

HPEN7002 Portfolio

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(1) Annotated Bibliography

Provisional research project: *Enquiry into Pre-service English Teacher Cognition of Pronunciation Teaching in Chinese Secondary School Classroom*

ENTRY 1: BURNS, A., D. FREEMAN, and E. EDWARDS. 2015. 'Theorizing and Studying the Language-Teaching Mind: Mapping Research on Language Teacher Cognition', *The Modern language journal (Boulder, Colo.)*, 99: 585-601.

The authors manage to picture the research scenario of language teacher cognition between 1990s and 2014, which can be a good starting point in reviewing the relevant literature. To begin with, they historically examine the notion in terms of its nature, the way it is studied. They argue that the Language-Teaching Mind (language teacher cognition) experiences four ontological generations covering “individualist”, “social”, “sociohistorical” and “complex, chaotic systems” (pp.589). Accordingly, they categorise representative research work both conceptual and empirical into those adopting differing ontology. Then they categorise and review the articles in the collection according to their ontological orientations, adopted theoretical framework and studied constructs. Finally, they call for reconsidering the foreground of the language teaching cognition research. Noticeably, they agree with the sociohistorical generation proponents in recognising the importance of place and time in which teachers are situated. Moreover, they tend to welcome the move to the fourth generation offers conceptual attractiveness, replacing traditional research mind itself with “how that cognition is interwoven in place, time and relationship” (pp.597). Admittedly, they argue that it is still difficult to foresee the future of the existed directions, but the assured challenge is to locate a new way through which researchers may better understand language teachers’ mental work. However, the distinction

between the third and the fourth ontological generation is somehow unclear, though it may be inferred from the techniques the researchers use.

ENTRY 2: Yuan R. & Lee I. (2014) 'Pre-service teachers' changing beliefs in the teaching practicum: Three cases in an EFL context', *System*, 44, pp.1-12.

Yuan and Lee's article offers an interesting insight looking into student-teacher cognition of teaching English in practicum. Influenced by sociocultural perspectives and based on the framework of teacher belief change devised by Cabaroglu and Robert, the two authors collect qualitative data ranging from interview transcription, lessons' classroom observation recording with field notes, stimulated recall interview transcription to participants' weekly reflective journals. They focus on three major aspects: participants' beliefs about language teaching and learning, professional lives and development, together with their own roles. The beliefs in these aspects are emerging from the categorising, theming and comparing across interviews at different stages of the practicum. Importantly, the interpretation they made based on the data is commented by the three participants so that the final analysis is refined accordingly. This adds credibility to the research. Naturally, they arrive at a conclusion that the student teachers' beliefs change in a process covering "confirmation, realization, disagreement, elaboration, integration, and modification" (pp.1). They argue that sociocultural factors are contributing to these changes. Further, they call for an environment in practicum which is "open and supportive" for facilitating the belief change process. Yet it is a little bit unclear regarding the last proposition. They do not provide enough evidence in explaining the interaction between the student-teachers and other (administrational or teaching supervisory) professionals on site. It somehow

weakens influencers and thus it is hard to tell what really counts for “open and supportive”.

ENTRY 3: Çimen, ŞŞ., and A. Daloğlu. 2019. 'Dealing with in-class challenges: Pre-service teacher cognitions and influences', *The journal of language and linguistic studies*, 15: 754-772.

This article focuses on pre-service language teacher cognition and its change based on their classroom practice in practicum; however, it provides an alternative way of research design. The data coming from questionnaire and interviews which share the common feature. Unlike other similar researches, the authors include in-service English language teachers' responses as “base-line data” (pp.758). Yet I hold doubt about its use because this type of data links less directly to the research questions. What is more, the difficulties experienced by pre-service teachers may not be reported by in-service ones. Through coding and categorising, they report that pre-service teachers develop strategies in different categories of challenges, and confirm changes found in teacher cognition before and after practicum. They list percentages of reference to evidence this, without further details of relevant frequency or counts, not benefiting its reliability. As to the influencing factors, they identify three sources containing the pre-service teachers' own learning experience, course in teacher education program and practicum experiences. Contradicting previous research findings, they claim the teacher education program still exerts a great influence to post-practicum cognition.

ENTRY 4: Lim, S. 2016. 'Learning to Teach Intelligible Pronunciation for ASEAN English as a Lingua Franca: A Sociocultural Investigation of Cambodian Pre-service Teacher Cognition and Practice', *RELC journal*, 47: 313-329.

This study provides a detailed exploration of teacher cognition in teaching English pronunciation in Cambodia. Lim cares about the socioeconomic context of ASEAN integration and conducts qualitative, grounded analysis of three pre-service teachers' oral report, documents, and interviews, according to the sociocultural theory. The author comes up with four themes emerging from analysis consists of teachers' acknowledgement about their own pronunciation, belief of pronunciation instruction target, ways in dealing with teaching pronunciation and their attitudes towards ASEAN English as a legitimate variety. Lim argues that these teachers recognise their non-native English speaker teacher identity and aim to instruct intelligible speech rather than native-like. Moreover, it is found that a tension exists in the teachers who hold positive attitudes to the variety pull back by local English as a Foreign Language education orientation. This leads to their corrections of students' pronunciation aiming for intelligibility on one hand, and reluctance to model multilingual varieties in class. Finally, Lim calls for alteration in local ELT curriculum, consistency in teaching and learning and further literature on this variety.

