Exemplary Capstone Projects 2020

(Independent research projects by final year English Majors)

English@CUHK

**Department of English
The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

PREFACE

It is my pleasure to introduce the 2020 volume of the Exemplary Capstone Project of the Department of English at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. The Capstone Project provides students with an opportunity to carry out an independent research project in an area of interest within Applied English Linguistics, English Literary Studies, or Creative Writing, with supervision from a faculty member in the Department. The 2020 volume highlights the work of fifteen of our students, with topics as diverse as folktales and fairytales to Twitter and Netflix. This diversity in topics as well as the approaches taken to the research in theoretical framing and methodology, highlights the range of skills our students develop during their studies in the Department of English at CUHK, and their ability to apply these skills independently to research topics of their own choosing. The fifteen essays in this volume also highlight the creativity and imagination that the Department encourages in our students. A sincere congratulations to all the students whose work is published in this volume; we are proud of them all.

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To What Extent Hong Kong English Is Acceptable Viewed by Its Young Users?

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Introduction

Hong Kong is often described as a bilingual or multilingual society. According to the 2016 Population By-Census, Cantonese was spoken by 96.7% of the city's population and the usual spoken language for over 90% of them, making it the most commonly spoken language. However, the prevalence of Cantonese does not make it the sole dominant language in Hong Kong. The same report also revealed that English and Mandarin were used by nearly half of Hong Kong's population as the second language. On the administrative level, the Hong Kong government stated that both Chinese and English are official languages of the city and advocated the "bi-lieracy and trilingualism" language policy which promoted the use of Cantonese, English and Mandarin. After the handover of sovereignty from the UK to China in 1997, Mandarin has been an emerging language in Hong Kong. On the other hand, the co-existence of English and Cantonese has rooted in Hong Kong for a longer period, making the correlation between the two languages interesting to linguists who are devoted to studying the linguistic phenomena of the city.

Bilingualism of Cantonese and English in Hong Kong can be traced back to its colonial era between 1841 to 1997. After the Qing Dynasty lost the Opium Wars to Britain, Hong Kong fell into the territory of the British colony where the British established governments and brought along their culture and language to. Earlier during the colonial era, the British or the Westerners were considered superior to the Chinese population. Although the Chinese ethnic group dominated the population and all sorts of Chinese languages including Cantonese were spoken widely, English was the only official language of Hong Kong until 1974. The colonial history created an imbalance between the status of Cantonese and English, where English was seen as a "high" language and Cantonese "low". Chan (2002) noted that "English language skills became associated

with an elite class status and success" as it was used in domains such as government, business and law (p.274). In addition, English has developed into the global lingua franca, therefore English ability is emphasised in Hong Kong society for career opportunities and economic prosperity of the city. However, the higher status of English seemed to have little effect on the transmission of Cantonese as the Chinese has still made up the majority of the populaiton.

The colonial background of Hong Kong has made Cantonese and English intertwine with each other. Traditionally, Chinese Hongkongers acquire Cantonese as their first language while learning English as a second language from formal instructions in schools. Regarding how Hongkongers learn and use English in Hong Kong, Wong (2017) commented that:

"Ever since English was used in Hong Kong, it has been adapted to the new local context by its indigenous users so that new forms and structures have been developed in phonetics and phonology, in the lexicon and in syntax" (p.2)

English used by Hongkongers is heavily influenced by Cantonese, creating a set of distinctive spoken and written forms which are recognised by researchers. For example, Hung (2000) and Deterding et al. (2008) collected data and summarised some phonological patterns shared by Hong Kong English speakers such as substituting /θ/ as /f/, extending the short vowels like /ɪ/ as /iː/ and "l-n conflation" which means interchangeably using /l/ and /n/. In addition, syntactic features such as random use of plural suffix "s", tense switching within the same context and "topic-comment" sentence structure were found by Setter et al. (2018). These features emerge due to the linguistic differences between Cantonese and English. How to view these deviations from native English varieties is arguable and varies among individuals. Therefore, there have been debates on whether these characteristics seen in English used by Hongkongers give Hong Kong English (HKE) recognition and acceptance as an established variety, which is the focus of this capstone project.

Literature Review

Non-native English varieties have taken place to thrive and evolve in many places around the world due to the expansion of the British colonies. The English language still has a great influence on the former colonies after gaining independence, becoming a second language of the people there. Some non-native varieties gained acceptance in society like Singaporean English or Singlish. Siemund et al. (2014) conducted a survey and found out that university students generally shared positive views on the statement "I think speaking Singlish is a critical part of my self-definition" (p.356), even there were supposed to have better English proficiency and educated with standard English in schools under the "Speak Good English Movement". According to Bambose (1998), the status of a language variety largely depends on the acceptability of its users and non-users, who would judge whether "an observed feature of language use is indeed an innovation" or "simply an error (p.2). He argued that "why should a native-variety-based standards continue to license the norms of non-native Englishes?", suggesting deviation from native varieties is not a crucial factor to determine whether a non-native one is established, but the view of society mattered.

To oversee the development of non-native English varieties, Schneider (2003) developed a dynamic model to categories the varieties into five phases: Foundation, Exonormative Stabilisation, Nativisation, Endonormative Stabilisation and Differentiation where the variety finally gains its independence from "external power sources" (p.253). For example, Singlish was categorised into Phase 4 as it was widely accepted in society and an expression of identity as Singaporean. HKE, according to Schneider, was in Phase 3 which is Nativisation as it displayed distinctive vocabulary and phonetics but its acceptability was still debatable.

There may be some signs that HKE is gaining global recognition and acceptance. For example, words such as "Siu Mei" (Chinese roasted meat) and "Dai Pai Dong" (open-air food stall) which are the transliterations of Cantonese vocabulary into English have been added to Oxford English Dictionary as individual entries. However, local acceptability has come a long way and is still evolving. Luke and Richards (1982) commented "There is no such thing as "Hong Kong English" (p.55, quoted in Groves, 2011, p.33). They believed that English learners in Hong Kong tended to rely on external norms and standards

from native varieties, like imitating British or American accents. English was the "elite language", so the pursuit of good English or standard English which is the native form was considered more important than recognising HKE as an established variety. The same question was brought to Pang (2003), but he also drew similar conclusions that linguistic purism was common and Hongkongers showed "resentment of any deviation from the norm" (p.16). His study also showed that only 13.6% of the respondents of his survey agreed that they should speak like a Hongkoner while the majority preferred sounding like British or American which are native varieties. However, there were possibilities that HKE would evolve and gain acceptance in future as 74.3% of the respondents believed HKE was real and 46.1% believed HKE was unique and acceptable.

The development of HKE seems to be accelerated by the changes in the political landscape of Hong Kong. Since the handover of sovereignty to China, the Hong Kong-Sino relationship has been a controversial political issue, stirring up arguments in the city's core values, governmental systems and self-identification. How Hongkongers position themselves could be reflected in our language use, such as the advocate of Cantonese protection. English also could play a role in the identity crisis. Hansen Edward (2016) conducted surveys before and after the Umbrella Revolution in 2014, a series of large-scale sit-in protests demanding universal election of the Chief Executive and Legislative Councillors, to find out their perceptions towards HKE. The results revealed an increase in people expressing that HKE was a real variety and admitting speaking HKE from 2014 to 2015. Those who identified themselves as "Hongkongers" instead of "Hong Kong Chinese" or "Chinese" showed more agreement to these two statements (40.7% said HKE was real and 78.7% said they spoke HKE). Therefore, Hansen Edward claimed that there was evidence that HKE was entering Phase 4 in Schneider's Dynamic Model, Endonormative Stabilisation, where HKE was accepted and used as an identity marker as a Hongkonger.

Five years later, the Anti Extradition Bill Movement broke out in 2019 in Hong Kong which was also protests expressing outrage to the government of Hong Kong and China triggered by doubts over a Bill which stated the arrangement of extraditing criminals to China. The localised identity, Hongkongers, was again brought under the spotlight in local politics. As the last social movement was found having a great influence

on perception towards HKE, this survey aims at investigating the latest views of its users regarding acceptability of HKE after the massive social movement. The younger generation who were in their 20s were more involved in social movements. Therefore, it is believed that the political atmosphere and identity crisis had a severe effect on how they perceive HKE which would navigate the future of the local variety.

Methodology

The topic of the capstone project can be subdivided into three research questions below:

1. How acceptable are the linguistic features of HKE on different occasions?

2. What are the motivations for young people to use HKE?

3. How legitimate is HKE from the perspective of its young users?

An online survey was carried out to collect data and the questions used circulated around the above research questions (see Appendix). As the project aims at studying the perception of young people who are in their 20s, 52 undergraduates from the Chinese University of Hong Kong were invited to fill in the survey. All respondents were local students who spoke Cantonese as their L1 and English as L2 to ensure that they were also HKE users or had the idea of HKE.

The survey consisted of four parts. In the first two parts, some authentic or pseudo-authentic examples of HKE uses on different occasions were displayed to elicit reactions of the respondents. The design of these two parts is inspired by Ting and Wong (2019) who also conducted an acceptability survey on grammatical features of HKE. The first part, "Grammatical Feature Acceptability", which was also the acceptance towards grammatical features took references of the features used by Ting and Wong (2019). However, occasion of HKE uses was also a concern for this project, so the target features used in this survey came with descriptions of the occasions, such as WhatsApp messages between friends and letters to the editor on social issues. The target features were shown into pictures which looked at a cropped screen from a real situation (like an actual instant message or section of a newspaper) to make the HKE uses appear more authentic. The occasions of HKE uses were categorised into "formal", "semi-formal" and "casual".

The second part, "Phonological Features Acceptability", was also an acceptability

survey. Similar to the first part, the HKE features were displayed in an authentic way as the descriptions of the occasions were affixed to the audio clips of HKE uses produced by real HKE speakers. There were three audio clips of similar lengths for the three occasions varying in formality. For the first two parts, after reading the pictures and listening to the audio clips, respondents were asked to rate the acceptability of the HKE features according to the occasion on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 stood for "very unacceptable" and 10 "very acceptable". In both parts, examples in standard English were also included as controlled groups to see the preference of the respondents. The standard English examples were also in the same three occasions as correspondences of their HKE counterparts. The categorisation of the examples used in the first two parts can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Question design of the first two parts ("Grammatical Features Acceptability" and "Phonological Features Acceptability") of the online survey.

Grammatical feature			
Occasion	Context	HKE example	HKE feature displayed
Formal	WhatsApp messages to friends or family	"Let's have lunch after I cut my hairs" "Here are many restaurants"	Extended plurality ("hairs") Non-occurrence of subject ("here are")
Semi-formal	Email to course tutor	"For example, I know that English song are more popular than Cantonese ones and dominate the local music before 1980s.	Unmarked plurality ("song" Verbs not marked for past tense ("are", "dominate")
Informal	Letter to the editor	"Our traditions have always include exploitation and discrimination towards disadvantaged group"	Subject-verb disagreement ('have") Verbs not marked for past participle ("include") Unmarked plurality ("group")
Phonological feature			

Occasion	Context	Some phonological features displayed
Formal	Press conference	Deleted final consonants ("People" as /ˈpiː.pə‿ʊ/) L-N conflation ("Explanation" as ˌek.spləˈl e ɪ.ʃən")
Semi-formal	Class discussion with classmates	Consonant substitution ("Whether" as /ˈwed .ə/, "With" as /wɪf/) Reduced consonant cluster "Solved" as /sɒv/)
Casual	Street interview for shooting a Youtube channel	Stressing weak vowel ("Event" as /iːˈven/) Deleted final consonant ("Event" as /iːˈven/, "Model" as /ˈmɒd.ə‿ʊ/)

In the third part "General Impression" , respondents were given ten adjectives and asked to rate the suitability of those adjectives to describe HKE on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 stood for "Very unsuitable" and 10 for "Very suitable". The ten adjectives were from five pairs of positive and negative adjectives, like "Intelligent" as the opposite of "Uneducated", to see whether the respondents had an inclination for positive or negative connotations with HKE. Table 2 below shows the adjectives used for this part.

Table 2. Adjectives for rating in the third part "General Impression".

Negative adjectives	Positive adjectives
Uneducated	Intelligent
Lazy	Comfortable
Creative	Erroneous
Unsociable	Friendly
Unique	Weird

The final part was "Attitudinal Statements of HKE" where seven statements were given to respondents who would judge whether they agree with them or not. The statements could be further categorised into three types of attitudes which were "Use of HKE", "HKE and Identity" and "Legitimacy of HKE". Table 3 below shows the statements in this part.

Table 3. Statements in the fourth part "Attitudinal Statements of HKE".

Category	Statement
Use of HKE	S1: In general, I am comfortable using Hong Kong English.
	S2: Hong Kong English can be used in either formal or casual occasions.
	S3: If I could choose, I would rather always speak with or use native varieties of English (e.g. British English or American English) than Hong Kong English.
HKE and Identity	S4: Speaking Hong Kong English is a way to show my Hongkonger identity.
	S5: Hong Kong English reflects Hong Kong local culture.
Legitimacy of HKE	S6: Instead of common mistakes made by Hongkongers when using English, Hong Kong English is an established variety of English.
	S7: Hong Kong English is a legitimate variety of English, like British and American English.

Findings

Grammatical Features Acceptability

Figure 1 below reports the means of acceptability of the uses of HKE and standard English on different occasions. Across all degrees of formality, uses of standard English scored higher marks than HKE. The difference between standard English and HKE on casual occasions (WhatsApp messages to friends and family) was the most significant, where the score of HKE was over 3 points lower than its standard English counterpart.

While the means of HKE English uses were relatively consistent on all occasions, means of standard uses showed variations. The means of standard uses on casual and formal occasions were close, but the mean of semi-formal occasion was exceptionally low (6.27 out of 10), making it close to the mean of HKE English (7.90) for this formality. The inconsistency will be further discussed. However, still the data for this part showed the respondents' preference to standard English over HKE which exhibited distinctive grammatical features.

Figure 1. Means of acceptability of grammatical features of HKE and standard English on different occasions.
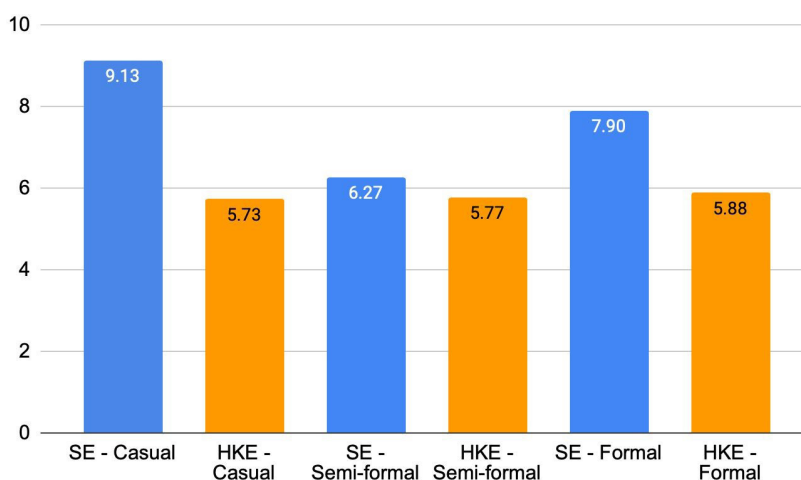
*SE = Standard English

Phonological Features Acceptability

The overall preference of the respondents for this part was similar with that for grammatical features, which can be seen in Figure 2 below. The means of standard English which was native speaker accents were higher on all occasions than HKE. The difference between the two language varieties on casual occasions was again the most significant, with HKE scoring over 3 points lower than standard English. However, inconsistency was also discovered in the rating on semi-formal occasions in this part as the mean of HKE use (7.27) was significantly higher than other uses of HKE on other occasions which

stayed between 5 to 6. Acceptability of HKE for the semi-formal occasion was close to standard English (7.90). Despite the means on semi-formal occasions, the respondents showed a notable preference for standard English over HKE when they listened to audio clips in both language varieties.

Figure 2. Means of acceptability of phonological features of HKE and standard English on different occasions.
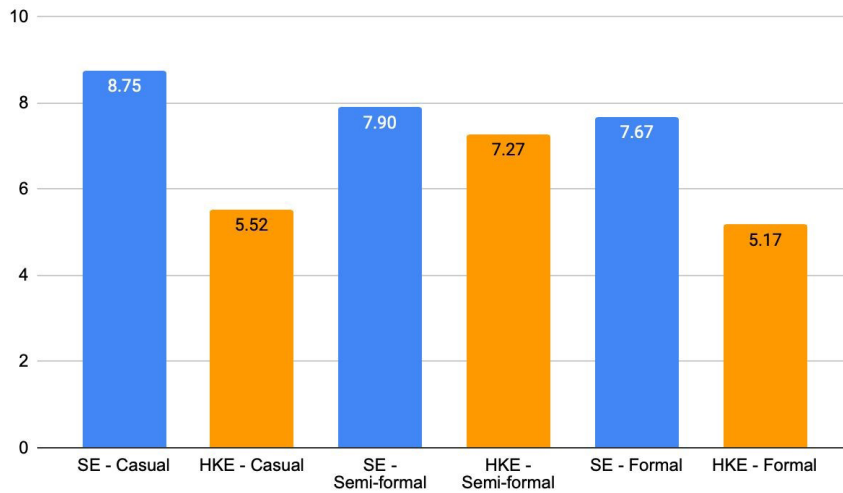
*SE = Standard English

General Impression

Figure 3 belows reports the mean rating on the suitability of adjectives to describe HKE, which were intended to find out whether the respondents had more positive and negative impressions towards HKE. Regarding the first three pairs in Figure 3 ("Uneducated-Intelligent", "Lazy-Comfortable" and "Erroneous-Creative"), no significant point differences could be found within the pairs, and the mean ratings were close to 5 (on a scale of 1 to 10) which shows a neutral stance of the respondents to these adjectives. However, further examination would be discussed in the later part as the respondents had diverse opinions on these three pairs. Nonetheless, respondents seemed to have a stronger inclination for the last two pairs as the differences between the positive and negative were more significant. The respondents gave the positive adjectives

which were "Friendly"(6.46) and "Unique" (6.92) higher points than their opposites "Unsociable" (5.12) and "Weird" (3.71). The mean points received by "Friendly" and "Unique" were also relatively high among all adjectives, suggesting that the respondents had a tendency to think HKE could show friendliness and uniqueness in speech styles. On the other hand, mean points received by "Unsociable" was the lowest, showing that the respondents believed that using HKE was not inappropriate for socialisation and communication.

Figure 3. Suitability of adjectives to describe HKE.
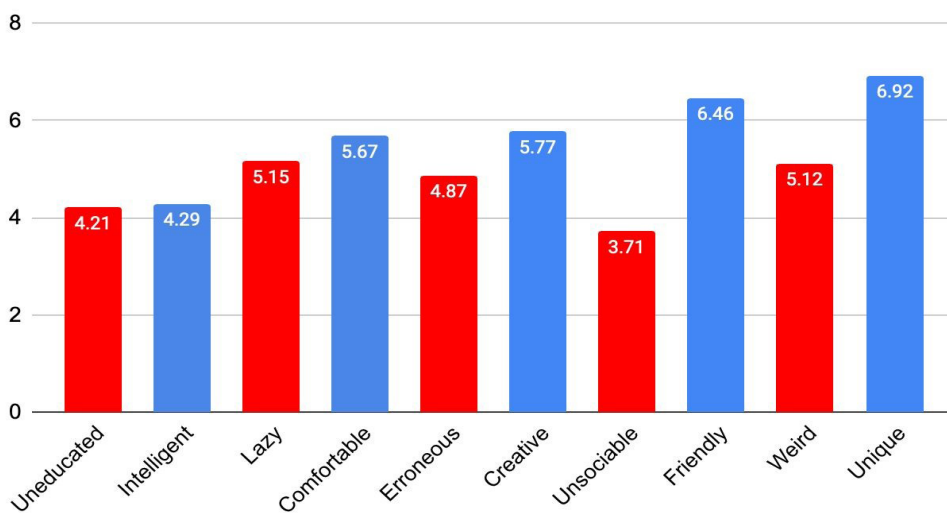
Attitudinal Statement of HKE

Use of HKE

Statements regarding "Use of English" targeted at finding out the feelings of the respondents when they use HKE in daily lives. Figure 4 to 6 below show us the data collected for S1 to S3 in this part of the survey. For S1, over half of the respondents (55.8%) reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they were comfortable when using HKE. Only 15.4% of the respondents reported discomfort being HKE users and none of them chose "strongly disagree" for S1. From S1, the respondents did not feel extremely uneasy when using HKE, and some even may embrace the idea of using HKE.

However, about the occasion to use HKE, 61.6% of the respondents shared disagreement with the idea that HKE could be used in all formal and informal occasions.

In addition, none of the respondents chose "Strongly agree" as the option for S2 which means that the domains to use HKE transcend formality. The data collected for S2 agree with that in the first two parts of the survey which reveals the respondents did not prefer HKE on all occasions over standard English.

S3 further probed into the preference of the respondents of language variety by asking them whether they would like to adopt the language competency of a native English speaker. The respondents still reflected a strong preference to native varieties as 82.1% agreed that they would like to always speak like a native speakers. Only 7.1% did not show preference to native varieties and none of them chose "Strongly Disagree" for the idea of switching language variety.

Figure 4. S1: In general, I am comfortable using Hong Kong English.

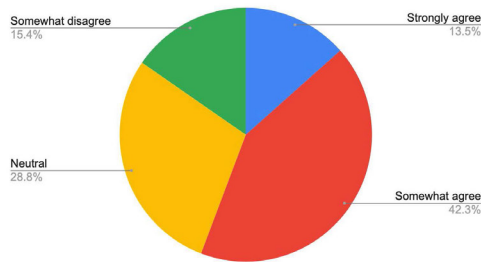Figure 5. S2: Hong Kong English can be used in either formal or casual occasions.
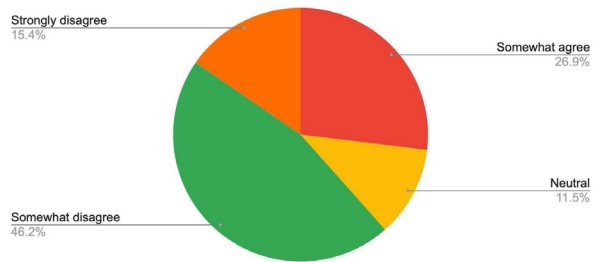
Figure 6. S3: If I could choose, I would rather always speak with or use native varieties of English (e.g. British or American English) than Hong Kong English
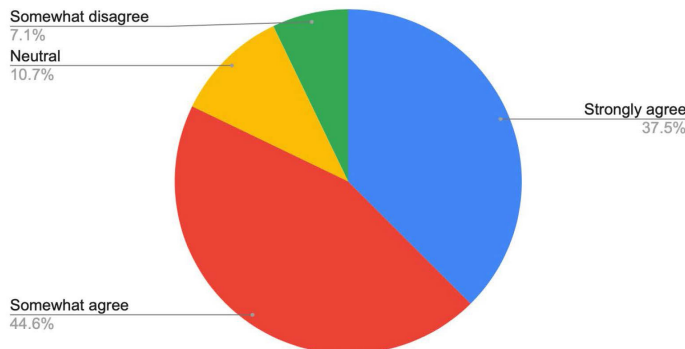
HKE and Identity

The statements of this section examined the relation between using HKE and the local identity. S4 directly asked the respondents whether using HKE is a gesture

expressing their local identity, and 75.0% of the respondents agreed with that, with almost one third of them (32.1%) agreed with the statement strongly. On the other hand, only less than 10% (8.9%) of the respondents expressed disagreement with the S4, meaning that they had a strong inclination to see HKE as an identity marker.

Furthermore, S5 asked about whether HKE could reflect the local culture, and the data showed an even clearer inclination of the respondents. Nearly 90% (89.3%) of the respondents agreed that HKE reflected the culture of Hong Kong, with over 50% (51.8%) of them strongly believing that HKE was a reflection of local culture. Overall, from the perspective of the respondents, HKE was a localised variety which was deep-rooted in local culture and contexts.

Figure 7. S4: Speaking Hong Kong English is a way to show my Hongkonger identity.
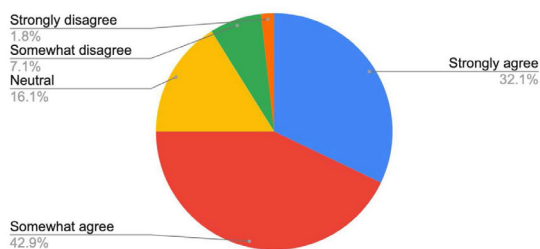
Figure 8. S5: Hong Kong English reflects Hong Kong local culture.
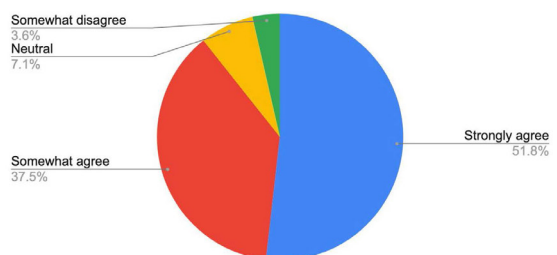
Legitimacy of HKE

The data collected from S6 are presented in Figure 9 below, which reveals that over 60% (62.5%) of the respondents believed HKE was common mistakes made by Hong Kong English speakers or learners. Although there were a significant proportion of respondents not seeing HKE as an established variety based on its variations from standard English, they expressed divided opinions on the legitimacy of HKE in comparison with native varieties such as British and American Englishes. While nearly half of the responses (46.4) were "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree" for the legitimacy of HKE, still the survey had nearly one third of the respondents choosing "Somewhat disagree" or even "Strongly disagree" for the idea that HKE was a legitimate language variety like the native ones. From the data collected from the two statements in this section, some respondents held an apologetic perspective to view HKE which was just errors, making

it inferior to native English varieties. However, some of the respondents were more open to the notion that HKE gained its legitimacy despite its deviations from standard English.

Figure 9. Instead of common mistakes made by Hongkongers when using English, Hong Kong English is an established variety of English.
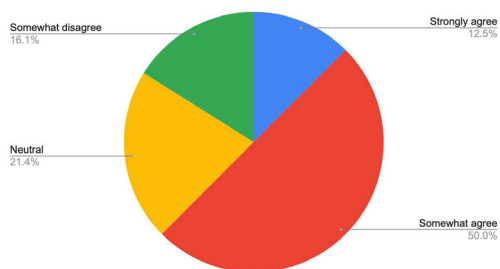
Figure 10. S7: Hong Kong English is a legitimate variety of English, like British and American English.

Somewhat disagree
16.1%

Strongly agree
12.5%

Neutral
21.4%

Somewhat agree
50.0%

Strongly disagree
1.8%

Strongly agree
12.5%

Somewhat disagree
30.4%

Somewhat agree
33.9%

Neutral
21.4%
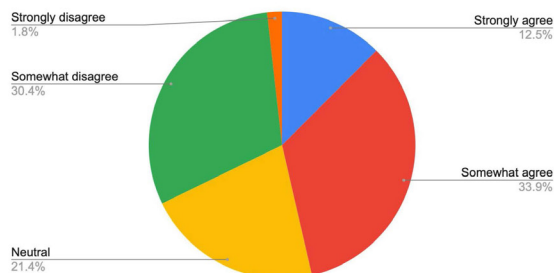
Discussion

Acceptability of Linguistic Features

The first research question and surface attention of this survey are how acceptable are the features of HKE in the eyes of its young users. After collecting the data from the respondents who have judged the acceptability on different HKE uses, it is reflected that both the selected grammatical and phonological features were not widely accepted. Occasion and formality are not a concern for acceptability of HKE as the examples on both formal and casual occasions received similar ratings which were between 5 to 6, the midpoint of the scale of 1 to 10. The ratings which are close to average score on the scale could be explained by the observation that the respondents had polarised opinions on acceptability HKE features. For instance, 19.2% of the respondents gave a score at 3 or even lower to the use of HKE grammar on the formal occasion, while 30.8% of them 8 or higher. Therefore, the data obtained from the first two parts of the survey led to the conclusion that the young users are divided in terms of whether they accept others using HKE, but some show more tolerance to the language variety than others.

The division can also be seen further in the data in part 3, General Impression. As discussed before, acceptability of a language variety depends on the perception that whether its deviations from the standard variety are considered errors or innovations.

The question pair "Erroneous-Creative" was intended to address this perception directly. Although the differences between the mean scores of the pair are not significant to tell the respondents' inclination, further analysis on the data distribution gives us more information.

Figure 11. Distribution of ratings on using "Erroneous" to describe HKE.
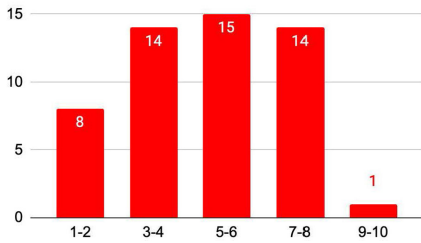
Figure 12. Distribution of ratings on using "Creative" to describe HKE.
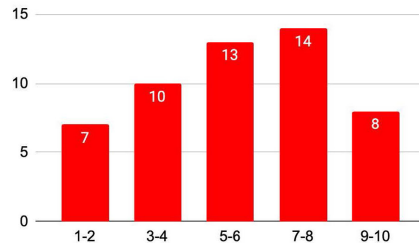
Figure 11 and 12 above report the distribution of ratings for the two adjectives. While the average scores (5-6) is the most popular choice for respondents rating the suitability of "Erroneous", the numbers of respondents giving 3-4 or 7-8 tie, meaning that they do not share a common view on whether HKE is just a set of errors. The distribution in Figure 12 which is about the suitability of "Creative" also reflects a similar pattern, but there is a slight inclination to 7-8, suggesting their tolerance to the linguistic features of HKE is emerging.

Motivation to use HKE

Receptively speaking, the respondents have different views on acceptability of others using HKE on all occasions. However, most Hongkongers may also be HKE users to a variety of degrees and frequencies as the result of acquiring Cantonese as L1 and English as L2. Besides uncontrollable factors such as slips of the tongue or education backgrounds, the data also suggest some motivators to drive HKE users to use the language variety. The respondents reflected a consensus on S4 and S5 in section, Legitimacy of HKE, which is further highlighted in Table 4 below. It is worth noting that the majority of the respondents thought HKE was a product of local culture, therefore an ideal identity marker as a Hongkonger. "Strongly agree" is the most chosen choice for both statements which is the most significant inclination observed in the whole survey. Therefore, it is

suggested that young users of HKE will intentionally use the language variety when they wish to emphasise their local identity in their speeches, disregarding the fact that the linguistic features demonstrated may be seen as errors inappropriate choice of language.

Table 4. Distribution of rating on S4 and S5.

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Sum
S4: Speaking Hong Kong English is a way to show my Hongkonger identity.	42.9%	32.1%	75.0%
S5: Hong Kong English reflects Hong Kong local culture.	51.8%	37.5%	89.3%

Another possible motivator driving its young users to choose speaking HKE is to show friendliness. Figure 13 below captures the rating on the pair "Friendly-Unsociable" in General Impression. The significant differences between the average scores of the two adjectives reveal that despite its deviations from standard varieties, HKE is seldom considered unsociable. On the other hand, there are patterns of the common features of HKE discussed by other linguistic researchers and even the users, therefore HKE is also appropriate for communication. Using HKE can be a gesture to show solidarity to the local community and close members in their social circles as the interlocutors can also understand HKE and recognise the language variety as a common identity marker.

Figure 13. Rating on suitability of using "Unsociable" and "Friendly" to describe HKE.
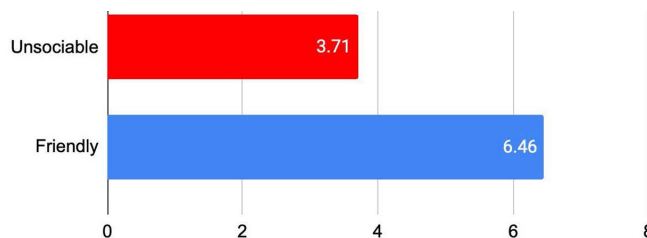
Legitimacy of HKE

By isolating the linguistic features, it is seen that the respondents doubted the appropriateness to use HKE on a variety of occasions, but some showed openness to it. Speaking of legitimacy of HKE in general, the respondents also expressed different and

conflicting views.

From the data of S7, a significant proportion of respondents agreed that HKE was more than interlanguage errors made by Hongkongers. The establishment of HKE was recognised and the linguistic features are tolerated and even used as an identity, implying that the legitimacy is emerging. However, at the same time the young users may see HKE as an inferior language variety to the standards. Data in the first two parts of the survey reflect native or standard varieties is still preferred over HKE. Moreover, the majority of the respondents expressed that they would like to speak like a British or American rather than a HKE user if they could adjust their linguistic habit and ability. Still, the reliance on external norms impedes the acceptability and legitimacy of HKE as the users may not feel confident using the localised variety. A further analysis reported in Figure 14 below shows us more on this idea. Although some respondents felt comfortable to use HKE, the majority of them (75.8%) still opted for native varieties to use if they had a choice to pick up a language variety.

The contradictory views held by HKE's users towards HKE can be conceptualised as the "Linguistic Schizophrenia" phenomenon. Kachru (1986) used this term to describe the situation of Indian English at that time, when "a complex love-hate relationship with the language" was observed (p.32). It is believed that HKE is in a similar position from the perspective of its young users as both exonormative beliefs and endonormative language practices co-exist. The users may switch sides on whether to use HKE for different purposes. For example, to avoid judgements of the language choice or English proficiency, standard varieties which are the "safest" choices are preferred as most interlocutors accept them on all occasions. HKE can be used when there is a need to accentuate the local identity. How and when to switch sides depends on the users' openness to variants, courage to showcase speech styles or attachment to their identity as Hongkongers. But still,

Figure 14. S3: If I could choose, I would rather always speak with or use native varieties of English (e.g. British English or American English) than Hong Kong English. (Only respondents feeling comfortable using HKE)
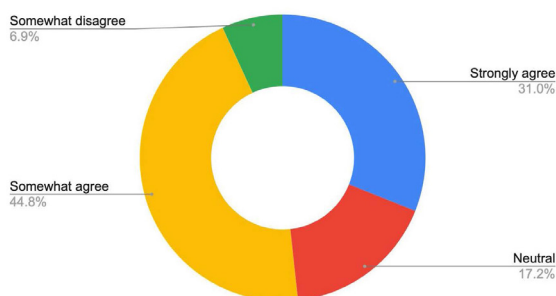
Development as an English Variety

Past researches tried to assign HKE into phases in Schneider's Dynamic Model. From the literature review of this project, it is found that HKE has made its attempt to enter a later phase, starting from phase 2, Exonormative Stabilisation, to phase 3, Nativisation. Hansen Edward (2016) claimed that HKE was in phase 3 but entering phase 4, Endonormative Stabilisation, where the local English variety is an identity marker and gaining wide acceptance by its users. From her study, political factors have a major impact on the development of HKE as the increasing awareness of the Hongkonger identity helps HKE win its acceptance from its users.

This survey was also conducted after a large-scale social unrest in 2019, when the local identity was reflected again and many political incidents happened. The "Yellow Campaign" who are the people of Hong Kong supporting the Anti-Extradition Movements has been advocating many actions to support the development of democracy in Hong Kong and rebel against the Central Chinese government. The campaign has called for actions such as protection of Cantonese and boycotting shops from the "Blue Campaign" which belongs to the pro-Beijing side or Chinese-financed corporates. These responses to the Hong Kong and Chinese government's confrontation against the social movements reflect the separateness of the two concepts, Hong Kong and PRC. In her later work, Hansen Edward (2019) also claimed that the urge to distinguish Hongkongers from general Chinese helped HKE mature as a possible identity marker, and this notion is also found in the latest social movement. Although HKE is still a language variety

which represents the local identity of its young users, still the users cannot escape from an apologetic perspective to treat HKE. Some young users may be more eager to use HKE, but generally they are reliant on exonormative norms. Therefore, I argue that no significant progress has been made to push HKE to stage 4 where the acceptance is popular in society. Some lingering influence of phase 2 is also observed as the imbalance status between HKE and native varieties is prevalent.

Whether HKE can become more established like its Singaporean counterpart depends on many social factors. For example, the trend of the Sino-Hong Kong relationship will have a huge impact on the Hongkonger identity, leading to the change in status of HKE. If the social movements continue in future after the temporal halt caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, HKE and other identity markers will have room to grow and be recognised by more people supporting the movements and reflecting on their self-identification. On the other hand, the Hong Kong government has been attempting to curb the social movements and civil rebellions as a response, such as the implementation of the National Security Law and adjustments on the curriculum of Liberal Studies and national education in mainstream school education. Also, the government has promoted more economic cooperation and manpower mobility with the Mainland. These acts may have an integration effect on the identities of Hongkongers and Chinese, decreasing the need for local identity markers.

Furthermore, challenges are faced by HKE to gain acceptance and legitimacy. Hong Kong English education still discourages the use of HKE and relies on standard varieties. Therefore, the young users still uphold an exonormative belief which is similar to the elder generation. Hardly we see that the government or authorities promote or support HKE, but even non-governmental organisations or the general public. Local languages are major identity markers, and advocate on Cantonese is seen in the local community. For example, Societas Linguistica Hongkongensis is an NGO established to fight for the survival of Cantonese in Hong Kong. Even the Central and Western District Council has subsidised the NGO's Cantonese essay-writing. However, advocates on HKE are less common, like Konglish Daily (n.d.) which is a Facebook page originated from a "college research grant of Tung Wah College and currently maintained by the HKUST-TWC Kongish research group". The page attempts to write posts and have publications written in

HKE without apologies which receive positive comments. Another way to help HKE gain its acceptance in the present or near future is the public's appreciation of HKE creativity. Luk (2013) has gathered some uses of HKE or code-switching of Cantonese and English in language play, like "Delay no more" as an advertisement slogan which is close to the transliteration of the foul language phrase of Cantonese "屌你老母" (diu2 nei5 lou5 mou 2, meaning "fuck your mother"). The language plays not only provides mental pleasure, but also can serve a range of pragmatic purposes such as commercial advertisement, political parodies and simply telling a casual joke. Only HKE users will understand the humour in these language plays, so this may also pave a way to the establishment of HKE by showcasing the variety's creativity exclusive to the users.

Limitation

Although the survey successfully collected data from respondents who are HKE young users, the sample size of this survey is relatively small, due to the time constraints and the hindrance brought by the pandemic. It is recommended that further research could invite more respondents to draw a more solid conclusion on the research questions. In addition, as respondents sometimes showed divided opinions on questions such as acceptability of linguistic features and general impression, qualitative surveys such as interviews are recommended too to find out more explanation for the division. For example, future surveys could ask about respondents' education background and experience of using HKE in daily lives which may affect their perception of receiving and producing HKE utterance.

Another limitation of this survey is related to the first two parts which are related to acceptability of linguistic features. The average ratings on examples in both HKE and standard English on semi-formal occasions do not show consistency. For example, the average of written standard English acceptability on the semi-formal occasion drops to 6.27. Also, spoken HKE on the semi-formal occasion surges to 7.27 while the other uses of HKE remains at between 5-6. This may be attributed to the tones and styles of the examples. The standard English example is written in a more casual tone, and the respondents may deem it inappropriate to write like that to tutors. On the other hand, the tone of the spoken HKE example is more polite and calm, and the content of the

speaker is more fruitful as it was during a classroom discussion on social issues. So it may give the impression to respondents that it was more acceptable. If there are more studies aiming at the relation between formality and HKE, modification could be done by including more semi-formal occasions as examples or finding out the most perceived semi-formal occasions first before designing the survey.

Personal Reflection

After drillings and practices on English proficiency in secondary school for the HKDSE examination, I found myself repulsive to non-standard English varieties before taking a major in English. I tended to see HKE as errors and the deficiency of English ability of Hongkongers, and avoided using it to appear more proficient in English. However, studying applied English linguistics offers me a new angle to see the local language variety. I realise that language can be analysed from a descriptive perspective by observing the speaker's language habit and ideologies. In addition, English is a pluricentric language and there is not a standard agreed by all speakers around the world. Non-native speakers of English even outnumbers native speakers, so statistically we as L2 learners have more rights to judge what the norm is. In fact, hardly we have the authority or evidence to claim one variety is a wrong variety, as language standards are always evolving and socially constructed. Therefore, I have adopted a more open mind to the local variety by studying more about HKE and appreciating the creativity displayed in language variety. Moreover, I am more confident when using HKE and less judgemental to others using HKE, especially I also realise HKE makes me sound more like a Hongkonger.

Although I am comfortable using HKE, still I understand there are constraints on the domain to use HKE. On many formal occasions such as workplace and academic, standard English is the only accepted variety due to the social preference to native varieties and ease of communication. I also suffer from Linguistic Schizophrenia in those circumstances and feel the love-hate relation with HKE. There is an urge to use HKE, but also the understanding that HKE is frowned upon and useless. But the use of HKE may not be liberated in near future as the young users also seem to be apologetic when using HKE. Whether HKE users including me can have more confidence and rights to use HKE

counts on the politics and also advocate works on HKE. We cannot blame anyone for the suppression on HKE, as perception towards a language variety is socially constructed and there is no pressing need to protect HKE. Nonetheless, as an English graduate, I will continue using HKE when the occasions allow and encourage others to use HKE as well as a gesture to show my respect to any language varieties and my identity as a Hongkonger.

Conclusion

The unique background of Hong Kong gave birth to HKE. In the bilingual environment of English and Cantonese during the city's colonial era, the majority of the Chinese population has acquired the English language while still using Cantonese as L1. HKE is distinctive to other English varieties as it absorbs the linguistic features of Cantonese and is affected by the local culture and its users' language ideologies. Even whether HKE is a variety rather than mistakes found in Hongkongers' interlanguage is still a debate within the local community. Nonetheless, HKE is found closely related to its users' self-identification which is a hot topic on local politics. The complexity of relations between China and Hong Kong prompts the people to reflect on their identity, and besides Cantonese as the dominant language, HKE is a possible local identity marker. Therefore, political factors such as social movements are crucial concerns for the development and status of HKE in future.

This survey in 2020 targets HKE young users' perception to HKE under the atmosphere of post-social unrest of the Anti-Extradition Bill Movement in 2019. It is suspected that they will demonstrate some differences in views and acceptability towards HKE. However, it is found that HKE is still in phase 3 but entering phase 4 if we wish to assign HKE in Schneider's Dynamic Model. As Hansen Edward (2019) mentioned, the Model only describes the general situation of HKE but "do[es] not represent the ideologies of all speakers in Hong Kong" (p.218). Close analysis can find out that the variations among individuals are significant in terms of their thoughts on HKE. Some users welcome the use of HKE and see it as innovations and normal and common linguistic features. However, some are more conservative and the majority still rely on native varieties as standards. The inferiority of HKE is still rooted in its users' minds. The importance of HKE as an identity marker is the most critical factor of whether HKE can

be used and raise its status in people's perception. But in the present, HKE users speak the local English variety with pride and shame at the same. Future researches devoted to HKE should pay attention to the changes in political landscape.

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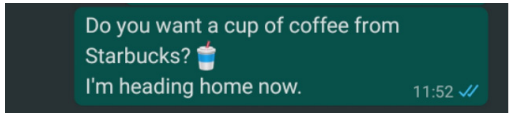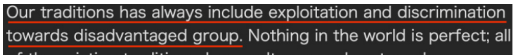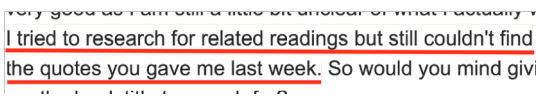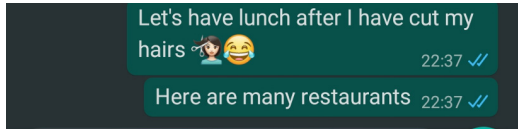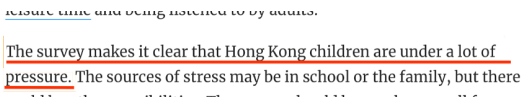
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Page 1	
Survey for ENGE 4700 Project Thank you for taking part in this survey for my ENGE 4700 project! This survey aims at investigating your attitudes towards Hong Kong English. Please be reminded that this is NOT a test on your English competence, but your personal feelings of Hong Kong English. It should only take 5 minutes, and your responses are completely anonymous. Some of the questions involve audio materials for illustration, so please make sure that your device in use can play the clips with sounds on. Please inform me if you encounter any problems when taking part in this survey	
Page 2	
Here are some pictures showing use of English in different occasions. Please rate how acceptable the uses of English are. Please pay attention to the GRAMMATICAL FEATURES and CONTEXT but not the content.	
Q1. How acceptable is the use of English in Photo 1?	Do you want a cup of coffee from Starbucks? 🥤 I'm heading home now. 11:52 ✓✓
Q2. How acceptable is the use of English in Photo 2? (Underlined sentence)	Our traditions has always include exploitation and discrimination towards disadvantaged group. Nothing in the world is perfect; all
Q3. How acceptable is the use of English in Photo 3? (Underlined sentence)	very good as I am still a little bit unclear of what I actually v I tried to research for related readings but still couldn't find the quotes you gave me last week. So would you mind givi
Q4. How acceptable is the use of English in Photo 4?	Let's have lunch after I have cut my hairs 💇🏻‍♀️😂 22:37 ✓✓ Here are many restaurants 22:37 ✓✓
Q5. How acceptable is the use of English in Photo 5?	leisure time and being listened to by adults. The survey makes it clear that Hong Kong children are under a lot of pressure. The sources of stress may be in school or the family, but there could be other possibilities. The survey should be a wake-up call for

Q6. How acceptable is the use of English in Photo 6? (Underlined sentence)	I would like to select Cantopop songs from different time periods from <u>For example, I know that English song are more popular than</u> <u>Cantonese ones and dominate the local music industry before 1980s.</u> used. I would like to find some examples on Youtube. Alongside some
*Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (1 = Very unacceptable, 10= Very acceptable)	
Page 3	

Here are some audio clips showing use of English in different occasions. Please rate how acceptable the uses of English are. Please pay attention to the PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES and CONTEXT but not the content.

Q1. How acceptable is the use of English in Audio 1?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cb-Bj-hyVQ&feature=youtu.be
Q2. How acceptable is the use of English in Audio 2?	https://youtu.be/VtQv4Iz8ITc
Q3. How acceptable is the use of English in Audio 3?	https://youtu.be/WxWfEyjWUDs
Q4. How acceptable is the use of English in Audio 4?	https://youtu.be/ODLH3niSbgM
Q5. How acceptable is the use of English in Audio 5?	https://youtu.be/mDCXJ6gOvjU
Q6. How acceptable is the use of English in Audio 6?	https://youtu.be/1i2uHLuu7z0

*Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (1 = Very unacceptable, 10= Very acceptable)
Page 4

Please rate whether the following adjectives are suitable to describe your feeling when hearing or reading Hong Kong English.
Uneducated
Friendly

Lazy
Unique
Comfortable
Creative
Weird
Intelligent
Please select "1"
Unsociable
Erroneous
*Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (1 = Very unacceptable, 10= Very acceptable)
Page 5
Please state whether you agree with the following statements.
Q1 Instead of common mistakes made by Hongkongers when using English, Hong Kong English is an established variety of English.
Q2 In general, I am comfortable using Hong Kong English.
Q3 If I could choose, I would rather always speak with or use native varieties of English (e.g. British English or American English) than Hong Kong English.
Q4 Hong Kong English can be used in either formal or casual occasions.

Q5 Speaking Hong Kong English is a way to show my Hongkonger identity.
Q6 Hong Kong English reflects Hong Kong local culture.
Q7 Hong Kong English is a legitimate variety of English, like British and American English.
*Choices: Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Neutral, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree

Analysing Evaluation in News Articles of the National Security Law

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Supervisor: Professor Ron Darvin

Abstract

In Hong Kong, the newly and hastily implemented national security law has caused much controversy since June 2020. Different news platforms have presented the law differently, which may affect how the public understands the issue. Many have questioned whether it violates the principle of "one country, two systems" and gives the Chinese government excessive power over Hong Kong. This study thus draws on Bednarek's (2006) parameter-based theory (core evaluative parameters: comprehensibility, emotivity and importance; peripheral evaluative parameter: evidentiality) in the context of media discourse to examine the evaluative language of two news articles from New York Times and People's Daily reporting on the national security law in Hong Kong. Analysing evaluative language is relevant in the sense that it reveals the writer's opinions, attitudes and ideas as to the issue being discussed. With the use of discourse analysis, this study examines the stances and attitudes of such news articles. Findings show that the news text from the New York Times leans towards a rather negative stance and shows doubt and worry over the law, while the one from People's Daily holds an extremely positive stance with absolute confidence and looks forward to the future of Hong Kong under the protection of the law. Given these findings, this paper calls for future research on how reading newspapers with different political stances may likely affect people's perceptions and opinions on such political events.

Keywords: evaluation in text, media discourse, news articles, national security law

1.0 Background of the Study

According to Article 23 of the Basic Law, there is a need for Hong Kong to enact its own national security legislation. Such a proposal was put forward and scrapped in 2003 due to considerable opposition from the public. 16 years later, 2019 saw a series of protests against the city's extradition bill which was eventually withdrawn due to public pressure. However, after the withdrawal of the extradition bill, rumours of the implementation of a more severe law had been pervading the city since this May. Finally, it all came to surface when the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL), enacted by the Chinese Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, officially came into effect at 11 p.m. on the 30th June 2020 after being signed by the Chinese government, President Xi, bypassing the Legislative Council (Tsoi & Lam, 2020).

Such law has come under fierce criticism worldwide ever since. Hong Kong's society itself has become polarized with different points of view towards the issue, for example, the pro-establishment camp arguing for the law, while the pro-democracy one against it. People's perceptions are highly influenced by their sources of information. To stay well-informed, it is important to choose reliable, impartial sources. Since newspapers are traditionally considered a common and reliable source of information for the majority of people, media discourse serves to be a topic that is worth researching. This paper evaluates language in Chinese and US newspapers on the issue of the NSL. Investigating the language use of newspapers is relevant to our daily lives because people's mindsets are highly influenced by what they read. This paper thus poses the following questions: what are the stances and attitudes of the writers towards the issue and how does evaluation in language show such stances and attitudes?

For my analysis, I have chosen two news texts, one titled as "Brushing Aside Opponents, Beijing Imposes Security Law in Hong Kong", taken from the New York Times which is a widely reputable, liberal newspaper with a huge international readership, including many educated Hong Kong people; the other one titled as "China adopts law on safeguarding national security in Hong Kong", from People's Daily, one of the largest news platforms in China and owned by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist

Party with its English edition generally read by expats in China and local Chinese who know English. I am interested in the contrast in stance between two newspapers, so I have chosen two newspapers that are of different natures: the New York Times, internationally well-known and hailed as a "national newspaper of record"; and People's Daily owned by the political party "as a 'mouthpiece' of the Communist Party" (Hatton, 2015). Both of the texts outline an important overview of the NSL and were released right after the official commencement of the law: one on 30 June and the other 2 July, which I consider to be a crucial period for reporting the news. I wanted to compare texts that may reflect more subjectivity for easier and more meaningful comparison. Written by two American reporters who focus on China news, the text from New York Times is a news analysis which is supposed to consider facts to explain why a certain event happens and how it can be understood. Although the text from People's Daily is portrayed as a hard news report, it contains much rather subjective wording, so I found it still suitable for comparison with the news analysis.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

Language is not neutral. Much of what we say and write reflect our thoughts and opinions. To understand "evaluation" when it comes to language, Hunston and Thompson's (2000) definition can be taken as a starting point:

> the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about. That attitude may relate to certainty or obligation or desirability or any of a number of other sets of values. (p. 5)

Bednarek (2006) has suggested a new evaluation theory which "is based on the assumption that there are different parameters along which speakers can evaluate aspects of the world" (2006, p. 41). She explained the limitations of other evaluation theories that already exist. For example, Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework "blurs the important distinction between [authorial and non-authorial expressions of emotion in one and the same category]" and lacks "the parameter for importance" (Bednarek, 2006, p. 32). Hunston and Thompson's (2000) focus on affect "is used to talk about the expressions of emotions and feelings", while for Bednarek, evaluation "deals with the

expression of opinion" (Bednarek, 2006, p. 19).

Therefore, to illustrate how news articles can be evaluated, I have chosen Bednarek's (2006) parameter-based theory (comprised of core evaluative parameters: comprehensibility, emotivity, expectedness, importance, possibility, reliability; peripheral evaluative parameters: evidentiality, mental state, style) which she herself calls "a combining approach" (p. 41).

To find out the stances and attitudes of the reporters, I deem emotivity the most important parameter in illustrating whether the writers show approval or disapproval so I will spend a large proportion discussing it in the findings. The following presents a table which shows all the parameters I find most prominent in the two chosen news texts and their respective explanations and examples.

Core evaluative parameters (can be evaluated on a high to low score):	Explanation:	Examples:
Comprehensibility	deals with "the extent to which writers evaluate entities, situations or propositions as being within or beyond the grasp of human understanding" (p. 45)	Comprehensible: *clear*, *explicit*
		Incomprehensible: *complicated*, *confusing*
Emotivity	is "concerned with the writer's evaluation of aspects of events as good or bad" (p. 45)	Positive: *success*
		Negative: *failure*
Importance	"evaluates the world according to the speaker's judgement of its status in terms of importance, relevance and significance" (p. 50)	Important: *key*, *crucial*
		Unimportant: *insignificant*, *trivial*

Peripheral Evaluative Parameter (cannot be evaluated on a high to low score):	Explanation:	Examples:
Evidentiality	"deals with writers' evaluations of the 'evidence' for their knowledge" (p. 53)	Hearsay: He *said that…*
		Perception: *seem, appear*
		Evidence: (concrete evidence such as a report)
		Unspecified: *meaning that…*

By studying the parameters, I aim to further decipher the possible stances and attitudes that are reflected from these parameters.

3.0 Literature Reviews

There are existing literature reviews focusing on how language is used differently in media discourse and have generated interesting findings.

Leung's study sets out to investigate "the dominant discourses on intimate partner violence (IPV) in newspaper reports and discuss how the myths about IPV are perpetuated in news reporting in Hong Kong" (2019, p. 2227). The article puts emphasis on lexical items with a sample of 250 articles from Ming Pao and 384 from Apple Daily during a 10-year period. The critical discourse analysis reveals that news reporting has "systematically stereotyped IPV abusers and blamed survivors" (Leung, 2019, p. 2241), which may "perpetuate the myths about IPV and marginalize IPV survivors" (p. 2228).

There is a closer similarity between Ballesteros-Lintao's research (2018) and my paper. His study of evaluative language in the context of news examines the positions of Chinese and Filipino newspapers writers reporting on the South China Sea Tensions. To analyse the evaluative language of a three-year sample of 360 news reports, he adopts

Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework which is comprised of three sub-systems: attitude, engagement and graduation. With a qualitative-quantitative approach, he set out to pinpoint lexicons which construe judgement. The study finds that "the Chinese news reports lean towards a more diplomatic stance through the noteworthy use of evaluative affect … while the Philippine news reports are more inclined to express implied negative subjective attitudinal stance on the issue" (Ballesteros-Lintao, 2016, p. 66). The paper is significant in finding how language frames "positions, sentiments, opinions and policies [where] meanings are construed in the news reports" (Ballesteros-Lintao, 2016, p. 75).

What draws my study different from Ballesteros-Lintao's is that mine would aim to provide a more focused discourse analysis of the two selected pieces of news while his examines three years of news pieces. Additionally, mine would adopt Bednarek's framework instead of Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory used by Ballesteros-Lintao. In other words, my study would deliver a discourse analysis on two particular news articles in a close reading style by using a framework that is especially suited to media discourse.

4.0 Methodology

To find out the stances and attitudes of news writers, this study will employ the method of discourse analysis which examines the patterns of written language and is widely used to closely analyse different texts, along with Bednarek's theoretical framework. I aim to list the utterances that reflect the writer's evaluation and correspond to the respective parameters. Then I will compare and contrast the two texts for each parameter by giving comments on more prominent utterances in order to further shed light on the possible stances and attitudes of the writers towards the NSL. Given how different the natures and the discrepancies in the readerships of the two newspapers, it is expected that a sharp distinction between the stances and attitudes that each newspaper organization takes will be shown.

5.0 Findings

5.1 Core Evaluative Parameter: Comprehensibility

Sub-value of Comprehensibility	Example from the New York Times report
Incomprehensible:	- "the law has ignited ***uncertainty*** about the future of Hong Kong" (para 3) - "the new law ***complicates*** the delicate, often-convoluted game" (para 9) - "the security law — creating a ***murky*** realm"

Subvalue of Comprehensibility	Example from the People's Daily report
Comprehensible:	- "***make sure*** the principle is not distorted" (para 9) - " The law… is a ***comprehensive*** law" (para 11) - "It ***clearly stipulates*** the duties " (para 12)

Comprehensibility is considered as the "broad notion comprising the related concepts of vagueness and explicitness" (Bednarek, 2006, p. 45). In other words, what is clear is regarded as "comprehensible" and what is unclear as "incomprehensible".

In Buckley and Bradsher's text, the national security law is described to bring "*uncertainty*" and "*complicate* the [one country, two systems principle]" while "creating a *murky* realm" which refers to a foggy situation with unclear facts. All of these suggest that the NSL is a vague, unclear law that would only intensify doubt and take Hong Kong to a more uncertain state.

On the other hand, Hongyu and Bianji show a much more comprehensible evaluation of the NSL. They praise the clarity of the law, describing that it is "*comprehensible*" and "*clearly* stipulates" the duties of the government and citizens. The writers are confident that the law gives clear, direct instructions for "mak[ing] sure the 'one country, two systems' is not distorted in practice".

5.2 Core Evaluative Parameter: Emotivity

Sub-values of Emotivity	Examples from the New York Times report
Positive:	- "A year after protesters in Hong Kong *jubilantly* defied Chinese rule" (para 6) - "Mr. Xi's *determination* to remake the territory" (para 6)
Negative:	- "passed with *intimidating* speed" (para 3) - "the law has created a *chill*" (para 7) - "In imposing such expansive and *drastic* legislation" (para 6) - "on his *authoritarian* terms" (para 6) - "That *straddling* act" (para 10) - "Growing *hostility* between China and the United States" (para 26)

Sub-values of Emotivity	Examples from the People's Daily report
Positive:	- "…the law will *fully* and *faithfully* implement the principle … *help safeguard* national sovereignty, security and development interests, *maintain* Hong Kong's lasting *prosperity* and *stability*…" (para 2) - "The practice of 'one country, two systems' has achieved a universally *recognized success*…" (para 3) - "… to *improve* institutional mechanisms…" (para 8) - "… *effectively* restrains the 'anti-China' forces" (para 14) - "… the central government … has enough *sincerity* and *confidence* to ensure that the principle … is *unwaveringly* upheld. It also has the *resolve* and *capability* to ensure no distortion ..." (para 21)

Negative:	- "…encountered new circumstances and **problems**" (para 3)
	- "… the **disturbance** related to the now-withdrawn ordinance amendments… to **undermine** the national unity…" (para 4)
	- "… some foreign and external forces **blatantly interfered** in Hong Kong affairs… using Hong Kong to **damage** the national security of China" (para 5)

Emotivity refers to the writer's evaluation of whether something is good or bad and therefore can be divided into "positive" and "negative". Both texts show positive and negative lexical items regarding the NSL and its related aspects.

For the NSL itself, Buckley and Bradsher use rather negative words. They state that the "*drastic*" law was passed so swiftly that it became "*intimidating*" and created a "*chill*" which is a sudden, unpleasant feeling for many people. On the other hand, Hongyu and Bianji use a lot of positive words to show their approval for the NSL. The law is expected to provide many benefits for China and Hong Kong, for example, to "*fully and faithfully*" implement the principle of "one country, two systems", "*help safeguard*" on a national scale, "*maintain* Hong Kong's … *prosperity* and *stability*" and "plug the legal loopholes". The writers believe the law is for the good of both the country and Hong Kong.

When talking about the Basic Law, Buckley and Bradsher use the word "*convoluted*" to emphasize the unreasonably lengthy and complicated nature of the "one country, two systems" principle which could often cause confusion. They further criticize the "*straddling*" attitude of Hong Kong government and judges who tried to be ambiguous and please both the Beijing government and Hong Kong people with the Basic Law. Hongyu and Bianji praise the Basic Law, in particular the "one country, two systems" for having achieved a universally "*recognized success*" despite facing some problems. The NSL would serve to be an "*effective*" complement of the basic law for Hong Kong to "fulfill its constitutional and major responsibilities to *safeguard* national security".

Regarding the aspect of the Chinese government, Buckley and Bradsher seemingly

use a positive word "*determination*" to describe President Xi's insistence on remaking Hong Kong. But they use it rather sarcastically since later on they add the phrase "on his *authoritarian* terms", meaning a very strict and oppressive leading approach that is not ideal. On the other hand, Hongyu and Bianji show absolute confidence in the Chinese government with a lot of positive words. They assure the readers that the government is able to "*march forward*" with "enough *sincerity* and *confidence*" to ensure the unchangeability of the one country, two systems principle as well as "*resolve* and *capability*" to prevent any distortion of the said principle.

As for protests in Hong Kong, Buckley and Bradsher paint a rather cheerful picture of protesters "*jubilantly* def[ying] Chinese rule", which shows their approval of such protests. However, Hongyu and Bianji consider the protests to be "*disturbance*", political obstruction such as "anti-China forces" and calls for "Hong Kong Independence, self-determination, referendum" which would all "*undermine*" the unity of China. They deem such protests harmful to the benefit of China.

In describing the relationships between China and foreign countries, Buckley and Bradsher acknowledge the "*growing hostility*", which shows concern over the continuation of such a state. They quote Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's statement where he said the US would not show indifference while "China swallows Hong Kong". Such a statement, in Hongyu and Bianji's text, would likely be seen as an example of foreign and external forces "*blatantly interfer[ing]*" with the affairs of Hong Kong. The provoking phrase "blatantly interfered" pinpoints that any sort of foreign assistance equals interference and therefore is not welcome.

5.3 Core Evaluative Parameter: Importance

Sub-value of Importance	Example from the New York Times report
Important:	- "… that **preserved** Hong Kong's distinctive status, freedoms and laws" (para 7) - "A **big** test of the law lies in the Hong Kong courts" (para 30) - "Beijing will be able to exert influence at every **key** stage of fortifying national security" (para 32) - "Hong Kong society will have to make **major** adjustments" (para 39)

Sub-value of Importance	Example from the People's Daily report
Important:	- "It bears both practical and historical **significance**" (para 2)

"Importance" is concerned with "evaluat[ing] aspects of the reported event on a scale ranging from important to unimportant" (Bednarek, 2006, p. 50). Both texts recognize the importance of the basic law. Buckley and Bradsher deem it important in "*presersv[ing]* Hong Kong's distinctive status, freedoms and laws" while Hongyu and Bianji acknowledge the "practical and historical *significance*" of the Basic Law. Buckley and Bradsher further point out that Hong Kong courts would play a "*big*" role in being a safety net with its "long tradition of independent decisions". However, they also add that the NSL is "wired with provisions that appear designed to ward off attempts by courts and local lawmakers to hem in its powers", which would enable "Beijing to exert influence at every *key* stage of fortifying national security". In other words, the NSL trumps the existing local law and would cause "*major* adjustments" for the city.

5.4 Peripheral Evaluative Parameter: Evidentiality

Sub-values of Evidentiality	Examples from the New York Times report
Hearsay:	- "***Chinese officials and policy advisers … suggest*** that [the law] will scrub away a dangerous residue of Western influence and liberal values" (para 3) - "***Some critics have described*** the law…" (para 7) - "… ***said Joseph Cheng***" (para 8) - "… ***Carrie Lam***, the chief executive of Hong Kong, who serves with Beijing's blessing, ***said*** in a video speech" (para 15) - "***Zhang Xiaoming***, a top Chinese official who helps oversee Hong Kong policy, ***suggested*** that…" (para 23) - "… ***said Lau Siu-kai***, a former senior Hong Kong government official who is now a prominent adviser to Beijing" (para 27) - "…***said Cora Chan***, an associate professor of law at the University of Hong Kong" (para 32)
Perception	- "many companies in Hong Kong ***appear*** confident that commerce and contracts will remain largely untouched by the law" (para 14)
Evidence	- "Chinese courts finished cases on state security charges against ***8,640*** defendants, according the ***Dui Hua Foundation***" (para 35)

Sub-value of Evidentiality	Example from the People's Daily report
Unspecified:	- "The newly-passed law … ***is believed*** to help ensure" (para 20)

Eventuality, not applicable on a high-to-low scale, evaluates "the truth value of a sentence… with respect to the source of the information contained in the sentence" (Bednarek, 2006, p. 53). There are a few dimensions of this parameter. "Hearsay" is an

utterance expressed by a "sayer", excluding the writer himself. "Perception" includes mental (such as "seem' and "appear") and sensory (such as "see" and "visibly") ones. "Evidence" refers to a solid piece of proof, for example, a report or a survey. "Unspecified" is an unnamed source, frequently appearing in passive voice such as "it emerged that…" and "it is believed that…".

In terms of "hearsay", Buckley and Bradsher list a wide range of people, including but not limited to Chinese officials, Hong Kong government officials, critics and scholars. The political stances of these people are diverse. For example, Joseph Cheng, a scientist in politics, pointed out the common view, shared by many Hong Kong residents, that the NSL would mean the "the end of the 'one country, two systems' model" while the Hong Kong government, Carrie Lam gladly assures that the law "will not affect Hong Kong's renowned judicial independence". Trying to stay unbiased, Buckley and Bradsher provide the both sides of the spectrum to show the different stances and attitudes held by different people. To help the readers to stay much more well-informed, they also briefly introduce the background of the "sayer" such as explaining that Lau Siu-kai is currently "a prominent adviser to Beijing" and that the government of Hong Kong, Carrie Lam, is one to "serve with Beijing's blessing", implying that they all shall side with the Chinese government and support the NSL.

As for "perception", there is an example of mental perception, showing that businesses in Hong Kong "appear confident that commerce and contracts will remain largely untouched by the law". But the word "appear" carries a rather unsure tone, which suggests that those companies may hold a seemingly positive view that business will go as usual, but deep down they are not very certain about it.

Lastly, Buckley and Bradsher's text also gives a piece of "evidence" perhaps more concrete than the rest. They pinpoint the statistics given by the Dui Hua Foundation which shows that there 8640 defendants in Chinese courts during 2006-2016 charged with state security crimes, most of which were ethnic minority groups. This information can be used as a reference to determine whether there would be an increase in charges

regarding the security law in Hong Kong, which many worry about.

Hongyu and Bianji's text does not provide many examples with regard to the "evidence" parameter. They do not list particular people's statements, which appears a lot in Buckley and Bradsher's text. But there is an "unspecified" example: "is believed to…". The use of passive voice here omits the identity of the "sayer" or other concrete evidence, which makes what follows the phrase appear less convincing.

6.0 Discussion.

After looking at the evaluative parameters, I would like to discuss what stances and attitudes towards the NSL issue are shown with regard to the findings.

6.1 "Brushing Aside Opponents, Beijing Imposes Security Law in Hong Kong" from the New York Times

Buckley and Bradsher show an inclination to a slightly negative stance with a doubtful attitude and concern over the NSL. They use words of the category of "comprehensibility: incomprehensible" to describe the law, saying that it would only make the implementation of the existing Basic Law more difficult and complicated. As for negative terms, by mentioning the "intimidating" speed at which the law was passed, they emphasize the law would cause fear in people. They also draw on the "growing hostility" between the US and China, possibly further deepened by the introduction of the NSL. The writers spend a considerable proportion quoting people who hold different political opinions, ranging from hardcore Beijing supporters such as Carrie Lam and Zhang Xiaoming to local youth organizations to scholars who shall neutrally analyse the political situation from an academic point of view. Providing diverse voices from across the board would help Buckley and Bradsher remain more objective and let the readers themselves decide what to take in. Overall, it is concluded that the writers are more inclined to a negative stance and feel doubtful and worried over the law while trying to give an overview with the display of points of view from a diverse spectrum of people.

Their stance and attitudes fall in line with the background of the New York Times

which is a liberal news organization that values freedom and individual rights. The New York Times often criticizes China's development of democracy and its policies, especially those relating to the administration of Hong Kong. In the opinion section, columnists may even express a very opposing stance towards the NSL, as seen from How China Scammed Hong Kong. Therefore, it is not difficult to see why Buckley and Bradsher would feel concern and possibly disapprove of the law.

6.2 "Hong Kong national security law helps ensure long-term stability of 'one country, two systems" from People's daily

Hongyu and Bianji hold an extremely positive stance towards the NSL and explicitly show confidence in it. The title of the text is already self-explanatory in that it expresses confidence in the NSL to stabilize Hong Kong in the long run. The writer uses a lot of "emotivity: positive" lexical items to state the well-meaning intentions of the NSL and lay out the benefits Hong Kong will enjoy due to the law. Albeit with "disturbance" and political obstruction of recent years, the writers hold high expectations of the NSL to help bring Hong Kong out of its status quo and achieve its "lasting *prosperity* and *stability*". They also assure and persuade the readers to feel confident in the Chinese government to have the "*capability* and *resolve*" to continue the success of the "one country, two systems" model. In short, the writers gladly welcome and fully support the law while expressing high hope for the Chinese government and Hong Kong's promising future.

Their stance and attitudes are also largely related to the background that People's Daily is owned by the government as a state-run newspaper to spread information and opinions of the party. It is therefore highly expected that the writers would show full support for the Chinese government's decision to implement the NSL.

7.0 Conclusion

To conclude, the two chosen texts show quite different takes on the NSL: New York Times' expressing doubt and concern over the law while People's Daily's welcoming the law which the writers believe will bring prosperity to Hong Kong. To delve into the other

related political aspects, as expected, they also hold very different opinions. Reading news, be it online or in paper, is one of the major sources of information. What we write reflects our evaluations and opinions of the event, as language is hard to be neutral. As readers we can choose to read different stances of the same issue to see the event from more angles. This paper also calls for future research on how reading newspapers with different political stances may affect people's perceptions and opinions on such political events.

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Hong Kong protesters' discourse on Twitter: their linguistic behaviors and construction of identity and affiliation

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1.   Introduction

Many people and media describe 2019 and 2020 as "years of unrest and protests"—a lot of protests broke out around the world. A particular phenomenon that one can easily observe is the upsurge in the use of social media in these protests. Postings about protests created by users are omnipresent on different social media platforms. Indeed, in spite of the typical affordances for social networking and relationship management (Walther et al., 2008; Treem & Leonardi, 2016), it is obvious that the use of social media has gone beyond these functions to enable users to participate in social events through textually-mediated and multimodal practices (Barton & Lee, 2013). Reflected from many social unrests in recent years, social media has been proven very effective in spreading an ideology or a political message to other people (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013). It also enables protesters to organize, incite, and encourage others to take part in the protest (Castells, 2012). Therefore, the association between social media and protests is strong and worth our attention and investigation.

