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THAT

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Each year through the student societies, students from Cultural Studies (CULS), Professional Communication and English Studies (PENG), and Bilingual Language and Literature Studies (BLLS) 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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ART AND
LITERATURE

Giselle, A Romantic Classical Ballet

Zhou Shuning, Jessica

Giselle, a romantic and classical genre ballet, was performed on stage on the 4th of November 2018 at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Grand Theatre. The music of *Giselle* was composed by the prolific opera and ballet composer Adolphe Adam, with Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot creating the choreography. *Giselle* is one of the world's most frequently performed classical ballets, and also it is one of the most challenging one to perform. In this report, the performance, the stagecraft and the choreography will be analyzed in detail.

The play was written soon after the end of the French Revolution. Middle-class families flourished in France and they tended to enjoy performances related to everyday life, instead of something far fetched like Greek mythology, which was mainly adored by the diminishing upper-class nobles. The themes of this romantic tragedy are love, death and redemption. The ballet is divided into two acts: the first act portrays an innocent and beautiful peasant girl, Giselle, who falls in love with a deceitful and disguised nobleman Albrecht, who has already been engaged with his fiancée, Bathilde. When Giselle finds out the truth, she forces herself to dance till her fragile heart gives in. In the second act, it shows the Wills, a group of mystic and supernatural women, wandering in darkness, avenging themselves by using their dark magic, forcing any men they may encounter to dance to their

deaths. In this act, they want Albrecht to pay with his life for Giselle. However, with the great power of love from Giselle, Albrecht survives, but lives with loneliness.

As a whole, this particular rendering of *Giselle* is naturalistic and believable to some extent, except the supernatural scene. Aiming to harmonize with the unique characteristics in the 19th century, performers are dressed with costumes fashionable at the time. The body language is also professionally delivered and is believed to reflect mannerism of the time. Since ballet itself belongs to a kind of high culture, and it is performed with body language without any dialogue. As a beginner to ballet, I dare not claim to follow completely the conventions of ballet mannerism.

According to the Knapp and Hall's functions of nonverbal codes (1997), this performance of *Giselle* portrays emotions, identities and values through their non-verbal communication. All cultures display rules which govern when and in what context certain nonverbal expressions are required, permitted, preferred, or prohibited (Lustig and Koester, 2010). As in the performance of the first act, *Giselle* transforms her feelings towards Albrecht from being shy to being fully accepting and deeply in love. When Albrecht expresses his love to *Giselle* and hopes that she would accept him, *Giselle* lowers her head and is too shy to look into his eyes, playing with her white dress bashfully. And when Albrecht touches her hands and invites her to dance, *Giselle* retracts her hands immediately and turns away from Albrecht. These body languages perfectly illustrate the "substitute" function of non-verbal communication codes, eliminating the need for speech.

Focusing on the stagecraft, beautiful costumes indirectly express different identities of the characters. Especially in dance dramas,

costume plays an essential part in the plot for characterization, shaping unique personality or social status. In the beginning, contrast can be revealed through different styles of costumes in a prominent way. For example, the peasant girl wears a simple dress, with pretty wildflowers on her head. On the contrary, the noble fiancée has an aristocratic dress, adorned with a kind of formal, luxurious and fine embroidery in a silk-like material. The obvious contrast represents their difference in class, showing different social status. For Albrecht, when he is disguised as a peasant boy, he removes the black cape, boots and sword that symbolize royalty and upper-class identity, and puts on a kind of brown countryside-style costume. When his identity has been exposed, he changes his clothes into a blue one, which looks nobler than the brown one. Thus, different identities are illustrated by the costumes they wear. In the second act, the dead Giselle wears a pure white flimsy dress with white long yarn covering her face, forming a contrast with the costume of the lively rural girl. The simple white dress gives people a sense of mystery and gruesomeness, creating a supernatural atmosphere, also helping to illustrate the identity of Giselle as a ghost.

Another section that is worth mentioning is the music that accompanies Giselle, an iconic melody that Adolphe Adam composes. It has two prominent characteristics. In general, Adolphe Adam emphasizes the combination of sound, dance and scene-setting, attaching great significance to promoting plot development through music. For instance, when Giselle and Albrecht fall in love with each other and dance, the background music is lively. It has a soft dynamic. The texture is clear and light, expressing their happiness. It also mixes with strong musical accompaniment. The quick tempo releases nervous emotions to the audience. Compared with these different kinds of rhythm, it

indicates that a pitiless fate would control their love. Traditional rank, order and class distinction take the leading role in their love story, suggesting a tragic ending. Secondly, the melody may be the first using the 'Main Melody Penetration Method' in the dance music. This method means that the melody that appeared in the past plot would be played again. The light texture and lively melody that accompany Giselle and Albrecht's falling in love appear again when Giselle finds out about the fiancée, recalling their romantic moments. This method not only contributes to making the plots more compact, but also sets an iconic example for the music of dance drama in the future.

Giselle is an artistic work that is based on the classic ballet, so there is no doubt that dancing is a significant element. Jules Perrot is one of the choreographers of this ballet. He is the elderly dancing teacher in Edgar Degas's famous impressionism painting, *The Dance Class*. This painting shows that he is of vital significance to ballet. In my opinion, the most attractive part is "the dance of spirits," a group of girls in white dress dancing in harmony with a mysterious and dark atmosphere. Although they dance elegantly, they also give the feeling of mercilessness and cold-heartedness.

Among the classical ballets like *Giselle*, the "arabesque" is quite famous. It was created by Perrot and has been admired throughout the world until now. This posture appears many times during the act, "the dance of the ghosts." Performers stand still on their toes. The bending action is counterbalanced by lifting the upper back, enabling body weight to be lowered on the supporting foot. The height of the raised leg is sustained at a 90-degree angle (Ryman, 1997). Their arms are stretched one high and one low in front, like flying in the air freely without any gravity. This posture gives the audience the feeling of ghostly lightness and mystery,

connecting with the plot that when Giselle dies, her spirit transforms into a ghost. Even though Giselle is ordered to kill Albrecht, through her gentle dancing movements, we could still experience the heartbreak.

In “the dance of spirits,” the large group of girls dance in various dynamic postures and movements. They lift their legs in the same direction and at the same time, lining one by one straightly in harmony. They form a circle and leap agilely from one side of the stage to another side neatly. Then they split into pairs symmetrically, extending their arms higher and lifting their legs, showing the energy of smoothness and flexibility. It seems like they are communicating to the audience, explaining their love to their husbands, crying and complaining about their miserable fate, and criticizing inequality in society.

Giselle expresses the multiple themes of persistence and deception, light and darkness, life and death. According to Edward T. Hall (1990), Iceberg Theory is closely connected with the themes of this ballet. “Culture hides more than it reveals:” the costumes and dance represent the part of the iceberg above water. The hidden part below the sea is represented by the body language that belongs to the 19th century. Maybe because of the restriction of class distinction, Giselle struggles in a life of innocence, happiness, and despair. Ideology conditions behaviour, and in behaviour we detect the spirit of the time.

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The Mysterious Human Psyche

Ng Ho Lun, Ron

Mental illnesses have always been a mysterious puzzle which cannot be solved completely. It is hard to explain how it works. In this essay, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) and *The Raven* (1845) will be compared and contrasted. *A Streetcar Named Desire*, a play that was written by Tennessee Williams, is about how the protagonist Blanche DuBois goes mad after she has left her own life and sought refuge with her sister, Stella, and her husband, Stanley. *The Raven*, a poem by Edgar Allan Poe, is about the process of the protagonist going crazy and questioning the raven about his lost love named Lenore. Both of the protagonists from the stories suffer from serious mental problems due to the lack of the fulfillment of sexual desire and the loss of love respectively. There is also similar symbolism between the two stories.

