had no options and the only way for Chris to solve it was taking away Nola from his life forever, where innocent bystanders got involved in the process. After Chris got away from the responsibility of taking care of Nola by taking away her life, another responsibility replaced it, which was his guilt. Even though Chris was still married to a rich woman, with his future secured in prosperity and the birth of his child which should be giving him joy, he seemed isolated and lost in his own thoughts. In the end of the movie, the viewers can assume that he feels remorse for the crime he committed. Therefore, no other factor than oneself is responsible for the immoral actions that a person has caused, no matter the circumstances is beyond his/her control or not.

All in all, luck can never justify someone's immoral action because moral judgement is not always bound up with punishment, circumstances beyond a person's control cannot change that person's moral standing, and no matter the circumstances are beyond a person's control or not, that person is still held responsible for immoral action he/she had caused. If a person was not condemned for his/her crime, it doesn't mean the action he/she had done is moral. In the movie, Chris got away just because he was lucky, the actions he had committed helps evaluate his moral standing and luck doesn't provide a way to run away from responsibilities for the crimes a person had committed. The stand of an immoral action doesn't change even if a person gets lucky to not face their circumstances. At least in this movie, neither consequences nor luck matters in making a moral judgement.

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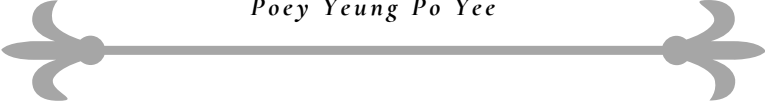
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A just cause of assisted euthanasia

Poey Yeung Po Yee

A decorative horizontal line with stylized, symmetrical flourishes at both ends, resembling three-lobed leaves or petals.

When it comes to assisted suicide, this controversial issue is tangling with morality and law. The case in *You Don't Know Jack* (2010) triggers a debate on whether physician-assisted suicide is a guardian angel or a sinner to kill the patients. During the 1990s, the religious believers strongly condemned those physician-assisted euthanasia so-called 'murderer' as violating the "common law" from theological principles. In the movie, the conditions of those times render the greatest hindrance to Jack Kevorkian's achievement which was legalized euthanasia. Assisted suicide is considered as a form of "homicide" in United States. Those patients who suffer painfully are being rejected to seek death which aggravates their pain in the rest of their life. Assisted suicide is a laudable behaviour in which every doctor defends the human rights of patients.

To begin with, it is justified that people can end their life in the manner they choose, without harm to others. In Utilitarianism, the purpose of the law is to promote the welfare to everyone. It should not restrict the liberty of citizens unless the activities or behaviour is detrimental or dangerous to others. In the film, when Kevorkian 'murdered' those patients who were asking him for help, he was simply helping them to take the easy way out by their own decisions. According to "The Harm Principle" by J.S. Mill, "The individual is sovereign." Personal behavior should be limited to prevent harm to other individuals. The principle concerns personal freedom. For instance, Kevorkian helps his friend Janet Good end her life and no harm was caused to others in the process of assisting suicide in the movie. Moreover, this is not someone else's business apart from the patients. The Harm Principle does not specify not stipulate what kind of qualified as harm. Self-discipline becomes another problem. However, in the situation of assisted suicide, the law would be set up according to the condition that what type of people conforms to euthanasia. Such as, in the film, Kevorkian rejected a patient with mental illness could be treated. For the classical utilitarian, the law prohibiting euthanasia is an unreasonable restriction on people's ability to control their own lives. Everybody has no limits of their natural rights including the right of euthanasia if their acts do not disturb the

free behaviour of others and cause no harm to others.

Secondly, it is morally right that when euthanasia can brighten the balance of happiness over unhappiness. Utilitarianism also involved "A Consequentialist Principle" meaning it "stresses the end and the goal of an action". The purpose of active euthanasia is to help the patients release their pain. In the film, Kevorkian's final patients called Thomas Youk was suffering from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, which caused a very large amount of pain and there was no way to be cured. He desperately wanted to end his life by assisted suicide which can maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Moreover, voluntary euthanasia conforms with "The Greatest Happiness Principle" which can "produce the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people". Physician-assisted suicide is painless whether the result and the action itself. The terminally ill patients are happy to get rid of the pain. The result of euthanasia can promote utility and happiness by eliminating the suffering from the patients, their families, and society. For instance, Youk's family required Kevorkian to 'kill' him in order to dispel their pain both mentally and physically. Utilitarians also believe that a person has complete sovereignty over their body, and any decision about their body depends on them rather than on other authorities. Therefore, assisted-dying is morally right for the Utilitarianism.