One of the biggest protests that took place in 2019-2020 must be the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill protest (Anti-ELAB protests hereafter). This protest is unprecedented in Hong Kong in terms of its scale, very explicit "leaderless" nature of and more importantly, its evolvement from less "digital" in the previous Umbrella Revolution into being heavily reliant on media technologies (Lee et al., 2019). There are no political parties or any individuals that are said to be the leader of the movement. Despite the absence of a leader, the protest is impeccably organized and promoted because of the use of social media to organize the protest—social media played a significant role. Apart from the social media platforms that Hong Kong people have been very familiar with, such as Facebook, Instagram, and online forums, a newcomer to Hong Kong, Twitter, came to prominence and became the key platform for Hong Kong protesters to spread the political

message. Moreover, Lee et al. (2019) argue that political activism has experienced an evolution during the Anti-ELAB protests. Therefore, although the use of social media in protests has been studied in academia in Hong Kong before (e.g. Wetzstein, 2017; Chan, 2013), the popularization of Twitter during the Anti-ELAB protests has provided new fuel to the field. Particularly, a review of the literature indicates that a lot of the existing research in Hong Kong approached the topic merely from the perspective of journalism (e.g. Lee & Chan, 2018) or social science (e.g. Leung, 2000). There is relatively little research focusing on the perspective of linguistics. However, political identities are also linguistically indexed (Hall & Bucholtz, 2005; Silverstein, 2003). Consequently, it will be worthwhile to research how Twitter as a newly popularized social media platform is used in the most recent Anti-ELAB protests from the perspective of linguistics. Therefore, through corpus analysis and discourse-centered online ethnography, (1) by providing an overview of the linguistic features of the language that Hong Kong protesters used on Twitter, this paper aims at (2) studying how the linguistic features found contribute to the construction of their identities through linguistic practices and (3) whether Hong Kong protesters on Twitter form a community with affiliation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Twitter Discourse as a CMC discourse and Online Identity

"I slay my final project. #islay"—this is an example of a microblog that an ordinary Twitter user might create. According to the description posted on the Help Centre of Twitter, Twitter allows users to connect with their family and acquaintances through the exchange of quick and frequent messages (Twitter, 2021). Therefore, Twitter, along with other social media platforms, is typically used in interpersonal exchange among friends, family and acquaintances. However, the affordance of Twitter evolves as time goes by—the use has extended to more contexts, such as political context or mere information-sharing context. A lot of studies have been conducted to identify the linguistic features and speech acts of Twitter users in different contexts, such as the educational context (Veletsianos, 2012) and the political context (Dyagilev & Yom-Tov, 2014). These features are distinct from face-to-face communication. In offline face-to-face communication, interlocutors often use paralinguistic cues, such as gestures, proximity and facial expressions, alongside

the verbal message to create meaning. However, in computer-mediated communication (CMC) like Twitter, these paralinguistic cues are absent. Instead, Interlocutors utilize emojis, emoticons and punctuations (Tagg, 2015). Therefore, CMC discourse has its distinctive linguistic features which are proved to serve as important identity markers online (Androutsopoulos, 2014). With this in mind, the current and previous studies have been being interested in delving into how interlocutors construct their identity on social media platforms by deploying different linguistic resources unique on the Internet.

Previous studies have largely outlined the discrepancy between online identity and offline identity (eg. Danet et al., 1997). It proves that the internet allows users to construct and manifest identities to their liking. In their study on the identity construction dynamics of a Facebook group dedicated to a linguistic course in a university of Hong Kong, Chau & Lee (2017) found out that members of the group construct and exhibit different identities depending on the circumstances and the people they are talking to through deploying different linguistic resources, such as emoticons and "Chinglish". For example, the case participant Matthew would use more emoticons and "Chinglish" with a view to constructing an identity of a friendly and lively person to his fellow classmates when talking about topics outside of the curriculum while he would tend to avoid emoticons and use more formal English when discussing academic issues to construct an identity of a serious student and the role model to other junior students. It proves the tendency for netizens to use different linguistic resources to present different identities online. In the Umbrella Movement, the use of Cantonese and Cantonese-English code-switching found across online linguistic landscapes are now understood to have been the resistance to the government and the exhibition of their Hongkonger identity (Bhatia, 2015). In this case of the Anti-ELAB protest, it is also worth investigating the identities construction process of these Hong Kong protesters.

Comparing with Facebook which was and is arguably still the most common social media platform Hong Kong people use, Twitter—the rising medium in Hong being investigated in this study—does not follow the practice of turn-taking as strictly. To elaborate, creating a microblog on Twitter is not equivalent to initiate a conversation and replying to a microblog is not obligatory when viewing a microblog. This unique phenomenon on Twitter is referred to as the "dilution of conversational obligations"

(Oulasvirta et al., 2010, p. 244). Therefore, Twitter involves more "information sharing" than Facebook outlining the fundamental differences between Facebook and Twitter. Twitter, being new to Hong Kong, is worth our attention from the perspective of linguistics because of the obvious differences because such a difference will affect how people use the site further impacting their identity construction process—does the nature of "information sharing" has any impact on the construction of their identities and affiliation?

Nevertheless, while there are a lot of studies on the construction of the identity of Hong Kong people on social media platforms like the above-mentioned one, studies on Twitter are apparently limited given that it is only popular in Hong Kong after the Anti-ELAB protests. However, the use of Twitter by Hong Kong people has invited motivation for the current research. Being one of the rare researchers who studied the use of Twitter by Hong Kong people before, Wetzstein (2014) examined the visual discourse of the 2014 Hong Kong Protest on Twitter. The study established the function of images to legitimize the protest movement echoing the idea that linguistic resources are used to mark identity—the identity of the supporters of the 2014 Hong Kong Protest. However, the discussion of the study merely focusses the perspective of sociology instead of a linguistic perspective, as the author also mentioned this limitation. Moreover, the author included postings by all people including journalists and foreigners instead of selectively choosing Hong Kong protesters to be the subject of the study. It is understandable since Twitter was not common in Hong Kong back then in contrast to the ubiquity of Hong Kong protesters on Twitter now. Hong Kong protesters, being the newcomers to Twitter, is definitely a research gap that should be given attention.

2.2   Protest and Social Media

As mentioned in the above section, social media has been being incorporated into protests. Particularly, in recent years, social media plays a greater role in protests than before. The internet enables people to gather and network to collectively "battle" the authority (Castells, 2012). On the one hand, Twitter is commonly used to promote the protest to the public. For example, Tremayne (2013) found out that Twitter contributes to the escalation of the Occupy Wall Street protest to a nationwide series of major protests. Twitter is a causal factor of protest. On the other hand, Twitter has also been the venue

where the protest takes place. In his research on a protest against the police department of New York (NYPD), Hayes (2017) discovered that Twitter is not only a place where information about the protest is distributed, but it can also become the place where the protest takes place. In other words, social media like Twitter breaks the assumption that protests can only occur in a physical location, along with the long-standing tradition of protest via letters, petitions and protest songs. Particularly, affiliation among the protesters created online is the key to the success of this virtual protest. Affiliation is therefore worth researching. Moreover, investigating the example of protest surrounding G20 meetings in 2009, Earl et. al (2013) also found out that Twitter is important for protesters to share information about the protest, such as the location and actions of the police, which impacted on the outcome of the protest. Thus, the previous studies widely established that the influence of Twitter on protest is very significant. Recent research also found out that social media played a very important role in facilitating the Anti-ELAB protest (Lee et al., 2019). However, while the immense impact is identified, it is under researched currently, which motivated this study.

2.3   Affiliation and The Use of Hashtag

Using Twitter to promote a political message proposes an interesting question—with Twitter being used in such a goal-oriented fashion, is there affiliation among the members within the same speech community? Given that Twitter is only popular in Hong Kong after the promotion of using it to promote the movement to the international community, some people believe that the use of Twitter is limited to promoting the movement. Particularly, there are lot of material teaching Hong Kong protesters to promote the protest to the international community in the form of posters and even video tutorials. Such observation gives rise to one of the goals of this research—to understand whether affiliation is present among Hong Kong protesters on Twitter. Affiliation is a subjective concept. The definition of affiliation this paper adopts is that affiliation is the desire to interact, the joy of being with others and sharing emotions (McClelland, 1987).

A linguistic analysis offers a useful tool for researchers to understand the formation and maintenance of the network of interpersonal relationships (Zappavigna, 2012). Over the years, studies of different online discourses from the perspective of linguistics have

been extensively established (Baron, 2010). A lot of these studies adopt the approach of identifying linguistic patterning and social structure to understand affiliation and social bonds (Androutsopoulos, 2006). Thus, informed by the previous studies, this study is going to understand how affiliation is formed among Hong Kong protesters on Twitter through delving into the existence of linguistic patterning which also means taking a semiotic approach and using semiotic evidence to categorize the discourse created by the protesters in Hong Kong.

One particular linguistic behavior that has been identified by existing research as serving the function of community building is using hashtag. Hashtag means inserting the symbol # before the keyword to annotate the content uploaded by the users. Hashtag, as a form of social tagging, is very prevalent among users on Twitter. Typically, when it comes to hashtag, the functions that people can immediately think of are tracking information and categorizing tweets (McCarthy & Boyd, 2005). However, scholars found out that there is more to hashtag. Zappavigna (2015) coined the term "searchable talk" which means that hashtag provides "searchability" in social media discourse—not only can it serve as a "topic markers", but it can also bring about "ambient affiliation"—with hashtag, people can gather around a topic that they are interested in, forming a community. With the significance of hashtags to the formation of a community and prosperity of affiliation, hashtag will also be a focus of this paper.

3.   Methodology

This study adopts a mix of corpus analysis and discourse-centered online ethnography which center on a corpus containing 1000 tweets (29,708 words) created by Hong Kong Twitter users. In line with other similar studies of the dynamics of social events on social media, the corpus was collected from a keyword search (e.g. Lee & Chau, 2017; Maireer & Schwarzenegger, 2010). The search term that I have used for this corpus is "#standwithhongkong" which is directly related to the protest. The reason for choosing this particular hashtag instead of other equally popular hashtags like "#hkprotest" or "#antielab" is that "#standwithhongkong" carries the explicit connotation of supporting the protest in contrast with the others being more merely narrative. Therefore, the use of "#standwithhongkong" is more frequently used by Hong Kong protesters who are the

intended subject of this study. Moreover, as in a lot of material teaching protesters to use Twitter, "#standwithhongkong" is always mentioned to remind Hong Kong protesters to use when they tweet. Therefore, this hashtag can target Hong Kong protesters who are the subject of my study. On the contrary, other more narrative hashtags include more news agencies, journalists, and foreigners which pose difficulty in filtering out irrelevant tweets.

The corpus includes tweets created between October 2019 and October 2020. The reason for choosing this period is because it is the key period of the protest. Moreover, tweets are "time-sensitive" (Cataldi et al., 2010, p. 2) which means that the lexis users use varies greatly as time lapses (Clark, 2009). Therefore, if I only focus on a limited time period, the data collected will be narrowed to only a single incident that occurred in the course of the large movement of Anti-ELAB protests instead of the big picture of how people tweeted during the Anti-ELAB protests. For example, if I collected data only during November 2019 which is the time when the siege of the Chinese University of Hong Kong occurred, the data would most likely to revolve around this incident only and fail to capture the entire perspective of the Anti-ELAB protests. Therefore, a corpus containing data collected from a longer time period was preferred in this study. Moreover, informed by Grier et al. (2010), I have manually filtered out tweets that appear to be spam, retweeted tweets, and automated tweets to ensure a more accurate result. However, I did not exclude posts created by the protesters that do not appear to be directly related to the protest as the purpose of this study is to investigate the genuine interaction and linguistic behaviors of the Hong Kong protesters. Therefore, all tweets created by Hong Kong protesters are collected. Taking multimodality into consideration, some images and emojis contained in the post will also be taken into consideration. Moreover, although tweets that are completely in another language other than English were excluded, bilingual or multilingual tweets that contain both English and other languages were included because it is important to shed light on the multilingual nature of social media to capture the genuine and unbiased language behaviors of the subjects when conducting a CMC research (Barton & Lee, 2013; Crystal, 2011).

To facilitate the data analysis and identify the linguistic behavior of these Hong Kong protesters on Twitter, the collected data was uploaded to Sketch Engine which

is a leading corpus tool to generate a corpus. In the following sections, I will identify different linguistic features that are worth discussing. Informed by the past literature that compiles common linguistic features in a CMC discourse (e.g. Crystal, 2006; Herring, 2012; Zappavigna, 2012), the linguistic features I focus on are generally typographic, synaptic and discoursal and orthographic. Features that are exclusive and especially prominent on Twitter were also explored, such as hashtag. As mentioned in the above section (Section 2.3), informed by the previous studies, linguistic patterning will also be examined through the concordance function powered by Sketch Engine.

In addition to corpus analysis, a discourse-centered online ethnography was also conducted by interviewing 3 Hong Kong Protesters who either used or are still using Twitter to complement the findings from the corpus analysis. A CMC discourse and an online community need to be investigated through the lens of superdiversity (Deumert, 2014). That is, following individuals' discursive practice is beneficial, if not essential, in CMC research (Chau & Lee, 2017). Hence, I have used the direct message function of Twitter to conduct online semi-structed interviews with 4 Hong Kong Protesters on Twitter. In the interviews, the interviewees shared the motivation for their linguistic behaviors, their intention of using Twitter and some of their background information. For these selected interviewees, I have also taken a diachronic approach and explored the tweets created by them throughout the course of the Anti-ELAB protests to have an overview and evolvement of their linguistic behavior in hopes of gaining a better understanding of a particular linguistic behavior by doing a comparison. To make sure that the individual cases are "rich" and value-adding to my study (Androutsopoulous, 2008), these 4 interviewees are deliberately chosen—the criteria is active behavior on Twitter during then and diverse and worthwhile linguistic behaviors. The identities, including Twitter handles, of the interviewees as well as all the creators of the tweets used as an example in this paper are kept confidential. An alias is given to each interviewee.

4.   Findings and Discussion

In this section, three linguistic features informed by the abovementioned literature review and an initial basic textual analysis of the corpus–linguistic patterns, the use of hashtag, and hybrid discourse—will be analyzed to further look into their impact on the

construction of affiliation among Hong Kong protesters on Twitter and the construction of their identities.

4.1 Linguistic Patterns

Dialogic Tweets

With a view to getting an overview of the linguistic behaviors of the Hong Kong protesters on Twitter, I have explored some of the most common patterns in the corpus. First of all, Table 1 lists the most frequent words that are found in the corpus.

Word	Frequency
#	1893
#standwithHongKong	1200
@	654
and	531
of	466
in	386
is	366
a	346
for	345
!	337
we	268
you	245

Table 1. The most frequent words in the corpus

Among all the items, # and @ are exclusive in a CMC corpus. Particularly, the function of "@" is to bring the tweets to the addressed user's attention. Therefore, it is actually a linguistic resource for Twitter users to engage with other users on Twitter, serving the dialogic function (Honeycutt & Herring, 2009). A more in-depth investigation into the usage of "@" reveals that although most of them are used to address public figures from foreign countries, especially influential politicians, "@" is also widely used among protesters to either reply to or initiate a discussion with other fellow protesters. For example, a Hong Kong protester tweeted this:

@anotherHongKongProtester It is totally understandable that a rational foreigner

can become so agitated after witnessing so much police brutality on the frontline.
#StandWithHongKong

They use the "@" to discuss the Anti-ELAB protests which is the topic that they are both interested in discussing. In other words, the use of "@" indicates interaction among protesters on Twitter. This interpersonal interaction breaks the stereotype that Hong Kong protesters use Twitter merely for spreading information to others—there is a desire for interaction that signifies affiliation (Zappavigna, 2012). Additionally, the frequency list also discloses that the second singular pronoun "you" and first plural pronoun "we" also occupy a very high ranking in the frequency list. These pronouns highlight the interaction because they are used to address readers of these tweets on Twitter. Their dominance also discloses that the discourse made by the Hong Kong protesters on Twitter does not only limited to providing information. Instead, there are interactions and conversations which indicates the presence of affiliation.

Shared Emotions

Emotions and sentiments can be embedded/marked in the language. In linguistics, Martin & White (2007) proposed "the affect system" which refers to the expressions of emotion in the language. While the affect in the tweets created by Hong Kong protesters on Twitter is not the focus of this paper, the corpus analysis allows me to dig out the shared emotions among them which indicate the presence of ambient affiliation. Semantic prosody (Louw, 1993) refers to the idea that neutral words can be regarded as positive or negative depending on the collocations it formed. Analyzing the result from N-grams which means looking at the language in the form of clusters, it is found out that "freedom", a very frequent word in the corpus, always couples with words that carry the negative connotations of 'being oppressed", "ruined", "to be fought for", "lost", and "suppressed" to realize the negative affect (see Table 2). The word "freedom" is usually a positive word as most people long for freedom. Nevertheless, the fact that the majority of Hong Kong protesters on Twitter evaluate the word "freedom" and associate it with some bad affects means that they have a peculiar, yet shared emotion towards this positive word. Being peculiar means that this emotion is exclusive among these protesters and may not be found among other communities. Ambient affiliation is established in this case in a

sense that these protesters on Twitter may not have talked to each other and shared their emotions directly, yet a community with affiliation is formed from the shared emotions that they have established through this kind of evaluative language, as seen in the example of "freedom".

Cluster	Frequency	Example
Freedom and democracy	18	Replying to (@user) We believe persistence, creativity, courage and love are of our strongest weapons. We are fighting against CCP in frontline for **freedom and democracy**! Please stand with Hong Kong 🙏🙏 #HongKongProtests #StandWithHongKong
suppression of freedom and democracy	10	(@user) You're doing great at raising international awareness on #HongKongProtests and CCP's **suppression of HK's freedom** and democracy, which was once promised and enshrined onto the Basic Law. #StandWithHongKong
Fight for freedom	12	Age, education level, professions and more are no barrier to the pursuit of democracy. Even though HK is just a small dot on the map, it is our home, and we have sworn to protect it with all costs. **Fight for freedom**. #StandWithHongKong #2020goals
Without freedom	7	Replying to (@user) Under the dictatorship of the #CCP, HK became a #PoliceState **without freedom**. #China keeps committing #HumanRightsViolations and suppressing the freedom of people. #China & #HKGov deserve sanctions for violating the Sino British Joint Decl. #Chinazi #FreeHongKong
Battle freedom	5	Thank you #America for #StandwithHongKong! The Act is inotrope to our fight against the CCP's oppression. We'll continue our **battle** for freedom & democracy! God bless America!

Table 2. Examples of Evaluative Loaded "Freedom"

4.2   The Use of Hashtag

It will be unusual to not examine hashtag when conducting linguistic research on Twitter. There are altogether 1893 occurrences of hashtag in the corpus. As observed, most of the hashtags come from the online tutorials which teach Hong Kong protesters to include in their promotional tweets to maximize the number of people who read the post. Examples of these hashtags include #standwithHongKong (1200 times), #Hkprotest (212 times), #freehongkong (157 times), #Chinazi (A neologism formed around the protest by combining the words China and Nazi)(62 times), #HKPoliceBrutality (62times) and #HKPoliceTerrorism (34times). Apparently, being creative and coming up with their own hashtags are rare among these Hong Kong protesters. Nevertheless, an investigation into the usage of the most popular hashtag—"#StandwithHongKong" proves otherwise.

"StandwithHongKong" is the most popular hashtag of the Anti-ELAB protest. This deduction does not come from the result of my corpus but the number of results when searching on Twitter since the search term of my research is "StandwithHongKong" which creates bias. It has been being widely used since the occurrence of the movement. It is fair to say that the hashtag "StandwithHongKong" is sufficient to signify the Anti-ELAB protests. Given its significance and representativeness, I have specifically looked into the usage of it.

Table 3 summaries the four major motivations for using the "#StandwithHongKong" hashtag.

Motivation	Example
Spreading Information	Just now, #HKpolice fire few #teargas n arrest some #hongkong #citizens who only chant the slogan n celebrate #NewYear! #StandWithHongKong #HongKongProtests #HKPoliceTerrorists #NewYearsEve #NewYear2020
Sharing/Venting Sentiments	Totally gangster!! Triad!!Undercovered police,who know?!!?#HKPoliceTerrorists #HKPoliceBrutality #HKHRDA #FightForFreedom #standwithhongkong @SolomonYue @HawleyMO
Offering Support	Hongkonger keep flighting Red heart #毋忘 #抗爭 #手足 #standwithHongKong
Casual Posting/ Unrelated to the Protest	no mood to dse ☹ #standwithHongkong

Table 3. Motivations of Using the Hashtag "#StandWithHongKong"

The point of departure is to see if the motivation of using this hashtag is consistent with the intention of using the hashtag to promote. The first motivation is to spread information (McCarthy & Boyd, 2005). Hong Kong protesters on Twitter use the hashtag #StandWithHongKong to gather information about the Anti-ELAB protests, allowing other people to have access to the information when exploring the hashtag which signifies the movement. Therefore, it is in line with the motivation of using the hashtag to promote.

However, the second and third motivations for using #standwithhongkong is not mainly for promotion but to build affiliation through venting sentiments and showing supports towards the protest (Hughes et al., 2008). This outlines the exchange of emotion and sentiment among these protesters on Twitter. In line with the definition (McClelland, 1987) adopted by this study, the expression of emotions and support are evidence of affiliation among the protesters on Twitter. However, it can also be regarded as a means to promotion since emotionally charged posts are found to be more likely to draw attention and to be retweeted (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). Nonetheless, the emotions and the affiliation among these protesters present, no matter the underlying intention.

The fourth motivation of the "StandwithHongKong" hashtag observed from the

corpus is casual postings that are not directly related to the Anti-ELAB protests. Although the majority of protesters on Twitter strictly used the hashtag to highlight protest-related information, there is a tendency that some protesters used the hashtag in some tweets that are irrelevant to the protests. To illustrate, they used the hashtag "StandwithHongKong" in posts that are about foods and their daily life. They did not use it to fulfill the typical affordance for hashtag which is to allow other users to conveniently find relevant information about the hashtag. One of my interviewees, Vivian, a Hong Kong Twitter user who has exhibited such linguistic behavior, said that she did that because she would like to find "friends who share the same values" [同路人] to start a conversation. Since the hashtag "#StandwithHongKong" inherently carries the affect of believing in the positive outcome of the protest (i.e. standing with Hong Kong in difficult times), it is generally only used by people who are supportive of the protest. Therefore, instead of using hashtags to promote or discuss the protests, hashtags are used to serve as an identity marker. Hashtags are used by them to look for a parallel voice instead of merely looking for information (Zappavigna, 2012). Hence, hashtags are used by Hong Kong protesters creatively to initiate a conversation and build affiliation with the like-minded. Using hashtags can also be interpreted as a process of constructing one's political identity online because using the hashtag means that you are either interested in the topic or agree with the affect carried by the affective hashtag.

4.3   Hybrid Discourse

Hong Kong protesters on Twitter adopt hybrid discourse to construct different identities. Hybrid discourse refers to the situation where two different communicative practices are present within the same discourse. Such a practice of hybrid discourse is found among the Hong Kong protesters on Twitter, which is in line with the previous CMC discourse research. It is found that Hong Kong protesters tend to write shorter tweets with an informal register when the intended audience is the fellow Hong Kong protesters while they would write longer tweets with a more formal register when the audience is the international community. Taking the multimodality of language into consideration, the discourse also contains more emojis which create a lighter mood when talking to other Hong Kong protesters. Although there are occasionally a lot of emojis in

the discourse to the foreign audience, the functions they perform are different. Most of the time, the lengthy tweets account for their use of emoji to save room for words and adapt to the word limitations of 150 words of tweets. For example, they would use the emoji of Hong Kong flag to replace the word Hong Kong to save space while they use emojis to express emotions and affiliation when talking to Hong Kong people. Moreover, there is also a tendency for the Hong Kong protesters to use more non-standard English when speaking to other Hongkongers on Twitter. Some of them are in line with the features of Hong Kong English defined by Wong (2017)—new forms and structures in lexicon and syntax after undergoing adaptation to the new local contexts in Hong Kong. Additionally, romanized Cantonese particles, like "la" (啦), "jeng" (正) and "ga" (嫁), are also very common when talking to other Hong Kong protesters. Some of the common features of substandard English reflected from the tweets created by Hong Kong protesters on Twitter are listed in Table 4—all of them are extracted from tweets intended to talk to other Hong Kong protesters.

Features	Example
Non-occurrence of subject	(@user) Screen them overseas, definitely will have support! #standwithhongkong
Unmarked plurality	These **dog** are innocent! ☹ HK popo hurt their own kind! 😄😄 #HKPoliceTerrorists #HKPoliceBrutality #StandwithHongKong
Verbs not marked for past tense	Yesterday there **are** so many ppl come to the protest ʜᴋ #StandwithHongKong
Romanized Chinese particles	the protest not over ga!! Hk ppl add oil **ar** :"(#standwithhongkong

Table 4. Examples of Features of the Substandard English Found in the Discourse of Hong Kong Protesters

I argue that hybrid discourse is a means to construct two different identities among these Hong Kong protesters on Twitter. To understand the motivations behind hybrid discourse, we would take a look at the case of Misha here. Misha is an English teacher in training which means that she has a high proficiency in English. She exhibited

the linguistic behavior of hybrid discourse in her tweets. With adequate proficiency in English, the possibility that she might not be able to speak standard English is ruled out. Hybrid discourse is obviously a personal option. The language that Misha used when sharing information about the current situation of Hong Kong to the international community in Excerpt 1 is very formal and standard. The tone is also much more serious. Misha said that she intentionally chose to use words that sound more "sophisticated", like "trampling" and "totalitarian" because she thought it would be more appealing to the international communities:

I chose to use more fancy words when I am writing promotional messages [文宣]. I think foreigners will be more impressed when the English is more standard. They would not take you seriously if your tone and wordings are not appealing.

Standard English is used by Misha on Twitter to construct an identity of a more knowledgeable and serious Hongkonger to impress foreigners and to increase the seriousness of the appeal and information being shared. This outlines the inferiority of the substandard variety and the prestige of the standard variety (Crystal, 2003). Misha also said that she seldom writes like that in other contexts. Her decision to intentionally write like that implies that she hopes that she can use the language to realize her ideal self—whom she wants people to see her on the internet (Higgins, 1987) as she believes that this identity will be more "appealing" to the international audience. Therefore, it is found out that Misha will switch to a more formal style in her hybrid discourse when talking to foreigners in hopes of constructing a knowledgeable and serious identity getting their acknowledgment.

In contrast, when talking to the fellow Hong Kong protesters in excerpt 2, her language is significantly more informal and shorter. The language used also deviates from standard English, such as the use of romanized Chinese. When I asked why she did so, she said:

I used more HKE on purpose when the audience of the post is intended to be Hongkongers as it is more 'Hong Kong' and closer to use HKE. However, I did not think

of anything when I decided to use "jeng", it just came to my mind. I felt very natural because I am Hongkonger and we speak like that.

A more informal and substandard discourse is used by Misha to construct an identity of an approachable and lively Hongkkonger. It is clear that Misha intentionally used substandard English on purpose to make the tone friendlier and livelier when talking to fellow Hongkongers. She believed that the use of a more informal and substandard language will shorten the distance between her and other Hongkongers. Using this kind of communicative practice, Misha aims to construct an identity of a Hongkonger with closeness and affiliate with the community. Moreover, she also mentioned that the English that she uses is "Hong Kong English" instead of "substandard English". It proves that while she agrees that standard English is required when spreading information to foreigners, she does not think the English that she uses from the identity as a HongKonger is substandard. It shows the pride she has in her identity as a HongKonger and the exhibition of it using Hong Kong English. It also in line with the conclusion made by Bhatia' (2015) study that Hong Kong English is a means to construct a Hongkonger identity instead of being just substandard.

In terms of emoji, it is also apparent that Misha used many more emojis when talking to other Hong Kong protesters in excerpt 2 which proves the existence of affiliation. The use of emoji serves several functions—expressing emotions, finetuning the illocutionary force and indicating illocutionary force (Skovholt et al., 2014). To elaborate, Misha used the "😄" and "😊" emojis which are generally considered to be pleasant to lessen the illocutionary force created by the inquiry she made to other protesters. It also mitigates the face-threatening act since asking a question creates a burden on others. Using emojis to finetune the illocutionary force means that the Hong Kong protesters on Twitter do care about the "face" of each other proving a very strong affiliation among the community.

Another emoji that is worth our attention is the yellow-hearted emoji (💛) which carries a symbolic meaning allowing the protesters to construct their identities. Among all the emojis in the corpus, the yellow-hearted emoji (💛) and the yellow ribbon emoji (🎗) are very frequently used, with 100 times and 90 times respectively. The pro-democracy individuals and the protesters are always referred to the yellow-ribbon camp in Hong Kong (Ngai, 2020). Therefore, these emojis with the yellow color symbolize the yellow

ribbon camp and serves as an identity marker telling people that you are from the yellow ribbon camp. Thus, using this emoji is an implicit construction process of the identity of a pro-democracy and pro-protesters individual.

Moreover, widely using the same symbol among a group serves the function of strengthening and building solidarity and affiliation (Dresner & Herring, 2010). Therefore, that my corpus found out that the same symbol/emoji being widely used proves that the solidarity and affiliation among Hong Kong protesters on Twitter are strong.

> Misha: This is a further proof that that the Hong Kong government has become a totalitarian government that ignores the law and legislation, trampling the rights of Hongkongers. #StandWithHK #HongKongPoliceTerrorism #HongKong
> Nov 18, 2019

Excerpt 1. An example of tweets by Misha when the audience is the international community

> Misha: any jeng yellow restaurant recommendation? 😆😋 🤍
> #standwithhongkong
> Apr 10, 2020

Excerpt 2. An example of tweets by Misha when the audience is other Hong Kong protesters

Strictly speaking, the "yellow emoji" is not only an identity marker but also an exclusive identity marker. It makes sense that the use of the "yellow emoji" is almost absent when the posts are intended to spread the message to the international community because generally foreigners may not be well-informed enough to know the implication of it. Therefore, there is no use in using it. The use of this emoji as an identity marker is exclusive. Ordinary people or people who are not well-informed supporters of the protest are not native to this identity marker, making it exclusive.

In addition to emoji, such exclusiveness also exists in the form of substandard English. One of my interviewees, Ben, also adopts hybrid discourse to create exclusive-ness. Interestingly, taking a diachronic approach and reviewing all of his tweets during

the data period, I have discovered that he has the habit of using substandard English in some topics that are relatively sensitive and might invite objection from the international community. For example, Ben used substandard English that involves romanized Chinese and even code-switching when another Hong Kong protester started criticizing Americans for disliking Donald Trump in the conversation captured in excerpt 3. Since criticizing Americans and supporting Donald Trump who is a controversial figure will definitely entail a certain degree of loss of support, Ben intervened and used substandard English to ask him to stop posting similar tweets. He even code-switched which prohibits foreigners, who usually are not proficient in Cantonese, from understanding what it means although it can actually be interpreted using Google Translate. When being asked about the intention of using substandard English in these two tweets, he admitted that he was trying to keep the international community from seeing "what they should not see". This linguistic behavior can be interpreted by the concept of "anti-language". Anti-language refers to a minority dialect or mode of communication that is native to a minority speech group in a way that it can exclude members of the main speech community (Halliday, 1976). In excerpt 3, only people who know Chinese are native to romanized Chinese. Especially, the romanized Chinese in Hong Kong is unique in Hong Kong (Lee, 2016). Therefore, this kind of romanized Chinese in substandard English does not only exclude people who do not know Chinese but also those who know. Only Hongkongers who have exposure to the internet culture of Hong Kong will be able to understand "mm". It poses obstacles to foreigners when trying to understand these tweets. By creating anti-language and exclusiveness using substandard English, it excluded the foreigners as "outsiders" and created an "in-group" which are Hong Kong protesters on Twitter. Eventually, the anti-language in hybrid discourse promotes the formation of a "in-group" community with affiliation as well as Hong Kong protesters' construction of identity as a Hong Kong protester on Twitter.

User: Americans are so stupid to oppose @realDonaldTrump. He is the greatest president of all times. Thank you president Trump for #StandwithHongKong! us😣😣🐸 #hkprotest #hk #hongkong #followbackhk

Ben: Ching. Mm ho post this kind of message. Will lose support.
   (Translation: My friend, do not post this kind of message. We will lose support.)

Ben: pls do not intervene other countries politics… 就第有乜自已知好
(translation: even if it is true, keep it to yourself)
Jan 14, 2020

Excerpt 3. A conservation between Ben and another user on Twitter

5.   Conclusions

This study has provided an overview of the linguistic resources that Hong Kong protesters have utilized. Echoing the previous studies done in other countries, similar linguistic behaviors are found among these protesters on Twitter—linguistic patterning that signifies shared emotions and dialogic tweets, the affiliative use of hashtags, and hybrid discourse. The linguistic analysis of these linguistic behavior's indicates that Hong Kong protesters also manage to wittily utilize these linguistic resources to build and shine their identities online—both as a proud Hongkonger or a knowledgeable and eloquent Hongkonger who are impressive enough to let more people from the international communities to hear their voices. On the other hand, our linguistic analysis also concluded that Hong Kong protesters on Twitter also form a dynamic community with affiliation. This breaks the myth that Twitter is only a place for Hong Kong protesters to promote the protest (Steger, 2019). In conclusion, this paper is a testimony of the resilience and liveliness of Hong Kong people, even in the course of a difficult period and protesting.

Although this study has provided an overview of the linguistic behavior of Hong Kong protesters on Twitter, the size of the corpus is relatively limited. A study that adopts a larger corpus is called for to dig out more features and provide a more generalized

result. Moreover, ever since the implementation of the national security law, a lot of Hong Kong Twitter users deleted their tweets or even deleted their accounts, the data collection process may not be able to capture some significant data. Such behavior of deleting may also be a research topic that is worth our attention. Moreover, the aim of this study is to provide an overview paving for way for future studies by looking into different features dug out respectively. Therefore, it is hoped that there will be more focused studies conducted based on the features that have been dug out from this study.

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"I know that's not a Real English": Language ideologies and Hong Kong English

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Abstract

The study adopts a qualitative approach to investigate English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' language ideologies of Hong Kong English (HKE). Four ESL learners from local universities, ranging from Year 3 to Year 4 in their undergraduate studies, were interviewed. All the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed through implementing thematic approach. The findings show that the participants share multiple and contested ideologies regarding HKE. Some common language ideologies include HKE as self-identification as Hongkongers and language of in-group identity. On the other hand, some participants have shown individualized language ideologies regarding HKE. For instance, some perceived HKE solely as a tool of communication while some saw HKE as inclusive of "Kong Girl Accent" which is derogatory. One participant questioned whether HKE is a "Real English".

Overall, the study shows that the choice of HKE includes ideological dilemma. On the positive side, HKE can represent the local identities of Hongkongers. It can make young people feel WE-ness (Kachru, 1996) among the users of HKE. It is also used in daily practices because the participants feel "comfortable" and "convenient" to express their personal emotions via HKE. However, the participants still question whether HKE is a legitimate accent. Indeed, some youth embrace negative ideologies, which considered HKE as neither a standard nor a native accent. These lead to a struggle between local solidarity and the uncertain status of HKE. The study implies that in the broader sociolinguistic climate of Hong Kong, where British English and American English have strong symbolic and cultural values, the ideologies of HKE are contested and dilemmatic. I conclude that language ideologies about HKE are not fixed, but rather they are dynamic, flexible, and open-ended.

Key words: Hong Kong English, language ideologies, accent preferences, identities

1.   Introduction

The English language has multiple varieties across the globe. Among the varieties of English, the most dominant ones are British English (BrE) and American English (AmE), as they represent "a large proportion of all native speakers of English" (Svartvik and Leech, 2006, p.150) in the world as standard and native accents.

Apart from standard BrE and AmE, there are other varieties of English such as Australian English, Canadian English and Indian English. In order to conclude such varieties of English across the globe, Kachru (1996) used "Englishes" to symbolize the variances in form and function, use in linguistically and culturally distinct contexts, as well as a range of variety in literary creativity (p.135)". The term also indicates distinct identities of the language (ibid.). Hong Kong English (HKE) can be one of the "Englishes". It is a localized version of English in Hong Kong which is commonly used by Hongkongers in daily contexts, for example, within their family members, with their teachers, classmates and friends.

Before delving into HKE, it is important to know the status of English in Hong Kong first. In the context of Hong Kong as the former British colony, English has a strong historical legacy in Hong Kong. Alongside Cantonese, the L1 of most Hongkongers, English is another official language in Hong Kong. As a culturally-diversified society, English is used as a lingua franca among tourists, businessmen and investors from around the world in Hong Kong. In the educational context, students in Hong Kong are required to learn English as their L2, according to the school curriculum. In the legal context, most of the formal policy documents and information are written in both Chinese and English. Some governmental organizations and institutions even include "English version shall prevail if there is any inconsistency or ambiguity between English and Chinese version (Legislative Council)" in their disclaimer.

From the above, it is seen that English is used in various contexts. As mentioned, BrE and AmE are the most dominant accents in the world. Hong Kong, as an international center, is deeply influenced by these two accents. The appreciation of BrE can be attributed to educational influences, while the gaining popularity of AmE can be explained by the influence of American media (Edwards, 2016, p. 14). When we take a closer examination into the socio-linguistic climate in Hong Kong, Hong Kong English (HKE) was indeed

arisen as a localized variety of English (instead of a standard variety). Some notable phonological features of HKE include the use of [f] for initial [th] and the relative absence of reduced vowels (Kirkpatrick et al., 2008, p.361). The respective examples are misreading "three" as "free" and the absence of schwa in utterances. There are also syntactic characteristics of HKE which are different from BrE and AmE. For example, Chan (2017) presents some examples of HKE, such as "blow blow water with me la" (meaning "talk with me") and "you come find me or I come find you?" (meaning "Will you come to find me? Shall I come to find you?").

Linguistically, although HKE is commonly used in daily contexts, there were negative stereotypes of HKE as a non-native or non-standard accent, especially in the old days. Around 20 years ago, as stated by Tsui and Bunton (2000), HKE varied from Standard English and had not achieved wide acceptance in the community (p.287). Its variances can also be realized in the schooling context as well. Exonormative preference of the local teachers, i.e. the tendency to rely on foreign forms, would also discourage the students from using reference works on HKE (Pang, 2003, p.14). Without wide acceptance in the community and the education sector, HKE was not perceived as a standard variety of English that it had widely been treated as a non-native accent.

Nevertheless, there are multiple points of views about HKE. HKE seems to become more popular, despite the fact that controversy still happens among the public. For instance, Kongish Daily is a local site sharing news in Kongish. It is a type of HKE in which Cantonese and English are mixed in the phrases (Cheng, 2015). The site is arisen in social media and it gets around 70000 likes on Facebook. However, some people still incline to follow the perception in the past – being exonormative (relying on foreign forms, as mentioned above) instead of endonormative (where a localized version of language, HKE has become widely and socially acceptable, according to Kirkpatrick, 2007, p.189).

HKE is used in Hong Kong, but it is not much discussed how local ESL students justify their use of HKE. This study thus aims to investigate language ideologies of four undergraduate students who are studying in the local universities with different majors. Undergraduate students are chosen as they are of higher English proficiency, and they are capable to distinguish between accents. The analysis is done by delving into the rationalization of language ideologies among the participants. Broader linguistic issues,

such as Kong Girl Accent, function(s) of a language and Real English, are addressed. Social identities, emotions and affects, and in-group identity are also discussed to understand language ideologies of Hong Kong ESL students in the study.

2.   Language Ideology as a Theoretical Framework

In this study, I use language ideology as a major theoretical framework to analyze ESL students' rationalization of accent preferences. In this section, I define language ideology and discuss its relevance to study accent preferences. According to Woolard and Schieffelin (1994), language ideologies are characterized as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use (p.57). They are also ideas and objectives that the members hold regarding roles of language in their social experiences, contributing to the expression of the group (ibid.). Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) also defined language ideologies as guiding ways in which individual make use of linguistic resources to index their identities, as well as to evaluating the use of linguistic resources by others (p.14). In other words, they described how linguistic resources are evaluated and used to establish one's identities. Piller (2005) also pointed out that language ideologies are multiple, interested and contested (p. 4). This could explain the choices of linguistic resources are pluralistic. Accent preferences can be a choice of utilizing linguistic resources. They are interconnected with language ideologies. Ideologies help shape up one's accent preference. They are also justifications of one's preferred way of communication. Accent preference itself can also be a language ideology, which is explained as follows:

Accent preference as a language ideology

Accent preference can be an ideological phenomenon as it varies among individuals according to their ideologies. For instance, the choice of accents can largely depend on sociocultural contexts that one is exposed to. Such a choice is also relevant to identities. For example, Sung (2020) found that accent preferences play a significant role in shaping their pursuing desirable identities in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) Communication.

Participants desired to be either competent L2 users who can attain high English proficiency, or Hongkongers who embrace HKE as a local accent and avoid any associations with the native speakers. The latter perception can be further explained by Loewen (2015). He proposed that maintaining a non-native accent (e.g. HKE) helps individuals retain their ethnic affiliation and cultural identities (p.119). The use of the accent with local traits also stands a sign that learners "are not abandoning their origins (ibid.)" This is associated with establishment and recognition of identities. Identities are not limited to how an individual perceives him/herself, but it is also related to other individuals who come from the same cultural background. Trying to sound native-like bears the risk of being accused as forgoing L1. Many learners still preserve "L1 phonological influences" which enables them to be closely connected with their L1 culture while being understandable in their L2 (ibid.).

Factors shaping Language Ideologies

Language ideologies are multiple and usually involve different sets of expectations about the usage of a language for each individual and communities (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994, p.59). Language ideologies can be shaped by many factors. One major factor is social prestige. The varieties of language can differ from each other in terms of their prestige in communities. According to Finegan and Rickford (2004), linguistic forms carry "overt prestige" if they "are assigned their social evaluation based on widespread recognition of social significance (p.70)". Apart from "overt prestige", there is another set of norms which is in relation to solidarity, regardless of the social status of the group – "covert prestige". When linguistic forms are valued in a positive manner aside from, or even oppose to the "social significance for the wider society (p.71)", they are considered as having "covert prestige". Therefore, the appreciation of BrE in Hong Kong can be seen as "overt prestige" as it is widely recognized by formal organizations. It can also be somehow related to Hong Kong's position as a former British colony. On the other hand, the upholding of HKE by some citizens in Hong Kong is seen as "covert prestige" as it is representative in the sense that Hongkongers can understand effortlessly. It also shows a sense of unity.

The second major factor is identity. Identity is regarded as a particular form of social representation which mediates the relationship between the individual and the socialworld (Chryssochoou, 2003, p.225). Accent variation can be a means to allow L2 speakers to express their identity (Jenkins, 2000, 2007; Walker 2010). When identity is put into the context regarding the varieties of English, local people adopt the variety of English which includes some characteristics of their L1, which echoes with what Jenkins (2000) proposed. She argues that L2 speakers of English can speak English with own L1 accent influence, instead of striving to sound like native speakers (p.69). When they are interacting with the interlocutor with the same background, they can understand each other easily and even help recognize each other as from the same culture. If the interlocutor is from different background, people can still adopt their respective variety of English to express their local culture and specialties. This is one way to express identity via language. Another means is to express WE-ness among the users of English, according to Kachru (1996, p. 135). It is to distinguish between "us" (within the social group) and "them" (outside the social group) (ibid.). Therefore, language identity is not only about embracing the local variety, but using a particular language can differentiate "us" from "them", or even exclude "them". It is also related to social identity, which is defined as membership and sense of belonging of people to various social groups (Spears, 2011, p.169). Group identities can also be expressed via language this way.

The third major factor is cultural practices. They involve cultural production and transmission. According to Sharifian (2016), "cultural conceptualizations" arisen from cultural practices can be associated with "glocalization" (p.1). It refers to the "dual process of globalization and localization of English" (ibid). It is also a relatively new concept which has been arising recently. The processes of "glocalization" include making use of English to encode cultural conceptualizations that are not initially related to the language; the spread of Anglo-English conceptualizations to non-Anglo speech communities; and the blending of cultural conceptualizations (ibid.).

For the "global" part, Hong Kong has been heavily influenced by globalization as an international financial centre. It requires interaction with tourists and businessmen around the corners of the globe. Therefore, the growing dominance of particular type of English might have influenced some Hongkongers to appreciate accents of BrE and AmE

in the broader sociolinguistic climate (Edwards, 2015, p.187). For the "local" part, the local dialect of English in Hong Kong – HKE, is upheld by some Hongkongers. HKE incorporates traits of Cantonese into English and develop new syntactic expressions, e.g. "I am not happy lor" or "So happy ar", where "lor" and "ar" are romanized versions of Cantonese interjections. Some even use such syntactic expressions with the foreigner whose first language is not Cantonese. Together with the globalized world, Westerners, for example, are also exposed to HKE. This may give rise to HKE as a "glocal" variety of English in terms of cultural practices.

3.   Literature Review of Empirical Studies

This research study is built on the theory of language ideology. Accent preferences, which are greatly relevant to language ideologies, are also addressed in this study. I discuss how languages ideologies shape identities and social values of ESL learners from the existing empirical evidences. I also discuss the accent preferences among Hongkongers and explain its connection with language ideologies. The following studies all serve as an important basis for my study.

3.1   Previous Studies Related to Language Ideologies

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, language ideologies can be general. However, some are also individualized that they can be affected by other factors, such as identities and society.

3.1.1   Language Ideology and Identity

Language identity refers to "the attributed and/or assumed relationship between one's sense of self as well as a means of communication" (Block, 2007). These concepts are closely correlated with language ideologies. Language ideologies, in turn, help shape one's self-perceived identities. Alternatively, one's identities can effectively influence the assumptions that one owns for a language. In other words, language ideology and identity are interconnected.

Empirical studies which investigate the relationship between language ideologies and language identities often centre on bilingual contexts. By examining the

language identities of bilingual students in Hong Kong using "paradigmatic analytic procedures", Sung (2020) proposed that language identities tend to be shaped by the existence of various language ideologies. Such language ideologies help evoke a variety of assumptions regarding the "functions, roles and values of English in English as a Lingua Franca communication (p.193)". Language ideologies identified in the study also ascribed "specific social meanings and values (p.194)" to English in the contexts. Therefore, during the negotiation of language identities among the participants, how they positioned or were positioned depended on language ideologies to a certain extent.

Zhang (2013) also delved into the selection of varieties of English of Hong Kong students. The study was conducted by distributing survey to informants from two universities in Hong Kong. Their language attitudes were investigated. The study showed that an educated Hong Kong English (HKed) has the potential to become a "standard variety of English (p.12)". It may be seen as "a marker of Hong Kong identity (p.13)". Meanwhile, Hong Kong broad accent (HKbr) was negatively evaluated as "a poor and non-standard variety of English (ibid.)". On the other hand, HKbr was favourable to become a symbol of solidarity (p.14). It is seen that HKE can be differentiated in at least two ways – educated accent and broad accent.

By exploring the case study of a Mexican-American bilingual child using qualitative approach, Martínez-Roldán and Malavé (2004) suggested that how people emphasize their own language and how they portray their groups could be largely impacted by language ideologies. For example, the "self-depreciation (p.176)" (i.e. devaluation of oneself) by the child's father towards his heritage language could be justified by the "internalization of main ideologies of anti-immigrant groups as well as anti-bilingual language ideologies (p.177)". It is realized that language ideologies do have a great impact on the establishment of one's language identities.

3.1.2   Language Ideologies as Social Phenomenon

Before uncovering the relation between language ideologies and societies, it is essential to clarify the nature of language ideologies. It is noted that language ideologies are not usually homogeneous, but rather multiple and contested, which resonates with the plurality of these ideologies (Piller, 2015). Different socio-cultural factors can contribute

to different ideologies within an individual. This also implies that language ideologies are diverse, dynamic and unpredictable.

Language ideology itself can indeed represent the "sociolinguistic climate of a region (p.399)", according to Jenks and Lee (2016). Researchers become more eager to gain nuanced understandings of how people from different backgrounds utilize the language resources and the driving force behind the utilization. The choice of utilizing particular language resource can shape up one's language ideologies. Jenks and Lee (2016) studied the circulation of ideologies among English undergraduate majors by focusing on Hong Kong as the context. The study was done by "adapting Bakhtinian heteroglossia to study co-existence of various ideologies of English", by analyzing self-narratives of the participants (p.384). The finding of the study shows that "sociological and anthropological issues (p.400)" served as the catalyst for the type of English adopted and its associative ideologies. Related issues included job, pop culture, social status, and more specifically, "derogatory terms such as Fake ABCs and Hong Kong Girl (ibid.)". The issues can help shape one's dialects and the varieties of Englishes in the same region.

Standard language ideology is more influential to shape accent preferences in the society. For instance, Kircher and Fox (2019) conducted a corpus-informed discourse study among the discourses of non-Multiculture London English (MLE) speakers and MLE speakers. The study stated that the non-MLE speakers tended to "hold stronger and negative stereotypes of MLE speakers (p.14)". Standard language ideology perpetuates social hierarchy in the society by maintaining the "social hegemonic order (p.16)". This finding led to the conclusion that language ideologies shift when social power shifts.

3.2   Previous Studies related to Accent Preferences

By referencing the empirical studies conducted in the educational context in Hong Kong, I discuss some studies regarding accent preferences among Hong Kong teachers and students.

Lai (2020) adopted Verbal-guise Technique method and group interviews, to explore the attitudes of prospective English teachers towards the different varieties of English in Hong Kong (p.494). Respondents had to listen to some samples of speech

from authentic speakers, and then expressed their views about each speaker by filling in a questionnaire (p.499). Three groups out of five respondents were also interviewed (p.500). The findings of Lai's study showed that participants ranked HKE the highest in terms of "solidarity" (p.504), despite HKE's consistently low ranking in terms of other domains (e.g. overall, language model and competence). The speaker who used HKE was ranked as "the most honest and friendly" person by the respondents (ibid.). It implies that HKE might sound friendlier to Hongkongers when comparing with other foreign accents. Lai's findings are also found to be corresponding to Kirkpatrick's study (2007) of language prejudice – people who shared similar accents (sounded like each other) were considered as more honest and warmer (p.54). Both studies show that the Hong Kong model of English is increasingly accepted because of being a familiar accent for the Hong Kong people (Lai, 2020, p.508). These studies clearly indicate that the accent preference is part of language ideology and is culturally driven.

In another study, Edwards (2016) studied the attitudes of Hong Kong people towards HKE in the pre- and post- the Umbrella Movement. By comparing the two data sets collected from the same respondents, the study showed that there was a significant increase in the number of respondents who supported HKE as a legitimate variety of English, and a rapid decline in the number who did not think that it was legitimate (p.163). The study also showed that nearly 75% of the respondents spoke HKE in the new data set, when compared with almost 60% in the previous data set (ibid.). The choice of Hong Kong accent and accepting HKE as a legitimate type of English were concluded to be correlated. The causes of such changes in around a year could be attributed to the "dynamic political landscape of Hong Kong" (ibid.), which can be justified by the solidarity built within Hongkongers during political movement. It also gives rise to "localism", in which things with local traits are highly appreciated. That could explain why HKE became more recognized. Based on the findings, Edwards (2016) made a conclusion that HKE is getting wider acceptance by students in tertiary institutions(p.164).

3.3   Implications and Research Gap

The review of the studies shows that there is growing in the study of attitudes towards HKE. However, most studies chose participants as students with the same major,

particularly English majors, in the Hong Kong context. This may hinder the variety of answers, which can possibly be shaped up by different backgrounds. In light of this, participants selected for this study are from different faculties. Selecting participants from different faculties can ensure the study incorporates more diversified opinions on language ideologies and accent preferences, as well as fills in the research gap. Moreover, the issues are not only analysed from a mono-perspective (e.g. linguistic perspective, which is a typical perception from most English majors), but also from social and educational perspectives as different majors were interviewed.

This study also further inspects if accent preferences change across context. In other words, how do language ideologies shape up accent preferences? How do they differ within one individual and/or from others? Context is also an influential factor in shaping up accent preferences within an individual. This is because individuals may try to use different accents in different contexts, which will be elaborated later in the findings. For the variances between individuals, their backgrounds and experiences can justify their language ideologies – their rationalization and values of English as their L2. Among BrE and AmE, there are already abundant studies investigating their differences, in terms of their vocabularies, grammar, spelling and accents. Therefore, HKE will be the main focus of this study to complement the existing studies.

4. Research Questions

The research questions of the study are:

(1)   How do Hong Kong ESL learners perceive the use of HKE?

(2)   What factors shape the rationalization of Hong Kong ESL learners' ideologies of HKE?

5. Method of the Study

5.1 Participants

Four undergraduate students who are in Year 3 and Year 4 are invited for the interview. They are young adults, with ages ranging from 20 to 21. Two male students

and two female students accepted to participate in the study. All the participants selected were the native speakers of Cantonese. They have learnt English for at least 15 years, with upper-intermediate to advanced English proficiency. They studied in local primary and secondary schools. They then received tertiary education in local universities where English is the medium of instruction for their major subjects. They come from diversified faculties – Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Science and Faculty of Social Science. Pseudonyms are used to represent the 4 participants. Ada is a female participant who studies Public Policy and Politics in the university. Betty is another female interviewee who is an English major. Calvin is a male interviewee who studies Mathematics Education as his major subject. Douglas is another male participant who is a Mathematics major.

5.2   Data Collection

The data adopted in this study were drawn from semi-structured interviews with four participants. Semi-structured interviews are used to ensure subjective responses from the participants regarding a particular situation or phenomenon they have experienced (Mclntosh and Morse, 2015, p.1). In light of this, the interviews were designated to be open-ended to investigate how each participant perceives different varieties of English in both spoken and written contexts. Also, owing to the nature of the interview, the "interview guidelines" (see Appendix 1) consisting of seven major directions was formulated instead of "interview questions". Specific follow-up prompts were also raised to cater for their individualized responses.

These interviews commenced with the personal narratives of the participants' background, in terms of their mother tongue, L2 learning, schooling, family etc. They were also invited to share their personal experiences in the journey of learning English, from kindergarten to tertiary education. Participants were then asked to account for their habits and preferences in using English. After that, they were put into a broader context – the society. They had to choose a variety of English as (a)the standard type of English; and (b) the most popular type of English, from their points ofview.

The usage of English is not limited to classroom setting or schooling. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences of using English in various activities outside the classroom. Apart from their personal narratives, they were asked to share their opinions on the issues of English (e.g. what is meant by standard and what is prevalent in Hong Kong). Interviews were conducted individually in English. Each of them lasted from 19 to 24 minutes. Due to the pandemic, each interview was conducted via Zoom and recorded by the built-in recorder on the computer. Only the first take interviews were adopted. This is to capture the first reactions of the participants.

5.3   Data analysis

The interviews were first transcribed and then analyzed by adopting a thematic approach, which is a method of analyzing qualitative data (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). The analytical framework of the thematic approach is applicable to a set of texts, including interview transcripts. The interview transcripts in this study were read and re-read to reach an overall understanding of the data and the main issues in the scenarios, i.e. language ideologies under this study (ibid.). Such an understanding allowed myself to focus on the most significant constructs as presented in the data. In this study, each transcript was closely examined to identify the common and individualized language ideologies of the participants. This was done by referencing the general language ideologies and drawing some specific ideologies. Similar ideologies were categorized together and different ideologies were listed out with elaboration.

6.   Findings and Discussion

The findings are categorized based on the participants' common and individualized language ideologies as follows.

6.1   Common language ideologies – HKE as a Symbol of Identity

The choice of a particular variety of English can be associated with language identity. Three participants in this study indicate that the reason behind the usage of HKE is to maintain their local identity. The participants associate local accent with their self-identity as Hongkongers. For instance, Ada thinks that it is essential to show a regional

identity by employing the traits of the local dialect, i.e. Cantonese, into English:

> [Ada] I also adopt my <u>Cantonese traits into my English</u> and we can all understand each other. And I think it's more important and actually <u>it kind of shows our regional identity too.</u>

From the excerpt above, it is seen that HKE can be representative of the participants' Hong Kong identity. For example, Ada says that her HKE accent helps her "stand out from others" by using HKE in Harvard National Model Unite Nations. It is an international conference to promote international dialogue and cooperation that simulates the United Nations (HNMUN, 2021). Meanwhile, her perception of her identity as a Hongkonger is also further reinforced as she could seek some attention from foreign delegates in the conference due to her Hong Kong accent:

> [Ada] And I think the <u>Cantonese accent helped me to stand out from the others</u>. And <u>I would perceive myself as a Hongkonger more of the time</u> […] I am the only participant [of the world conference] with the Cantonese background, <u>others will pay more attention while I am speaking in English</u>. They are also <u>very curious about my background and are willing to have several conversations with me.</u>

Similar experience has been shared by another participant, Calvin. When he travelled to Langkawi, he used Hong Kong accent to interact with the local people. The residents even gained a good impression of Hongkongers in terms of English proficiency, despite the usage of HKE, which is often regarded as a non-native and non-standard type of English. This further increases his pride of being a Hongkonger by the local dialect of English used in the foreign context:

> [Calvin] <u>I love my hometown and I am proud of being a Hongkonger</u>.
> Although I know that <u>using Hong Kong Accent is not as professional</u>

as using British or American accents, I still like using Hong Kong Accent. I remembered when I was travelling to Langkawi, I used my Hong Kong accent to speak with the local people there. The resident told me that my English was very good, which I didn't expect. He also said that unlike some other countries or cities,the English proficiency of Hongkongers is generally great."

Another participant, Betty, also has shown her preference to use HKE for ethnic affiliation as Hongkongers. She argues that HKE shows her local identity. She also mentions that Hong Kong accent is familiarized by her surroundings that speaking in other accents might be stereotyped as "weird" or "fake":

[Betty] I employ the Hong Kong accent for certain reasons, usually just to sound

familiar to my culture so that they don't find me weird or fake[…] HongKongers definitely feel familiar with these accents […] Hong Kong accent represents being local and is constructive in terms of identity.

From the presented data, it is seen that the adoption of HKE indeed shows the participants' sense of belonging to Hong Kong and their identity as a "Hong Kong citizen". Such an ideology of using HKE as a symbol of identity can be justified by familiarity within Hong Kong context and cultural acceptance outside Hong Kong. For the former, Hongkongers (i.e. local people) adopt the type of English (i.e. HKE) which includes some traits of Cantonese (i.e. L1), when identity is put into the context concerning the types of English (Jenkins, 2000, p.69). For the latter, this echoes with Sharifian (2016)'s concept of "cultural conceptualizations", which are associated with "glocalization" (p.1). This is because it involves the spread of HKE, i.e. a localized version of English in Hong Kong, to other areas outside Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the responses from the speech communities outside Hong Kong (e.g. international delegates, and residents from Langkawi) were all positive, as in Ada and Calvin's respective cases. These show the cultural acceptance of HKE from other parts of the globe. These are some positive opportunities for the

participants brought by using HKE. They in turn make the participants become proud of using HKE as embracing their local identity as Hongkongers. It is realized by standing out from other counterparts with different first languages and receiving praises from foreigners.

6.2   Common Language Ideologies – HKE as a Language of Emotion

The analysis reveals that three of the participants has expressed their affect in using HKE. According to Martin and White (2005), affect is about registering both "positive and negative feelings (p.42)". It is inside the broader system of attitude (ibid.). In this study, the participants use 'comfortability' to rationalize the use of HKE in communication. For example, Ada feels 'comfortable' as she does not need to change her accent when she is chatting with friends in Hong Kong. It is also fine to use HKE as long as it is used with ease:

> [Ada] Using <u>some traits of Cantonese in English is actually quite comfortable</u>, especially while you are surrounding with other Hong Kong people, they <u>understand your Cantonese accent and you don't feel that you have to change your accent necessarily</u>. […] I believe accent is not such a big deal, like, <u>it's comfortable to use Hong Kong English, and it's okay to use Hong Kong English too</u>.

Another participant, Calvin, provides an example to support why he is using HKE instead of standard accents such as BrE and AmE. For him, it is because speaking in British or American accents makes him sound 'unnatural'. He feels 'uneasy' when he is trying out BrE or AmE. On the other hand, using HKE in the spoken context comforts him as it can be uttered in a reassured way.

> [Calvin] When <u>I try to speak in British accent or American accent, I become unnatural</u>[…] I would just <u>go for the one [HKE] that I feel comfortable with. This [Using HKE] is the most natural way of speaking English if you ask me</u>[…] Therefore, <u>I just choose the easiest way of speaking English, which is Hong Kong Accent.</u>

Calvin's opinion shows that using HKE is the most "natural way of speaking English". This case is also applicable to Douglas, who states the same thing regarding his daily conversations – within peers and academic context:

> [Douglas] You know, sometimes I use the Hong Kong accent. When I am chatting with my friends, when I am having a presentation in class, I use the Hong Kong accent. It is because <u>Hong Kong accent is the most natural for me personally</u>.

Therefore, it can be concluded that speaking naturally by adopting HKE is perhaps the easiest way to communicate with others, from the perspectives of Calvin and Douglas. All the instances prove that the usage of a particular accent can be an affective choice. For them, HKE represents their personal feelings and allows them to express themselves in a natural way with both Hongkongers or foreigners. This agrees with Collin's claim (1990) that an emotion is not solely coming from an individual body, but from what holds the social body together (p.27). HKE can help maintain the rapport between Hongkongers. The benefits of HKE as an affective choice makes it become a linguistic resource which is representative as their language of emotions.

On the other hand, using BrE and AmE might intensify the pressure of ESL learners (except Douglas, which is explained later) in Hong Kong as they are still not so familiar with them. This can be associated with the concept of language anxiety, which is a tendency to feel anxious that is specific to foreign language learning (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994, p.283). The high pressure in using BrE and AmE can be used to explain why Calvin, for instance, uses HKE with people around him.

6.3   Common Language Ideologies – HKE as a Medium to Establish In-Group Identity

All interviewees express that HKE make them feel comfortable when they are interacting with people around them. They have a social identity, which describes a sense of belonging of people to various social groups (Spears, 2011, p.169). Tajfel and Turner

(1986) also stated that individuals strive to maintain or to achieve social identity (p.284). A positive social identity is also related to in-group identity, which is about valuing for one's own group (Spears, 2011, p. 202).

Ada, for example, put forward a counter-argument to explain why she uses HKE instead of BrE or AmE in spoken context. This is due to the adoption of language by her teachers and classmates, i.e. the people within her group at school:

> [Ada] <u>People around me, including my teachers and classmates, did not speak with a British or American accent, and hence I was not influenced by both.</u>
> As <u>no one had ever forced me to speak English with a British or American accent</u>[…] it is <u>normal for me to speak with the Hong Kong accent</u> instead of British or American accents.

Similar case also happens to Calvin and Douglas, that people around them are using Hong Kong accent to communicate with each other. This is applicable to Calvin in the way when he is with his friends or brother. He uses HKE within his social circle and his family.

> [Calvin] I like using <u>Hong Kong accent with my friends and my brother </u>as well. We are using <u>Hong Kong accent </u>to talk with each other.

Douglas also mentions that the immersion into a particular linguistic atmosphere helps shape up his use of Hong Kong accent, that literally the people around him speaks in HKE:

> [Douglas] Yeah, I grew up in Hong Kong, I am studying in Hong Kong, my teachers, my classmates, my parents, my friends, my relatives […] <u>Literally everyone around me speaks English in the Hong Kong accent, so I have got used to the Hong Kong accent, I have been immersed in a so-called 'Hong Kong accent atmosphere' since I was born.</u>

Douglas also implies that language ideologies of people around him can affect his ideologies of HKE as recognized in the group. In-group identity, thus, acts as a driving factor to use a particular accent that are common and understandable within the group in order to maintain a stable relationship with the group members. In-group identity, to a great extent, is also based on favoured comparisons which can be made between in-group and out-group (Tajfel and Turner, 1986, p.284). The in-groups are always seen as positively differentiated from the out-groups (ibid.). This shows the importance of having in-group identity to facilitate one's social development as being recognized and favoured. It also echoes with WE-ness among the users of English (Kachru, 1996, p. 135), which differentiates "us" (in-group) from "them" (out-group). When it is put into a broader sociolinguistic climate, both the ingroup and outgroup attitudes were seen as a result of emerging social norms, directly due to an explicit intergroup conflict of goals (Tajfel, 1974, p.66).

These are some common language ideologies that can be found between the participants in their daily lives. They are revolving around affective factors, in which HKE can be either a language of emotions, or more sociolinguistically, HKE can be used to construct identities within a social group and as Hongkongers. These are all the similarities that can be drawn from the majority of / all the participants. In the following section, each of the ideologies are proposed by one particular participant, that they are summed up as individualized language ideologies of that particular participant.

The participants in this study have different ideologies regarding the use HKE. Ada does not include any individualized language ideologies towards HKE. Calvin states that it is good to use HKE for communication as it is intelligible. Douglas even proposes that HKE is not a "Real English". Betty's is about "Kong Girl Accent", which is explained in the next section.

6.4 Individualized Language Ideologies – "Kong Girl Accent" as Derogatory in Hong Kong Society

Betty brings up the topic of "Kong Girl" accent as she describes as a joke accent which dissociates her relationship with "Kong Girl". "Kong Girl" refers to those who mimic native English speakers and feel more superior than others. It is thus pretentious

and unfavourable to most Hongkongers. However, "Kong Girl Accent" is quite common in Hong Kong that xenophiles who want to sound more native choose to adopt similar accent. Nevertheless, Betty uses such an accent in the context when she wants to mock those people being superior and pretentious, which further intensifies the sense of "Kong Girl Accent" as being derogatory and undesirable. In terms of Betty's accent preference, it is lucid that Betty is not in favour of "Kong Girl Accent". Despite her unfavourable views, she still makes use of such an accent when she attempts to make fun with her friends:

> [Betty] Sometimes I imitate the "Kong Girl" accent to joke with my friends[…] While I use the Hong Kong accent as a regular accent and the "Kong Girl" accent as a joke accent, some people, most stereotyped as rich and proud girls who fake poor American accent, do use the "Kong Girl" accent on a daily basis. My action means I side with the poorer social class and mock the rich people in a certain sense, which constructs my identity as a poor student waiting to be employed and ideally have a moderate job later in life to make my way to a flat or something."
> "

Kong Girl Accent" is often associated with negative image of "Kong Girl". According to Jenks and Lee (2016), "Kong Girl" is a derogatory term which is used to depict an opportunistic "gold digging" people (p.398). Chen and Kang (2015) also described "Kong Girl" as a "demanding, narcissistic and materialistic persona" (p.194).

Despite its sense of being derogatory and undesirable, Chen and Kang also mentioned that such a negative stereotype was widespread (ibid.). Its associated accent, "Kong Girl Accent", is a new term arisen which deserves some attention with its locally oriented specialty as "Kong Girl" does. As "Kong Girl Accent" is close to near-native that the users attempt to make, it may pose questionable thoughts: whether sounding near native-like English speakers in Hong Kong will be stereotyped as being "Kong Girls". There is still not a clear-cut of how "Kong Girls" can be differentiated from some near native-like Hongkongers who are solely training themselves as native speakers. This study thus calls for further investigation of "Kong Girl Accent" to find the discrepancy

behind.

6.5 Individualized Language Ideologies – Language Solely as a Tool of Communication

The major function of using a language is to communicate with others who share the same language. However, the functions of a language do not limit to communication, but it can be used to express identities, play, express imaginatively and release emotion (Crystal and Robert, 2021). However, Calvin treats language only as a tool of communication. Therefore, he does not think that it is necessary to learn other accents, as long as the utterances are conveyed clearly and can be understood:

> [Calvin] And to me, the <u>only function of using a language is only to communicate</u>. As long as <u>I can communicate with other people, that's enough for me</u>[…] For me, <u>speaking a language is just for communication, not for the purpose of art. Speaking in another accent requires time to learn and practise</u>. And I am not the kind of person who love to act in another way of speaking.

Calvin adopts HKE as it helps him communicate with others. Such a medium has to be comprehensible in order to facilitate communication. His thought can be further associated with "Intelligibility Principle", which states that learners should try to attain "a level of pronunciation proficiency which is comprehensible to others, rather than sounding like native speakers" (Levis, 2005, p.370). In fact, it is possible for learners to make their speech understandable even with a foreign accent (Loewen, 2015, p.119).

Munro (2008) also agrees that HKE or other varieties of Englishes can be different from native speech, but they are still intelligible and comprehensible (p.210). Bent and Bradlow (2003) even discovered that ESL speakers may find foreign-accented speech are just as intelligible as native-produced speech (p.2883). Those foreign accents, or L2 accents, are even different from the accents produced by the ESL speakers (ibid.). HKE, as an L2 accent, is also proved to be very intelligible both in Asia and globally (Kirkpatrick et al., 2008; Matsuura, 2007; Tauroza & Luk, 1997). These can explain why Calvin still uses HKE as a communication tool, despite the fact that HKE is not seen as a

standard or native accent.

In addition, Calvin also mentions that it takes time to acquire another accent. This can be further connected to the idea that language is solely for communication. He can substantially interact with people around him just by using HKE. Therefore, he does not feel the need to learn another accent as he is not fond of acting in another way of speaking, either for fun or as a joke accent, as what Betty brings up. HKE helps Calvin communicate and it is the variety that he is used to. Both factors shape up his accent preferences towards HKE.

6.6   Individualized Language Ideologies – Hong Kong English is not a Real English

Despite smaller effect of linguistic schizophrenia, some people only recognize native accents. Douglas can be one of them as he initiates HKE is not a "Real English". From Douglas' perspective, code-mixing (e.g. "so good wor" and "let's go la") happens often for L2 speakers of English in Hong Kong, where mixing of Cantonese and English happens in an utterance. The "wor" and "la" serve as interjections in Cantonese for the ending of an utterance. Douglas cannot accept Cantonese interjections are combined with English expressions in a sentence as it violates the standard of native English speakers:

> [Douglas] when we are speaking in English, we <u>tend to mix two languages together</u>. Like, for example, we would say <u>"So good wor" instead of "very good", right?</u> One more example, we would say <u>"Let's go la" instead of just saying "Let's go"</u>. Native English speakers won't speak English like that.

Furthermore, Douglas quotes a common example of HKE – "Laugh die me" to state the syntactic difference between Cantonese and English. Again, the same problem exists: Native English Speakers may feel confused regarding the meaning conveyed.

Instead, native English Speakers use "I'm laughing so hard" to deliver the intended meaning. Therefore, Douglas characterizes HKE as a "side product of cultural exchange" which is limited to communication within Hongkongers and is violating the origin of English. "Laugh die me", for instance, is ungrammatical and forbidden in native English.

This leads to Douglas' thought that HKE is not equal to "Real English":

> [Douglas] In terms of grammar, the sentence structures of Chinese language are totally different from that of English language. For instance, when we hear something really funny, sometimes we would say <u>"Laugh die me" instead of "I'm laughing so hard"</u>. Again, <u>English people won't say "Laugh die me". They even don't understand what you mean if you say that in front of them</u>. Therefore, I would describe this kind of English as a <u>"side product" of cultural exchange</u>. Only Hong Kong people use this kind of English, <u>which is not the original English.</u> That's why I would say that the Hong Kong English is not "Real English".

Apart from the syntactic perspective, he prefers BrE, in spite of the fact that he uses HKE with people around him. When he responds to the question asking for his preference, he chooses British accent and starts putting forward the argument that "HKE is not a 'Real English'". This is how the above points begin to be developed.

> [Douglas] Um...I'll definitely choose the British accent, that's for sure. As I've mentioned above, <u>the British accent sounds really elegant for me</u>. Although I've got used speaking in the Hong Kong accent, I know that's not the "Real English".

Douglas's case is just a tip of the iceberg of broader sociolinguistic climate. With globalization, together with Hong Kong's status as an international city, Western cultural inputs have been circulating and influencing our lives in Hong Kong. Standard and native accents, such as BrE and AmE are also appreciated by the broader sociolinguistic climate. It seems that HKE's status as standard has been denied.

Nevertheless, can HKE be a "Real English"? This is an ideological question because this study tells us that Hong Kong ESL learners have mixed ideologies. Some of them prefer to speak in HKE, embracing HKE as a symbol of identity. Meanwhile, some produce negative ideologies about HKE because of the broader sociolinguistic climate where BrE and AmE are appreciated instead of HKE. Therefore, it is hard to say whether

HKE is a real English or not.

Indeed, Asian English, particularly HKE, was found to be highly intelligible to listeners who came from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds (Edward, 2018, p. 553). This study also confirmed previous studies which discovered that HKE was very intelligible both in Asia and globally (Kirkpatrick et al., 2008; Matsuura, 2007; Tauroza & Luk, 1997). Therefore, to consider whether HKE is substandard is an ideology. For instance, Douglas' language ideology conflicts with what researchers have found. His views towards HKE as a "unreal English" is shaped up by his ideologies.

Whether HKE is a "Real English" or not depends on one's language ideologies. On the positive side, HKE can possibly become a "glocal" dialect as HKE is a localized variety of English limited to Hong Kong nowadays. With globalization, together with Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre, HKE can be brought to light during interaction with foreigners as a cultural input. Therefore, such a "side product" may be beneficial to arouse attention towards HKE to be recognized as a "Real English" as it is a special language. On the negative side, it is similar to Douglas's case, which denies HKE as a "Real English" because of the syntactic differences which is not accepted by native English speakers.