Firstly, “the return of the repressed” is a crucial factor that leads the protagonist to be mad in both stories. In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the character Blanche goes insane at the end of the story. Similarly, the narrator from *The Raven* is also crazy, as shown in his conversation with a speaking raven. According to John Storey (2009), Freud claims that repression means keeping something away from our consciousness. In our daily life, we receive a lot of information and we are not able to remember every single one of them, so most of the things are being stored and repressed into our

unconscious. Also, Storey (2009) avers, “In this way, then, we could say that repression is a special form of amnesia; it removes all the things with which we cannot or will not deal.” The above statement also claims that repression is to prevent us from remembering the things which we cannot or do not want to handle, for example, some unhappy and painful memories. Besides, in both *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Raven*, the protagonists suffer from their own unpleasant memories. For Blanche, she was fired by the school because she had a relationship with a student. This incident is the memory that she wants to forget and does not want others to know about. In the same way, the speaker in *The Raven* also suffers because he tries to forget his lost love. However, in both of the stories, the protagonists have not successfully repressed the unpleasant memories, which results in the return of the repressed. In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the secret of Blanche is exposed by Stanley. Blanche is raped by Stanley and it triggers off her repressed memories and leads her to insanity at the end of the story. In *The Raven*, the trigger of the speaker’s madness is the conversation with the raven. The raven in the poem responds to the speaker with only one word, “Nevermore.” The speaker asks the raven more and more questions, which intensify his pain. The repetition of “nevermore” finally drives him crazy. Both protagonists go mad because of the return of the repressed, which is triggered off by different people or objects.

Secondly, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Raven* both use an object to symbolize their themes. In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the protagonist Blanche takes a streetcar named desire and seeks refuge with her sister Stella. It can be said that the streetcar symbolizes Blanche’s identity. According to Storey:

The id (identity) is the most primitive part of our being. It is the part of 'our nature [which] is impersonal, and, so to speak, subject to natural law' (Freud, 1984: 362); it is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality . . . a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations (Storey, 2009, P.92).

In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the action of riding the streetcar symbolizes Blanche's behaviour that starts to follow her own instinct and impulse and she lets her id take over herself. These behaviours are shown in scene 5. In this scene, she was flirting with the young man with her fancy words like "Young man! Young, young, young man! Has anyone ever told you that you look like a young Prince out of the Arabian Nights?" She also sexualises herself by touching his cheek and kissing him. The above actions expose her hypocrisy. She did not use to show her true colours to others but at this point of the story, she seeks only sexual excitement and disregards conventional moral norms. On the other hand, in *The Raven*, the speaking raven symbolizes the unconscious of the speaker. Throughout the poem, the speaker talks to the raven and the raven's replies cause his madness. The raven seems to be just an illusion. There is no raven in the room at all. The speaker is only talking to himself, his own unconscious. The conversation between him and his unconscious represents the struggle inside his mind. In one perspective, the speaker wants to escape from the pain by forgetting his love. But in another perspective, he does not want to forget his love in order to preserve the happy memories. This contradiction inside his mind tortures him to madness. The symbolism in both stories represents the inner selves of the protagonists which include their desires and impulses in the unconscious.

Thirdly, both protagonists suffer from the condition of “the lack” according to Lacanian psychoanalysis, which is also the reason why they descend to madness at the end. “According to Lacan, we are born into a condition of ‘lack’, and subsequently spend the rest of our lives trying to overcome this condition” (Storey, 2009, P.101). “The lack” is the basic condition of a human being. Since we left our mother’s body, we have already suffered from the lack and we do not feel perfect anymore because we want to go back to the mother’s body in order to find comfort and completeness. According to Lacan, our life is just like a quest to overcome this condition and fulfill our desires in order to find perfection. In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Blanche suffers from the lack. Before her husband was gone, she has already suffered from the lack because she knew her husband was gay. In other words, inside the relationship between Blanche and her husband, she cannot actually fulfill her sexual desire because her husband is not sexually interested in her. Blanche tries to escape from the lack and fulfill her lust temporarily by flirting with different men. However, the lack is never filled up because she cannot really find true love throughout the whole play, which results in madness. Similarly, in *The Raven*, the speaker suffers from the lack because he lost his wife. Originally, the speaker was able to deal with the lack temporarily because he had Lenore with him and the happy experience made him forget about his innate incompleteness. However, when he lost her, the lack resurfaces. The loneliness and nostalgia of the narrator show the lack, which causes his breakdown.

To sum up, both *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Raven* offer some insights into the human psyche. They share similar symbolism about the inner selves of the protagonists. Such insights define them as two pieces of great literature.

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Gender Stereotype in *M. Butterfly* (1988) and *The Danish Girl* (2015)

Mak Tsz Kwan, Karen

Gender stereotype is defined as the common preconception of characteristics performed by women and men (OHCHR, n.d.). *M. Butterfly* (1988) and *The Danish Girl* (2015) present two worlds of gender stereotypes and challenge the conventional gender differences. In *M. Butterfly*, David Henry Hwang uses Song, who is a male spy dressed as a woman to please man, to problematize the binary gender identity. *The Danish Girl*, a screenplay by Lucinda Coxon, portrays a male painter Einar Wegener, who discovers his feminine character inside him called Lili and takes sex reassignment surgery in order to live as a woman, under the protection of his wife Gerda. This film tries to challenge the traditional gender stereotypes of masculine men and feminine women. The following discusses the complexity of gender assignments and stereotypes.

Men are expected to be masculine in both stories. According to Bederman and Stimpson (1995), masculinity can be linked with authority and power shown in attributes or sex roles. In *M. Butterfly*, Hwang presents masculinity by portraying Marc as a sex-driven man. When Gallimard is struggling to pursue Song or not as he is a married man, Marc suggests “I cheated after ... six months. Then again and again until now - three hundred girls in twelve years” (Hwang, 1988, 1.9.24). It suggests that Marc has

a colourful sex life with many women and enjoy exercising his power in sex. In their conversation talking about the girl who loves a superior position in sex, Marc says “We all wanted to ball her. But she only wanted me” (Hwang, 1988, 1.11.33). Marc is proud that he has tamed a girl, who played hard to get, which further represents his male power. From how Marc behaves in front of Gallimard, it is seen that a man is expected to be dominant in a sex relationship. *The Danish Girl* shows the gender stereotype of man by illustrating how Einar’s feminine action is not accepted by others. Einar acts as a woman more often after joining the ball with the identity of Lili. Einar goes to a doctor and describes his feminine persuasion to the doctor. The doctor responds, “You know, the most likely explanation for all of this is a chemical imbalance. That would explain the pain, confused state of masculinity, infertility.” When the doctor concludes that his femininity was caused by the chemical imbalance, the doctor thinks masculinity is an inherent characteristic of a man, and a man acting feminine is regarded as pathological. It shows that man is often recognized as masculine. To sum up, *M. Butterfly* points out the sex-driven stereotype of a man while *The Danish Girl* suggests the deeply-rooted masculine stereotyping.

On the other hand, both *M. Butterfly* and *The Danish Girl* point out the gender stereotype of weak and submissive women. In *M. Butterfly*, Gallimard’s wife is portrayed to be a traditional housewife relying on her husband. In the time of Cultural Revolution, Helga was expelled by the police on the street as she was regarded as a member of the Red Guard. She describes, “I tried to shout, to tell them I was the wife of a diplomat” (Hwang, 1988, 2.11.73-74). It shows that she relies on her husband’s career achievement, which constructs a dependent woman image. Moreover, Gallimard is frank with Helga about his relationship

with Song. “Gallimard: I’ve had a mistress/ Helga: So? / Gallimard: For eight years/ Helga: I knew you would. I knew you would the day I married you” (Hwang, 1988, 2.11.75). It suggests that women are often betrayed and abandoned by men like trash when they have found a new companion. Hwang suggests the stereotype that women should be dominated by men and be submissive and dependent on men. In *The Danish Girl*, a submissive image of women is shown in Lili. The body of Lili is male but his inner self is female. How Lili imagines her appearance represents some stereotypes of women. Every time Lili meets Henrik, she dresses up wearing high heels and puts on makeup. Her appearance represents how women should dress up to meet men’s expectations. Moreover, she speaks softly and walks in small steps, which also constructs the image of feminine elegance. When Lili is preparing to take the second stage of sex reassignment surgery, Doctor Warnekros comforts Lili that he would be on her side. Lili responds, “I want a husband who looks just like you,” which means that Lili hopes to be loved by someone taking care of her and staying with her. It suggests that women want to rely on men. Both plays suggest the stereotype of submissive women with how they should behave and rely on men.