ENTRY 5: Couper, G. 2017. 'Teacher Cognition of Pronunciation Teaching: Teachers' Concerns and Issues', *TESOL quarterly*, 51: 820-843.

Couper's research into English teachers' perceptions of teaching pronunciation in New Zealand follows a traditional descriptive and narrative approach, focusing on

understanding the in-service teachers' views in general rather than on specific types of students. Noticeably, the author reports that pronunciation is neglected partly due to inadequate initial training and phonological knowledge, according to the content analysis; additionally, teachers generally find pronunciation teaching to be specific to individuals. What is provoking is the concluding section that Couper questions the hidden reasons behind the neglect and calls for more empirical research on effectiveness of pronunciation teaching, especially the techniques in explicit instruction and improvements in teacher education programmes. This somehow enlightens others in future research direction in instruction and teacher development.

(2) Critique-1

A Critique about Cultural Materialism

1. Introduction:

The term Cultural Materialism is initially used by Raymond Williams in cultural analysis converging studies on history, sociology and English in cultural studies (Dollimore, 1994, p.2). It has been considered as one of the prominent theories in literary studies. It is originated from Marxist literary criticism and rooted in post-war United Kingdom, then parallels with American New Historicism deeply influencing over theories such as post-colonialism and feminism.

2. Theoretical ground

The early concept of "culture" and "materialism" both have original traces in Marxism. According to Marx's remarks, the economic base determines the superstructure of a society, and culture is one area of superstructure (Eagleton, 1976, pp.4-5). A superstructure functions in legitimating the power of the class owning the means of economic production or the ruling class, with "definite forms of social consciousness" such as political, religious, ethical and cultural forms. Through this function of ideology, one powerful class is able to influence others whereas members of the society may feel "natural" (Eagleton, 1976, pp.5). "Culture" in cultural materialism seems to have analytic meanings when it is referred to the whole meaning by which a society or an individual comprehends itself and the liaison between oneself and the society (Dollimore & Sinfield, 1994, pp. viii). More importantly, the evaluative meaning of culture draws more attention on the engagement of "superior values and a refined sensibility" delivered by literature and other forms of arts exerted

by the high class to the commoners (ibid.). To explore this practice, CM absorbs studies on the marginalized or the subordinate cultures into scope. This enables people to gain a wider horizon looking into the ideology building or working in society, especially on how ideology shifts with literature works.

The concept “materialism” implies that cultural materialism theorists give a priority for material processes rather than mind. They acknowledge that culture cannot exist without “the material forces and the relations of production” (Dollimore & Sinfield, 1994, pp. viii). In cultural materialism, culture is more than simply reflecting the economic and political system of a society; it functions more like productive processes, which the hegemonic forces disseminate ideology with artefacts like texts to engrave their preferred values among the rest society members.

3. Approaching to Analysing Literary Texts

Influenced by Marxism, cultural materialism theorists pay much attention to conflicting issues involving social classes, gender, race in analysing literary texts. In Marxist criticism, literature is analysed in terms of its historical conditions under which it is produced (Eagleton, 1976, pp.vi). Likewise, cultural materialism literary critics conduct abundant reading on Renaissance Literature with a striking feature of emphasising the historical context both in terms of the playwrights’ times and the time of critics’ interpretation. Furthermore, the essential goal of Marxist criticism is to care about the struggles of the oppressed, marginalised people in society to emancipate themselves from oppression and exploitation. The theorists also keenly dig into literary texts to explore the conflicts between the hegemonic forces and the oppressed groups. Basically, built their argument on historical contexts, cultural materialism theorists conduct close textual analysis so that they can identify the

ideological conflicts or struggle of the oppressed through the representation of those literary texts.

There are some interesting examples based on this approach bring fresh ideas into literary criticism and triggers people to reflect on our familiar and trusted for no reason history and social reality. These benefits I think are the major contribution of cultural materialism. For instance, in Kavanagh's discussion on *Shakespeare in Ideology* (1985), the related sociohistorical conditions are taken into account, especially Shakespeare's economic semi-independence position still combined with relative ideological compulsion. He notices that the appearance of new aristocracy, or the early bourgeoisie, brought more space for an ideological shift, whereas the old nobility was losing predominant legitimacy in ideological influence. Another example can be found from the argument made by Ghasemi and Keshavarz (2012) on the Victorian Marriage Tradition in *Jude the Obscure*. Contrary to some conventional beliefs about Hardy's reproachful position on the dominant discourse of Victorian Marriage, with cultural materialism approach to close reading, they find that the author achieves a result of reinforcing the mainstream marriage tradition virtues through marginalising his major characters and consolidating the dominant discourse.

4. Implications and Limitations of Cultural Materialism

It shakes off previous limitations of liberal humanism on readers' mind. According to liberal humanism' basic tenets, "good literature is of timeless significance" and "contains its own meaning within itself" (Barry, 2017, p.17). The exclusion of socio-political, literary-historical or autobiographical context sometimes inhibits readers from fully understanding writers and their works. As previously discussed, Ray Williams reinterprets Marxist economic-superstructure theory and views culture as a

special productive process, which to some extent deepens readers' understanding about life behind cultural phenomena embodied in literary texts and offers guides or alternative views in critically seeing social problems intertwined with power and economic disparities.