7.   Conclusion

HKE is an interesting topic to be delved into. By investigating ideologies of students, I have some really interesting ideas. For instance, the claim that "Hong Kong English is not a Real English" is quite shocking. In my opinion, as long as the accent is intelligible, it has the potential to become a "Real English". This is supported by Jenkins (2002), who claimed that pronunciation norms should be based on English as a lingua franca instead of standardized British or American accents (p.86). HKE was said to be highly intelligible to listeners from various linguistic backgrounds by Edwards (2018, p.553). However, not necessarily all native speakers understand HKE. It really depends on whether the utterances are syntactically correct, or whether those native speakers have some prior knowledge of Cantonese. Syntactic problems made by code-mixing can be a reasonable justification by Douglas who disagrees with HKE as a "Real English". Another critical insight is that HKE, as a variety, has varieties itself. Examples include

Kong Girl Accent, near native-like Hong Kong Accent, Hong Kong Educated Accent, Hong Kong Broad Accent and Kongish. Kong Girl Accent is the most interesting among the five accents as it can either act as a joke accent or even a mockery accent to judge those pretentious girls.

More importantly, apart from the interesting findings, it is acknowledged that the choice of HKE can be an ideological dilemma. On the positive side, it can be adopted to represent the local identities of Hongkongers. It can also make them feel like they are within the group, as stressing WE-ness among the users of HKE (Kachru, 1996, p.2). It is also used in daily practices by some of them where comfortability and convenience are emphasized. However, it does not necessarily mean that HKE is a legitimate accent.

There are still some people who embrace negative ideologies towards HKE, e.g. it is neither a standard nor native accent; it is not a real English. Together with the broader sociolinguistic climate in which BrE and AmE are overpowered in Hong Kong, there are still very contested and dilemmatic ideologies of HKE.

One should also note that there is not right or wrong in terms of language ideologies. As they are about beliefs, justifications and rationalizations of a language (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994, p.57), one should respect another's language ideologies in spite of the differences.

It is hoped that this study can provide some insights into what language ideologies are and how they are associated with and shape up accent preferences, from the perspective of several ESL university students. Also, it is hoped that such an inquiry can contribute to a nuanced understanding of language ideologies of HKE.

This study calls for further investigation of the distinction between "Kong Girl Accent" and Hong Kong accent. Due to the small size of this study, the interviewees may not be able to represent all the ESL learners. This study thus encourages an exploration into language ideologies of different age groups and across geographical areas. Particularly, it will be more comprehensive to include both spoken and written samples of the participants by collecting data from their daily conversation in English.

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Appendices

<u>**Appendix 1: Guidelines for the interview (7 major questions with individualized**</u>
<u>**follow-up questions based on interviewees' personal narratives)**</u>

1. Can you tell me more about your background? (In terms of mother tongue, L2 learning, schooling, family etc.) You can also share more about your personal experiences in learningEnglish.
2. In spoken context, which accent do you usually use?
3. In spoken context, which accent do you prefer to use?
4. In written context, which type of English do you usually use?
5. In written context, which type of English do you prefer to use?
6. Which type of English is regarded as the standard type of English in HongKong?
7. Which type of English is prevailing in Hong Kong nowadays?

<u>**Appendix 2: Interview Transcript of Ada (M stands for the researcher)**</u>

M: Hello, this interview serves as the basis of my Capstone Project, which is about language ideologies of ESL learners. As it is a semi-structured interview, your personal narratives are highly appreciated and considered. Therefore, it is an open-ended discussion about your perception on Englishes. Can we start now?

Ada: Okay.

M: Firstly, can you tell me more about your background? (In terms of mother tongue, second language learning, schooling background, family etc.) You can also share more about your personal experiences in learning English.

Ada: I am from Hong Kong so my mother tongue is definitely Cantonese but I have learnt English since I was like 4 years old from kindergarten. And in my family,

my brother and I are the only two that will use English because we are both students in Hong Kong. For my father and mother, because they did not use English from day to day, therefore their English skills are quite lacking. I would say, and yeah. For instance, I have participated in English writing courses in both my primary and secondary schools. I had also joined the English Drama Club during my secondary schools, which did boost my English in a very short period. And at the university level, I had signed up for several activities that allowed me to communicate with native English speakers. All of these events did help me to improve English in many ways.

M: Can you tell me more about your schooling background please?

Ada: Ok. Besides the kindergarten education that I have just mentioned, throughout my whole education, I mean from kindergarten, to primary schools, and then secondary schools, even now in the university, I received English lessons from time to time. I think the major reason that I am now still practicing English is um… My secondary school is an EMI school which means that I have to use English in almost every lesson except for Putonghua and Chinese. And my university also provides very well-rounded English courses in terms of speaking, writing, listening et cetera.

M: Oh, okay. So how about your primary school? Is it a CMI school?

Ada: I think it's partially an CMI school. Because in most of the lessons, I was using Chinese in, I think in Music, Arts, Chinese, of course, and at that time General studies, but in classes like Maths and English, the teachers would use English as the teaching medium.

M: Oh, I see. Okay. So, can you tell me more about, how would you like, for example, will you use English among your friends or classmates?

Ada: Um… You mean nowadays when I'm in university?

M: Yeah. You can say more about your situation in the university and whatever context. Daily contexts or schooling or any context.

Ada: Okay. So maybe we can go with my university first. Because my major requires us to use English as the medium. So basically in every lecture and tutorial, we must use English. But on some occasions, if the terms are difficult to be understood in English, the professor will tend to pick up some Chinese translations to help us to understand more of the concept. And in my classes, there are some exchange students, of course. And in order to accommodate them, the professor will also most likely use English, but in everyday life. I mean, when it's after the lessons, me and my friends who most often use Cantonese to chit chat. But when I'm WhatsApping or texting, sometimes I may use English too.

M: I see. So you mean you use Cantonese more often during spoken context while, for example, in written context, you use English quite often?

Ada: Yeah, I will say this.

M: Oh, okay. Let's move on to some contextual questions. For example, in spoken context, which English do you usually use? I mean which type for example, you know, there are many kinds of accents, like British accents, American accents, or Hong Kong accents. What type of English do you usually use?

Ada: Um, definitely Hong Kong English or Cantonese accent, because of course Cantonese is my first language, so I think it's quite normal for people to adopt their first language into English.

M: Hmm. So why are you using Hong Kong English?

Ada: First of all, using some traits of Cantonese in English is actually quite comfortable, especially while you are surrounding with other Hong Kong people, they

understand your Cantonese accent and you don't feel that you have to change your accent necessarily. I mean, I've just recently attended a conference where there are so many people from different parts of the world, like maybe Europe or South America. And they got their own accents too, that they adopted some of their traits of the first language into English. And I also adopt my Cantonese traits into my English and we can all understand each other. And I think it's more important and actually it kinds of shows our regional identity too.

M: Why don't you use British or American accents then?

Ada: I think other than my mother language, the surroundings also make a great part of why I am not speaking with a British or American accent. People around me, including my teachers and classmates, did not speak with a British or American accent, and hence I [was] not influenced by both. As no one had ever forced me to speak English with a British or American accent. In fact, I had only met one speaking with a native British or American accent when I entered university. As a result, it is normal for me to speak with the Hong Kong accent instead of British or American accents.

M: Okay. So can you tell me more about your identity? For example, who do you perceive yourself? Is it related to your adoption of the Hong Kong accent?

Ada: So you mean by...So you mean by I perceive myself by my language?M: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Similar to this idea.

Ada: Um... I think most of the time I perceive myself as a Hongkonger and I will introduce myself as from Hong Kong. And I do think Cantonese made a very great part because Cantonese is a language that is very commonly used in Hong Kong. And just some parts of mainland China will use Cantonese. Even though the mainlanders may know a bit of Cantonese, they are not very fluent indeed. And I think the Cantonese accent helped me to stand out from the others. And I would perceive myself as Hong Konger more of the time.

M: Oh, that's interesting. Can you give me some concrete examples of how you stand out with the Hong Kong accent?

Ada: This happens a lot… This happens the most when I am having a conversation with the foreigners. Considering myself having a stronger Hong Kong accent, I usually speak a little bit differently compared with others. Just in those activities that I have mentioned, since I am the only participant with the Cantonese background, others will pay more attention while I am speaking in English. They are also very curious about my background and are willing to have several conversations with me.

M: I see. So as you mentioned, you usually use the Hong Kong accent. What about your accent preference? Do you prefer using Hong Kong English as well?

Ada: Oh, yes, definitely. I've mentioned, I believe accent is not such a big deal, like, it's comfortable to use Hong Kong English, and it's okay to use Hong Kong English too. And, but I can see that some people in Hong Kong are praising like British accent and British English, I think it's fine for them because they are quite… they are really quite attractive. But it doesn't have to force yourself to become a British accent speaker. I think it's okay for you to speak Cantonese accent as well.

M: Yeah. Okay. So, this is all for spoken context. We'll now move on to written context. So for written context, which type of English do you usually use? Is it still Hong Kong English or that's another type of it?

Ada: I don't think that is a kind of written Hong Kong English, even though we may speak with an accent but we don't write with an accent. In written contexts, people in Hong Kong mostly used British English, because it's sort of the official language in Hong Kong and as a colony of Britain in the last century. And in writing formats, we will tend to use British terms instead of American terms like, we will use...we will write trousers instead of pants.

M: Why don't you write in American English then?

Ada: As a student, I was taught with British terms and it feels more natural for me to write in British English. Not saying American English is bad, but it is more comfortable to use

what I am more familiar with. I am also afraid I am using the wrong term or wrong spelling when I am writing in American English since I am not very used to it.

M: Hmm. I see. Is this the type of English, I mean, is British English the language that you prefer to use in written contexts?

Ada: So you mean I will use, like British in written contexts?

M: Yeah. Do you prefer using British English in your written context?

Ada: Um, personally, I, I will, I will say because it's what I've been taught since the time when I was 4 years old. So, and I, I will say I am pretty well-trained for this. And just from a personal point of view, instead of such, instead of the learning format, I would say British English is more formal and academic. Most of the time when I'm writing English…, I like writing a paper or writing an email in British English. And I do agree that British English makes people feel more professional, and formal. And so I would tend to use British English forms in my writings.

M: Okay. So I think these are about your personal experiences or your personal narratives of Englishes that you used in spoken and written contexts. So let's move on to a broader context, that is the society. So which type of English do you think is regarded as the standard type of English in Hong Kong?

Ada: Um, standards... from what I've known… from my knowledge, I don't think Hong Kong has a very specific type of English as standard, but we can see that because I am a student in Public Policy, I read a lot of government documents. I can tell that they tend to use British English. Not just because we don't have a Cantonese English, it is also because Hong Kong, as a former colony of the UK, will tend to use their formatting and their organization and their writing style and formats, like some grammar and some vocabs that I have just mentioned. They tend to use British English than others.

M: Yeah. So you think British English might be the standard type of English? I mean, most probably that will be the standard one.

Ada: Yeah, because we don't have something like Hong Kong English here. So I think I would go with British type.

M: Oh, okay. So which type of English is popular in Hong Kong nowadays?

Ada: Surprisingly, I would say American accent. I think most of the teenagers these days, or even adults, they watch Netflix a lot, which has a lot of American TV dramas, and like the horror stories or sex education, very commonly. And their American accent is… I would say, influencing our English too, and from time to time when people are listening to those English, they will tend to learn from them. I personally learned English from the Big Bang Theory. So some people say I speak like Shelton, haha. And I do agree that the media had a lot of influence on our English. But I would say a part of Hongkongers are still preferring to use British English because it is more privileged and more high-class, you know, because, the British are usually in the higher class level in Hong Kong and somehow British English is more formal and more gentle and sophisticated, I would say.

M: As you mentioned, different parties might hold different opinions towards the accent preferences. Do you think that one can use both American accent and British accent on different occasions?

Ada: Yeah, I will stand with this statement. Overall, accent is only a part of our everyday conversation. Under globalization, it is easier for us to get in touch with the media, and hence different types of accents. This may effortlessly affect people's accent. And since the US and UK are the two countries with such a large cultural output, it is very common to be influenced by both British and American accents. So I think it is ok for one to practice both accents, not on different occasions, or even ok on the same occasion. For instance, the famous actress Anya Taylor-Joy, as I remember, is always commented to be speaking with a mix of different accents even though she learned English as her second language in

London. Not to mention that accent really does not matter a lot in everyday conversation, and therefore it is ok to speak what accent you find comfortable in, whether it is British or American accent on whatever occasion.

M: Okay. So that's the end of the interview today. Thank you so much for your time. Bye bye.

Ada: Bye bye!

M: Hello, this interview serves as the basis of my Capstone Project, which is about language ideologies of ESL learners. As it is a semi-structured interview, your personal narratives are highly appreciated and considered. Therefore, it is an open-ended discussion about your perception on Englishes. Can we start now?

Betty: Okay.

M: Firstly, can you tell me more about your background? (In terms of mother tongue, second language learning, schooling background, family etc.) You can also share more about your personal experiences in learning English.

Betty: I am a university student majoring English. I started learning English as a second language from around 4 to 5 years old, and my mother language is Cantonese. I speak Cantonese with my family, and sometimes we converse in English. I mainly learned English in extracurricular activities. Since primary school, I have taken a liking to English and thus participated in a variety of English-based extracurricular activities. I used to be a member of the English Drama society and joined the English Drama Festival, and I attended speech festivals every year for both solo and choral competitions. The English Drama society helped with my English learning most comprehensively since there are script readings and interactions between members. I also had extra English classes which did not end until I entered secondary school. In secondary school, I continued my role in the English Drama club and spent a large portion of my time in the English Cafe, and thus I spoke English a lot. In fact, I might have spoken English more than Cantonese on a daily basis. I entered the Toastmasters Club in secondary 3 or 4, and I was the head English Prefect in Secondary 5.

After that, I graduated from secondary school and chose English as my major. I studied phonetics and creative writing and a bunch of other stuff. I also went on exchange a year ago due to graduation requirements, and that was a fruitful experience.

M: Can you tell me more about your usage of a second language at the university? You can tell me more about how you interact with your teachers and coursemates.

Betty: The use of English in university is more limited than I thought but definitely more extensive than secondary school, since English is mostly used in answering class questions and writing essays. In group discussions, we sort of alternate between Cantonese and English a bit, which is code mixing, since even if we are quite fluent in English, most group mates are more comfortable with speaking in Cantonese, and English can be the alternative when we have to use more professional language which are weird in Cantonese, such as relative pronouns and interdiscursivity. Most students converse in English with our teachers, and sometimes if our teacher knows Cantonese or Putonghua, they may utilize code mixing to maximize their teaching outcomes. I seldom meet exchange students, but I use English if I converse with them, since it is an international language. I would also try to get them to translate some vocabulary from their languages into English for me to learn. This situation was reversed when I went to exchange, since I understood their language but the locals did not understand mine.

M: Can you tell me more about your exchange experience?

Betty: The exchange is actually pretty comprehensive as well. In fact, there were some pretty interesting things and some pretty stereotyped things. When people there met me, they were often quite astonished about my accent, because I don't sound unfamiliar to them. The reason, I think, is mostly related to my accent. Actually, the education I received as a child proved very influential to my accent. The classes I took in primary school were taught by Americans mostly, so I took on American accent at a relatively young age. But then just before the exchange, I took the phonetics course, in which a British instructor taught standard British IPA. I therefore learned certain British pronunciations, and I was quite fluent in British accent in the exchange period, but that is almost it. Right now, I am not sure, but back to the topic. The Americans I met were surprised by my accent, and they welcomed it. Some people talk with me only to realize later that I was not a local, and we had a good time joking around. However, there were some weird things too. Some people asked me about my accent -- not surprising at all right -- and I did say I learned phonetics. The accent I picked up was British, and I went to America. So strangely, one particular

person replied saying that, "Oh yeah, you (Hong Kong) were a colony." I was first greatly angered by her view, because like what, you think my education and what makes me is because Hong Kong was a colony?

Seriously? I had British accent because I was colonized? That girl may not have meant it that way, but it had a condescending taste to it. But then I started to ponder, what if the empire which colonized Hong Kong was Ameri[ca]? I think the IPA taught in university would still be in British accent, like no offense, but we have a language purity problem in general. So, I don't think colonialism is the right reason. Maybe the instructor and the impression of the accent to my culture are the true reasons. Otherwise, I think there is no particular preference in teaching any English accents. Overall, the exchange was a balanced trip.

M: It seems that you got some special experiences during your exchange. Speaking of your mixed accents, I think that is definitely an interesting issue. So in spoken context, will you keep on using such a mixed accent? Or to make it simpler, which type of English do you usually use?

Betty: I usually alternate between accents. I speak in British accent and American accent usually, I kinda impartially use them when I am speaking casually, partly because of the courses I took and the exchange stuff. I stress the "r"s sometimes with a not really that open "a", that is pretty obvious to me. When I speak on formal occasions, I somehow tend to switch to a full British accent. Personally, I like switching from accent to accent from time to time, sometimes for humor and sometimes for fun. It is an interesting thing to play with, and I like that. Some accents, like Indian accent or Japanese accent, are just fun on their own.

Cantonese...Chinese accent varies a lot but is relatively easy to understand. The French and German accents are difficult but feasible once I catch certain patterns, but I still get caught off guard or out of character sometimes. There is also another accent I can't really name that I practiced for fun, and I am still doing it sometimes. I use the Hong Kong accent and "Kong Girl" accent with HongKongers. That's about it.

M: Do you think if your adoption of the Hong Kong Accent or "Kong Girl" Accent is related to your identities?

Betty: Absolutely. I employ the Hong Kong accent for certain reasons, usually just to sound familiar to my culture so that they don't find me weird or fake, if our distance is that far, or mostly just for some local fun. Sometimes I imitate the "Kong Girl" accent to joke with my

friends. Hong Kongers definitely feel familiar with these accents. Of course, Hong Kongers would know more about the difference between the Hong Kong accent and the "Kong Girl" accent since they have different implications. While I use the Hong Kong accent as a regular accent and the "Kong Girl" accent as a joke accent, some people, most stereotyped as rich and proud girls who fake poor American accent, do use the "Kong Girl" accent on a daily basis. My action means I side with the poorer social class and mock the rich people in a certain sense, which constructs my identity as a poor student waiting to be employed and ideally have a moderate job later in life to make my way to a flat or … As Hong Kongers, we all know the economy in Hong Kong and what it means to be poor, while Americans or British would know less about Hong Kong right now. This may be the reason why the Hong Kong accent represents being local and is constructive in terms of identity. That's it.

M: Interesting, so which English do you prefer to use in the spoken context and why?

Betty: I use what I feel like using, seriously, mainly depending on the context and the content of my conversations. Most of the time I use the American British mix, simply because that is my most natural preference as who I am. When I am talking with my friends, I speak like how I am speaking. Some people may find it fake or something, some of my students found learning English more difficult I guess and was quite disappointed in themselves. When I worked as a waitress, some customers were awed. They didn't expect that. Those were fun. I don't limit myself to any specific type like strictly British or strictly American. I thought of achieving a fully royal British accent, but that went down the drain because I had no more interest in it now. I am also not a big fan of American accent, like I

use it but I don't love it to the point I want to limit myself to American English only. When I want to stress something I use British because the heavily voiced ends are very useful in grabbing attention. Sometimes I joke and use other accents, mostly Hong Kong accent, "Kong Girl" accent, Indian and Japanese. I like Indian accent very much, but when I use it I might get called out for discrimination or things, so yeah no offense, better not use it unless I am speaking with really trustworthy friends. Japanese is also fun but rather difficult to understand. People also used to laugh at Japanese English, and sometimes I do, so also nope not on a daily basis. Sometimes I speak to myself, and that would be either in the mixed or a weird accent I have been practicing.

M: Ok...How about in written context? Which type of English do you usually use?

Betty: In essays, dully academic, but not strictly, which should not be the case but I can't help it. In others, simple casual languages, not too flowery or grand. Sometimes in creative writing, some embellishments can be added. I guess.

M: Will there be a particular type of English that you use?

Betty: I usually spell words with -ize ending, so American I guess. I used to think that -ize is British English but then after quite some time I realized it is American. But then again since I got used to it, I don't need to change it for anything.

M: That is interesting. How about your preferences? Which type of English do you prefer to use and why? I mean in written context.

Betty: In both essays and creative writing, I don't have a preference, but I am used to using British I guess. Then again I don't use really English stuff. I would use "rubbish bin" and not "bin" or "rubbish can". I prefer writing in simple English no matter British or American. I have always thought that embellishments are necessary for a beautiful piece of work, but then I have seen works that worked well with simple words and absolutely beautiful scenes. I don't think I can be half as good as any of E. B. White's or Hemingway's

works, but I like the style and I took that on somehow. This has nothing to do with British or American English, it is just plain English as a medium for communication.

M: I see. So far we have talked about your opinions regarding the spoken and written context. Let's look at a broader context -- the society. Which type of English is regarded as the standard type of English in Hong Kong?

Betty: I don't know if this matters that much, but maybe British English I guess. My family always says that if I learn English, I have to go to Britain. And of course they would think that, because English is their mother tongue and all the English culture is there. And then...you know Britian. And then English exchange programmes in Britain are considerably rarer than that of other countries. British writing may appear to be more prestigious than American writing. Some of my friends think that Americans speak lazy, but they actually forgot that British kinda don't pronounce everything too. In terms of workplace usage, maybe British would also be dominant, and that would probably be the templates left by the British I guess. Some organizations would use American because of the settings in Microsoft Word though.

M: Then in your opinion, which type of English is popular in Hong Kong nowadays?

Betty: Definitely American accent. I have taught quite some students who speak fluent American English. When I was young, I learnt British English. Surprisingly, this does not happen to younger generations nowadays because preschool education nowadays is mostly taught in American English. I still remember the time when I was an assistant there. The extracurricular classes the kids had were held at this big preschool organization. There were a lot of teachers, like from pitch black to porcelain, I'm not kidding, but 9 out of 10 speak American English. Almost all teachers I met were American English speakers, and the education materials, like the e-books which speak to the children, sound horrible, but still American. That is the younger kids, the older kids have different stuff. Marvel, DC. When I was a secondary school student, I began to expose to Suicide Squad, Miley Cyrus, Rihanna, Camila Cabello, Anna Kendrick and America's Got Talent. Count in AFV for extra points.

The only two British things were like Harry Potter and Benedict Cumberbatch, both of which I think is pretty weird to employ in everyday life and thus did not give them any thoughts.

Think of it, a beaver. And the BGT is all about Piers screaming and Sharon sending love and David Hoffman looking nice. But Michael McIntyre is good, and then again no one around me watched it so I didn't get to know it until I entered university. So anyways.

M: Ok, haha. If Hong Kong is colonized by America, do you think the standard would be American?

Betty: I don't think so, no. Britain is the origin of English, and we as Asians stereotype make us, are quite some perfectionists. There is a language purity issue which is like "British English is the most traditional and therefore the best", and I think that may affect the education system in a parallel universe as the market there may need it. Some may argue that if America colonized Hong Kong, the education system would be different from the start.

Well, why not say we'll be wiped out like Aztec no no just joking I am not going in that direction (or maybe it could be) But as long as Asians are Asians, American English being set as the standard English is quite impossible.

M: Haha, what an interesting idea. Thank you so much for your time today. Bye Bye. Betty: Thanks, bye!

Appendix 4: Interview Transcript of Calvin (M stands for the researcher)

M: Hello, this interview serves as the basis of my Capstone Project, which is about language ideologies of ESL learners. As it is a semi-structured interview, your personal narratives are highly appreciated and considered. Therefore, it is an open-ended discussion about your perception on Englishes. Can we start now?

Calvin: Sure, why not?

M: Firstly, can you tell me more about your background? (In terms of mother tongue, second language learning, schooling background, family etc.) You can also share more about your personal experiences in learning English.

Calvin: Um...Cantonese is my mother tongue. Unlike some of the famous people, I am very proud of having Cantonese as my first language. Since my parents always used Cantonese as their only language, my brother and I would not speak in English at home. My second language is English as I have been learning English for around 15 years. I was first exposed to English when I was studying in kindergarten. I used phonics to learn English and my vocabulary bank started to grow from that time. I was then promoted to local primary and secondary schools. Therefore, the only chance that I can speak in English is the English lessons. Before I entered the university, I seldom used English to communicate with other people in the spoken context.

I have been engaging in playing computer games very much since I was in secondary school. Most of my favourite games use English as the medium. Since then, I started practising using English to communicate with other players on the Internet by typing of course, haha. That's why I still got few chances to speak in English. My English was improved unconsciously. I have a special habit of trying to follow the soundtrack of the game. You know, when you are choosing the character in the game to perform some actions, attack, for example, they will produce their some sounds, you know I would try to learn the way they speak and in this way. Also, I was exposed to different accents, the

British accent, for example. Apart from these, I also learn a lot of vocabulary. Most of them fall into the same category. They are military terms I think. I remember when I was eleven years old, I had to turn on the subtitles in the game so that I can understand what they are talking about in the cutscenes. And after only 5 years, I can understand most of the content in the cutscenes even if I turned off the subtitles.

In addition to a gamer, I am also a singer as I love singing very much. I usually listen to Cantopop. I also listened to English pop music as my secondary schoolmates always recommended some English songs to me. This gave me another opportunity to expose myself to the vocabulary of different categories. As the vocabulary that is used in pop music is more diversified, my vocabulary bank has been expanded a lot.

M: Good to know that your establishment of identities can be related back to your journey of learning English. Can you tell me more about your usage of a second language at the university?

Calvin: Um… when I was in my first year in university, I met a foreigner, I mean an exchange student, from America. We had to work together in a group project. Can you believe it? This is the first time in my life to speak to foreigners via face-to-face. I was so excited and surprisingly, I didn't find myself too nervous when I was trying to express myself in front of him.

M: Will you communicate with him using American accent instead?

Calvin: In fact no, I just kept trying to use my Hong Kong Accent to communicate with him.

M: What makes you use the Hong Kong Accent instead of American accent?

Calvin: Well, because I am a Hongkonger, I love my hometown and I am proud of being a Hongkonger. Although I know that using Hong Kong Accent is not as professional

as using British or American accents, I still like using Hong Kong Accent. I remembered when I was travelling to Langkawi, I used my Hong Kong accent to speak with the local people there. The resident told me that my English was very good, which I didn't expect. He also said that unlike some other countries or cities, the English proficiency of Hongkongers is generally great. I do agree with him as I recalled I had some difficulties in understanding what my Professor was saying when he used a particular accent in teaching. Therefore I would like more people to know about the Hong Kong accent and I know that this accent is not very common in the world. And I wish one day people would try to recognize the Hong Kong accent as the status of British accent and American accent. And there is another reason why I would like to use the Hong Kong accent. It is because when I try to speak in British accent or American accent, I become unnatural. And to me, the only function of using a language is only to communicate. As long as I can communicate with other people, that's enough for me. Therefore, I would just go for the one that I feel comfortable with.

M: Apart from interaction with friends, do you usually use the Hong Kong Accent in spoken context as well?

Calvin: Yes, yes! I usually use the Hong Kong Accent in spoken context as well. For example, I am working in an education center to teach Maths as my part-time job. My job requires me to speak in English even when I am teaching Maths. Luckily I was studying in a school which uses English to teach Maths, therefore, I started learning the vocabulary of Math since I was Form 1. At the beginning, I disliked this way of teaching. But then, I took it as a great chance of practising my spoken English. After that, I started finding it easy to explain the concept of Math in English. And I try to adapt to this environment. So far, I have taught more than 20 students and most of them are studying in international school, meaning that they are native English speakers. Surprisingly, I didn't find any difficulties when I am trying to explain the concept of Maths to them. Therefore, using the Hong Kong accent is not so bad after all, haha!

M: Then do you prefer using the Hong Kong Accent too?

Calvin: Yes, well, I am not sure if I would change my answer to this question if I was living in other countries or cities. But living in Hong Kong, the answer is one hundred percent yes! As a Hongkonger, I cannot see what the problem is if I am using the Hong Kong Accent. Just like you won't find it weird if you find an American using American Accent. This is the most natural way of speaking English if you ask me. I like using Hong Kong accent with my friends and my brother as well. We are using Hong Kong accent to talk with each other.

M: Why didn't you use British Accent or American Accent?

Calvin: For me, speaking a language is just for communication, not for the purpose of art. Speaking in another accent requires time to learn and practise. And I am not the kind of person who love to act in another way of speaking. Therefore, I just choose the easiest way to speak in English, which is Hong Kong Accent. Speaking in British Accent is, in my opinion, quite elegant, and beautiful I would say. But, for me it would be quite tiring to act in that way of speaking, cause I have tried it before, and that's definitely not the way I prefer. I enjoy listening to people who speak in British Accent, but not saying it myself. For American Accent, I tried to act in that way of saying English but it turned out to be quite funny and I swear that I will not ever do that again, Haha!

M: Haha! Ok, that's interesting. How about in written context? Which type of English do you usually use?

Calvin: Hong Kong Accent as well. Haha, just kidding! Of course, I believe that we don't have the so-called Hong Kong Accent in written context, do we? For the written context, let me think, hmm...I think I will go for the British way since I was taught in this way throughout my English lessons in schools. Let me share with you a real story, I remembered that when I was eight, I made a "mistake" by spelling "colour" to "color" in the English dictation. I don't know why, this is the only mistake I can recall from my dictation throughout my whole school life. I didn't know the one I spell was the American version, otherwise, you know, I would have argued with the teacher about it already as that cost me five marks, from 100! Haha!

M: Oh, that's sad. So do you prefer to use British English in written context too?

Calvin: Well, I am a traditional person. From my perspective, English was originated from Britain. Just like I will also prefer using traditional Chinese characters to using simplified Chinese characters. Similarly, I prefer the "traditional and prestigious English characters", which is the British English to the others too. And I am the kind of person that, once I start learning something in a certain way, it is very hard for me to change it to another way. Just like I was told that the word "colour" is C-O-L-O-U-R, it is deeply entrenched in my mind, it is quite hard for me to use another way to spell it instead.

M: Why didn't you use American English in the written context? Is it because of your teacher, haha?

Calvin: Yes, I just learnt what my teacher taught me, I didn't actively search for the American way of writing when I was in secondary school. And after a long year of learning the British way of writing, it is hard for me to learn another way of written context just for fun. Another reason is that my memory for spelling is weak, so it would be somehow confusing to me to learn another way to spell the same word and remember which one is which. I am just a mathematician after all. Haha!

M: I see. This is interesting. So far we have talked about your opinions regarding the spoken and written context. Let's look at a broader context -- the society. Which type of English is regarded as the standard type of English in Hong Kong?

Calvin: Let me start from the spoken one first. Of course, if your definition of "standard" refers to the one that most Hongkongers use…

M: Sorry to interrupt, but the definition of standard should be about something that is established by authority, custom, or general consent as a model or example.

Calvin: Okay, then I think using British English is the standard type of English in Hong Kong. As I recall, when I was in primary and secondary, most of the schools in Hong Kong used British English to teach. I am not sure about the situation now. Such a standard is because of the history of Hong Kong. You know, Hong Kong was a colony of the UK before 1997. And this affected a lot in the written context of the Hong Kong people.

M: I see. Then in your opinion, which type of English is popular in Hong Kong nowadays?

Calvin: Good question, I think that American accent is getting popular in Hong Kong nowadays. The reason is quite obvious. Americanization is happening in Hong Kong. It is not only limited to the spread of brands such as McDonalds' and Apple, but it is also influencing how Hongkongers perceive American accent. We can see that there are more people who love watching American movies and listen to American pop music compared to those in the past. I believe that the influence of American nowadays is great. Hong Kong is not the only one who is being Americanized, but it is no doubt one of them. As a result, the American accent is gaining its popularity in HongKong.

M: As you mentioned, you are a part-time tutor in the education center. Have you encountered similar experiences while teaching students from international school? If so, can you share some of your findings from the perspective of education?

Calvin: This is quite interesting. Before I started teaching in the education center, I thought students from the international schools will use British Accents more than others. However, it turns out I can hardly remember which one of them are using the British Accents since most of them are using American Accents instead! It really surprised me! As I recall, there was one boy who was using British Accent in my class, but he was just using it for fun! Because of this, I can see the trend of the changing of the usage of accents in English in HongKong.

M: If Hong Kong is colonized by America, do you think the standard would still be British?

Calvin: I think no, and it will probably change to American standard as well. It is because the people in Hong Kong are easily affected by a culture that they are always exposed to. The people here are also fast learners and are easy to adapt to some new environments. They can pick up a new language within a short period of time. Therefore, it really depends on which country Hong Kong is colonized by, and the same standard would be.

M: Okay. That's the end of the interview today. Thank you so much. Bye! Calvin: Bye!

<u>Appendix 5: Interview Transcript of Douglas (M stands for the researcher)</u>

M: Hello, this interview serves as the basis of my Capstone Project, which is about language ideologies of ESL learners. As it is a semi-structured interview, your personal narratives are highly appreciated and considered. Therefore, it is an open-ended discussion about your perception on Englishes. Can we start now?

Douglas: Ok, no problem.

M: Firstly, can you tell me more about your background? (In terms of mother tongue, second language learning, schooling background, family etc.) You can also share more about your personal experiences in learning English.

Douglas: I'm an undergraduate student. I'm now in year 4 and I'm studying Mathematics. My mother language is Cantonese, then I started learning English when I was around 5 years old? I guess? Maybe? Whatever, that was a long time ago, so my second language is English.

Most of the time, I communicate with my family and friends in Cantonese. I think the only moment I really communicate with others in English is during an English class. So, you can see that I actually don't speak much English.

In terms of English learning, I think I would split my English learning process into 4 stages. Kindergarten, primary school, secondary school, and University English learning. Lemme explain more about that.

When I was in kindergarten, I definitely started learning English by recognising and reading out loud the 26 alphabets. Yeah, that's for sure.

I think my English improved the most when I was in primary school. You know, dictations helped me a lot in terms of memorising vocabularies. On the other

hand, the grammar exercises also helped me a lot. Yeah, the tenses, the prepositions, the punctuations... Yeah those exercises really helped me a lot. There is also a fun fact about me. You know what? I actually haven't learnt phonics officially. Like, I haven't attended my phonics classes. I don't have any phonics exercises. Yeah, however, I could pronounce most English words correctly. Perhaps it's because I'm good at Math, yeah? I'm good at observing patterns. I don't know. During English lessons in primary school, I usually looked at every single word in the text book while the teacher was reading it aloud. Eventually I somehow understood how phonics work. For instance, the /t/ sound, the /k/ sound, and even the tion (/ʃ(ə)n/) sound.

When it came to secondary school, I could still kind of keep my English standard, because I was studying in an EMI school. Some subjects like Mathematics, Science… I remember there was a subject called Humanities Education when I was in junior form. It was something like… kind of a mixture of liberal studies and history. That's right, I learnt that subject in English too. So yeah, I got more opportunities for exposure to English. Also, I think I learnt English in a more general way because I learnt a lot of terms, a lot of vocabularies that related to different aspects. That's why I'm pretty sure that my English was not bad at thattime.

However, in my secondary school life, yeah, I didn't really work hard in learning English. Perhaps it's because yeah, I was too confident in my English, too confident in a way that I was a little bit arrogant. I didn't have the sense that I needed to do revision in English subject, especially grammar. So...I used to think that I could use common sense to write sentences with perfect grammar. Yeah it turns out not, of course. So, I forgot most of the grammar and collocations that I have learnt from secondary school. If you ask me now, I probably can't tell you what Conditional types 0, 1, 2, 3 are. I probably can't tell you when I should use which kind of reported speech. Yeah I "returned" most of them to my English teacher. Even now, you can probably hear a lot of grammatical mistakes from my speech throughout this conversation, because I just speak English by feeling. Fortunately, I think my speaking skills improved the most during my secondary school years, especially when I was in F3. What did I say… Kindergarten, primary school,

secondary school...

Yeah, when it comes to university. Learning English for me was mostly about writing. Writing research papers, as well as writing stuff that are quite practical. For instance, job application letters, personal statements, CV… Yeah something like that.

M: Interesting! Did you meet any international students or foreigners during your studies? Douglas: Well, I was going to say the reason why my speaking improved a lot when I was in F.3. I sat next to a foreigner exchange student who came from Austria in the entire year. I had a lot of chances to communicate with him in English. So, my spoken English was getting more and more fluent at that time. I remembered that his Maths and Science were quite poor to be honest, because he wasn't interested in them, so… Yeah he didn't really care about Maths and Science. I actually helped him a lot on every single Math assignment and yeah, Science assignment. Once he asked me if I could just let him copy my works, but you know, I was a good student, I mean, I am a good student, yeah, so I didn't. Also, I love Math very much, in a way that I had a lot of beautiful pictures about Math in my mind. I really wanted to influence him. I really wanted to convince him that Math is fun! So instead of just letting him copy my works, I put a lot of effort into explaining him every single question in every single Math assignment. Yeah, I also tried hard to go through every single formula that my Math teacher taught at that time. I think my English presentation skills have improved a lot since then, yeah. I think that's also the reason why I could teach my private tutorial students Math in English during the entire lesson, because I've got used to explaining Math in English.

M: What a great experience! In spoken context, which English do you usually use?

Douglas: Well… It really depends on the circumstance. You know, sometimes I use the Hong Kong accent. When I am chatting with my friends, when I am having a presentation in class, I use the Hong Kong accent. It is because the Hong Kong accent is the most natural for me personally. Right? Yeah I grew up in Hong Kong, I am studying in Hong Kong, my teachers, my classmates, my parents, my friends, my relatives…

Literally everyone around me speaks English in the Hong Kong accent, so I have got used to the Hong Kong accent, I have been immersed in a so-called 'Hong Kong accent atmosphere' since I was born.

However, sometimes I do use the British accent. You know, I like watching educational clips in my spare time. So, there are some channels that teach English, and some of those teachers are speaking in the British accent. For instance, I'm pretty sure you know who Uncle Siu is. His British accent, together with his beautiful voice, the whole thing is just elegant for me! So I'm somehow learning to speak in the British accent, and sometimes I do use the British accent to talk to my friends because I'm learning it. You know, sometimes you just need to practice so that you can have a good learning experience. Well sometimes it might be quite embarrassing because yeah, my British accent is not that accurate, but I understand this is a learning process. I will never succeed if I just feel shy and escape from it.

M: That's great to hear! In spoken context, which English do you prefer to use?

Douglas: Um...I'll definitely choose the British accent, that's for sure. As I've mentioned above, the British accent sounds really elegant for me. Although I've got used to speaking in the Hong Kong accent, I know that's not the 'Real English'.

M: Why do you think that Hong Kong Accent is not a 'Real English'?

Douglas: Um… This is a good question. Ok...so how should I explain to you… OK, let me put it in this way. I'm pretty sure you have heard of a term called 'Chinglish', right? I think we both agree that Cantonese is the first language of most Hong Kong people instead of English. However, there is a very interesting fact! When we speak, we often somehow mix Cantonese and English together. Say, for a 10-word sentence, sometimes we kind of insert 1 to 2 English vocabularies so that we can express ourselves more fluently. Can you believe it? If we are chatting with each other in Cantonese, I bet at least one English vocabulary would appear within around 5 sentences in our conversation. Likewise, when we are speaking in English, we tend to mix two languages together. Like,

for example, we would say 'So good wor' instead of 'very good', right? Ok, one more example, we would say 'Let's go la' instead of just saying 'Let's go'. Native English speakers won't speak English like that.Right?

Moreover, in terms of grammar, the sentence structures of Chinese language are totally different from that of English language. For instance, when we hear something really funny, sometimes we would say 'Laugh die me' instead of 'I'm laughing so hard'. Again, English people won't say 'Laugh die me'. They even don't understand what you mean if you say that in front of them. Therefore, I would describe this kind of English as a 'side product' of cultural exchange I guess. Yeah, only Hong Kong people use this kind of English, which is not the original English. That's why I would say that the Hong Kong English is not 'Real English'.

M: I see...why don't you use or prefer using American accent then?

Douglas: Oh that's simple. It is because British accent sounds more elegant to me, just my feeling.

M: Ok...In written context, which type of English do you usually use?

Douglas: Well…This is a good question. Yeah I know there are some kinds of differences between British and American in terms of writing English. For instance, the word
'flavor'. British spell the word 'flavour' with a 'u', while American spell the word 'flavor' without a 'u'. I used to think one of the spellings was wrong. Until recently, after I read more books, I found that some authors spell 'flavour' as FLAVOUR while some spell it as
FLAVOR, without the letter 'u'. Then I tried to figure out the reason why. I searched on the internet and found that it's just the difference between British English and American English. I think it also depends on contexts. Sometimes I write in British, sometimes I write in American. I think the only opportunity for me to write English is when I'm doing assignments, like writing an essay, something like that. So it really

depends on what kind of person my professor is. If he/she is an American, then I write in American English. If he/she is a British, then I write in British English.

M: I see. So you are using both languages. In written context, which type of English do you prefer to use?

Douglas: As I mentioned, for spoken English, I prefer British accent. However, for written English. I prefer American. It is because...Yeah I'm lazy, and I figured out that most of the time, the number of alphabets used in a certain vocabulary in American written English is fewer than that in British written English. OK let me use the example 'flavor' again. For British English, they spell FLAVOUR, which includes 7 alphabets, right? While for American English, they spell FLAVOR, which includes only 6 alphabets. Ok so let me think of one more example… OK, this one. You write TROUSERS in British English, and PANTS in American English. OK, TROUSERS, you need 8 characters, while PANTS, just 5. Yeah!

On the other hand, personally, I think American written English is more elegant. Like, in American English, we replace the letter 's' by the letter 'z'. For example, the word 'recognize'. We spell it RECOGNISE in British English, while RECOGNIZE in American English. I like the letter 'z' more than 's' for some reason. Perhaps it's because the letter 'z' is rarer than the letter 's'. So I feel like there are more combinations to spell different vocabularies in American English than in British English.

M: Ok, then...which type of English is regarded as the standard type of English in Hong Kong?

Douglas: I think British English is more likely to be regarded as the standard type of English in Hong Kong because Hong Kong was once a British colony. Also, I think when it comes to interviews that English is involved. I would first think of British English rather than American English. I don't know...I just think that American English is less formal I guess.

M: Then, which type of English is popular in Hong Kong nowadays?

Douglas: Personally, personally ok? I think American English is more popular in Hong Kong nowadays. Yeah I think people in Hong Kong are more inclined to use the American accent to speak English. So for example, most people around me put a lot of emphasis on the /r/ sound when they are speaking, this is one of the characteristics of theAmerican

accent. Moreover, many people like watching movies on Netflix in their spare time. There are a lot of American movies on Netflix. Personally, I'm not that kind of person who watches a lot of movies. I don't really watch movies to be honest, but most of the famous movies that I know are American movies. For instance, the Marvel series, the Disney series.

M: Interesting. That's the end of the interview. Thank you so much. Bye!

Douglas: Bye!

Pragmatic Competence of Hong Kong EFL Learners: Politeness in Production and Perception of Requests and Refusals

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Abstract

Requests and refusals are widely acknowledged challenging speech acts realized even in native interactions owing to their intrinsic nature of face-threatening. It is therefore conceivable that producing such social responses would be an arduous task for foreign language learners. Notwithstanding English as one of the official languages in Hong Kong and the constant emphasis from local curriculum on the significance of language-learning in authentic context, barely have any attempts been made to investigate the pragmatic competence of HK EFL learners for evaluating such education guideline. Consequently, the present study set out to examine the politeness in production and perception of requests and refusals by HK secondary six EFL learners under different degrees of social distance and social status, with prospective English teachers and native speakers as the control group. A discourse-completion task and a survey served as the instruments to elicit quantitative data. Results were analyzed with reference to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which proposes four types of politeness strategies, namely bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record strategy. Findings revealed that intermediate learners had an overuse of direct strategy that could threaten both positive and negative face of interlocutors, while advanced learners favored conventional indirectness in general. Plausible explanation was the insufficient coverage of certain topics at schools. The paper hence demands educational adjustment in relevant aspects to improve learners' pragmatic performance.

Keywords: politeness strategy, face-threatening acts, pragmatic competence, HK EFL learners

Introduction

Pragmatic competence is a fundamental component of communicative language ability, and any pragmatic infelicities would lead to a communication breakdown (Thomas, 1983). Associated adverse impacts could range from trivial misunderstandings in forms of incertitude, offense, and embarrassment, to a massive failure in integrating into foreign language community. Therefore, in recent decades, education systems around the globe appear to have a growing recognition of the paramount role of pragmatic competence in foreign language learning, not merely restricted to emphasizing grammatical accuracy. Studies on relevant topic have been gradually flourishing worldwide, yet not locally. The curriculum guide of English language education in Hong Kong is one of those systems which highly encourages teachers to adopt a communicative approach, involving language use in authentic daily context. Nevertheless, critic crucifies that local language teaching only encourages students to develop language competence needed for academic purposes, instead of cultivating their language ability also in informal social settings ("Are HK students poor in English"). In a bid to investigate whether a gap exists between the objectives of English language teaching in Hong Kong and the actual, outputted students, the present study explores local EFL learners' politeness in production and perception of requests and refusals. Unlike commonly investigated speech acts such as suggestions and apologies, requests and refusals are intrinsically some face-threatening acts. In consequence, politeness strategies implemented under these two social situations shall represent the pragmatic competence of an individual more accurately.

Literature review

While previous studies have predominantly examined the production of refusals by EFL learners in a bid to determine their level of pragmatic competence, Lin (2014) analyzed EFL learners' perception and production of English refusal. Utilizing a discourse-completion task and a scaled-response questionnaire, the research investigated a total of 90 native Mandarin speakers, Taiwanese EFL learners and native English speakers. Results reflected that EFL learners did demonstrate a weaker pragmatic sensitivity than native speakers as hypothesized, typically having an overall tendency to overuse conventionally indirect strategies. An insightful finding rarely suggested by

previous studies was that only EFL learners, but no other two baseline groups exhibited the waffling phenomenon, which referred to the incorporation of excessive statements denoting indecision into the discourse before refusing so as to minimize the degree of face-threatening. Notwithstanding the inspiring result-discussion, one limitation of Lin's one-off study was that it recruited interlanguage data from intermediate learners only, which might not represent all levels of EFL learners comprehensively.

Demirkol's (2016) research on L2 learners' refusal strategies filled in the gap by carrying out a longitudinal study that tracked the refusal performance of 16 Turkish EFL learners during their one-year preparatory programme at a university, where they manifested language improvement from starter level to intermediate. Discourse-completion tasks and open role plays were conducted with two-month intervals, and results proved that participants at different data collection periods (i.e., different proficiency levels) did employ different refusal strategies. For instance, participants offered more alternatives and showed more empathy in refusal production as they grew from beginners to intermediate learners. Aside from that, beginners were characterized by outperforming in direct strategy use, while reason and regret were the most preferred indirect strategies among learners in all phases. The study was significant in highlighting the fact that distinctive patterns of politeness strategy application existed not only between native and non-native English speakers, but also within EFL learners with different language proficiency.

Chen's study (2014) simplified Demirkol's work by conducting a quantitative research to compare the pragmatic competence of intermediate and advanced EFL learners at the same time. The research focused on another speech act type, request, which often preceded a refusal. It involved 89 Chinese secondary school intermediate learners, together with 20 advanced learners who were undergraduates and English teachers-to-be, with translation test and discourse-completion task as the instruments. Not only did the data collected illustrate similar features discussed above, they also presented a specifically unique phenomenon in Chinese intermediate EFL learners: the obligatory use of please. Over half of the responses in the DCT contained the politeness marker. Chen believed such high frequency of use could be a consequence of hypercorrection and the stereotypical assumption of please equals request as taught in the English language education in Mainland. Despite such insightful observations and a wide coverage of

subjects with different proficiency levels, the study lacked in a way that its DCT did not take enough social variables into account even though the prime objective was to appraise the sociopragmatic competence.

The present study shares similar goal with Chen's work in also scrutinizing the pragmatic competence of intermediate and advanced EFL learners, in addition to adopting the same data-elicitation methods as in Lin's research. Nonetheless, this paper will look into the production of both requests and refusals, owing to their preceding-and-subsequent nature. It also differs from previous studies by including two major social variables (social distance and social power) in the instruments in hope to evaluate pragmatic competence more thoroughly. To be more specific, the study was carried with the following three principal research questions:

1. What are the politeness strategies HK secondary school EFL learners used in making requests and refusals?

2. To what extent do HK secondary school EFL learners resemble or differ from native speakers/adult advanced learners in production and perception of politeness?

3. Do HK secondary school EFL learners develop expected level of pragmatic competence? If not, are schools responsible for it?

Methodology

Participants

A total of 20 Hong Kong secondary six students were recruited, aged between 16 to 18. Ten participants (Group A) were with lower English proficiency, while the remaining 10 (Group B) were advanced English learners. Participants shall attain IELTS 7 / TOEFL 100 / TOEIC 850 / mock HKDSE level 5 in a bid to be classified as more competent English learners. Since secondary 6 students have undergone at least 12 years of English language education according to the local schooling system, they were assumed to have developed a certain level of pragmatic competence and to be a representable group of HK EFL learners. Besides, their daily time spent on communicating in English outside school did not exceed an hour. This was to ensure their pragmatic competence was primarily cultivated within school without interference from other factors. At the same time, one extra group of 10 undergraduates (Group C) was investigated, including

7 local prospective English teachers and 3 native English speakers. Hence, there was no restriction on their daily time of English usage. The information of the target participants is summarized and tabulated below:

	Group A	Group B	Group C
Subject	10 Secondary 6 students	10 Secondary 6 students	10 Undergraduates (7 local prospective English teachers + 3 native English speakers)
Proficiency level	Low proficiency	High proficiency	Advanced learners / Native speakers
Daily time spent on English outside school/work	0 – 1 hour	0 – 1 hour	0 – more than 6 hours

The Discourse-Completion Task

The data elicitation instrument was designed and initially adopted by Blum-Kulka's (1984) The Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project, with an objective to juxtapose the speech act performance between native speakers and target language learners, thereby examining the pragmatic competence of the learners. The DCT in the present study consisted of eight scenarios, each with a brief contextual information of the social situation where participants had to produce either a request or a refusal to another interlocutor along the discourse by filling in the blanks in the task. For instance, the following is a scenario which prompts a refusal:

You are at a friend's house for lunch.

Friend: How about another piece of cake?

You: _____

Friend: Come on, just a little piece?

You: _____

(Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz 1990:71)

Sociopragmatic variables have immense impacts on politeness marking and

strategy choice (Schauer & Adolphs, 2006). Consequently, this DCT incorporated two prime social variables into the scenarios, which were, social distance as well as social power. According to Ogiermann (2018), social distance (D) indicates the frequency of interactions and the extent of familiarity between two interlocutors. It is generally divided into three levels: friends (Low D), acquaintances (medium D) and strangers (high D). While for social power, it is interpreted as "the degree to which a speaker can impose his/her will on their interlocutor" (p.233). The speaker can be either of equal status with (S=H), lower status (S<H) or higher status (S>H) than the hearer. Encompassing all levels of variables in this DCT ensured a more comprehensive assessment of politeness in most possible social situations. Below is a table listing the distribution of social variables across the eight scenarios.

	Relationship between Interlocutors	Social Distance	Social Power
Scenario 1	Friends	Low D	S=H
Scenario 2	Student - Teacher	Medium D	S<H
Scenario 3	Chairperson - Secretary	Medium D	S>H
Scenario 4	Strangers	High D	S=H
Scenario 5	Friends	Low D	S=H
Scenario 6	Employee - Employer	Medium D	S<H
Scenario 7	Employer – Domestic helper	Medium D	S>H
Scenario 8	Service provider - Customer	High D	S=H

Table 2. Distribution of social variables across scenarios

The survey

The survey was composed of two sections: multiple-choice discourse-completion task and rating of politeness. First, the MC DCT was devised with a purpose to evaluate whether some weaker performance in the written DCT was subject to the influence of sociopragmatic insensitivity or plainly owing to a limited language ability to formulate requests and refusals with a variety of sentence structures and vocabularies. Resembling the DCT, the MC DCT included six questions which introduced different social situations where requests or refusals shall be made, with various levels of social distance and social power taken into consideration. The sole distinction was that three responses to the scenario were provided, participants were only required to choose the one that was most

likely to be their utterance under such circumstance. A sample question is shown below:

Your flatmate had a party the night before and left the kitchen in a mess.
Your friends are coming for dinner tonight so you will need to use the kitchen.
What would you say to him?

A. *Could you tidy up the kitchen a little bit? I'll need to use it later.*
B. *Can you please clean the mess up before I return?*
C. *I was hoping the dishes could be done by the time I come back with my friends.*

All responses given were possible utterances extended from the context, sharing and delivering similar messages. The dissimilarity lied in the types of speech acts (such as option *B* as an interrogative expressing a request and option *C* as a declarative implying a desire), in addition to the tenses of the modal verbs (i.e., "*Could*" in option A and "*Can*" in option *B*). Since the options varied predominantly in terms of forms and diction rather than the principal message, participants should possess a certain level of sociopragmatic sensitivity so as to be able to distinguish the most suitable, polite response from other options, manifesting their high pragmatic competence.

While the above DCTs assessed participants' self-production of politeness strategies, second part of the survey served as a complementary tool to investigate how they perceived politeness executed by others. This was because Tanaka and Kawade (1982) argued that there was no necessary correspondence between EFL learners' ability to assess politeness and their ability to produce appropriate responses in authentic communicative context. In this task, respondents had to rate the degree of politeness of a certain utterance produced in the six social situations on a scale from 1 to 6, with 1 being the least polite and 6 as the politest, see the following:

You are wandering around the campus to ask people to fill in your survey. You run into a person and you say, "I don't suppose you are free now to help me with my survey?"

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
least polite						*most polite*

Procedures

To obtain empirical data which would give an account for situational and individual variance in the realization of politeness, the two tests were conducted through a controlled elicitation procedure. In general, participants were first required to complete the written DCT without recognizing the purpose of study for securing responses which were not intentionally fabricated to yield "more polite" result. In the succeeding phase, the survey was presented. Throughout the process, respondents were reminded to consider the social situation as a natural conversation and to complete the discourse with their spontaneous reaction. Repeated rephrasing and constant modification of answers were highly discouraged in order to increase the authenticity of data and better measure the actual politeness in real-life context.

Analysis

Responses to the DCT

Collected data were analyzed and coded with reference to Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Strategies. Linguistic items in each response were scrupulously categorized into four respective strategies: 1) bald-on record, the direct act without redressive actions; 2) positive politeness, which minimizes threat to hearer's positive face; 3) negative politeness, which emphasizes avoidance of imposition on the hearer; and 4) off-record, a tactic that chiefly relies on hearer's interpretation. Inappropriate application of these strategies would threaten the positive face (the want to be appreciated and accepted) as well as the negative face (the want to stay unimpeded), consequently signifying a low level of pragmatic competence. The pattern and frequency of politeness strategies employed by the participants were also compared with those produced by the native English speakers/adult advanced learners. Fewer discrepancies would suggest a more pragmatically proficient EFL learner.

Responses to the survey

In both the multiple-choice DCT and the ranking scale of politeness, native speakers/ adult advanced learners' choice and scoring served as the standard index. The average score of each group was generated, later juxtaposed, revealing to what extent

did EFL learners' perception of politeness equate with or deviate from the exemplar. Particular features shall also be observed from the overall selections by the participants, such as intermediate learners' tendency to overgeneralize "indirectness" and native speakers' persistent use of interrogative, as suggested by previous studies.

Results

A) Overall Strategic Pattern

The results of the discourse-completion task were summarized in Table 3 below, which illustrated the overall strategic frequency of the three groups of participants.

	Group A	Group B	Group C
Bald on-record	43 (47.8%)	13 (8.8%)	10 (4.8%)
"No"	7	5	3
Use of imperatives	9	4	4
Negative willingness/ability	10	1	2
Direct expression of desires and wants	17	3	1
Positive politeness	19 (21.1%)	75 (50.7%)	86 (41.5%)
Use (in-group) identity markers / "we"	3	15	14
Offer / promise	4	9	10
Give reasons	6	23	25
Avoid disagreement	1	8	11
Other (Be optimistic, joke, give gifts to H…)	5	20	26
Negative politeness	25 (27.8%)	48 (32.4%)	91 (44.0%)
Apologize	10	14	20
Be conventionally indirect	10	20	30
Hedges	1	2	17
Minimize imposition	2	8	22
Others (Be pessimistic, impersonalize…)	2	4	2
Off-record	3 (3.3%)	12 (8.1%)	20 (9.7%)
Give hints	1	9	5
Use ellipsis	2	3	15
Total	90 (100%)	148 (100%)	207 (100%)

Table 3. Overall strategic use in the DCT

As reflected, under both request- and refusal-producing situations, the three groups demonstrated quite distinctive strategic choices. First of all, Group C combinedly

had the most applications of politeness strategy in the overall performance, recorded 207 times, which exceeded a double of that employed by Group A (230%) and an extra two-fifths of Group B (140%). Moreover, a prime difference lied in their most dominantly used types of strategy:

1. **Bald on-record Strategy**

    1.1 **Nonselective application by low-proficiency learners**

    Group A adopted bald on-record strategy most often, which accounted for 47.8% of the total use. Typical gestures included articulating desires and wants explicitly with expressive words like *want* and *need*, manifesting negative willingness/ability, etc. For instance, in scenarios 1 and 4 where participants respectively requested a friend (low D, S=H) to pay the bill and rejected a friend's offer of another piece of cake, common responses were "I <u>need </u>you to pay for me*"* (A8), "<u>No</u>, <u>I don't want to</u> eat anymore" (A6). When exposed to interlocutors with higher social distance and social status, Group A also did not minimize imposition but utilized imperatives to form task-oriented utterances. An example was a negative face-threatening request directed to the teacher (medium D, S<H) in Scenario 2, "I <u>need</u> your recommendation… <u>give</u> me back the letter in two days." (A6). Therefore, it could be deduced from the performance that the low-proficiency learners exhibited an arbitrary application of bald on-record strategy, regardless of different degrees of social variables.

    1.2 **Minimal use by advanced learners/native speakers**

    On the contrary, Group B and C had the least use of bald on-record strategy, most incidences (on average 79.6%) were in conversations with interlocutors who possessed low to medium social distance in addition to a lower or equal social status. For example, the utterance "<u>Forget</u> it. <u>Be</u> careful next time, I <u>don't want</u> you to get hurt too." (C7) in scenario 7 where participants declined the cleaning lady's (medium D, S>H) suggestion to recompense for the broken vase. The illocutionary force of the imperative *be* and *forget it* here were not command but positive advice, while the subsequent expressive *want* displayed concern instead of personal desire as well. Hence, the limitedly employed bald on-record strategy by Group B and C either served as an innocuous advice or with a succeeding redressive device to reduce threat posed to negative face.

2. Positive Politeness

In the whole DCT, positive politeness was the most preferred strategy among the four tactics, particularly comprised 50.7% of Group B's total strategy. Major features in positive politeness like avoiding disagreement and giving reasons often came in complementary existence for preserving the hearers' positive face, as presented in the following extract (B7):

Scenario 8) You are a traditional wedding planner. The couple wants to use black as the main color of the wedding. You do not think it is a good idea.

The couple: How about black? What do you think?

You: Would you consider using black as a complementary color with red?
(Avoid disagreement)

People usually use red for a traditional wedding.
(Avoid first-person comment, give reason)

Other recurrent gestures included addressing the hearer with (in-group) identity markers like "Guys" (B4), "Mate" (B9), "We" (B7) to serve a common ground-seeking purpose; giving gifts to hearers by complimenting and expressing exaggerated gratitude, such as "I wouldn't be the one I am today if you didn't treat me as your student and teach me in every aspect" (B4); being optimistic by assuming the hearer would react positively, such as "I was hoping you would be willing to be my reference." (B6); and suggesting alternatives to avoid immediate disagreement, "Maybe I can bring it home and eat it later?" (B3).

3. Negative Politeness

3.1 General tendency to be conventionally indirect in request-formation

Among all subcategories of each strategy, being conventionally indirect was of the most popular usage by all three groups of participants, though sometimes regardless of the degrees of social variables. A typical way to be conventionally indirect in formulating requests was to produce a question or statement with preparatory conditions like "I was wondering", "could you", "would you mind" etc. Consider the following two utterances:

To stranger (High D, S=H): *I was wondering if you have a phone with you.*
(B4)

To friend (low D, S=H): *Would it be possible for u to pay it for me first?* (B2)

Ostensibly, the locutionary act of both utterances was a statement/question inquiring about the presence/possibility of a certain thing. In fact, the illocutionary act of such utterance was a request prompting an action (i.e., lending phone or paying the bill). Indirectness assisted in reducing direct menace to negative face. Despite the fact that negative politeness accounted for approximately one-third (32.4%) of the overall strategies employed by Group B, the frequency chiefly concentrated on being conventionally indirect, there were only very few instances of hedging, minimizing imposition and impersonalizing.

3.2 Minimizing imposition

On the other hand, Group C had a dominant use of negative politeness strategy, the subclasses covered ranged from apologizing to hedging. Respective examples were "I am sorry to let you know in such short notice" (C9) and "Perhaps we can't go Dutch today" (C8). Hedges were lexical mitigating devices used to implicitly express probability and imprecision, sometimes indicating that the request or refusal made was not out of voluntary will, thereby minimizing the threat to negative face. More explicit cost-undermining was achieved via the use of understaters and qualifiers, as in "Just a few lines are fine" (C2) as well as "Could I borrow yours real quick" (C8). Generally speaking, while reducing imposition was a primary objective in negative politeness, it was plainly applied in a small scale across the DCT, and mostly by Group C participants.

4. Off-record Strategy

Off-record strategy had the rarest occurrence in the overall strategic use among the four tactics, making up at most 9.7% of Group C's use and only a single-digit incidence for Group A. Variation of off-record strategies by Group C was accomplished through the use of ellipsis and giving hints, mostly in cases to interlocutors who were with a moderate to high social distance and occupied a higher social status. In scenario 6, participants had to decline the employer's (medium D, S<H) offer of promotion because it involved moving. Responses included: "I really appreciate your offer, but I am satisfied with my current working environment, so…" (C3) and "To be honest, I plan to continue my work here…" (C4). The omitted part in both examples were the direct rejection which would

pose threat to hearer's desire to be accepted.

To scrutinize the principles behind participants' above choice of politeness strategy in the two examined social situations, data were collected regarding the factors they had taken into consideration during request/refusal production.
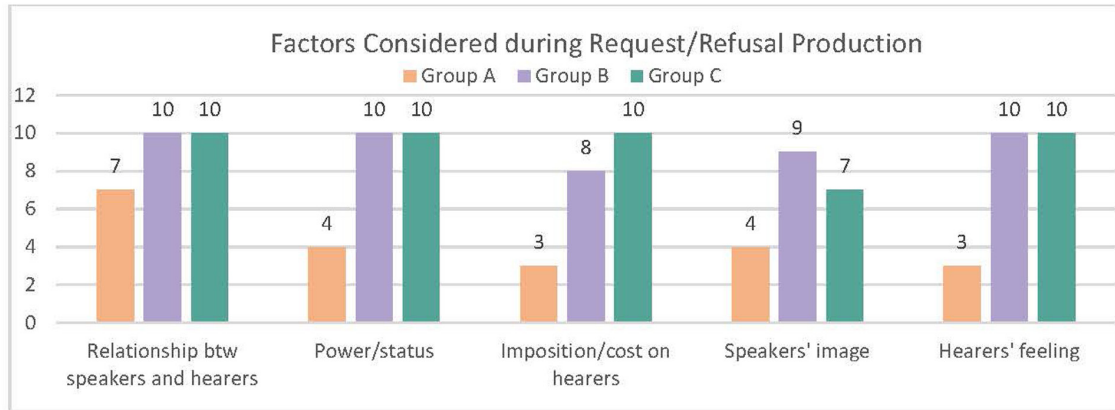
Figure 1. Factors considered during request/refusal production

As illustrated in figure 1, compared with the two other groups, Group A considered significantly fewer factors in producing the response. Firstly, while all advanced learners and native speakers took account of the relationship between speakers and hearers, 30% of the low-proficiency learners neglected its influence. Furthermore, Group B and C fully considered power/status, in addition to the hearer's feeling before making request/refusal, yet only two-fifths of Group A participants would do so. Aside from that, Group B and C borne high resemblance with each other, only marginally differed in a way that the former concerned more about personal image rather than the imposition on hearers, and the latter group demonstrated a reverse. In short, Group C had a more comprehensive consideration of the factors before requesting or refusing, followed by Group B, then Group A.

B) Perception of Politeness

Not only did Group B and C resembled each other in terms of the factor-consideration, they also shared a similar perception of politeness of the other-produced request/ refusal. The average score per question in the rating of politeness was summarized in figure 2 below.
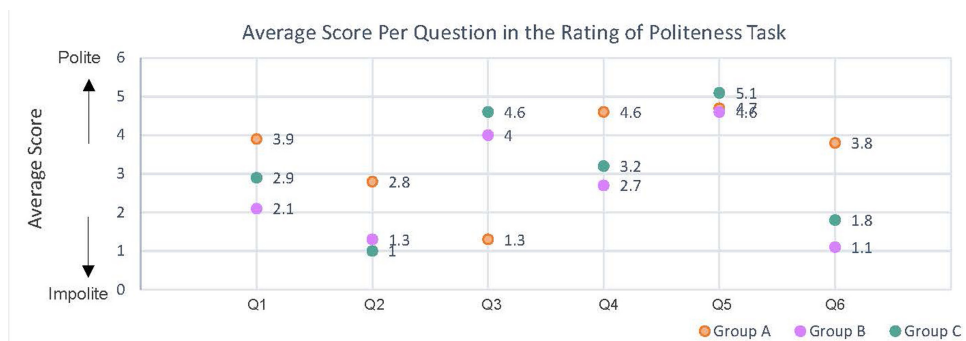
Figure 2. Average score per question in the rating of politeness task

As mentioned previously, the scoring by Group C served as a standard marking in this task. On average, Group B only slightly deviated from Group C's rating by 0.9 when Group A varied more prominently by 1.6 on a six-point Likert scale. Take Q4 as an example:

Q4. *You forget to do your homework and your classmate gives you his and tells you to copy it. You don't think it is a good idea, so you say, "Thanks a lot, but I don't think copying homework is a good thing."*

The utterance started off with conveying gratitude but ended with a direct disagreement, which threatened hearer's positive face and shall be consequently deemed rather impolite. Nevertheless, Group A participants gave a relatively high rating (4.6), deviating notably from the standard (3.2). This was quite a consistent phenomenon observed across all six scenarios. And interestingly, notwithstanding Group C's best performance in producing polite responses with wide ranges of appropriate strategies in the DCT, the rating revealed that they had a tendency to be more lenient in perceiving offense than Group B.

C) Participants' Views on School Education on Request/refusal Formation

Do you find it difficult to formulate requests or refusals?
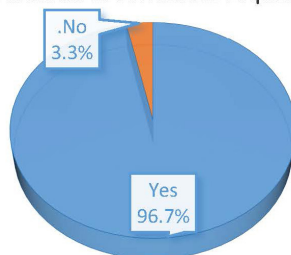
Figure 3. Opinions on the difficulty of forming request/refusal

An overwhelmingly high proportion (96.7%) of respondents believed that it was arduous to produce request/refusal, even all three native English speakers in this study acknowledged the difficulty as well. The same number of participants also recognized the importance of education on these two social situations and agreed that they shall be taught at schools. Nonetheless, the vast majority (86.7%) observed an insufficient coverage of the two topics in current Hong Kong school curriculum.
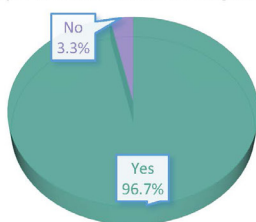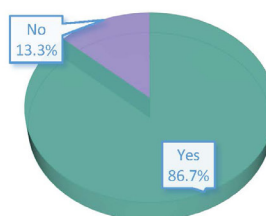
Figure 4. Opinions on the teaching of requests and refusals at HK schools

Discussion

The results above revealed that the group of adult advanced learners/native speakers employed the most politeness strategies among the three groups, followed by the secondary six proficient learners and then the intermediate learners. Since requests and refusals are by definition some face-threatening acts owing to their nature of freedom- and face-impingement (Brown & Levinson, 1978), more applications of positive and negative politeness as well as the off-record strategy to comprehensively safeguard interlocutors' positive and negative face would signify a more pragmatically competent individual. In this sense, Group C shall be regarded as the one with highest pragmatic competence out

of the three. This inference was further corroborated by the fact that only Group C applied a significant number of off-record strategies, which is commonly regarded as the most advanced politeness strategy among the four tactics since it assisted speakers in completely avoiding the supposedly inevitable accountability that would possibly be entailed in any on-record strategies. This finding came into consistency with previous study by Awang, Zakaria and Razak (2017), which suggested a positive correlation between the frequency of off-record strategy and pragmatic competence.

Now realizing that Group C demonstrated high pragmatic competence, the performance of student advanced learners was then juxtaposed with that of control Group C. As reflected in the above results, the two groups resembled each other in several aspects, for instance, the minimal use of bald on-record strategy, concentrated frequency on positive and negative politeness, and the average rating of politeness. The similarity proved that the student proficient learners also maintained a high level of pragmatic sensitivity. However, previous section highlighted that Group B had a tendency to be conventionally indirect in spite of different extents of social variables, sometimes overlooking the importance of avoiding imposition on the hearer. It was certainly too formal to adopt such strategy in requests directed to interlocutors with low social distance (i.e., friends), but the main problem with being conventionally indirect was that the apparent conventionality was conceived as no sincere effort was made to minimize imposition when encountering interlocutors with high social distance and status (Gibbs, 1981). In consequence, Group B participants might have occasionally weaker performance in scenarios concerning the use of conventionally indirect strategy, and a gap existed between student advanced learners and adult advanced learners/native speakers in terms of pragmatic competence.

Lastly, results from the discourse-completion task and rating of politeness collectively revealed that the intermediate learners had a weak pragmatic competence. Particularly, the nonselective overuse of bald on-record strategies across all scenarios with different ranks of social variables and the significant discrepancy with the standard marking of politeness seemed to imply that this group of participants possessed only very limited knowledge about (im)politeness in the two, or general social situations. And the cause of such shallow sociopragmatic understanding shall be attributed to the insufficient education at schools, as the majority of respondents agreed.

Conclusion

The present study explored the politeness strategic choice in perception and production of requests and refusals by Hong Kong students, particularly under the effect of social distance and social status. The evidence from this study intimates that intermediate learners manifested shallow understanding of (im)politeness by utilizing mainly bald on-record strategies to threaten both positive and negative face of the interlocutors; and the advanced learners, in spite of high language proficiency level, did not show comparable pragmatic performance with native speakers owing to the limited applications of negative politeness to minimize imposition. Nevertheless, given the small sample size (i.e., 30 participants), the findings might not be completely transferrable. It has, though, progressed towards enhancing our understanding of local EFL learners' pragmatic competence. In addition, considering only two social situations were examined in this study, it is hoped that future studies can address more situations for more comprehensive results. On a more personal level, as an English major who has been exploring the second language teaching world with the aid of courses like Semantics and Pragmatics and Contrastive Linguistics, I have developed a more profound knowledge in the field through this study. It is particularly worth mentioning that Group A participants, who are students with HKDSE level 4 or below, comprise of 89.8% of local students. In other words, the majority of Hong Kong EFL learners do not attain the education curriculum's objective of yielding students with pragmatic competence. As a prospective English teacher as well, this paper also allows me to evaluate a certain inadequacy in the current education system, apart from providing a pedagogical implication that a wider variety of politeness strategies should be taught in a communicative context to actually cultivate students with pragmatic competence, instead of plainly grammatically accurate EFL learners.

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Appendix 1: Discourse-completion Task

Instructions: The following 8 scenarios each presents a conversation between "you" and another interlocutor. Fill in what you would SAY in the blanks. Please respond as you would in actual conversation than considering this as a written task.

Scenario 1)
You are having lunch with your friend at a restaurant. When you ask for the bill, you find out that you forgot to bring your wallet.
You: _____

_____

Friend: Don't worry about it.

Scenario 2)
You need a recommendation letter from your teacher in order to apply for a scholarship, and the application will be closed in two days.
You: _____

_____

Teacher: Sure! But I am a bit busy these days, can I give the letter to you next week?
You: _____

_____

Scenario 3)
You are the Chairperson of an organization, who are supposed to hold a conference with your members today but feel too sick to do so. You want to tell your members to change the meeting time.
You: _____

_____

Members: Sure, we can pick another day.