Lastly, both plays challenge gender stereotypes by suggesting that gender qualities are not fixed. In *M. Butterfly*, Hwang uses Song, who pretends to be weak and submissive so as to explore gender stereotypes. Being a spy for the Communist Party, Song pretends to be a woman to seduce Gallimard for military intelligence. Song and Gallimard meet after Gallimard neglects Song for a long time. “Gallimard: Are you my Butterfly?/ Song: yes, I am. I am your Butterfly./ I am your treasure./ I’ll do my best to make you happy” (Hwang, 1988, 1.13.39-40). Song submits herself to Gallimard like a tool and serves Gallimard. However, Song’s femininity is all inside

Gallimard's head only. Under the woman's costume is a man. Song plays Gallimard for his spy mission, which demonstrates how a man can also use femininity as a weapon to dominate other men. Song also presents his male dominance when he reveals his male identity to Gallimard. "Song: Perhaps I was treating you cruelly. But now - I'm being nice. Come here, my little one" (Hwang, 1988, 3.1.86). As Song commands Gallimard, it shows his dominance as if Gallimard belonged to him. It is seen that Song has binary gender identities with his cross-dressing. In this case, Hwang suggests that appearance can create the illusion of gender qualities so gender is constructed beyond biology. A similar idea appears in *The Danish Girl*, the multi-gender qualities of Gerda are used to question fixed gender qualities. Gerda presents how both feminine and masculine characteristics can appear in one person. For her masculine side, she is aggressive in her career of art.

In conclusion, *M. Butterfly* and *The Danish Girl* present similar gender stereotypes of "masculine man and feminine woman." The two plays further challenge these gender stereotypes by presenting characters with different gender qualities. In *M. Butterfly*, Hwang uses Song to suggest that gender is constructed beyond biology. While in *The Danish Girl*, Einar (Lili) and Gerda are used to suggest the complex gender qualities. The gender stereotypes in both plays reveal that people in general focus on appearances only, when in fact, gender is often fluid.

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FILMS

You Don't Know Jack (2010)

Huang Jie Yi, Lora

You don't know Jack (2010) was adapted from the true story of Jack Kevorkian. It is about a doctor who works hard to promote euthanasia. He believes that euthanasia is a service rather than murder. He tried different methods so people could understand his ideas, such as showing the patients conducting euthanasia on social media. According to Boelpaep and Herron (2019), euthanasia can lead to death but it reduces the suffering of the patients. It is a controversial moral issue in the world — should we give up our lives to reduce suffering? In this essay, the reasons supporting euthanasia will be explained by using Kantianism and utilitarianism. First of all, according to utilitarianism, euthanasia has caused controversies in society and one of those is about the right to death. Second, euthanasia has also prompted more organ donations. Third, according to Kantianism, if we force the patient to live, the pain of treatment will become torture to the patient. Therefore, I support patients who give up their lives to reduce suffering.

To begin with, *You don't know Jack* is about a “death doctor” Jack, who has witnessed the tremendous pain his mother suffered before she died. Since then he starts to promote euthanasia as he cannot bare to see patients suffer. His first attempt failed, but the patient's pain has made him more devoted to promoting euthanasia. Janet Adkins, a woman with Alzheimer's, becomes Jack's first patient. This case brings out the biggest controversy of

the movie: can people choose death freely? Janet Adkins' case arouses a great debate in society. Jack and his supporters come under fire from human rights activists. At the end, Jack personally injects a lethal substance into a patient and releases the video, which prompts the police to define the case as murder. Jack is convicted at the end.

Some people may think that the court finally found Jack guilty, which means that Jack's behaviour was unethical. However, I disagree. Since Jack has caused a lot of controversies in society, people begin to think about the meaning of death. Euthanasia enables people to choose a painless death, and one has to think carefully. As shown in the film, the euthanasia operation conducted by Jack is determined by the patient who presses the button. The patient's will is repeatedly confirmed before the surgery begins. The opinion of the family is also taken into consideration. In the film, Jack assists many patients to commit suicide. For example, Sherry Miller, a patient with pelvic pain who had undergone ten operations and attempted three suicides. She thinks it is meaningless for her to live. Janet Good, a woman who suffers from cancer, assists Jack to promote euthanasia. From the perspective of utilitarianism, Jack has helped them get rid of pain and let them die peacefully and gracefully. Besides, what is illegal does not mean that it is immoral. In utilitarianism, what maximizes happiness and reduces pain is right. Euthanasia reduces negative emotions in the patients and their families, so euthanasia should be regarded as moral.

Secondly, Jack's promotion of euthanasia has prompted more organ donations. Jack gives people who want to commit suicide a right to die, and indirectly gives patients, who are waiting for an organ donation, a chance to survive. In my opinion, since patients who require euthanasia want to die meaningfully with dignity,

they are more likely to donate organs to help others in need. Euthanasia benefits people as they are endowed with the right to die or to live. Jack's behaviour embodies the respect for patients, who want to die, and the compassion for patients who want to survive.

Thirdly, from the perspective of Kantianism, I believe his motive is good, as he wants to help patients get rid of the pain. His behaviour was groundbreaking at the time. Without Jack's euthanasia, the patients would continue to be tortured by the disease and eventually die in pain. Jack says, "When a patient in agony dies, then a doctor's true calling implies one should do what is best, at the patient's request for humane, quick and painless demise." He thinks he has the obligation to help his patients because he is a doctor. Jack does not perform euthanasia casually. He has rejected some cases of severe depression and early Parkinson's disease. It can be seen that he does not admire suicide. Kant advocates self-discipline and rationality, which would lead people to act ethically. As euthanasia is chosen by people in their rational minds, the main point is the agreements from patients, and the practice of focusing on the bearer of action is consistent with Kant's obligation. In my opinion, Jack decides to help people euthanize based on people's expectations is reasonable as patients have given their expressed consent. The process can also be stopped by the patients at any point.

In conclusion, I think Jack's motive for euthanasia is to let patients die without pain. He thinks a doctor should be kind. Besides, he has successfully raised the awareness of the right to die in the general public by questioning conventional thinking. It also results in an increase in the number of organ donations. I think Jack's euthanasia should be considered morally laudable.

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Denis Villeneuve's *Sicario* (2015)

Tang Tsz Lik

Since Donald J. Trump was elected the President of the United States, the relationship between the US and Mexico has become tense. The border policy of the US undergoes changes. *Sicario* depicts the moral ambiguity of it, revolving around the issue of drug wars that have already ruined many lives. *Sicario* is a good exploration of what morality is. In order to eliminate the problem, the US government in the film deploys a special task force, but the extralegal or somewhat dehumanized approach toward the war is questionable. This is the morality of what regarded as “black ops” (black operations) that director Denis Villeneuve and scriptwriter Taylor Sheridan would like to challenge in *Sicario*. In the following, the black ops would be explicated as morally unjustifiable, with the aid of utilitarianism and Kantian Deontology. [1]

Neither the effectiveness of the actions nor the seriousness of the drug war can glorify the lack of morals in the operation. The representative of this topic is Matt, the leader of the operation, and the morality of the operation is going to be discussed. According to Foucault, transparency of law enforcement ensures the discipline of the actions. [2] However, in case of the black op, there is no transparency at all. When the sense of surveillance vanishes, the need to obey the law diminishes. Extreme violence is shown frequently in the film. So, what does the brutality do? It

causes the US agents to “dramatically overreact,” [3] which leads to the US inflicting wars and chaos among the drug cartels. Wars and chaos, these two generate a solid share of suffering, pain, and agony to Mexican citizens but foster an imponderable amount of benefits to the US general public, which is immoral in the utilitarian perspective. Moreover, the damages the Mexicans suffer are traumatizing, despite them being portrayed in the film subtly. The coldblooded killing of the gangsters and an FBI agent participating in torturing people demonstrate that the operation does not respect human rights. The acknowledgement of “dramatically overreact,” as Matt said in the scene, also reveals that the true nature of the operation is more than retribution, with its unnecessary intensity. Another decision should be considered immoral is the employment of Alejandro. He has no “good will,” hence immoral in Kant’s point of view as well. Besides, the US agents and the US government have no jurisdiction in Mexico. This operation is *de facto* not a Kantian duty for the US.