Even though cultural materialism provides people an alternative approach to close reading literary texts, it still contains certain ambiguities and lacks continuous vitality in literary review. The first limitation comes from the efforts made in separating cultural materialism from new historicism which diverts a lot of attention into arguing minor differences such as political optimism versus pessimism, arguing the stance of accepting a particular version of post-structuralism, or locating literary texts in political situation of their or our times. In my opinion, such differentiating work may not bring rich outcomes in analysing literary texts.

Personally, I also feel a little puzzled about the clear boundary of "culture" in cultural materialism. In *Political Shakespeare*, Dollimore (1994, p.14) endorses that the whole of culture is not defined by the ruling culture, and asks the critics to voice for the underrepresented. It seems that culture in this sense is broadened to an umbrella term embracing the demands, ways of thinking and living associated with classes, gender and ethnic groups. A broadened scope of concept in turn will not always bring about featured or focused finding, but makes it hard to follow the inner logical connection.

Apart from the above, I find that some classic literature works no matter written in which language in which period of time do contain certain merits beyond the conflicts caused by class disparities in given society or historical situation. Or we can see culture including social class conflicts, power differences or political demands is only part of the areas where great literature works gain nutrition from. If readers or critics

limit themselves in adopting cultural materialism as a single approach to reading works, then it would be a great loss to them.

5. Conclusion:

To conclude, this critique summarises the theoretical foundation of cultural materialism, discusses its approach to reading literary texts with some interesting brief examples and acknowledges its value in providing a new perspective to literature criticism as well as my doubtfulness about its limitations.

References:

- Barry, P. (2017) *B-Beginning Theory An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 4th edn, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
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Kavanagh, J.H. (1985) 'Shakespeare in ideology' in Drakakis, J. *Alternative Shakespeare: (New Accents) 1*, (ed.), New York: Methuen & Co Ltd.

(2) Critique-2

A Critique about Psychoanalysis

1. Introduction

Psychoanalysis in literary criticism is a branch of literary theory which draws from psychoanalytic analytic interpretive process and techniques of psychoanalysis tradition laid by Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud (Barry, 2017, p.87). The major concerns of psychoanalysis are based on his ideas about unconscious, repression, sublimation as well as a three-part model of psyche including the ego, the super-ego and the id. This form of literary theory has certain therapeutic value in methods of uncovering the mind of people, but received criticism nowadays for growing distrust on Freudian theories.

2. Freudian interpretation about consciousness and unconsciousness

Freud uses a series of concepts in illustrating the different level or state of human mind. He compares aspects of human personality to an iceberg, the tip of which represents the consciousness, while the larger underneath part of which is people's unconscious mind (Johnston, 1984, p.70). The tip of iceberg or the conscious mind covers all the things that people are aware of (feel) or thinking about (reason).

The unconsciousness occupies a large bulk of humans' mind, which is one of the most perplexing areas under exploration by psychologists and reflected in various literature works. According to Freudian theory, unconscious is used to replace earlier subconscious which seems to be misleading in referring to the extent of what is in the mind what is in another consciousness (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1988, p.430). The

“unconscious” describes “the repressed contents which have been denied access to the preconscious-conscious system by the operation of repression” (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1988, p.474). The repression of the “traumatic material” into the unconscious can be revealed when people’s resistances to psychoanalytic treatment is overcome, which can be similar and provoking in interpreting literary texts guided by the techniques of psychoanalysis. The experiences such as traumatic ones are normally located not in people’s immediate consciousness; meanwhile they can be recovered without much efforts. Or it is said to be stored in the preconscious mind which serves as a gatekeeper between humans’ consciousness and unconsciousness.

3. Freudian interpretation about dreams

In illustrating the relationships between dreams and waking life, Freud (1999, p.12) argues that no matter what our dreams present it acquires materials from reality and from humans’ waking life. He believes that the content of dreams is composed of material coming from humans’ experience, which is reproduced or remembered in dreams (ibid.). Admittedly, there is material appeared in our dream content which we do not remember or recognise when we are awake. He also points out that humans’ memory of dreams has a remarkable and incomprehensible feature that lies in the selection of material to be reproduced. It is interesting to find that both the most significant things and those of little importance are to be remembered. Consequently, dream which serves as an “escape-hatch” or “safety-valve” becomes the outlet of memories into humans’ conscious mind (Barry, p.88-89), it explains why certain feelings in question enters people’s dream hidden in appearance of other form. Materials with certain forms such as symbols or metaphors can be represented in

dreams. In this sense, it gives opportunities for critics to review literature works which contain such forms.