Scenario 4)
At a street of a foreign country.
During the trip, you accidentally separate with your friends. You forget to bring a phone with you, so you decide to borrow one from a passerby.
You: _____

_____

Passerby: No problem. There you go.
You: _____

Scenario 5)
You are at a friend's house for lunch.
Friend: How about another piece of cake?
You: _____

_____

Friend: Come on, just a little piece?
You: _____

_____

(Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz 1990:71)

Scenario 6)
Your boss offers you a raise and promotion, but it involves moving. You don't want to go. What would you say to your boss?
Boss: You've been contributing a lot to our company these few years. You deserve a raise. There's a place for you in the headquarter, what's your thought on that?
You: _____

_____

Scenario 7)
Your domestic helper accidentally breaks your vase and keeps apologizing to you. She's always been good at her job and you know that she's supporting three children on her own.
Domestic helper: Oh God, I'm so sorry! While I was cleaning, I bumped into the table and your vase fell and broke. I feel very bad about it. I'll pay for it.
You: _____

_____

Scenario 8)
You are a traditional wedding planner. The couple wants to use black as the main color of the wedding. You do not think it is a good idea.
The couple: How about black? What do you think?
You: _____

_____

Pragmatic Competence of Hong Kong S6 EFL Learners: Politeness in Production of Requests and Refusals

This survey is conducted for CUHK ENGE4700 Independent Research Project. The survey should take you around 5 minutes only. Thank you very much for your response and I sincerely appreciate your input.

1 * Number

_____

2 * Gender

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

○ Female
○ Male

3 * Age

_____

4 * Education

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

○ Secondary school
○ Undergraduate
○ Postgraduate
○ Working

8 * 1. Your flatmate had a party the night before and left the kitchen in a mess. Your friends are coming for dinner tonight so you will need to use the kitchen. What would you say to him?

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

○ Could you tidy up the kitchen a little bit? I'll need to use it later.
○ Can you please clean the mess up before I return?
○ I was hoping the dishes could be done by the time I come back with my friends.

9 * 2. You want to interview the Principal of your school for your school project. Her secretary told you that the Principal had no plan for the upcoming week. How would you ask the Principal for the interview?

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

○ Good morning Principal. Would you mind sparing a bit of your time to have an interview with me? I believe no one knows the school better than you do.
○ Good morning Principal. I know you are free this week, can I have an interview with you?
○ Good morning Principal. I was wondering if I could have an interview with you. I sincerely hope no inconvenience will be caused to you.

10 * 3. You are getting ready to go to work but your car won't start. You see your new neighbour get into his. He notices you and asks you what has happened; you decide to seek his help.

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

○ My car won't start and I can't find anyone to help. You're the only person I can turn to right now.
○ There's something wrong with my car. I suppose you can drive me to work?
○ Geez... My car is not working. Drive me to work, can you?

5 * Your HKDSE / HKAL / IELTS / TOEIC result: (e.g. IELTS 7.5)

_____

6 * (For S6 students who do not have the above academic results) Your mock HKDSE result:

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

○ Unclassified
○ 1
○ 2
○ 3
○ 4
○ 5
○ 5*
○ 5**

7 * Time spent on communicating in English outside school/work every day:

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

○ 0 - 1 hour
○ 2 - 3 hours
○ 4 - 5 hours
○ 6 or more hours

In the following questions, please choose the answer you think that is most likely to be your response. There is no right or wrong answer!

11 * 4. A close friend invites you to dinner, but you don't really get along well with this friend's husband/wife. What would you say to your friend?

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

○ I'm sorry. I really want to come but I've got things to do tonight. I was thinking perhaps we could go grab lunch together sometime?
○ That sounds great but I can't tonight. Perhaps the two of us can dine out next time.
○ Thank you for the invitation, but I am not available tonight. How about next week?

12 * 5. Your teacher suggests that you take her class which you think will be too difficult for you. You would rather not take it. What would you say?

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

○ I think your class is too difficult, I guess I won't take it.
○ I'd love to attend your class. Unfortunately, I have already registered another class.
○ Thank you so much for the invitation. I am sorry that I have another class at the same time.

13 * 6. A fundraiser on the street asks you to buy some cookies. You have never heard of the institution organizing the fundraising so you decide not to buy. What would you say to the fundraiser?

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

○ No, sorry, I won't buy it.
○ Sorry, I don't really know your institution. Maybe I'll come back later after searching it.
○ I'm sorry. I don't really enjoy cookies.

In the following questions, please rate the degree of "politeness" of the utterance in each situation.

14 • 1. Your computer operates no more because of a virus. Your brother is very skilful in fixing computers. Even though he is very busy at the moment, you still want to ask for his help; so you say, "Brother, my computer is down because of a virus. I want you to fix it for me."

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
least polite	○	○	○	○	○	○	most polite

15 • 2. You have been working for the company for many years and believe that you deserve a pay rise. Therefore, you tell the boss, "It's about time to discuss my salary after all these years."

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
least polite	○	○	○	○	○	○	most polite

16 • 3. You are wandering around the campus to ask people to fill in your survey. You run into a person and so you say, "I don't suppose you are free now to help me with my survey?"

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
least polite	○	○	○	○	○	○	most polite

17 • 4. You forget to do your homework and your classmate gives you his and tells you to copy it. You don't think it is a good idea, so you say, "Thanks a lot, but I don't think copying homework is a good thing."

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
least polite	○	○	○	○	○	○	most polite

18 • 5. A senior staff of your company passes you a new case. Yet, you already have four cases in your hand but he has none. You decide to turn him down, "I am handling four cases right now. Can you deal with this one?"

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
least polite	○	○	○	○	○	○	most polite

19 • 6. The tour guide recommends you some sites that he thinks might interest you, but you don't feel the same way; so you say, "Thanks for all the suggestions but none of which actually fits me. I guess I'll go ask someone else."

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
least polite	○	○	○	○	○	○	most polite

20 • 13. When answering previous questions, what do you consider? (you might choose one or more options)

請選擇所有適用項目。

- ☐ Relationship between speakers and hearers (e.g. siblings, neighbour)
- ☐ Power/status (e.g. teacher > student, employer > employee)
- ☐ Imposition/cost on hearers
- ☐ Speakers' image (i.e. "My" image)
- ☐ Hearers' feeling
- 其他： ☐ _____

21 • 14. Do you consider all the conditions you choose above when you make requests and refusals in real life situations?

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

22 • 15. If you choose "No" for Q14, is it because...? (you might choose one or more options)

請選擇所有適用項目。

- ☐ Requesting and refusing in real life could happen in spontaneous speech, so I don't have time to consider all conditions.
- ☐ It is troublesome to consider all conditions every time I make a request or refusal, so I apply the same strategy even though I am in different situations.
- ☐ I don't know I have to consider these many conditions before making requests and refusals.
- 其他： ☐ _____

23 • 16. Do you find it difficult to formulate requests or refusals in English?

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

24 • 17. Do you think learning how to make requests and refusals are important and should be taught at school?

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

25 • 18. If you choose "No" for Q17, what is the reason?

_____

26 • 19. Do you think HK school curriculum has covered enough on these two top

您只能標示一個橢圓形。

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Language in adversity:
How should language be used in times of crisis?

CHOR Tsz Him Ernest
(Supervisor: Prof. Rowan Mackay)

Abstract

COVID-19 is one of the most unprecedented events in the history of mankind. Facing such difficult challenges in combatting the virus, it is the paramount responsibility for government leaders to face the public and provides them with guidance given the uncertainties. Despite both the Prime Minister of the UK Boris Johnson, and Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern, delivering daily press conferences to the public, the public's perception of these speeches differs hugely: Johnson is often criticised for being uncertain and uncreditable, while Ardern is nearly always acclaimed for her firmness and clarity. In order to discover the reason for such difference, this study collects 10 COVID speeches respectively for the two leaders as a corpus and analyses their difference in language use using a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis approach. It is found that Ardern's strategy such as using effective epistemic modality, telling stories to express empathy, and the frequent use of imperatives, are crucial to her positive perception. This thus provides implications around the appropriate language strategies one should adopt in time of future crisis.

Background

Having past experiences of being a leader in a team in multiple occasions, I have become increasingly aware of the importance of effective communication in facilitating cooperation, especially during times of difficulties. Although in most occasions I could successfully solve the problems in work with my teammates, I often struggle in finding the best way to motivate and strengthen my team in difficult times. Because of that, learning new ways and strategies in communications have always been one of the areas that I would like to improve on for a successful development in all areas I would like to pursue in the future.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the common norm for political leaders to deliver speeches to the public in uniting their nations to seek for a collective action against the virus. Although the goals of political leaders are mainly the same, the success of the actions of political leaders often vary from country to country. In New Zealand, the Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is often acclaimed by the mass media for her effort in successfully uniting the nation, resulting in a complete control of the pandemic situation in the country. On the other hand, in the UK, Boris Johnson is instead the main target of criticism for his lack of certainty and direction in leading the country out of the pandemic. Why is this the case? What are their differences in their language use? During my study of General Education course, *The Art of Leadership* in year 1, I learnt how different structure and delivery of political speech could often have a significant impact on the success in promoting ideas of the politicians. Together of my experience taking linguistics courses in the department and understanding how linguistics analysis could be incorporated into analysing political discourse, the idea of doing political discourse analysis of COVID speeches have come into my mind. By analysing the difference in language use of Boris Johnson and Jacinda Ardern, it is hoped that I could have a better understanding on why Ardern has a more positive perception than Johnson in COVID purely by her speeches. From that, I hope that the findings would thus provide a valuable insight on the way communication should be performed in case of any future crisis in my career development and equip myself with the appropriate knowledge to tackle problems ahead.

Literature Review

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary field of investigating 'the relationship between language, power and ideology' (Simpson, 2011:445). Setting forth by major scholars such as Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk and Theo van Leeuwen, CDA links language analysis into the advancement of society in which the two could not be separated. Looking at the theoretical framework and key concepts of CDA, the following aims to provide an overview on CDA and establishes the foundation for the methodology adopted in undertaking the study.

Before explaining the notion of CDA, it is first important to define what it means by 'discourse'. In Gee's theory of discourse, discourse could be divided into two

types: 'discourse' with a lower-case d, and 'Discourse' with an upper-case D. 'discourse' with a lower-case d refers to:

> 'any stretch of language (spoken, written, signed) which "hangs together" to make sense to some community of people who use that language… [M]aking sense is always a social and variable matter: what makes sense to one community of people may not make sense to another.'

(Gee, 1990:103)

In general, 'discourse' refers to language in use. It specifically reflects the actual text and linguistic elements that people used to communicate with one another. 'Discourse' with an upper case instead could be described as taking an integrated approach into language. In Gee's definition, it could be seen that 'Discourse' refers to:

> 'a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and artifacts, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or "social network"'.

(Gee, 1996:131)

Given Gee's definition of seeing 'Discourse' as an integration between linguistics element and its context in which such elements are produced, the analysis of 'Discourse' would therefore not only an analysis of the text itself, but also on social beliefs and values which shape the discourse. Because of that, analysing language would help us understand the system of thoughts lies within the society as well as beliefs related to certain occurrence of social practices.

Since such new view of discourse sees both language and context as an integrated unit for analysis, CDA could be seen as an attempt in the linguistics field in recent years to respond to such view of language by carrying out linguistics analysis on both textual and social level. By linking textual analysis into social analysis, CDA primarily aims to investigate how 'the way social-power abuse and way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' with the aim to 'challenge social inequality' (van Dijk, 2015). Therefore, the 'critical' aspect of language analysis is seen through relating language use to its social context in hope for social advancement which often contains a political purpose. In further

laying out the foundations of CDA, Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 258-284) list out the eight major principles of CDA as follow:

1. CDA addresses social problems.

2. Power relations are discursive.

3. Discourse constitutes society and culture.

4. Discourse does ideological work.

5. Discourse is historical.

6. The link between text and society is mediated.

7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory.

8. Discourse is a form of social action.

Because of the aim for social advancement, Fairclough (2001) defines CDA as "a form of critical social science geared to illuminating the problems which people are confronted with by particular forms of social life, and to contributing resources which people may be able to draw upon in tackling and overcoming those problems" (P.125). Thus, CDA could be characterized 'as a social movement of politically committed discourse analysts' (van Dijk, 2015) in which language is related with social changes.

Three Main Approaches into CDA:

Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach

Fairclough's approach into CDA is often termed as a 'three-dimensional model' which consists of three stages: description, interpretation and explanation. In *Language and Power* (1989), Fairclough explained the differences of each level of analysis:

1. Description: The stage which is concerned with the formal properties of the text.

2. Interpretation: Concerned with the relationship between text and interaction – with seeing the text as a product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation.

3. Explanation: Concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context – with the social determination of the processes of production and inter- pretation, and their social effects.

Fairclough (1989: 26)

Using the three-dimension model, Fairclough's CDA aims to perform language analysis in combination of micro, meso and macro-level interpretations. Micro-

level interpretation directly corresponds to the first dimension of textual description. At this level of analysis, researchers focus of the textual and linguistics elements of the text. Possible analysis includes the use of imperatives, conceptual metaphor or any specific language features that could be found in a text. Meso-level analysis concerns with the study of text production and consumption. The researcher would attempt to see elements such as the target audience and the author or institution who produces the text to understand how these elements affect our interpretation of the text. The final macro-level links to the part of Explanation in the three-dimensional model which focus is placed on the social context and beliefs surrounding the text. In Fairclough's CDA, these three levels of analysis are all ultimately mutually explainable and inclusive, meaning that the researcher could start his analysis in any of the level in analysis.

Van Dijk's Sociocognitive Approach:

Van Dijk's Approach in CDA centres around the idea of the 'Discourse-Cognitive-Society Triangle'. Under such approach, it is claimed that the relationship between discourse and society is 'cognitively related' (van Dijk, 2009). Rather than seeing discourse and society as a combined unit, sociocognitive approach believes that 'discourse structures and social structures are of a different nature and can only be related through mental representations of language users as individual and as social members' (van Dijk, 2009). Therefore, the cognitive components such as memory, mind and mental models of the individual are the centre of focus. In carrying out research using van Dijk's framework, the structures of discourse, cognition and society are not seen as independent component. Thus, researcher has to first analysis the discourse structure with description and explanation in relation to 'underlying mental representations such as mental models, knowledge or ideologies' (van Dijk, 2009). After that, the socio level of analysis is responsible in explaining the cognitive basis enlisted in the previous level of analysis.

Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach:

Wodak's approach of CDA is described as an 'interdisciplinary study [that] combined linguistics analysis with historical and sociological approaches' (Wodak, 2015). Wodak summarizes ten of the most important principles of in using discourse-historical approach which are listed as follow:

1. The approach is interdisciplinary. Interdisciplinary involves theory, methods,

methodology, research practice and practical application.

2. The approach is problem oriented.

3. Various theories and methods are combined wherever integration leads to an adequate understanding and explanation of the research object.

4. The research incorporates fieldwork and ethnography (study from "inside") where this is required for a thorough analysis and theorizing of the object under investigation.

5. The research necessarily moves recursively between theory and empirical data.

6. Numerous genres and public spaces as well as intertextual and interdiscursive relationships are studied.

7. The historical context is taken into account in interpreting texts and discourses. The historical orientation permits the reconstruction of how recontextualization functions as an important process linking texts and discourses intertextually and interdiscursively over time.

8. Categories and tools are not fixed once and for all. They must be elaborated for each

   analysis according to the specific problem under investigation.

9. "Grand theories" often serve as a foundation. In the specific analyses, however, "middle-range theories" frequently supply a better theoretical basis.

10. The application of results is an important target. Results should be made available to and applied by experts and should be communicated to the public.

(Wodak, 2015)

Given the principles listed by Wodak, it could be seen that the discourse-historical approach focuses on the changes of discourse over time in which the historical context is the centre of the research. Therefore, it aims to analyze how changes in historical dimension affects and shapes the transformation of discourse in a particular genre.

Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis Approach

Despite the three different major approaches in CDA, one of the key defects of CDA is subjectivity. Given the assumption that CDA could be seen as a social movement which the description and interpretation often involve certain political position, the analysis of CDA is often seen as 'political' (biased) and 'unscientific' (subjective) (van Dijk, 1995).

Widdowson points out similar defect in CDA in which he criticises the possibility of "'cherry-picking' or intentionally select (possibly atypical) data or linguistic features for analysis to prove a preconceived point" (2000, 2004) Therefore, a new emergence of approach of incorporating Corpus Linguistics into CDA has gained popularity in recent years. Instead of a top-down approach in CDA, corpus linguistics adopted a 'bottom-up' approach in which the research is mainly data-driven. Using data to guide the research facilitates researchers to be as objective as possible during the process of analysis in which Baker described that researchers could 'start from a position whereby the data itself has not been selected in order to confirm our conscious (or subconscious) biases' (2006: 12).

Another advantage of a corpus linguistics (CL)-assisted CDA is that the usage of CL methodology could help researchers to deal with patterns which could be easily omitted and overlooked during the research process, especially when the corpus size is large. Partington presents a clear view on the advantage of CL methodology as follows:

> At the simplest level, corpus technology helps find other examples of a phenomenon one has already noted. At the other extreme, it reveals patterns of use previously unthought of. In between, it can reinforce, refute or revise a researcher's intuition and show them why and how much their suspicions were grounded.

> (Partington, 2003: 12)

Partington's description on the effect of corpus analysis to 'reinforce, refute or revise a researcher's intuition' reveals another advantage of CL method in CDA of triangulation. Sociology scholar Cicourel describes that 'research triangulation involves carrying out two or more approaches as a means of checking results' (1969). By using corpus data in confirming, refuting or complimenting certain findings in CDA, CL methodology could increase the authenticity of the result, providing advantages over a solely CDA approach.

Research Methodology:

The study aims to combine qualitative and quantitative approach in tackling the issue. In terms of qualitative approach, this study would utilize Fairclough's three-dimensional modal in CDA as basis of analysis. The main reason for the adoption of

Fairclough's CDA approach is due to its simplicity. Compared to van Dijk's sociocognitive approach, such approach requires the investigative of the cognitive components of both British and New Zealander. As such investigation would require data collection methods such as interviews, the time and geographical constraint do not allow the analysis to be carried in such manner. Moreover, as the study would primarily aim to focus on linguistic elements of their speeches in which each text is considered on an individual basis, tracing the changes of discourse using DHA would not suit the purpose of the study. Therefore, Fairclough's modal is adopted in this study. However, due to the subjectivity of CDA, the study will also adopt corpus analysis to provide quantitative data in the textual description level in CDA to reduce the subjectivity of the study. Two mini corpora containing 10 COVID speech transcripts of the two respective PMs will be investigated. By looking at data such as word frequency and concordance, it helps to understand and analyse the context and the ways specific words or grammatical structures political leaders used in conveying certain ideas. By that, it is hoped that we could get a better understanding of why Ardern's speech is generally considered as more positively perceived compared to Boris Johnson and provides insight on the appropriate communication strategies in crisis.

Research Objectives:

1. Examine the differences in language use of Prime Minister of New Zealand and the UK in their COVID speeches.
2. How the language used by the PMs affect their success of their speeches respectively during the pandemic?
3. What are the implications on language strategies in managing crisis?

Data and Data Collection:

1. A mini corpus containing 10 political speeches on COVID (12,000 - 20,000 words) will be built for each of the PM. Selection of speeches will be based on importance. Speeches such as National Address or Lockdown announcement will be first selected which are followed by speeches made in daily press conferences with significant announcements.
2. Speech transcripts are retrieved from the official government websites. The links for

the official database for COVID speeches are listed below:

Prime Minister of New Zealand: https://www.beehive.govt.nz/search?query=Covid &f%5B0%5D=government_facet%3A6203&f%5B1%5D=ministers%3A6363&f%5 B2%5D=content_type_facet%3Aspeech

Prime Minister of UK:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/slides-and-datasets-to-accompany-coronavirus-press-conferences#transcripts

3. Antconc would be used as the main tool for performing corpus analysis. Information such as collocation, frequency, N-gram, Mutual Information would be considered in corpus analysis.

Result and Discussion

(A) Modality Maker

Cruse states that 'modal expressions are those which signal a particular attitude on the part of the speaker to the proposition expressed or the situation described (typically in a statement)' (2004: 286). Therefore, modality marker provides us with information on the speaker's attitude towards his utterance. As COVID speeches are often made up three main components, namely (1) Giving the general public advice and guidelines on what they should and should not do, (2) Reporting the latest statistics and situation of COVID in their respective country and (3) Instilling confidence and hope to the public, looking at how different modality markers are used could allow us to evaluate the success of COVID speeches in addressing the above three areas. Thus, comparisons could be made to determine the success of political speeches of Boris Johnson and Jacinda Ardern respectively.

Under the current theoretical framework, modality could be divided into two main types: deontic modality and epistemic modality. In Kreidler's framework, deontic modality refers to 'the necessity of an individual to act or not act in a particular way' (1998:241). Typical modality markers used to express deontic modality include 'should', 'need', 'may' with varying degree of forcefulness and authority expressed from the speakers. As deontic modality markers concern with permission and obligation, deontic modality markers are therefore used widely in COVID speeches in advising the general

public on things they are allowed and prohibited to do. Analysing how different deontic modality markers used in addressing these issues could then be useful in understanding the power relation between the government and the public, as well as how permission and obligation are communicated.

Epistemic modality markers on the other hand addresses 'the possibility, probability or impossibility of a particular proposition' (Kreidler,1998:241). Modality markers used in expressing these propositions include 'could', 'will', 'must' etc. Similar to deontic modality, epistemic proposition expressed could also be divided into different degree of probability based on the epistemic marker used. In Kreidler's framework, he divides the degree of probability into five main categories as shown in the following scale (1998, 242):

	Possible			Impossible
Apparently true	highly probable	fairly probable	slightly probable	Improbable

As COVID speeches often involve the utterance of scientific facts and instilling confidence to the public, looking at the usage of epistemic markers could give us information on (i) how sure the government is on certain issue and (ii) how much information do they actually know which both affect the success of confidence building and the effectiveness of the political speech. Therefore, looking at epistemic marker is also important in understanding the difference between Boris Johnson and Jacinda Ardern on their success in delivering COVID speeches.

(i) The use of deontic modality markers (Description and Interpretation)

Using qualitative analysis, typical modal verbs are often found to be used in both the speeches of Johnson and Ardern to provide instructions. These include 'must', 'should', 'can', 'may' etc. Although there may not be many differences in the modal verbs used, the main difference in expressing deontic modality lies on the usage of lexical verbs. In Boris Johnson's speech, the government is often portrayed as an authoritative figure in which the government has power over the public. Take the Prime Minister's address on 4 January 2021 as an example:

In England, we must therefore go into a national lockdown which is tough enough to contain this variant.

That means the Government is once again ***instructing*** you to stay at home.

In announcing the national lockdown to combat the emergence of a new variant in England, Boris Johnson utilized the verb 'instructing' in delivering the urgency for the public to stay at home. Concerning the verb choice, the use of 'instructing' rather than verb such as 'asking' and 'suggesting' communicates a much stronger sense of forcefulness and authority from the government. Concerning discourse production and consumption, the subject and object in the sentence are also worthy to discuss. The usage of the noun phrase 'the Government' instead of personal pronoun such as 'I' or 'we' as the subject suggests a sense of separation from the object 'you' which is a pronoun. The power relation is further established by the use of 'once again' which reinforces the idea of 'the government' being the power holders. A 'top-down' approach could thus be seen in Boris Johnson's way of giving advising to the general public.

However, comparing to Boris Johnson's speech, Ardern employs a moderate tone in addressing the nation in which her approach could be described as 'bottom-up'. Instead of an authoritative tone, Ardern often communicates with a cooperative tone with the public. Take her speech on 21 March 2020 as an example:

There are four levels to the alert system. At each level there are things we ***need*** you to do…

And what you'll ***need*** to do… we ***need*** to step things up…

Here are the things that we ***need*** from you…that means we ***need*** friends, family and neighbours to support our older New Zealanders and… we also ***need*** everyone to start working differently.

One of the major characteristics of Ardern's speech is her often usage of 'need'. In the above excerpt, Ardern uses the 'need' continuously to emphasize the importance of the cooperation of New Zealanders. 'Need' as a deontic modality marker conveys a much mild tone in which Ardern appears not as a forceful figure in guiding the public what they should do. Moreover, we could also see that the verb 'need' is often proceeded by the personal pronoun 'we'. This indicates that Ardern identifies herself with the general public that the actions are collaborative. In interpreting the speech, it reveals that the government and the public will work together in eliminating the virus that there are shared responsibilities which is found much rarely in Johnson's speeches.

In order to further discover linguistics features of their speeches which could not be found using qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis using corpus is adopted in the study to widen and support the findings in qualitative analysis. The corpus analysis is conducted by collecting and analysing all the deontic modality marker used on all the instances in which the two Prime Ministers give medical advice to the population in their corpora. The following table illustrates the result:

Deontic Marker	Frequency		% relative to total deontic marker used (Frequency/Total*100%)		% Diff (UK - NZ)	Which country uses it more?
	UK	NZ	UK	NZ		
must	38	30	30.65%	23.26%	7.39%	UK
could	2	0	1.61%	0.00%	1.61%	UK
should	21	8	16.94%	6.20%	10.73%	UK
can	39	24	31.45%	18.60%	12.85%	UK
ask	3	8	2.42%	6.20%	-3.78%	NZ
allow	2	5	1.61%	3.88%	-2.26%	NZ
necessary	1	1	0.81%	0.78%	0.03%	UK
oblige	1	1	0.81%	0.78%	0.03%	UK
instruct	1	0	0.81%	0.00%	0.81%	UK
may	2	1	1.61%	0.78%	0.84%	UK
advise	3	3	2.42%	2.33%	0.09%	UK
able to	2	5	1.61%	3.88%	-2.26%	NZ
need	4	28	3.23%	21.71%	-18.48%	NZ
have to	4	10	3.23%	7.75%	-4.53%	NZ
free to	1	0	0.81%	0.00%	0.81%	UK
require	0	4	0.00%	3.10%	-3.10%	NZ
permit	0	1	0.00%	0.78%	-0.78%	NZ
TOTAL	124	129	100.00%	100.00%		

The top three deontic modality markers used by Boris Johnson are 'can', 'must' and 'should' respectively. Similar to the usage of 'instructing', the heavy usage of 'should' connotates a sense of instructing. This is in line with the findings in the qualitative analysis in which reflects that the position of the government being the one who guides the public. With the discourse producer being the government while the general public being the discourse consumer, the heavy usage of 'should' places the government above the general population.

For Arden, she used 'must', 'need' and 'can' most heavily. The wide usage of 'need' of 21.71% similarly confirms the findings in qualitative analysis. Interestingly, although both Boris Johnson and Ardern uses 'must' heavily, the relative percentage of the usage of 'must' to the total of all deontic markers is 7.39% lower for Ardern. Given the discursive practice being a speech, the word 'must' is often pronounced and conveyed with a stronger tone and sense of obligation. This further proves that Boris Johnson's speeches in general contains a stronger sense of forcefulness in the public in instructing to do something rather than asking them to cooperate as in Ardern's speech.

(ii) Context Analysis (Explanation)

Putting the above textual and intertextual analysis into the wider context, it would not be surprising to understand why the authoritative and instructive tone of Boris Johnson is not an effective strategy in COVID speech. Firstly, Britain has been historically a democratic country with parliamentary politics being a key framework in their political system. Throughout history in their political ideology, the general public share similar identity and power status as the government in which the public even has the right to change the government through elections. Given the huge importance of the public on politics, the tone of instructing in Boris Johnson's speech would not be successful as the British people are generally resistant to such authoritative approach from the government. Moreover, it is important to note that Boris Johnson has only recently come into power of being the Prime Minister in July 2019. Due to his short time in office, Boris Johnson has yet to win public support and have a strong public consolidation in Britain. Thus, using instructing tone reveals the lack of control he has within the government and the general British society. Therefore, the instructing tone rather than being a mean to ensure the public comply with the measures, it instead reveals the weaknesses of Boris Johnson's government. This makes it even harder for his strategy to be effective, making him look inferior in combatting the COVID crisis.

Comparatively, Ardern was facing the challenge of the general election in November 2020 in hope to continue her time in office during the COVID crisis. In the eyes of the general public, Ardern's collaborative strategy indicates that the Ardern's government highly values the importance of the public. Instead of being an authoritative figure, Ardern respects public opinion and the government is willing to help or even

hoping the public could help the government. This reflects Ardern's need of public support in maintaining in office. Given such huge emphasis on the importance of the public as well as the imminency of the general election, the niceness Ardern expressed using collaborative strategy facilitates people to cooperate in hope that the good terms between the government and the society could continue and sustain even after the election. Therefore, comparing the political context, it provides a further explanation on why the instructive strategy of Johnson performs worse than the collaborative strategy of Ardern.

(iii) The use of epistemic markers (Description and Interpretation)

In qualitative analysis, one of the key differences between Boris Johnson and Ardern is the epistemic markers used in reporting COVID statistics. In Boris Johnson' speech, his speech often contains a sense of uncertainty in reporting statistics. For example, in his speech made on 10 May:

And yet when I look at where we are tonight, we have the R below one, between 0.5 and 0.9 – but ***potentially*** only just below one.

Although Boris Johnson was reporting on statistical data of the rate of transmission (R value), epistemic marker 'potentially' was used to give audience an idea on the actual number. The usage of 'potentially' here reveals the lack of certainty on Boris Johnson's part on the actual statistics which was detrimental on the success of his speech. Moreover, concerning that this is speech made towards the public, the uncertainty on the speaker part could induce the lack of confidence on the leaders from the public as even the Prime Minister seemed not to possess much information. This would therefore further deteriorate the success of his speech.

However, Ardern uses epistemic marker in reporting statistics to assert authority and confidence on the public. For example, in her speech made on 23 March 2020:

I can also ***confirm***, as did the Director General of Health, that we have 2 cases where public health officials have been unable to find how they came in contact with COVID-19.

In this instance, Ardern utilized the lexical verb 'confirm' to establish confidence and authority to the public. It indicates that she had full knowledge on the COVID situation in New Zealand without any reservations. Given her position as the Prime Minister of New Zealand, she was able to communicate a sense of assertiveness to the public. This

could facilitate the public building confidence in her which helps increase the success of her COVID speeches.

Another difference that could be found in qualitative analysis is the use of adjective in Boris Johnson's speech as epistemic marker. For example, in the speech made on 30 April:

> Today Oxford university has announced a partnership with Astrazeneca to develop what they believe could soon be a means of inoculating ourselves against this disease But until this day comes – and I am ***afraid*** we cannot say exactly when it may be…

In this instance, Boris Johnson addressed the nation on the possibility of the introduction of vaccine. In expressing his reservation and predication on when the vaccine will be available, he utilized the adjective 'afraid' as the epistemic marker. In analysing such usage, 'afraid' as an adjective is often used to reflect an individual emotion. Compared to other epistemic marker and expression such as 'I am uncertain when it may be', the use of 'afraid' could potentially portray the internal fear of Boris Johnson. Concerning the point of view of the general public as the audience, such reservations and feelings expressed by Johnson would decrease their confidence in believing to his speeches. Compared to Ardern who never employed such expressions in speech, this indicates that the usage of emotional adjectives would be detrimental in affecting the success of political speech.

To further investigate the issue, quantitative analysis is employed. As epistemic marker could reflect the amount of knowledge the speaker possesses on the subject matter, for simplicity reason, the study has divided epistemic marker into two main categories, epistemic certainty and epistemic probability to investigate how much information the speaker actually knows. Epistemic certainty concerns with instances in which the speakers are fully sure the proposition in the utterance is true or false. Other instances in which the speaker is not sure on the true value of the proposition, all of these are categorized as epistemic possibility. By comparing the percentage of epistemic certainty and possibility to the total of epistemic modality marker used, it is hoped that we could understand whether there are differences on how much Ardern and Johnson actually knows about their subject matter which affects the success of the speeches. Moreover, by investigating the variation of epistemic possibility and certainty markers used respectively, it is also

hoped that new insight could be gained in affecting the success of their speech. The result is as follow:

1. Epistemic Certainty Marker Comparison

Epistemic Certainty Marker	Frequency		% relative to total Epistemic Certainty Marker used (Frequency/ Total*100%)		% Diff (UK - NZ)	Which country uses it more?
	UK	NZ	UK	NZ		
fact	1	0	1.18%	0.00%	1.18%	UK
believe	8	4	9.41%	3.36%	6.05%	UK
must	2	1	2.35%	0.84%	1.51%	UK
of course	7	1	8.24%	0.84%	7.39%	UK
assure	2	2	2.35%	1.68%	0.67%	UK
true	4	0	4.71%	0.00%	4.71%	UK
know	22	27	25.88%	22.69%	3.19%	UK
no doubt	2	1	2.35%	0.84%	1.51%	UK
confirm	3	2	3.53%	1.68%	1.85%	UK
clear	3	1	3.53%	0.84%	2.69%	UK
recognize	1	0	1.18%	0.00%	1.18%	UK
understand	2	2	2.35%	1.68%	0.67%	UK
going to	5	1	5.88%	0.84%	5.04%	UK
reality	1	2	1.18%	1.68%	-0.50%	NZ
will	14	45	16.47%	37.82%	-21.34%	NZ
certain	1	0	1.18%	0.00%	1.18%	UK
acknowledge	1	4	1.18%	3.36%	-2.18%	NZ
unanimous	1	0	1.18%	0.00%	1.18%	UK
confident	1	2	1.18%	1.68%	-0.50%	NZ
conscious	1	0	1.18%	0.00%	1.18%	UK
certainly	1	1	1.18%	0.84%	0.34%	UK
absolutely	2	0	2.35%	0.00%	2.35%	UK
obvious	0	1	0.00%	0.84%	-0.84%	NZ
really	0	1	0.00%	0.84%	-0.84%	NZ
necessarily	0	1	0.00%	0.84%	-0.84%	NZ
best	0	6	0.00%	5.04%	-5.04%	NZ
aware	0	2	0.00%	1.68%	-1.68%	NZ
assurance	0	1	0.00%	0.84%	-0.84%	NZ

understanding	0	1	0.00%	0.84%	-0.84%	NZ
emphasize	0	1	0.00%	0.84%	-0.84%	NZ
recognise	0	1	0.00%	0.84%	-0.84%	NZ
report	0	2	0.00%	1.68%	-1.68%	NZ
no denying that	0	1	0.00%	0.84%	-0.84%	NZ
indicate	0	1	0.00%	0.84%	-0.84%	NZ
learn	0	4	0.00%	3.36%	-3.36%	NZ
Total	85	119	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%	

2. Epistemic Possibility Marker Comparison

Epistemic Possibility Marker	Frequency		% relative to total Epistemic Possibility Marker used (Frequency/Total*100%)		% Diff (UK - NZ)	Which country uses it more?
	UK	NZ	UK	NZ		
could	5	10	10.20%	17.54%	-7.34%	NZ
may	4	4	8.16%	7.02%	1.15%	UK
if…will…	16	11	32.65%	19.30%	13.35%	UK
unlikely	1	1	2.04%	1.75%	0.29%	UK
expect	3	4	6.12%	7.02%	-0.90%	NZ
should	3	2	6.12%	3.51%	2.61%	UK
perhaps	1	0	2.04%	0.00%	2.04%	UK
likely	1	8	2.04%	14.04%	-11.99%	NZ
think	4	4	8.16%	7.02%	1.15%	UK
appear	2	1	4.08%	1.75%	2.33%	UK
fairly	1	0	2.04%	0.00%	2.04%	UK
suggest	3	2	6.12%	3.51%	2.61%	UK
afraid	3	0	6.12%	0.00%	6.12%	UK
possible	1	0	2.04%	0.00%	2.04%	UK
would	1	0	2.04%	0.00%	2.04%	UK
consider	0	3	0.00%	5.26%	-5.26%	NZ
potentially	0	2	0.00%	3.51%	-3.51%	NZ
imagine	0	2	0.00%	3.51%	-3.51%	NZ
assumption	0	1	0.00%	1.75%	-1.75%	NZ
seem	0	2	0.00%	3.51%	-3.51%	NZ

| Total | 49 | 57 | 100.00% | 100.00% | 0.00% | |

3. Total Epistemic Marker Comparison

% of Epistemic Certainty Marker Relative to Total (Total Frequency of Epistemic Certainty Marker used / [Total Frequency of Epistemic Possibility + Certainty Marker used] * 100%)	
UK	NZ
63.43283582	67.61363636
% of Epistemic Possibility Marker Relative to Total (Total Frequency of Epistemic Possibility Marker used / [Total Frequency of Epistemic Possibility + Certainty Marker used] * 100%)	
UK	NZ
36.56716418	32.38636364

Although not as significant, the corpus analysis echoes the qualitative analysis in which Boris Johnson contains more uncertainty in his speech. With 67.61% comprises of epistemic certainty marker in Ardern compared to 63.43% in Boris Johnson, this indicates that Ardern is more certain on the true value of her utterance. Looking at the top five epistemic certainty markers used, it is interesting to note the large difference in percentage of 'will' used in Ardern's speech compared to Johnson's. Moreover, the top five of Ardern's epistemic certainty markers used include lexical verbs such as 'learn' which indicates a sense of humbleness on the government. From the audience perspective, this could create an image that the government is willing to accept new ideas and methods in combatting while also willing to be flexible when new facts are learnt during the research process on COVID. Such would be beneficial in enhancing the success of the political speech.

Looking at the top five used epistemic possibility markers used, the corpus analysis complements the findings in qualitative analysis in which 'afraid' is one of the mostly used markers by Johnson to express possibility. The communication of fear to the audience is therefore further reinforced through the frequent usage of such adjective. On the other hand, Ardern tends to use the adverb 'likely' to express possibility. Compared to the usage of emotional adjective for Boris Johnson, the usage of 'likely' does not communicate any fear or emotional factor to the audience. This facilitates the construction of a confident government in which the audience is more willing to believe to the propositions made by the government in the speech, enhancing the level of success in her speech.

(iii) Context Analysis (Explanation)

Looking at the context of these speeches, COVID is a completely new virus to humankind. Both New Zealand and Britain are experiencing high uncertainty in society. In such critical moment, it is essential to communicate as many facts and information to the public as possible to stabilize the nation. Therefore, COVID political speech is not only seen as a daily update on the latest situation of the virus in their respective country, but it also acts as a confidence-builder which helps unites and strengthens the whole nation. Because of that, this explains the high percentage of epistemic certainty markers used in both Boris Johnson and Ardern in order to convey as many facts and information as to establish the government as a knowledgeable figure who is capable in managing the uncertain situation.

However, this also provides reason why Boris Johnson speech is seen less successful than Ardern with the usage of emotional pronoun as epistemic marker. Concerning the wider context, COVID has resulted in a huge economic downfall with large increase in unemployment rate across country. Many businesses are forced to closed. Together with the lack of amount of knowledge on the virus, these two combines have already created huge amount of fear in society. The frequent usage of emotional adjective 'afraid' in Boris Johnson not only fails to instil confidence on the public in which he does not portray himself as a capable leader of the country, this fear that he communicates will further deepen the fear the general public already faced as the leader does not seem to have a solution on the country, paving way for more potential economic and social hardship. Comparatively, Ardern does not employ any personal emotional adjectives as ways to express reservations and uncertainties over the propositions and predications she made in speech. This shows that the avoidance of personal negative emotion given the context of COVID is crucial contributing to her success. Therefore, looking at the social context, the word choice of Boris Johnson is one of the reasons why he does not appear as successful in his effort in combatting COVID compared to Ardern judging by the speech alone.

(B) Expression of Empathy

Empathy refers to the recognition or perception of another person's emotions

(Hoffman 2001, 30). In a period full of social hardship and uncertainty such as COVID-19, the expression of empathy thus becomes extremely important in instilling hope to the general public, helping them to sustain through hardship, as well as comforting those who have lost loved ones in the pandemic. Therefore, by looking at how empathy is expressed, we could use it as a measure to evaluate and compare the success of the political speeches of Boris Johnson and Ardern.

(i) Recognition of the hardship and effort of the public

The first way empathy could be seen is the understanding of the social hardship of the people. Being the common theme of the speech in both Boris Johnson and Ardern, their strategies in addressing such empathy differ hugely. For Johnson, he uses nominalization strategy to acknowledge and thank the nation for their effort in combatting COVID-19. In a speech delivered on 27 April, he spoke:

…thanks to your *forbearance*, your *good sense*, your *altruism*, your *spirit* of community

thanks to our collective national resolve

we are on the brink of achieving that first clear mission

to prevent our national health service from being overwhelmed

in a way that tragically we have seen elsewhere…

In recognizing the effort of the public, Boris Johnson uses nominalization strategy in which he lists many different qualities in nouns such as 'forbearance', 'good sense' and 'altruism' to describe the unselfishness of the people.

Similar nominalization strategy is shown even more prominent in his speech delivered on 10 May 2020:

And when I look at what you have done already.

The *patience* and *common sense* you have shown.

The *fortitude* of the elderly whose isolation we all want to end as fast as we can.

The incredible *bravery* and hard *work* of our NHS staff, our care workers.

The *devotion* and *self-sacrifice* of all those in every walk of life who are helping us to beat this disease.

In this example, a repetition of structure could be seen in which Boris Johnson used noun forms to describe the goodness of the people shown in the virus. These

include 'patience', 'fortitude', 'bravery', 'devotion' etc. Although Boris Johnson on both occasions provided an extensive list of good qualities in which he recognized in the public, considering the part of interpretation, the use of nominalization strategy conveys a sense of formality which is detrimental to its success. Political speeches by Boris Johnson are all delivered in spoken form. Using expression in noun form rather than verb form, for example saying 'the patience and common sense you have shown' rather than 'You are patience and show common sense', the nominalized version indicates a sense of objectivity and have an impersonal tone. Given such objectivity, this would lead to the audience developing an image of the government being indifferent to their hardship compared to using the verb form which communicates a more personal tone. Moreover, the nominalized sentence often contains a more complex structure to the verbalized version. As the audience of the speech is the whole UK population which varies hugely in social and education background, the complexity of the speech may make it difficult for the audience to truly understand the meaning of Boris Johnson, reducing the effectiveness of Boris Johnson's speech in showing his understanding on the hardship on the general population.

Boris Johnson's empathetic expression is also not entirely empathetic as ideas of criticism on the public could be found in the above example. Looking at the qualities Boris Johnson listed, these include 'patience', 'fortitude', 'bravery' which are all nouns with positive connotations. However, an interesting inclusion on that list is 'common sense'. Compared to nouns such as 'patience' and 'fortitude', 'common sense' could be described containing a more neutral connotation. The premodifier 'common' also denotes that it is a quality which is inherent to all people rather than learned. Due to 'common sense' being a trait that all people should possess, placing it in a coordinated structure with other learned qualities such as 'patience' indicates that Boris Johnson believes that the UK people are not behaving with common sense during the pandemic. To the audience, they will see such description as subtle criticism by the government rather than showing understanding to their efforts in combatting the pandemic. Therefore, this sense of criticism contained in such empathetic expression would reduce the truthfulness on the gratitude expressed by the government. This negatively impact the success of Boris Johnson's speech.

Comparatively, Ardern uses story to show her empathy on the hardship of the

general public. For example, in her speech delivered on 11 May 2020:

Over the weekend I read a letter from a mother who spoke about what that team effort has meant to her.

Her young son has compromised immunity and as a result is on constant medication. When COVID arrived in the form of a global pandemic she was terrified. But she was writing to me out of sheer relief. There may be no cure, no vaccine for COVID yet, but there was each and every one of you. Every single Kiwi who made the decision to stay home. To make sacrifices. You did that for her boy. You did it for someone's mother. Someone's father. Someone's child.

In the above example, Ardern utilized story of a mother that she read from the letters of the public. Rather than listing all the good qualities of the New Zealanders, Ardern instead talked about how the sacrifices of the public save a family. By using repetitive expression such as 'You did that for her boy. / You did it for someone's mother. Someone's father. Someone's child.', Arden's story shows the importance of family in the government's eyes. Considering the New Zealand population who many of them loses loved ones during the pandemic, this shows that the government is able to relate to the hardship with the people who suffers during the pandemic. The emphasize of 'mother', 'father' and 'child' also reflects that Ardern cares for each individual. Unlike how the goodness of the people are generalized in Boris Johnson using nominalized strategy, Ardern's repetition indicates that the New Zealand government is caring and empathetic.

(ii) Grieving for the loss of loved ones

Another area in empathy that could be addressed is looking at how both Prime Ministers express their grieve for losing loved ones. For Boris Johnson, one of his main features in expressing sorrow is the usage of generic sentences. There are three occasions in the corpus in which Boris Johnson expresses grieve to the family:

And though the death toll has been tragic, and the suffering immense.

And though *we grieve* for all those we have lost. (10 May 2020)

Here in the UK *we mourn* every person we have lost, and *we grieve* with their families.

(22 September 2020)

We grieve for them and with them

But as ***we grieve*** we are strengthened in our resolve to defeat this virus (30 April 2020)

In the above three occasions, Boris Johnson utilized similar sentence structure and vocabulary to express his sorrow to the family in which he 'grieves[s]' for them. From the audience point of view, the generic sentence structure and limited vocabulary used indicate a sense of indifference form the government. Rather than conveying a sense of truly caring for the public, the prevalence of the structure 'we grieve for [something]' for repeated manners causes the expression to be clichés. The government fails to portray an image of genuine care to all the people who suffer during the pandemic.

However, Ardern uses a more variety of mental verbs to articulate her empathy to the New Zealand population. For example:

I am acutely ***aware*** of the pain many New Zealanders are feeling. (25 March)

Today I want to ***remember*** the people in New Zealand who have lost someone to COVID-19, or the many more who had the ***terror*** of almost losing someone. (20 April 2020)

We may be amongst a small number of countries where that is still able to happen, where the numbers we have lost have been small, but we cannot ***forget*** that every number is someone's father, someone's mum, a relative and a friend and someone we have all been united in an effort to protect and to save. (20 April)

In Ardern's descriptions, she utilized a more variety of vocabulary in expressing her sorrow to the public. These included verbs such as 'remember', 'forget' and nouns such as 'pain'. Considering the choice of vocabulary, Ardern was able to convey a sense of interpersonal relationship with the audience in which she 'remember[s]' all the families who lose loved ones during the pandemic. From the audience's perspective, using a variety of mental verbs in a spoken discourse would facilitate the building up of sentimental connections between the speaker and the audience. Therefore, empathy is shown more vividly and interpersonally compared to Boris Johnson's strategy of using generic phrases. This certainly makes Ardern's speech more successful compared to Boris Johnson in this aspect.

(iii) Expression of shared identity

In expressing empathy, the expression of shared identity is also important as the audience could understand that the government is constantly supporting them. It also helps unite the nation as sharing identity facilitates cooperation within the whole society. Therefore, looking at how shared identity is expressed is useful in evaluating the effectiveness.

Two of the most common ways of expressing one's identity is through the expressions of 'as a' and 'being'. Therefore, using AntConc to search for occasions where 'as a' and 'being' are used is a good way to understand the identity expressed from both Boris Johnson and Ardern. Looking at the corpus of Boris Johnson, Boris Johnson identifies himself as the following three identities with frequency: as a member of the country (1 time), a member of the nation (2 times), and the Prime Minister of UK (3 times). From the corpus analysis of Boris Johnson's speech, it could see that Boris Johnson utilizes involvement strategy of identifying himself as a part of the UK population. However, the high frequency of identifying himself as the Prime Minister of the UK at the same time conveys a sense of authority and power over the public. Considering from the audience point of view, such identification indicates a sense of segregation. Therefore, this could negatively impact how the public in perceiving the genuinely of truly being a part of the public, reducing the success of his speech in expressing his shared identity with the population.

For Ardern, she associates herself with the following identities: mum (1 time), country (3 times), nation (6 times), government (1 time), team (2 times). Looking at Ardern's associations, she most commonly associated herself as a part of the nation of New Zealanders and she utilized it as an involvement strategy to be recognized as a part of the New Zealand population. Interestingly, Ardern also associated herself as a 'team' and 'mum' in expressing empathy to the public. Comparing the Johnson's speech, her associations with 'team' protrudes a sense to the audience that she has a cooperative relationship with the public in which they are willing to help each other out in difficult times. On the other hand, the associate of 'mum' indicates a sense of intimacy to the audience in which she is willing to take care the nation as her own child. This not only creates a sentimental relationship with the public, but also able to enhance the confidence level of the audience in trusting that she would be able to lead the country out of the

hardship of the pandemic. Therefore, this positively impacts the understanding the government shown on the public and facilitates the success of her speech.

(iv) Context Analysis (Explanation)

Considering the wider social context of both UK and New Zealand, both UK and New Zealand had to go into full national lockdown in order to combat the virus. During the lockdown, non-essential businesses were all closed while movement of people were restricted. Moreover, families were separated in which they could not visit one another. Due to the restrictions imposed, it is the norm to find people staying at home all days and become isolated. The lack of physical and face-to-face interactions went against the natural needs of communication in people. Under such context, Boris Johnson using nominalization strategies would certainly not prove to be a successful strategy given the loneliness of the people. In a time where people need genuine care, generalizing the situation and acknowledging the goodness of the population is not enough in motivating the public in sustaining their battle against the virus. Moreover, the high frequency of Boris Johnson emphasizing himself as the Prime Minister of the UK further reflects the separation of the government from the public in which further reduces its effectiveness given the social context of the UK. Comparatively, although New Zealand is experiencing similar lockdown as the UK, Ardern was able to assess the situation well in which stories were used to express her empathy towards the population. Her strategy using stories put the focus of the pandemic back to the individual rather than the general. This certainly increases its success given the norm of isolation during the pandemic. The shared identity of working together also facilitates its success given the loneliness and uncertainty of the people during lockdown. Therefore, the context of lockdown helps us to understand the relationship between the success of both Boris Johnson's and Ardern's speech and their language strategies used.

Another context that is important to the interpretation is the frequency that political speeches are delivered. In both UK and New Zealand, pandemic-related press conferences are held in a regular basis. It is becoming a norm in both of these countries to see their Prime Ministers on the television delivering daily updates to the nation. Considering such context, Boris Johnson's repetitive language used would be a sign of the government not putting much effort in addressing the public. It would not be surprising that the

audience will feel that the government is reusing previous scripts in press conferences, leading to the interpretation of being the government being indifferent and ingenuine. Comparatively, the variety of choice in vocabulary used in Ardern's speech excels in such context given the high frequency of her addressing to the public. The context of daily press conference helps explain the interpersonal interpretation of the public as it indicates that the government indeed puts effort in crafting speeches delivered during the press conferences. It shows that they value the importance of the public that they cherish talking to the public. Therefore, the context of frequent press conferences would help explain the part of interpretation and provides additional explanation on why Ardern is more successful in her speech using her linguistics strategies.

C. Internal Contradiction

The last element that could be investigated is signs of internal contradiction in speeches. Political speeches are often an important tool for the government to convey messages to the public. During the pandemic where guidance from the government is extremely important, clear and consistent message therefore is crucial to its success.

1. Internal Contradiction in Boris Johnson's speeches

(i) Conflicting Presuppositions

One of the key defects of the speeches of Boris Johnson is the existence of conflicting presuppositions. For example, during the introduction of regional tier system, he spoke:

From next Wednesday people ***will be able to leave their home for any purpose***…

In particular, in tier 1 people ***should work from home wherever possible***. (23 Nov)

In the first sentence, the speaker has the presupposition that the freedom of movement will be restored in which people could freely commute to any places. However, in the same announcement, the second sentence of 'working at home wherever possible' presupposes that the public should not go out for work. This presupposition contradicts with the freedom stated in the first sentence. Considering the interpretation of the audience, this conflicting presupposition creates confusion, making it difficult for the

public to understand the instructions given by the government.

Another example of conflicting presuppositions could be seen in the speech on 10 May 2020:

We said that you should ***work from home if you can, and only go to work if you must***.

We now need to stress that anyone who can't work from home, for instance those in construction or manufacturing, ***should be actively encouraged to go to work***.

The first advice presupposes that the government believes work from home should be the first priority of the workers. However, the second advice instead presupposes that the government thinks that essential business should go out and work as usual. These two presuppositions are conflicting and the advice of the government are not consistent. Moreover, the advice of the government is usually given in a way that people should do something under the fulfillment of certain conditions with the high usage of conditional sentences. Considering that political speech is a spoken discourse which is usually fast-paced, the high frequency of usage of conditional sentences and conflicting presuppositions make it difficult for the audience to process and understand the advices given the limited time. Therefore, this hinders the effectiveness of Boris Johnson speeches.

(ii) Omission of rationale

Another defect of Boris Johnson's speech is the lack of explanation of counterintuitive statements. One of the examples could be drawn from the imposition of quarantine:

And to prevent re-infection from abroad, I am serving notice that it will soon be the time – with transmission significantly lower – to impose quarantine on people coming into this country by air.

(10 May 2020)

In the example, Boris Johnson states that quarantine will be required for people entering the UK only when the transmission is significantly lower. However, as stated in the first sentence, the introduction of such measure is aimed to prevent re-infection from abroad. His statement saying that such measure would only be imposed when the transmission rate is significantly lower is counterintuitive at first glance. For the audience,

without the government providing any rationales in explaining such counterintuitive statement, it would only create confusion on the policy of the government.

2. Internal Contradiction in Ardern's speeches

Comparatively, internal contradictions are difficult to find in Ardern's speeches. Therefore, instead of providing signs of internal contradictions, this section will analyze strategies Ardern used to eliminate the chance of being contradictory.

(i) Use of Imperative Sentence

The high frequency of imperative sentence structure is one of the key characteristics of Ardern's speech. For example:

Work and learn from home if you can.

Make your business COVID-19 safe.

Stay regional.

Keep your bubble as small as possible.

Wash your hands often with soap. Then dry them. Cough into your elbow. (20 April)

Using consecutive short imperative sentences to provide instructions of the public, the instructions were given clearly. Considering the perspective that this was delivered as a spoken speech, the usage of imperative sentence causes the audience to be able to easily understand the instruction given its clear and succinct manner in which confusions could be minimized.

(ii) Emphasis of the Rationale

Another strategy in which Ardern adopts is to emphasis of the rationale of giving certain advice. In comparing how often one's rationale is expressed, a list of vocabulary related to the expression of goals are investigated in the corpus. The following table illustrates the findings:

'Goal' Vocabulary	Frequency	
	New Zealand	UK
principle	12	0

aim	5	0
goal	6	1
intention	2	0
objective	0	0
target	4	1
ambition	1	1
duty	0	1
mission	0	0
purpose	1	4
desire	0	0
aspire	0	0
reason	8	8
Total	39	16

Comparing the frequency of goal-related vocabulary in both corpora, it could be seen that there is a high usage of such vocabulary with 'principle', 'reason' and 'goal' being the three mostly used nouns in articulating her rationale and objective behind the instructions she has given to the public. However, looking at Boris Jonson's speech, he utilizes a smaller number of nouns to state his rationale in making his decisions. Analyzing the above in terms of the interpretation of the audience, having the aim and goal of certain advice clearly stated could facilitate the public understanding on the direction of the government. By having a clear picture on the thinking of the government, this could reduce the chance of confusion as well as contradiction as the logical argument could be easily understood by the public. The lack of such emphasis in Boris Johnson's speech as a result reduces its effectiveness.

3. Context Analysis (Explanations)

Considering the context, COVID-19 is a completely new virus to the world in which the public does not possess much information on the best way to tackle the transmission. Under such circumstances, the government becomes the main source of information which people would tend to rely on. Because of this, clarity from the government is essential as it dictates the whole sentiment and the strategies adopted by the public in handling the virus. Comparatively, Ardern's strategy of clearly stating the aim and goal of her policy could facilitate her success as such clear objectives would allow people to better understand the ideology of the government as well as the best way

in combatting the virus. Moreover, the use of imperative sentences also helps increases the clarity of her speech, making it more successful considering the context of COVID being a huge uncertainty which many unverified and conflicting information appear in society.

Looking at Boris Johnson's speech, the existence of conflicting presuppositions inherently already causes his speech to be inconsistent and confusing. Considering the aforementioned context of COVID, the confusion with Johnson's speech would only intensify the uncertainty of the public. At the same time, the high usage of conditional sentences in giving instructions reflect the reservation and uncertainty the government has on certain issues. In a time where information and stability are key, the lack of certainty on the government would be detrimental to the success of his speech. As a result, Ardern's consistency and clarity allows her COVID speeches to be perceived as more successful compared to the speeches of Boris Johnson.

Conclusion

This project analyzes the difference in linguistics strategies adopted by Boris Johnson and Ardern in their COVID speeches and the effects of such strategies to their speech success. It is found that strategies such as using the appropriate modality markers, using shared identity to express empathy and the avoidance of conflicting presuppositions are all crucial in affecting speech success. It is by conveying certainty, empathy and consistency in speech through the appropriate use of language that could help Ardern to excel in her speech and allows her to be more positively perceived by the nation than Boris Johnson in delivering her COVID speeches to the public. There are few limitations in this study. These include the subjectivity inherent in CDA and the limited number of speeches included for analysis. However, using a corpus-assisted CDA approach, it is hoped that these problems would be minimized by providing a systematic and quantitative method in approaching the issue. The project aims to enrich and compliment current research in this area by incorporating corpus analysis into the textual description in CDA. The CDA approach also helps us to further understand the importance of context in text interpretation in which the text and the context often have a two-way relationship in which one could not be understood and explained separately.

As a capstone project, the project would also hope to provide ways language should be used in my future career, either working in a managerial position or in the legal profession. In terms of the impact it has on my possible managerial career, in the past, I was privileged to have the opportunity to be a leader of my team during my internship in the Hong Kong Jockey Club. During my internship, I had to meet deadlines while fulfilling the dynamic requirements of the clients in which our team had to constantly change our workflow and schedule. However, being an inexperienced leader at that time, I would label myself as 'unsympathetic' since I tend to keep using the same stock phrases to encourage my colleagues to work together as a team. Having done this capstone project and taking a deeper look on how Boris Johnson and Ardern utilizes language different to express empathy to the audience, it is certain that I would now become more aware that I should avoid using prefabricated phrases again when talking to my colleagues. In face of a crisis, I realize the importance of stating the goal and objective of my ideas while using short and simple imperative sentences to communicate my thoughts to my team to ensure that my message is clear and well-communicated using Ardern as an example.

In terms of the impact of my future legal career, success in the legal profession hugely depends on the amount of confidence the clients have on you. This is particular true in criminal cases in which clients usually are usually nervous and emotionally unstable while facing a legal charge could be seen as their own 'crisis' as the topic of this capstone suggests. Because of this, the investigation of language that should be used during crisis would be crucial in terms of being a successful lawyer in the future. After undertaking this study, I realize the importance of establishing a shared identity with the clients. In case of any future instances in which I have to help my clients to win cases in court, it is certain that rather than emphasizing myself as a lawyer who is an outsider, I would try to portray myself as equal as possible in terms of status in which I will let my clients know that we are in this together as a team. Moreover, I would increase my usage of epistemic certainty marker as much as possible so that the client could put all of his trust on me. This would be useful in comforting my clients while instilling confidence in him that we could win the case together. Therefore, I believe that the findings of this capstone project would facilitate the improvement of my communication skills, especially in time of 'crisis', and prepare myself for any challenges ahead in the future.

Lastly, reflecting on the process of doing the project and concluding my own study in the English department in the last four years, this is the first extensive project that I have done in linguistics. Being vastly a literature student myself in the department, corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis are two both relative new domain to me in which I have spent a lot of time and effort reading referential materials in equipping myself the appropriate knowledge to undertake this study. Through this experience, I realize how importance of self-learning and dedication in performing any kinds of research. Moreover, the similarity between Critical Discourse Analysis in the dimension of textual description and literary analysis has also made me understand the relationship and intricacy between literature and linguistics. Seeing them as two completely separate streams before undertaking the study, I am surprised by how close reading method in literature could be useful in carrying out textual description in linguistics study. This certainly allows me to see linguistics and literature as two integrated fields which such linkage could not be perceived before this study. The capstone project is certainly a great conclusion to my study as an English major and further deepens what I have learnt throughout my years in CUHK.

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Appendix I: UK Corpus
SPEECH 1: 10 MAY 2020
 (https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavi-rus-10-may-2020)
Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 10 May 2020

It is now almost two months since the people of this country began to put up with restrictions on their freedom – your freedom – of a kind that we have never seen before in peace or war.

And you have shown the good sense to support those rules overwhelmingly.

You have put up with all the hardships of that programme of social distancing.

Because you understand that as things stand, and as the experience of every other country has shown, it's the only way to defeat the coronavirus - the most vicious threat this country has faced in my lifetime.

And though the death toll has been tragic, and the suffering immense.

And though we grieve for all those we have lost.

It is a fact that by adopting those measures we prevented this country from being engulfed by what could have been a catastrophe in which the reasonable worst case scenario was half a million fatalities.

And it is thanks to your effort and sacrifice in stopping the spread of this disease that the death rate is coming down and hospital admissions are coming down.

And thanks to you we have protected our NHS and saved many thousands of lives.

And so I know - you know - that it would be madness now to throw away that achievement by allowing a second spike.

We must stay alert.

We must continue to control the virus and save lives.

And yet we must also recognise that this campaign against the virus has come at colossal cost to our way of life.

We can see it all around us in the shuttered shops and abandoned businesses and darkened pubs and restaurants.

And there are millions of people who are both fearful of this terrible disease, and at the same time also fearful of what this long period of enforced inactivity will do to their

livelihoods and their mental and physical wellbeing.

To their futures and the futures of their children.

So I want to provide tonight - for you - the shape of a plan to address both fears.

Both to beat the virus and provide the first sketch of a road map for reopening society.

A sense of the way ahead, and when and how and on what basis we will take the decisions to proceed.

I will be setting out more details in Parliament tomorrow and taking questions from the public in the evening.

I have consulted across the political spectrum, across all four nations of the UK.

And though different parts of the country are experiencing the pandemic at different rates.

And though it is right to be flexible in our response.

I believe that as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom – Scotland, England, Wales, Northern Ireland, there is a strong resolve to defeat this together.

And today a general consensus on what we could do.

And I stress could.

Because although we have a plan, it is a conditional plan.

And since our priority is to protect the public and save lives, we cannot move forward unless we satisfy the five tests.

We must protect our NHS.

We must see sustained falls in the death rate.

We must see sustained and considerable falls in the rate of infection.

We must sort out our challenges in getting enough PPE to the people who need it, and yes, it is a global problem but we must fix it.

And last, we must make sure that any measures we take do not force the reproduction rate of the disease - the R - back up over one, so that we have the kind of exponential growth we were facing a few weeks ago.

And to chart our progress and to avoid going back to square one, we are establishing a new Covid Alert System run by a new Joint Biosecurity Centre.

And that Covid Alert Level will be determined primarily by R and the number of

coronavirus cases.

And in turn that Covid Alert Level will tell us how tough we have to be in our social distancing measures – the lower the level the fewer the measures.

The higher the level, the tougher and stricter we will have to be.

There will be five alert levels.

Level One means the disease is no longer present in the UK and Level Five is the most critical – the kind of situation we could have had if the NHS had been overwhelmed.

Over the period of the lockdown we have been in Level Four, and it is thanks to your sacrifice we are now in a position to begin to move in steps to Level Three.

And as we go everyone will have a role to play in keeping the R down.

By staying alert and following the rules.

And to keep pushing the number of infections down there are two more things we must do.

We must reverse rapidly the awful epidemics in care homes and in the NHS, and though the numbers are coming down sharply now, there is plainly much more to be done.

And if we are to control this virus, then we must have a world-beating system for testing potential victims, and for tracing their contacts.

So that – all told - we are testing literally hundreds of thousands of people every day.

We have made fast progress on testing – but there is so much more to do now, and we can.

When this began, we hadn't seen this disease before, and we didn't fully understand its effects.

With every day we are getting more and more data.

We are shining the light of science on this invisible killer, and we will pick it up where it strikes.

Because our new system will be able in time to detect local flare-ups – in your area – as well as giving us a national picture.

And yet when I look at where we are tonight, we have the R below one, between 0.5 and 0.9 – but potentially only just below one.

And though we have made progress in satisfying at least some of the conditions I have given.

We have by no means fulfilled all of them.

And so no, this is not the time simply to end the lockdown this week.

Instead we are taking the first careful steps to modify our measures.

And the first step is a change of emphasis that we hope that people will act on this week.

We said that you should work from home if you can, and only go to work if you must.

We now need to stress that anyone who can't work from home, for instance those in construction or manufacturing, should be actively encouraged to go to work.

And we want it to be safe for you to get to work. So you should avoid public transport if at all possible – because we must and will maintain social distancing, and capacity will therefore be limited.

So work from home if you can, but you should go to work if you can't work from home. And to ensure you are safe at work we have been working to establish new guidance for employers to make workplaces COVID-secure.

And when you do go to work, if possible do so by car or even better by walking or bicycle. But just as with workplaces, public transport operators will also be following COVID-secure standards.

And from this Wednesday, we want to encourage people to take more and even unlimited amounts of outdoor exercise.

You can sit in the sun in your local park, you can drive to other destinations, you can even play sports but only with members of your own household.

You must obey the rules on social distancing and to enforce those rules we will increase the fines for the small minority who break them.

And so every day, with ever increasing data, we will be monitoring the R and the number of new infections, and the progress we are making, and if we as a nation begin to fulfil the conditions I have set out, then in the next few weeks and months we may be able to go further.

In step two – at the earliest by June 1 – after half term – we believe we may be in a position to begin the phased reopening of shops and to get primary pupils back into schools, in stages, beginning with reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

Our ambition is that secondary pupils facing exams next year will get at least some time with their teachers before the holidays. And we will shortly be setting out detailed

guidance on how to make it work in schools and shops and on transport.

And step three - at the earliest by July - and subject to all these conditions and further scientific advice; if and only if the numbers support it, we will hope to re-open at least some of the hospitality industry and other public places, provided they are safe and enforce social distancing.

Throughout this period of the next two months we will be driven not by mere hope or economic necessity. We are going to be driven by the science, the data and public health.

And I must stress again that all of this is conditional, it all depends on a series of big Ifs. It depends on all of us – the entire country – to follow the advice, to observe social distancing, and to keep that R down.

And to prevent re-infection from abroad, I am serving notice that it will soon be the time – with transmission significantly lower – to impose quarantine on people coming into this country by air.

And it is because of your efforts to get the R down and the number of infections down here, that this measure will now be effective.

And of course we will be monitoring our progress locally, regionally, and nationally and if there are outbreaks, if there are problems, we will not hesitate to put on the brakes.

We have been through the initial peak – but it is coming down the mountain that is often more dangerous.

We have a route, and we have a plan, and everyone in government has the all-consuming pressure and challenge to save lives, restore livelihoods and gradually restore the freedoms that we need.

But in the end this is a plan that everyone must make work.

And when I look at what you have done already.

The patience and common sense you have shown.

The fortitude of the elderly whose isolation we all want to end as fast as we can.

The incredible bravery and hard work of our NHS staff, our care workers.

The devotion and self-sacrifice of all those in every walk of life who are helping us to beat this disease.

Police, bus drivers, train drivers, pharmacists, supermarket workers, road hauliers, bin

collectors, cleaners, security guards, postal workers, our teachers and a thousand more.

The scientists who are working round the clock to find a vaccine.

When I think of the millions of everyday acts of kindness and thoughtfulness that are being performed across this country.

And that have helped to get us through this first phase.

I know that we can use this plan to get us through the next.

And if we can't do it by those dates, and if the alert level won't allow it, we will simply wait and go on until we have got it right.

We will come back from this devilish illness.

We will come back to health, and robust health.

And though the UK will be changed by this experience, I believe we can be stronger and better than ever before. More resilient, more innovative, more economically dynamic, but also more generous and more sharing.

But for now we must stay alert, control the virus and save lives.

Thank you very much.

SPEECH 2: 23 March 2020

(https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-23-march-2020)

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 23 March 2020

Good Evening,

The coronavirus is the biggest threat this country has faced for decades – and this country is not alone.

All over the world we are seeing the devastating impact of this invisible killer.

And so tonight I want to update you on the latest steps we are taking to fight the disease and what you can do to help.

And I want to begin by reminding you why the UK has been taking the approach that we have.

Without a huge national effort to halt the growth of this virus, there will come a moment when no health service in the world could possibly cope; because there won't be enough ventilators, enough intensive care beds, enough doctors and nurses.

And as we have seen elsewhere, in other countries that also have fantastic health care systems, that is the moment of real danger.

To put it simply, if too many people become seriously unwell at one time, the NHS will be unable to handle it - meaning more people are likely to die, not just from Coronavirus but from other illnesses as well.

So it's vital to slow the spread of the disease.

Because that is the way we reduce the number of people needing hospital treatment at any one time, so we can protect the NHS's ability to cope - and save more lives.

And that's why we have been asking people to stay at home during this pandemic.

And though huge numbers are complying - and I thank you all - the time has now come for us all to do more.

From this evening I must give the British people a very simple instruction - you must stay at home.

Because the critical thing we must do is stop the disease spreading between households.

That is why people will only be allowed to leave their home for the following very limited purposes:

shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible

one form of exercise a day - for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household;

any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person; and

travelling to and from work, but only where this is absolutely necessary and cannot be done from home.

That's all - these are the only reasons you should leave your home.

You should not be meeting friends. If your friends ask you to meet, you should say No.

You should not be meeting family members who do not live in your home.

You should not be going shopping except for essentials like food and medicine - and you should do this as little as you can. And use food delivery services where you can.

If you don't follow the rules the police will have the powers to enforce them, including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

To ensure compliance with the Government's instruction to stay at home, we will immediately:

close all shops selling non-essential goods, including clothing and electronic stores and other premises including libraries, playgrounds and outdoor gyms, and places of worship;

we will stop all gatherings of more than two people in public – excluding people you live with;

and we'll stop all social events, including weddings, baptisms and other ceremonies, but excluding funerals.

Parks will remain open for exercise but gatherings will be dispersed.

No Prime Minister wants to enact measures like this.

I know the damage that this disruption is doing and will do to people's lives, to their businesses and to their jobs.

And that's why we have produced a huge and unprecedented programme of support both for workers and for business.

And I can assure you that we will keep these restrictions under constant review. We will look again in three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows we are able to.

But at present there are just no easy options. The way ahead is hard, and it is still true

that many lives will sadly be lost.

And yet it is also true that there is a clear way through.

Day by day we are strengthening our amazing NHS with 7500 former clinicians now coming back to the service.

With the time you buy - by simply staying at home - we are increasing our stocks of equipment.

We are accelerating our search for treatments.

We are pioneering work on a vaccine.

And we are buying millions of testing kits that will enable us to turn the tide on this invisible killer.

I want to thank everyone who is working flat out to beat the virus.

Everyone from the supermarket staff to the transport workers to the carers to the nurses and doctors on the frontline.

But in this fight we can be in no doubt that each and every one of us is directly enlisted.

Each and every one of us is now obliged to join together.

To halt the spread of this disease.

To protect our NHS and to save many many thousands of lives.

And I know that as they have in the past so many times.

The people of this country will rise to that challenge.

And we will come through it stronger than ever.

We will beat the coronavirus and we will beat it together.

And therefore I urge you at this moment of national emergency to stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives.

Thank you.

SPEECH 3: 4 January 2021

(https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-address-to-the-nation-4-january-2021)

Prime Minister's address to the nation: 4 January 2021

Since the pandemic began last year, the whole United Kingdom has been engaged in a great national effort to fight Covid.

And there is no doubt that in fighting the old variant of the virus, our collective efforts were working and would have continued to work.

But we now have a new variant of the virus. It has been both frustrating and alarming to see the speed with which the new variant is spreading.

Our scientists have confirmed this new variant is between 50 and 70 per cent more transmissible – that means you are much, much more likely to catch the virus and to pass it on.

As I speak to you tonight, our hospitals are under more pressure from Covid than at any time since the start of the pandemic.

In England alone, the number of Covid patients in hospitals has increased by nearly a third in the last week, to almost 27,000.

That number is 40 per cent higher than the first peak in April.

On 29 December, more than 80,000 people tested positive for Covid across the UK – a new record.

The number of deaths is up by 20 per cent over the last week and will sadly rise further. My thoughts are with all those who have lost loved ones.