Immorality is also embodied in how personal vengeance is being executed in the disguise of social justice and law enforcement. Alejandro, the revenging hitman, discusses the distinction within retribution, punishment and personal vendetta. Referring to Foucault, the idea of punishment is to stop crime but not to create terror. [4] What Alejandro does in the film is undoubtedly very terrifying and manipulative. The killing, torturing and threatening people with no mercy or sense of guilt, surely indicate that he does not respect the value of life and human rights according to Kantian Deontology. [5] Firstly, what encourages Alejandro is rage and revenge. [6] Law and duty cannot tame him. Personal factors take control of almost all his actions. Besides, Alejandro has killed way more people than he has to, far more severe than “an eye for an eye.” [7] Although he is working for the

US government in the name of justice as a special agent to fight drug cartels, the motives and executions are not on par with the duty of law enforcement. Kantian Deontology clearly rejects Alejandro's behaviour and recognizes his action as immoral, the same goes with utilitarianism. According to J. Rachels and S. Rachels (2007), utilitarianism objects to all forms of punishment and "paying back" since these actions generate unhappiness. [8] As Alejandro is creating chaos and wars, his actions bring much despair to the city.

It is crucial to highlight that duty and law enforcement are not the right excuses for institutionalized police brutality. Considering that the domestic agency is responsible for enabling and approving the operation, Kate would be the perfect example to illustrate the relationship between institution and morality. According to Gross (2007), long term institutionalization can alternate a person's morality, thus forming an "immoral" morality. [9] Foucault (1975) explains that law enforcement is always being empowered, and a false sense of morality can also be magnified simultaneously. [10] In the film, Kate is reassured by her boss that the whole operation follows the regular procedures and regulations, which Kate doubts seriously. [11] Executing missions under the law and regulations does not mean the actions are morally acceptable. First of all, utilitarianism despises punishments if they do not generate happiness. The punishments adopted by the US government in the film eventually lead to more suffering in Mexico. The leader of the drug cartel even claims that they have learned those extreme methods from the US law enforcement. [12] The film does not exhibit how well the US would become after the operation, but clearly foreshadows the chaos and agony brought by the operation in Mexico. The brutality and extralegal punishments are not in

accordance with the universal laws promulgated in both utilitarianism and Kantian Deontology. Kant believes that decisions should be made from duty rather than personal desires or wants: "... one must follow from a sense of duty, regardless of one's wants or desires" (J. Rachels & S. Rachels, 2007, p.127). In this case, Kate logically knows she is not doing the right thing, in the light of the extensive use of institutionalized brutality that exceeds normal regulations. What Kate abides by is the personal emotional connection between the US law enforcement and herself, called "loyalty," [13] but not duty. The institutionalized police brutality does not respect human rights and extends far beyond fair retribution.

Executing morals in real life is complicated, yet examining morality and logic on paper is much easier. While different moral principles portray different perceptions on a moral issue, when and where to apply those principles are always debatable. Morality benefits human beings to maintain peace and harmony from negotiating moral theories and dilemmas. But from the police brutality presented in *Sicario* that causes chaos and destruction to Mexico, audiences like us are able to see that the line between good and evil is thin and vague. Parallel to contemporary Hong Kong that is going through a tough and chaotic moment, police brutality is unveiled in the ugliest and the most vicious ways. As the boundaries of extralegal law enforcement have pretty much vanished, Hong Kong becomes Alejandro's "the land of wolves." It is important to stay sane and rational in this difficult situation. As Fisher (2019) says, "as the history of war has proven time and time again, though, sometimes the only way to combat the bigger threat is to get your hands dirty. However, when you cross that immoral line, it's impossible to come back."

Notes:

[1] Rachels (2007, p. 120 - 138) explains Kantian Deontology with "hypothetical imperatives", as almost consistent rules that have no exceptions. A decision or moral judgment must be supported with good reasons and good motives, regardless of emotions or desires, emphasizing on logic and duties. Also, Kantian Deontology treats human beings as the ultimate goal. Human rights should be well respected. And in order to maintain law and order, retributivism in criminal punishment is morally acceptable.

[2] Foucault (1975, p. 187) explains the visibility of law enforcement assures the transparency of the power that is exercised over them, which the police force has to obey laws and regulations under supervision. "Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is this fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection."

[3] In *Sicario* (2015), at about 00:12:25, during the recruiting scene, Matt explains the objective of the operation as "to dramatically overreact."

[4] Foucault (1975, p. 9) explains the goal of punishment is to stop criminal activity from happening again, but not to terrify the public. "It is the certainty of being punished and not the horrifying spectacle of public punishment that must discourage crime."

[5] Rachels (2007, p. 132) explains that Kant thinks that humans are rational beings and humans should treat themselves with respect and never manipulate people, no matter what. "The being we are talking about are rational beings, and 'treating them as end-in-themselves' means respecting their rationality. Thus we may never manipulate people, or use people, to achieve our purpose, no matter how good those purposes may be."

[6] In *Sicario*, at about 01:35:45, during the Kate and Matt fighting scene, Matt explains that Alejandro works for anybody who will point him toward the people who made him, so he can get the person who orders the murder of his family. Alejandro is doing everything for revenge.

[7] Rachels (2007, p. 134 & p. 136), explains that, for Kant, the suffering of the criminal is deserved and once for all. "For the extra suffering is borne by the criminal who, after all, deserves it." "Kant says it is important to punish the criminal proportionately to

the seriousness of his crime. Small punishments may suffice for small crimes, but big punishments are necessary in response to big crimes."

[8] Rachels (2007, p. 133), explains in terms of Utilitarianism, punishment is evil and there should be no punishment since punishment draws hatred and unhappiness. "All punishment is mischief: all punishment in itself is evil."

[9] Gross (2007, p.492 & p. 503) explains loyalty in the Nazi as "immoral" morality. He says that an institution can shift people's morality, even in justifying criminal activities. "We can in this sense talk of a National Socialist morality without anticipating conceptual and substantive investigation of the problem raised here of what we might call an extremely 'immoral' morality." "This is to do with the fact that crimes can hardly ever be committed without some form of communal justification. A shift in morality, the inculcation of a particular morality is an essential condition for the commitment of crimes. In this respect morality is part of the deed. Questioning the specific concept of loyalty touches upon this form of participation."

[10] Foucault (1975, p. 22) explains that law enforcement can be empowered continuously through re-inscription. "Today, criminal justice functions and justifies itself only by this perpetual reference to something other than itself, by this unceasing re-inscription in non-judicial systems."

[11] At about 01:02:20, during the scene where Kate meets her boss, Kate asks, "I want to follow some semblance of procedure." Boss replies, "So, if your fear is operating out of bounds, I'm telling you, you are not."

[12] In the film *Sicario* (2015), at about 01:45:40, during the Alejandro infiltration scene, the drug cartel leader says to Alejandro, "Do you think the people that send you here are any different? Who do you think we learned it from?"

[13] Gross (2007, p. 492) explains loyalty as a sense of concepts or relationships or values. "The concept of "loyalty" can express both a relative and an absolute relationship. It is for instance relative in the sense of theology's conception of faithfulness to God, of the law's conception of fidelity to a contract, of the conception of loyalty to an alliance in politics, or in respect of a personal relationship."

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Gender Stereotypes and Male Gaze in *Pretty Woman* (1990)

Ng Ho Lun, Ron

Although the present society evolves rapidly, inequality still remains a serious social problem. Rakow (2008) avers, “the cultural theory approach argues that popular culture plays a role in patriarchal society.” In 1990, a Hollywood film named *Pretty Woman* was released and caused massive discussion in society. This film is about a love story between a successful businessman, Edward, and a prostitute, Vivian. There are different gender stereotypes portrayed. There is also a strong implication about the subordination of women in the film. In this essay, how the characters, Edward and Vivian, both reinforce and challenge the traditional gender stereotypes and how “male gaze” is being constructed in the film will be discussed.

Firstly, Vivian is played as a “beck and call” girl in the film who is projected as men’s desire. Rakow (1986) says that “feminist psychoanalysis, particularly as developed in film theory, has also suggested that content can be examined differently from the implied position of viewer, with women seen as functioning (in Classical Hollywood movies, at least) as a construction of male fantasy.” In the film, Edward is willing to pay a large amount of money to Vivian because she is able to be ready to do anything for Edward at any time upon request. Edward’s ex-girlfriends could not be there for Edward anytime anywhere so they broke up. This

shows a gender stereotype that female is only an appendage of male. It is shown that men have the power over women and women are not autonomous in such a way that they have to passively stand by men even when they do not want to. This kind of “beck and call” girls are what men want. When a man has the desire, a woman should be ready to serve their needs. This kind of gender stereotype shows the subordination of women which reinforces the traditional gender stereotype.