On the other hand, someone may claim that suicide or euthanasia is violating Kantian Deontology. This theory emphasizes duty instead of inclination (feelings). People should be treated as an end but not as means only. In the film, those patients use Kevorkian's sympathy as a means to achieve the goal of eliminating pain. Therefore, this is morally wrong according to Kant. However, it loses sight of the 2nd formulation of Categorical Imperative which is "The Concept of Consent". Human value is above anything else. "Human being have the highest intrinsic value". Our rational thinking is more valuable than all else. In voluntary euthanasia, people who have rational thinking can make their own decisions by their free will. If the doctor gets consent of euthanasia by those patients which gives people 'dignity' by allowing them the right to choose, this is morally right. For example, Kevorkian repeatedly confirmed with patients whether the patient has the will to die. Even the date of death and the method of death are also determined by the patient. When his first patient wanted to stop halfway, he respected the patient and ended the process. Therefore, if the patients have rational thinking, they can choose a way to die with dignity. Thus, assisted suicide has passed the 2nd formulation.

Last but not least, physician-assisted suicide can become a universal law. In the

1st formulation of Categorical Imperative, a rational person should “act only on that maxim that you can will as a universal law.” The key of Kantian Deontology lies on ‘autonomy’ yet also ‘heteronomy’, which means follow the law that you created. This principle would tell whether your act is morally permissible. People ought to follow the principle in every ethical dilemma. Let’s make a hypothetical example in the film. When Kevorkian set his maxim as “allow a person with rational thinking to end his or her life by physician-assisted suicide if he or she is under a huge amount of pain that is incurable or symptomatic” and everyone universalises this non-contradictory rule, it can be used to deal with all cases of euthanasia and support its moral acceptability. This rule can be adopted universally and must be binding on all rational agents. The requirements of morality are categorical. It can pass the 1st formulation and did not affect the world’s operations. Under this situation, physician-assisted suicide is morally right in terms of Kantian ethics and it can be implemented in society.

Pure and simple, Jack Kevorkian challenges the traditional religious ideas against legislating euthanasia. Based on both Utilitarianism and Kantian Deontology, assisted-dying is considered as morally right. Many patients point to concerns about the decline in quality of life and choose to end their lives before the pain worsens or mental impairment. Prohibition of euthanasia will cause the loss of autonomy and dignity. Therefore, the behaviour of physician-assisted suicide should be allowed and encouraged out of respect.

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Poems

A whale

April Chen Wan Yi



One hundred years ago,
He was
Born in the deep Mariana Trend
Wrapped in the warm equatorial currents
Resting in the broad seabed of Mexico Gulf
Swaying in the azure sky of wonderland.

One hundred years later,
He was
Breathing in the bloody smell of swirling
Engraved by numerous flesh scars
Fed by the colourful straws and bags
Struggling in the raging chaos of apocalypse.

Day by day
His mouth, his stomach, his blood is filled of
Plasticottonyloneedles.
His skin, his body, his tail is resolved in
Leadrossewage.

At that moment,
The dazzling sunlight is glittering in the dark foam
Making him remember the day,
the day he was born.

In that day,
Countless whales flowed with undercurrent
danced along the boundless Mariana Trend,
kissed the soaring seagulls upon Gulf of Mexico.

He closed his eyes,
Waiting for rolling waves
bringing him
to the seaside.

Hide-and-Seek

Lam Wing Hin



When you walk,
I follow behind, treading lightly.
When you run,
I trot along, gazing your back.

Soon,
I have no option but to wear my dusty glasses
To trace your marks.
However, the track is stretched
to the Moon

You conceal yourself behind the cloud
the thick layer of dust is floating in the air
rising in clouds
the dust is yet too thick.
The glasses cannot help me watch clearly
From afar.