With most of the country already under extreme measures, it is clear that we need to do more, together, to bring this new variant under control while our vaccines are rolled out.

In England, we must therefore go into a national lockdown which is tough enough to contain this variant.

That means the Government is once again instructing you to stay at home.

You may only leave home for limited reasons permitted in law, such as to shop for essentials, to work if you absolutely cannot work from home, to exercise, to seek medical assistance such as getting a Covid test, or to escape domestic abuse.

The full details on what you can and can't do will be available at gov.uk/coronavirus.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable, we are advising you to begin shielding again and you will shortly receive a letter about what this means for you.

And because we now have to do everything we possibly can to stop the spread of the disease, primary schools, secondary schools and colleges across England must move to remote provision from tomorrow, except for vulnerable children and the children of key workers.

Everyone will still be able to access early years settings such as nurseries.

We recognise that this will mean it is not possible or fair for all exams to go ahead this summer as normal. The Education Secretary will work with Ofqual to put in place alternative arrangements.

We will provide extra support to ensure that pupils entitled to free school meals will continue to receive them while schools are closed, and we'll distribute more devices to support remote education.

I completely understand the inconvenience and distress this late change will cause millions of parents and pupils up and down the country.

Parents whose children were in school today may reasonably ask why we did not take this decision sooner.

The answer is simply that we have been doing everything in our power to keep schools open, because we know how important each day in education is to children's life chances.

And I want to stress that the problem is not that schools are unsafe for children – children are still very unlikely to be severely affected by even the new variant of Covid.

The problem is that schools may nonetheless act as vectors for transmission, causing the virus to spread between households.

Today the United Kingdom's Chief Medical Officers have advised that the country should move to alert level 5, meaning that if action is not taken NHS capacity may be overwhelmed within 21 days.

Of course, there is one huge difference compared to last year.

We are now rolling out the biggest vaccination programme in our history.

So far, we in the UK have vaccinated more people than the rest of Europe combined.

With the arrival today of the UK's own Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine, the pace of

vaccination is accelerating.

I can share with you tonight the NHS's realistic expectations for the vaccination programme in the coming weeks.

By the middle of February, if things go well and with a fair wind in our sails, we expect to have offered the first vaccine dose to everyone in the four top priority groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

That means vaccinating all residents in a care home for older adults and their carers, everyone over the age of 70, all frontline health and social care workers, and everyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

If we succeed in vaccinating all those groups, we will have removed huge numbers of people from the path of the virus.

And of course, that will eventually enable us to lift many of the restrictions we have endured for so long.

I must stress that even if we achieve this goal, there remains a time lag of two to three weeks from getting a jab to receiving immunity.

And there will be a further time lag before the pressure on the NHS is lifted.

So we should remain cautious about the timetable ahead.

But if our understanding of the virus doesn't change dramatically once again…

If the rollout of the vaccine programme continues to be successful…

If deaths start to fall as the vaccine takes effect…

And, critically, if everyone plays their part by following the rules…

Then I hope we can steadily move out of lockdown, reopening schools after the February half term and starting, cautiously, to move regions down the tiers.

I want to say to everyone right across the United Kingdom that I know how tough this is, I know how frustrated you are, I know that you have had more than enough of government guidance about defeating this virus.

But now more than ever, we must pull together.

You should follow the new rules from now, and they will become law in the early hours of Wednesday morning. Parliament will meet – largely remotely – later that day.

I know that the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland share my conviction this is a pivotal moment and they're taking similar steps.

The weeks ahead will be the hardest yet but I really do believe that we are entering the last phase of the struggle.

Because with every jab that goes into our arms, we are tilting the odds against Covid and in favour of the British people.

And, thanks to the miracle of science, not only is the end in sight and we know exactly how we will get there.

But for now, I am afraid, you must once again stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

Thank you all very much.

SPEECH 4: 12 March 2020

(https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-coronavirus-12-march-2020)

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 12 March 2020

Good afternoon everybody and thank you very much for coming.

I've just chaired a meeting of the government's emergency committee including ministers from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

And it's clear that coronavirus, COVID-19, continues and will continue to spread across the world and our country over the next few months. We've done what can be done to contain this disease and this has bought us valuable time.

But it is now a global pandemic.

And the number of cases will rise sharply and indeed the true number of cases is higher - perhaps much higher - than the number of cases we have so far confirmed with tests.

I've got to be clear, we've all got to be clear, that this is the worst public health crisis for a generation.

Some people compare it to seasonal flu. Alas, that is not right. Owing to the lack of immunity, this disease is more dangerous.

And it's going to spread further and I must level with you, level with the British public, many more families are going to lose loved ones before their time. And the Chief Scientific Adviser will set out the best information we have on that in a moment.

But as we've said over the last few weeks, we have a clear plan that we are now working through.

And we are now moving to the next phase in that plan.

Because this is now not just to attempt to contain the disease as far as possible, but to delay its spread and thereby minimise the suffering. If we delay the peak even by a few weeks, then our NHS will be in a stronger state as the weather improves and fewer people suffer from normal respiratory diseases, more beds are available and we'll have more time for medical research.

We can also act to stretch the peak of the disease over a longer period so that our society is better able to cope.

The Chief Medical Officer will set out our lines of defence. We have to deploy these at the right time to maximise their effect. The most important task will be to protect our elderly and most vulnerable people during the peak weeks when there is the maximum risk of exposure to the disease and when the NHS will be under the most pressure. So the most dangerous period is not now but some weeks away depending on how fast it spreads.

Today therefore we are moving forward with our plan. From tomorrow, if you have coronavirus symptoms, however mild – either a new continuous cough or a high temperature – then you should stay at home for at least 7 days to protect others and help slow the spread of the disease.

We advise all those over 70 and those with serious medical conditions against going on cruises and we advise against international school trips.

At some point in the next few weeks, we are likely to go further and if someone in a household has those symptoms, we will be asking everyone in the household to stay at home. We are not introducing this yet for reasons Sir Patrick will explain, but I want to signal now that this is coming down the track.

We are considering the question of banning major public events such as sporting fixtures. The scientific advice as we've said over the last couple of weeks is that banning such events will have little effect on the spread.

But there is also the issue of the burden that such events can place on public services. So we're discussing these issues with colleagues in all parts of the United Kingdom and will have more to say shortly about the timing of further action in that respect.

At all stages, we have been guided by the science, and we will do the right thing at the right time.

We are not - repeat not - closing schools now. The scientific advice is that this could do more harm than good at this time. But we are of course keeping this under review and this again may change as the disease spreads. Schools should only close if they are specifically advised to do so. And that remains our advice.

There is no escaping the reality that these measures will cause severe disruption across our country for many months.

The best scientific advice is that this will help us slow the disease and save lives. There

will be detailed information available on the NHS website and from 111 online. But I want to stress something that is very important in the wake of what we're saying this afternoon – I urge people, who think in view of what we're saying about their potential symptoms that they should stay at home, not to call 111 but to use the internet for information if they can.

I also want at this stage to speak directly to older people. Because this disease is particularly dangerous for you, for older people, even though the vast majority this will be a mild to moderate illness, I know that many people will be very worried. And I think we should all be thinking about our elderly relatives, the more vulnerable members of their family, our neighbours, and everything we can do to protect them over the next few months. We're going to need to mobilise millions of people to help and support each other. And I just want to you to know that the government will do all we can to help you and your family during this period. We're not just going to be as you saw yesterday supporting the economy during this period, we will be providing money and many other forms of support, and helping communities to support each other.

And as we have done over the last few weeks, we will continue to provide, as soon as we have it, as much clear scientific and medical information as we can.

So I'd like to end by repeating the two important messages, with which you will have become familiar – it is still vital, perhaps more vital than ever – that we remember to wash our hands.

And lastly of course even if things seem tough now, just to remember, that we will get through this, this country will get through this epidemic, just as it has got through many tougher experiences before if we look out for each other and commit wholeheartedly to a full national effort.

SPEECH 5: 19 December 2020

(https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-19-december-2020)

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 19 December 2020

Good afternoon,

I am sorry to report that the situation has deteriorated since I last spoke to you three days ago.

Yesterday afternoon, I was briefed on the latest data showing the virus spreading more rapidly in London, the South East and the East of England than would be expected given the tough restrictions which are already in place.

I also received an explanation for why the virus is spreading more rapidly in these areas. It appears this spread is now being driven by the new variant of the virus, which we first learned about earlier this week.

Our advisory group on New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats – NERVTAG – has spent the last few days analysing the new variant.

There is no evidence the variant causes more severe illness or higher mortality, but it does appear to be passed on significantly more easily.

NERVTAG's early analysis suggests the new variant could increase R by 0.4 or greater. Although there is considerable uncertainty, it may be up to 70% more transmissible than the old variant.

This is early data. It is subject to review. It is the best we have at the moment, and we have to act on information as we have it because this is now spreading very fast.

The U.K. has by far the best genomic sequencing ability in the world, which means we are better able to identify new strains like this than any other country.

The Chief Medical Officer last night submitted our findings so far to the World Health Organisation and we will continue to be totally transparent with our global partners.

There is still much we don't know. While we are fairly certain the variant is transmitted more quickly, there is no evidence to suggest that it is more lethal or causes more severe illness. Equally there is no evidence to suggest the vaccine will be any less effective against the new variant.

Our experts will continue their work to improve our understanding of the variant.

So we are learning more about this variant as we go.

But we know enough already to be sure that we must act now.

I met ministers on the Covid Operations Committee last night and again first thing this morning, and Cabinet met at lunchtime to agree the following actions.

First, we will introduce new restrictions in the most affected areas – specifically those parts of London, the South East and the East of England which are currently in tier 3.

These areas will enter a new tier 4, which will be broadly equivalent to the national restrictions which were in place in England in November.

That means:

Residents in those areas must stay at home, apart from limited exemptions set out in law. Non-essential retail, indoor gyms and leisure facilities, and personal care services must close. People must work from home if they can, but may travel to work if this is not possible, for example in the construction and manufacturing sectors. People should not enter or leave tier 4 areas, and tier 4 residents must not stay overnight away from home. Individuals can only meet one person from another household in an outdoor public space.

Unlike the November national restrictions, communal worship can continue to take place in tier 4 areas.

These measures will take effect from tomorrow morning.

All tiers will continue to be regularly reviewed in line with the approach previously set out, with the next formal review point taking place on 30 December.

Second, we are issuing new advice on travel.

Although the new variant is concentrated in tier 4 areas, it is nonetheless present at lower levels around the country.

We are asking everyone, in all tiers, to stay local.

People should carefully consider whether they need to travel abroad and follow the rules in their tier.

Those in tier 4 areas will not be permitted to travel abroad apart from limited exceptions, such as for work purposes.

Third, we must, I am afraid, look again at Christmas.

As Prime Minister, it is my duty to take the difficult decisions, to do what is right to

protect the people of this country.

Given the early evidence we have on this new variant of the virus, and the potential risk it poses, it is with a heavy heart that I must tell you we cannot continue with Christmas as planned.

In England, those living in tier 4 areas should not mix with anyone outside their own household at Christmas, though support bubbles will remain in place for those at particular risk of loneliness or isolation.

Across the rest of the country, the Christmas rules allowing up to three households to meet will now be limited to Christmas Day only, rather than the five days as previously set out.

As before, there will be no relaxation on 31 December, so people must not break the rules at New Year.

I know how much emotion people invest in this time of year, and how important it is for grandparents to see their grandchildren, and for families to be together.

So I know how disappointing this will be, but we have said throughout this pandemic that we must and we will be guided by the science.

When the science changes, we must change our response.

When the virus changes its method of attack, we must change our method of defence.

As your Prime Minister, I sincerely believe there is no alternative open to me.

Without action, the evidence suggests infections would soar, hospitals would become overwhelmed and many thousands more would lose their lives.

I want to stress we are not alone in this fight – many of our European friends and neighbours are being forced to take similar action.

We are working closely with the devolved administrations to protect people in every part of the UK.

Of course there is now hope – real hope – that we will soon be rid of this virus.

That prospect is growing with every day that passes and every vaccine dose administered.

The UK was the first country in the western world to start using a clinically approve vaccine.

So please, if the NHS contacts you then get your vaccine – and join the 350,000 people across the UK who have already had their first dose.

Yes, Christmas this year will be very different, but we must be realistic.

We are sacrificing our chance to see loved ones this Christmas, so we have a better chance of protecting their lives so we can see them at future Christmases.

As sure as night follows day, we will beat back this virus.

We will defeat it.

And we will reclaim our lives.

SPEECH 6: 22 September 2020

(https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavi-rus-covid-19-22-september-2020)

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 22 September 2020

Good evening, the struggle against covid is the single biggest crisis the world has faced in my lifetime.

In less than a year this disease has killed almost a million people, and caused havoc to economies everywhere.

Here in the UK we mourn every person we have lost, and we grieve with their families.

And yet I am more certain than ever that this is a struggle that humanity will win, and we in this country will win – and to achieve what we must I want to talk to you directly tonight about the choices that we face – none of them easy – and why we must take action now.

I know that we can succeed because we have succeeded before.

When the sickness took hold in this country in March, we pulled together in a spirit of national sacrifice and community. We followed the guidance to the letter. We stayed at home, protected the NHS, and saved thousands of lives.

And for months with those disciplines of social distancing we have kept that virus at bay.

But we have to acknowledge this this is a great and freedom-loving country; and while the vast majority have complied with the rules there have been too many breaches – too many opportunities for our invisible enemy to slip through undetected.

The virus has started to spread again in an exponential way. Infections are up, hospital admissions are climbing.

We can see what is happening in France and Spain, and we know, alas, that this virus is no less fatal than it was in the spring, and that the vast majority of our people are no less susceptible, and the iron laws of geometrical progression are shouting at us from the graphs that we risk many more deaths, many more families losing loved ones before their time;

and I know that faced with that risk the British people will want their government to continue to fight to protect them, you, and that is what we are doing, night and day. And

yet the single greatest weapon we bring to this fight is the common sense of the people themselves – the joint resolve of this country to work together to suppress covid now.

So today I set out a package of tougher measures in England – early closing for pubs, bars; table service only; closing businesses that are not covid secure; expanding the use of face coverings, and new fines for those that fail to comply;

and once again asking office workers to work from home if they can while enforcing the rule of six indoors and outdoors – a tougher package of national measures combined with the potential for tougher local restrictions for areas already in lockdown. I know that this approach – robust but proportionate – already carries the support of all the main parties in parliament.

After discussion with colleagues in the Devolved Administrations, I believe this broad approach is shared across the whole UK. And to those who say we don't need this stuff, and we should leave people to take their own risks, I say these risks are not our own. The tragic reality of having covid is that your mild cough can be someone else's death knell.

And as for the suggestion that we should simply lock up the elderly and the vulnerable – with all the suffering that would entail – I must tell you that this is just not realistic, because if you let the virus rip through the rest of the population it would inevitably find its way through to the elderly as well, and in much greater numbers.

That's why we need to suppress the virus now, and as for that minority who may continue to flout the rules, we will enforce those rules with tougher penalties and fines of up to £10,000. We will put more police out on the streets and use the army to backfill if necessary.

And of course I am deeply, spiritually reluctant to make any of these impositions, or infringe anyone's freedom, but unless we take action the risk is that we will have to go for tougher measures later, when the deaths have already mounted and we have a huge caseload of infection such as we had in the spring.

If we let this virus get out of control now, it would mean that our NHS had no space – once again – to deal with cancer patients and millions of other non-covid medical needs. And if we were forced into a new national lockdown, that would threaten not just jobs and livelihoods but the loving human contact on which we all depend.

It would mean renewed loneliness and confinement for the elderly and vulnerable, and ultimately it would threaten once again the education of our children. We must do all we can to avoid going down that road again.

But if people don't follow the rules we have set out, then we must reserve the right to go further. We must take action now because a stitch in time saves nine; and this way we can keep people in work, we can keep our shops and our schools open, and we can keep our country moving forward while we work together to suppress the virus.

That is our strategy, and if we can follow this package together, then I know we can succeed because in so many ways we are better prepared than before.

We have the PPE, we have the beds, we have the Nightingales, we have new medicines – pioneered in this country – that can help save lives.

And though our doctors and our medical advisers are rightly worried about the data now, and the risks over winter, they are unanimous that things will be far better by the spring, when we have not only the hope of a vaccine, but one day soon – and I must stress that we are not there yet - of mass testing so efficient that people will be able to be tested in minutes so they can do more of the things they love. That's the hope; that's the dream. It's hard, but it's attainable, and we are working as hard as we can to get there.

But until we do, we must rely on our willingness to look out for each other, to protect each other. Never in our history has our collective destiny and our collective health depended so completely on our individual behaviour.

If we follow these simple rules together, we will get through this winter together. There are unquestionably difficult months to come.

And the fight against covid is by no means over. I have no doubt, however, that there are great days ahead.

But now is the time for us all to summon the discipline, and the resolve, and the spirit of togetherness that will carry us through.

SPEECH 7: 30 September

(https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-30-september-2020)

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 30 September 2020

When I spoke to you all last week I explained that the number of Covid patients going into hospital had doubled in a fortnight and I explained that the rate of infections was climbing steeply.

I said that we faced the sad reality that on these figures we could expect many more daily deaths.

And so that's why we announced the package of restrictions and stronger enforcement last week.

At the same time we've been intensifying the local lockdowns in areas where the disease has been flaring up.

I want to say - I know how tough it is and has been for these communities and I want to pay a particular tribute to the students who are experiencing a first term back at university unlike anything they could have imagined.

I can assure you, assure everybody at university, that plans are being put in place to allow students home safely for Christmas.

I wish I could tell you tonight that the impact of this package has already begun to appear but it will take time to feed through.

And yesterday we saw the biggest rise in daily cases since the pandemic began, today a further 7,108.

We've also had a tragic increase in the number of daily deaths – with 71 yesterday and again today.

And these figures show why our plan is so essential

We now have to stick to it together - and we should stick to it with confidence, because there are many ways in which we are far better prepared than we were in March.

We are on track to hit our target of being able to conduct 500,000 tests a day by the end of October,

We're already exceeding the number of tests per capita that are conducted in Germany, France and Spain.

We have over 2,000 beds that could be available across seven Nightingale hospitals, and we will be able to go further if needed.

We've ordered 32 billion items of PPE, and we'll have a four month stockpile of masks, visors, gowns and other essentials for winter.

By December, by the way, we expect UK manufacturers will meet 70 per cent of the demand for PPE compared with just one per cent before the pandemic.

And in the last six months we have more than trebled the availability of mechanical ventilators to our NHS across the UK to 31,500.

But the best way forwards, to protect the NHS, save lives,

to keep our children in school and the economy moving, is to follow the rules wherever we live.

So I want to thank everyone for the fantastic national effort that we are seeing, continuing to see

And no matter how impatient we may be, how fed up we may become there is only one way of doing this, and that's by showing a collective forbearance, common sense and willingness to make sacrifices for the safety of others.

At this critical moment, when I know people will be wanting to know the details, I will be providing regular updates through these press conferences.

And I have to be clear, that if the evidence requires it, we will not hesitate to take further measures that would, I'm afraid, be more costly than the ones we have put into effect now

But if we put in the work together now, then we give ourselves the best possible chance of avoiding that outcome and avoiding further measures

I know some people will think we should give up and let the virus take its course, despite the huge loss of life that would potentially entail.

I have to say, I profoundly disagree.

And I don't think it's what the British people want, I don't think they want to throw in the sponge, they want to fight and defeat this virus and that is what we are going to do.

Even as we fight Covid, it is vital that people get all the treatment they need for other conditions.

But I must be clear, if the NHS were to be overwhelmed by covid, then no-one could get

any such care.

That's why we must bear down on the virus now, so that we never reach that point,

and I am absolutely confident that with ever increased testing, with better treatments and

of course with the prospect of a vaccine,

we will get through this.

So let's follow the rules,

wash our hands, cover our faces, observe social distancing,

download the app, as 14 million of you have already done,

and together we will fight back against this virus,

protect our NHS and save many more lives.

SPEECH 8: 27 April

(https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-in-downing-street-27-april-2020)

PM statement in Downing Street: 27 April 2020

I am sorry I have been away from my desk for much longer than I would have liked

and I want to thank everybody who has stepped up

in particular the First Secretary of State Dominic Raab

who has done a terrific job

but once again I want to thank you

the people of this country

for the sheer grit and guts

you have shown and are continuing to show

every day I know that this virus brings new sadness and mourning to households across the land

and it is still true that this is the biggest single challenge this country has faced since the war

and I in no way minimise the continuing problems we face

and yet it is also true that we are making progress

with fewer hospital admissions

fewer covid patients in ICU

and real signs now that we are passing through the peak

and thanks to your forbearance, your good sense, your altruism, your spirit of community

thanks to our collective national resolve

we are on the brink of achieving that first clear mission

to prevent our national health service from being overwhelmed

in a way that tragically we have seen elsewhere

and that is how and why we are now beginning to turn the tide

If this virus were a physical assailant

an unexpected and invisible mugger

which I can tell you from personal experience it is

then this is the moment when we have begun together to wrestle it to the floor

and so it follows that this is the moment of opportunity

this is the moment when we can press home our advantage

it is also the moment of maximum risk

because I know that there will be many people looking now at our apparent success

and beginning to wonder whether now is the time to go easy on those social distancing measures

and I know how hard and how stressful it has been to give up

even temporarily

those ancient and basic freedoms

not seeing friends, not seeing loved ones

working from home, managing the kids

worrying about your job and your firm

so let me say directly also to British business

to the shopkeepers, to the entrepreneurs, to the hospitality sector

to everyone on whom our economy depends

I understand your impatience

I share your anxiety

And I know that without our private sector

without the drive and commitment of the wealth creators of this country

there will be no economy to speak of

there will be no cash to pay for our public services

no way of funding our NHS

and yes I can see the long term consequences of lock down as clearly as anyone

and so yes I entirely share your urgency

it's the government's urgency

and yet we must also recognise the risk of a second spike

the risk of losing control of that virus

and letting the reproduction rate go back over one

because that would mean not only a new wave of death and disease but also an economic disaster

and we would be forced once again to slam on the brakes across the whole country

and the whole economy

and reimpose restrictions in such a way as to do more and lasting damage

and so I know it is tough

and I want to get this economy moving as fast as I can

but I refuse to throw away all the effort and the sacrifice of the British people

and to risk a second major outbreak and huge loss of life and the overwhelming of the NHS

and I ask you to contain your impatience because I believe we are coming now to the end of the first phase of this conflict

and in spite of all the suffering we have so nearly succeeded

we defied so many predictions

we did not run out of ventilators or ICU beds

we did not allow our NHS to collapse

and on the contrary we have so far collectively shielded our NHS so that our incredible doctors and nurses and healthcare staff have been able to shield all of us

from an outbreak that would have been far worse

and we collectively flattened the peak

and so when we are sure that this first phase is over

and that we are meeting our five tests

deaths falling NHS protected

rate of infection down

really sorting out the challenges of testing and PPE

avoiding a second peak

then that will be the time to move on to the second phase

in which we continue to suppress the disease

and keep the reproduction rate, the r rate, down,

but begin gradually to refine the economic and social restrictions

and one by one to fire up the engines of this vast UK economy

and in that process difficult judgments will be made

and we simply cannot spell out now how fast or slow or even when those changes will

be made

though clearly the government will be saying much more about this in the coming days

and I want to serve notice now that these decisions will be taken with the maximum possible transparency

and I want to share all our working and our thinking, my thinking, with you the British people

and of course, we will be relying as ever on the science to inform us

as we have from the beginning

but we will also be reaching out to build the biggest possible consensus

across business, across industry, across all parts of our United Kingdom

across party lines

bringing in opposition parties as far as we possibly can

because I think that is no less than what the British people would expect

and I can tell you now that preparations are under way

and have been for weeks

to allow us to win phase two of this fight as I believe we are now on track to prevail in phase one

and so I say to you finally if you can keep going in the way that you have kept going so far

if you can help protect our NHS

to save lives

and if we as a country can show the same spirit of optimism and energy shown by Captain Tom Moore

who turns 100 this week

if we can show the same spirit of unity and determination as we have all shown in the past six weeks

then I have absolutely no doubt that

we will beat it together

we will come through this all the faster

and the United Kingdom

will emerge stronger than ever before

SPEECH 9: 23 November 2020

(https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-covid-19-winter-plan-23-november-2020)

PM statement on COVID-19 Winter Plan: 23 November 2020

Mr Speaker, thank you very much and with your permission, I will make a statement on the Government's COVID-19 Winter Plan.

For the first time since this wretched virus took hold, we can see a route out of the pandemic.

The breakthroughs in treatment, in testing and vaccines mean that the scientific cavalry is now in sight

and we know in our hearts that next year we will succeed.

By the Spring, these advances should reduce the need for the restrictions we have endured in 2020

and make the whole concept of a Covid lockdown redundant.

When that moment comes, it will have been made possible by the sacrifices of millions of people across the United Kingdom.

I am acutely conscious that no other peacetime Prime Minister has asked so much of the British people

and just as our country has risen to every previous trial,

so it has responded this time, and I am deeply grateful.

But the hard truth, Mr Speaker, is that we are not there yet.

First we must get through Winter without the virus spreading out of control and squandering our hard-won gains,

at exactly the time when the burden on the NHS is always greatest.

Our Winter Plan is designed to carry us safely to Spring.

In recent weeks, families and businesses in England have, once again, steadfastly observed nationwide restrictions

and they have managed to slow the growth of new cases and ease the worst pressures on our NHS.

I can therefore confirm that national restrictions in England will end on 2nd December, and they will not be renewed.

From next Wednesday people will be able to leave their home for any purpose,

and meet others in outdoor public spaces, subject to the Rule of Six.

Collective worship, weddings and outdoor sports can resume,

and shops, personal care, gyms and the wider leisure sector can reopen.

But without sensible precautions, we would risk the virus escalating into a Winter or New Year surge.

The incidence of the disease is, alas, still widespread in many areas,

so we are not going to replace national measures with a free for all, the status quo ante Covid.

We are going to go back instead to a regional tiered approach,

applying the toughest measures where Covid is most prevalent.

And while the previous local tiers did cut the R number, they were not quite enough to reduce it below 1,

so the scientific advice, I am afraid, is that as we come out is that our tiers need to be made tougher.

In particular, in tier 1 people should work from home wherever possible.

In tier 2, alcohol may only be served in hospitality settings as part of a substantial meal.

In tier 3, indoor entertainment, hotels and other accommodation will have to close,

along with all forms of hospitality, except for delivery and takeaways.

And I am very sorry obviously for the unavoidable hardship that this will cause to business owners who have already endured so much disruption this year.

Mr Speaker, unlike the previous arrangements, tiers will now be a uniform set of rules,

That's to say we won't have negotiations on additional measures with each region, it's a uniform set of rules

We have learnt from experience that there are some things we can do differently

So from the 10pm closing time for hospitality we're going to change that to so that it is last orders at 10 with closing at 11.

In tiers 1 and 2, spectator sports and business events will be free to resume inside and outside - with capacity limits and social distancing –

providing more consistency with indoor performances in theatres and concert halls.

We will also strengthen the enforcement ability of Local Authorities,

including specially trained officers and new powers to close down premises that pose a risk to public health.

Later this week we will announce which areas will fall into which tier, I hope on Thursday,

based on analysis of cases in all age groups, especially the over 60s,

also looking at the rate by which cases are rising or falling,

the percentage of those tested in a local population who have Covid,

and the current and projected pressures on the NHS. I am sorry to say we expect that more regions will fall – at least temporarily – into higher levels than before,

but by using these tougher tiers

and by using rapid turnaround tests on an ever greater scale

to drive R below 1 and keep it there, it should be possible for areas to move down the tiering scale to lower levels of restrictions.

By maintaining the pressure on the virus, we can also enable people to see more of their family and friends over Christmas.

Mr Speaker, I can't say that Christmas will be normal this year,

but in a period of adversity, time spent with loved ones is even more precious for people of all faiths and none.

We all want some kind of Christmas,

we need it,

we certainly feel we deserve it.

But what we don't want is to throw caution to the winds and allow the virus to flare up again, forcing us all back into lockdown in January.

So to allow families to come together, while minimising the risk,

we are working with the Devolved Administrations on a special, time-limited Christmas dispensation,

embracing the whole of the United Kingdom, and reflecting the ties of kinship across our islands.

But this virus is obviously not going to grant us a Christmas truce, it doesn't know it's Christmas Mr Speaker and families will need to make a careful judgement about the risk of visiting elderly relatives.

We will be publishing guidance for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable on how to manage the risks in each tier, as well as over Christmas.

As we work to suppress the virus with these local tiers,

two scientific breakthroughs will ultimately make these restrictions obsolete.

As soon as a vaccine is approved, we will dispense it as quickly as possible.

But given that this cannot be done immediately, we will simultaneously use rapid turnaround testing, the lateral flow testing that gives results within 30 minutes,

to identify those without symptoms so they can isolate and avoid transmission.

We are beginning to deploy these tests in our NHS

and in care homes in England,

so people will once again be able to hug and hold hands with loved ones, instead of waving at them through a window.

By the end of the year, this will allow every care home resident to have two visitors, who can be tested twice a week.

Care workers looking after people in their own homes will be offered weekly tests from today.

And from next month, weekly tests will also be available to staff in prisons, food manufacturing, and those delivering and administering Covid vaccines.

We are also using testing as the House knows to help schools and universities stay open,

and testing will enable students to know they can go home safely for Christmas and indeed back from home to university.

But there is another way of using these rapid tests,

and that is to follow the example of Liverpool,

where in the last two and a half weeks over 200,000 people have taken part in community testing, contributing to a very substantial fall in infections.

So together with NHS Test and Trace and our fantastic Armed Forces,

we will now launch a major community testing programme,

offering all local authorities in tier 3 areas in England a six week surge of testing.

The system is untried and there are of course many unknowns,

but if it works, we should be able to offer those who test negative the prospect of fewer restrictions,

for example, meeting up in certain places with others who have also tested negative.

And those towns and regions which engage in community testing will have a much greater chance of easing the rules, the tiering, that they currently endure.

Mr Speaker, we will also use daily testing to ease another restriction that has impinged on many lives.

We will seek to end automatic isolation for close contacts of those found positive.

Beginning in Liverpool later this week,

contacts who are tested every day for a week will only need to isolate if they themselves test positive.

If successful, this approach will be extended across the health system next month,

and to the whole of England from January.

And, of course, we are working with the Devolved Administrations to ensure that Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland also benefit as they should and will from these advances in rapid testing.

But clearly the most hopeful advance of all is how vaccines are now edging ever closer to liberating us from the virus,

demonstrating emphatically that this is not a pandemic without end.

We can take heart from today's news, which has the makings of a wonderful British scientific achievement.

The vaccine developed with astonishing speed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca is now one of three capable of delivering a period of immunity.   We don't yet know when any will be ready and licensed,   but we have ordered 100 million doses of the Oxford vaccine,   and over 350 million in total,   more than enough for everyone in the UK, the Crown Dependencies and the Overseas Territories.

And the NHS is preparing a nationwide immunisation programme, ready next month, the like of which we have never witnessed.

Mr Speaker, 2020 has been in many ways a tragic year when so many have lost loved ones and faced financial ruin.

This will be still a hard Winter,

Christmas cannot be normal,

and there is a long road to Spring.

But we have turned a corner: and the escape route is in sight.

We must hold out against the virus until testing and vaccines come to our rescue and reduce the need for restrictions.

Everyone can help speed up the arrival of that moment

by continuing to follow the rules,

getting tested and self-isolating when instructed,

remembering hands, face and space,

and pulling together for one final push to the Spring,

when we have every reason to hope and believe that the achievements of our scientists will finally lift the shadow of the virus.

Mr Speaker, I commend this Statement to the House

SPEECH 10: 30 April 2020

(https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-30-april-2020)

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 30 April 2020

Good afternoon, welcome everyone again to this Number Ten press conference where I am joined by Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, and Sir Patrick Vallance our Chief Scientific Advisor

And I am sorry not to have been part of this trio for so long

I want to thank everybody who has been doing such a good job in my absence and I want to thank the NHS for so much

Including getting me back here and I might add for a much happier hospital visit yesterday

In a few minutes I am going to hand over to Patrick to update you on the epidemic

But first I am going to set out today's latest data

901,905 tests for coronavirus have now been carried out in the UK, including 81,611 tests yesterday

171,253 people have tested positive, that's an increase of 6,032 cases since yesterday

15,043 people are currently in hospital with coronavirus, compared to 15,359 people yesterday

And sadly, of those tested positive for coronavirus, across all settings, 26,711 have now died. That's an increase of 674 fatalities since yesterday across all settings.

This figure of course includes deaths not just in hospitals.

Across this country, therefore, families every day are continuing to lose loved ones before their time

We grieve for them and with them

But as we grieve we are strengthened in our resolve to defeat this virus

To get this whole country back to health, back on its feet

And we are determined urgently and in particular to overcome those challenges that in the last few weeks have been so knotty and so infuriating

I'm not going to minimise the logistical problems we have faced in getting the right protective gear to the right people at the right time, both in the NHS and in care homes

Or the frustrations that we have experienced in expanding the numbers of tests

But what I can tell you is that everyone responsible for tackling these problems whether in

Government or the NHS, or Public Health England, local authorities

We are throwing everything at it, heart and soul, night and day

To get it right – and we will get it right and we are making huge progress

And I will not underrate the work and the achievement of those who are dealing with global shortages, in a global pandemic

They are rising to a challenge we have never seen in our lifetimes

And the same can be said of the entire people of this country Staying in enforced confinement

Not seeing family, not seeing friends or grandchildren

Worrying about their jobs and the future

And so my message to everyone again today is your effort and your sacrifice is working and has been proved to work

Today the number of Covid hospital admissions is falling

The number of patients in ICU is falling

We have so far succeeded in the first and most important task we set ourselves as a nation

To avoid the tragedy that engulfed other parts of the world

Because at no stage has our NHS been overwhelmed

No patient went without a ventilator

No patient was deprived of intensive care

We have five of the seven projected Nightingale wards

And it is thanks to that massive collective effort to shield the NHS that we avoided an uncontrollable and catastrophic epidemic where the reasonable worst case scenario was 500,000 deaths

And so I can confirm today for the first time that we are past the peak of this disease

We are past the peak and we are on the downward slope

And we have so many reasons to be hopeful for the long term

The UK is leading international efforts to find a vaccine

Today Oxford university has announced a partnership with Astrazeneca to develop what they believe could soon be a means of inoculating ourselves against this disease

But until this day comes – and I am afraid we cannot say exactly when it may be

We will have to beat this disease by our growing resolve and ingenuity

So I will be setting out a comprehensive plan next week

To explain how we can get our economy moving, one,

How we can get our children back to school, back into childcare, second, and third how we can travel to work and how we can make life in the workplace safer

And in short how we can continue to suppress the disease and at the same time re-start the economy.

A huge amount of work has been going on on that that plan and as we produce it we are being guided by the science, and we will try to build the maximum political consensus as we produce it across all parties and across the UK

But there will be five key tests that we must satisfy before we can put that plan into action

We must be sure that we can continue to protect the NHS and its ability to cope

We must see a sustained fall in deaths

We must be sure that the infection rate is falling

We must overcome the operational and logistical challenges on testing and PPE

Fifth, and this is the most important, we must all make sure that the measures we take do not risk a second spike that would overwhelm the NHS

We have come through the peak

Or rather we've come under what could have been a vast peak

as though we've been going through some huge alpine tunnel

And we can now see the sunlight and pasture ahead of us

And so it is vital that we do not now lose control and run slap into a second and even bigger mountain

And so to avoid that disaster our fifth and final test is that nothing as I say we do should lift the R or the reproduction rate of that disease back above one

And before I hand over to Patrick I am going to ask for a short explanatory clip about the one

P. 228

And before we come to that clip, let me just emphasise that keeping the R down is going to be absolutely vital to our recovery, keeping the reproduction rate of the disease down, and we can only do it by our collective discipline and working together

I know we can do it, because we did it, we've shown we can do it, in phase one of this disease

This country came together in a way few of us have seen in our lifetimes

To protect the NHS and to save lives and that's why I am absolutely convinced we can do it in phase two as well

Can we play the video now.

Appendix II: New Zealand Corpus
SPEECH 1: 21 MARCH 2020
(https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/pm-address-covid-19-update)
PM Address - Covid-19 Update

Kia ora koutou katoa

I'm speaking directly to all New Zealanders today to give you as much certainty and clarity as we can as we fight Covid-19.

Over the past few weeks, the world has changed. And it has changed very quickly. In February it would have seemed unimaginable to close New Zealand's borders to the world, and now it has been an obvious step as we fight COVID-19.

This is because we are experiencing an unprecedented event – a global pandemic that in New Zealand, we have moved to fight by going hard, and going early.

I understand that all of this rapid change creates anxiety, and uncertainty. Especially when it means changing how we live. That's why today I am going to set out for you as clearly as possible, what you can expect as we continue to fight the virus together.

The first really important thing to remember, is that the vast majority of people who will ever have COVID 19 will only experience mild to moderate symptoms. But there will be some who need more care.

That's why we have to focus on one simple goal – to slow down Covid 19.

Slowing it down, means not having one big tidal wave of cases, but instead, smaller waves - groups of cases that we can manage properly as they arise. That means we reduce the impact on health, on jobs and on our economy. Some countries have successfully managed to do this –but it does mean we have to be ready to step up our action when we need to.

Here's how we will know what to do and when.

Already in New Zealand we have warning systems to try and get ahead of problems and hazards. We all know and recognise signs that tell us when we have fire risk Or when to reduce our water use.

Today I am announcing an alert system for COVID-19. That alert system can apply to the whole country, but sometimes, it may only apply to certain towns or cities.

There are four levels to the alert system. At each level there are things we need you to

do, to keep you safe. And there are things the government will do too.

Alert Level One is where COVID-19 is here, but contained. In this phase we prepare. The basics, like border measures, contact tracing, and cancelling mass gatherings are activated. You'll see that this is where we have been when COVID first arrived in New Zealand.

Alert Level Two is where the disease is contained but the risks are growing because we have more cases. This is when we move to reduce our contact with one another. We increase our border measures, and we cancel events. This is also the level where we ask people to work differently if they can, and cancel unnecessary travel.

Alert Level Three is where the disease is increasingly difficult to contain. This is where we restrict our contact by stepping things up again. We close public venues and ask non-essential businesses to close.

Alert Level Four is where we have sustained transmission. This is where we eliminate contact with each other altogether. We keep essential services going but ask everyone to stay at home until COVID-19 is back under control.

It's important to note, that at every alert level supermarkets and essential services, like access to pharmaceuticals will continue. Shop normally. If we do that, our supermarkets will have time to restock their shelves.

We will use this alert system every time we update our cases, so you'll know if the status in your area has gone up, or down, or stayed the same. And what you'll need to do.

Today I am confirming that New Zealand is at alert level two.

That means the risk of community transmission is growing, and so to stay ahead and reduce the chances of the wave growing, we need to step things up.

We already have many of the measures for level two in place. But there are some that are new.

Here are the things that we need from you:

Today we are asking people over 70 years of age, or people who have compromised immunity or have underlying respiratory conditions to stay at home as much as they can.

That means we need friends, family and neighbours to support our older New

Zealanders and people who may be in this group by doing simple things like keeping in contact and dropping off food or other supplies. And when you do, make sure you are not sick, that you are using good handwashing practices, and keeping your distance.

We also need everyone to start working differently. Many offices have plans for workers to work from home. Others have staggered meal breaks or shift based working. We are now asking you to implement these plans.

We know not everyone can do this. We need and will continue to have health and emergency professionals, transport and delivery staff, supermarket and food production workers, and other essential people continuing on at their place of work. And there are some sectors where work from home is impossible. There are steps these workplaces should take all the same, like additional cleaning, and physical distancing as much as possible.

And finally, we are asking that you limit your movement around the country. This will help us track and contain any spread of COVID-19. That means cutting non-essential domestic travel.

Every unnecessary movement gives COVID-19 a chance to spread.

For those of you who are parents or caregivers, you will have questions about schools and education facilities. At alert level two, schools will be closed if there is a case that effects a school, as we have been doing to date. That may change if we move into higher alert levels. Sending children home at this stage though, doesn't necessarily reduce transmission in the community, but I can assure you we are constantly monitoring these settings to keep children safe. As a mum, I can assure you that is my key consideration.

Finally, this is a time when I know people will want as much information as possible. It's also a time when there is plenty of mis-information. All the advice from the government about COVID-19 and how it affects you is available at www.covid19.govt. nz including more detailed guidance on this announcement.

Till then, I know this current situation is causing huge disruption and uncertainty. And right now I cannot tell you when that will end. This alert system is designed to help us through that – so please do stay tuned as we share daily updates – especially as alert levels can move from one level to the next in a short space of time, as we have seen elsewhere in the world.

For now, I ask that New Zealand does what we do so well. We are a country that is creative, practical, and community minded. We may not have experienced anything like this in our lifetimes, but we know how to rally and we know how to look after one another, and right now what could be more important than that. So thank you for all that you're about to do.

Please be strong, be kind, and unite against COVID-19

SPEECH 2: 23 MARCH 2020

(https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/prime-minister-covid-19-alert-level-increased)

Prime Minister: COVID-19 Alert Level increased

Good afternoon

The Cabinet met this morning to discuss our next actions in the fight against COVID-19. Like the rest of the world, we are facing the potential for devastating impacts from this virus. But, through decisive action, and through working together, we have a small window to get ahead of it.

On Saturday I announced a COVID-19 alert level system and placed New Zealand at Alert Level 2.

I also said we should all be prepared to move quickly. Now is the time to put our plans into action.

We are fortunate to still be some way behind the majority of overseas countries in terms of cases, but the trajectory is clear. Act now, or risk the virus taking hold as it has elsewhere.

We currently have 102 cases. But so did Italy once. Now the virus has overwhelmed their health system and hundreds of people are dying every day.

The situation here is moving at pace, and so must we.

We have always said we would act early. Today 36 new cases were announced. While the majority of these cases continue to be linked to overseas travel in some way, I can also confirm, as did the Director General of Health, that we have 2 cases where public health officials have been unable to find how they came in contact with COVID-19. On that basis, we now consider that there is transmission within our communities.

If community transmission takes off in New Zealand the number of cases will double every five days. If that happens unchecked, our health system will be inundated, and tens of thousands of New Zealanders will die.

There is no easy way to say that – but it is the reality we have seen overseas – and the possibility we must now face here.

Together, we must stop that happening, and we can.

Right now we have a window of opportunity to break the chain of community transmission – to contain the virus – to stop it multiplying and to protect New

Zealanders from the worst.

Our plan is simple. We can stop the spread by staying at home and reducing contact. Now is the time to act.

That's why Cabinet met today and agreed that, effective immediately, we will move to Alert Level 3 nationwide.

After 48 hours, the time required to ensure essential services are in place, we will move to Level 4.

These decisions will place the most significant restriction on New Zealanders' movements in modern history. This is not a decision taken lightly. But this is our best chance to slow the virus and to save lives.

Let me set out what these changes will mean for everyone.

Supermarkets, doctors, pharmacies, service stations, access to essential banking services, will all be available throughout New Zealand at every alert level. If you do not have immediate needs, do not go to the supermarket. It will be there for you today, tomorrow, and the day after that. We must give time for supermarkets to restock their shelves, there will be enough for everyone if we shop normally.

In the meantime, we will be working through practices like those used overseas to make sure that social distancing is maintained at supermarkets when people are undertaking essential shops.

Non-essential businesses in New Zealand must now close. All bars, restaurants, cafes, gyms, cinemas, pools, museums, libraries, playgrounds and any other place where the public congregate must close their face-to-face function.

Over the next 48 hours as we move to Level 4, takeaway services must move to close their operations.

All indoor and outdoor events cannot proceed.

In short: we are all now preparing to go into self isolation as a nation. Just as you've seen with other countries.

Staying at home is essential. It's a simple but highly effective way to constrain the virus – it denies it places to go, and will help give our healthcare system a fighting chance.

So over the next 48 hours every workplace must implement alternative ways of working, people must work from home so that interactions with others are limited.

Essential services will need to put in place alternative ways of working that ensure physical distancing of staff of 2 metres, or utilise appropriate Personal Protective Equipment.

Schools will be closed from tomorrow, except to the children of essential workers such as our doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers and police – this will give them time to plan. This will be temporary, and schools will close entirely from midnight Wednesday.

The school term break will be brought forward. For the remainder of this week and through the term break schools will establish ways to deliver teaching online and remotely. All students across the country are currently being given information on this decision for their parents, including the list of who is considered an essential service. This will be communicated directly to parents.

To be absolutely clear we are now asking all New Zealanders who are outside essential services to stay at home, and to stop all interactions with others outside of those in your household.

I understand that self isolation is a daunting prospect. So we are being practical. You can leave your home for fresh air, a walk, exercise. To take your children outside. But remember the simple principle. It must be solitary. We are asking that you only spend time with those you are in self isolation with. And if you are outside, keep your distance from others. That means 2 metres at all times. This is the single most important thing we can do right now to stop further community transmission.

Travel around New Zealand will also change.

Over the next 48 hours, people will need to get home, be it locally or throughout the country. We have asked all air transport providers to ensure social distancing for that period. After 48 hours we will be moving to air travel only applying to the transport of people undertaking essential services and the transport of freight.

Public transport will also begin to transition over the next 48 hours and will only be available for those working in essential services, for medical reasons, and to move essential goods – including ferry services between the North and South Island.

Further details on the transition we are all now making will be made publicly available on the COVID-19 website.

Now I want to share with you what will happen while we are all in Alert Level 4 to get

ahead of COVID-19.

We will continue to vigorously contact trace every single case. Testing will continue at pace to help us understand the current number of cases in New Zealand and where they are based. If we flush out the cases we already have and see transmission slow, we will potentially be able to move areas out of Level 4 over time.

But for the next wee while, things will look worse before they look better. In the short term the number of cases will likely rise because the virus is already in our community. But these new measures can slow the virus down and prevent our health system from being overwhelmed and ultimately save lives.

To be successful though, to stop community transmission which has a lag time, these measures will need to be in place for 4 weeks. Again, I want to reiterate, you will be able to make regular visits to essential services in that time.

If we after those 4 weeks we have been successful, we hope we will be able to ease up on restrictions. If we haven't, we'll find ourselves living with them for longer. That's why sticking to the rules matters. If we don't – if you hang out with that friend at a park or see that family member for lunch, you risk spreading COVID -19 and extending everyone's time in Level 4.

Our low number of cases compared to the rest of the world gives us a chance, but does not mean we have escaped. I do not underestimate what I am asking New Zealanders to do. It's huge. And I know it will feel daunting. But I wanted to share with you the stark choice we face.

New medical modelling considered by the Cabinet today suggests that without the measures I have just announced up to tens of thousands of New Zealanders could die from COVID-19.

Everything you will all give up for the next few weeks, all of the lost contact with others, all of the isolation, and difficult time entertaining children – it will literally save lives. Thousands of lives.

The worst case scenario is simply intolerable. It would represent the greatest loss of New Zealanders' lives in our country's history. I will not take that chance.

I would rather make this decision now, and save those lives, and be in lockdown for a shorter period, than delay, and see New Zealanders lose loved ones and their contact

with each other for an even longer period. I hope you are all with me on that.

Together we have an opportunity to contain the spread and prevent the worst.

I cannot stress enough the need for every New Zealander to follow the advice I have laid out today.

The Government will do all it can to protect you .Now I'm asking you to do everything you can to protect us all. None of us can do this alone.

Your actions will be critical to our collective ability to stop the spread of COVID-19. Failure to play your part in the coming days will put the lives of others at risk. There will be no tolerance for that and we will not hesitate in using enforcement powers if needed.

We're in this together and must unite against COVID-19.

I am in no doubt that the measures I have announced today will cause unprecedented economic and social disruption. But they are necessary.

I have one final message. Be kind. I know people will want to act as enforcers. And I understand that, people are afraid and anxious. We will play that role for you. What we need from you, is to support one another. Go home tonight and check in on your neighbours. Start a phone tree with your street. Plan how you'll keep in touch with one another. We will get through this together, but only if we stick together. Be strong and be kind.

I am now going to hand over to the Finance Minister to set out the additional support measures agreed by Cabinet today to provide income guarantees to those whose livelihood is disrupted by the virus.

Straight after that Minister Hipkins will talk through some of the specific decisions as they relate to education.

Following that we are making available Commissioner of Police, Mike Bush, who has been playing a key role in the operational side, and John Ombler the Controller of the All of Government response to speak with you and answer additional questions.

SPEECH 3: 25 MARCH 2020

(https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/prime-minister%E2%80%99s-statement-state-national-emergency-and-epidemic-notice)

Prime Minister's statement on State of National Emergency and Epidemic Notice

Mr Speaker

I wish to make a Ministerial Statement under Standing Order 347 in relation to the recent declaration of a State of National Emergency.

Having considered the advice of the Director Civil Defence Emergency Management, the Minister of Civil Defence declared a State of National Emergency for the whole of New Zealand under section 66 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 on March the 25th 2020 at 12.21pm.

This is to manage the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic within New Zealand.

The Minister of Civil Defence took this step because of the unprecedented nature of this global pandemic, and because he considered the response required to combat COVID-19 is of such a degree that it will be beyond the capacity of local Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups to respond to on their own.

This pandemic also requires a significant and coordinated response by and across central and local government.

Also, under section 5 of the Epidemic Preparedness Act 2006, yesterday I issued an Epidemic Notice, nationwide, to help ensure the continuity of essential Government business due to the unprecedented effects of the global pandemic, COVID-19, which is likely to significantly disrupt essential governmental and business activity in New Zealand.

This Epidemic Notice came into effect today, the 25th of March 2020, just after midnight and it will remain for three months with ongoing review, and from which, now further Epidemic Management Notices and Epidemic Modification Orders can be given – particularly across local government, immigration and social services – crucial services that now need flexibility to operate due to the effects of an epidemic in our country and an impending lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

At 11.59pm tonight, we move to the highest Alert Level of 4, and we, as a nation, go into self-isolation.

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The trigger: early evidence of community transmission of COVID-19 in New Zealand. But unlike so many other gravely inundated countries, we have a window of opportunity to stay home, break the chain of transmission, and save lives. It's that simple.

In this fight against a virus, we have some things on our side.

We are moving into this next phase of our response early. Ahead of any potential over-run of our hospitals, and ahead of any deaths on New Zealand soil. But that doesn't mean we should be complacent. And that's why we must take this period of self-isolation deadly seriously.

This means we will go about life very differently to help slow down the spread of COVID-19.

We all have a role to play.

Only those in essential services will leave home to go to work. All others stay home and stop interactions with those outside the home.

Non-essential business premises close.

Events and gatherings are cancelled.

Schools close.

Public transport is reserved for those undertaking essential services and transport of freight.

Domestic air travel is very limited.

New Zealanders entering at our borders undergo strict measures to isolate or quarantine. From midnight tonight, we bunker down for four weeks to try and stop the virus in its tracks, to break the chain.

Make no mistake this will get worse before it gets better. We will have a lag and cases will increase for the next week or so. Then we'll begin to know how successful we have been.

I am fully aware that we have moved with huge speed. No other country in the world has moved to these measures with no deaths and so few infections. We have 5 people in our hospitals, none in ICUs or needing ventilators at this stage.

But we have no time to waste. We could have waited to plan ever intricate detail required to execute this closure, till we could answer every single question or circumstance. But, every hour we wait, is one more person, two more people, three

more people, exposed to Covid-19.

That is why we did not wait. We established an alert system with clear guidance on when we must act, and why. We asked people to prepare, and then moved decisively. These moves will be enforced. And we will be the enforcer.

Yesterday I issued the Epidemic Notice and today the Minister of Civil Defence declared a State of National Emergency, both of which provide us the powers for Government to move the country to Alert Level 4.

This is the second time in New Zealand's history that a State of National Emergency has been declared.

The first was on February the 23rd 2011.

It followed the 6.3 magnitude earthquake in Christchurch. It followed the death of many New Zealanders, the total destruction of much infrastructure and the crippling of essential services.

It was declared to allow the greatest possible coordination of local, national, and international resources to work on rescue and recovery. As the other side of the House would recall well.

Today we put in place our country's second State of National Emergency as we fight a global pandemic, as we fight to save New Zealanders' lives. To prevent the very worst that we've seen in other countries around the world from happening here. To protect our essential health services. To cushion the economic impacts of COVID-19.

A State of National Emergency to preserve our way of life.

Every person still at work, interacting with others, increases the risk of the virus spreading exponentially and means we will be in lockdown for longer.

That means people will be out of work longer, doing further damage to livelihood and lives.

There will be no tolerance for that. We will not hesitate to use our enforcement powers if needed.

Through the early and hard measures we've taken at the border, using the powers under the Health Act, the signing of epidemic notices, now, being in a State of National Emergency, we have all of the legislative means possible, all the enforcement powers, all the tools we need, at our disposal to combat the spread of COVID-19.

Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, today's declaration of a State of National Emergency will allow the Director Civil Defence Emergency Management to direct, coordinate and use the resources made available to manage the response to COVID-19.

The Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management may also control the exercise and performance of functions, duties, and powers of Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups and Group Controllers across the country.

While in force, it will allow Civil Defence Emergency Management Controllers to provide for the:

conservation and supply of food, fuel and other essential supplies

regulate land, water and air traffic

to close roads and public places

to evacuate any premises, including any public place,

And if necessary to exclude people or vehicles from any premises or place.

This declaration helps us limit our exposure, and the exposure of the most vulnerable members of our community, to COVID-19. In short, it will help save lives.

An Epidemic Notice further strengthens our response to COVID-19 and helps us manage effectively shutting down the country for the first time.

It does a number of things including allowing for special powers of medical officers of health – and immediately unlocks powers under the Corrections, Health and Electoral Acts.

But importantly an Epidemic Notice sits as an umbrella over further notices that can now be issued, and which have now been issued, to change and modify specific parts of legislation in a common-sense and pragmatic way to keep our systems working in a time of lockdown – and get rid of particular requirements that are impractical to comply with in a time of an epidemic and when in lockdown.

Specifically for our immigration sector:

Temporary visas are automatically extended to late September.

This comes into effect from Thursday the 2nd of April 2020 and means travellers with a temporary work, student, visitor, interim and limited, visa expiring before 1 April 2020 who are unable to leave New Zealand must apply online for a new visa. An interim visa

will be issued.

Travellers with a temporary visa due to expire between 1 April and 9 July 2020 will have their visas extended to late September. Confirmation of extensions will be emailed directly to all visa holders.

Detailed information is on the Immigration NZ website and covid19.govt.nz website but anyone in New Zealand and concerned about their visa should get in touch with Immigration New Zealand.

For our social service sector, an epidemic notice means:

The Ministry for Social Development can grant emergency benefits to people who would otherwise not be entitled to them (including temporary workers who lose a job) – this sits as a necessary partner to the Government's multi-billion dollar economic assistance package that aims to keep people in jobs and with an income – including wage subsidies for all workers working legally in New Zealand and a deployment package.

It also allows for extra flexibility in relation to the payment, reinstatement, grant, increase, cancellation, suspension, or variation of benefits

These notices and the powers which they carry are not issued lightly.

The restrictions in place on New Zealanders' movements are the most significant in our modern history. I do not underestimate the gravity of what is being asked of you. But we have a limited window of opportunity and we must use every weapon we have.

New Zealanders want to see that these measures are being complied with but in a way that we're used to seeing as New Zealanders.

As Police Commissioner Mike Bush said, the Police and the Military will be working together and there is assistance at the ready as required. If people do not follow the message here today, then the police will remind people of their obligations. They have the ability to escalate if required. They can arrest if needed, they can detain if needed. But these are tools of last resort, in a time when I know New Zealanders will rally. Because that is what we do.

And so, as we enter into a stage that none of us have experienced before, I want to share a few final messages.

Firstly, you are not alone. You will hear us, and see us, daily as we guide New Zealand

through this period. It won't always be perfect. But the principle of what we are trying to do is the right one.

Secondly, success won't be instant. The benefit of what we do today, won't be felt for many days to come. Expect our numbers to keep rising, because they will. But over time, we will see change if we all stick to the rules.

Thirdly, you may not be at work, but that doesn't mean you don't have a job. Your job is to save lives, and you can do that by staying home, and breaking the chain.

And finally, if you have any questions about what you can or can't do, apply a simple principle. Act like you have COVID-19. Every move you then make is a risk to someone else. That is how we must all collectively think.

That's why the joy of physically visiting other family, children, grandchildren, friends, neighbours is on hold. Because we're all now putting each other first. And that is what we as a nation do so well.

So New Zealand, be calm, be kind, stay at home. We can break the chain.

SPEECH 4: 09 APRIL 2020

(https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/prime-minister%E2%80%99s-remarks-half-way-through-alert-level-4-lockdown)

Prime Minister's remarks halfway through Alert Level 4 lockdown

Today is day 15 of Alert Level 4 lockdown.

And at the halfway mark I have no hesitation in saying, that what New Zealanders have done over the last two weeks is huge.

In the face of the greatest threat to human health we have seen in over a century, Kiwis have quietly and collectively implemented a nationwide wall of defence.

You are breaking the chain of transmission. And you did it for each other.

As a Government, we may have had pandemic notices. We may have had powers that come with being in a national emergency. But you held the greatest power of all. You made the decision that together, we could protect one other. And you have.

You have saved lives.

Modelling provided to my office by economist Rodney Jones on the eve of the lockdown suggested New Zealand was on a similar trajectory to potentially Italy and Spain and that our 205 cases on the 25th of March could have grown to over 10,000 by now without the actions we have taken together.

And new modelling due to be released later today by Te Punaha Matatini suggests that the current controls at Alert Level 4 have already had a significant impact on new case numbers and we are on track to meet their most optimistic scenario.

Instead of the horrific scenes we have seen abroad we are at 1239 cases, and the total number of cases has fallen for the last four days with 29 new cases today, the lowest daily number of cases since the 23rd of March, before the lockdown began.

We are turning a corner, and your commitment means our plan is working.

But to succeed, we need it to keep working. Success does not mean we change the course. Removing restrictions now would allow the virus to spread rapidly once again and we would be back to the starting line within two weeks. That's also why we will keep enforcing the rules. In addition you will have seen an increase in police enforcement in recent days, I expect that to continue, including road blocks in some places this Easter weekend. While most people are doing the right thing, some are not.

We cannot let the selfish actions of a few set us back. And we won't.

Especially after all that everyone has sacrificed to get us here.

I have read messages from those who have lost loved ones they couldn't come together to grieve for, brand new parents whose most joyful time has been made so difficult because of separation. Businesses who are worried for their livelihoods and for the family that are their employees.

I am acutely aware of the pain many New Zealanders are feeling.

Over 1 million of our fellow citizens are now supported by a wage subsidy, many of whom will be experiencing a cut in income.

At the end of March there were already an extra 4,866 Kiwis on a benefit, and last week that number increased by another 10,000. And many businesses are reporting that they may not be able to re-open at the end of the lockdown period.

I want to give you all the assurance that I can, that the health and wellbeing of you and our communities has always been on our minds as we have made decisions on COVID-19, but so has your livelihoods.

We will continue to stand alongside you.

We have made record investments to keep as many businesses as possible afloat and people in jobs. We are doing what we can to cushion the blow and plan for our recovery. But as I've said, this is going to be a marathon.

Our plan for that marathon, is to keep eliminating the virus from New Zealand. We can do that by keeping it out of the country, but also by rapidly stamping out any outbreaks that flare up. And that plan is the very best thing we can also do for the New Zealand economy.

The best economic response continues to be a strong health response.

That's why I am announcing the next stage of initiatives to scale up our health response to put us in the best position possible to exit Level 4 and prepare for Level 3.

No matter what level we are at in the future, there are three areas where we need to become water tight.

Firstly, our borders must be tightly managed.

That's why from midnight tonight every New Zealander boarding a flight to return home will be required to undergo quarantine or what we have called managed isolation

in an approved facility for a minimum of 14 days.

I am also signalling that the requirement for 14 days of quarantine or managed self-isolation in a government-approved facility, will be a prerequisite for anyone entering the country in order to keep the virus out.

As an island nation we have a distinct advantage in our ability to eliminate the virus, but our borders are also our biggest risk.

The Government has gone harder earlier with border measures compared to other countries, but even one person slipping through the cracks and bringing the virus in can see an explosion in cases as we have observed with some of our bigger clusters.

The quarantining of returning New Zealanders will be a significant undertaking.

For context nearly 40,000 New Zealanders have returned home since the 20th of March, when we closed the border to foreign nationals. That is more than all of the hotel rooms across the country that we could have properly housed people in.

There has always been urgency around this matter, but simply put, we could not have done it from the beginning, but we can and are doing it now.

A network of up to 18 hotels will be used to implement this approach, of which one to two will be specifically set aside for those under strict quarantine conditions.

The second aspect of our ongoing COVID-19 response is significantly scaled up and faster contact tracing and greater use of technology.

The more we improve the speed and effectiveness of our contact tracing, the better placed we will be in breaking the chain of transmission.

The Ministry of Health is already working on a locally developed app that will assist with contact tracing.

I should caution that it is in the early stages, it will have basic functionality, but even that will be important as it will help update our national health database with users contact details.

Then they will look to add functions. We are investigating the Singaporean Government's Bluetooth-based app TraceTogether that can record interactions between a phone and any other phones nearby that have the app installed. It will often pick up phones at a distance so is not perfect.

The data is stored on the phone and if the user tests positive they then release the data to

the government for contact tracing. Close contacts can then be automatically notified of their need to self-isolate and be tested.

Singapore are planning to open source their technology in the next few weeks. We have made initial contact with the Singaporean Government and registered our interest, and I have a phone call with Prime Minister Lee of Singapore this evening where I will be discussing this technology further.

I think it's important to note that these kinds of apps are useful, but don't solve everything. What's most important is that you have good people, and enough people, working on contact tracing as quickly as possible. We do, and we continue to improve every day.

And finally, this ongoing plan must be underpinned by testing.

We already have incredibly high rates of testing compared to others, but we want to be even better.

We will be maintaining high levels of testing and supplementing it with additional testing to ensure we have greater levels of certainty around the decline in the viruses' spread.

With these three pillars, border controls, rigorous testing and contact tracing, and making sure we use all the technology available we have what we need to win this marathon.

But I know in a race it's important to have some signposts. To know where we are, and exactly what we need to do when we get there so we can all plan.

Let me set out the timelines then for some key decisions that will affect everyone.

Level 4 has come with some heavy restrictions. That has required difficult decisions around services and businesses that can and cannot operate.

We need to give similar more detailed guidance on what life at Level 3 looks like, and we will do that next week. That will give us a window to iron out questions and issues, and make sure we're as prepared as we can be when it comes time to move.

It is then my intention that on the 20th of April, two days before the lockdown is due to finish, Cabinet will make a decision on our next steps. That's because we need to use the most up to date data that we have to make that decision.

That means, if we are ready to move to Alert Level 3, business we will have two days to

implement arrangements.

But let me say again, we will not be moving out of Level 4 early. If we move too early, we will go backwards.

In the meantime I ask every business to use the time you have to prepare for what every alert level may mean for you. Treat COVID-19 like a health and safety issue. Ask whether it's possible for your business to have social distancing? Can you build in contact tracing tools or mechanisms to keep track of your supply train and customers? Help us get ready as a nation for the marathon we must all run together.

I know we can do this. And I know that, because we are already.

So as we head in to Easter I say thank you to you and your bubble. You have stayed calm, you've been strong, you've saved lives, and now we need to keep going.

SPEECH 5: 20 APRIL 2020

(https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/prime-minister%E2%80%99s-remarks-cov-id-19-alert-level-decision-%E2%80%93-april-20)

Prime Minister's remarks on COVID-19 alert level decision – April 20

Tēnā koutou katoa

Over the past few weeks I have often used my time at this podium to acknowledge the people on the frontline.

Today I want to remember the people in New Zealand who have lost someone to COVID-19, or the many more who had the terror of almost losing someone.

Throughout this pandemic there have been individuals who I have tracked the progress of. I didn't know their names, but I knew their status. And I still get a phone call for every individual person we lose to COVID-19.

We may be amongst a small number of countries where that is still able to happen, where the numbers we have lost have been small, but we cannot forget that every number is someone's father, someone's mum, a relative and a friend and someone we have all been united in an effort to protect and to save.

And that is why we as a country took on the challenge of staring down COVID-19 – because we believed that decisive action, going hard and going early, gave us the very best chance of stamping out the virus. And it has.

We have done what very few countries have been able to do. We have stopped a wave of devastation.

Our transmission rate, the number of cases each person with the virus passes it onto, is now 0.48, less than half a person each. Overseas the average is 2.5 people. We have amongst the lowest number of confirmed cases per 100,000 people in the world.

We have a relatively low proportion of serious cases and, according to the Oxford University Coronavirus Government Response Tracker, one of the lowest mortality rates in the world.

Nearly every case identified since April 1 is as a result of overseas travel or contact with someone with the virus, often in existing clusters. The number of individual cases that don't have an obvious connection in that period stands now at only 8.

Our testing has scaled up and we have now tested over 85,000 New Zealanders, one of

the highest testing rates per capita in the world.

In the last few days, we expanded testing to include random testing in Queenstown, the Waikato, Canterbury and Auckland. We have tested over a thousand people this way and so far have produced not a single positive result.

The Director General of Health is confident that there is currently no widespread undetected community transmission in New Zealand.

In short, the effort of our team of 5 million has broken the chain of transmission and taken a quantum leap forward in our goal to eliminate the virus.

Elimination doesn't mean zero cases, it means zero tolerance for cases. It means when a case emerges, and it will, we test, we contact trace, we isolate, and we do that every single time with the ambition that when we see COVID-19, we eliminate it. That is how we will keep our transmission rate under 1, and it is how we will keep succeeding. And we have seen success.

You, all of you, have stopped the uncontrolled explosion of COVID-19 in New Zealand, and I couldn't feel prouder of the start we have made together.

But I also feel a huge responsibility to ensure that we do not lose any of the gains we have made either.

On that basis, New Zealand will move out of Alert Level 4 lockdown at 11.59pm on Monday April 27, one week from today. We will then hold in Alert Level 3 for two weeks, before reviewing how we are tracking again, and making further decisions at Cabinet on the 11th of May.

In making this decision, Cabinet discussed in depth all of the data we have shared with you daily. We looked at the gains we have made in our results, but also our systems.

We considered that the longer we are in lockdown, the less likely it is we will need to go back. We also considered moving alert levels on the 23rd of April, in just 48 hours' time. The sacrifice made to date has been huge. And Cabinet wanted to make sure we lock in our gains, and give ourselves some additional certainty.

Waiting to move to alert levels next week costs us two more business days, but gives us much greater longer term health and economic returns down the track. It means we are less likely to go backwards.

Ultimately, we have taken a balanced approach, and one that the Director General of

Health not only supported, but also recommended.

This time we now have will be used to prepare, on all fronts.

This week businesses will be allowed to get ready to open, such as employers re-entering premises to receive stock if necessary, but we ask that in doing so they stick to social distancing and their bubbles.

The same principle applies for preparing schools.

Schools and early learning centres can be accessed this week for cleaning, maintenance and any other preparations. The current plan is for schools to be able to re-open for a Teacher Only Day on 28 April as part of their preparation, and we expect those who need to attend, to be able to from 29 April. It may take a bit longer for some schools and early learning centres to be ready.

And from a health perspective, testing will continue including giving ongoing public confidence that we are reaching isolated, rural, maōri and pacific communities, contact tracing will be bolstered even further, and we will continue to use the best evidence, advice and modelling we have to make daily decisions to serve New Zealanders.

The most important thing to remember in the meantime though, is that all of this preparation takes us to an alert level in one week's time – a recovery room of sorts – that has many restrictions.

Yes Alert Level 3 allows more economic activity like construction, manufacturing and forestry, but it does not allow more social activity. And for good reason. If we want to make sure that we are a health success story, and ensure our economy can start to operate again without the virus taking off, we need to get the next phase right. The worst thing we can do for our country is to yo-yo between levels, with all of the uncertainty that this would bring.

We need to move with confidence. And that means following the rules.

So here's a reminder of the principles for Level 3 when we get there.

Stay home. If you are not at work, school, exercising or getting essentials, then you must be at home, the same as at Level 4.

Work and learn from home if you can. We still want the vast majority of people working from home, and children and young people learning from home. At-risk students and staff should also stay at home, and they will be supported to do so. Early learning

centres and schools will physically be open for up to Year 10 for families that need them.

Make your business COVID-19 safe. COVID-19 has spread in workplaces, so the quid pro quo of being able to open is doing it in a way that doesn't spread the virus. Important industries like construction, manufacturing and forestry will be able to open, as will retail so long as it is contactless retail.

Stay regional. You can exercise at parks or beaches within your region, but the closer to home the better. Activities must be safe – keep 2 metres away from anybody not in your bubble. Make minimal trips.

Keep your bubble as small as possible. If you need to, you can expand your bubble a small amount to bring in close family, isolated people or caregivers. <

Wash your hands often with soap. Then dry them. Cough into your elbow.

If you're sick stay at home and seek advice from your GP or Healthline about getting a test. And quickly. There is no stigma to COVID-19. None. We will only be successful if everyone is willing to play their part in finding it wherever it is.

These rules will be so important. We all want to continue to progress down the levels. The best hope of getting back to normal as soon as possible, is never getting ahead of where we are right now.

So, to recap. We are currently in lockdown, and are staying there for the next week.

From Tuesday morning the 28th of April we will move to Level 3 and stay there for two weeks. Those two weeks gives us another cycle of transmission to assess how we are doing. From there, we will move if we can and if we're ready.

But only when we're ready, and only when it's safe.

And so, this weekend, ANZAC weekend, enjoy the company of your bubble, stay local, and reflect on the amazing sacrifice of our forebears.

Decades ago they came together in the most testing of circumstances half a world away and helped forge who we are today. It was a very different battle than the one we are in now, but the character of who we are as a country remains exactly the same.

So please, stay strong, stay home, be kind. And let's finish what we started.

SPEECH 6: 7 MAY 2020

(https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/alert-level-2-restrictions-announced)

Alert Level 2 restrictions announced

For six weeks now, our lives have been quite different. We have gone from a lockdown, into Level 3 and the reopening of parts of our economy, as our team of 5 million has stuck to our strategy of going hard and going early to win the battle against COVID-19. We can be proud of what we achieved.

Low numbers of new cases, and 2 days where we were without any. Increases in testing, including actively testing those who might be at risk of COVID-19 as we hunt to find any burning embers of the virus.

Amongst the health response, we have seen the ingenuity of Kiwis who have understood what was needed to operate at Level 3 safely, and have made it work. Even more pleasing, is how well these owners and operators have been supported, with Kiwis being mindful of the people and livelihoods that sit behind a meal, a parcel, a takeaway lunch. Those businesses reopened their doors, and we have begun reopening our economy.

Now we find ourselves in a unique position again.

On Monday Cabinet will consider the next stage of our response. We will do that with the best evidence and advice we can, with all of the data we have from almost one more full cycle of the virus.

We need every number from every single day to get the full set of data and we need of course the view of the Director General of Health.

We will make a balanced decision. One that recognises the impact of restrictions, and the huge impact of restrictions on people's livelihoods but doesn't risk all of the gains that we have made today.

After-all, no one wants a second wave. No one.

As restrictions have been relaxed in other countries around the world, the virus has had the opportunity to bounce back. And in some places it has. Ultimately we need to stay in control

So, the key for us has always been to understand where we are at, at any given time in our battle with COVID, and then make sure we are at the right alert level to put us in the best position to continue beating it.

Every alert level therefore has its own battle. And even when you win one, it doesn't mean that the war is over.

So a quick reminder again of the framework we have been using to help us on this journey.

As the Alert Level system makes clear, different levels allow different amounts of contact with one another, depending on how bad the spread of COVID-19 is. At Alert Level 4 the aim is to 'eliminate' contact with each other, and that is what a full lockdown achieves.

At Level 3 – Restrict – there is still a high risk the virus can get out of control and bounce back, so the goal remains to restrict contact with one another as much as possible.

At Level 2 – The aim is still to reduce close contact with strangers. It acknowledges that the virus is probably still with us, so we do need to behave differently to prevent it taking off again. It is very unlikely that we have hunted down every single case of COVID-19. If stray cases start new chains of transmission we might not find them for a month. So we all have to stay on guard.