Secondly, Edward is being portrayed as an ideal male stereotype in the film. Edward is a wealthy, handsome, “gentlemanly” businessman. Edward also has all the dominant masculine traits. According to John Storey (2009),

Easthope’s focus is on what he calls dominant masculinity (the myth of heterosexual masculinity as something essential and self-evident which is tough, masterful, self-possessed, knowing, always in control, etc.). He begins from the proposition that masculinity is a cultural construct; that is, it is not ‘natural’, ‘normal’ or ‘universal’ (p. 159).

This kind of representation empowers and strengthens the traditional male stereotype to which men should conform. Men should be handsome and wealthy as Edward in order to achieve their aspirations. Besides, Storey (2009) avers, “As part of this argument, he analysed the way dominant masculinity is represented across a range of popular cultural texts: pop songs, popular fiction, films, television and newspapers...” Similar to what Storey mentions, the film also illustrates a particular dominant masculinity and provides us with a false consciousness that a man like Edward would not have any bad qualities. For instance, he would not hit nor cheat on his wife; he is good

tempered and will make exceptions for his love. But the truth is that there is no such perfect guy like Edward in reality and this kind of ideal man will only appear in films.

However, both Edward and Vivian hold some qualities which challenge the traditional gender stereotypes. Storey (2009) writes that, "Femininity and masculinity are not expressions of 'nature', they are 'cultural performances in which their "naturalness" [is] constituted through discursively constrained performative acts . . . that create the effect of the natural, the original, and the inevitable.'" Therefore, in gender theory, what defines a "gender" is based on the roles and behaviors that are socially and culturally constructed by the society instead of biology. For example, men are supposed to be strong, powerful and muscular, whereas women are supposed to be soft and weak. Unlike some Disney films, the female protagonists this time are not entirely weaker and male protagonists are not completely more powerful. In one scene, Vivian drives and takes Edward to his hotel. Vivian seems to be more familiar with the car than Edward does. She is capable of controlling the car and has more knowledge of vehicles. However, in gender theory, men are supposed to be more familiar with cars and sports. Edward seems to be "inferior" and "subordinate" to Vivian in this sense. Also, Vivian is portrayed as a woman who is more familiar with male products. Both Edward and Vivian challenge the traditional gender stereotypes that women can also be capable of what are initially regarded as the interests or enjoyments specifically for men. As a result, it alters the gender stereotypes that are socially constructed from the past.

Male gaze is being constructed through the image of Vivian. Storey (2009) writes, "The inscription of the image of woman in this system is twofold: (i) she is the object of male desire, and

(ii) she is the signifier of the threat of castration.” In other words, male gaze refers to how men see women. According to Mulvey (1975), male gaze is about projecting women as the object of male desire and is related to “scopophilia”. Scopophilia means “the pleasure of looking.” Men not only perceive women as objects but also connect women to sexual desire visually. Such male gaze is shown in the beginning of the film through Vivian’s scantily-clad body and heavy makeup. These sexually alluring images are what Mulvey means that in some narrative cinema, women are being portrayed as the “traditional exhibitionistic role.” Therefore, in *Pretty Woman*, Vivian is the “traditional exhibitionistic role” that is being visited passively by different men. This male gaze is simply formed through the appearance of Vivian in order to fulfill the sexual desire of men.

Apart from the image of Vivian, there are also some other scenes that construct the male gaze. According to Storey (2009),

This often leads to the erotic look of the spectator no longer being borne by the look of the male protagonist, producing moments of pure erotic spectacle as the camera holds the female body (often focusing on particular parts of the body) for the unmediated erotic look of the spectator (p. 106).

From the first appearance of Vivian, where she is changing her clothes and when she is putting on her bra, the camera only focuses on her breasts. This scene demonstrates Vivian’s erotic mannerism. From a male perspective, it indulges in satisfying one’s sexual desire, the libido. Another scene is when Vivian and Edward are having sex, the camera is shot from an angle blocked by a partition with holes. It creates a voyeuristic fantasy, which means when we are watching the film in the cinema, in the big

contrast between the darkness in the cinema and the light from the screen, we are peeping at the characters' personal life. We are also peeping at Edward and Vivian when they are making love, which generates pleasure because of scopophilia. Male gaze is being constructed through these sex scenes.

To conclude, gender stereotypes and male gaze are being portrayed through different popular cultural texts. Although such texts could be entertaining, gender issues are still being reflected and should be analyzed critically.

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HONG KONG

Project Gutenberg (無雙) (2018) and the Future of Hong Kong Films

Zeng Beiyi, Eleanor

Introduction

“The death of Hong Kong films” was put forward in *Ming Pao Monthly* in November, 1995. It reflects that the situation of Hong Kong films is not optimistic in recent years. At the same time, *Project Gutenberg* (無雙) was taken as a symbol of the revival of Hong Kong films in 2018. *Project Gutenberg* is successful because it has broken the tradition of crime films in Hong Kong that mainly focuses on the struggle between police and gangsters. The data from Box Office Mojo by IMDbPro shows that the total box office of *Project Gutenberg* is \$190 million. This essay explores the future of Hong Kong film through an interpretation of *Project Gutenberg*.

Thematic innovation

Project Gutenberg has shown innovation different from previous Hong Kong films. Its focus is not the struggle between the police and the gangsters, but on the criminal process. Hao Jian (2002) considers that the police and gangster films usually take policemen and gangsters as the main characters and their struggle as its theme. For example, *Infernal Affairs* (2002 - 2003) was a great success. It transforms the fight between the police

and the gangsters into a psychological warfare, but the theme is still the struggle between the two sides. However, *Project Gutenberg* breaks away from the limitations of traditional police films, focusing less on the struggle between the two sides and more on the criminal process. The criminal process here refers to the whole course of making counterfeit banknotes. The main storyline focuses on how to solve the problems of making fake money, rather than a fight between police and criminals. The struggle between police and criminals is merely interspersed in the process of making counterfeit banknotes.

The whole narrative in the film revolves around making counterfeit banknotes. The centre of the film is a deep questioning of human nature. Police and gangster films in the past used to focus on heroism and *yiqi*. In this film, it is more of an existential crisis of a person's real identity. It leads the audience to constantly go back to previous scenes and rethink the story. Such a theme breaks the old mould of Hong Kong police and crime films.

International compatibility

Secondly, *Project Gutenberg* combines Hollywood storytelling and opens the market to international standards. According to King (2000), one of the characteristics of Hollywood is the spectacle of special effects. Instead of overusing special effects, *Project Gutenberg* blends special effects with story. Although the special effects are reminiscent of Hong Kong films in the 1980s and 1990s, the major shootout scenes, such as the set piece in Thailand, blend well with the narrative. Special effects become a means of propelling the plot, rather than a mere spectacle.

The classic struggle between *yiqi* and money, which has defined the police and gangster films in the 80s and 90s, can also be found in *Project Gutenberg*. The painter and his team call each other brother in the films. His team is willing to help him out of personal loyalty when he fights with the general in Thailand, even though they still turn against each other for profit when they try to kill Ruan in Dubai. In sum, *Project Gutenberg* has made innovative improvements on the old formula.

Unexpected reversal

Thirdly, the unexpected reversal in *Project Gutenberg* offers psychological depth that is not found in previous films. The ending of the movie is ambiguous. It is seen from a different person's perspective, which produces different results. The ending of the story is pieced together from the perspectives of Xiu, Ruan and Lee, and the final truth of the ending is left to the imagination of the audience. The painter may have ended up being Lee and some may think it was Ruan or Xiu. Lee turns out to have made up the identity of the painter to cover up his crime, which makes people reflect on the nature of truth and falsity. Everyone has a double identity in the film, but only one of them is their real identity in the end. The story Lee tells is fake, and it was him who made the counterfeit dollar. At the same time, Ruan acts as an impostor in the beginning of the film, and the love between Lee and Xiu is also fake. Counterfeit human relationships mirror the fake money, which also mirrors Hong Kong people's dual identity.

Conclusion

There was a plagiarism controversy after *Project Gutenberg* was released. Undeniably, the film does remind one of *Fight Club* (1999) and *The Usual Suspects* (1995). However, the connotation of the story in *Project Gutenberg* is not the same. It is mainly through the questioning of truth and falsehood, the questioning of human nature and the dual identities of multiple characters, that director Felix Chong Man-keung expresses the existential crisis in Hong Kong. Chong has achieved the amazing feat of balancing entertainment value, innovation, and themes that are dear to Hong Kong people. Chong has shown us that there is still hope in the future of Hong Kong cinema.