I could only look back to the footprints
And walk along the trace
behind me.

There is no place like home

Makayla Wong Cho Ying



There is no place like home

The place where we live
was flourishing and boundless
every bird could use their voice
no matter what feather colour

But hunters came
Defined our home by bullets
shotgun destroyed the stage where we sang
Branches broken off to a tangle
The place where we live
Now turns to dust and chaos

Birds born in a cage
think flying is an illness
We turn our feather to black
Gather together to fight
For our home
For our right to sing
For us
eternally free

Hold your hand

Conny Zheng Cui Ting



She pulled out the needle from her patient's backhand,
threw it in the garbage can
and listened to her ravings.
Stood side and looked at that woman on the bed.
A face full of wrinkles, like mountain ridges.
When she clutched the calloused hand on the bed,
she could feel the rushing time, fixed with bitter.
This was the patient she had been taking care of for the longest time.

The old hand griped the young hand,
like children, holding their favourite toys.
She stayed bedside, stared at her and sighed
How long has it been?
Since they last held hands like this.

Two shadows.
One sat, one lied.
Hearing the steady breath, feeling the loosened grip.
She slowly put her hand into the quilt.
Whispered,
Good night.



Short Stories

Happy eighteenth birthday

April Chen Wan Yi

Outside the classroom, a candle was burning against the solid wind. The flame went out.

“Happy 18th birthday to me,” she whispered.

It was Amy’s 18th birthday. In front of the mirror, she stood still, staring at herself. She saw the reflection of a mature girl but couldn’t recognize her strange face. Two deep holes in her face—big as wells—had dried up since their first digging by an unknown person. Eighteen years had passed, and they were covered with slimy moss from head to bottom.

“Jump down, won’t you do it for me?” A voice from the wells murmured in a bloody smell of rust.

DING DING DING.

She put down her sleeves to cover the fresh cuts before leaving her dormitory. Even though it was merely 413 meters to get to her classroom, she still needed to drag herself towards the school. Her school bag weighed heavily on her skinny back. In the wind, a flood of students passed by and crowded into the mouth of dazzling stars.

“Good morning.” She said to Vicky, one of the dazzling stars in class.

“Why are you late again? You are wasting our class time so why don’t you just hand in the homework!”

Amy opened the schoolbag to find her wrinkled chemistry worksheet and gave it to her.

Vicky snatched it and hurried to the teacher’s office.

“Morning,” she responded.

As Amy stood, the freezing wind in December blew her hair to the back until it mingled with the wind and vanished. Amy tried hard to swallow the stone that was stuck in her throat and struggled to let it slowly roll down the mouth of well.

Class began. Enveloped in the regular reading sound, she sat in 90-degree upright position and buried her nose into the book.

" $\text{KMnO}_4 + \text{HCl} = \text{KCl} + \text{MnCl}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{Cl}_2$," she mumbled. " $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COOH} + \text{O}_2 = \text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COOH} + \text{O}_2 = \text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O}$...", she kept repeating the same equation.

Then Amy looked at blackboard and stared at the teachers' mouth. But she only heard sounds of iron ruler from the platform.

BANG BANG BANG.

That piercing metallic sound was tied with a rope and pulled some words out of the well. She couldn't hear what the teacher was saying. The classroom changed to her bedroom and the sound of her classmate around dimmed.

She heard two girls whispering outside of her door, as she walked ahead towards the sound.

"See, Jason is looking at me!" "I bet you are totally blind."

Two girls were walking, arm in arm. Two voices were gleaming on the silver rail of school aisle and ran far away.

"See, there is a dim star!" "Yeah, let me catch it."

Amy grasped a dim starlight in her palm in a way that little Amy would do when she curled up against the window of orphanage every midnight. But finally, she wanted to hide away from the only light that she had control over. The light yet sneaked away and merged with dazzling neon starlight.

DING DING DING.

The bedroom changed to her classroom.

She was waiting for something to hold the rope but only pen scratching sounds

slipped into 5-meter silence. Whispers of her classmates were heard.