Level 2 has been designed to get as many people back to work as possible and the economy back up and running but in the safest way possible.

In a nutshell, the principle behind Level 2, is play it safe.

We will only move there if things are under control, but it won't mean the fight is over. If we adopt a safer way of operating as part of our new normal, we can keep it in check and remain on our path of elimination.

So, now for the principles of playing it safe.

First, we have our constants.

Public health measures remain unchanged. If you are even slightly sick, stay home. I know this is against New Zealander's stoic intuition, but I cannot reiterate this enough, if you are sick, please stay at home. If you have symptoms, even if it's just a runny nose, a sore throat, get a test.

And now more than ever, wash your hands, often and properly, all of the time.

Wash all high-touch surfaces regularly, like your keys and door handles. And don't pass other people your phone.

The border remains unchanged. We will continue to keep our borders closed except to Kiwis. We will continue to isolate Kiwis who come in from overseas in managed hotels away from others.

And our elimination strategy remains in place. Test. Contact trace. Isolate.

This is our COVID business as usual.

There are a few other things we want you to keep the same. And that includes your distance.

You'll hear people talk a lot about how far you should stay apart from others. Let me give you the rationale behind that. If you are sick, then you will sometimes have symptoms that will make you spread your illness – things like coughing. If that's the case, the safest place for you is at home. But, if someone doesn't follow those rules, or doesn't know they are sick, and leaves the house, the safest distance between you and that sick person is 2 metres. So that's why we use that guideline.

Now, as we have moved through the alert levels, you will be coming into contact with more people, in more places. It's not always easy to keep that much distance between you. So at Alert Level 2, playing it safe means 2 metres from strangers, but in your workplace, or places where you're around people you know or who we can contact trace later, we can live with less. Because we can find you and we can find them.

Let's talk then about workplaces at Level 2.

Businesses can restart for staff and for customers.

Services can be provided on customers' premises, for example in people's homes. And people who haven't been into their office spaces can return, but with good hygiene practices in place.

But one thing to remember. COVID is still with us. The fewer people we may have to contact trace in a workplace the better. So while you can go back, it is still worth the conversation with your boss whether you have to be there in person. After-all, many businesses may well have experienced the productivity gains of staggered start times, less congestion, and working from home. There's no reason we should lose what we have learnt.

Each business can work out its own situation. There is flexibility there. What is non-negotiable though is key basic hygiene practices.

That brings me to those places of work where working from home was never an option. Domestic cleaners, hairdressers, retail stores, cafes, restaurants, hospitality – at Level 2, when we get there, these operations can reopen.

But they all must play it safe, and means doing things differently.

For retail, that means physical distancing in store for both staff and customers. It means good hygiene practices and regular cleaning of surfaces and those things people touch often.

Larger retailers and malls will follow the lead of our supermarkets with measures like limiting the number of people in store to enable enough space for physical distancing.

For hairdressers and beauticians, it means wearing appropriate PPE because of the close proximity you have with your customers throughout the day – because we want to protect you, and your clients. This in an area we where have given specific advice, because it is virtually impossible to do this job without being in close proximity to your clients and having a large number of clients in any single day so this system is to mitigate this risk.

And for hospitality, be it a cafe, a restaurant, or a bar, playing it safe means using all of the evidence and advice we have to make rules that work.

This means that only those businesses that can apply the three 's' will be able to operate. They are:

1) People must be seated. That means you can only have as many people in your venue as you can safely seat, and no one, regardless of venue size, can have more than 100. The reason for this is simple – COVID loves congregations. Crowds of strangers with no physical distancing, and no ability to tell who you were standing near is very very difficult. It is much easier to separate people, keep them physically distanced, and trace them, if we make sure people are seated. This also helps to prevent the spread. Congested bars have already produced a massive cluster in New Zealand and we must avoid another.

2) People must be separated – so there must be social distance in a venue between people and tables. I acknowledge that this may mean for some it is not economical to open but that is up to each venue.

3) Each table must have a single server. At every venue there must be table service, not

people going up to counters, as this minimises contact and helps us to trace if we need to.

So the three s's again are seated, separated, and single-server.

Finally, as you can imagine, contact tracing will also be key here. We are working on a nationwide technological fix to make it easier for businesses to record who comes into their premises. This is likely to include QR codes but in the meantime manual or basic digital recording will be used, which was being done by venues before we moved up alert levels.

Of course it matters what happens outside the hospitality venue too – as we have seen in recent weeks.

Operators will have a responsibility to manage customer contact outside their venue. If there are lines for instance – people must be separated.

Those who do not comply with these guidelines will be shut down and lose their ability to operate.

As you can see, there are significant risks in hospitality, and so there are significant rules to manage those risks. These are all principles we have worked through with the Hospitality Association, including the three S's and we both believe they can be made to work.

That brings me to the issue of gatherings. Our journey in understanding this virus has also led us to reaffirm that at Level 2, indoor gatherings are limited to a maximum of 100. I do just want to just acknowledge – that is a maximum, of course many venues for their fire regulations will not be able to have that many and many will not be able to sit that many, and some can't due to physical venue size but we have also learned enough, to also limit outdoor gatherings to 100 people also.

Previously you'll recall it was 500 for outdoors but I think everyone can see that big events lead to risk, and that risk can mean big clusters. I know this will affect many, but we have to keep working on getting things right so that we can get to a place where larger events are possible again. In the meantime, we are thinking about the extra support required for sectors that are impacted by this.

For managed events like weddings, music events, religious services, funerals – these can be held at Level 2 when we get there but with all the same public health guidance,

and with the 100-person limit.

Public venues such as museums and markets can also open again, but again, the same rules of keeping your distance, and good hygiene apply.

Success or failure could depend on something as simple as how often you clean the handrails.

This brings me to issue of bubbles.

First you no longer need to stick to your bubble. You can begin seeing family and friends again. But, we do want you to hang onto the same principles we are using general in hospitality. Space, hygiene, and contact tracing.

If we have large scale events held in people's homes, then all of that becomes harder. That is why at alert level two, we are saying that you can have friends and family over to your home, but keep numbers small so that you can practice safe distancing. This is not the time for a large party or function at your home. We will providing more specific guidance on this in the coming days.

Personal movement

And finally, I come to the issue of moving around New Zealand. At the time of creating the alert level framework, our case numbers were limited. We now know a lot about risk. We know for instance, that so long as you play it safe when you travel, we can minimise the risks. It's what you do when you get there that is the problem. A trip from Wellington to Napier to see your mum is fine. A trip from Wellington to Napier to go to a big conference with an open bar, is not fine.

That's why at Level 2, we will be allowing people to move around the country again, but to do it safely. Keep your distance on public transport, and at airports. Manage your social distancing. Remember the same practices apply wherever you go in the country. And those are practices that those involved in large scale transport are already putting in place.

I know this change will mean a lot to the likes of our tourism industry, and I know a lot of people are keen to support you. In fact I got an email just last night from a wonderful Kiwi named Judith who told me that "when we are on the other side of this, I plan to get a haircut then to take a trip somewhere in New Zealand."

A lot of Kiwis share this sentiment but we need to support our tourism industry safely to

avoid going back to square one.

That brings me to recreation and sport.

It's quite different at Level 2.

At Level 2, playgrounds, gyms, pools and public courts are permitted to reopen, subject to meeting the required public health measures.

All water activities, including sailing and motorised boating can resume.

Some community sports will be able to return to play more quickly than others while the necessary health requirements are worked through, so we ask that you give your club a chance to get up and running again.

We all want to get back to sport, but we want to take enough time to do it safely.

Professional sport will be able to resume domestically under Level 2 with the necessary public health measures in place. Super Rugby and the Netball Premiership League have already confirmed their intention to resume a domestic competition at Alert Level 2 which I know will be cause for great excitement for many.

The rules around mass gatherings will still apply, so there won't be any stadium crowds for now. But sport will be played. Again there is more detail to come on this area and it will be made publicly available.

And last but not least, education.

Early learning services, schools and tertiary education facilities can open at Level 2.

I do want to emphasise that, with so few cases in New Zealand, schools and early learning services are safe environments for children, young people and staff. Additional public health control measures are in place to prevent the spread of disease and to support contact tracing.

Schools and early learning services will engage with parents about children returning at Level 2.

Distance learning is available for those unable to attend school, for example those who are self-isolating, because of potential contact with Covid.

Tertiary education facilities too will maintain the core capability to deliver comprehensive distance learning to students if needed.

If an education facility has a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, they must close on an individual or group basis for 72 hours, to allow contact tracing, and then

potentially for a further 14 days if required.

We also agreed that when we make the decision to move levels, schools won't be opened midweek – whenever the decision is made – they will open at the beginning of the following week.

The same public health messages continue to apply to schools; keep children at home if they're even slightly sick, and good hygiene such as hand washing are very important. Where possible physical distancing is a good precaution. We do, however, know it is near impossible in an early learning environment and challenging in schools. So staying home if sick, good hygiene practices and regular cleaning become even more important here.

And all schools and early learning services will collect information about who's there, so public health can contact people quickly if they needed.

We know parents will have lots of questions, but please give schools and early learning centres time to plan and contact you.

And again a reminder we're not moving yet, this is just the framework

So that I hope gives you a good sense of the rationale and principles of Level 2. The place where we are still limiting contact with strangers, and playing it safe.

As you can see, it is a large step from where we are now. So my last message is an important one.

When it comes the time to move, we want to move with confidence.

That means the Ministry of Health and experts giving us the best advice on how to do that.

If that advice is to move in a phased way because Level 2 taken all at once has too many risks, because for instance it includes gatherings of people, I would rather take that advice and move out slowly than be in Level 3 longer than we need to. And equally, no one wants to make a decision that leads to us yo-yoing between levels.

Now again, no decisions have been made. The Director General has not provided us with advice yet on what decision we should take on Monday. We wait for all of the data to do that. But if reducing risk means taking several steps into Level 2 rather than one big one, that may be what happens. But we all need to wait, and make that call when the

time comes.

And finally, a reminder to stick to the plan.

I know it's Mother's Day this weekend, and the urge to reach out will be strong, but we remain at Level 3, and so if your mum is not in your bubble, then reach out over the phone, or video, send a wee local present and make plans to catch up when it's safe to do so.

There will no doubt be additional questions beyond the broad overview I have given today. Details are available at the COVID website, including examples for different workplaces. We have tried to provide as much as we can, and we've tried to work alongside industry and industry associations to provide guidance, but we cannot necessarily provide every answer. We have given ourselves time though, so if you're a business in particular, and you need a question answered, please do reach out to MBIE for further information.

Ultimately, Level 2 is our safer normal. Not a return to business as usual.

Treasury modelling has told us that we are better off in the longer term to move down through alert levels progressively and not yo-yo, so that does mean getting every stage right. That means both the decision to go there, but also what we do when we get there. If we think of ourselves as halfway down Everest, I think it's clear no one wants to hike back up that peak.

The descent is known to be even more dangerous, and so we need to proceed with caution, with the highest degree of confidence, and to look after one another on the way. I absolutely believe we can do that.

I'm now happy to take your questions.

SPEECH 7: 11 MAY 2020

(https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/level-2-announcement)

Level 2 announcement

I want to start today by acknowledging the sacrifices New Zealanders have made over the six and a half weeks we have been in Alert Levels 4 and 3 in order to beat COVID-19.

Be it those who lost loved ones and were unable to say goodbye and mourn properly.

Be it the children who wrote to me about missing birthdays, and there were many of them, or the many who cancelled weddings or didn't mark anniversaries.

Be it the jobs that have been lost and the businesses that owners spent years building up only to watch it and their workforce suffer terribly.

But for all of that, Kiwis from all walks of life were resolute and determined.

Determined that this was a war we could eventually win, but only if we acted together.

So we formed a team, and as a team we created a wall of protection for one another.

Over the weekend I read a letter from a mother who spoke about what that team effort has meant to her.

Her young son has compromised immunity and as a result is on constant medication. When COVID arrived in the form of a global pandemic she was terrified. But she was writing to me out of sheer relief. There may be no cure, no vaccine for COVID yet, but there was each and every one of you. Every single Kiwi who made the decision to stay home. To make sacrifices. You did that for her boy.

You did it for someone's mother. Someone's father. Someone's child. You created a wall that meant the virus couldn't reach those that it could easily take. And for that, there are many people who are grateful to you – their team of 5 million.

Case numbers remain low, and in the last week we have had two days in a row of no cases.

By the end of Level 4 our R value, the number of people each case goes on to infect was 0.4. Under Level 3 it has remained low. Experts tell us that if the R value stays below 1 we will eventually achieve our goal of elimination.

As of today we have only 90 New Zealanders recorded as having the virus of whom only 2 are in hospital.

None of that has been through luck, but hard work. While we have been battling the virus, we have also built up our health system specifically to act as a defence.

We can now undertake up to 12,000 tests a day. 3.5 per cent of the entire population has been tested and our testing rates are amongst the highest in the world per-capita, ahead of countries like Australia, the UK, Germany, Singapore and South Korea.

A lot of work has gone into building up our contact tracing capability. Dr Ayesha Verrall's report has been instrumental in this regard and the majority of the recommendations have been implemented.

We can now contact trace 185 cases a day and have capacity to contact 10,000 people a day through a new national call centre, established since the beginning of the outbreak.

Identifying new cases of the virus quickly through testing and rapid contact tracing can be 90 per cent as effective as a vaccine in stopping the spread of the virus. But I cannot emphasise enough that speed is of the essence. The clock starts as soon as someone feels sick. If you have COVID, we need every minute to find the people you have been in contact with and isolate them before they are in contact with someone else.

In short, if you have a sniffle, or a sore throat, or a cough – get advice and get a test. Quickly. Please don't be a stoic Kiwi.

If you do your bit, we all must keep doing ours. That means continuing our strong border controls, hand hygiene and physical distancing which have, and will continue, to be our primary wall of defence against COVID.

They're tools that have worked.

But we all know there is more to do. We may have won a few battles, but we have not won the war.

We are still recording cases most days.

New information about the virus indicates it could be spread prior to a person becoming symptomatic, meaning it can be passed on by seemingly healthy people.

And the scientists who have advised us so well to date, say there is still a chance of silent spread in the future and therefore cases taking off again.

So, today I am announcing that Cabinet agrees we are ready to move into Level 2, to open up the economy, but to do it as safely as possible.

Let me set out how we will do that.

On Thursday this week retail, malls, cafes, restaurants, cinemas and other public spaces including playgrounds and gyms, can reopen. All will be required to have physical distancing and strict hygiene measures in place.

You can begin to move around New Zealand, but space yourself out especially if you're using public transport.

And of course health services will restart.

On Monday 18 May, all children and young people will be able to return to school and early learning. This staging is to give parents, teachers and education facilities time to plan.

And finally, on Thursday 21 May, bars will be able to open with all the requirements set out last week, including that seating must be provided, there must be space between tables, and there mustn't be multiple waiters and waitresses serving a single table.

We have left bars till last because they do pose the most risk, as we can see from South Korea that recently opened up there bars, only to close them again after one person created an outbreak of 40 people and 1500 tests.

While we have put in place measures and expectations to make all hospitality as safe as possible, these few extra days really do give us a chance to lock in the data from level three and feel more secure that we're ready for this move.

Overall though, the upshot is that in 10 days' time we will have reopened most businesses in New Zealand, and sooner than many other countries around the world. But that fits with our plan – go hard, go early – so we can get our economy moving again sooner, and so we get the economic benefit of getting our health response right.

And so far, we have.

But there does have to be a new normal. And that normal means that we will be breaking out of our bubbles, we will be around more people. But we can do that, and get more activity going, if we balance that with keeping our distance, and keeping our social gatherings small for now.

Our strength so far has been our willingness to learn about this virus and change the way we behave to beat it.

And we have learnt a lot, especially from our clusters. If you've followed their origin, you'll know that are a slice of Kiwi life. They have started at wedding receptions,

stag dos, a conference in Queenstown that included drinks and socialising, a bar in Matamata. There is a theme – when we come together to socialise in large numbers with one another, there is risk. The best insurance policy we have for that risk, is to reduce the size of our socialising for now. And that is what the Director General of Health has recommended we do, for now.

Parties, big social events or anything designed to be for mixing and mingling won't be allowed to happen for groups larger than 10 people.

Gatherings at home, need to be capped at 10. Church and religious events, weddings, funerals, stag dos – all must be limited to 10 for now.

And if you're wanting to head to a restaurant, or a bar, they won't be able to take group bookings larger than 10. This, alongside social distancing, is our insurance policy.

And why 10? Simple. If something goes wrong with a group of 10, that's much easier to contain, much easier to contact trace, and much less likely that if something goes wrong that the whole country will have to experience more restrictions.

That doesn't mean you won't see larger gatherings than this. People will be at the movies – but they'll be spaced out. They'll be watching sports, but spaced out. People might go to show, but they'll be spaced out. You'll see bars and restaurants open – but they'll be required to have people seated, and spaced out.

We have done what we can to prioritise opening up businesses, but just alter the way we work within them for the next wee while. This strikes the balance between getting the economy moving, but also making sure we have got the next stage right.

I know that many New Zealanders are looking forward to catching up with friends and family, and from this Thursday you can.

But for now it needs to be small. This is a transition out of bubbles, where you can see people you haven't seen in a while; you just can't do it all at once.

I should also add that if you have a family that is larger than 10, you don't need to throw anyone out of the house. We are being pragmatic. But we don't want you having a big gathering yet.

This is also one of the reasons we decided to allow travel again as we signalled last week. It wasn't so much the movement around the country – it was what people did when they got there that mattered. So go and see your mum – just don't turn it into a

massive family reunion while you're at it. Instead, maybe visit a local tourism site or support a local business.

We will look at these remaining restrictions again in two weeks' time and if our numbers continue to look good the number of people you can socialise with, and hold events with, will grow.

Last Thursday when announcing what Level 2 looks like I said the key rule is to play it safe. That we all need to take individual responsibility for our actions and continue to behave like the virus is still amongst us, especially when in public and among people we don't know.

At level 4 and 3 we had success because staying home meant we broke the chain of transmission. We simply weren't in contact with others to spread the virus.

At Level 2 we are now out and about again, just about all parts of the economy are opening up again. What we have balanced in these decisions, is how we can do that, get restaurants opens, malls open, shops open, but also how we can keep them open.

That's why we are asking you all to be incredibly careful as we get back to a new safer normal. None of us can assume COVID isn't with us.

So with that in mind, a reminder of the golden rules of Level 2:

Keep your distance from other people when you are out in public, including on transport.

If you're sick, stay home. Don't go to work or school. Don't socialise. This should be a really low bar.

If you have symptoms of cold or flu call your doctor or Healthline immediately and get tested.

Wash your hands. Wash your hands. Wash your hands. Do it properly.

Don't get together socially or mix and mingle with more than 10 people at once.

And keep a track of where you've been and who you've seen.

Your efforts New Zealand have got us to this place ahead of most of the world and without the carnage COVID inflicted in many other places.

But there are risks ahead, so please be vigilant at level 2. Irresponsible behaviour will take us backwards.

Getting to this position early has saved jobs and businesses but there is a long road ahead to full recovery, and things will continue to be very, very tough before they get better. We are looking to provide more support for the businesses most affected, and to do that soon.

This week the Government will release our Budget, our plan to respond to the economic toll the virus has caused.

It will be one of many steps we take in our efforts to rebuild together.

In fact that is what the Budget is called, "Rebuilding together". At its heart it is the simple idea that our team of 5 million has united to beat the virus, now together we can also unite to rebuild our economy.

And that there is an opportunity to build back even better addressing issues like inequality, our run-down infrastructure and challenges to our environment.

The Finance Minister will have much, much more to say on that on Thursday.

For now we are in Level 3 for just two more days.

From Thursday when you wake up, play it safe.

Remember that wall of defence we built together as a team, now rests with every one of us. So when you're out and about acknowledge your fellow team mates. Enjoy being out more, and seeing others – but keep it small, keep your distance, and be kind.

SPEECH 8: 14 MAY 2020

(https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/%E2%80%8B-%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8Bprime-minister%E2%80%99s-budget-2020-speech)

Prime Minister's Budget 2020 speech

Mr Speaker, business as usual in this place would dictate that today, Budget day, is the day that the Minister of Finance comes down to this house and delivers the Government's plan for the year ahead.

Business as usual, would then have the Opposition stand and give a speech opposing that Budget.

Business as usual would have everyone in this house retrench into our old patterns that the public know so well but, if we're honest, have probably never had much time for.

Today Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has acted as if it's business as usual. But nothing, and I mean nothing, about this time in our history is usual and so neither should our response be.

We have been a Government that, with the support and efforts of New Zealanders, took us through an enormous health challenge. And we will take the same approach to the recovery of our economy.

I make the offer to Mr Bridges and the Opposition today, to see this period in our history for what it is – a global crisis. And to see this Budget for what it is, a response to the rainy day we have planned for.

Now is the chance for us to come together as politicians. To say that a rainy day demands of us that we shelter and protect New Zealand to weather the storm.

Rather than argue about who gets to hold the umbrella, I hope the Opposition steps away from business as usual, and votes for this Budget and the jobs it will create.

Mr Speaker, a mere six months ago nobody would have imagined a world in the grip of a global COVID-19 pandemic, let alone one that would wreak havoc across health systems and economies globally.

I still vividly remember at the beginning of the year reading about the first lockdowns overseas and thinking what a remarkable thing it was. To ask humans to stay in one place for such a long period of time seemed unfathomable.

And yet here we are, having shut our borders, moved into lockdown, and collectively built a wall of defence to a virus that was closing in on the world.

Mr Speaker, there are few things that I think I will ever consider as being outside the bounds of possibility any more. And perhaps that is the same perspective we now need as we start our recovery.

We have to be focused. We have to be decisive. We have to go into this period knowing it will be tough, but that there is hope and possibility.

In short, I give my commitment to New Zealanders that they will see us apply the same unrelenting focus we have had on our health response to COVID-19, to our economic response.

And that work has already started.

From the very beginning we have said that jobs were our focus, and they are. That is why in March we announced a wage subsidy scheme designed to keep people connected to work, and to the certainty and dignity that can come with work.

That programme has supported roughly 1.6 million New Zealanders to date and has meant we have avoided the spike in unemployment other countries have experienced while our country was in lockdown and businesses were unable to open.

It helped get many, many workers and businesses through the toughest weeks so that they now have the chance to reopen and move to recovery.

But we must keep going. The times ahead will be tough. Global predictions are dire. Unemployment will rise, and growth will slow dramatically.

We know as a trading nation that will have an impact, and it will be significant and it will be painful.

We have never sugar-coated what the future will look like, but nor will we pretend there is nothing that we can do about it. Governments have choices, just as we did when we faced COVID-19. And those choices are between sit back and hope, or sit up and act. We have chosen to act.

Today, we are starting by extending the wage subsidy. It won't be exactly the same as the first round, as we look to make it more targeted.

We know there are businesses who are opening up again, but we also know there are some who cannot just yet, while others will take more time to recover.

It serves no one, if in the meantime while businesses are opening back up, to lay off staff unnecessarily. I know how important this is, I have received a huge number of emails from people describing what a difference the wage subsidy has meant to them. In almost all of them they talk about their staff being their family, and how important retaining and looking after them has been.

So today we are extending the wage subsidy for another eight weeks with a focus on providing support to businesses who have been particularly affected by Covid. This will mean employers in sectors like tourism and other small businesses across the country will be supported, and it will ease the recovery for thousands.

And like the first round of the wage subsidy saved jobs, this targeted extension will save jobs too. That's why it is such an important part this jobs budget – we believe it's the best thing we can do at this phase of our recovery to help businesses who are getting back on their feet to keep on their staff.

But our response must go beyond supporting those still in work. That isn't enough. Too many people have already lost their jobs and we need to support their path back to employment.

For them, we must be swift. We must be practical. But we also owe it to ourselves to take this opportunity to solve the problems of both today and yesterday as we go.

If I had asked you before COVID, what it is that we must address as a nation, what our common challenges were, I would imagine that many people would write a similar list. We have long faced a housing crisis, our environment has been suffering, inequality and child poverty have all been issues we've had to tackle.

In three years' time I want to look back and say that COVID was not the point those issues got worse, but the chance we had to make them better.

We can emerge from this crisis stronger than we were before. That's why we are focussed on jobs, but also jobs that solve these entrenched problems.

So let's look at how.

We have had a skills deficit, and now on top of that we have more people who need the chance to train or retrain. That's why this Budget will target the vocational training and apprenticeships we need most, and make them free.

And I don't just mean for school leavers, I mean everyone.

It will mean more people training in building and construction, in agriculture, in manufacturing, community health, counselling and care work. This will help those who have lost their jobs retrain, and others to train on the job.

And while many have lost work, there are others who have labour shortages.

Even through COVID-19 people have wanted to buy our high quality food and fibre, and that's why in this Budget we'll be looking to partner and support 10,000 New Zealanders into primary sector jobs.

For our young people, those who so often carry the brunt of a crisis like this, we will fund 1,000 more places in trades academies, expand He Poutama Rangatahi to support young people into work in West and South Auckland, Hamilton, Porirua and East Christchurch, and build group training schemes that support Maori apprenticeships.

All in all Mr Speaker, this is a $1.6 billion investment into New Zealand's future, and into rebuilding apprenticeships, into closing our skills gap.

And that will be so important because of our next challenge. Housing.

Our response to COVID on the face of it, had a very simple premise early on – stay home, save lives. That simple, simple requirement forced us all as a country to ask the question – what if you don't have a home?

The answer was simple, we will find you one. And through hard work and huge collaboration, between Government, local government, iwi and the community sector, that is exactly what happened. In the midst of the crisis we housed the chronically homeless in New Zealand.

Now we need to keep it that way.

In this Budget we are announcing an extra 8000 houses, providing $5 billion of construction stimulus into the economy over the next 4 to 5 years. This will be split between public and transitional housing and, when combined with what we have already funded, takes the number of housing places to 17,000.

This represents the largest public housing building programme in recent decades, and I hope means that COVID 19 will be remembered as a period where New Zealand didn't just stay home, it made sure everyone had a home.

Since coming into Government we have seen countless other examples of the under investment in New Zealand's infrastructure. We have already invested $12 billion in

the NZ Upgrade Programme, and our $3 billion fund in this Budget will be squarely focused on projects that are ready to create jobs, but also tackle issues like water infrastructure.

But perhaps there is no better example of the way this Budget can bring together the challenges of today, and the challenges of yesterday, than the jobs it will create in regional New Zealand to restore our environment.

Whether it's working with iwi on pest control to prevent the loss of North Island Forests, working with farmers to tackle wallaby, fence waterways or stabilise riverbanks – or working with council, local businesses and DOC to employ thousands of people to restore wetlands, boost predator controls, improve tracks and huts – this is a win, win. Wilding pine controls alone require on foot labour, chain saw operators, heavy machinery and helicopters. It has a knock on effect to accommodation, vehicles, and repairs maintenance and food providers.

In total this Budget creates almost 11,000 jobs for our environment, for our regions, for our people.

And that brings me to the last challenge, child poverty.

We know this has the potential to get even worse than where we are now. And while we moved quickly even before lockdown, providing increasing Government support to those out of work through benefit increases and the winter energy payment, today we focus on kids with a major expansion of the food in schools programme.

We started this programme last year, now we expand healthy lunches in schools so that around 200,000 more children across the country benefit. Based on what we know, this will also create an estimated 2,000 jobs in local communities. And equally important it will mean in the tough days ahead we can guarantee our most vulnerable kids will get a filling, healthy lunch every school day.

Mr Speaker, I want to finish where I started. On our businesses, on our job creators, on our innovators and on those who have carried such a huge burden over these last weeks and months.

We know they have faced challenges too, that pre date COVID. The cost of innovation, the need to constantly make productivity gains. The challenge of growing beyond New Zealand, if you choose to make that leap.

That's why the Budget provides incentives and grants to encourage e-commerce, train more digital advisors and provide information and support for SMEs wanting to incorporate e-commerce into their businesses. It sees a significant increase in support for entrepreneurs and businesses looking to invest in new products and R&D.

This will help create the jobs New Zealand needs. And it puts $216 million into increasing the number of exporters receiving intensive support from New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, and increasing digital services and tools.

Mr Speaker, I said yesterday that this Budget would be about jobs, jobs, jobs. In total it seeks to save as many as 140,000 of them over the next two years, and to support the growth of 370,000 more over four years.

The Budget sets out a clear plan to generate new green jobs, rural jobs, jobs rebuilding crumbling infrastructure and new training opportunities for those who need it.

But even this is just stage one.

You have heard today about some of our sector recovery funds. We must keep working alongside those industries who have been most gravely affected. Tourism has a package announced today. In coming days we will do the same for arts, sports and large events.

But just as the science informing our health response evolved, so too will the economic situation both global and domestic. It is for this reason that the Finance Minister has announced today the next suite of actions we are putting in place but has also held back funds to tackle the next phase of our rebuild.

We know business craves certainty in order to plan how it will operate. And while there is much we cannot predict in these uncertain times, what I can promise is that we know this is not the end of what we need to do.

We will keep working with you, we will keep supporting workers and businesses.

Mr Speaker, you can see the strength of this Government in this Budget. I want to thank our Coalition partner and the Deputy Prime Minister for their partnership in bringing this Budget today. I'd like to also thank our Confidence and Supply partner the Greens for their consistent advocacy to be bold in tackling the challenges of both today and tomorrow.

Finally, I want to thank the Minister of Finance. Grant thank you for your determination and your compassion. Through this crisis you have acted to protect the jobs and

livelihoods of millions of New Zealanders. Today you deliver a Budget that will carry us through this crisis and gets the economy moving.

So now, we get on with it.

We went hard and early to fight COVID-19 and that success has opened up economic opportunities. Now, it's time to make the most of the head start New Zealand has with its economic recovery.

This Budget shows how we are positioning New Zealand for that right now. It shows that we know this is not the time for business as usual, it's the time for a relentless focus on jobs, on training, on education, and the role they all can play to support our environment, and our people.

So Mr Speaker, let's begin our recovery and let's rebuild, together.

SPEECH 9: 8 JUNE 2020

(https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/new-zealand-moves-alert-level-1)

New Zealand moves to Alert Level 1

Today is day 26 of Alert Level 2 and day 17 without any new cases of Covid-19 in the country.

Today is also day 75 of being in a Covid alert level of any kind.

Our team of 5 million has both sacrificed and achieved a huge amount in just under 11 weeks as the world reckoned with, and continues to reckon with, a virus that went from obscurity at the start of the year to a global pandemic that will linger, with second waves a constant reality.

As it spread rapidly around the world, we all saw people losing their loved ones and their livelihoods at a rate that was never acceptable to us.

And so here in New Zealand we went hard and early with a single plan that had a dual purpose – and to protect lives and livelihoods.

Self isolation for all returning travellers came into place first – 17 days after our first case.

We closed our borders to everyone but New Zealanders 20 days after our first case.

Our first economic package, including the critically important wage subsidy scheme, was in place 19 days after the first case. Most other countries took more than 40.

And then New Zealanders did something remarkable in our fight to beat Covid-19. We united in unprecedented ways to crush the virus.

Our lockdown was in place 26 days after our first case, when we had just over 200 cases.

Google tracking showed that during our lockdown, New Zealanders massively reduced their movements – by 91 per cent to retail and recreation – better than Australia, the UK, the United States, and nearly every other place we compare ourselves to.

Had we not acted, 11 days in to our lockdown we were projected to have 4000 cases. We had 1000 and one of the lowest rates per capita in the world.

That was what the sacrifice of our team of 5 million was for. To keep one another safe, and to keep one another well.

And as much as we could, we have.

We acknowledge those we have lost in our battle to beat Covid-19.

Our goal was also to come out the other side as quickly and as safely as we could.

A place where our borders continue to be our first line of defence but where all current rules and restrictions on businesses and services are essentially lifted.

Where all the rules for hospitality, such as single service, separated tables, and people being seated, all end.

Where there is no requirement for physical distancing in workplaces and in public places.

Where all gatherings of any size can occur.

Where life feels as normal as it can in the time of a global pandemic.

And today, 75 days later, we are ready.

Today, there are no active cases in New Zealand.

We have tested almost 40,000 people for Covid-19 in the past 17 days and none have tested positive.

We have had no one in hospital with Covid-19 for 12 days.

It's been 40 days since the last case of community transmission, 22 days since that person finished their self-isolation.

And so today I can announce that Cabinet has agreed we will now move to Level 1 – to get our economy fully open again – and we will start almost immediately.

We move down to Covid-19 Alert Level 1 from midnight tonight.

With over 100,000 new cases being reported each day, the challenge of Covid remains around the globe and so it remains here. We are not immune to what is happening in the rest of the world.

But unlike the rest of the world, not only have we protected New Zealanders' health, we now have a head-start on our economic recovery.

That's because at Level 1 we become, if not the most open, one of the most open economies in the world.

Oxford University publishes a Government response stringency index, ranking countries from 0 to 100 in terms of their level of restrictions.

Before today's move to Level 1, New Zealand was at 33.3, while Australia was at 62.5. We were already nearly twice as open as they were.

The Reserve Bank's analysis shows the economy under Level 1 is expected to be operating just 3.8 per cent below normal levels.

That's an improvement from the estimated 8.8 per cent below normal under Level 2, 19 per cent below normal under Level 3, and 37 per cent under Level 4.

And it was encouraging to see economists recognise that activity under Level 2 was also stronger than expected. Westpac last week said the economic recovery was tracking faster than expected, and that activity like heavy and light traffic movement, and electricity use is back to, or above, pre-Covid levels.

Zespri too has reported that despite the global challenge of Covid, its exports are well ahead of last year, with 5.7 million more trays shipped this season so far than last season along with its highest sales yet in Europe as demand for healthy produce grows.

At Level 1, we expect the continuation of recovery.

After all, at Level 1 we can hold public events without limitations.

Private events such as weddings, functions and funerals without limitations.

Retail is back without limitations.

Hospitality is back without limitations.

Public transport and travel across the country is fully opened.

This freedom from restrictions relies though heavily on the ongoing role that our border controls will play in keeping the virus out.

We must remain mindful of the global situation and the harsh reality that the virus will be in our world for some time to come.

We are confident we have eliminated transmission of the virus in New Zealand for now, but elimination is not a point in time – it is a sustained effort.

We almost certainly will see cases here again – I want to say again, we will almost certainly see cases here again – but when that occurs it will not mean we have failed. It is the reality of this virus. We must be and we are prepared for future cases.

That's the reasons our border remains our first line of defence as we aim not to import the virus. Borders remain closed at 15 of 17 comparable countries.

Our managed isolation and quarantine at the border will continue and it will be as important as ever as we know this is a potential pathway.

And that is key because we want to not just move to Level 1 – we want to stay there.

And so there is a key ask I have of all of you today, of businesses.

We are asking all businesses and services where the public visit or enter to provide people the opportunity to maintain their own diaries of where they've been.

And so our All of Government team will continue working with sector groups, businesses, hospitality firms, churches, schools and others to encourage them to display QR codes via posters at the entrance of premises – as most of you will have seen at businesses as you were out and about at the weekend – so that everyone can maintain their diaries via the NZ Covid Tracer App.

Manual sign-in is no longer required, but we do ask that you put up a QR code poster at the door of your premises so people can scan in and can keep a record for themselves. Ongoing improvements will be made to ensure these QR posters are as accessible as possible for businesses.

We have also worked with the events sector on a voluntary code to ensure attendees' details are captured at these bigger events where we know the virus can spread easily.

The reason for all of this is simple.

If we get one or two cases in future, which will remain possible for some time to come due to the global situation and nature of the virus, we need to shut down those cases fast.

The last thing we want to do is move back up the alert system again.

So this is a key new behaviour we are asking all New Zealanders to adopt at Level 1.

You can do and go wherever you like, we just ask you keep a record of where you have been by scanning in – or noting down your movements for yourself.

I have one more thing to ask.

At Level 2, agencies have been managing the return of employees to work with around 50 per cent of people back at their places of work last week.

Now, at Level 1, you can, unless you feel unwell, go back to your place of work.

There has been some good adaptation over the past couple of months with flexible working. This is progress and has helped people with care arrangements and has also helped to avoid traffic congestion – these things we should not lose.

But we can balance that with ensuring we also have thriving CBDs.

For our part we have asked the State Services Commission to issue new workplace

guidance to make it clear that every public sector worker should return to their usual place of work, taking into account flexible work policies.

We've got to Level 1, now let's make our next goal supporting our recovery, right across the economy.

I know that having such a firm sight on success for so long has sometimes made the road we've taken seem longer and the steps we've taken seem more laboured.

At every step there have been those who've pushed us to do something different, to go faster or further, but our collective results speak I think for themselves.

That caution and hard work got us down the mountain safely when the descent is always the most perilous part.

Moving to Level 1 now the dividend for everyone's hard work, for now.

But we need our team of 5 million for the phase.

And that is to get New Zealand moving again, as we move from the collective call to action of Unite against Covid-19 to Unite for Recovery.

I encourage you to buy, play and experience New Zealand-made to get our country moving again. Consider it an extra form of support, to visit our country, buy our local products and support our local businesses.

For my part, this week is about the Government's recovery efforts, and focus on jobs.

And you'll be seeing that in my agenda.

Tomorrow I will be in the Bay of Plenty, visiting a kiwifruit and avocado packhouse – to discuss how we can further assist the sector to attract workers, noting horticulture has already picked up some 2000 workers who have lost their jobs due to Covid. I will also check in with our Mana in Mahi scheme that gives employers the equivalent of the unemployment benefit to hire those who might be reliant on it, at an electrical business installing solar power and heat pumps in Tauranga.

On Wednesday I'll be in Kaikoura for a tourism announcement.

On Thursday I'm in Auckland making a health infrastructure announcement and on Friday, following our $30 billion investment to protect jobs and restart the economy due to Covid, I will speak to the Vision Week web summit where I will share further details of how the Government is working with business on New Zealand's economic recovery

and rebuild from Covid-19.

While we're in a safer, stronger position there's still no easy path back to pre-Covid life but the determination and focus we have had on our health response will now be vested in our economic rebuild.

And so while the job is not done, there is no denying this is a milestone. So can I finish with a very simple thank you New Zealand.

SPEECH 10: July 15 2020

(https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/next-steps-covid-response)

Next steps in COVID response

Today I am setting out our plan in the event we have a new case of community transmission of COVID-19 in New Zealand.

I will take a bit of time to do that, and then I'll be happy to take questions at the end. Since we moved to level one, we have continued work to ensure we have an ongoing level of preparedness for resurgence in New Zealand.

The framework I will be speaking to today has been through a Cabinet process, and is more important than ever.

It is designed to give the public, and our business community as much certainty as we can around what to expect if new cases inside our borders are found. And that is something we all must prepare for.

We have been 75 days without community transmission here in New Zealand, but COVID is now exploding outside our borders and every country we have sought to replicate or have drawn from in the fight against COVID has now experienced further community outbreaks.

We only need to look to Victoria, New South Wales, Hong Kong, Singapore and Korea to see examples of other places that like us had the virus under control at a point in time only to see it emerge again.

This does not mean anyone has failed- it means perfection in the response to a virus, and a pandemic, is just not possible. That is certainly the case as we see this pandemic continue to grow.

The World Health Organisation this week reported the global infection rate is nearing 13 million cases, with over 215,000 cases reported globally on Tuesday.

To put that into perspective when we closed our borders on the 19th of March there were 240,000 cases in the world in total. It's fifty times worse than that now.

We see this growth in cases around the world reflected in the steady stream of New Zealanders returning from overseas, some of whom are bringing the virus back with them, which we continue to contain at our borders.

In the main the pattern of returnees carrying the virus reflects the state of COVID in the

world, with our cases coming from places like India, the US and the UK.

New modelling by Rodney Jones indicates there will be over 100,000 new cases a day in the US by the end of the month, nearly 70,000 cases a day in India and nearly 10,000 cases a day across Europe by early August.

We will continue to welcome home New Zealanders from these places as citizens, as they have a right to come home to their legal place of residence. But with that right comes risk, and the need to continue ongoing stringent measures to keep them, and everyone around them, safe.

Victoria in particular is a cautionary tale for New Zealand that we must learn from.

It appears their current outbreak is linked to a managed isolation facility similar to the ones we run here and that the entire outbreak was seeded by just two cases.

That goes to show how quickly the virus can spread and it can move from being under control to out of control, and that even the best plans still carry risk in a pandemic.

It's important to remember that our border facilities have served us well so far.

Our testing regime is picking up cases amongst new arrivals who are in quarantine and nearly 30,000 people have been through a facility without a case of COVID transferring to the community. But there is limited room for error.

Just as many of our frontline health workers like nurses who were in contact with COVID patients got the virus from those patients during level 4 lockdown, our frontline border and airline staff and staff in our managed isolation facilities are in daily contact with returnees carrying the virus. Even our most experienced and trained support workers have picked up COVID.

Experts tell us that even with the best precautions possible, the chances of the virus passing from a surface, or contact with someone who is a carrier are high.

We must prepare now for that eventuality and have a plan at the ready in the event that it does.

The first thing we need to do is continue to ensure our border and our managed isolation facilities stay as tight as they can be.

We have ensured our frontline workers at the border are safe by wearing appropriate PPE, getting regularly tested and that our systems for managing returnees are robust and limit the risk of spread. As I say the system has done the job it was set up to do to date.

The work done by Minister Woods and Air Commodore Webb in recent weeks have made significant additional improvements in this space, and we will continue to improve the system. Australia is currently conducting an audit of its quarantine system and I've asked Prime Minister Morrison to share any insights so we can continually learn and improve on what we do here.

But again, no system is 100% fool proof and around the world we are seeing even the most rigorous measures being tested by the virus.

And so today I am setting out the next stage in our COVID plan in the event we have new cases in the community.

The first thing to note is that the Government's strategy for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic remains elimination. That has not and will not change.

Allowing our hospitals to be overrun, further deaths and the economy to close down again for an indefinite period of time is not a strategy.

We have seen overseas the toll that that takes on lives and economies.

We have said from the start that the best approach for the economy is a strong health response, and the evidence has supported that approach throughout.

We can already see that with New Zealand's economy more open than nearly anywhere in the world because of the steps we took to break the chain of transmission under lockdown.

Our plan moving forward seeks to protect that position and minimise any economic impact of future cases.

So in the event of new community cases we would move immediately to implement our "Stamp it Out" approach again.

There are two key things to remember.

Firstly, the simple approach of limiting the ability for the virus to move from human to human to break the chain of transmission remains the foundation of our response no matter what.

That's why our key public health measures remain important for protecting ourselves and each other from the spread of disease. They are:

- wash your hands regularly and thoroughly
- cough or sneeze into your elbow

- don't go to work, socialise, or be out in public if you are sick

- Keep a digital diary of your whereabouts by downloading and using the COVID Tracer app.

These principles are key to the second ongoing tool in our response.

Rapid contact tracing, testing, and use of isolation and quarantine for those exposed to COVID. That is why the Covid tracer app, and whatever other means of recording where you have been remains vital. Every time you step into the world I want you to ask this question "if I come into contact with COVID today, how will I know, and how will others know".

If you are in or near a situation of community transmission this will be an exceptionally important tool for contact tracing, and for finding you.

In this area we are constantly looking at how we can use new technology to strengthen our response, the same goes for testing.

But these are the principles we are all familiar with. Now I want to touch on what would be different.

The alert level system and framework remains in place. But in the event of cases, rather than apply the framework nationally, we would look to apply our Alert Level system at a localised or regional level in the first instance.

Our priority will be to control any cases with the least intrusive measures, and over the smallest area we can.

In practical terms that means doing absolutely everything possible to avoid the entire country returning to Alert Levels 3 or 4 as a measure of last resort.

"Our 'Stamp it Out' approach is scenario specific meaning that our actions will depend on the severity of the situation.

And of course when we see the first COVID-19 case beyond the border, you can expect us to move very quickly and very firmly to contain it while we gather information on the situation we are facing.

However there are three broad starting scenarios we can plan around.

1. A case or a number of cases in a community.

2. A larger number of cases or cluster in a region

3. Multiple clusters that have spread nationally

Let me run through what each scenario might look like.

First a contained case or cases within a community.

We would be looking at applying strong restrictions but only applied locally in a neighbourhood, town or city to contain the virus and stopping it spread.

We would likely remain at Alert Level 1 nationally.

The local measures to contain the case would involve rapid contact tracing and isolation of cases and their contacts, scaled up and targeted testing of people connected to the case, such as workmates, those they live with or those in their neighbourhood.

The point with this scenario is we would look at act hard and fast, but local in an attempt to ring fence the virus.

The second scenario is a large cluster within a region.

Here, a significant increase in testing would be the priority. We would look to undertake much wider community testing, on top of testing any contacts or potential contact of those with the virus. This could look like it did in Victoria where health staff went door to door to test people in affected areas.

We would also take steps to stop the spread to other parts of the country so a regional shift in Alert Level would likely be applied that restricted travel. This would mean travel in or out of the city, town or region could be stopped, people in that place asked to work from home, and local restrictions on gatherings implemented.

The aim here is to contain the spread away from other areas to avoid the whole country having to put in place restrictions so we can remain at Alert Level 1 nationally, depending on the evidence of risk of spread outside the region.

The final scenario is if multiple clusters, spread nationally.

In this scenario we would most likely apply a nationwide increase in Alert Level to stop transmission.

There is an assumption in all of these scenarios that we know whether we have a contained outbreak or not. Where we don't have full information, we will take a precautionary approach, and scale back as needed, rather than run the risk of doing too little too late.

Ultimately though, as with the original application of the Alert Levels we will be guided by science and what we know works. Internationally the evidence remains that going

hard and early is the best way to stop the virus and ultimately delivers the best results for human health and the economy over half measures that aren't as effective at getting on top of the virus and sees us in lockdown for longer.

We have learnt much from the first wave at stopping the chain of transmission and eliminating community transmission.

We learnt if we act fast we can stop the virus spreading.

We learnt that if we restrict contact we can stop the virus spreading and we learnt that everyone being vigilant and following the rules worked.

No one wants to go backwards but the reality is our fight against the virus is not over and we must have a plan at the ready to protect our current position if it comes back.

And I believe we can do that. Because the facts show when New Zealand's team of 5 million goes about implementing a plan it works, no matter what comes our way.

I'll now take questions.

Down the rabbit hole of Victorian Femininity:
An investigation of the deviation from Victorian femininity in *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* and Tim Burton's Alice in Wonderland

WONG Cheuk Yiu

(Supervisor: Professor Eddie TAY)

In recent decades, women have been fighting for their rights in society in the hope of being treated fairly regardless of their gender. The phenomenon is so prevalent that it has become a feminist era in which people combat many deep-rooted perceptions of femininity from years ago that gave form to a guideline of how females should be. Among the female ideals that are now frowned upon, many are proposed during the Victorian era in Britain, one of the eras that contributed significantly to the stereotypes of womanhood. In this paper, "femininity" represents both the female gender norms and roles. The former stands for the behaviours and personalities praised by the Victorian people, and the latter stands for the roles females played in a family and society. This paper investigates the deviation from Victorian femininity of Alice in the original novel *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* and the movie adaptation from 2010, *Alice in Wonderland*, and discusses the changes in Alice from childhood to adolescence under the growingly frequent exposure to society and her growing awareness of a Victorian woman's moral duty in the 19th century, thus discovering the hindrance of teenage Alice from breaking through gender norms due to the lack of childlike bravery that is possessed by seven-year-old Alice in the novel.

Industrialization in Britain gave a new way of work and urban life (Gorham, 2012). This prompted a change in the perception of the two genders regarding their social function, one of which was the notion of separate spheres. The new gender ideology assigned the two genders their respective moral duties in society. Women belonged to the private sphere of family and hearth, while men were in the public sphere of business, professionals (Gorham, 2012). Domesticity was advocated at the same when people

came to realize the importance of having a well-functioning family, and the responsibility of maintaining a healthy environment for the household fell upon the females. This idea of femininity that was family-centred, encapsulated gentility and embodied self-renunciation was further promoted by Queen Victoria herself, as she became the icon of Victorian femininity and domesticity (Vicinus, 2013). Idealization of femininity was concerned with middle-class women's manifestation of these features in motherhood and wifehood. Yet, a family consisted of more than the parents, but also the children and daughter specifically played a crucial role in the cult of domesticity. Daughters, in comparison to adult women, are more significant in middle-class families since young girls embodied majestic childishness and represented purity to a greater extent without having to bear the responsibility of motherhood or wifehood, including the inevitable sexuality (Gorham, 2012). Moreover, they are more dependent on their father and elder siblings but at the same time bearing the burden of domestic care with their mothers. They made an "unambiguous model of feminine dependence, childlike simplicity and sexual purity" (Gorham, 2012), thus helping them make a more successful "Angel in the House" than their mothers.

Possessing gentility and the above ideals were not enough to make the daughters from middle-class families amiable in society. They had to receive proper education through homeschooling. Unlike young boys that were equipped for the public sphere, girls were taught to show their competence in the private sphere as better wives, or better mothers. Since young girls received training according to its necessity, meaning how it benefited them in attracting candidates for marriage, their education includes French, music, drawing, needlework, history, and geography (Dyhouse, 1981). Education for women was not for knowledge or employment, but for building a functioning family. Females were bound by social expectations to a great extent since they were at a tender age, but the rigid cult of domesticity prompted the Victorian society to operate consistently by making both genders perform their moral duties.

Naturally, throughout the early to mid-19th century, women of all ages only had one main goal—fulfilling functions only as they existed in relationships to men and their

children. How they interact with family members in particular, reflected their upbringing and the manifestation of femininity in their roles (Vicinus, 2013). It was until the late 19th century the sphere for young women was starting to be widened. The emerging ideologies of reducing gender differentiation approved competitive sports such as swimming (Day, 2015), football (McCrone, 2005) and cycling (Marland, 2017), among women even though it was still seen as a rough and ungraceful behaviour; loud, aggressive and clumsy young girls were also approved by parts of society. Yet controversy still existed and such unconventional females were perceived as unfeminine "hoydens" (Gorham, 2012), and their mannish strong-mindedness potentially threatened domesticity. Seven-year-old Alice is one of the "hoydens" that raised much awareness to the legitimacy of this social doctrine in both the Victorian era and modern society.

Alice's Adventure in Wonderland (Alice in Wonderland) written by Lewis Carroll is a product of Victorian femininity throughout the century. Carroll deviated from the culturally and socially accepted idea of a submissive girl and came up with a story that encapsulates the role of a female in Victorian society, representing the beginning of a shift in gender differentiation in the late 19th century. A Victorian girl, Alice, is slowly defying the ideology of femininity and unintentionally transforming into a deviant at the end of the story by asserting her stance before men and the authority, thus freeing her from the private sphere she is subjected to in the outside world. Careful cultivation is seen in Alice's manners and interactions with different characters at the beginning of the novel. Yet, as she ventures into the distorted land of absurdity that defies her fundamental beliefs, she reveals the difficulties in suppressing her emotions to become the ideal Victorian feminine figure, foreshadowing the inevitable deviation.

This transition from conventions to the unpredictable begins the moment Alice falls down the rabbit hole. It represents more than Alice's travel from the real world to her imaginary world, but also from traditional Victorian femininity to a possibly new perspective to femininity in the close future. The rabbit hole was filled with cupboards and shelves, maps and pictures hanging on walls, resembling the interior of a well-organized, cosy house. All of the items were common imageries related to the "Angel in the House",

hence reminding readers of the moral duty of a common adult woman in the Victorian era. Such imageries also appear in later feminists' literary works of fighting the social bounds for females, such as Anne Sexton's "Her Kind", in which she wrote about women being forced to tend "warm caves in the woods". However, the significance of this rabbit hole lies within the fact that there is an end to it. Unlike Anne Sexton's "warm caves", this is a tunnel with an exit, allowing Alice to pass through this phase in which women were supposedly stuck in once they stepped into adulthood. Once she is on the other side, Alice is presented with a world of absurdity, just as Carroll proposed to readers of the Victorian era his Wonderland—a breakthrough of femininity and domesticity. His idea of a young Victorian girl being competitive, stubborn, in the face of authority and masculinity could be just as illogical as the Caterpillar with a hookah or the whining mock turtle to the general public. In this book, readers are to look into this illogical world and the Victorian girl who focuses on winning at the Croquet game while players are fighting and being executed, and resists the order in Wonderland to the extent she fights with the King during his jurisdiction with no fear.

When Alice first steps foot into Wonderland, she puts on her Victorian, lady-like demeanour. Alice neither actively challenges Victorian femininity, nor finds it problematic, given that she maintains a strong sense of noblesse oblige and takes pride in her education, social position, and the Victorian virtue of good manners in the beginning. To uphold the virtues, Alice even develops the ability to suppress negative emotions and behaves as a socially amiable young lady. For example, Alice shows her concern for fulfilling her moral duty at all times at the beginning of the story. While she is falling down the rabbit hole, she places a marmalade jar inside a falling cabinet so it wouldn't drop and hit someone despite her disappointment of finding it empty. She has the concern to rearrange the misaligned as a well-educated "angle in the house", thus creating a safe shelter for the household. Aside from the awareness of her duties, she also suppresses hostility in situations that challenge her urban intelligence with unfamiliar logics to show respect at first. Upon finishing the Caucus race, Alice is unreasonably demanded to give out prizes to every contestant and to participate in a fussy ceremony in which Alice is presented with her thimble as a prize. Being a courteous young lady, Alice holds back

her urge to ridicule the absurdity and assimilates into the crowd to show respect. Besides, even though Alice shows confidence in her social position, in the face of men and authoritative power, Alice maintains an inferior attitude and behaves in a servile manner. The Mouse's attitude towards Alice is discourteous, and he repeatedly reprimands Alice for her inattentiveness and oblivion. Alice's "childishness" that was spoken highly of in the Victorian era is challenged. Nonetheless, Alice behaves in a submissive manner to plead the Mouse and relies heavily on him for company. After the Mouse decides to leave Alice alone for offending him, Alice pleads him to stay, saying "please come back and finish your [his] story", but is left ignored and abandoned by the rest of the creatures (Carroll, 1865, p.46-47). After the encounter with the Mouse and various animals, Alice comes across another seemingly antagonistic character. The Caterpillar makes an effort to help Alice but in a dismissive manner, confusing Alice throughout the conversation. Still, Alice follows the Victorian notion of femininity and "swallows down her anger" (Carroll, 1865, p.59) so that she does not upset the gender and social hierarchy. In front of men that appear superior, she remains submissive and obedient, in front of those she perceives as less privileged, she approaches with solicitous indulgence to create a harmonious environment for everyone, achieving her lady-like accomplishment emphasised in the Victorian era.

Given Alice's interaction with the creatures, without a doubt, she behaves in a Victorian manner in the face of contemptuousness and epitomises as the ideal lady. Nevertheless, the more Alice loses control over the situation, the more she resorts to her intuition and emotions to protect her rights that are violated by the conformation to Victorian femininity. It appears more challenging to maintain a competent image as her fundamental sense of order and logic are challenged in Wonderland. Alice, like what Victorian women were assumed to be, is rather emotional and sentimental (Gorham, 2012), but unlike adult women, her lack of willpower makes it difficult to maintain gentility in adverse situations. When she grows to the size of the White rabbit's house, and the White Rabbit challenges her idea of social class by mistaking her as his maid, she ditches her respectable demeanour under pressure. It is noteworthy that before Alice grows to the size of the house, the White Rabbit calls out to her in an angry tone, saying

"why Mary Ann, what *are* you doing out here?", then asks her to fetch him his gloves and fan (Carroll, 1865, p.48). Upon realization of his mistake, the White Rabbit tries to get rid of the now gigantic Alice. Out of annoyance and fear, Alice reaches out to snatch the rabbit with her hand, and kicks Bill the lizard out of the house through the chimney with much force. Not only does she resorts to violence, once she realizes that the creatures are planning on burning up the house, she also threatens to unleash Dinah on them. Alice fails to stifle her negative emotions to confront the antagonists in a civilised method and instead resorts to violence and threats. Upon meeting the Caterpillar, Alice quickly regains her Victorian manner and speaks in a humble tone. She addresses him politely by calling him "sir" in most of her relies on the early stage. But the Caterpillar challenges her perceptions of good manners by treating her with dismissive rudeness; the unfamiliar contradiction makes Alice starting to lose her temper. Instead of trying to convince and begging the Caterpillar for help as she does with the Mouse, she walks away from him this time (Carroll, 1865, p.59). This encounter is to highlight the moment Alice slowly deviates from the Victorian ideal by losing reliance and submissiveness to men, and in turn takes on a "mannish strong-mindedness" (Gorham, 2012) to assert her independence. Another instance of Alice refusing to be compliant with men is at the Mad Tea-Party. Although female subordination was a traditional element in the Victorian era (Lynn, 2001), Alice adopts an ideological shift in the justification for the secondary position of females by taking on a superior role in the face of the Mad Hatter. She lectures him "with severity" when he made personal remarks (Carroll, 1865, p.81) about her appearance, judges wearily about him wasting time in asking riddles that have no answers, and told him no one asked for his opinion when he spoke up (Carroll, 1865, p.87). Alice reacts according to her instincts and emotions when she is disrespected without considering her inferior status to men, thus overthrowing the deep-rooted society element and questioning the normalisation of the secondary position of women. At this point, Alice is not an "ornament" or a "sheltered flower" (Vicinus, 2013) exhibiting gentility as Victorians expected women to, but a young lady that realizes conforming to Victorian femininity makes her easy to fall prey to disrespect and belittlement.

Soon Alice finds her bravery to overcome her inferiority to men so she defies

the unjust authority and protects her rights through joining the public sphere. Earlier in the book, Alice still belongs to the private sphere. Male characters like the Mouse, the Hatter and the March Hare belittle her; the Caterpillar and the Footman dismiss her; the Duchess forces motherly duties upon Alice by making her nurse the Duchess's baby. Even though Alice acts tougher when mistreated, she only dismisses the situation by retreating without a direct confrontation. Her unpleasant conversation with the Caterpillar ends when he vanishes into thin air; she walks away from the Tea party in the face of the Hatter's rudeness of telling her she shouldn't talk; she turns away from the Footman when he doesn't take her seriously. Alice's inferiority to men and others' expectation of her fulfilling her moral duties is still present so she is still trapped in the private sphere. This ends upon the confrontation between Alice and the King and Queen. In the face of the Queen and her ruthless persecutions, she points out the Queen's unreasonable judgements and abuse of power by yelling "nonsense" in her face (Carroll, 1865, p.93) while no one else dares to defy her; she also hides the three soldiers when they are ordered to be beheaded; before the Duchess, Alice asserts her civil rights by replying sharply to the Duchess when she feels her right to think is threatened. The most significant part is when Alice boldly replies to the King truthfully that she knows nothing related to the crime when she is pressed into giving evidence, during the questioning she challenges him regarding his rules with her quick-wittedness. The King of Hearts might appear timid, but his presence shows a clear hierarchy in Wonderland. The King comes before the Queen, who gives orders mostly at her own will but is still submissive to the King. Then the Queen is above the rest of all creatures in Wonderland. He shows his authority briefly in 3 scenes, which are when he gives the Queen orders to withhold herself from executing Alice (Carroll, 1865, p.93), to behead the Cheshire Cat (Carroll, 1865, p.98), and when he is the only judge presiding over the trial of creatures who are accused of stealing tarts. Even the Queen could not interrupt the King or pass a verdict in court, but Alice defies the rules and challenges him herself, thus threatening his authoritative position. At this point, Alice has already stepped foot into the public sphere by getting involved in the jurisdiction with the power of reasoning. She suggests the possibility for women in the Victorian era to stand up against unjustness while challenging the justification of social rules that were came up by men with their wisdom and potentials. Alice has been growing

in size since the beginning of the trial, implying her personal growth due to her emerging bravery and boldness to fight conventions. At the end of the legal process, Alice is no longer intimidated by either the King or the Queen as she is during the game of croquet.

Throughout Alice's adventure in Wonderland, she gradually grows out of the Victorian custom. Alice loses her childishness slowly as she is exposed more to the unknown land with no usual order or logic. Instead of showing Victorian femininity, she resorts to her intuition and emotions to secure her sanity and protect herself from the White Rabbit's death threats with fire, the Mad Hatter's belittlement and the King's wrongful verdict. In the end, Alice challenges the doctrine of separate spheres upon coming across the Queen and reaching the court of justice. She is presented with the public sphere filled with legal power, hierarchy and higher education. The illogicalness makes Alice reflects on the need to protect her rights and the desire for an institute of law to show order and objectiveness, which requires the interference of women's potentials and wisdom. After the ordeal, Alice has matured fully as she grows to her full size and finally deviates from the Victorian ideal Within Wonderland. Yet despite her deviation in Wonderland, when Alice wakes up from her dream, her sister shows expectation of Alice growing up to be a loving motherly figure that retains her "majestic childishness" throughout her riper years (Carroll, 1865, p.139). As a result, Alice is still living under the gender norm and is expected to become a well behaved Victorian woman. In this brief end scene, she is not shown to have deviated from the gender norms in real life, but she has to potential to given that she values her rights, has the bravery to challenge the unjust or the illogical when her sense of order is challenged.

Of all the movie adaptations of this masterpiece, one of the latest pieces puts a stronger emphasis on feminism than the novel did. *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) directed by Tim Burton from a screenplay written by Linda Woolverton, instils the concept of breaking the Victorian doctrine of femininity through regaining bravery to deny the nonsensical rules in Underland. Analysing the two pieces of art is not just about comparing and contrasting the modern version with the original, but an investigation of an original sequel to the novel—a sequel that indicates the changes of Alice from a child to a teenager.

In the adaptation, Alice's assertion of her identity and denial of Victorian femininity are strengthened after she regains her "child-like bravery", the bravery embodied by seven-year-old Alice who thinks having a bigger size gives her the upper hand in the face of the authority (Carroll, 1865, p.134-135). In this way, teenage Alice can once again believe in the possibilities of things beyond her imagination to fight for her rights regardless of society's antagonism, thus allowing her to break through the Victorian doctrine in the everyday world.

One of the significances of this adaptation is that rather than Wonderland, the audience was introduced to a dystopian version of it—Underland. By creating a dystopian Wonderland, the story loses its original innocence and depicts women's struggles of refusing to conform to Victorian femininity under the pressure of the social norms. Similar to the original novel, the story takes place in the late 1800s, but the modern adaptation has a more explicit acknowledgement of feminism. It includes several noteworthy implications regarding the Victorians' attitude towards femininity, referencing the forward-looking advocates from the late 1800s that spoke against gender differentiation and encouraged mannish strong-mindedness in females (Gorham, 2012). Nevertheless, despite the emergence of open-minded advocates, it was still difficult to epitomise the idea and deny Victorian femininity in public due to the lack of acceptance of this mindset. In the movie, the contrasting attitudes regarding femininity and gender differentiation were shown through two types of characters, one of which are the women who adhere to the doctrine and rely on it to gain a decent reputation to the family, including Lady Ascot, who orders Alice to dance with Hamish and stop making him wait (Burton, 2010, 00:04:43), and tells Alice she is bound to produce lovely grandchildren (Burton, 2010, 00:08:31), implying her strict belief in female's duties; Alice's sister, who persuades Alice she to get married before she turns 20 as she will become a burden on mother if she does not (Burton, 2010, 00:07:51); Aunt Imogene, who is old but still fantasises marrying a prince and is said to be "a burden on the family" (Burton, 2010, 0:07;58). Then there are characters that look beyond gender difference and instead focus on the potentials in each individual. Examples included Alice's father and Lord Ascot as the exceptions that encourage women to live beyond the social norms of femininity. From Alice's mention of

her father, he is more open-minded regarding femininity compared to her mother; as for Lord Ascot, he takes Alice as his apprentice in the trading business even though women are traditionally not allowed to step foot in the public sphere. Meanwhile, among these two groups of people, there is Alice, a teenager that actively denies the Victorian doctrines of femininity to indicate the emergence of forward-looking females. Her struggles to embody her ideologies fully in public implied the oppression Victorian women suffered from due to social pressures. The purpose of presenting a teenage Alice lied in the moral duty of a Victorian lady that a child was not expected to bear in the past. Alice is not just any Victorian lady, but one that comes from a family without the pillar—her father. Traditionally, females could not raise their social status without the help of men. Women's sole purpose was to build a family that acted as a "shelter" or "refuge" for their husbands and children (Vicinus, 2013). By doing so they decided the status of the men they bonded with. For Alice, without her father, she has to marry Lord Ascot's son, Hamish, for the sake of securing her family's position in society. Therefore, even though Alice is an open-minded teenager that believes no one has the right to define how females should behave "properly" (Burton, 2010, 0:03:33), and challenges her mother by suggesting that individuals should live beyond the restrictions of social expectations, her denial of femininity fails to reach beyond a silent protest by not wearing stockings or corsets. Alice mentions that "to me [her], a corset is [was] like a codfish" (Burton, 2010, 0:03:38) when challenging her mother the rationality of following traditional feminine aesthetics because it is «proper». Her remark reminded the audience of the Victorian dress reform in the first wave of feminism in the Western World that took place from the 1850s to the 1890s, in which feminists denounced certain elements of female costumes, including corsets that were "frivolous, irrational, physically injurious, or positively indecent" (Dorré, 2002). One purpose of this movement was to reform women's undergarments so that they could be modified without exposing the wearer to social ridicule, similar to what Alice is trying to achieve in the movie (Warner, 1978). Unfortunately, despite the emergence of this type of movements, in 1871, the year this movie is set in, women were still struggling to find enough support from their surroundings to show their stance against Victorian femininity publicly (Gorham, 2012). Fortunately, Alice's doubt is dispelled after a trip to a Dystopian Wonderland—Underland. Underland helps Alice find the bravery she needs to take pride

in her identity as an unconventional female dissociating from gender differentiation. In that world, she has the mission to slay the Jabberwocky and save the land she once visited as a child. Only through revisiting the now tattered Wonderland would <u>Alice recall her childhood self that believed in the impossible</u>. In the novel, Alice never once doubts the realness of the creatures in Wonderland, she does not realize all is a dream until she wakes up in her sister's lap. When first arrived at Wonderland, Alice even tries to remain a courteous Victorian lady demeanour. Despite the lack of order in Wonderland, she still believes the smoke Caterpillar and speaking animals are real. Alice has this great capacity to believe in the most ridiculous things around her, that teenage Alice in the movie does not. Only by remembering her innocent self who believes in anything can she obtain the bravery to look beyond social expectations, and achieve independence from the gender norm.

Not only is the setting of the story different from the book, but Alice also has rather little in common with seven-year-old Alice in the novel. Teenage Alice assimilates into Underland's nonsensical rules by the end of the movie and obtains the childlike bravery to overcome her fear of showing disassociation from Victorian femininity in public. She also finds her identity as a female trading company apprentice after leaving Underland, signifying a breakthrough of the Victorian sphere notion. In short, in the novel, Alice deviates from Victorian femininity by denying the absurdity of the illogical; contrarily, nineteen-year-old Alice from the movie deviates from the norms by believing in the possibilities of the illogical. When Alice first reaches Underland, the creatures deny her and chastise her for being the "wrong Alice" (Burton, 2010, 0:19:17). Even Alice herself agrees and refuses to take on the role to slay the Jabberwocky as the White Rabbit asks. Yet, by the end of the movie, it is revealed that Alice is indeed the little girl who visited Wonderland, proving the creatures wrong. The reason Alice is not approved by the creatures was that she does not believe in Underland. Compared to adventurous Alice from the novel, who does not realize Wonderland is a dream until she wakes up, teenage Alice focuses on waking up from the "dream" and denies the existence of Underland from the very beginning(Burton, 2010, 0:22:09). Consequently, she dismisses the possibility of her slaying the Jabberwocky and chooses to hide from her duty. To become the Alice

the creatures expects her to be, she will need bravery. Yet, the bravery Alice lacks is not the courage to confront monsters or the Queen since she sneaks into the Red Queen's castle to save the Hatter and tames the Bandersnatch but she is still the "wrong Alice". What she needs is that of a childlike mind, a mind that is ignorant to social ideals and expectations. Seven-year-old Alice possesses this childish bravery to face up to creatures that disrespect her when her ideals are challenged regardless of her duty as a Victorian young lady; she defends her rights when she feels threatened by the Duchess with an assertive remark "I[she]'ve [has] a right to think" (Carroll, 1865, p.104); this simple-minded girl also stands up in court to defy the Kind and Queen of Heart with the advantage of size while neglecting the consequences of fighting the authority (Carroll, 1865, p.134). All these actions become so much harder for teenage Alice as she gains greater exposure to society and receives an education of a higher level. Upon learning about the glass ceiling for women mention a few details from the film and their powerlessness to raise their social status independently, she cannot conform to her emotions like Alice in the novel does to stand against to nonsensical rules in the everyday world for the sake of her family's reputation and their future. Underland thus plays a role in recalling Alice's childhood memory to awaken her sense of responsibility to protect it, then guides her to regain this childlike bravery to look beyond the social constraints. But unlike little Alice, instead of recklessness, Alice in the movie cooperates it with her gentleness, wisdom, and assuredness acquired from education and gradual exposure to society as a teenager, and comes to terms with the illogical Underland.

At the point where Alice has to finally decide if she is fighting the Jabberwocky for the sake of Underland, she paces back and forth under the pavilion, which resonates with the scene in which Alice has to decide if she should accept the unwanted marriage proposal from Hamish in the everyday world (Burton, 2010, 1:20:40). This scene reveals Underland to be an analogy of the crossroad Alice comes across in the everyday world. She can choose to believe in the impossible and crazy ideas—the possibility of women living without the constrictions of Victorian femininity, and her slaying the Jabberwocky, which symbolises the uncertainty in Alice to defy the deep-rooted Victorian ideology. Before Alice fully assimilates into the logic and order in Underland, the White Queen

reminds her that "you [Alice] cannot [could not] live your [her] life to please others", and when Alice stands against the Jabberwocky, she would be alone (Burton, 2010, 1:19:44). The moment Alice chooses to deviate from the social norm, she would be alone and the future would be unknown. Similar to the forward-looking Victorian writers from mid to late-1800s, the minorities faced antagonism towards nascent women's movements and criticisms from scholars (Vicinus, 2013), and part of the pubic who claimed that "mannish strong-mindedness" threatens domesticity (Gorham, 2012)and the liberal idea only approved women that were "loud, aggressive, clumsy and ungracious" (Gorham, 2012). But Alice has gotten braver and accepts Underland that is devoid of logic by recognising the possibility of things beyond her understanding (Burton, 2010, 1:26:03), including a shrinking potion, the Upelkuchen—a cake that makes Alice grow, talking animals, the Cheshire Cat, Wonderland, and lastly, her ability to slay the Jabberwocky (1:26:47). Upon realising that anything is possible, even the most ridiculous things in Underland, Alice carries this new mindset back to the everyday world. Not only does Alice assert her deviance from Victorian femininity, but she also steps foot in the public sphere by impressing Lord Ascot with her idea of establishing oceanic trade routes to Hong Kong, inspiring him to take her as his apprentice.

Seven-year-old Alice in the novel is incapable of or reluctant to understand the lack of order in Wonderland, so till the end, she fights without coming to terms with the inverted logics, in which majestic childishness and submissiveness are not the desirable traits in a Victorian young lady; a social class can be challenged and jurisdictions do not have to make sense. To young Alice, Wonderland is no more than a world she visits in a dream, she fights for the sake of self-protection, not to achieve any breakthrough of the gender norm; on the other hand, Alice in the film has the maturity to correlate the relationship between Underland and the everyday world, which helps her succeed in regaining her bravery to both stepping foot in the public sphere and imposing publicly the seemingly impossible ideology—women living outside of the social norms.