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Cantonese and Hongkonger: The Ghettoized Official Language and the Unofficial Identity

Lee Pui Ki, Lyna

Hong Kong's future after 2047 is always an unknown. Would Hong Kong become just another part of China? With more and more Chinese interventions on Hong Kong's own affairs, the future seems to be predictable. *Dialect*, a story in the film *Ten Years* (2015), gives us some ideas about what Hong Kong would be like in the future. In the story, Cantonese is de-officialized and the Hongkonger identity becomes unofficial.

Language and identity have an inseparable relationship. Language is an instrument that has communicative and symbolic functions. It is also an emblem of togetherness, a symbol, a psychosocial rally-point (Edwards, 2009, p.55). Cantonese and Mandarin (now China's official language) are both Chinese languages. They both serve the communicative function as a Chinese language, yet they have very different symbolic meanings. Steiner (1992) points out that "we possess civilization because we have learnt to translate out of the time." Language contains culture and history, which is specific to the place a people grow up in. The accessibility to the language is what distinguishes "us" from "the others." One can feel a sense of subjectivity sharing a language with people from the same place.

Chinese is one of the two official languages in Hong Kong. Over 88.9% of the population use Cantonese as a usual spoken language

(Hong Kong - The Facts). It helps Hongkongers build up their subjectivity and identify themselves officially as Hongkongers. In the story *Dialect*, Cantonese is de-officialized and Mandarin is the new Hong Kong's official language. Taxi drivers speaking Cantonese are banned in the business district and tourist spots, whereas Mandarin-speaking taxi drivers could do their business as usual. Cantonese is being “ghettoized,” meaning that it is only used on a daily basis, but not in formal occasions. It creates an illusion that Mandarin is more privileged, so as the Mainlander identity, whereas Cantonese is un-officialized and therefore underprivileged, so as the Hongkongers' identity. People show two different types of attitudes towards Cantonese being ghettoized in the taxi industry: some adopt it and some refuse to. However, both sides still have a sense of identity as a “Hongkonger” at different levels due to the split subjectivity of Hong Kong people.

People who refuse to use Mandarin have a strong identity of being a Hongkonger as they openly adopt Hong Kong's subjectivity. The Cantonese speaking taxi driver (as taxi driver A in the following) and passengers show a sense of belonging to Hong Kong as their home. They struggle to try to learn Mandarin for a living. They speak Cantonese as a tool of communication on daily matters. They only use Mandarin when it is unavoidable. They only use Mandarin for its communication function. They do not connect themselves with the symbolic function of Mandarin. They feel sad about the fact that Mandarin is now supreme in Hong Kong and that they must learn Mandarin to blend in, when compared to the past that Mainlanders learned Cantonese to blend in with Hong Kong culture and society. They feel like they are expelled from their home by outsiders. Their attitude towards Mandarin comes from their sense of subjectivity and identity of being a Hongkonger. The struggle of continuing to identify themselves as

relatively underprivileged members in a twisted community and defending the cultural invasion from the north reveal how strongly determined they are as Hongkongers.

People adopting Mandarin still have a sense of identity of being a Hongkonger due to the split subjectivity they have. The Mandarin-speaking taxi driver (as taxi driver B in the following) and passengers show a relatively positive attitude towards Mandarin, compared to the Cantonese speaking people. They use Mandarin for business and use both Mandarin and Cantonese in daily life. They use Mandarin as a method or tool to earn a living and for communication purposes, but they do not adopt the sense of togetherness of using Mandarin. When taxi driver A is trying to serve a Cantonese speaking passenger, taxi driver B confronts him in Mandarin, asking him why he is in that area (from which A is banned). He then asks again in Cantonese after he finds out that taxi driver A and the passenger are Cantonese speakers. He asks him to stop serving and leave immediately or he would call the police. When taxi driver A tries to stop taxi driver B from calling the police and says, “We are both Hongkongers, we don’t have to make it such a big deal,” taxi driver B says that A breaks the law and it is not good for business. B does not care about “we are both HongKongers,” he cares only about his livelihood instead. It shows that B still sees himself as a Hongkonger, as his split subjectivity permits himself to adopt a language as communicative, without its symbolic functions. The Mandarin-speaking people still have a sense of identity of Hongkonger, but just not as strong as the Cantonese speakers’.

Cantonese is now still Hong Kong’s language and there is no evidence showing that it will be replaced by Mandarin soon. But with China massively exporting their cultures, increasing cross-

border exchanges, along with other political interventions, our next generations will be living in an environment highly exposed to Mainland Chinese culture and Mandarin. It is believed that there is still a possibility that Cantonese would be “ghettoized.”

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“Bentu” Consciousness in C AllStar's “生於斯”

Fung Tsz Yu, Marcella

How do we recognise ourselves as Hong Kong people? By our everyday language or the way we speak? There are a lot of collective memories and visible cultures that lead Hong Kong people to have a strong sense of belonging to this prosperous city. A famous French thinker, Ernest Renan (2018, p.1088) claims that people feel belong to a nation because of everyday plebiscite, which means the common way we live our lives and the topics we share. In Hong Kong, Cantopop is a kind of significant visible and audible culture that shows the characteristics of Hong Kong people. In the following, C AllStar’s album named “生於斯,” which was released in 2015, will be used to reveal the people’s attitude towards nostalgia in Hong Kong. It also reflects the idea of a “bentu” consciousness. The lyrics portray “Hong Kong people” and “Hong Kong spirit” in terms of building a strong sense of belonging to the city, and the conviction and challenges facing Hong Kong in recent years.

To start with, Hong Kong people are preoccupied with nostalgia, particularly with objects. Nostalgia is a Greek word combining “nosto” (coming back home) and “algia” (a painful feeling or situation). It shows a feeling of remembering and hoping to return home. Nostalgia may not be negative as it can positively associate with the meaning of life, enhancing a sense of

connection to society (Routledge, 2011, p.638). After 1997, the reversion from Britain to China, Hong Kong people have started to build up a feeling of nostalgia about the old days, the time when the British were governing Hong Kong. Such nostalgia becomes part of Hong Kong people's collective consciousness. In a song in the album named “**逾越生死**,” the lyrics describe the significant objects in Hong Kong: “Who is waiting for the temple and the postbox to have a reunion” (寺廟 郵筒 在等誰團聚); “How the gravel fort was shattered on the day before” (沙礫堡壘 在前天怎樣粉碎) and “The remaining old buildings and streets haven't faded away” (殘留舊居和大街中未褪的印). “Temple” and “postbox” can be easily found in Hong Kong. In this song, “postbox” refers to the red postbox in the colonial days. Significant and memorable old architecture and artefacts have been demolished recently. However, feelings towards the old days or the city will never fade out. It is still possible to find things from the past in the city. In another song named “**后會無期**,” the lyrics express that, “I knew I'd say goodbye tonight” (早知我 這夜 盡 告別後 再見說過); “Just like a Queen that is for old time's sake” (皇后像你 不會再念舊); “The name will be erased at dawn” (天快光妳將抹去我名字). In 2006, the government decided to demolish the Queen's Pier. A group of people staged a sit-in and a hunger strike to protest against the government. “**皇后**” refers to the “Queen's Pier.” Hong Kong people still feel sad because of the demolition of the Pier till now. Nostalgia shows that Hong Kong people are reluctant to leave the colonial period and suffer from a “reversed hallucination” suggested by Ackbar Abbas (1997, p. 25). It was feared that Hong Kong would be lost forever. Although nostalgia is about the past, it can still be understood positively in building a sense of belonging and connection to the city.