She saw Vicky coming towards her, and out of habit she whispered the equation that she was learning today. " $2\text{KNO}_3 + 3\text{C} + \text{S} = \text{K}_2\text{S} + \text{N}_2 + 3\text{CO}_2$," she mumbled to Vicky.

Vicky looked at her, handed her an envelope, and told her to open it outside the school. Amy packed her bag in a hurry and left her school.

Today was Amy 18th birthday, she went out of the classroom without a single wish from her classmates. The rushing wind kept blowing her hair and finally pushed that stone down to the bottom.

"Dip."

She took out the envelope that Vicky gave her.

Inside it there was a birthday card with a bright candlelight and two smiling faces.

"Happy 18th birthday to you."

The fly

Diane Chen Yi Peng

Still in that old house, where I got stuck into. A fly approached the window. His body was green, covered by dense green fur. He laid on the stair of window, starting to rub his legs. The soles of his right foot rubbed on his left thigh. Rubbing its legs seems to be popular among his species as if they want to be welcomed. I stared at his hairy legs writhing up and down. Just the thought of his legs made me want to throw up.

I was lost in my thoughts. When I looked out of the window again, he disappeared just as his sudden visit. The only source of entertainment was gone. Wondering where he was, the corner of my eye grasped a shadow. Was that the fly? He moved so fast, shuttling back and forth across the room and fleeting. I could hardly make up my mind -- Let him stay or kill him?

He stopped suddenly, standing in front of me, I just realized that he was an unusual one, with half meter height. He stretched out the mouthparts, sticking into my neck like the way mantises kill and steal the most nutritional dew from the belly. I was immobilized until I was given power which made me bounce to the ground but he disappeared.

Into my eyes was the body beside me, my original flesh, my shape as a girl, lying on the floor without liveliness, more like a pile of rubble. Unconsciously, I rubbed my legs, too.

Affair

Jessica So Yau Nga

This is meant to be two-person partnership. Once there is three, the bond between will be cut. Society does not allow the form of three, and even human body structures come in two: eyes, ears, hands and feet. Just in pairs. I work in the company selling cosmetic products. I know that my colleagues see me as dull as ditchwater, who work from 6 am to the midnight. They all have their own leisure time, from hanging out with their boyfriends to raising children.

That night, after negotiating with my client, I walked by a night club. I had a sudden thought: why not go to a club for the first time in my life. I sat down. I looked around. Then I ordered a glass of wine, but I had to say it three times until the bartender got what I said. I took a sip. I now knew what 'alcohol' is. From the reflection of the glass bottle, I could see my face. Thinking about my colleagues, whose eyes were shiny, cheeks were crimson and wore earrings, I maybe an ordinary woman who seldom wore make-up. Then I swallowed more sips that I started to vomit. People next to me escaped.

'Are you okay?' A man in suit asked me and gave me a silk hankie.

I received it with thanks. After settling down, he told me that he had been observing me by the time I stepped into this club.

'It's interesting you don't wear make-up. Look at the other girls here,' he said.

'I seldom wear make-up,' I said.

'That's rare! Actually, girls look prettier with no make-up,' he says.

'Will you be here tomorrow?'

'Yes, I will'

'See you then.'

I am not sure if he was lying, but what he said was music to my ears, for a woman who had never been praised by a guy.

From that day onwards, every day when I knocked off work, I went to that club to meet him. Each time he arrived earlier than me. When he saw me, he flashed a smile.

He rarely talked about his business, or even his own life. There were many questions I wanted to ask him, but I held back at last. Maybe I was afraid to know his personal life.

At a fixed time at midnight, he would go to the washroom for a while to receive a phone call. I did not know who was calling him, but I forced myself not to think about it. Ignorance is bliss. Perhaps this relationship was not even real. Were we both treating each other as friends? I did not know. But I really enjoyed the way he embraced me. I melted into his arms.

'Do you love me?' I asked him in bed. He replied with a kiss on my hand.

Our business continued. Except for one night that something happened. I went to the club as usual. Before I entered, I saw him outside.

'My friend told me that you're dating with a woman here recently, uh?'

A lady with a beautiful face in silk dress was questioning him. I could tell that she was wearing heavy make-up even from afar.