To conclude, childlike bravery is the key factor in the two girls' deviation from Victorian femininity in both the novel and film. The two works of art together with

childlike bravery as their core idea depict how maturation changes the behavioural characteristics of women by exposing them to social pressure and expatiations, which in turn stifle their potential to live beyond the gender norm. Seven-year-old Alice gains the bravery to confront men who belittle her and challenges her logic and order; nineteen-year-old Alice achieves the bravery to believe the possibility in anything and to take risks despite the burden of her duties so that she can break the shackles of Victorian femininity. The process is much more challenging for teenage Alice as she takes a much greater risk for her deviation, given that she has her family's reputation and social status to save after losing her father. Her deviation and involvement in the public sphere could have become a burden on the family or even exposed them to social ridicule. On the other hand, young Alice in the novel does not have as many moral duties as teenage Alice does and that allows her to freely succumb to her childishness. Nineteen-year-old Alice is forced to mature under social pressure. The more she is aware of the effects her decisions have on her family's future, the more she casts her childish bravery out of her life. This significant part of teenage Alice's character development depicts the typical transition from childhood to adolescence of a person across culture and time, while seven-year-old Alice's development shows the potential of deviation in every woman before social expectations infiltrate her life. When one is gradually exposed to society, they will have to make their moves with much caution for the sake of their family, future and people involved in their lives. As a result, childlike bravery is no longer a probable tool to combat belittlement from men. Nevertheless, it is not impossible as suggested by teenage Alice who turns down an unwanted marriage and joins the public sphere as an apprentice in a trading company in public after regaining childlike bravery.

Working on this capstone project while reviewing all the things I have learnt from my previous courses have given me a new perspective in my future planning. It occurs to me that my vision was narrowed down into one single path that I perceived as the only way to my goal, and every other alternative out there seemed too far-fetched far fetch for me. Besides, like most students, I am planning to pursue a master degree and other ambitious plans in the future but I will have to seek the path myself with very little help. It is all unfamiliar and risky, similar to how Victorian women once fight for a

society where their value was decided by something besides their gender. All the courses I have taken so far, from Introduction to Literature, World Literature, to Reading Poetry and even Renaissance, have shown me arrays of examples of women struggling to fight for their rights throughout history, and how some of them succumb to the gender norm and normalise their inferior, secondary position to men. Without a doubt, the world in the feminists' vision could be full of critics, risks and controversies, and they might even be oppressed in society. Yet, these heroines all possessed this "childlike bravery" that prompted them to take the risks despite knowing how heavy the consequences there might be, and how hard the process could be for all women. They ran a long way to achieve what we could call "normal" nowadays. If they alone can have the childlike bravery combined with their wisdom and maturity to turn their vision into reality, pursuing a master degree, moving to another country, finding a job and settling down do not seem as impossible. Hopefully, those I have shared my project with can regain their childlike bravery, then look for the rabbit hole that will lead to their very own Wonderland.

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Emma on Film: Feminist Influence in the 2020 Adaptation

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Introduction

Jane Austen's works are some of the most frequently adapted 19ᵗʰ Century fictions. I, for one, was drawn to Austen's works, to English culture and to becoming an English major after watching the screen adaptations. The knowledge I gained from courses on literature, women in American films, art appreciation and film adaptation has not only allowed me to see Austen's books and adaptations beyond the appearance of love stories set in a fascinating period, but also helped me understand how adaptations reinterpret the source texts to show renewed relevance of literary works in creative ways, which has inspired me to work on this project.

As Penny Gay noted, with the changes in the cultural environment, adaptations need to "engage the audience with the sense that the story speaks to them of their own concerns" (90). Hence, studying adaptations gives us the "chance for… cultural self-definition" (Troost and Greenfield 6), a reflection on what are "of [our] own concerns" (Gay 90). In this paper, I will study the case of *Emma.* (2020), which is the latest adaptation of Austen's novel directed by Autumn de Wilde.

In relation to the text and past iterations, this adaptation has some distinctive qualities. One of which is the mood of the film. The film is noted to be a "fresh" and "more racy" take on Austen's novel (Porter; "Interview" 4:03). It captures the energy and humour of Austen's work (Porter; Scheinman), as contributed by the screwball comedy elements that the American director has brought in to "physicalize" Austen's satire and to "poke fun" at the "hubris of youth" of her characters (Larson; Porter; "Interview" 5:57; "Coolidge Corner Theatre" 24:10). However, while Porter praises how the screwball elements help the film parallel the text's dynamics, Kermode worries that they simplify the text to a "romp". Morgenstern sees that the physical comedy reflects a greater problem of the film. Morgenstern complains that the film comes off shallow in its emphasis on

"antics" and "style". Porter also notes that the film has heightened its stylization in comparison with other adaptations. She points out that the "general glamourization" in costume and set design at times mispresents the characters' circumstance, though it also serves to highlight Emma's vanity.

Another characteristic of this adaptation is its character portrayal, most notably that of Emma and Harriet. Critics comment that the portrayal of Emma in this adaptation stays true to Austen's work because unlike past adaptations, it does not shy away from Emma's unfavourable qualities (Leon; Porter). Hence, Anya Taylor-Joy's Emma is "less likeable" and even the "meanest" when compared with other adaptations (Kermode; Leon; Porter), and yet "all the better for it" (Kermode). Moreover, the film differs significantly from the novel's depiction of the friendship between Emma and Harriet in terms of its ending where the two originally grow distant (Leon; Porter), and in terms of its importance, as Gamerman describes the film as Emma's "double love story" with Mr. Knightley and Harriet. When discussing the changes, Eleanor Catton, the screenwriter of the film, brings up that "female friendship is a very contemporary subject, and it hasn't been given a lot of airtime in a serious way on film" (Gamerman).

As shown, *Emma.* (2020) has some distinctive deviations from previous adaptations and even from the novel, especially on the female characters. But in the present, as the film was newly released, there are not many academic articles about the film. Most literature about the film is relatively brief film reviews that have limited analysis on the approach of the film to its source material with few supporting textual details. Therefore, this paper aims to supplement a more in-depth study on the new film in relation to the text, and more broadly, to contribute to the understanding of what the changes of the adaptation suggest about our society and its development over the years.

In this paper, I would like to suggest that the 2020 film adaptation of Austen's novel *Emma* (1815) maximises feminist elements within the story's framework, which reflects the contemporary ideals and persisting struggles in young women's personal growth. To set the paper in context, the paper will first begin with a brief overview that outlines the development of the ideas of womanhood in the Regency period and the contemporary times. Then the paper will examine the approach of this film in transposing Austen's text onto the screen and its implications by looking into the film's characterisation of the

heroine, the portrayal of the heroine's interpersonal relationships, as well as the social critique on gender and class inequality.

Historical context

English society in the Regency era was "both hierarchical and modernizing" (Irvine 7). The contradictory forces between structured social order and new social changes in society were reflected in the place of women as well.

At the time, women were characterised by their sensibility and domesticity (Irvine 8). They were considered to be more emotional than men, and hence more capable to be compassionate and virtuous. Besides exercising moral authority, women also took charge of the household. As early capitalism widened the separation between the public world of work and the private world of home (Irvine 8), to which women were increasingly assigned, women became largely defined in relation to their husband and family. The ideal woman, according to conduct books, should show benevolence, chastity, and female modesty, which is to subordinate one's needs to those of men and to restrain one's desires (Irvine 8; Byrne 298). While conduct books encouraged women's emotional and moral virtues, this was not the case for intelligence. In fact, conduct books advised women to keep it a "secret" (Byrne 298). Otherwise, they would face a "jealous and malignant eye" from men (Byrne 298), since women were considered intelligently inferior to them.

Women's private virtues found a new significance in the context of the Regency era. The period was facing rapid economic transformation, challenges to class stratification with the rise of the middle-class, the influence of the French Revolution and the war with France (Kelly 253). In times of this disrupted social order, it was thought that by promoting moral virtues in their private, domestic sphere, women could cultivate the ethics and civic virtues of men, thus restoring the integrity of the nation at large (Kelly 253).

This moral and political importance of women became female writers' argument in favour of women's intellectual education and even, of women's potential equality with men. For example, the conservative writer Hannah More argues that current education in accomplishments is insufficient for women to fulfill their role as moral "reformers" at home and thus save the country (Kelly 258). But one of the most revolutionary

advocates for female education would be the 18th century writer Mary Wollstonecraft, who is now considered a proto-feminist. Different from More, Wollstonecraft, in her work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), argues on the grounds that women are "human creatures" that "stand alone" rather than men's "house-slaves" or "alluring mistresses" (qtd. Mellor 142; "Mary Wollstonecraft"), and hence, women should be given the same rights as men (qtd. Mellor 142). Wollstonecraft believes that women should be recognized as men's rational equals; if women are less intelligent, it would be due to their lack of professional education (Brunell and Burkett). She suggests that as women possess both sense and sensibility, they will become a good "companion" to men in an "egalitarian marriage" (Mellor 142). Her idea is different from the common practice of the society at the time, that marriage serves economic ends. Although Wollstonecraft did not live till the Regency era, the influence of her ideology was still felt in the period and was shown in the works of female writers like Austen (Mellor 156). One can say that, in the Regency era, women were limited by the domestic sphere, but also to an extent, saw opportunities provided under social changes.

In contemporary times, women enjoy improvements in gender equality and greater rights and freedom. After a long struggle for legal equality through women's suffrage, feminist activism expanded to campaign against women's subordination and oppression in a society with institutions that discriminate against women, and even to challenge the society as inherently patriarchal in its norms and structure (Brunell and Burkett).

Shifting from the critique of societal structure, the modern feminist movement focuses on women's individualism and the movement's inclusiveness (Brunell and Burkett). By rejecting the idea that all women share a common identity and set of experiences, the current movement strives to include women with different personal experiences and of all race and economic standing, as a response to what troubled previous waves of activism (Snyder 184). One contemporary example would be the #MeToo movement, where women from all over the world share their experiences of sexual abuse via social media (Brunell and Burkett).

Under the influence of post-modernist thinking, the definitions of gender are also questioned (Snyder 186). Instead of considering the gender binary and attributing characteristics based on sexes like in the Regency era, more people are seeing themselves

through a "gender continuum" (Brunell and Burkett). This dissolution of definite gender and gender roles make the relationship between the sexes less oppositional. People also enjoy greater freedom, as they get to define their identity on a spectrum, and do not have to act in ways that are imposed by society. Echoing this idea of choice, the modern emphasis is for women to be powerful, sexually liberated and possess a strong sense of autonomy (Brunell and Burkett; Snyder 188).

But modern women are not without struggles. Although they are freed from "external patriarchal constraints" (Judzińska 146), the new challenge is that they need to learn to balance between masculinity (behaviours marked with individualism and choice) and femininity (lingering stereotypes and traditions around womanhood, marriage and motherhood) (Judzińska 148).

Characterisation of the heroine

As shown from the characterisation of Emma, both the book and the film adaptation agree that young women should grow up to be strong and assertive, but should nonetheless, be humble and compassionate. In the film, Emma's image as a strong woman is first established by its casting. The actress Anya Taylor-Joy conveys a less sweet-looking Emma, partly due to her unconventional beauty, and partly due to the influence of her previous filmography in horror thrillers. Moreover, the film illustrates Emma's snobbery very early on, as shown from her fastidiousness when picking flowers and her polite yet cold smile to Miss Bates' friendliness in the church. This shapes an unlikeable image of Emma at the beginning of the film as mentioned by critics. The difference is even more apparent when one compares this Emma with the previous adaptations. Gwyneth Paltrow's Emma conveys a sense of naivety due to her sweet looks and soft voice. Romola Garai portrays a vivacious Emma through her hearty laughs, which contrasts with Taylor-Joy's demure smile. The new iteration's approach in shaping a pricklier Emma challenges the idea that women need to be sweet-tempered and meek to be loved by the story's characters and the audience.

Story-wise, Emma is strong in the sense that she demonstrates independence. Much of women's life at the time is constituted of and defined by marriage and motherhood. Yet, it is said that Emma "always declares she will never marry" (I:v; 24:06). With her fortune,

Emma can maintain her financial independence and thus, her romantic independence and her own identity. For Emma to "change such a situation" (I:x), it would be her active choice. While it can be said that Emma's personal autonomy is made available by her fortune, it is also a way for the writer to circumvent and disrupt the tradition of women always being subjected to external pressure, and to portray an ideal in which they are free to choose a life they want. Indeed, this concept of Emma being an ideal is resonated in the film. Portraying the school boarder girls with more details, the film shows the boarder girls giggle with admiration when they see Emma and line up eagerly to welcome her visit (0:33:13). It shows that Emma, enjoying power, freedom and education, represents an ideal woman that the female community looks up to.

The book and the film not only highlight Emma's autonomy, but also her confidence when challenging male authority. In the argument about Harriet rejecting Robert Martin's proposal, Mr. Knightley criticises in "asperity" that Harriet's refusal and Emma's interference are misguided (I:viii). However, Emma is not afraid of expressing her own opinion against him, even though she has "habitual respect" for his judgment (I:viii).

The film adaptation further heightens Emma's assertiveness by increasing the dramatic tension of the scene. In the book, although Mr. Knightley is in an "angry state" (I:viii), Emma at least "[tries] to look cheerfully unconcerned" (I:viii). In the film, however, they are in intense argument to the uncommon point of yelling over each other, largely flouting the era's propriety for women to be deferential. Moreover, the fast-paced dialogue and the motion of the two, as they walk around the dining table and across the hallway, charge the scene with energy and reduce the feeling that Emma is passively being "lectured" (III:xiii). The camera also captures the two in two-shots, each taking an equal portion of the screen. Thus, the scene creates the sense that the two are equal in footing and neither is inferior in their argument.

Moving beyond Emma's personal agency, the story also shows that Emma can socially influence her community at large. As the book indicates, "The Woodhouses [are] first in consequence [in Highbury]. All [look] up to them" (I:i). As one who "[can] do any thing in Highbury" (II:vi), Emma exercises her influence on the community by participating in matchmaking and organising a ball at the Crown's Inn. Adding upon the

plot, the film takes advantage of its medium and shows this social influence through its cinematography and mise-en-scene. For example, when the Woodhouses enter the church for the Westons' wedding, they walk through a crowd of neighbours who stand on the sides to greet them. Their position as the centre of the camera frame reflects their importance in the community. This is even clearer when the film shows that the Woodhouses have the habit of sitting on the front row of the church. The fact that it is Emma who greets her neighbours instead of Mr. Woodhouse further highlights her power and central role in the household and the community.

The film also shows Emma's influence on both female and male characters. An apparent example of Emma's social influence would be Harriet. Harriet has the "habits of dependence and imitation" (I:x), which is translated physically in the film. For example, Harriet would observe and imitate Emma's manner of drinking her tea (0:12:52). In their chance encounter with Mr. Martin on the road, Harriet would also walk behind Emma (0:19:18). By introducing scenes that show Harriet's physical imitation of Emma, the film also physicalises Emma's social influence. But Harriet is not the only one subject to Emma's influence in the film. In the group dinner with the Westons, Mr. Elton similarly observes and imitates Emma when having his soup, showing a parallel of Harriet drinking her tea (0:36:42). These examples from the film suggest that Emma's social influence is not limited to the female community. In fact, her influence extends to the community's people in general. The added scenes of the film complement and expand on the book's idea that with Emma's high rank in society, the influence of her behaviour is extensive. People in general "[will] be entirely guided by [her] treatment" of others (III: vii), as Mr. Knightley points out in his criticism of Emma's treatment of Miss Bates.

While the novel and the film celebrate women's power through Emma, the story also suggests that young woman should learn to be humble and compassionate, not out of a "subjection of self" that is expected of woman (Kohn), but out of respect and care for others. In the case of Miss Bates, since Emma "[can] not resist" the urge to make fun of Miss Bates' talkative nature (III:vii), she causes pain and humiliation to Miss Bates. However, it is not Emma's power (the ability to sway others' treatment of Miss Bates) that Mr. Knightley criticises, but her "thoughtless spirit" and "pride of the moment" (III:vii), leading her to be uncompassionate to a person who deserves her sympathy.

In conveying the growth of Emma, the novel shows that the cultivation of humility and compassion is a learning process that is encouraged by external influence, while the film suggests that humility and compassion are innate qualities. In the book's Box Hill visit, Emma at first does not realise the "pain" she has caused to Miss Bates (III:vii). It is after Mr. Knightley points out her misconduct that Emma "recollect[s]" the experience (III:vii). Mr. Knightley's criticism pricks Emma's "conscience" (III:viii), prompting her to reflect on her "remiss…in thought" (III:viii) and apologise to Miss Bates afterwards.

In the film, however, Emma quickly realises her mistake and regrets her words as soon as she says it to Miss Bates, as shown by the changed expression of the actress (1:26:53). In the following shot, the camera cuts from a medium close-up shot from Emma to show Miss Bates with her head turned away, eyeing downcast. This reverse shot creates the effect that the two are linked emotionally and that Emma is observing Miss Bates as she is concerned about Miss Bates' reaction upon hearing her hurtful words. A subsequent scene also shows that Emma sits dispirited on her carriage even before Mr. Knightley reprimands her. This sequential difference between the text and the adaptation in showing Mr. Knightley's effect on Emma seems to show the modern film's attempt to avoid giving the impression that women should be "lectured" into modesty by men. It suggests that humility and compassion should be general propriety that direct people's power (III:xiii). Overall, through the characterisation of the heroine, the novel and the film show an ideal woman to be strong and confident while humble and compassionate.

The Heroine's interpersonal relationships

By adapting the book's portrayal of the heroine's interpersonal relationships, the film also reflects what women nowadays should look for in their relationships with others and how they should situate themselves. I will illustrate this point with respect to the heroine's friendship, romantic relationship and family relationship.

One of the most significant changes in the film is Emma's friendship with Harriet, and these changes in the contemporary remake reflect how female unity is encouraged nowadays. In examining their friendship, one can see that while the relationship with Harriet is sidelined in the book's ending, the adaptation has put increased attention to and importance on Emma and Harriet's relationship. In the book, after Emma realises

that Harriet is in love with Mr. Knightley, she bemoans: "Oh God! that I had never seen her!" (III:xi). Emma's renunciation of her friendship reflects that the relationship between Emma and Harriet in the novel is hardly a close emotional tie, and it inevitably needs to be severed when the injustice to Harriet is too great in face of Emma's romance, as seen from Emma sending Harriet away. The main importance of Harriet's character is to prompt Emma to examine "the blindness of her own head and heart" (III:xi), thus helping her acquire the self-knowledge of her vanity and her romantic feelings. The book prioritises the female protagonist's development, but it also creates the effect that women's friendship ends up as a sidelined plot device that serves only to promote the heroine's personal growth and romance.

However, the film tries to emphasise that female friendship is not necessarily temporary or subsidiary to (heterosexual) romance by foregrounding Emma and Harriet's relationship. In the aforementioned scene, the film modifies the plot so that when the misunderstanding unravels, Harriet at the same time realises that Emma also admires Mr. Knightley, whereas in the book, Harriet does not notice it. The result of such a narrative change is that the plot's focus shifts from Emma's self-reflection to a friendship in crisis. Subsequently, the film shows Emma seeking active remedies to honour and salvage her relationship with her "dearest friend" (1:44:47). For example, she not only rejects Mr. Knightley's proposal because "[Harriet's] in love with [him]" (1:43:00), but also pays visit and apologises to Mr. Martin. Emma actively promotes her friend's development, which comes in contrast with how the book's Harriet only finds her happy ending coincidentally. The drastic differences of the plot from the book and even from the previous adaptations show how the film suggests that female bonding is important and should be valued.

The adaptation also works to justify and strengthen the basis of Emma and Harriet's friendship. The film adds a scene in which they practise dancing in their nightgown. The private coziness of the scene signifies the trust between the two and the ease they enjoy. In addition to inserting a heartwarming anecdote to frame the intimacy of their friendship, the film also downplays the idea of Emma being a manipulative friend. In the book, Emma influences Harriet not to accept Mr. Martin's proposal by persuading her that she should be "thinking of" marrying Mr. Elton (I:vii), and by approving her decision to be "perfectly right" (I:vii). But these dialogues are taken out in the film. Emma is

shown to walk down from her pedestal (literally and symbolically) and turn away from Harriet, thus reducing her influence on Harriet's decision. By adapting the book's female friendship into a healthier bonding based on emotional intimacy, the film attempts to avoid confirming the stereotype of female friendship being manipulative or toxic. Contrarily, the film presents female bonding to be an important and favourable connection between women. This reflects the contemporary view that women do not have to see finding "the one" as their life purpose and define their lives in relation to men; instead, fulfillment can also be found in friendship, which is an equally important part of women's lives.

In the ending, the adaptation also diffuses social obstacles to give way to the success of female friendship. One obstacle is class stratification. In the book, Harriet is in "inferiority" (III:xi), not only of "mind" but also of "situation" as the illegitimate child of a tradesman and as "Mrs. Robert Martin, of Abbey-Mill Farm" (III:xi; I:vii). Hence, when the narrator points out that the "intimacy" between Harriet and Emma "must sink" (III:xix), the book ends in a conservative tone that suggests the formation of female bonding is restricted by the social context of class divisions. But the film shows Emma and Harriet overcome this limitation. For example, in addition to breaking the class boundary to apologise to Mr. Martin for the sake of Harriet, Emma also expresses her welcome of Harriet's parentage: she hopes "[Harriet] will bring [her father] to Hartfield" (01:46:23). By reducing its class consciousness, the story not only appeals to the modern classless ideal, but also gestures towards an inclusive, general unity among women. The film's hope of female solidarity is best illustrated in the scene of Emma's wedding, in which all the female characters are present, including the group of school boarder girls, and Mrs. Elton, who is uninvited in the book. Through the reverse shots between Emma and other female characters, the film establishes a sense of supportive and inclusive sisterhood. It resonates with the contemporary emphasis of female unity as a way for women to resist the oppressions caused by social stratifications like gender and class and to build their agency.

After examining Emma's female friendship, it is also important to consider the man-and-woman relationship portrayed in the film. After all, the romance plot in Austen's stories enjoys huge popularity nowadays. In the contemporary remake, Emma and Mr. Knightley's romantic relationship reflects the sexual attraction between partners to be an

important part of a romantic relationship. In the past, marriage usually serves to continue the bloodline, or to secure financial stability (mostly in women's case). But Austen's story suggests the importance of emotional attraction. As Emma says, for her to enter marriage "without love" would be "fool[ish]" (I:x). In contemporary times, with the sexual liberation of women and sex no longer a taboo for them, people have even come to acknowledge that a romantic relationship should not just come in emotional attraction, but also physical attraction between both partners.

This idea of physical attraction is highlighted in the film, as shown from the dance in the Crown Inn. After Emma accepts to dance with Mr. Knightley, the book leaves out what happens next. It simply foreshadows their attraction towards each other as Mr. Knightley agrees with Emma that they are not "brother and sister" (III:ii). Eroticism is conveyed through their verbal exchanges. The film, however, adds an elaborate dance sequence to show and build up the sexual attraction between the two. The soft and warm candlelit lighting, together with the mellow string music, first sets a romantic atmosphere for the sequence. The bickering of the Eltons in the background before the start of the dance serves as a foil for Emma and Mr. Knightley, whose relationship is based on mutual attraction. In their dance moves, Emma and Mr. Knightley step forward and backward; they are drawn closer and then separate. Different from other dancers in the room, their hands also touch without gloves, which is unusual for the Regency norm. The focus on their titillating physical proximity, coupled with the reverse shots showing their steady gaze towards each other, highlights the sexual tension between them and signals the change of their friendship into romantic and sexual attraction.

Moreover, the film seeks to normalize the physical. The film has a recurring motif of dressing and undressing. For example, Emma is shown to sensually drop her shawl on the ground and take off her shoes after the romantic dance. But one instance that may come as a surprise even to the contemporary audience is the unprecedented display of nudity, as Mr. Knightley changes his clothes after horse-riding. The sequence is charged with masculine, sexual energy and is at the same time, sensual. With the bold use of the dress-undressing motif, the film presents the body, its sensations and even its desire to be something most natural and acceptable. Through its edited plot and increased erotic elements, the film reflects and appeals to the expectation of sexual passion in a romantic

relationship in contemporary times.

Women's position in their relationship with men, not just in marriage, but also in family, has been an issue for centuries. Through the adaptation, one can see how it is thought of in modern society. As seen from Emma's relationship with Mr. Knightley and her father, the adaptation suggests the ideal of an equal and harmonious relationship between the sexes.

By playing with the idea of gender role, the story's depiction of Emma and Mr. Knightley's power dynamics resonates with what Wollstonecraft proposed: a companionate marriage in which women and men are on the same footing (Mellor 142). For example, Emma is given qualities that were not available nor encouraged in women at the time. Besides having autonomy and power, she is also "clever" (I:i); Mr. Knightley becomes her "companion" in her "intellectual solitude" (I:i). The gender role reversal applies to Mr. Knightley too, as demonstrated in their marriage arrangement. To help Emma ensure her father's comfort, Mr. Knightley decides to move into Hartfield. He takes on the "sacrifice" of "independence" to support the partner, which is traditionally expected of women in the past and even of women nowadays (III:xv; 01:49:10). As the story concludes in the couple's "perfect happiness" (III:xix), it endorses a relationship that is complementary and "all equal" to be the ideal mode of marriage (III:xvii).

For the film, it further breaks down the gender role barrier and dissolves the gender binary. The film not only accentuates Emma's "masculine" qualities, but also introduces a softened, less masculine portrayal of Mr. Knightley. For instance, the contemporary remake leaves out the age difference between Mr. Knightley and Emma, which is mentioned in the book and previous adaptations. Mr. Knightley becomes more of Emma's equal, and less of a patriarchal father figure.

Furthermore, the film highlights how men can be just as emotionally vulnerable as women. As previously mentioned, the film has a motif of dressing and undressing. Another effect of this motif is that, as a private moment in a private space, the process of undressing signifies the characters' most vulnerable side. Emma is shown to cry while changing her clothes, after seeing Mr. Knightley's seeming indifference to her following their fight. But this vulnerability is not limited to women. The film shows Mr. Knightley, strained by his jealousy of Frank, throws a fit at home as he takes off his clothes and

lies on the ground in frustration. By offering an additional glimpse of Mr. Knightley's emotional vulnerability and passion, the film emphasizes the fundamental sameness in both men and women's interiority.

The call for a harmonious and equal gender relationship reflects itself between Emma and Mr. Woodhouse as well. In the book, one can see Emma's father as a burden that grounds Emma in Hartfield physically and emotionally. Mr. Woodhouse is described to be a "valetudinarian" who has the "habits of gentle selfishness" and whose "spirits [require] support" (I:i). His consent becomes an obstacle whenever Emma wishes to leave Hartfield, like in the case of the Coles' party and the ball in the Crown Inn (II:vii; II:xi). Moreover, Emma's feelings and decisions are often tied to her father due to her deep sense of obligation and affection for him. One evident example is Emma's marriage. Emma has previously refused the idea of marriage because it will necessarily "separate her from her father" (III:xii). Even after Emma and Mr. Knightley confirm their love for each other, Emma "[can] not proceed" with her marriage plan (III:xix), even though the marriage can promote her own happiness, which shows how Emma's own comfort is dependent on and limited by her father.

The gentle and affectionate Mr. Woodhouse is unlike the traditional intimidating and oppressive father figure. This break from stereotype may suggest the writer's more reconciliatory attitude in seeing the relationship of the sexes (Looser 159), that men are not necessarily macho oppressors. However, as shown, with his weak health and emotionally demanding character, Mr. Woodhouse nonetheless restricts our female protagonist in a different sense.

The film, however, works to improve the image of the father figure and construct a more harmonious father-daughter relationship, firstly by adjusting Mr. Woodhouse's characterisation. Mr. Woodhouse's first appearance in the film is introduced by his loud cry, an energetic jump from the stairs and grumpy strides. Such difference from the "valetudinarian" image in the book serves to lessen Emma's obligation to constantly care for her father to the extent of losing her freedom (I:i).

Another significant change in relation to Mr. Woodhouse is that the adaptation portrays him to be less of an obstacle to Emma's marriage. While the question of whether Emma can get married in the presence of her father spans over six chapters in the book,

it is rather quickly addressed in the film after Mr. Knightley suggests that he will move to Hartfield. Rather than an obstacle, Mr. Woodhouse in the film even serves as a facilitator of Emma and Mr. Knightley's happiness. Towards the end, the film shows how Mr. Woodhouse eyes the two as they exchange glances in the drawing room. Seemingly noticing the couple's relationship, he directs the servants to move the big screen to block the "draft" (01:47:59), creating the opportunity for the couple to sit together and kiss.

Besides minimising the constraints posed by the father figure on the heroine, the film emphasises the loving and supportive relationship between the two. For instance, when Emma is plunged into regret and self-reproach after returning from Box Hill, Emma in the book does not open up to Mr. Woodhouse about her distressed mind. She only sees his father's "fond affection and confiding esteem" as a haven and relief from "severe reproach" (III:viii). Yet in the corresponding scene of the film, Emma cries and confides in her father, while Mr. Woodhouse stands silently by Emma and listens to her. Although the two do not converse, the audience can sense their shared sadness and consequently, Mr. Woodhouse's quiet yet warm support for his daughter. This sense of shared connection strengthens the bonding between the father and the daughter. One can see that, by adapting the relationship between Mr. Woodhouse and Emma, the film presents a gratifying and ideal father-daughter relationship for the audience nowadays: one that does not limit women's freedom, one that promotes the other's happiness and one that is based on emotional connection.

Social criticism

The first and the second part of this essay have been discussing the portrayal of Emma's character and her interpersonal relationships. As the title of the story suggests, the story is largely about its titular character Emma and her journey of growth. This idea resonates in the adaptation too, as the film starts with a close-up of Emma waking up, opening her eyes and ends with a corresponding close-up of her closing her eyes at the wedding altar. Although the story revolves around the individual character of Emma, both the book and the film also provide implicit social criticism of larger gender and class inequality, which reflects the continuing struggles that young women may face in the patriarchal world.

In the story, Emma is aware of, and consequently makes the readers/audience aware of, her differences and privileges compared with other women. Emma proclaims that she has "none of the usual inducements of women to marry" because she wants neither "fortune", "employment" nor "consequence" (I:X; 0:15:05). Emma's famous lines highlight the unusualness of her case and at the same time, bring attention to the underlying reasons and the structural injustices that induced most women in the past to pursue marriage. In a time when women had few property rights under primogeniture, limited options for work and a lack of social opportunities (Irvine 8, 22), marrying and having children became an important way for women to ensure their financial security and to have a sense of employment and vocation in life. Therefore, dismissal of marriage like Emma's is seen as "odd" and out of the social norm (I:x).

By juxtaposing Emma who unconventionally rejects the domestic marriage life with her sister Isabella who embraces it, the book indirectly comments on society's gender expectations. Isabella in the book is described to be a loving mother of five and a devoted wife who "always thinks as [her husband] does" (I:v). It is said that Isabella, "passing her life with [the family] she doat[s] on, full of their merits, blind to their faults, and always innocently busy, might have been a model of right feminine happiness" (I:xvii). The descriptions suggest that Isabella, with her domestic qualities, leads a blissful marital and family life. Yet, the use of the words "blind" and "innocently" destabilises such an idealistic image as they imply unnoticed problems (I:xvii). The word "might" further conveys a sense of irony and doubts about marriage and motherhood being women's ultimate "happiness" and success (I:xvii). One cannot help but question along with the narrator: Why does women's happiness have a "right" "model" (I:xvii)? For whom is this happiness considered "right" (I:xvii)? Isabella exemplifies the expected "feminin[ity]" as a woman who unquestioningly centres her life on family and spousal duties (I:xvii). The book, however, implicitly questions such societal expectations for women as a construct that benefits not women themselves, but the interests of the dominant power.

In portraying Isabella and her relationship with her husband John Knightley, it is interesting that the film deliberately and completely subverts the book's characterisation. Isabella in the book is a "worshipping wife" whose "extreme sweetness" allows John to sometimes "act an ungracious, or say a severe thing" (I:xi). But in the film, she not

only challenges and argues with her husband about the "responsibility" of "teach[ing] the baby" (30:24), but she also becomes a domineering figure. In the scene after their quarrel in the carriage, John comes out from the carriage and vents his frustration on the servant beside him. Then the camera pans to Isabella, who is standing in front of him, gravely telling him to "comport [himself]" (44:52). The camera movement from the servant and John to Isabella conveys a sense of hierarchy, in which Isabella now dominates their relationship, contrary to her subservience in the book. The film continues Austen's play of gender roles in the story and overturns Isabella and John's power dynamics. By doing so, the film refuses to play up to, and even satirises, the audience/society's gender role expectations, which Austen also challenges in her book.

Through the portrayal of Isabella, the story casts doubt on the expectations for women. Nevertheless, the story shows that women do not have many other choices in life. While Emma with her inheritance can ignore marriage as a necessity, this is not the case for other female characters. Jane is similar to Emma in age and talents. But without Emma's fortune and social status, Jane faces the looming prospect of becoming a governess. Whether she can have a comfortable life depends again on her marriage to Frank Churchill. The juxtaposition of Jane and Emma's fate and the uncertainty of Jane's future throughout the book serve as a constant reminder of the limitations of women's lives due to their financial dependence. As a result, women lose control of their own destiny to men who hold the power.

The film, however, has chosen to skip over many details about Jane. For example, her prospect of going out as governess is left unmentioned. Her jealousy and later reconciliation with Emma are only symbolically resolved and represented by her presence in Emma's wedding. The omissions are probably due to the film's prioritisation of Emma's romance with Mr. Knightley and her friendship with Harriet, which in comparison, have arguably more dramatic tension needed for the screen and are more suited to the modern audience's taste. As Jane's engagement with Frank is supposed to be kept hidden for most of the story, introducing it in detail while keeping it under the surface may risk dragging the overall fast pace and comic tone of the film.

Indeed, this latest adaptation is marked by its energy and lighthearted humour, perhaps best exemplified by the period on its title "Emma." to indicate the film as a

period piece (BBC America). Such playfulness helps convey, but also at times mitigate, the social commentary in the film. For example, the film's screwball comedy influence ensures the conflicts between different sexes and different social classes in the story are explored in a "non-threatening" way (Jensen, Lisa, et al.).

One of the most obvious comedic elements in the film is the servants. In the novel, servants like James, Mr. Perry and William Larkins are constantly brought up in conversations, so much so that it becomes amusing, as their importance to the narrative is out of readers' expectations. For example, when Mr. Knightley proposes to quit Donwell for their marriage, Emma jokes that he should first "get [William Larkins'] consent" (III:xv). The interesting significance of the working class in the book, while reflecting the social status of the rich, also realistically shows the interconnectedness and limitations of people in a broader social hierarchy and social fabric.

In the adaptation, the presence of the servants is also oddly obvious. When Emma and Mr. Knightley argue, the maids are shown to hurriedly put down the plates (26:54). Although the maids are blurry in the background, their central position in the frame inevitably draws the attention of the audience. In particular, when they leave, they even intrude into the foreground as they walk through Emma and Mr. Knightley. Lending the focus to the servants, the film invites the audience to compare them with their masters. For instance, in the shot where the footmen Bartholomew and Charles reveal Emma's painting in the musical box (30:05), Emma and Harriet's back are out of focus on the side, which serves to frame the two footmen as part of the centre of attention. Consequently, the audience is encouraged to observe their reactions. Their mildly irritated expressions contrast comically with Mr. Elton and Harriet's exaggerated grin and Emma's awkward smile. Thus, the presence of the servants contrasts and satirises the excess and absurdity of the rich.

While both the book and the film combine social commentary with humour, Austen's humour is more subtle and serious. For example, in addition to the unexpected acknowledgement of servants in the narrative, the book also uses irony, such as the dramatic irony when Emma says that Mrs. Weston "[does] [match-making] very ill" (II:viii), or as Emma proclaims she has "a great many independent resources" when the choices of "employment" she lists are very limited (I:x). Austen's humour comes from

her perceptiveness about the reality, and she satirises the reality's human and societal flaws. To grasp her humour, readers need to read between the lines. On the other hand, the film delivers its social commentary often with immediate comic relief through physical comedy and farcical scenes, ranging from the aforementioned scenes to Harriet's moans and Emma's nosebleed. At times, the humour comes off as frivolous or exaggerated, which may prompt the audience to take the film's social commentary less seriously.

In addition to the comic tone, the notable stylization of the film from its mise-en-scène may also undermine the effectiveness of the film's overall social criticism. The adaptation is characterised by vivid colours, warm and bright lighting as well as glamourous set design and costume. Characters' clothing is well-tailored with intricate details and layers; Emma's headdresses and gowns are especially fancy and decorated to reflect her vanity and charm. Together, these elements infuse the film with a dazzling exuberance that shapes the life of Regency high society. The vibrancy of scenes, coupled with the film's frequent use of symmetrical compositions and establishing shots of the landscape and architecture, also satisfies the audience with plenty of visual pleasure. However, despite serving as a storytelling tool and bringing pleasing aesthetics, the overall heightened stylization faces the problem of presenting a romanticised version of Regency society, as it masks and distracts people from the undercurrents of tension between the sexes and the deepening social stratification of the period.

The film's light humour and stylistic features may be telling indications of the operation of the film industry and the contemporary culture. To a Hollywood film like *Emma.*, profit is an important consideration. By making the film an easy and entertaining watch, it helps to attract a younger audience who may not know about the book or the historical context (Troost 87). It also caters to the current consumerist society where people tend to look for instant gratification in entertainment. Moreover, as modern society is complex and rapidly changing, there rises a pushback for things to return to an orderly, "simpler time" lived by a "comfortingly wealthy and leisurely class" (Troost and Greenfield 4). With the display of heritage, adaptations project a "stable" and "feel-good utopia" of the past where the contemporary audience can "escape" into (Voigts-Virchow 124).

To balance its humour, style and the social awareness of Austen's satire, the

adaptation incorporates the characters of school boarder girls as the visual symbol of its social commentary on gender. In the film, the boarder girls are shown walking across in different transition shots. Their jarring bright red cloaks often set them off from the background, attracting the audience's attention. Their costume reminds the audience of the image of the innocent Little Red Riding Hood. Indeed, the film introduces a scene that shows the group of boarder girls playing games with sand (42:37). Their joy and excitement reflect their childlike innocence, inexperienced in the world outside their boarding school.

In the children's tale, Little Red Riding Hood is tempted into danger by the wolf, which, as indicated by Perrault, represents "unassuming" men "who pursue young women" (Perrault). These "gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all" correspond with Mr. Elton and Frank, who are also shown to pass by in the film when the boarder girls appear (Perrault; 20:48; 55:14). In a social structure that favours men, Mr. Elton and Frank have the active agency to freely choose their marriage and engage women's affections, while the fates of women like Harriet and Jane depend on men's decisions and their marriage proposals. In this sense, the boarder girls act as a warning of the lurking dangers and a sign of women's powerlessness in a patriarchal world.

Seeing the red cloak and bonnet, the modern audience may more readily recognise the allusion to the Handmaids in *The Handmaid's Tale*, a dystopian story that depicts a future where women are forced to bear children for the regime. It is worth noting that whenever Emma visits the boarding school, she wears blue, contrasting with the boarder girls' red cloaks. The colour blue is what the Wives, women of the top social class, in The Handmaid's Tale wear too. This allusion, then, is not only critical of the general oppression of women under patriarchy but also laments on the "difference of woman's destiny" (III:viii). Financially dependent coupled with the lack of social status, the boarder girls are unable to take control over their future and even their bodies. Young women are expected to, and have little choice but to, fit into the role of wives and childbearing mothers.

As this section has discussed, the book, with its juxtaposition of characters, and the film, with its use of visual symbol, show and implicitly criticise how male power's exclusion of women from the socio-economic order limits the life choices of women,

forcing women to assume roles that benefit the continuation of the power structure. Such practice has established itself as social norms that even though women nowadays have more independent means, living outside the given roles can still be difficult. By revising the portrayal of the characters' relationship, the film satirises such gender expectations and plays out the irony in the novel.

Conclusion

To conclude, this paper attempts to show how the latest 2020 film adaptation of Austen's novel *Emma* (1815) maximises feminist elements in the story, thus reflecting the contemporary ideals and persisting struggles in young women's development. The first part of the essay looks at the characterisation of the heroine Emma. The film aligns with the book that, instead of conforming to the norm of subservience, young women should stay self-determined while virtuous in a dignified way. Emma's increased agency in the film shows how women's emancipation has increasingly shaken up the conception of femininity nowadays. The second section of the essay examines the film's portrayal of the heroine's interpersonal relationships, namely her female friendship, romantic relationship and family relationship. The film shows the importance of female bonding, the sexual liberation of women and egalitarian relationship with men. The portrayal reflects the influence of recent decades' feminist movements, which call for inclusivity, self-ownership of the body and the rejection of gender binary and gender role. Despite the improvements made by women's movements, the film continues to remind the audience of the difficulties faced by women in the past and present. As the third part of this paper has noted, the film provides implicit social criticism on the systematic injustices against women and the imposition of restrictive gender expectations. Nevertheless, such social criticism is played down by the film's levity and heightened stylization.

My feelings about this adaptation are somewhat conflicted. One of the most remarkable qualities of this film is how it updates the story with modern values. From a viewer's perspective, it is satisfying to see the ending preserves, if not deepens, the friendship between Emma and Harriet, which helps represent the significance of friendship in women's lives and the possible steadfastness of female bonding. However, it is also the modern revamp that makes the film border on deviating from its historical context,

as seen from how the film upends the class system and gender norms. The context, along with Austen's nuanced social critique, can at times, be obscured by the light humour and picturesque visuals. Although one can say the adaptation presents an escapist fantasy, I appreciate how de Wilde's *Emma.* balances its contemporary appeal with social commentary through the creative use of visual irony and symbol, thus maintaining the dynamics of the source material at large.

In this capstone project, I had the opportunity to delve into Austen's works and screen adaptations, which have fascinated me since my secondary school years. Informed by my past courses on literature as well as films, I have studied the interaction between Austen's work and its latest adaptation in theme and in form. I have learnt to appreciate the creative choices and techniques of the film crew, from the casting, the cinematography to the use of visual symbols, to name a few. Crucially, this project has allowed me to reflect on the connection between myself, society and the entertainment I consume. Adaptations, supposedly a reflection of the past, are symbolic of the greater change of social values in the present, and they are used to meet the cultural needs and anxieties of the contemporary audience (including myself).

Since the main theme of this paper is about how women navigate in the world, this project has, in particular, encouraged me to think about the media representations of women. As described by the screenwriter, female friendship is a "contemporary subject" in films (Gamerman). Media traditionally stereotype female friendship as subsidiary, volatile and manipulative. Media can both give representations and reinforce stereotypes. This project has reminded me how the cultural representation of women, or the lack thereof, can affect our own views of ourselves and of others unwittingly.

Perhaps somewhat ironically, while working on this paper about feminism, I have once asked myself whether I would classify myself as a "feminist", a term that has been associated with negative labels like "anti-men", "radical" and "cliché". However, through researching for this project, I have learnt more about the history and development of different waves of women's movements over the years. They have offered me insights into gender dynamics, gender role expectations and also the operations of patriarchy; some of which I seldom thought about, like the divisions among women of different socio-economic backgrounds. I have gained more and more appreciation for the cause

and women's concerted effort, and in learning more about these issues, it allows me to stay critical of social practices.

Austen depicts the difficulties faced by women of another era. Nonetheless, her work continues to strike a chord among modern readers and draws in new reimaginations. Currently, there are two adaptations of *Persuasion* in production; one will be a period piece and one will be a modern retelling (Goldsmith). While these upcoming adaptations may capture modern values and sensibilities from new perspectives, they once again confirm the endurance of Austen's texts. The reason for the lasting popularity of Austen's texts lies not only in the plot, but also in her perceptive social critique and covert challenge of the patriarchal order, which perhaps, is a sign that the problems she wrote about have never been completely out of our lives.

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The Devil who Saves Christianity: Exploring Netflix's *Lucifer's* Portrayals and Solutions to the Crisis of Christian Faith in the 21st Century

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Connections with Past Subject Materials

For my capstone project, I have chosen to do a literary analysis of Netflix's television series *Lucifer*, with a focus on the show's religious significance in the 21st century. One major reason why I opted for this topic is that I hope to integrate my interest in television production with the knowledge I have gained throughout my university education.

The fact that I have always been an avid audience of films and television shows is an important motivation for choosing a television series as the text. It is because apart from entertainment, I am especially interested in understanding the ways production crews coordinate different creative elements to produce content that are both captivating and thought-provoking. Hence, I would like to put my enthusiasm to use in this capstone project.

My university education as an English major has also influenced my choice of topic, as it had brought me into the world of literature, in which I was exposed to various literary classics and able to acquire close reading skills. In particular, my choice to analyze media text is inspired by the course ENGE3220 Literature and Film, which was the first literature course that allowed me to formally apply my literary analytical skills to films. Besides, the several courses on film studies that I took for my minor in Journalism and Communication, one of which being COMM2930 Understanding Movies, had enriched my knowledge of cinematic techniques which are essential to conducting film analyses. I am, therefore, eager to put these analytical skills into practice via this project. Not to mention that due to *Lucifer's* diverse themes, I will also be able to apply concepts I learned from different courses, namely ENGE2110 Crime Fiction, ENGE2380 Twentieth-

Century Fiction, ENGE2650 From Renaissance to Enlightenment, COMM2920 Media, Sex and Violence, and COMM3922 Special Topic in Creative and New Media II (Global Cinema). As a result, I believe that doing a critical analysis of *Lucifer* for my capstone project would be a great way to encapsulate what I have learned in the past few years, and to bring my undergraduate education to a close.

Connections with Post-degree Life and Career

Upon graduation, I intend to seek job opportunities in the television industry, hopefully as a research writer. I would view this capstone project as an opportunity to, on one hand, hone my research and analytical skills, written communication proficiency, and my understanding of the television landscape; while on the other, exhibit my capability in these areas, considering that they are the typical skill sets expected of a research writer. Other than career prospects, I also hope to pursue a postgraduate degree in film and television after gaining certain years of job experience. This project could then serve as a part of my portfolio, which may be helpful to my application.

Nonetheless, as I enter a new chapter in my life, I also feel extremely anxious since I am also about to conclude a major part of my life as a student – an identity that has defined me for almost 20 years. Therefore, for the project that marks this transition in life, I wish to explore topics that would enable me to reflect upon the other identities I have had, one of which being a Catholic.

Despite being 'born' Catholic and having had a religious upbringing, my religion has never been an essential part of my identity. One explanation I have come up with is that it may be a result of growing up in a Catholic school environment where there was constant conflict between logic and faith – as average students, we studied conventional subjects that require reasoning skills; while at the same time, as students in a religious school, we were also taught to believe in an almighty God who could miraculously turn water into wine. Such a contradiction in my education was so confusing to me that I find it hard to reconcile my religious faith with my belief in scientific reasoning; eventually, I have lost faith in a God whose existence is unexplainable by science.

While my crisis of faith is certainly a personal experience, I do think that it is reflective of a broader social phenomenon, in which there is also disagreement between religion and science. Hence, through this capstone project, by choosing to analyze *Lucifer*, a contemporary television show which features the mythical Christian Devil's life on the substantial Earth, I wish to seek plausible solutions to this seemingly irreconcilable problem in both my faith and modernity, which may also hopefully guide me to redefining my identity.

<u>Introduction</u>

Religion has long been a means for humans to make sense of their experiences on Earth. It also plays a vital role in shaping civilizations as the sets of values upheld by respective religions would guide their believers' way of living, if not determine people's perception of the world. Nevertheless, considering that religions – especially the ones that were established before the Enlightenment – mostly turn to divine forces when trying to explain abstract concepts such as human existence, one can observe over time the tension between religious beliefs and modern values, in which the more society becomes inclined to scientific reasoning, the more severely religion is marginalized through secularization. Such incompatibility is even more evident in the 21st century as modern society's endeavor to a 'smarter' lifestyle via technological advancement has further accelerated secularization, thus threatening the survival of religion in today's world.

To understand the way secularization endangers a wide range of religions, one can specifically observe the circumstances of Christianity through Netflix's television series *Lucifer* (2016-) which, by being set in the modern context, can also be regarded as a contemporary response to the ongoing secularization phenomenon. Although the show's featuring of the Devil as the protagonist had stirred controversies among Christian communities, and even triggered the American Family Association (AFA) to launch a petition calling for cancellation of the show (Suebsaeng), it is discernable that *Lucifer* conveys an affirmative attitude toward Christian teachings, including the utmost importance of love. In view of an interesting approach as such, this paper therefore aims to examine the ways in which *Lucifer*, while illustrating the perceptible clashes between

Christian beliefs and the modern values in the 21st century on complex notions such as morality and free will, also argues that above all, one's adherence to the core Christian values could be an enduring solution to this seemingly irreconcilable relationship between religion and modernity; *Lucifer*'s medium as a television series will also be discussed in terms of its significance in offering new perspectives on Christianity amid the prevalent secularizing atmosphere.

Justification of *Lucifer* as the Choice of Text

Premise of *Lucifer*

Lucifer (2016-present) is an American television series that illustrates the life of Lucifer Morningstar, an angel who fell from Heaven and became the Devil, after he abandoned his throne in Hell and came to Earth for pleasure. The plot begins with Lucifer, who owns a nightclub in Los Angeles named Lux, became involved in an investigation on one of his customers' murder, during which he met Detective Chloe Decker of the LAPD and helped her with the investigation. After witnessing Lucifer's unexplainable power in drawing people to involuntarily confessing their true desires, the LAPD invited him to be the department's civilian consultant, to which Lucifer accepted and began to work alongside Chloe, whom he finds intriguing due to her immunity to his supernatural charm. As the story develops, Lucifer continues to struggle with his strained relationships with his father God and other celestial beings, while also adapting to his life on Earth with human beings with whom he has built emotional bonds.

Lucifer as a Gateway to Viewing Modern Christianity

Among various media texts that have included religious topics, *Lucifer* is deemed a suitable choice of text for this project due to its overt discussion of Christianity despite being produced in a secular context. As a story developed in the United States, which is a considerably secular society, *Lucifer* sets Christianity as its main theme and openly deals with the conflict between Christian faith and modern values. The most obvious evidence would be the fact that a large portion of the show's characters and plot elements is based

on the Bible. Apart from featuring the Christian Devil as the titular protagonist, the show also incorporates biblical characters like Eve, Cain and Abel, God the Father, and several archangels such as Michael and Uriel. At the same time, the show also makes frequent references to biblical stories, including the War in Heaven and the fall of man, the latter of which even later serves as a major plot device. These significant religious references thus differentiate *Lucifer* from other mainstream television shows, such as *Grey's Anatomy*, that have only slightly touched upon the topic of Christian faith. Furthermore, considering that *Lucifer* also addresses philosophical notions like morality and free will, the show's Christian approach therefore draws a contrast between itself and other philosophical media texts such as *The Good Place* and *Train to Busan*, both of which have explored the issue of morality in a secular manner.

Lucifer is also a more fitting choice when compared to other Christian-themed films and television shows because of its contemporary context and popularity. While *The Lord of the Rings* franchise (2001-2003) is regarded as a classic media portrayal of Christianity, it may not be as suitable as *Lucifer*, which was premiered in 2016, for the examination of Christianity's role in the 21st century. Besides, *Lucifer* is representative of similar shows that discuss Christianity in the contemporary world, such as *Preacher* (2016-2019), *Good Omens* (2019), and *Messiah* (2020), in view of its popularity. This can be seen from the fact that in the first week following the release of its latest season in August 2020, *Lucifer* ranked first as the most popular show on Netflix in almost all countries (Moore). Also, according to FlixPatrol, a website that releases viewership analytics of video-on-demand shows, *Lucifer* had a total of 38 million views on Netflix in the first month after release, making it the sixth-most popular show on all streaming platforms as of February 2021 ("TOP 10"). All in all, *Lucifer* can be of service to this paper's discussion of Christianity in the modern context.

Part 1: Modernity's Challenge Against the Survival of Christianity

1.1   Challenges from Modernization and Secularization in Society

Back in 1882, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche had already proposed the notion of "God is Dead" in light of the dwindling influence of religion, specifically

Christianity, in Western civilization ever since the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment ideal of logic being the primary source of knowledge, as well as the advocacy of secularism, has remained influential nowadays, as seen from the way the level of modernization is oftentimes defined by rationalist indicators that range from scientific advancements to democracy index, all of which suggest that modernity has to be achieved through secularity. One can even observe the spread of the Western world's secular practices toward other cultures as society enters an era of globalization, by which not only people's ways of living but also their view on the role of religion in society have been transformed. Ultimately, this accelerating trend of secularization in society has not only further substantiated Nietzsche's earlier notion, but may have also given rise to a crisis of faith that prompts believers to doubt their religious beliefs, and to rethink one of the core questions regarding religion: "Is there really a God?"

Hence, taking account of the above phenomenon, factors in the secularization of modern society will be discussed in the following, with a focus on the context of the United States, namely the production context of this project's choice of text *Lucifer*.

1.1.1   Emphasis on Science and American Pragmatism

The prominence of modern science has fundamentally revolutionized the relationship between humans and nature, which conflicts with the principle of Christianity. It is because, before science, humans lacked logical explanations to natural occurrences; the enigma of nature therefore urged people to regard it as an almighty force with which one must come to terms regardless (Olsen 2). In Christianity, specifically, it is taught that God created Earth, including "all kinds of plants" and "animal life" in nature (*Sunrise Good News Bible*, Gen. 1.12-24); whereas human beings, also being God's creation, are willed by God the Creator to be "in charge of […] all the wild animals" (Gen. 1.28), denoting that human beings are merely guardians of nature. However, the Christian notion of a harmonious human-nature relationship might not withstand the increasing authority of science because, considering that humans' reverence for nature mainly stems from their lack of knowledge, the way science enables people to grasp nature's structure has nullified its mysteriousness. Humans' thorough comprehension of nature

would, therefore, lead them to view nature as a mere object that can be reordered at will (Jonas), rather than a sacred realm that one should preserve. That is to say, the emphasis on science in modern days, as well as the resulting technological advancements, can be deemed a challenge against Christianity because it engenders a sense of superiority over God by granting people the power to conquer nature, namely God's creation.

In the particular context of the United States, the strong belief in science comes in the form of pragmatism, a popular philosophical tradition that originated in 1870s America, stressing practicality and scientific experimentation. In a broad sense, experience is of the utmost importance in pragmatist thinking – as pointed out by Charles Sanders Peirce, the "father of pragmatism", in his 1878 article *How to Make Our Ideas Clear*, "the whole of our conception" of any objects and theories should be constructed with "practical bearings" (8). While there are disputes among pragmatists over the compatibility of religion and science, it is certain that pragmatism, by accentuating the latter, encourages people to live by norms that are based on "functional truth for the conduct of life", rather than divine truth (Jeffrey and Evans 253-283). Hence, as pragmatist thinking diverts people's means of obtaining knowledge away from religious teachings, its growing prominence in the United States, and later in other countries due to globalization, can therefore be seen as a driving force toward secularization, thus another threat against Christianity.

1.1.2   American Liberal Democracy, Religious Pluralism, and Secular Education System

Apart from pragmatism whose emphasis on experimentation has introduced a secular approach to knowledge, America's political system may also play an impactful part in expediting secularization in modern education. The United States is a liberal democracy in which people possess the right to elect their government, and that people's individual rights and freedoms are officially recognized by the Constitution ("Your Government" 1; "The Constitution's"). Ensuring every individual's rights, however, also signifies the need to encourage multiculturalism and pluralism by prohibiting any imposition of a particular "individual preference" on others (Richardson 1367), including personal beliefs such as religion. In fact, the importance of freedom of religion can be seen from the fact that

it was one of the first five rights specified in the Bill of Rights ("The Bill"). The goal of religious pluralism thus prompts secularization, which, by restraining the influence of the more predominant religions like Christianity, can create a middle ground that could accommodate the minority of religions. Not to mention that in order to sustain such pluralism over time, secularization is also promoted through education, so that even younger generations are instilled with the idea that religious views are "sectarian", whereas secularism is "neutral" and essential to maintaining an impartial society (Olsen 14). It is clear, though, that a secularizing trend as such in modern education would pose threat to the status of Christianity in society in general.

1.1.3   Rise of Mass Popular Culture

The rise of mass culture may also undermine the influence of Christianity as it eliminates the culture of reading in society, which is essential to the religion. One of the characteristics of mass cultural products is that they often tap similarities among people's preferences, with the aim to appeal to a large audience at once; hence, it is inevitable that mass culture, once it gains prominence, will have pervasive influence in society. Besides, considering that as technology has advanced over the past century, modern mass entertainment also often comes in media other than print, such as television, film, and music; its dominance would accordingly lead to the decline of reading culture, which can be considered a menace to Christianity, too. It is because Christianity, as described by German theologian Andreas Holzem, is a "Buchreligion" (qtd. in Olsen 2) – or a 'book religion' – that is solely based on the Bible, which is essentially a collection of books of Scriptures. As a result, given the importance of perusal in Christian preaching, the way mass culture discourages people from reading may even obstruct the religion's development.

1.2   Conflicts Between Christian and Modern Values as Illustrated in *Lucifer*

Other than the challenges from secularization in society, one can also observe nowadays the way Christian beliefs clash with modern values such as the importance of self-confidence and free will. Such incompatibility is illustrated in *Lucifer* through

alternative portrayals of good and evil that differ from the Bible's depiction, by which the contradictions may cause people to doubt the moral standard of the Church's teaching and, thus, the fairness of its demonization of the Devil.

1.2.1   The Devil in the Bible

According to the Bible, the Devil is cast out of Heaven after his defeat in the war in Heaven which he has started (Rev. 12.9). The Bible suggests that the Devil's sins stem from pride, as he thinks he is "as wise as God" (Ezek. 28.8), due to which he daringly "climb[s] to the tops of the clouds and be like the Almighty" (Isa. 14. 14). These sins are considered utterly evil in Christianity because they are acts of blasphemy, which refers to actions that deliberately manifest contempt of God ("blasphemy"; "mortal sin"). As recounted in the gospels through the story of Jesus and Beelzebul, blasphemy is also specified by Jesus as an "eternal sin" that will never be forgiven (Mark 3.29; Matt. 12.31; Luke 12.10). Hence, in light of such seriousness of the Devil's sins, it has been indoctrinated by the Church that the Devil is the embodiment of pure, if not the ultimate evil through "every story of good and bad from throughout history" ("O, Ye"), as acknowledged in the show. Such demonization thus builds an intimidating image of the Devil that has eventually become deep-rooted in cultures that are influenced by Christianity.

1.2.2   Paradox of Good and Evil in *Lucifer* and Fairness of the Church's Teaching

While *Lucifer* challenges the Bible's portrayal of the Devil by characterizing Lucifer Morningstar as a charming devil, by setting the story in the 21st century, the show also places these traditional Christian teachings of the Devil within the modern context, in which modern values and Christian traditions collide. Altogether, it draws attention to the unfairness of the Church's demonization of Satan.

Pride, for example, may be considered as iniquity in Christianity due to the belief that humans, as God's creations, should "humble [them]selves […] under God's mighty hand" (1 Pet. 5.6). Yet, taking into account the modern emphasis on individualism and, thus, self-empowerment (Triandis 38), Lucifer's pride may no longer be viewed as mere vanity, but a manifestation of self-confidence. One example is that although Lucifer may come across as arrogant and narcissistic when he considers it "fascinating" to learn

that Chloe finds him repulsive ("Pilot"), his pride can be justified by his charismatic presentation – he is handsome and has a muscular physique; he also has a good sense of humor and even speaks a British accent that is deemed attractive nowadays. In other words, the show's depiction of him rather suggests that he is well qualified to take pride in his charm. Besides, it is also notable that people who are 'looked down' on by Lucifer are usually men with less polished appearances, such as Elliot Richards, a wealthy but shabby-looking stay-at-home father whom Lucifer satirizes to have "surrender[ed his] manhood" for wearing a stained tee shirt and unfashionable Crocs slippers ("Liar"). Hence, in addition to the observation that Lucifer's criticisms of others' appearances are mostly used by the show to serve comedic functions rather than to antagonize his character, one may understand that Lucifer's perception of the masculine ideal is also agreed upon by the modern audience. Lucifer's character can, therefore, be viewed as the show's representation of the collective ideal of masculinity in modern society. As a result, while the way Lucifer sees himself as the most attractive being may be regarded as a violation of the sin of pride in Christian teachings, the fact that his self-assertion as an attractive man is endorsed by the show and the audience may instead highlight the conflict between the Christian definition of pride and the modern definition of self-confidence.

Even the Devil's blasphemy may be deemed acceptable in today's society, considering that his defiance against God is an act of free will. While the seriousness of the sin against God is agreed by Christian communities, including the Catholic Church which specifies it in its Catechism as "a grave violation of God's law" (1855), the role of free will in blasphemy is also recognized, which can be seen from the Church's definition of mortal sin as a "sufficiently deliberate […] personal choice" made with "full knowledge and complete consent" (1859). Such voluntary nature of the Devil's rebellion against God is echoed in the television portrayal as well through the way Lucifer constantly reiterates his reason to quit ruling Hell, namely a task assigned to him by God, is that he is "sick of being a part of His play" ("Pilot"). This indicates that his decision is made with sound judgement, which is in contrast to the sheer obedience to God's orders of other angels, such as Amenadiel and Uriel. Furthermore, throughout the show, Lucifer has not only exhibited his self-will by behaving as he pleases regardless of other's opinions – such as taking his clothes off in public ("St. Lucifer") and declaring his love for drugs at an addict

support group ("Everything's Coming Up Lucifer") – but also demonstrated his support for exercising free will by luring people to face their true desires and to act on them.

Nonetheless, despite the negative association between the notion of free will and the Devil, the former is highly valued in modern days due to its indication of one's freedom from others' manipulation, which can be seen from *Lucifer*'s depiction of its human characters, especially Chloe. By noting the way Chloe, who used to feel dissatisfied in a predetermined career as a child actress, has eventually achieved fulfilment as a homicide detective, namely a profession for which she has desired since young, one can infer the show's affirmative stance on free will being the key to one's true happiness. The tension between free will and predestination is further accentuated as the show reveals that Chloe's existence is only made possible by God's intervention, which has led Chloe to go through a serious identity crisis as she believes that her predestination to be in Lucifer's path would deny her existence as an independent individual, and that her life has no other purpose other than being God's predetermined "perfect Mrs. Morningstar" ("Detective Amenadiel"). Chloe's distress can, therefore, be understood as modern people's rejection of the idea of predestination, thus their belief in free will. It is also notable that Chloe's predestination closely resembles that of the biblical character Eve, who is made by God to be Adam's "suitable companion" so that he would not live alone (Gen. 2.18), in a way that both of them are "just thing[s] created for someone else" ("Detective Amenadiel"). Hence, considering that the audience may sympathize with Chloe's despair after her revelation, by paralleling a human character with the 'original sinner' in Christian traditions, *Lucifer* may be urging the audience to re-evaluate Eve's sinfulness – perhaps, her choice to disobey God and to eat the forbidden fruit may be made out of free will, in hopes of making sense of her own existence.

All in all, by contrasting traditional Christian belief in the sinfulness of pride and blasphemy with today's perceptions of self-confidence and free will as ways to manifest one's individualism, the show highlights the way the modern context may diminish the evilness of the Devil and Eve's sins, through which it ultimately prompts contemplation on whether they – but especially the Devil – truly deserve the Church's extreme demonization, if not vilification.

1.3 The Survival of Christianity in the 21st Century

While the aforementioned confrontations between Christian traditions and modern values may provide a contextual background for one to understand the difficult situation of Christianity in the 21st century, such collision may also bring about a practical consequence – a crisis of faith in the religion.

The modern crisis of faith can be observed in *Lucifer* through the character of Ella Lopez. As a forensic scientist and a strong believer of Christianity, Ella can be viewed as a precise example of the collision of science and faith. However, despite her strong faith at the beginning, Ella eventually loses faith in God after the tragic death of Charlotte Richards, who is an attorney that used to serve guilty criminals but has later strived to redeem her sins, because she finds it hard to understand why God – who "works in mysterious ways" – would allow such a tragedy to happen ("A Devil of My Word"). On top of that, noting that Ella works in the homicide investigation department, her frequent encounters with wrongful deaths may also play a part in causing her eventual disbelief in the existence of Heaven and Hell, which symbolizes divine justice – or, as put by Chloe, "celestial justice" – in Christianity ("Devil Is as Devil Does"). Altogether, by allegorizing and highlighting the cruelty faced by humans through Ella's character, *Lucifer* may then amplify the significance of the core question regarding Christianity, if not most religions, in the 21st century – Is there really a God?

Part 2: *Lucifer*'s Solutions to Christianity's Survival in the Modern Era

Ever since before its premiere in 2016, *Lucifer* has been facing criticisms and accusations from the Christian community. For instance, in 2015, the American Family Association successfully obtained over 120 thousand signatures for its petition demanding Fox to cancel the show, criticizing it as "blasphemous" for "depict[ing] Satan as a charming [and] good guy" ("American Family Association"). The religious community's reception to the show has remained critical even after its premiere. A reviewer for Catholic News Service, for example, commented that the show "blurs many a moral and spiritual line with its fast-and-loose portrayal of Satan" (Macina). In South Africa, similarly, the officials of a subscription television channel had rescheduled *Lucifer*'s broadcasting to the late-night

spot after receiving a considerable number of complaints from Christian viewers, who criticized the show as "offensive" and "go[ing] against any grain of Christianity"; some even condemned the show as a form of "Satan worship", arguing that it would bring the cultivation of South Africa as a country and community into sin (Ferreira). Nonetheless, in contrast to these accusations of *Lucifer*, this part will argue that the show, in essence, affirms the Christian teachings by adhering to the core principles of Christianity despite its alternative interpretations of the Bible.

2.1. Reconciliation of Science and Faith

Being set in 21st century Los Angeles, the show narrows the tension between Christianity and modernity to the American context. As discussed in Part 1, the United States nowadays is situated in a conflicted state in which it is "both remarkably religious and remarkably secular" (Olsen 30). It is because, on one hand, Protestantism is deeply engraved in the American history and culture considering that the Puritans, who migrated to New England in 1620, were one of the earliest settlers in early America before the United States of America was founded in 1776 (Heimert and Delbanco 39-40); while on the other, secularization is happening due to the gaining prominence of pragmatism in today's American society. However, in regard to the threats of scientific advance and secularization against Christianity, *Lucifer*'s plot settings and character developments may suggest that religious faith and science are not necessarily incompatible.

The show's plot setting where divine beings come to live with humans on Earth can be seen as its attempt to combine religion with modern American values. More specifically, the fact that Lucifer, a supernatural character, collaborates with police detectives in investigation work may further accentuate the complementarity of science and religion. This can especially be seen from the way many of the cases are solved with the help of Lucifer's unexplainable ability – or, as Chloe would call it, his "mojo" – to draw out people's true desires. Yet, despite the incorporation of celestial elements, the show does not overstress Lucifer's role in solving cases; instead, the search for scientific evidence by Ella, the forensic scientist, and Chloe, the detective, remains important in the plot. As a result, the way *Lucifer* strikes a balance between supernatural and realistic elements, such that neither one would override the other, may altogether show that the

coordination of faith and logic can help to obtain a fuller truth, thus justice.

Apart from the plot setting, *Lucifer* also features romances between celestial beings and humans, which may symbolize the union of divinity and humanity. This is particularly evident in the development of Lucifer and Chloe's relationship – Lucifer, who used to expect Chloe to uncritically accept his claims about divinity, has gradually learned the importance of evidence in order to accommodate Chloe's belief in scientific proof, whereas Chloe, on the other hand, despite being "a woman of logic and reason" ("They're Back"), has transformed from obliviously dismissing Lucifer's illogical claims to be the Devil to trying her best to make sense of them as metaphors. Even when being left baffled after seeing Lucifer's Devil face to which science can no longer provide an explanation, she turns to seek answers from the religious characters, including Amenadiel, an actual celestial angel ("Expire Erect"), and Ella, a former devout Christian ("Devil Is as Devil Does"); not to mention she has also gone to "a division of the Church" in Rome to research more on the Devil, at which although she has been used by Father Kinley ("Somebody's"). One can also note that Chloe has begun to recognize Lucifer's unexplainable "mojo" by relying on it during investigation early on in the series, demonstrating the way she is willing to have faith in his powers despite not being able to understand them. Ultimately, the power of the combination of science and faith is exhibited when Chloe is kidnapped by Michael in the latest fifth season, during which Lucifer makes use of the investigations skills he has acquired over time to rescue Chloe, while Chloe also keeps faith in Lucifer's ability in searching for her. Their eventual reunion would thus signify the reconciliation between science and faith after their continuous efforts to cater to each other. On the whole, the show demonstrates, in a broader sense, the possibility of balancing between the extremes of secularization and evangelization in modern days despite the increasing importance of science.

2.2   Predestination Does Not Entail the Absence of Free Will

The faith in God's almightiness is an important, if not vital element in Christianity, considering that it is dictated to be the key to one's permanent salvation (Rom. 10.9). When examining the grounds for people's belief in God's omnipotence and omniscience,

one would undoubtedly come upon the doctrine of predestination, which refers to the belief that everything is willed and predetermined by God. Apart from simply illustrating God's ability to predestine one's fate, however, *Lucifer* also likens it to another form of divine control by presenting the common belief of 'the Devil made me do it', which insists that humans' sins are a result of the Devil's temptation, by which the show further highlights humans' tendencies to ascribe human events to supernatural forces. This can be seen from the show's portrayals of people's reactions to their experiences, ranging from blaming the Devil for their wrongdoings to holding God responsible for what they have been through. Yet, in response to such beliefs, *Lucifer* suggests that the compatibility of predetermination and human free will is still acknowledged by the Bible; thus, humans' experiences, whether good or tragic, should not be deemed mere results of divine manipulation, but also the consequences of one's willful choices.

The Christian doctrine of predestination can be roughly divided into two schools of thought: single predestination and double predestination. The former believes that God takes an active role in selecting the elects who are predestined for heaven; the latter, on the other hand, takes a step further to suggest that in addition to the elects, God also selects the reprobates for predestined damnation (Gleckman 22, 30). While the extent of predestination is yet being widely discussed in academia (Olson; Levering; Feinburg et al.), one can notice that the belief in God's omniscience and intervention in human fate is the common ground shared between both schools, in which the existence of free will can still be tolerated. In fact, the coexistence of God's predetermination and human free will is also endorsed in the Book of Proverbs, which indicates that God directs people's actions as they plan their ways in life (16.9). Hence, this interpretation of predestination being guidance from God may then imply that God does not actively cause their behaviors, thus acknowledging the presence of human free will despite God's omniscience. *Lucifer,* too, takes on this moderate interpretation of predestination and recognizes human beings' ability to determine their fate. This can be observed from Chloe's predestination story, in which the show suggests that although her encounter with Lucifer may be predestined by the fact that her mother's pregnancy was a result of God's blessing, the show proposes that by predestination, God only granted Chloe immunity to Lucifer's charms as the embodiment of people's greatest desires – that is, while all the other humans are attracted

to Lucifer because they see him as a mere reflection of their deepest desires, Chloe's immunity allows her to be "the only mortal who sees him for who he truly is" ("Detective Amenadiel"). As a result, it is illustrated in the show that predestination, instead of depriving Chloe of her free will, actually grants her lucidity to evaluate Lucifer in his truest form, and thus autonomy to decide the way her relationship with Lucifer would develop, namely whether or not she would fall in love with him.

At the same time, the show also satirizes people's tendency to blame the Devil for their sins through the lens of Lucifer, who has frequently reiterated throughout the show that he has "never made anyone […] do anything" ("Favorite Son"). In a particular supermarket scene where Lucifer lures a woman to taste a strawberry, for example, all he has said is a factual statement that the only way she could only "find[…] out what deliciousness is underneath [the strawberry is to] giv[e] it a little taste" ("Pops"). One can also discern the shocking resemblance of this scene with the story in the Garden of Eden, in which the Devil is said to have disguised himself as a snake and lured Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. According to the Book of Genesis, in contrast to God's warning that humans "will die the same day" from eating the fruit (2.17), the snake told Eve that not only will they not die from doing so, but they will even "be like God and know what is good and what is bad" (3.4). The snake's words are revealed to be true whereas God's are not, at least in a literal sense, considering that both Adam and Eve indeed survived afterwards; it is only their innocence that figuratively 'died' as they acquired sexual awareness and became aware that "they were naked" (3.7). As a result, *Lucifer*'s analogy for the Bible's account of the story in the Garden of Eden may serve to illustrate that the Devil's temptations are simply revelations of the truth that are by no means deceitful nor forceful. Thus, instead of being involuntarily manipulated by the Devil, the choice to sin against God is ultimately made by humans out of their own free will.