The album also presents the idea of “bentu” consciousness. Music sociologist Simon Firth (2007, p.264) pinpoints that there are four social functions of popular music: 1) it allows us to find our identities and places in society; 2) it helps us build relationship between public and private emotional lives; 3) it helps us develop our collective memory; 4) it helps us claim ownership of the present. Cantopop can help us develop a “bentu” consciousness. The main reason is that the lyrics are written and sung in Cantonese, a language that everyone knows. Hong Kong people have developed a sense of “bentu,” which is much stronger than “localism.” Sebastian Veg (2017, p.325) mentions that the word “bentu” is being used after several heritage preservation movements, such as Star Ferry Pier and Lee Tung Street in Wanchai. The most significant event that aroused “bentu xindong” is the fight for the preservation of Queen’s Pier in 2006. Afterwards, the formation of Hong Kong’s ethnic consciousness has been intensified. Apart from that, colloquial Cantonese also shows a strong perception of “bentu”. In the song “生於斯” there is a line: “生於煙花不識煙火的城市.” We call fireworks as “煙花” in Cantonese rather than “煙火” in Mandarin. The song “后会無期” adopts the simplified Chinese character “后” instead of “後,” symbolising that Hong Kong is going to be “mainlandised” and thus loses the unique characteristics. The concept of “bentu” intensifies after the Umbrella Movement in 2014. During the movement, a slogan that says “Hong Kong is ours, only Hong Kong people can save Hong Kong” (Chung and Szeto, p.69) is widely used. “Bentu” then becomes a notion of indigenization (Veg, 2017, p.327) and Hong Kong people are becoming more united. Since the album is released right after the Umbrella Movement, it is a reminder for us to treasure and protect “our own place.”

To conclude, there is definitely a positive future for both Cantopop and Hong Kong. “Hongkonger” can be formed as a community because of the medium of popular cultures such as Cantopop. “生於斯” is a local album that does not only have the theme of nostalgia, but it also provides a positive attitude towards Hong Kong. The song “夜幕天星” paints a picture of buskers at Star Ferry Pier where everyone can hang out. There are always possibilities for Cantopop to express our feelings about this irreplaceable city to which we all belong.

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Lyrics:

〈生於斯〉 (Born and Bred) (作詞：林夕)

生於煙花 不識煙火的城市
我愛這裡 愛憎都可以
浪漫就是 杜鵑花開的日子
讚紫荊如詩 莫須意義

生於荊棘 生死不決於明智
厭惡世故 永不念台詞
造夢路上 在追風箏的孩子
信風聲無私 無需要學會懷疑

光陰一支箭 時代像傷口被感染
天色一翻臉 隨時隨地亦會觸電
煙火一灑遍 繁榮是給溫飽者的鴉片
一天一挑戰 我的天 逐片被拆遷 無聲處話舊年

生於安穩 安心玩競爭遊戲
放肆讚美 已消逝傳奇
在活道上 活該坦率的年紀
看不懂玄機 無所禁忌

生於不羈 挑不起太多行李
到處過敏 有處方可處理
羨慕妒忌 或者講體恤慈悲
惹一點是非 無需要熱血 淋漓

光陰一支箭 時代像傷口被感染
天色一翻臉 隨時隨地亦會觸電
煙火一灑遍 繁榮是給溫飽者的鴉片
一天一挑戰 我的天
逐片被拆遷 無聲處話舊年

又重遇這預言 誰怨天
我要信哪支籤
要到哪裏 活著更方便

光陰一支箭 人情像傷口被感染
天色一翻臉 無時無日亦會閃電
煙火一灑遍 繁榮是否燒不光的鴉片
一天一挑戰 約好的
伴侶被發展 誰敢信任諾言

生於烽煙裡 沈默叫器都被討厭

掌聲燈影裏 紅黃藍綠沒法分辨
多麼想改變 然而自己都擔心被改變
生於新生裏 我的天
夢也被發展 如一覺便十年

〈后会無期〉 (The Queen) (作詞：Oscar)

准我今晚擁妳進懷內
准我今晚親妳的雙顏面腮
今晚一過不會再有期待
准我今晚捉緊妳默哀

花開之際其實早該知這夢要醒
花萎一瞬只有痛亦是高興
風一吹再璀璨的記憶盡褪色
隨情感散落路旁成泡影

天光了 再順路 變陌路
幾多春光秋色未可細訴
千載過 再遇在 愛恨路
看你半眼始終仍迷倒
即使我 再妒忌 再羨慕
你與愛侶同偕共老走過每段路
拈花錯 污泥染 都抵我遲自老

准我今晚一記住時事
(絲絲細雨就在圍城內初次遇上你)
准我今晚跟你輕聲說歷史
(抖抖顫顫就在門前輕親我一雙眉)
天快光妳將抹去我名字
(乾乾脆脆步奈何橋走出這黑暗地)
穿妳婚禮的錦繡羅衣

偷偷相愛其實早該知這夢要醒
得到資格傷痛過亦是高興
風一吹再璀璨的記憶盡褪色
洪流中往事前塵無背影

天光了 再順路 變陌路
幾多春光秋色未可細訴
千載過 再遇在 愛恨路
看你半眼始終仍迷倒

即使我 再妒忌 再羨慕
你與愛侶同偕共老走過每段路
拈花錯 污泥染 都抵我遲自老

匆匆一生走過半世是成就
愛過痛過歸於土中甘願承受
自來受 自來救 似毒咒
美夢要醒何來內疚
事過人離後

幾多對 再順路 變陌路
即使天崩海枯未可愛到
幾多歲 再遇在 愛恨路
耳語半句忠貞便難保

天一光 走 以後 獨行浪遊大宇宙

早知我 這夜盡 告別後 再見說過
皇后像你 不會再念舊
風吹過 枯葉舞
歸土化作塵垢

歌都唱過 剩一人奏

〈逾越生死〉 (In Memory Of You) (作詞：鍾晴)

路軌 路燈 在等誰
從年月 中從歷史 中大了幾歲
沙礫堡壘 在前天 怎樣粉碎
風箏斷了 才叫風 不再吹

寺廟 郵筒 在等誰團聚
粵曲 二胡 未等到下句
你沒留住 某些感覺 在你身軀
只有 任那記憶 沉睡 我在懷念內寄居

在那天 同遊大地 預約好重遊舊地
但你不辭而別 留下命裡缺憾 仍想起
一人遊舊地 舊記憶陪同生死
換了風景 依然盼望 能共你 看夕陽多麼美

汗水 髮根 或指紋
殘留舊居 和大街中 未褪的印
即使不見 亦曾經 這樣親近
歲月年華 學會刻骨銘心

或者 填海 是補償遺憾
或者 移山 是給我護蔭
我仍然是你的 不過亦會傷感
天註定你我的緣份 愛就維繫著這生

在那天 同遊大地 預約好重遊舊地
但你不辭而別 留下命裡缺憾 仍想起

一人遊舊地 舊記憶陪同生死
換了風景 依然盼望 能共你 看夕陽多麼美

感慨煉成大愛 把心交給你
可以掠過 上空 岸邊 大地
為衝破界限 像逾越生死

踏遍這浮華大地 若再可同遊舊地
若老天能成全 人願換個結局 仍一起
一人遊舊地 舊記憶陪同生死
用我一生感情 繼續懷念 緊記 已在回憶的你
每日重新想你
愛在橫跨世紀



POETRY



A Running Bullet

Chen Wanyi, April

A locked
refrigerated container
is loaded
on a moving lorry
waiting for
a silent
shooting.

39 pieces of orange skin
with
dripping wet
condensate tears
 in their eyes
are stuffed with
 frozen bloody juice.

78 rough red handprints
in different sizes
pat
the door of
distant home.

Hundreds of screaming
from
the commercial slaughterhouse
are echoing
in
the confined barrel.

Outside,

Customers from
supermarket
carrying packs of
Oranges
with satisfied smiles
with barrel of laughs

appreciating
the scenic highway
where

a bullet is running

A poet's reflection

The poem is based on the Essex lorry deaths, which happened on 23 October 2019. There were 39 Vietnamese deaths including two 15-year-old boys. After watching this tragic news, I kept following the updated information about the casualties and did some research about the cause of human trafficking, which mostly lies in the uneven economical distribution between the developed and developing countries. I believe that it is simply one of the many buried incidents of human trafficking. The enormous number of casualties in human trafficking must be unimaginable.

Recently, human trafficking has become increasingly common. For the sake of humanity, I think it is meaningful for me to write a poem about human trafficking and channel their extreme pain in refrigerated containers. I hope it could trigger human empathy about the refugees or the poor living in underdeveloped countries and raise the readers' awareness of the inhumanity.