'Answer me, Jonas!'

Jonas? Oh it's his name.

Only by then I realised I did not even know his name. I thought he would not come the next day, but he did. I saw a ring on his right hand.

'You always arrive earlier than me,' I said.

'This place gives me comfort,' he replied.

'What do you mean by that?'

'You know, sometimes when you can't find a place you feel comfortable, you

suffocate.'

I guess he referred to the state when he stayed at his own home, but the word 'suffocate' seemed to imply something.

'A glass of wine, please.'

'Do you still remember the first time we met? You ordered this thing and you vomitted.'

'Of course I do. It's quite embarrassing, actually.'

'I guess this would be the last glass of whisky I drink at this place. I used to think the taste is acceptable, but now I think it's kind of bitter.'

'I only want to ask one thing: have you ever loved me?'

'Drink this.'

At that time, I got the answer. That night, we drank a lot, but neither of us talked much.

'Bye,' he said.

'See you again,' I said.

Being trapped

Grace Zou Min Yan

I wake up. The whole world is black. Sometimes I wonder if my eyes are open. Slowly and lightly, I keep touching my face with fingers, until my palm feels something itchy. This feeling reminds me of Lily, our dog, who likes to lick my hand for cookies. Lily has disappeared for a long time. I still remember that day when I came home from school. I couldn't find Lily. I even asked my father if he had seen Lily, but he just held his beer bottle and shooed me away. Then I asked my brother, who often played with Lily. He said Lily ran away when he took him to the park. Honestly, I doubted it. For that reason, I sneaked into the backyard where my brother never allowed me to approach. But I didn't find any trace of Lily. Only one strange thing, something seemed to have been dragged across the grassland, leaving a long trail on the ground.

It was quite out there, and I kept my mouth closed. I understood it was the part of the game. This game is called the silent game, which our mother taught us. Whenever my father violently smashed against the door from the outside with a bottle of beer in his hand, our mother called us to her side, starting the silent game. The critical point was to keep silent until she found us. She put us in the cabinet, putting a chair covered with clothes in front of the cabinet. I couldn't see anything outside because the chair blocked off my sight. Keeping silent in the closet could be a bit boring, but I could stand it, for victory, and for something interesting in the closet. I was addicted to observing my brother's actions. The light leaked from the holes of the cabinet projected on his face, which let me see them clearly. It was weird for me: I had never seen that facial expression ever before. His eyes fixed on something outside the cabinet, and I could see he bit his lips with force. Maybe he wanted to win, I thought. Every time when our mother opened the door, she praised me for my good performance. My brother stood beside mother and kept pulling mother's hand. But mother just smiled, then snatched her hand away.

By the way, why does he still not come to find me? I know he is not a good player, but it takes too long. The last time it took so long, my brother and I opened the cabinet by ourselves, then we saw our father still holding his bottle, but a broken one, and there was a lot of blood on it. He stood there, staring at

my mother. My mother leaned on the couch with her hair covering most of her face. Suddenly, my brother picked up the knife in the kitchen, rushing straight to my father, sticking it into his face. Up and down. I could see his neck was spurting blood, like the volcanic eruption. I could see my brother waved the knife when I kept my head down, and I could see the blood flowing out from father gathered into a small pool.

They said that there was a group of gangsters who robbed our house and killed my parents when they were trying to fight with them in self-defense. My brother just stood there, looking at the pool of blood. I also kept my mouth shut as I did in the cabinet.

Then we were sent to a distant relative, whose family did not welcome us. My brother became more and more silent. When he reached 18, he took me far away from our hometown, settling in a new town.

He treats me well as before. There are many times I have seen him bringing different girls back to our home. They drank. I also saw him dragging those girls to the kitchen, and then he put me in the cabinet, started the silent game. By the time he opened the closet door, the girls were gone. I asked where the girls had been, and he just said they had already left. I was curious, isn't cold outside? How could they leave here with their shoes still at the front door?

I stop thinking as my consciousness begins to blur. I want to stop the game. I want to open the door, but I can't. I keep knocking at the door, wishing that my brother can take me out. But it all comes to silence. Is it still a silent game? I don't know. I can't breathe anymore.