4. Lacanian criticism

Another psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan also influences psychoanalysis in literary criticism. Important contribution made by Lacanian criticism lies in the development of the signifier over the signified borrowed from Ferdinand de Saussure (Lacan, 1977, p.149). He argues that language is central in investing unconsciousness, since psychoanalysis involves heavily using and examining language whose structure is similar with the structure of psychoanalysis. He further expands the "condensation and displacement" mechanisms identified by Freud with correspondence to metaphor and metonymy (Barry, 2017, pp.88). In metonymy, one part stands for the whole which is similar to the displacement by which a dream could stand for something else. Similarly, metaphor resembles condensation in which several items may be condensed into a symbol. He sees these linguistic analysis as important means for exploring the unconsciousness. Based on Lacanian psychoanalysis, critics find the traces of phases like the mirror-stage, which is beyond a period of infancy but a paradigm of imaginary order, in literary texts and treat the text in Lacanian orientations to relevant ideas such as unconsciousness or lack of desire.

5. Implications and limitations

This approach has a great value in helping readers and critics to understand human nature through close reading literary works. Both the characters sculptured in the

them and the writers can be targets for such analysis. Through certain plots designed by writers, people can tell some covered parts of the characters presented. For instance, frequently seen plots such as “slip of tongue”, “forgetting”, and “dreaming” are common topics for psychoanalytic criticism. They may convey hidden psychological status or activities such as humans’ fear, desire, trauma and so on.

However, humans’ inner world is normally implicitly transmitted in forms of purposeful plots arrangement and various rhetoric devices which can be interpreted from different perspectives other than psychoanalytic approach, thus the findings derived from psychoanalysis itself is controversial sometimes. Especially, there may exist an inadequacy in studying female characters’ psycho status since academia has a long-time argument over the bias of Freudian psychoanalysis on females. Zhang (2019, p.69) argues that early feminists oppose Freudian psychoanalysis because it overly attributes sexual connotations to objects and sees females as dependent and incomplete humans compared with males. Consequently, Freudian psychoanalytic critics give much less focus on female characters and analyse their psycho status or activities. This trend has not been changed until Karen Horney (2013, originally published in 1935) who revolutionise the psychoanalysis approach adopting biological and cultural factors into a fairer consideration rejecting Freudian “penis envy” and prejudice over females’ psychoanalysis. In this sense, Freudian psychoanalysis also somehow provides space which lays a preliminary foundation for later feminine criticism in its further development.

References:

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(3) Essay

Ideological Conflicts and Female Psyche in *The Tiredness of Rosabel* Based on Cultural Materialism and Psychoanalysis

1. Introduction

The Tiredness of Rosabel by Katherine Mansfield (1908) is an impressive short story which presents the life of a working-class young woman in London during the Victorian times. Through the words of the author, readers from the 21st century can find certain aspects of ideological tensions among social classes in the early 20th century as well as a single woman's subtle psyche in capitalist society. Those issues are discussed in cultural materialism and psychoanalysis approach in this essay.

2. Ideological tensions

The concept of ideology is deployed by cultural materialism in several ways. For example, one of them digs into the cultural connections between signification and legitimation (Dollimore, 1994, p.6). In other words, cultural materialism theorists are keen to uncover how those cultural products such as beliefs, practices and institutions form or justify the existing social order. This justification or legitimation which is a complicated process may be realised through different approaches. Dollimore (1994, p.7) summarises at least three ways of ruling class' ideological legitimation, including understanding sectional interests as working in the interests of a whole community through practices and institutions, comparing existing social order to laws in natural sciences to demonstrate its inevitability, and demonising attempts to subvert current

social relations. Some of these can be echoed by details embedded in *The Tiredness of Rosabel*, which contain multiple ideological tensions caused by legitimization of social order in society and attempts to challenge it. In cultural materialism, scholars use consolidation, subversion and containment to refer to the different ideological means with which a dominant order in a society is perpetuated, to be challenged or to be maintained by controlling subversive attempts. These are to be discussed underneath.

2.1 Between Rosabel and customers

Working as a shopkeeper at a millinery establishment provided the heroine Rosabel abundant opportunities to directly encounter various customers and many of them are rich females unlike her. The millinery establishment seemed to be a stage on which characters from upper class and working class demonstrated ideological tension with different traits somehow reflecting social order at that time.

In the story, Mansfield sketched several customers' images through Rosabel's recall of her work in the daytime. In "Would she ever forget that awful woman in the grey mackintosh who had wanted a trimmed motor-cap..." and "or the girl who had tried on every hat in the shop...", readers can picture these two ladies' image in mind.

They possessed features such as having a mania in self-decoration, showing off wealth and being too picky to be satisfied, all of which were commonly found among the bourgeois class members. Say the woman wanted "something purple with something rosy each side". This demand was extremely vague and somehow explained why Rosabel described her as "that awful woman". Also, when the girls refused to buy any hat after trying out all of the hats in the shop, she used an excuse of calling in tomorrow which was "worn so thin". This shows that serving such

hypercritical customers was not fresh to Rosabel. But being a shopkeeper, whose duty was to sell products as many as possible to earn a living, she was not able to refute them nor force them to purchase. This unequal relationship between a shopkeeper and customers reflected their different positions, that is, the working-class selling labour in exchange of living supply at a disadvantageous position whereas bourgeoisie at a position owning higher status and mastering resources in the British capitalist society during the post-Victorian period.