For the literary style of this poem, I choose to describe the tragic and horrible scenes in a cold and indirect way by employing the abstract symbol of "orange," which refers to the "yellow" skin colour in most developing countries and relates to the shared nature between commodity and human trafficking. The bright colour of orange also alludes to the surrealism in the appalling tragedy. For the latter part of the poem, I extend the meaning of the symbolic orange ironically to a related concept, the consumer in the supermarket.

The verb "load" is my favourite word in this poem as it functions as a link between two objects (gun and lorry) and helps me to develop a series of imaginative metaphors (gun, barrel, shooting),

which could further amplify the horror and fear from the dead in a normal container.

“The door of home” was inspired by a heartbreaking text sent by a girl to her mother when she was dying in a refrigerated container. It aims to express the refugee’s strong desire to live, not only in the freezing container but also in a safe and economically stable condition, though they have to suffer the nostalgia from leaving their motherland behind and the risk of dying in a foreign country.



Anorexia Nervosa

Lai Wing Yi, Cheryl

An ash-colored dreadful skeleton is in the mirror.
“You are not perfect enough,” she says.
She sees a bulk through her eyes.
The mirror is then cracked
into murky fragments on the messy ground.

Going in hot pursuit
by the hideous demon,
finding no way to get rid of it,
she can just be suffocated
and keep buckling the narrow pipe.

Looking at the golden, semi-solid and processed harvest
coming out from the dark and wet pipe,
but the bulk still does not disappear
from the mirror fragments
in her eyes.

“I hate you.”



The Change

Aisha Naseem

I remember,
Yellow leaves with ancient trees
Strong wind with flying leaves
Brown leaves crunching under my feet
Piles of gold and red and brown among the last lush green
Across the bridge and along the tracks
Across home lawns and along the porch steps
Children playing happily and merrily
Some with their bicycles, some with their sandcastles
While some after a long tiring day laughing wearily,
But today,
I walk the pathway with no one in sight
Cities hostile and towns unfriendly
The trees stiffen into places like burnt nerves
Fallen off leaves crunching under my feet
Leaves whispering in the cold silent night



SHORT STORIES

From the Eyes of an Outsider

Chen Wanyi, April

The wild-growing mosses silently climb into every corner of the boiling street, cold and damp, stained with the strangers' dried black blood. She, one billionth of the dyeing points inside the five-star red flag, is staring at the crumbling edges of the floating city in the roaring black waves.

Up in the gray-blue sky, the bleak sunshine in autumn with the glare of sharp umbrella swords storm into the boundless naked ground with the countless deep cracks. Millions and millions of falling posters and rolling leaves are stripped by approaching boots and exploding tear gas. The moment of "bomb," crisp as the distant aeolian bells in the temple of pilgrimage, gently touches the dispersing ripples on the cold asphalt.

Suddenly, an early autumn storm gathers, sailing up two million small umbrellas to form an enormous umbrella array and a condensing glimmer of umbrella blades. Forcing, forcing and forcing upward the unreachable peak above the free-floating clouds and bloody human flesh. Below the numerous small umbrellas in different shapes and colours, is the soil with multiple valences where multiple nationals grow in.

At the corner of the far-reaching wall, she hears the sounding slogans in a strange language with excitement, she complains about the suffocating violence on specially programmed TV but cannot perceive the echoing piercing cries within the howling wind in the sinking floating city.

My Husband

Sophia Sandhu

5th June, 2017

Today I am going to kill my husband. He doesn't know it but I'm sure he's gullible enough to see it coming. I am tired of hearing typical feminist speeches while feeling all helpless. Today I have come to accept that my life is in my hands and I cannot keep living like this. Death cannot come easy for him. He has to suffer like I did when he forced himself inside of me and killed our child, our sweet unborn child, whom I had only touched in the form of dark vivid blood. I remember telling John that if we had a boy, we would name him Daniel and if a girl Danielle, or if they were twins. Wow, maybe I could have had twins. He comes home late every day since he goes to his student's house for dinner. She. Danielle Jones, the 16-year old political science major my husband is pouring his sorrows and counting his blessings with. How ironic. Danielle goddamn Jones. If our Danielle - my Danielle was here, I'm sure she would grow up to resent her father and build up doubts and question her capabilities of being a mother, of starting a family, of sacrifice, of life, herself, like I did. I find it goddamn amusing how without us there is nothing and yet these oblivious, bossy men see us no more than personal maids and pleasure machines, with whom they can feel on cloud nine for ten goddamn minutes. As determined as I am now, I feel like god has other plans for me because it's going to be dawn in no time and John still isn't home. Well, there's always tomorrow.

11th June, 2017

Today John came home late smelling like her again. I wonder what expensive perfumes he's buying her from my trust fund. I cannot believe this guy. Joe Malone. Our 2nd anniversary gift. I smell it while he's scrubbing off her scent in the shower. The first time John took a hit at me, was the first time I realized I had made a mistake putting that ring on. He had proposed to me by playing Beyoncé's Single Ladies in the background. That slap did not get me scared, I was utterly disappointed. I laughed at myself like a maniac for being this gullible. I was the person who had a terrible childhood with a traumatizing mother and an abusive father, you would assume god would be gracious enough to give me a loving husband right? Oh, how wrong I was. I am tired of crying myself to sleep at night. I have decided today is the day.

11th June 2018

It has been exactly one year since the death of my husband John Woods, it would be an understatement to merely compliment the amazing memorial service we held for him. I finally got my feminist moment when I killed him by shoving his favourite axe down his skull, afterward, I minced him into pieces and fed his body meat to Simba. Simba sure did love it. Simba misses him but that is okay, whenever he would crawl on his four paws and curl up under the quilt at night. He stinks so bad but I guess it's alright, as that is the penance of being his co-owner. Today I went on a date, finally. I think it's time society gave me a break from being a "dead husband's wife." Oh, how gruelling the past year has been pretending to mourn over the fact that "my husband ran away with some other chick." I think this was the most believable lie I could make up. I mean there is nothing of the body left anyways. Moving on, when Tinder Tim saw me entering the restaurant, he stared at me for a good 30 seconds and said, "There is something deep about your eyes, what are you hiding missus?" Well, that's a secret I'll never tell.

The Cherry Pie

Aisha Malik

“One pound, Miss.” he said, he looked at me,

“Last seat of the last lane.” he added.

I looked down, nodded and hurried to my seat while the laughter and the whispers were tracing behind me.

Even though the long black coat and worn boots were the only nice things I could wear on the winter morning, which still weren't enough for me to get the front seat.

I sat on the greasy, rugged and torn seat. It was small. I just wanted to yell and scream but if I did that, I would just embarrass myself. I looked ahead and tried to ignore the stench that I thought was from a dead rat or something. The front seat was printed with red flowers.

Why her, she didn't even smile nice. Her black teeth showed her money, while my white showed how poor I was that I couldn't afford sweets or proper dessert. Proper became the word for them. Proper class, proper look. They all looked like the rats from beneath. I hated it.

I looked ahead and stared at the red heels of “hers”. I looked down at my shoes and sighed. It would take a whole week of saving and not eating to earn those shoes and get the seat at the front.

I was happy, indeed I was. I got a loving husband who was a baker and would do anything I commanded. It was a loving relationship.

I sat and hummed and hummed away. My stop was approaching, and my eyes wandered around the front row. I saw the pearl necklace on her thin neck. It was sore but healthy. Meat was so expensive. I only wished I could have just bought it and ate meat today. It would have been easier for Alvin.

I smiled at the end of my bus journey and got off. I was waiting for dinner, but I still had a long walk home, as I lived near the alley way. It was grey, broken and dirty.

Unwedded flowers, fences that reached the sky and broken glass bottles to create protection around the house. That's where I lived. I stepped into the home surprising Alvin. "Honey, I'm home." I said.

I went straight to the kitchen. Asking if It's done.

"I'm nearly done with this pie, why don't you freshen up?" he said.

I nodded and went ahead. I saw a pair of red heels near the kitchen doorway and went past it. The table had a pearl necklace on it, with its string unattached. My house walls were covered with its natural red paint, the fresher, the better. But it was not a canvas. It was splattered like an artist was decorating it. I sat down and waited.

“It took time, but it was done. I never knew it would be so hard to crack.” He said and kept the plate of pie near the carving fork.

“It looks good, did you put in my favourite part?” I asked.
He placed the napkin on his knee.

“Yes.” He said emphatically.

I ate it. I smiled.

“Do you like her?” he asked.

“Yes, I do.” I said and smiled. “I love it.”