The disparity in social class somehow deprived Rosabel of certain rights to safeguard her self-esteem and enables bourgeois customers to consume lavish merchandise meanwhile looking down upon the service providers. It is particularly clear in the description about the third customer that Rosabel served and mentioned in her recalling worth a dig-up. Unlike the previous described customers, the author gave a detailed description about this girl both in terms of her appearance and her behaviours. From “beautiful red hair and a white skin and eyes the colour of that green ribbon shot with gold they had got from Paris last week”, readers know that she must be a belle. And from Rosabel’s eyes, we further know this girl was rich enough to afford luxury purchase at this shop because she was driven here by “her electric brougham” and accompanied by a well-dressed young man. A clear-cut division in social class between this girl and Rosabel is thus indirectly formed. This division is not only embodied in their extent of richness but also in the power distance in purchasing and later conversations. For example, the rich girl herself asked Harry, her accompany, for advice in targeting an ideal hat at the very beginning. It implies that she had not a definite or necessary need in buying a hat otherwise she would have been able to utter what she wanted. The companion Harry also demanded the impossible. This made Rosabel’s later service more difficult, wishing to show them

something better. She tried to please this rich customer by finding the “the big, untouched box upstairs”. In doing so, she “had run up, breathlessly” expressing her eager hope to get this deal done. Surely, the finely decorated hat which was “rather large, soft, with a great, curled feather and a black velvet rose” attracted the couple, but what the rich girl did next was to a great extent unkind to Rosabel who had been made every effort to please her. She commanded Rosabel to try it on in front of them, praised the look of her wearing the new hat, and claimed to buy it. This behaviour might be a natural thing for rich women to obtain pleasure and self-satisfaction from comparing with each other, but it was rather impolite and insulting to Rosabel. As a poor girl working at a millinery, Rosabel was surely unable to afford such an expensive hat even though it suited her better than the rich girl who required Harry to pay for the hat afterwards and finally obtained it. What could be a crueller thing to a young girl than making her realise that she could be more beautiful with an ornament and then robbing it away from her because it was out of her reach. Consequently, “a sudden, ridiculous feeling of anger had seized Rosabel”. Moreover, her inner world turned to be a little bit wild longing to “throw this lovely, perishable thing in the girl’s face, and bent over the hat, flushing”; ironically, she had to say something otherwise at the same time to please the rich girl.

From this extract, views and values hidden in the two girls’ words and behaviours emerged. Obviously, both of them had been heavily influenced by the aesthetic orientation and favour for vanity tuned by the dominant class in society. This can be seen from their similar taste in selecting hats, especially the final hat which was almost forgotten in an untouched box upstairs. It is largely relevant to historical background and social environment which closely intertwined with the social order shaped by the ruling class through legitimization of various cultural influences. Hats

throughout history occupy an important position in distinguishing people's social status. It was especially popular in western countries in earlier eras. Women's hats evolved to be a part of their daily wear, in most cases performing a more decorative role than functional, and even worn indoors (Lynley, 2020). Women at that time competed to consume in hats which became an extravagant item decorated with rare feather, luxury jewels and ribbons. This shopping mania had been largely shaped by the bourgeois class who gained a dominant say in social media such as magazines, newspapers and influence the lower classes through those media. Additionally, some social practices such as tea parties, garden parties, and royal ascot all provided ladies an occasion to show off their hats. This unnecessary consumption intention was not seldomly seen thanks to the affluent material resources and large-sum capital accumulation of the bourgeois class benefited from British overseas colonial expansion and trade.

However, they had striking differences. On Rosabel's side, being a typical representative of the working class who had to sell labour and time to earn a living, she played a subordinate role in their interaction. She had to bear the direct and indirect insults and please those customers. On the contrast, the rich girl was more aggressive, holding a decisive role in this luxury purchase. The author Katherine Mansfield witnessed the end of Queen Victoria reign period when Britain had successfully enjoyed a period of stability (D'Arcy, 1999, p.246). In such a society, the gap between the rich and the poor was gauged, therefore identification and separation among social classes was also reinforced. One of the ways that the rich bourgeois class adopted to show off and separate them from the poor working class was clothing according to Veblen (1899). In his words, "expenditure on dress has this advantage over most other methods, that our pecuniary standing to all observers at the first

glance” (Veblen, 1899, p.111). There seems to be a rule that the newly rising bourgeois class tended to imitate the traditional royal and upper class in all aspects of daily life, and the extravagant consume products were simple choices for them to realise this goal. Thus, the result of conspicuous consumption and the implicit insulting behaviour of the rich girl was a reflection of such mentality: chasing to be like the upper class and snickering at the lower class. Naturally, Rosabel’s resentful emotional fluctuation reflected her inner subversive force against such humiliating practice caused by dominant cultural influence. However, this force was too weak to shake her unconscious imitation of the bourgeois fashion and to defy the customer.

2.2 Between Rosabel and the male companion Harry

Compared with Rosabel’s reaction to the rich female customers, her interaction with the only clearly mentioned male character Harry revealed more about the female struggle against the male dominance in culture.

The male character Harry appeared in the story as the rich girl’s companion. He was not a main character in it but his interaction with Rosabel was an impetus for later plot development. Actually, he impressed Rosabel initially by his good appearance and wealth, as she reckoned “quite a young man and so well dressed”. Then he suggested that the rich girl should have a black hat which seemed odd because a black hat for women was often associated with something bad or evil like a witch’s hat. No wonder Rosabel commented what he demanded as “impossible”. What is worse is that Harry took the chance of giving her the money for the new hat to flirt with her. He probably noticed the beauty of Rosabel from her trying on the new hat when she turned to him. Therefore, he praised that she ought to be painted in a rather rude and frivolous way

“You’ve got such a damned pretty little figure”. His easy virtue in dealing with Rosabel a young girl with no intimate relationship with him was so disrespectful to Rosabel as well as to the rich girl who seemed to be a publicly recognised partner of his. From Harry’s words, it is not hard to spot that he objectified women as a whole. Treating a woman in such a disrespectful way simply because she had a pretty figure which had a physical attraction to men like Harry himself ignored her value as an economically and spiritually independent individual who deserved adequate respect and equal treatment, instead of being an object to exhibit her physical beauty for men’s pleasure. Sadly, the young Rosabel could not help but seemingly falling in his handsome appearance, wealth and a slight hint of interest in her. She turned to be shy in front of him which can be told from her sudden pushing the hair back from her face and her hot forehead. But it seemed that she was holding back an impulse of further conversing with him with the action of hair pushing back in serving the couple and she signed “the luck of that girl!”. Clearly, Rosabel was at a disadvantageous position in the interaction with Harry. She was a representative respectively of a poor working-class girl having good wishes for romance in dealing with men while Harry symbolised the wealthy male bourgeoisie who hold a dominant position in manipulating material resources and in sexual relationships.

This ideological tension could reveal struggles between females and males associated with the author’s own stance in understanding the confinement put on women long existed in history and continued in capitalist society. The author Katherine Mansfield herself had an unusual life experience which somehow challenged the traditional virtues expected to be found in a woman at her times. Lederman (1977, p.35-36) commented that Mansfield had complained about men’s misery in her life. She was upset and unsatisfied about her father and her husband due to their mean in providing

her an easy life, such as reluctance of paying her carriage fee and adequate allowance for her living in London. She had to work for “a life of physical and aesthetic comforts” which she longed for (Lederman, 1977, p.35). On the other hand, she was rebellious in rejecting “the morals, roles and trappings of the bourgeois family” (Lederman, 1977, p.36). From the heroine Rosabel, readers can sense the conflicting struggle of Mansfield herself. Considering the similarities between the character and the author such as both living alone at a young adult age, struggling to pursue one’s ideal life, working to support their own life in expensive London, the writer must have transmitted her challenges on male dominance culture in Victorian times through the characters, which can be found in Rosabel’s sense in managing to keep her passion under control in work time, avoiding taking the bait of the rich man at least at this first encounter. However, her inclination for an independent life without confinement from the male dominant society was intertwined with conflicts with a wish for an easy and comfortable life. This explains why Rosabel experienced struggles in controlling her impulse. The subversive force fighting against the behaviour and disrespectful language of objectifying women within Rosabel was not stable and perhaps neither strong enough to protect her from harassing of rich men in the future. This could be a prediction of a trapped life twist in her life ahead. Thus, it demonstrated how strong the male dominance in community ideology was, which reinforced in a way of taming women to be used to reliance of men’s subsidy in turn. From this inner intension inside Rosabel and in Mansfield, readers can tell that there still has been a long way to go on the road to women’s truly liberation in getting rid of such reliance.

2.3 Between Rosabel and the girl on bus

The third ideological intension is vaguer to locate which lies in the differences between Rosabel and the unknown-named girl she met on bus. They had not conversed, but their indirect communication was still interesting to find the acceptance to the dominant culture of young women from working class in the early 20th century.

The two young girls of similar age from the same working class encountered on a bus sitting next to each other without saying a word. Rosabel noticed that the neighbouring girl was reading a cheap edition of book *Anna Lombard* while she was spending most of the time watching the scene outside. In the second glance, Rosabel peeped some lines from the book and felt uneasy. Its content was quite controversial due to some plot arrangements like cross-religious and racial romance without patriarchal approval, sexual relationship out of public-recognised wedlock and infanticide, even though its author argued that she tried to create the hero Gerald Ethridge “whose actions should be in accordance with the principles laid down by Christ” (Long, 2005). The book surely had attracted the girl who was reading it with absorbed interests, which was a glimpse of how books as a form of common cultural products asserted ideological influences over community members. Though the influence on the girl was not revealed in the story, its influence on Rosabel was easy to find in her later fantasy about romance with Harry. However, this influence was potentially dangerous to her because it was better categorised into a subversive force challenging the dominant marital structure and coupling rules. Specifically, its unrealistic embodiment of passionate romance across classes as well as its description about sexual attractions and intimate relationships were risky in luring young girls to go astray in Victorian times when moral principles were valued highly, especially for women. For a young girl like Rosabel, the situation was even more tricky since men

from bourgeois or upper class were not likely to be her trustworthy spouse overcoming social class barriers and prejudice on poor economic status, but more likely to abandon her after seducing, unlike the near-perfect Ethridge in the novel.

3. Female Psyche

Female psyche has long been a field in which prosperous outcomes came out. Psychoanalysis as a set of psychological and psycho-therapeutic theories and relevant techniques provides an ideal approach for literary critics to review psyche of the female characters in some classic literary works. Prominently, psychologists such as Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan established two branches of psychoanalysis, that is, Freudian psychoanalysis and Lacanian psychoanalysis. In the former one, psychologists tend to explore patients' personality in a way of easing him or her because "it is most clearly revealed when the intellect is exercising least control, and it follows that a patient's dreams, his behaviour when under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the odd lapsus linguae ['slip of the tongue'], the events he unaccountably forgets, tell more about him than his socially-controlled behaviour" (Brown, 1961, p.4). According to the latter one, the psychological structure of human subject can be explained by Lacan's three order theory, namely, an organism of inseparable imaginary order, symbolic order and real order. The imaginary order is not a complete world of fiction, but the world that an infant felt before it has the ability to use a language, which keeps the connotation of fantasy and illusion (Phillipe, 1995, p.34). An important argument in imaginary order claims that self is formed by identifying the similar or mirror image, a key factor in imagination (Berger, 2008, p.85). The self is formed by identifying with the Other in this relationship. In other

words, both the self and the imagination are the places where alienation takes place and alienation constitutes the imaginary order (Tamise, 2000, p.52-76). Similar with Freud, Lacan also discussed unconsciousness in psychoanalysis which continues throughout our life since its emerging. These are enlightening for literary criticism.

3.1 Implicit loneliness

The heroine Rosabel was experiencing loneliness from the beginning of the story till the end when she was half sleeping. It was largely because that the author posed her in a somehow isolated position both in terms of her disadvantageous role in public place and private life lacking of connections with other people. Through some of her psycho-activities such as silence and fantasy readers would be able to catch the implicit strong hints of her loneliness.

At the very beginning, Rosabel staged on a bus to get back home from the hustle and bustle of downtown London. Although there were crowds beside her, she did not converse with anyone among the masses. Her silence was partially caused by her listlessness and hunger. Say, she signed that she “would have sacrificed her soul for a good dinner-roast duck and green peas...”, and her languished body was wet by the bad weather. But more importantly, the reason why she did not speak spontaneously with other passengers was affected by her detachment from them in a way of distant psychological distance. In Rosabel’s eyes, the bus was like a mini-sized world carried a community of commoners emitting “a sickening smell” and “had the same expression, sitting so still, staring in front of them” whereas the outside world entailed a lot of sparkling novelties such as the various advertisements, flashy street lights, and the jewellers’ shops seen from the panes “like fairy palaces”. From these details,

readers can sense that Rosabel was highly possible in differentiating herself from the nearby community. The immediate surroundings were not her wants but the outside bustling and prosperous material world was. This could also be supported from her reaction to the neighbouring girl. She did not show an interest in conversation with her neighbour even though they were of similar age. It was rare to see that young girls and women kept silence when they got together. She seemed to have restrained herself from keeping peeping the girl's book, despite of a slight affected hint expressed through her unbuttoning her coat. The neighbouring girl was even more distant psychologically since she did not respond to Rosabel's pardon at all, instead she fully focused on the book she was reading. Thus, the only interest of Rosabel associated with the commuters on bus was extinguished under such cold action. And then Rosabel's loneliness was reinforced when she finally arrived at home, a shabby room for herself. She was so tired and alone that she could not help but falling into retrospection of daytime occurrence hereafter.

Rosabel's loneliness could be a reflection of the author's youth memory. Katherine Mansfield left home in New Zealand for London to attend Queen's College to be "finished" at a young age (Lappin, 2008). As a student at college, Mansfield was not popular among her classmates. She had demonstrated a strong personal will in dealing with relationships which seemed to be less pleasing to others. Mantz and Murray (1933) argued that Mansfield did not get quite close to other girls around her, even with her chosen friends. They wrote that "her manner was eager and precipitate, but from most of the girls she seems to have held herself aloof somewhat from the hauteur of her own family, and because she had become withdrawn even within its circle" (p.182). It was no wonder that the author herself had experienced a strong sense of loneliness in her adolescence. Her aloofness was in temperament and

attitudes of her acquaintances and friends was transformed into the character Rosabel. Their similar state of solitude as a lonely girl living in a metropolis having difficulties in getting along people around. When Mansfield “exulted in watching the enacting of the play: far more deeply thrilling to her at that time to watch than to act” (ibid.), Rosabel echoed in a similar way that she chose to watch the street scenes outside when she was in a crowded bus. Her loneliness somehow mirrored the similar feeling of Mansfield; likewise, the Bronte’s unconscious loneliness helped to explain the misery flicked both Heathcliff and Katherine in the *Wuthering Heights* (Levy, 1996, p.160). For Mansfield, loneliness was something harassed her almost along her life. In early ears, she lost her dear brother in the war which was a great shock for her. Lederman (1977, p.39) revealed that “she had always felt part of him, and she felt as if part of herself had died with him”. Such loss of her beloved ones went go as she failed to keep sustaining relationship with men and even had problems in maintaining close relationship with her parents who had disinherited her eventually. Even upon her death, her husband was away from her. Apart from one or two bosom friends, the author’s associations with others in the world were rather weak and loose. These could be also revealed from Rosabel’s listless daily chores in the mundane world. She lacked liaisons with others in London as well. For instance, her distance kept from the girl of the same social class and age and her monotonous leisure life after work both demonstrated her loneliness to a great extent mirrored the way of Mansfield in her youth years. On the one side, they both tended to get away from people nearby rather voluntarily get to know others or join them which may be caused by their aloofness in nature. In this way, she identified otherness from herself and thus alienated herself from other members of the community. On the other hand, their disadvantageous position in the community could worsen their self-esteem in such optional socialising

occasion if they were not well received by others. This can be supported by Rosabel's self-relinquished anger towards the rich girl's impolite treatment at work where she had to deal with strangers and was not fully entitled to command as she wished. The alienation was thus reinforced on her mind which would lead to a deeper sense of loneliness. In this case, it laid a clue for her fantasy of doubling the rich girl and herself later.

3.2 Hunger for love and material security

Another major feature of this story is the big portion of describing Rosabel's fantasy, in which her desire for intimate relationship and material security was embedded. According to Freud, what people dream is associated with the reality and the intellectual life accompanied with the reality (1999, p.12). The dream-material derives from our experience, which is then remembered or reproduced in dream (ibid.). Importantly, no matter what an exact dream content is, the central force in which is believed to be the symbolisation in imagination (1999, p.73). In this text, Rosabel's psyche experienced fluctuations from clear state to dream, which closely related with her daytime experience.

When Rosabel returned to her residence, she shut the outside out so that "just one little sheet of glass between her and the great wet world outside!". It suggested that this was a safe place for her to free her mind and body and soon she began to recollect what had occurred to her in worktime. A rich girl impressed her not only by her beauty and wealth, but also by her handsome and rich fiancé. She imagined a situation in which she replaced the rich girl. In her fantasy, Harry would have been her companion and a maid would also have followed her. This could imply that her previous lack of close connections with others was satisfied in this unrealistic way

temporarily. Her fantasy about Harry was in detail. He became an ideal gentleman making every measure to court Rosabel. She stressed that “of course they were in love with each other, but not engaged, very nearly” suggesting a preference for enjoying the process of being cherished and doted. Thus, the doting and gentle caring seemed to be what Rosabel desperately demanded in reality since such rare emotions were commonly found in intimate relationships whereas she did not have. More details in the text present psychological traits of the heroine’s desire for love. For instance, she even fantasied a plot of Harry’s stopping at Gerald’s for buying her a bunch of Parma violets. The violets seemed to be Rosabel’s favoured flowers considering her voluntarily purchasing of them after work in reality. According to Freud (1999, p.248), blossoms generally links with purity or sin in romance. Usually, white ones signify innocence whereas red ones are associated with sexual sinfulness. The symbolic meaning of violets in western culture was normally purity and love quite like the general symbolisation in psychoanalysis. Then in this text a referential meaning of beauty or loveliness of women seems also make sense, as Harry in her fantasy complemented her sweetness with an analogy of violets. As a gift given by her admire, violets here could also symbolise love that she was demanding. The sweet smell of these violets became a force attracting young girls like her to throw themselves into a type of romantic pleasing relationship. Additionally, the sweet fragrance of Parma violets was repeated in the story including the mentioning after their tea back home could have become a sign of Rosabel’s strong hunger for the intimacy in love. After a series of courting efforts made by Harry, she fantasied that they got engaged and then finally married. Her elaborated fantasy about a different life ended here which may suggest that she could only envisage the romantic love rather than a mundane family life.

Rosabel's hunger for love was intertwined with a demand for finding security in the real world, especially the material security in terms of wealth and higher social status. She somehow saw some similar traits in the rich girl with herself, say they were both young and pretty. These became a basis for characters' doubling in her fantasy. Clearly, they had a drastic disparity in social status which was clear in Rosabel's mind due to the daytime experience. As it is argued that clear self and other distinction gave space for imagination to grow (Tamise, 2000, p.52-76), Rosabel's fantasy was produced under such circumstance. She imagined herself having a life with richer economic conditions and higher social status which would empower her adequate dignity to avoid being hurt by the outsiders and protection in life from coldness and poor conditions. In her imagination, she had those social connections that did not exist in reality, say the French maid and butler at her service, handsome and loving admirers including a foreign prince and Harry who later turned to be her fiancé and husband. She did not only swap to be a distinguished customer at the café and restaurant, but also received homage from peasants in the village after wedding. Such connections completed a missed loop in reality. In this way, Rosabel was orientated to a new identity allowing her restrained desire for respect and acknowledging to be realised. However, it is unfortunate that the cold world and the poor young woman herself were both unchanged when her fantasy and dream came to an end upon morning. Overall, the concealed desire of the female expressed in a way of daydream like fantasy, even though the gap between the fantasy and the reality would make the situation crueller upon her awakening.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, with the cultural materialism approach the text of *The Tiredness of Rosabel* presented various ideological tensions existed between working class woman and bourgeois customers, between women at a disadvantageous position and men from the dominant culture, between working class women themselves. Further, it is analysed in psychoanalysis approach, revealing a strong sense of loneliness of a young woman living metropolis London as well as her hidden desire for love and security expressed in a near-dream fantasy.

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