On the whole, although the voluntary nature of the Devil's blasphemy may have led to the conventional perception of free will as sinful, *Lucifer* argues otherwise that one does not simply become a sinner by exercising free will; rather, it is when one uses his free will to decide to commit sins that he has become evil. By echoing early Christian scholars' views on the interrelationship between free will and predestination – such as Origen, Jerome, and Pelagius's argument that "the cause of each person's salvation is

not placed in the foreknowledge of God but in one's own purpose and actions" (qtd. in Gleckman 21-22), *Lucifer* suggests that the two doctrines are not necessarily mutually exclusive in Christianity. Instead, by highlighting the crucial role of free will in people's behaviors and experiences, the show demonstrates that even though divine forces such as predestination may indeed act as an influential factor, they should not be exploited by humans as an excuse for their poor decisions. It is because be it God or the Devil, they only serve to offer different alternatives to humans and to guide them toward good or evil. In the end, the decision of one's action is still up to the individual and, therefore, as Lucifer has always stressed, "people need to take responsibility for their own bad behaviors" ("Sweet Kicks").

2.3   The Utmost Importance of Love

2.3.1   Love as a Remedy for Obstacles in Life

Love is said in the Bible to be the greatest virtue, followed by faith and hope (1 Cor. 13.13). The way one should love is established by Jesus, who commanded that people should "love one another" just as the way He has loved them (John 15.12), by which He also suggested that one's acts of love may require self-sacrifices, as seen from the way Jesus manifested His love for humans by sacrificing His life for their sins. The notion of love being the most powerful force that could overcome everything, including Jesus's suffering and let alone human hardships, is also pinpointed in *Lucifer*.

Throughout the show, the power of love is often illustrated in occasions of major plot conflicts, in which the characters ultimately conquer their respective obstacles via love. One of the examples of such conflicts is when Lucifer finds out that Chloe has teamed up with Father Kinley, a priest that has wanted to banish Lucifer from Earth, he feels so utterly hurt, not only from her betrayal but also her deception, that he refuses to forgive her even after her apology ("O, Ye"). Nevertheless, although Lucifer has never explicitly stated his forgiveness for Chloe's betrayal, their fight is eventually resolved after a hostage crisis, in which Chloe instinctively jumps onto Lucifer to protect him from an imminent bomb explosion ("Expire Erect"). The way Chloe would risk her life to protect Lucifer exemplifies the act of sacrificial love, which not only parallels Jesus's

sacrifice for humanity, but is also preached by Jesus to be "the greatest love a person can have for his friends" (John 15.13). Therefore, the fact that Lucifer, despite having been utterly dismayed, eventually forgives Chloe after realizing her true love for him may substantiate that the power of love is, indeed, great enough to pardon disagreements as severe as such.

One can also observe the magnitude of love in *Lucifer* from the severe consequences from which Amenadiel and Lucifer have to suffer for being engrossed in hatred. Amenadiel, for instance, loses his angel wings and the power to stop time after committing a number of sins during his time on Earth, among which the most inappropriate one is resurrecting Malcolm, a corrupt and murderous detective, from Hell after failing to make Lucifer return to Hell ("Wingman"). Apart from the fact that he has revived an immoral sinner, Amenadiel's resurrection of Malcolm is deemed further unacceptable due to his intention to kill Lucifer ("A Priest Walks"), whom he hates for hindering him from fulfilling God's request. One may also discern that his hatred toward Lucifer stems from his reluctance to forgive, which would further substantiate his lack of love given that forgiveness is preached to be an essential quality of love (Col. 3.13-14). Hence, by noting that Amenadiel's wicked intention and refusal to forgive Lucifer directly violate the Christian virtue of love, the loss of his angelic features can then be understood as a punishment – perhaps from God – for being consumed with hatred and unable to love his brother. Similarly, Lucifer also undergoes changes in his angelic appearance after unleashing his immense self-hatred and guilt which he has been suppressing in a therapy session with Dr. Linda Martin ("Super Bad Boyfriend") – he loses control over his physical form and, eventually, fully takes on his Devil figure without being able to return to the human form ("Save Lucifer"). It is until he admits that he wants to forgive himself has his burnt Devil skin begun to fade from his chest ("Save Lucifer"). Therefore, while Lucifer's devilish appearance can be viewed as a manifestation of his self-hatred, the way the show depicts that genuine self-forgiveness, thus self-love, can even reverse the Devil's devilishness may then be seen as the ultimate exemplification of the power of love.

2.3.2   Love as the Timeless Essence of Christian Teachings

Lucifer's illustration of love as a powerful cure to human problems may also apply to the broader social context, by which it can be interpreted as an overall solution to modern challenges such as rationalism and secularization.

It is interesting to note that among the many comedic devices adopted in *Lucifer*, the juxtaposition of divine characters, including Lucifer and Amenadiel, with clergymen can be regarded as the show's attempt to draw distinctions between the Christian religion and the Church, especially in terms of their endurance of changes in society over time. For the former, while it is evident in reality that, as a religion originated in the 1st century, Christianity has remained to be one of the largest religions in today's world, the endurance of religion is also represented in *Lucifer* through its biblically-based characters, whose immortality can be viewed as a denotation of the way the Bible, thus Christianity as a whole, is able to transcend time. Besides, the way these celestial characters, despite being from an ancient background, are able to accustom to the 21st-century lifestyle can also be seen as a representation of Christianity's resistance to changes in society. Hence, observing that the creed of Christianity remains essentially consistent despite the challenge of time, the religion's transcendence can ultimately be ascribed to its enduring core values, one of which being the virtue of love.

The steadfastness of Christianity is, however, in contrast to the Church which has drastically evolved over the past 21 centuries. As a result of the reforms from Jesus's ministry in the 1st century to the East-West schism in the 11th century, and further to the Reformation in the 16th century (Mullin 307-310), Christianity nowadays is broadly split into three main branches, namely Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Eastern Orthodoxy; each of which further consists of more denominations with varying interpretations of the Scriptures (Ramshaw 92-115). Considering such diversity in the Christian community, one can then anticipate a vast range of interpretations of biblical ideas – including the notion of love – within which contradictions exist yet none of the views is absolutely accurate. Such ambivalence in people's understanding of Christian teachings is also explored in *Lucifer* through the contrasts between people's stereotype of the Devil and Lucifer's side of the story. For instance, after realizing Lucifer's true identity,

Chloe asks Lucifer if he has enjoyed torturing people in Hell ("Somebody's"), by which her perception of the Devil as a ruthless monster is in line with the Christian stereotype. As a response, Lucifer defends himself with a firm denial, by which his disdain for being a torturer may seem contradictory to the conventional view of the Devil. Nevertheless, it is important to note that while the Devil is said in the Bible to be prideful, blasphemous, and deceitful, there is no mention of him taking pleasure from torturing humans; this means that despite the contradiction to people's common belief, Lucifer's reaction is still compatible with the Bible's description of the Devil. Besides, Lucifer's comment that "somebody's been reading Dante's *Inferno*" ("Somebody's") is also notable because it satirizes the way people believe so firmly in the depictions of afterlife in literary canons, although they are just the writers' imagination and nothing but another possible reading of the Bible.

Ergo, while situating itself in Lucifer's position, the show not only argues against the traditional perception of the Devil, but also challenges the rigidity in such understanding. *Lucifer*'s approach, although radical, has indeed offered an alternative way of interpreting the Bible's depiction of the Devil and evil, through which it has also pinpointed the open-ended nature of biblical interpretation. Nonetheless, even though it is impossible for humans to obtain an absolute understanding of the Bible's teachings, at the same time, *Lucifer* also argues that the Scriptures has already explicitly specified doctrines for believers to observe, including love, faith, and hope, all of which have endured the test of time and social changes. Therefore, by specifically illustrating the notion of love as a powerful remedy for humans' hardships in life, as well as a timeless core principle of Christianity, *Lucifer* may be arguing that in order to fight against the modern crisis of faith, which has derived from various reasons, perhaps it is best for one to hold fast to the core Christian creeds – especially love – rather than clinging onto the Churches' varying biblical interpretations.

Part 3: Significance of *Lucifer* as a Television Show

As a television adaptation of the ancient Christian tale of the Devil, the story of *Lucifer* combines elements from both the Bible and the DC comic book series of the

same name, while also incorporating customized alterations in terms of genre and style. These alterations, on one hand, can be understood as a result of the story's transition from the form of written text to a graphic novel, and further to serialized television, while on the other, may also serve to exemplify the way the television medium enables this age-old story of the Devil to adapt to the scene of modern popular culture, if not to further consolidate the influence of Christianity in the 21st century. Hence, by looking into the show's genre and style, this part will examine the impacts of *Lucifer's* nature as a Hollywood television series in terms of not only promoting Christian ideas but also showcasing the religion's flexibility in the face of the everchanging mediascape and social environment, from which one may ultimately view the show as an allegory of how Christianity can position itself in modernity.

3.1 *Lucifer* as a Loose Adaptation of DC Comics' Graphic Novel

3.1.1 Alteration to the Genre

Compared to its source of adaptation – Mike Carey's graphic novel *Lucifer*, the television adaptation differs greatly in terms of genre characteristics as it has been restructured from a pure fantasy into a police procedural comedy-drama that also incorporates supernatural elements. This can be evidenced by the fact that, although the protagonists of both the graphic novel and the television adaptation share the same backstory, the former focuses its plotline on Lucifer's involvement in the affairs among divine beings, whereas the latter is more inclusive of its human characters' narratives. One can notice this from the fact that, while the mythical elements, namely biblical references, remain essential despite the shift of focus as they constitute the central plot which concerns the tension between Lucifer and God, the human component is still prominent, which can be seen from the way the television show is mainly set on Earth and features an overarching plot about Lucifer's relationship with Chloe. At the same time, each episode also consists of a self-contained subplot that involves a homicide case, thus demonstrating the show's humanistic approach as opposed to the comics.

<u>3.1.2   Impacts of *Lucifer*'s Readapted Genre</u>

By combining the genres of mythical fantasy and realistic police procedural, the hybrid nature of *Lucifer* may serve to create stronger resonance with its audience, which could further facilitate the conveyance of the show's thematic message. It is because, on one hand, the mythic genre may help evoke people's interest in the story to begin with. American literature professor Joseph Campbell once defined mythologies as "public dreams that move and shape societies" (362), by which he highlights the collective and perpetual nature of these stories. This can also be exemplified by Christian myths, including the story of the Devil, which have been shared across cultures and generations through the growth of Christianity, shaping numerous communities for centuries. Hence, by applying such nature of mythologies to the context of media portrayals, the mythical genre may then allow *Lucifer*'s account of the age-old tale of the Devil to stay relevant and interesting to its modern audiences.

On the other hand, however, realistic elements are still needed in *Lucifer* to complement the mythical genre, which could be a limitation in optimizing the show's resonance with its audience. Resonance is deemed vital to *Lucifer* considering that one of the show's aims, as stated by its executive producers Joe Henderson and Ildy Modrovich, is to "explore stories and relationships that we [as humans] would typically experience" ("Joe Henderson," 00:02:48-00:02:53). In view of this, the fantastical elements in the original comics may not be entirely suitable for the television adaptation as they may distance the audience from reality, thus nullifying the show's function to prompt people's reflection on their real-life experiences. Instead, by restructuring itself into a police procedural drama, which is by nature more "authentic and realistic" than other subgenres of detective fiction (Primasita and Ahimsa-Putra 37) and let alone the fantasy genre, *Lucifer* not only depicts the exciting investigation processes but also reflects real-life police work. This can be observed from the show's portrayal of workplace affairs, such as Chloe being unpopular among her colleagues due to bitter disagreements ("Pilot"), as well as Dan's repetitive paperwork that is described by Lucifer as "very boring" ("Detective Amenadiel"), all of which may be experienced by, and therefore relatable to, the show's viewers as workers themselves. Therefore, the authenticity of *Lucifer*'s portrayal may serve to counterbalance the fantastical myth elements and reconnect its modern audiences

with reality, altogether allowing them to reflect upon their real-life experiences through the lens of the fictional characters.

Ultimately, by creating resonance with its audience on a personal level, *Lucifer*'s use of realism may even specifically guide people to re-evaluate their religious experience, as well as Christianity on the whole. The important role of realism in engendering people's reconsideration of their understandings of Christianity is especially displayed in scenes that illustrate the celestial characters' experiences as humans on Earth, one of which is Lucifer's regular therapy sessions with Dr. Linda Martin. Considering that psychological therapy is a realistic way through which people – perhaps including the show's viewers – attempt to sort out one's emotions at times of adversities, the way the show portrays Lucifer's journey of self-discovery as a motif may then fundamentally challenge its viewers' conception of the Devil as it repeatedly acknowledges that Lucifer, even as the Devil, also has emotions and suffers emotionally like humans. Hence, while the show's humanization of Lucifer challenges the stereotypical Christian understanding of the Devil as an utterly remorseless, torturous creature, it may also eventually guide people to reconsider the deep-seated Christian notion of evil, or even morality in general.

3.2 *Lucifer*'s Style: Acclimatization of Biblical Ideas to Modern Television

3.2.1   Implications of *Lucifer*'s Nature as a Hollywood Television Production

To facilitate the discussion of *Lucifer*'s significance as a modern television series, it is essential for one to first understand the unique nature of the television medium as opposed to other media forms. Television can be seen as a dangerously irresistible medium of communication that has radically revolutionized people's experiences with electronic media, including telegraphy and photography, ever since its popularization in the mid 20th century. As argued by media theorist Neil Postman in his work *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, it is because television has not only enhanced "the interplay of image and instancy to an exquisite and dangerous perfection", but also transcended multiple boundaries ranging from private sphere and age to poverty, education, and subjects of public interests (78). The unprecedented level of attractiveness and wide coverage of television in society have therefore given rise to a drastic growth in audience size, thus

the influence of television productions – including *Lucifer* – in society.

At the same time, however, ensuring the enormous extent of television's influence may also indicate the need for productions to cater to their diverse audience's preferences all at once, which is usually achieved through providing entertainment. This characteristic can also be seen in *Lucifer*, whose entertainment nature may function to further intensify the show's influence. Justification of the fact that *Lucifer* is chiefly aimed for entertainment purposes is twofold – firstly, considering that "entertainment is the supra-ideology of all discourse on television" (Postman 87), *Lucifer*'s primary function to provide amusement and pleasure is already determined by its nature as a television show; secondly, the show's background as a Hollywood production also presupposes its ultimate goal to accommodate the audience's preferences. It is because Hollywood, also known as the First Cinema, operates as a commercial industry that is profit-driven, due to which its productions are mostly targeted at the preferences of their customers, namely the audiences, to ensure marketability (Wu Leung). *Lucifer*, too, abides by this formula by maximizing its entertaining effect, which can be observed from the show's incorporation of striking elements such as sex and violence, as well as the way it adapts the story's genre from the original comic book's fantasy into the more relatable genre of crime fiction. All in all, one may realize a complementary relationship between *Lucifer*'s nature as both a television show and a Hollywood production, in which while the medium gives rise to a vast audience that has to be satisfied via entertainment, the way the entertainment purpose should be fulfilled is in turn determined by the preferences of the same group of audience. Altogether, by integrating the power of the television medium and entertainment, *Lucifer*'s nature as a Hollywood television production may ultimately enhance its influence to the largest possible extent, through which the show's message could be delivered more effectively across society.

3.2.2 *Lucifer*'s Cinematic Style for Entertainment and Popularity

Lucifer's purpose of entertainment is mostly achieved through its eye-catching cinematic style, which is made possible by its television medium and, thus, a larger cinematic capacity. One prominent example is the abundance of sexual and violent

elements in the show, which can be observed from aspects ranging from mise-en-scène to scriptwriting. For instance, the show's portrayals of crime scenes are often gruesome and bloody, featuring close-up shots of corpses and horrifying ways of murder such as sticking metal bars into the victim's head ("Everything's Coming Up"). Other than that, sexual elements are also frequently presented via provocative visuals and dialogues. For example, in a scene where Lucifer invites Chloe to have sex with him ("Our Mojo"), one of the shots is framed by Lucifer's arching leg, while Chloe is placed within the triangular arch, by which the shot's composition creates a perspective as if the audience is gazing from between Lucifer's legs and close to his private parts. Similarly, one may also notice the abundance of obscene references incorporated in the script, whether they are sex jokes or anecdotes that require nudity on screen. An example of the former is Lucifer's remark when he gifts Chloe a necklace that is made from the bullet with which she shot him, in which he says, "since I'd never likely penetrate you, I'd commemorate the one time you penetrated me" ("Vegas with Some Radish"). The audience may easily grasp Lucifer's pun on the word 'penetrate', which can be understood in both a sexual and literal sense, especially considering that he has been explicit about wanting to sleep with Chloe since their first encounter. As for the latter – stories that require nudity on screen, it can be exemplified by the episode "Orgy Pants to Work" which features a murder case that requires investigation in a naturist resort in which everybody is naked; it is also worth noting that the specific investigation scene takes up a total of four minutes of screen time, thus demonstrating the way the plot may also contribute to the show's striking visual presentation. All in all, one may observe the way *Lucifer* utilizes these striking cinematic elements to better satisfy the diverse taste of its modern audiences, thus fulfilling its entertainment purposes as a modern television show.

3.2.3 *Lucifer*'s Style of Humor for Provoking Thoughts on Christianity

Apart from the sexual overtones, as a comedy-drama, *Lucifer*'s style of humor is also characterized by its extensive use of religious puns that may as well effectively prompt its audience to rethink their daily vocabulary. One of the phrases that is frequently highlighted by the show is 'Oh my God', to which Lucifer always responds although it is often dismissed as a pointless exclamation in reality. For example, when a girl expresses her frustration to Lucifer by saying "Oh God, I'm such a mess", Lucifer pinpoints her exclamation and clarifies that "God has nothing to do with your mess" ("Pilot"). Likewise, later in the series when Chloe exclaims "Lucifer…Oh my God!", Lucifer jokes that "there's an oxymoron" as he is Satan, whose name denotes him as the 'adversary' of God ("Somebody's"). Another example of a common exclamation phrase pinpointed in *Lucifer* would be "Holy crap", which is also playfully exploited by the show to highlight the religious value in it. On an occasion where Lucifer rants to Linda about the way God manipulates him by giving him angel wings against his will, Linda exclaims "Holy crap!" out of shock as she listens to Lucifer's recount of his celestial experiences, to which Lucifer replies "Exactly", referring to his "Dad's latest stunt" as rubbish ("They're Back").

These examples may show that while *Lucifer*'s use of puns undoubtedly serves comedic purposes, it may also be effective in provoking people's contemplation on their vocabulary as it requires the audience to heed the language used. Besides, by noting that many of Lucifer's puns are made upon daily colloquial phrases, which are so commonly used that they have been instilled into our vocabulary and are sometimes uttered subconsciously, one can understand the way the show's use of puns may function to challenge the audience's perceptions of these seemingly insignificant daily utterances, and to encourage people to be aware of the fact that these phrases are not just simple exclamations, but also direct references to the religion that should be used carefully. Nonetheless, the way *Lucifer*, even with a Christian-based theme, delivers most of its religious references – other than the important ones that serve to propose new theological perspectives – through comedic devices may help to achieve subtlety. Subtlety may be beneficial to the show as a means of entertainment because religious ideas may sometimes be too overwhelming for some audiences to absorb. Hence, by downplaying the seriousness of these topics, *Lucifer* can successfully avoid shoving grand philosophical and theological notions to its

audience, so as to retain its overall entertainment purpose at the same time.

3.3   *Lucifer* as an Allegory of Christianity's Situation Amidst Modernity

Considering television as a medium symbolic of modernity, the way *Lucifer* is able to habituate biblical myths to modern television by distinguishing its genre and style may ultimately illustrate the adaptability of Christianity to contemporaneity. Furthermore, one can also take note of the show's popularity among its audience, which may indicate the way Christian ideas, however old they are, may still be able to resonate with, if not be well received by modern audiences after being accustomed to the contemporary context as well as people's preferred style of narrative.

It is also noteworthy that *Lucifer*'s significance as a serialized television show extends further beyond the scope of television medium due to its recent transition from a television network to an online streaming platform. Such a transition in the mode of distribution would be another illustrative example of the way *Lucifer*, as a television show, has successfully adapted to the drastic development in today's cultural mediascape, namely the decline of broadcast television and the rise of online streaming services (Jenner 1-4). Thus, the show's success in adjusting to the modern scenario may consequently enable its embedded Christian notions, let alone the core creeds as stressed by the show, to do the same.

With all things considered, as an adaptation of texts as ancient as the Bible, and as fantastical as the graphic novel of the same name, *Lucifer* can therefore be viewed as an allegory of the way Christianity, as an ancient religion that is preached through mythical parables, can position itself in the 21st century to remain relevant, and even impactful, in society in spite of the dynamic social changes. At the same time, as the show catches up with the latest development in today's mediascape, one may also anticipate *Lucifer*'s influence to persist in the near future, which may altogether illustrate the enormous potential of Christianity's social influence in upcoming decades, even when in the face of challenges from modernization.

Conclusion

Summing up, this paper has altogether argued that Netflix's *Lucifer* (2016-), despite being a television series that features the Christian Devil as its protagonist, may not necessarily take a stance against the core values of Christianity as criticized by particular Christian communities, but may even serve to promote the religion against the backdrop of rapid secularization nowadays.

With reference to remarkable events in human history ranging from the Enlightenment in the 18th century to the rise of mass popular culture in mid 20th century, this paper has first explored in Part 1 the ways in which modernization has intrinsically transformed society's foundation of beliefs from gnostic divine forces to empirically testable rules of science, by which such a shift has given rise to a secularizing trend that poses direct threat against the survival of Christianity. Conflicts between traditional Christian beliefs and modern values, such as free will versus predestination, are also explored through *Lucifer*, which, by portraying the Devil contradictorily to the Bible as a more compassionate if not attractive individual, has further illustrated the way the Church's teaching of good and evil may not be able to withstand the challenge of the change in society's values over time.

In view of the incompatibility of Christian values in the 21st-century context, one may then wonder: how can Christianity, as an ancient religion, situate itself amid the drastic societal changes in contemporaneity? As an attempt to seek solutions to this very question, Part 2 of this paper has returned to *Lucifer*'s account of the Devil's life in modern society, from which it is found out that, instead of merely portraying the conflicts between Christianity and modernity, the show in fact provides solutions to the problems it has raised, whether it is the seemingly irreconcilable relationship between science and religious faith or the tension between the Christian notion of predestination and modern free will, while remaining fully compatible with the Bible's teachings. *Lucifer*'s fundamental adherence to the core principles of Christianity as stated in the Bible, especially the virtue of love, can also be seen from the way it illustrates love not only as a powerful cure to conflicts among the fictional characters, but also the key to the Christian religion's endurance of time and social changes in reality. Such steadfastness of the Christian creeds

is therefore in contrast with the variability in Christian communities' interpretations of biblical ideas, which is further substantiated by the show's radical yet biblically compatible representation of the Devil. Altogether, this paper suggests that *Lucifer*'s ultimate answer to the 21st-century crisis of Christian faith is one's commitment to the enduring core Christian creeds, including and especially love.

Finally, Part 3 of this paper views *Lucifer* broadly as a loose television adaptation of the Bible and DC Comics' graphic novel based on its re-established genre and style. More importantly, these alterations are attributed to the change of medium into television, which not only determines *Lucifer*'s chief purpose of entertainment but also symbolizes modernity. This part therefore proposes that, by flexibly acclimatizing the age-old biblical tales of the Devil and other mythical characters to modern television, not to mention popularizing them among contemporary audiences, *Lucifer* may ultimately be viewed as an allegory of how Christianity, as a religion as old as these biblical stories, can potentially adjust itself to modernity, so as to secure if not further strengthen its status in today's everchanging society. After all, by taking into account the show's latest transition to Netflix – an even newer model of digital distribution than broadcast television, it is foreseeable that *Lucifer* and its pro-Christian thematic messages may remain influential to future audiences. As loyal viewers prepare for the show's upcoming seasons, which will likely continue with the story after God's long-awaited first appearance, one may as well look forward to the refreshing and insightful ways in which *Lucifer* explores more aspects of the Christian religion.

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The Conflict of Gender Ideologies in Fairytale: A Case Study of "Little Red Riding Hood"

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(Supervisor: Prof. Eddie TAY)

1.   Introduction

I am truly grateful for all the courses that I have taken and all the amazing people I have met throughout my undergraduate studies. Every lecture, every discussion, and every essay allowed me to research and reflect on something which I had not thoroughly thought about. Little by little, they transformed me into who I am today. This research is influenced by all the things that I have learned and unlearned throughout and even before my undergraduate studies, for I have internalized them, and they are all significant parts of me and my way of thinking. Nevertheless, this research is, in particular, inspired by the following three courses: Children's Literature (ENGE2360) and 19th-Century Novels on Screen (ENGE2150), which cultivated my academic interests in children's literature and adaptations, and Trans-Asian Bodies and Visual Fantasy Cultures (CURE2390), which sharpened my sensitivity toward representations of gender and sexuality in popular culture, especially in things that appear to be too "natural" to be aware of. In my (hopefully) last semester of undergraduate studies, I am grateful to have a chance to conduct this research, which I have been given free rein to work on things that I love and things that I deeply care about.

"Little Red Riding Hood" is one of the most famous fairy tales in today's world. From the feminist perspective, the research examines the gender ideologies embedded in the early oral versions (which were circulated in the Middle Ages), Charles Perrault's "*Le petit chaperon rouge*" (1697), the Brother Grimms' "*Rotkäppchen*" (1812) and Angela Carter's three "women-with-wolves" tales, namely "The Werewolf", "The Company of Wolves" and "Wolf-Alice", which were revised and published in her *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979). Here, I argue that Perrault and the Grimms appropriated the women-centered-and-celebrated oral tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood", to construct their own versions, which consciously or unconsciously convey patriarchal ideologies;

on the other hand, Carter's "women-with-wolves" tales adapted and appropriated both the (women-centered-and-celebrated) oral and (patriarchal) literary traditions, to create her own feminist, pluralistic versions, which serve as a resource of resistance against the patriarchal oppressions.

2.   The Origin and Early Development of "Little Red Riding Hood"

"Little Red Riding Hood" is one of the most popular fairy tales in today's world. The earlier oral versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" were circulated in the Middle Ages, and are women-centered-and-celebrated. Charles Perrault's and the Brother Grimms' adaptations popularized the story, and laid grounds for the patriarchal literary tradition, which has predominantly shaped the common cognizance of the story in today's world. In the following, the essay discusses the content of the early oral versions, Perrault's "*Le petit chaperon rouge*" and the Grimms' "*Rotkäppchen*" and the gender ideologies conveyed in these versions.

2.1   The Oral Tradition

The tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" has an earlier oral tradition which dates back to the Middle Ages. The tale is believed to be originated from France, Tyrol and northern Italy. Cristina Bacchilega summarized the recorded oral versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" in her "Not Re(a)d Once and for All: 'Little Red Riding Hood''s Voice in Performance":

> a peasant girl would, on her way to visit her grandmother, meet a werewolf (*loup-garou*) or wolf. One then takes the "path of the needles," while the other takes the "path of the pins." Having devoured the grandmother, the wolf in disguise waits for the girl and welcomes her with something to eat and drink: some of the grandmother's flesh and blood, presented as sliced meat or local specialties and wine. In most versions, the girl accepts. Then she strips, one item of clothing at a time, and following a formulaic question-and-answer sequence, she burns her clothes in the fire and joins the wolf in bed. Finally, after the ritual exchange which reveals the wolf's intentions ("The better to eat you, my child!"), the wolf gobbles the girl up or the girl escapes by pretending she needs to go outside to

answer the call of nature. (54)

A Feminist anthropologist, Yvonne Verdier, conducted field research in the village of Minot, in Burgundy. During her fieldwork, she collected tales which demonstrate a significant unity in plot and structure with existing oral versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" from the elderly women living there. She found that, in most of the versions, after the girl tries to escape by pretending she needs to answer the call of nature, the wolf or werewolf refuses and

> tells her: "If you must, you can do it in the bed." But she insists that she can't, and finally they hit on a compromise: he ties a rope to her leg and holds on to his end of it so she cannot get away. But once outside she frees herself, slips the rope round the trunk of a tree, then makes a dash for the river. (Douglas 4)

In some versions, the little girl is aided by washerwomen who pull her safely across (Douglas 4). According to most versions of the "original" tale, the little girl does not wear any red riding hood (or cap). She became Little Red Riding Hood only after Charles Perrault's tale in 1697. Nevertheless, in this essay, the folk tale would be referred as "Little Red Riding Hood" unless otherwise specified.

The earlier oral versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" were clearly of a peasant tradition. In the Medieval Period, wolves were actual threats for peasants living in the French, Tirolian and Italian Alps (particularly to the children). Therefore, the tale could be interpreted quite literally in the Middle Ages. In these mountain areas where the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" possibly originated from and circulated, the superstition in werewolves or man-wolves was well-established. In the Middle Ages, many people actually believed that "[a]ny neighbor or relative could be such a shape-shifter and turn dangerous when called upon by the Familiar or the moon" (Bacchilega 55). The strong superstition in werewolves (and of course, witches) attributed to the fact that little children were sometimes attacked and killed by adults due to hunger, as famines were frequent occurrences in the Middle Ages. The superstitious belief was, partially, constructed to explain such violence and atrocious acts (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 23). Wolves and "werewolves" threatened the life of peasant children, regardless of sex. However, the oral versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" circulated in the Middle Ages were explicitly sexual. In the Medieval Period, werewolf was associated with the Devil and had specifically

sexual connotations (Bacchilega 56). The interactions between the (were)wolf and the little girl are laced with sexual innuendo: the (were)wolf invites the girl to join him in bed and she complies; their pillow-talk in which "her surprised remarks on her grandmother's body ('How big…! How hairy…! How strong…!') elicit lewd answers, starting with 'All the better to…'" is far-from-innocent (Douglas 4); not to mention, what Jack Zipes called, the "ritual undressing", which is "a sort of strip-tease by Little Red Riding Hood, who each time she takes off a garment asks the wolf where she should put it, which leads to an enigmatic or frankly menacing response from the ferocious animal" (*Trials & Tribulation* 21) — *in the fire*. The (were)wolf wants to "eat" the girl, and in the versions with a tragic ending, he succeeds. Apart from its literal meaning, "eating" can be metaphorical and suggests sexual violence. "Little Red Riding Hood" portrays masculine violence and gender tensions, and can be interpreted as a warning tale of rape.

Contrary to our common understanding of "Little Red Riding Hood", its earlier oral versions are actually women-centered, and those versions with a happy ending celebrates the knowledge and courage of the female protagonist. In the oral tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood", the little girl is an "unwitting cannibal" (Douglas 4): she consumes some of her grandmother's flesh and/or blood, disguised as "sliced meat or local specialties and wine" (Bacchilega 54). The cannibalism demonstrates the feminine order:

> By eating the flesh and drinking the blood, the young girl incorporates the grandmother's knowledge and takes her place. This involuntary and sympathetic cannibalism requires the older woman's sacrifice—in all known versions, either the grandmother or the mother "dies"—but brings about the re-birth of the younger women. [… The] cultural (grand) mother-girl assimilation speaks for some form of woman-centered genealogy. (Bacchilega 56)

Moreover, the choice between the path of pins and the path of needles indicates the different stages of a woman's life. As Mary Douglas illustrated in her "Red Riding Hood: An Interpretation from Anthropology", while "[p]ins have no opening; putting a thread through the eye of a needle has a simple sexual connotation". (4) The pin can be interpreted as a symbol of girlhood (which implies being unsexed), and the needle can be interpreted as a symbol of womanhood (which of course, implies being sexed). The

choice between the path of pins and the path of needles is also related to "the needlework apprenticeship undergone by young peasant girls, and designed the arrival of puberty and initiation into society" as women (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 24). Therefore, the oral tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood" was a celebration of the little girl coming-of-age, as the references to the pins and needles would alert the listeners to expect a story referring to sex and the transition from girlhood to womanhood in the Middle Ages (Douglas 4). Furthermore, the oral versions (with a happy ending) celebrate the little girl's knowledge and courage, for she outwits the (were)wolf and escapes. The folk tale demonstrates that it is possible for girls and/or women to escape masculine violence by herself (and sometimes with the aid of her own sex, as suggested by the versions in which the washerwomen help the little girl get away. According to Jack Zipes, "the sexual cravings of the wolf are debunked and treated as harmless because the little girl knows how to take care of herself in nature" (*Trials & Tribulation* 74). The little girl saves herself by deceiving the (were) wolf into believing she actually needs to relieve herself. She is clever and courageous, and possesses the knowledge to survival; she is not established as inferior to the (were) wolf (which symbolizes masculinity), or perhaps, as Jack Zipes argued, she is "naturally equal to the werewolf" (*Trials & Tribulation* 75). The oral tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood" in the Middle Ages was sexual (which reflects the peasantry's sexual frankness), but never patriarchal. In fact, the folk tale was controlled by women, possibly told by mothers to daughters. Femininity and feminine order are of great significance in these oral versions. The female protagonist is not shaped according to patriarchal ideals (for she is certainly neither innocent nor naive), and the versions in which she outwits the (were) wolf celebrate her ability to defeat masculinity, so to speak.

2.2   *The Literary Tradition*

Adaptation, sometimes comes to light under the disguised name "collecting", is never an objective endeavor. From selection to edition to publication, the editor-writers are, to a certain extent, personally involved; they consciously and/or unconsciously alter the source texts, according to their stylistic, aesthetic and/or ideological preferences etc. Charles Perrault's "*Le petit chaperon rouge*" and the Grimms' "*Rotkäppchen*" are two of the most important and influential adaptations or literary versions of "Little Red

Riding Hood", and shaped our common understanding of the tale along with the popular, patriarchal image of the female protagonist (who is named "Little Red Riding Hood", "Little Red Cap" or other names in different texts), which are quite different from what the earlier oral versions convey. Perrault and the Grimms altered the women-centered oral tradition, and laid grounds for a literary tradition of sexual violence and male dominance.

Published in 1697, Charles Perrault's "*Le petit chaperon rouge*" is the very first printed version of the tale. The title is traditionally translated as "Little Red Riding Hood" in English, though a *chaperon* is not exactly a riding hood. The publication of "*Le petit chaperon rouge*" is a point of collusion: it significantly shaped the literary tradition, and powerfully influenced the oral tradition, because his tale was very popular so that many elements of his tales were re-absorbed into the oral re-telling. Although there is no concrete evidence, Marc Soriano, Marianne Rumpf and other scholars tend to believe that Perrault had known the oral versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" before he wrote his own "*Le petit chaperon rouge*".

Before looking into how Perrault appropriated and altered the oral tradition, it is important to note that Perrault's tales were intended for an upper-class readership, both children and adults. Perrault was a member of the *haute bourgeois*, the upper-middle class: "[h]e was a high royal civil servant, […] endorsed the expansion political wars of Louis XIV, and believed in the exalted mission of the French absolutistic regime to 'civilize' Europe and the rest of the world" (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 28). Similar to his contemporaries, he wanted to contribute to the discourse on *civilité* through providing behavioral patterns and models for children through his fairy tales. Because of the intended bourgeois-aristocratic readership, Perrault "purified" the oral tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood" through removing elements which were considered as "indecent" or "uncivilized" by the upper-class in the 17th-century France. In "*Le petit chaperon rouge*", there is no cannibalism, urination and/or defecation. The sexual connotations of the oral tradition were both foregrounded and sanitized. Given that Perrault appeared to disapprove the peasantry's superstitions (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 25), "*Le petit chaperon rouge*" concerns a wolf, but not a werewolf. Nevertheless, its readers of the 17th-century still identified the wolf with the werewolf, which was associated with the Devil, insatiable lust and chaotic nature (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 75). Perrault also added an element, the red

chaperon, which remains crucial in the literary and oral traditions of "Little Red Riding Hood". In the 17th-century, red was traditionally associated with the Devil along with the notions of sin and sensuality (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 26). Moreover, the elaborate strip-tease is reduced to a plain statement of "undressed" (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 93), but Little Red Riding Hood still joins the wolf in bed, *naked*. The sexual references are still noted in "*Le petit chaperon rouge*", but they are not as explicit as in the earlier oral versions. The reduced level of sexuality can be related to Perrault's intended readership: for he wanted to write for both adults and children, "he sought to appeal to the erotic and playful side of adult readers who took pleasure in naughty stories of seduction [… while the sexual connotations were] lost on younger readers, who could still enjoy the warning aspect of the tale" (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 25).

While Perrault's "*Le petit chaperon rouge*" serves as a warning of rape and sexual molestation, which are actual threats, but it also serves as a justification of sexual violence, as Perrault suspiciously puts the blame on Little Red Riding Hood, the female victim. It is important to note that, in Perrault's version, the wolf, *the rapist*, is never punished for his crime. The story ends immediately after "the wicked wolf [throws] himself upon Little Red Riding Hood and [eats] her up"; he is much more fortunate than his earlier and later counterparts, for he is neither fooled by the female protagonist nor killed by the male protector(s). There is literally no punishment for him, and in fact, Perrault subtly justifies his crime by stating that "it had been more than three days since he had last eaten" (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 92). It is seemingly a survival need for the wolf to "eat" Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother, thus justifying the violence. Ironically, Little Red Riding Hood, the female protagonist and victim, is the only one punished. The wolf is associated with the Devil, and "according to 17th century beliefs, anyone who entered into an agreement with a diabolic figure was contaminated [… and all] French and German writers of 18th century knew that Little Red Riding Hood had been punished for her 'crime' of speaking to the devil and laying the grounds for her own seduction and rape" (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 77). Apart from that, Perrault furtively attributed that the rape to the female protagonist's own beauty. Perrault highlighted that Little Red Riding Hood is "the prettiest that had ever been seen" (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 91), and the "moral" which followed the story was especially written for

young, pretty girls (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 93). Perrault repeatedly highlighted the "prettiness", as if one's physical appearance actually matters in (a story of) rape. Maybe for Perrault, it is one's natural instinct to be tempted by beautiful people and things. It is stated that Little Red Riding Hood "enjoy[s] herself by gathering nuts, running after butterflies, and making bouquets of small flowers which she [finds]" (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 92). She is not persuaded by the wolf to commit these actions, but in fact, she is tempted by the natural beauty of things in the woods. It seems very *natural* for one to want to own or possess beautiful things: the wolf wants to own the beauty of Little Red Riding Hood (who is then treated as a sadomasochistic object by the wolf and Perrault), while the female protagonist wants to possess the beautiful, natural things. Perrault's tale is an example of the notorious victim-blaming, through suggesting the female victim ought to be responsible for the rape, as she is too attractive and not careful enough. The "moral" seems to suggest that if young girls are careful enough not to listen and speak to strangers, the potential rape can be prevented. Nevertheless, in Perrault's tale, even if Little Red Riding Hood does not stop and speak to the wolf (which is strange since the wolf is an "old neighbor" (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 91), by no means she can prevent the rape by herself because the only reason that the wolf does not eat her in the woods is the presence of woodcutters; if the wolf secretly follows Little Red Riding Hood, he can gobble her up anywhere the woodcutters are not there (for he is far stronger than the female protagonist). For Little Red Riding Hood, the only possible way to prevent the rape is to run into any of the woodcutters and to be protected; the irony is that she can never distinguish between a male protector and a male oppressor, because according to the "moral", men who seem to be "tame, good-natured, and pleasant" can be the most dangerous of all (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 93). The female protagonist is established as fundamentally "inferior" to men; she needs to be protected by men, and she is absolutely incapable of defeating masculine violence. Both the happy and tragic endings existed and were popular when Perrault wrote his own version; he abandoned the happy ending in which the little girl outwits the (were)wolf along with the references to the feminine order. Perrault appropriated elements of the common folklore which is originated from a female (and peasant) tradition, and constructed a male-dominated tale which provides a textbook example of victim-blaming in the rape culture.

Perrault's "*Le petit chaperon rouge*" was widely received in the 18th-century Europe. It laid grounds for a bourgeois-aristocratic, patriarchal literary tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood", which was further extended by the Grimm's "*Rotkäppchen*" (1812). The tale was told to the Grimms by Marie Hassenpflug, who was familiar with the Perrault's version, between 1811 and 1812. Furthermore, the Grimms were also familiar with Ludwig Tieck's verse play *Leben und Tod des Kleinen Rotkäppchens* (*The Life and Death of Little Red Riding Hood: A Tragedy*), which they borrowed some elements from (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 32). The Grimms were born into a solid middle-class family and were diligent Calvinists; their collection of fairy tales was "strongly influenced by the Protestant ethic and patriarchal viewpoint that shaped their sense of justice" (Zipes, *Grimm Legacies* 14). Following Perrault, the Grimms further sanitized the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" for the bourgeois socialization process of the 19th-century Germany, and appropriated it according to the social transformations in how women, sexuality and children are viewed (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 32). Grimms further sanitized the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" through deleting the sexual references. Unlike the Little Red Riding Hood in Perrault's tale, the female protagonist in the Grimms' "*Rotkäppchen*" never undresses and never joins the wolf in bed. Although its readers might still relate the wolf and the red cap (which the female protagonist wears) to sexuality, almost all explicit sexual references were deleted. The "de-sexualization" attributed to how the Victorian bourgeoisie viewed sexuality. According to Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, during the Victorian era, especially for the middle-class, sexuality was carefully confined in the parents' bedroom:

> The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction. On the subject of sex, silence became the rule. The legitimate and procreative couple laid down the law. The couple imposed itself as model, enforced the norm, safeguarded the truth, and reserved the right to speak while retaining the principle of secrecy. A single locus of sexuality was acknowledged in social place as well as the heart of every household, but it was utilitarian and fertile one: the parents' bedroom. The rest had only to remain vague; proper demeanor avoided contact with other bodies, and verbal decency sanitized one's speech. (4)
> One of major strategic unities since the 18th-century was the "pedagogization of

children's sex". It regarded children's sexuality as natural, and at the same time, needed to be monitored by authorities such as parents, teachers and doctors (Foucault 104). Therefore, any clues of the sexual relation between a female child and a stranger-wolf were certainly something to be frown at, by the Victorian bourgeois (which included both the Grimms and their intended readers). The Victorian bourgeois (and the Grimms) not only repressed sexuality, but also *sensuality*. The "flesh" itself, "that is, of the body, sensation, the nature of pleasure, the more secret forms of enjoyment or acquiescence" was considered as "problematic" and needed to be regulated (Foucault 109). The Grimms rejected both sexual and sensual pleasures in their "*Rotkäppchen*": all references of sexuality were deleted, while all actions in search of sensual pleasures were punished.

Compared to the Perrault's tale, "*Rotkäppchen*" seems to be a more "gender-equal" version, for all indulgences in sensuality are punished, regardless of the doer's sex. Unlike Perrault, the Grimms did not justified the wolf's crime by suggesting the wolf eats Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother to survive. It is clearly stated that the wolf in "*Rotkäppchen*" considers the female protagonist as "a good juicy morsel" (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 136); the diction here suggests that the wolf's actions are out of gluttony, one of the seven deadly sins of Christianity. He was then punished by having his belly stone-filled — stones which are tasteless, unsensual, and certainly not considered as *juicy morsels*. Little Red Cap, the female protagonist, is not at all innocent. She appears to be slightly vain, for she always wants to wear the red cap, because it is "so becoming" (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 135) — it suits her and gives her an attractive appearance. She is easily tempted, by the wolf and the sensuous delights in the woods, and therefore breaks her former agreement with her mother. Her disobedience and sensual-pleasure-seeking were regarded as inappropriate by the Victorian bourgeois, and therefore needed to be regulated. Little Red Cap learns the lesson through her punishment — being devoured by the wolf. While "*Rotkäppchen*" seems to be more "gender-equal" as both male and female characters who commit "wrongdoings" are punished, but it still suggests that the female protagonist, at least partially, contributes to her own rape. When the Grimms wrote their tale, a "Little Red Riding Hood syndrome", which went under the name of "virtue seduced", had been established within the middle-class. The Victorian bourgeois believed that if they and their children were not disciplined enough, they might be "seduced"

and "raped" by the perverted aristocracy, both literally and figuratively. "*Rotkäppchen*" suggests that young children, especially girls, should regulate their sexuality and bodies, and be obedient to their parents; otherwise, they are responsible for the consequences which follow. Although the Grimms might not intend to do so, they were unconsciously influenced, and at the same time contributed to the long history of victim-blaming, which significantly contributes to the normalization of rape.

It is mentioned above that patriarchy played a significant role in the Grimms' habitus forming; it is no surprise that the Grimms' portrayal of gender roles and relations in "*Rotkäppchen*" was inextricably intertwined with the patriarchal perspective. Perrault introduced the idea of male as protectors in his "*Le petit chaperon rouge*", and the Grimms further reinforced the idea by introducing the *Jäger* who kills the wolf and saves Little Red Cap and her grandmother in their "*Rotkäppchen*". "The German word *Jäger* (gamekeeper or hunter) was associated with the police. That is, the *Jäger* was hired by the feudal lord to protect his property from poachers and intruders" (Zipes, *Trials & Tribulation* 35). The diction here suggests that women and girls were seen as someone else's *property* and needed to be protected (or even, governed) by men. It shapes the female protagonist as weak and defenseless, and established as fundamentally inferior to the male characters (both the oppressor and the protector). Nevertheless, the Grimms offered another way for the girls to be saved — domestication. In the Grimms' version, there is a second wolf who wants to eat Little Red Cap, but fails to do so, because Little Red Cap is well-protected in her grandmother's house. Cristina Bacchilega suggested that the domestication of Little Red Cap serves as a tool to educate middle-class women and girls "in the propriety of keeping to their places as 'angels of the home', and thus never to be mistaken for demonic sexual beings" who wander in the woods (59). To conclude, the Grimms' "*Rotkäppchen*" reinforces the stereotypical gender roles and the gender binary opposition which legitimizes gender inequalities.

Perrault's and the Grimms' versions laid grounds for the bourgeois, patriarchal literary tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood", and "lock[ed] the protagonist into a gendered and constricting chamber" (Bacchilega 59). They contributed to our common image of Little Red Riding Hood or Little Red Cap: a pretty, naïve and defenseless girl, who is incapable of looking after herself in the woods and therefore needed to be protected

by male or domestication (which implies a patriarchal family). Jack Zipes described the image of Little Red Riding Hood in popular culture as "seductively innocent" (*Trials & Tribulation* 18), which actually makes sense, since the "de-sexualization" of Little Red Riding Hood (compared with the female protagonist in the oral tradition) made her more preferrable by the Victorian-minded men and society. In other words, to de-sexualize is to sexualize; Little Red Riding Hood is stripped off her (sexual) agency, and thus established as an object of desire, according to Victorian, patriarchal ideals. However, what is problematic is not only what the tale is about, but also what it can do. Both the Perrault' and Grimms' versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" constructed fear. While the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" can positively serve as a warning about the possibilities of rape and sexual assault (which are very actual threats to women and girls throughout history), it can also be a tool to control females. Because of the possibilities of sexual violence, women and girls are often taught to follow how the male-dominated society expects them to behave, which includes but not limited to, do not be out alone at night, do not wear "slutty" clothes and so on and so forth. Nevertheless, the truth is that: rape, more often than not, does not have any association with what the victim wears, where the victim is and how the victim behaves. Being at home does not necessarily guarantee safety, for acquaintance rape and marital rape are never rare things. The sexual violence portrayed in "Little Red Riding Hood" is very true, and it is something that women and girls ought to be feared (and perhaps, angry) about. However, the fear is, at least partially, constructed by male and the male-dominated culture, to regulate women and girls' behaviors, which serves their ideals and interests. To a certain extent, the very popularity of the tale is problematic. If there is one most important thing to teach children about rape — *it is not to rape*, but not how to prevent being raped. Nevertheless, in the canon of fairy tales and children's literature, there are very few if any stories to teach children not to rape; on the contrary, the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" and its patriarchal ideologies have been widely received. As Jack Zipes said, "[t]he problem is not in the literature, nor can it be solved through censorship". It is related to the society and the cultural notions of rape, gender and sexuality. Literature, however, can be quite powerful. Perrault and the Grimms transformed the woman-centered-and-celebrated oral tradition into a literary tradition of sexual violence and male dominance, and perhaps, it is not impossible for female writers

to reclaim the authority through revising and reappropriating the tale.

3.   Angela Carter's Feminist Rewritings of "Little Red Riding Hood"

The tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" was first told to Angela Carter by her grandmother when she was small, but to her, the tale was never a warning one; when her grandmother "pounced, roaring like a hungry wolf" and saying, "All the better to eat you with", Carter's response was to squirm, giggle and squeak in delight (Gordon 3). She was familiar with both the oral and literary traditions of "Little Red Riding Hood" (including but not limited to Perrault's and the Grimms' tales): she was very much exhilarated by the sexual frankness of the earlier oral versions[1], read and loved the Grimms' fairy tales when she was young, and started to translate Perrault's collection of fairy tales in the summer of 1976. She was highly critical to Perrault's tales, and described him as "never artful" (qtd. in Gordon 266); as a result, "[s]he tested the limits between translation and adaptation", offering a not-at-all accurate translation of Perrault's tales[2]. After the "translation" of Perrault's tales, Carter started to dream up "a collection of tales in which the latent sexual imagery would rise uncomfortably to the surface, a book that would expose a vainglorious lies the ways we try to distinguish ourselves from animals, in which she later described as 'a social realism of the unconscious'" (Gordon 267-8).

Based on the oral and literary traditions of "Little Red Riding Hood", Carter had written "The Werewolf", "The Company of Wolves" and "Wolf-Alice", which were later revised for the publication of *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* in 1979. They are the final three tales of *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*; Cristina Bacchilega referred them as "women-with-wolves" (64) or "women-in-the-company-of-wolves" stories (66), while Kimberly Lau referred them as "wolf trilogy" (78), to indicate that they are "necessarily conjoined, intertextually inseparable" (78). As Bacchilega suggested, Carter listened to the many "voices" of the fairy tale. On one hand, the "women-with-wolves" tales are a returning to the women-centered-and-celebrated tradition; on the other hand,

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1   Carter read Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment*, "in which he contended that fairy tales serve to console children about such terrifying mysteries as sex and death, by presenting them in symbolic form" (Gordon 267). Although she disagreed with some of his arguments, but "she was exhilarated by the vivid images of sex and violence, lurking in the familiar spaces of the nursery, that Bettelheim laid bare" (Gordon 267).
2   The inaccuracy was well-acknowledged by Carter herself.

Carter adapts and appropriates the patriarchal literary tradition, to write her own pluralistic versions which seek to expose the flaws of patriarchal narrative and ideologies, and to open up possibilities for the marginalized — women, girls and the oppressed "other".

3.1 Reactivation of the Knowledge & Courage (of the Oral Tradition)

First of all, Carter reactivated and returned to the women-centered oral tradition[3] which celebrates the knowledge and courage of the female protagonist. It is noted that all the three female protagonists in Carter's "women-with-wolves" tales do not fear the forest, albeit for very different reasons. In "The Werewolf", the female protagonist "[knows] the forest too well to fear it" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 128). She possesses the necessary knowledge to survive: she knows the forest and the minacious beasts well; therefore, she knows the wolf is approaching once she hears its "freezing howl", and reacts immediately (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 127). The female protagonist in "Wolf-Alice" is similarly knowledgeable, but perhaps from an animalistic perspective. As a feral child raised by wolves, Wolf-Alice identifies herself and possesses the necessary knowledge to survive in the forest as a wolf; she is considered to be unknowledgeable by other characters, from an anthropocentric perspective. Nevertheless, Carter states that:

> If you could transport her, in her filth rags and feral disorder, to the Eden of our first beginnings where Eve and grunting Adam on a daisy bank, picking the lice from one another's pelts, then she might prove to be the wise child who leads them all and her howling a language as authentic as any language of nature (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 143)

It suggests that her animalistic knowledge is equally authentic as the knowledge of contemporary culture, if not more; it should not be regarded as inferior. Carter celebrates both the humanly knowledge of the female protagonist in "The Werewolf" and the animalistic knowledge of Wolf-Alice, for these knowledges allow them to survive in the minacious forest. On the contrary, the female protagonist in "The Company of Wolves" might not be as knowledgeable as her counterparts, but she possesses another well-celebrated quality of the female protagonist in the oral tradition, which eventually allows her to survive in the forest — bravery. Carter repeatedly mentions that the female

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3   In particular, the earlier oral versions with a happy ending.

protagonist fears neither the forest nor the beast: "she has been too much loved ever to feel scared" (133); "she is quite sure that wild beasts cannot harm her" (132); "she is afraid of nothing" (133). When the hunter-wolf reveals his true nature to her, she is temporarily terrified. However, she soon realizes that "since fear [does] her no good, she cease[s] to be afraid" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 138). Her lack of fear eventually saves her from ending up like her grandmother — being eaten by the hunter-wolf.

3.2   *Rejection of the Patriarchal Ideologies (of the Literary Tradition)*

Carter's emphasis and celebration of courage is a returning to the women-centered oral tradition, and on the other hand, a rejection to the patriarchal literary tradition. As formerly mentioned, Perrault's and the Grimms' tales (and many other tales which follow their tradition) serve as a warning tale of rape, which constructs fear to regulate women' and girls' behaviors. Perhaps, Carter suggests that neither the fear nor any "good" behaviors (according to patriarchal standards) save women and girls from being raped. Carter's opposition of the patriarchal doctrine is further consolidated by her rejection of the morals offered by Perrault and the Grimms. Both Perrault and the Grimms' tales indicate that the female protagonist is at least, partially responsible to her own rape: Perrault's *moralité* seemingly suggests that young girls can prevent their own rape if they careful enough not to listen and speak to strangers, while the Grimms' story suggests that the rape is a punishment of the female protagonist straying off the path (in search of sensual delights). Carter rejects both the morals in "The Werewolf": it is quite explicitly stated that the female protagonist keeps the promise with her mother and does not stray off the path, and she is very careful and never speaks to the werewolf. Nevertheless, she is still attacked on her way, by the werewolf. Following the morals does not save the female protagonist from being attacked. It serves as a response to the institutionalized "morals" and the patriarchal ideology of victim-blaming behind. It demonstrates that the victims are never responsible to any forms of sexual violence happened to them. Furthermore, the literary tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood" indicates that male protectors[4] or domestication[5] save women and girls from potential sexual violence. In "The Company of Wolves", the

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4   Which is suggested by both Charles Perrault and the Brother Grimms.
5   Which is suggested only by the Brother Grimms.

female protagonist does not have her carving knife at hand to protect herself, because when [the hunter-wolf] offer[s] to carry her basket, she [gives] it to him although her knife [is] in it because he [tells] her that his rifle would protect them" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 134). Carter demonstrates that the supposed-to-be male protector can turn into a predator in the twinkling of an eye, divulging the paradox of Perrault's tale — one can never tell the difference between a male protector and a male oppressor, until he reveals himself being the latter. Concerning domestication, in "The Company of Wolves", it is stated:

> But the wolves have ways of arriving at your own hearthside. We try and try but sometimes we cannot keep them out. There is no winter's night the cottager does not fear to see a lean, grey, famished snout questing under the door, and there was a woman once bitten in her own kitchen as she was straining the macaroni. (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 130)

Carter points out the very fact that domestication does not protect women and girls from sexual violence, but rather, the idea of domestication as protection is often employed as a tool to confine women and girls within household and the "Angel in the House" image. With her "women-with-wolves" tales, Carter debunked the patriarchal myth through rejecting the patriarchal norms which are illustrated in and "normalized" by Perrault's and the Grimms' versions of "Little Red Riding Hood"; she as well reactivated the women-celebrated oral tradition, through bringing back the knowledge and courage to her female protagonists.

3.3   *Deconstruction of the Gender Binary Opposition*

Nevertheless, Carter's anti-patriarchal characterization went beyond the returning to the existing, oral tradition. It is noted that Carter undermines the gender binary opposition, which is fundamental in Western patriarchy and institutionalized fairy tales, through suggesting one's gender identity is not necessarily confined to one of the "opposites". In Carter's "women-with-wolves" tales, the three female protagonists possess traits which are traditionally associated with masculinity, for example, physical strength and knife-fighting skills. In "The Werewolf", the female protagonist is described as "strong, and armed with her father's hunting knife" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 128). She is

quite a competent fighter: she immediately "seize[s] her knife and turn[s] on the beast" when the werewolf approaches; in her fight against the werewolf, "she ma[kes] a great swipe at it with her father's knife and slashe[s] off its right forepaw" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 128). She is competent and courageous, and somewhat "too masculine" from a patriarchal perspective. Her counterpart in "Wolf-Alice" is another female protagonist who is not shaped according to patriarchal ideals, in particularly, her physical appearance. She has "*wide* shoulders, long arms" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 141; emphasis added) and "long, lean and *muscular* legs" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 140; emphasis added); "[h]er elbows, hands and knees are thickly callused because she always runs on all fours" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 140). She is certainly not considered as a feminine beauty, from a patriarchal perspective. Instead, her physical traits are more associated with masculine strength and roughness, and not to mention, the combination of humanity and animality is one of the most ancient grotesque forms (Jennings 93). According to patriarchal ideals, women and girls ought to be feminine, which connotes physical and personal qualities, such as softness, sweetness, modesty, passivity, and so forth; more importantly, female is supposed to be fundamentally inferior to male, and femininity to masculinity, according to the sexual and gender binary oppositions, which are artificially constructed, but seen as "essential" throughout most of Western civilization. These oppositions suggest that women and girls are dependent on and ought to be protected by male or the patriarch; the *protection* is more often than not, a form of *oppression*, for it limits women and girls' possibilities. The "masculine", personal and physical traits of the two female protagonists in "The Werewolf" and "Wolf-Alice" are Carter's challenges to the patriarchal ideals and the essentiality of binary oppositions in the realm of sex and gender. Carter's anti-patriarchal characterization rejects the "male gaze", for the two female protagonists are certainly not shaped according to patriarchal ideals, to please neither any male characters nor male readers. Instead, they can be considered as quite disturbing to the male oppressors and the entire system of patriarchy, for they open up possibilities for women and girls.

While the female protagonist in "The Company of Wolves" is probably the most feminine amongst the three female protagonists in Carter's "women-with-wolves" tales, she is not at all strengthless. She is armed with "a carving knife" (Carter, *The Bloody*

Chamber 132); "when she heard the freezing howl of a distant wolf, her *practised* hand sprang to the handle of her knife" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 133; emphasis added), indicating that she, similar to the female protagonist in "The Werewolf", possesses the masculinity-associated knife-fighting skills. In her "Between (Just) the Paws of the Tender Wolf: Rereading the Conclusion of Angela Carter's THE COMPANY OF THE WOLVES", Jill Silvius offered an interpretation of "The Company of the Wolves", based on the unusual wording "between the paws of the tender wolf" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 139). She demonstrates the possibilities that the female protagonist slumbers between *only* the paws of the wolf, after killing him and cutting off his paws (Silvius 79). Although it is not the most popular interpretation, it actually makes perfect sense. Intertextuality is at heart of Carter's "women-with-wolves" tales. In "The Werewolf", the female protagonist cuts off the werewolf's paw with her father's hunting knife. It is not impossible that the female protagonist in "The Company of Wolves" follows her counterpart, to fight against the hunter-wolf and cut off his paws. Furthermore, the word "tender" is an interesting choice. As an adjective, on one hand, "tender" means "gentle, loving, or kind"; on the other hand, it means "painful, sore, or uncomfortable when touched" when describing certain parts of the body ("Tender."). Therefore, "the tender paws" can be an expression of synecdoche, describing the gentle, loving hunter-wolf who affectionately embraces the female protagonist; besides, "the tender paws" can be literally describing the hunter-wolf's paws, which the female protagonist cuts off and sleeps in bed with. While Silvius' interpretation seems very perfectly valid, it is not the one and only way to interpret Carter's story. For Carter, what is significant is always — the ambiguity. The female protagonist in "The Company of Wolves" is not confirmed to be the fearless fighter, which means that she always has the possibility to fight or not to fight against the minacious beast (which kills her grandmother). Carter not only rejected the patriarchal ideals of women and girls, but also rejected any ideal images of women, even the images created by her. Although she is a radical feminist, it does not mean every female (character) needs to be one; but if a woman or girl wants to be the fighter, her possibilities of becoming ought not to be limited by the patriarchal society. Nevertheless, Carter's ambiguities, many possibilities and non-confinement are the most anti-patriarchal of her "women-with-wolves" tales.

3.4   The Subject of Sexuality versus the Object of Desire

Another interpretation of "The Company of Wolves", perhaps the more popular one, is to celebrate the female protagonist's embrace of her own sexuality. When Carter wrote her own versions of "Little Red Riding Hood", the female protagonist's sexuality had long been repressed by the patriarchal, bourgeois literary tradition; such repression was situated in the wider social context, in which sexuality was carefully confined in the parents' bedroom (Foucault 4). Nevertheless, Carter was always against the repression of sexuality, in both the fictional and non-fictional world. Moreover, she was very much "exhilarated by the vivid images of sex and violence" in the earlier oral versions of "Little Red Riding Hood". Therefore, when she wrote "The Company of Wolves", Carter reactivated the lost tradition of sexual frankness: in "The Company of Wolves", the sexual references are precise and pervasive, and the strip-tease is brought back and further elaborated. Furthermore, the female protagonist embraces her own sexuality, as a subject of sexuality (as opposed to as an object of desire). When the hunter-wolf flirts with her, "she lower[s] her eyes and blushe[s]", which is "commonplaces of a rustic seduction" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 135). Also, "she want[s] to dawdle on her way to make sure the handsome gentleman would win his wager", which is to be kissed by her (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 135). Her agency is noted in their relationship, and she surely enjoys every bit of it. When the hunter-wolf reveals his nature, the female protagonist would probably transform into a victim of (sexual) violence, for she momentarily fears and "shiver[s], in spite of the scarlet shawl she pulled more closely round herself as if it would protect her although it was as red as the blood she must spill" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 137). However, she soon realizes that the hunter-wolf does not necessarily "have deadly appetites" (Bacchilega 63), then accepts and acts out her desires. Cristina Bacchilega indicates that "by acting out her desires — sexual, not just for life — the girl offers her as flesh not meat" (63). The point is further illustrated by Kimberly Lau:

> In reading the Marquis de Sade's exploration of the limits of sexual behavior (and perhaps adding her own commentary on marriage), she makes an important distinction between flesh and meat: "Flesh has specific orifices to contain the prick that penetrates it but meat's relation to the knife is more random and a thrust anywhere will do" (138). Unlike the meatiness of Sade's characters — "he writes

about sexual relations in terms of butchery and meat" (138) — Carter's Little Red Riding Hood is "nobody's meat" removes her from the realm of patriarchal pornography. (87)

Through accepting and acting out her own sexual desires, the female protagonist confirms herself as "nobody's meat" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 138) and removes herself from being framed as the victim of sexual violence and as responsible to the victimization. At the very beginning of the tale, the female protagonist appears to be shaped according to the logic of pedophilic fantasy — a "nymphet as seemingly innocent in her knowing and her seductions" (Lau 88). Nevertheless, Carter removes her from the patriarchal fantasy and the position as *an object of desire*, through confirming her sexual agency and subjectivity. The female protagonist's position as *a subject of sexuality* is further confirmed by the nature of her sexuality. Her sexuality embodies entangled masculinity, femininity and animality. While her "freely" given kiss and elaborate strip-tease can be perceived as an expression of feminine sexuality, the "masculinity" lies in her initiative and activeness. Throughout Western civilization, women and girls had long been locked in the passive case, and for Carter, "[t]o exist in the passive case is to die in the passive case — that is to be killed", and "[t]his is the moral of the fairy tale about the perfect woman" (*The Sadeian Woman* 76-7). The female protagonist attempts to escape the passive case through restoring her agency and activeness and demonstrating her "(fe) male gaze[6]" on the hunter-wolf, which are traits which are traditionally associated with masculine sexuality. Again, Carter suggests the failures of gender binary opposition here, for the female protagonist, and many other women and girls in fictional or non-fictional world, can never be strictly classified as "feminine" according to patriarchal ideologies, in terms of sexuality and/or other aspects. Furthermore, Carter explores the notion of animalistic sexuality, what Kimberly Lau called, "the animal erotic" (88). She stated that:

> While Little Red Riding Hood's initial seductions of the stranger-wolf — her "freely" given kiss, her stripping him — might still be perceived according to the logic of a pedophilic fantasy (nymphet as seemingly innocent in her knowing and her seductions), her picking and eating the lice of his pelt cannot be so understood. Through this other erotic, this animal erotic, Carter unveils the hegemonic order of

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6   It functions just as the "male gaze", but the reversal of gender roles is observed.

heterosexual relations, offering in its stead "the infinite modulations of the sexual act, the real relations of man and his kind," a sexual moment no longer chained to a dominant erotic that limits the sexual possibilities of men and women but one that emerges from our deepest drives. (88)

After her encounter with the hunter-wolf, the female protagonist constructs her own sexuality and subjectivity, which are masculine, feminine, and animalistic; occasionally at the same time, occasionally not. It demonstrates the failures of phallocentric language, for there is not any existing category which the female protagonist's sexuality can be classified as. Before she meets the hunter-wolf, the female protagonist is described as a "closed system" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 133) — an anthropocentric system which rejects animality as the "other". The twist is when "she can hear the sadness of the wolves' 'concert' outside in the cold" (Bacchilega 63), and the statements of "the snow had invaded the room", "the room was full of the clamour of the forest's Liebestod" and "the door of the solstice stands wide open" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 138-9) demonstrate the synthesis of the inside / the hearth and the outside / the wild. She is no longer a "closed system", for she realizes that the world is not necessarily a "closed system" either, as Cristina Bacchilega described, "the wolf, that excluded and demonized other, allowed to slip in" (64). The female protagonist matures to have a better understanding of the shifting nature of the world and the beings in it. Carter celebrates the female protagonist's embrace of her own sexuality, which is outside the "closed system" of phallocentric language, and Carter suggests that to explore one's sexual subjectivity is a way to empower women and girls to escape from the passive case, from being the object of (male) desire and from the patriarchal system (and way of thinking).

3.5   *"Gender-Fluidity" & Femininity as Otherness*

In fact, Carter's characters in the "women-with-wolves" tales are more often than not, of "gender fluidity". In "The Werewolf", the grandmother of the female protagonist is both the werewolf (which is traditionally associated with masculinity) and the witch. Similar to the sexuality of the female protagonist in "The Company of Wolves", the "fluidity" and the pluralistic identities of the grandmother demonstrate the failures of phallocentric language: "she cannot be contained by the singularity of any given category.

Instead, her constant slipping between werewolf, witch, woman, from male to female," offers a glimpse into the cracks that belie the myth of an omnipotent language," (Lau 83) — the "closed system" of phallocentric language. Another interpretation is the grandmother as a phallic mother, and the female protagonist "prosper[s]" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 128) after the death of her grandmother demonstrates the possibility of women and girls to be separated from her family and the aggressions of the phallic mother to live alone (Lau 83). Again, the many possibilities are at heart of Carter's "women-with-wolves" tales, but both interpretations are anti-patriarchal enough to serve as a resource of resistance against the system of patriarchy in which the literary tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood" is deep-rooted in. Furthermore, the Duke in "Wolf-Alice", who might be best described as a vampire-werewolf composite, embodies femininity. It is noted that the Duke "howls like a wolf with his foot in a trap or *a woman in labour*" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 148; emphasis added). For Carter, femininity does not "exclusively apply to women as such; as Toril Moi explains, it encompasses 'that which is marginalized by the patriarchal symbolic order' (165)" (Jennings 95). Kristine Jennings further explained:

> The otherness, the heterogenous in-between states represented by Wolf-Alice and the Duke prove traumatic to the villagers, whose reaction is to expel them. "By way of abjection," Kristeva writes, "primitive societies have marked out a precise area of their culture in order to remove it from the threatening world of animals or animalism, which were imagined as representatives of sex and murder," and the imperfect humanity of this wolf-girl and werewolf, the proximity to the animalistic, is the threatening reminder of the fragility of this distinction between the realm of the human and that of the animal. (95)

It is perhaps why the (were)wolves in Carter's "women-with-wolves" tales are never the typical, traditional figures of masculine violence. Similar to the witches, the (were)wolves are the social outcast because of their associations with the Devil. Nevertheless, in "The Werewolf", Carter deliberately distances her readers from the upland woodsmen who hold such superstitious beliefs, by stating that "they have not seen us nor even know that we exist" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 126). Moreover, Carter suggests that the danger of the wolves is only a projection of humanity's fear. It is stated that "[a]t night, the eyes of wolves shine like candle flames, yellowish, reddish, but that is because the pupils of

their eyes flatten on darkness and catch the light of your lantern to flash it back to you —
red for danger" (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 129). They are expelled into the position
of "other", for their imperfection "show[s] us what we might have been" (Carter, *The
Bloody Chamber* 144). In her "women-with-wolves" stories, Carter expresses sympathy
for the (were)wolves; for example, in "The Company of Wolves", she states:

> The long-drawn, waver howl has, for all its fearful resonance, some inherent
> sadness in it, as if the beast would love to be less beastly if only they knew how
> and never cease to mourn their own condition. There is a vast melancholy in
> the canticles of the wolves, melancholy infinite as the forest, endless as these
> long nights of winter and yet that ghastly sadness, that mourning for their own,
> irremediable appetites, can never move the heart for not one phrase in it hints
> at the possibility of redemption; grace could not come to the wolf from its own
> despair, only through some external mediator, so that, sometimes, the beast will
> look as if he half welcomes the knife that dispatches him. (*The Bloody Chamber*
> 131)

Being anti-patriarchal, Carter's "women-with-wolves" tales do not only speak for women
and girls, but also the wolves who are seen as "other" and oppressed by the mainstream,
patriarchal society. Here, I would like to borrow Bell Hooks' "center/margin" theory, and
to suggest Carter chose the margin as her standpoint, perspective and position, to stand
with the "other" and the oppressed as well as to fight against the "center" (of patriarchy
and of anthropocentrism). With her "women-with-wolves" stories, Carter demonstrates
the problems of the existing, patriarchal system and exposes the nonsense of the cultural
norms which are shaped and serve the "center".

Carter once said, "I'm in the demythologizing business. I'm interested in myths
— though I'm much more interested in folklore — just because they are extraordinary
lies designed to make people unfree" (qtd. in Jennings 89). As a result, "freedom", is at
heart of Carter's (re)writings. She deconstructs the patriarchal narratives and ideologies
which serve to confine the "other" and opens up possibilities them. The three female
protagonists and the wolves in "The Werewolf", "The Company of Wolves" and "Wolf-
Alice" are very different and do not confine to any of the existing tropes; the tales have
no singular, "authorized" interpretations, but welcome multiplicity. This "plural closure

of Carter's narrative allows 'departure,' breaking with 'the specular relations,' which rule the coherence of a subject or text (Cixous, 'Castration or Decapitation'), and imag(in)ing a different kind of self-reflexivity, one pouring out of touch, voice and blood" (Bacchilega 66). In other words, Carter's tales are anti-authorship; not only that of patriarchy, but also her own authorship, for her resistance of foreclosure in the "women-with-wolves" tales is noteworthy. Perhaps for Carter, it is the very singularity which makes people unfree, and with the "women-with-wolves" tales, she allows diversity and individuality to slip in, to open up possibilities, for everyone and everything in chains.

4.   <u>Conclusion</u>

Because of the very popularity, fairy tales have long been employed as, what Louis Althusser called, an ideological state apparatus to convey patriarchal ideologies to consolidate the patriarchal order. Perrault's and the Grimms' versions are examples of patriarchal fairy tales, and their ideologies conveyed are truly problematic, for they contribute to the victim-blaming rape culture and consolidate the stereotypical images of women and girls. However hard they tried to confine the female protagonist (and fellow women and girls) within the patriarchal expectations on how women and girls ought to behave, Carter (and many other feminist writers who wrote her own versions of "Little Red Riding Hood") deconstructed the patriarchal texts and ideologies which make people unfree. The conflict of gender ideologies in "Little Red Riding Hood" demonstrates that the "meanings" of a particular text are never fixed. Adaptations, especially unfaithful adaptations (which offer a counter-discourse against the original text), can have very striking effects on their readers.

As a woman who was once confined within the patriarchal ideals (in terms of appearance, behaviors, etc.), I appreciate and admire Carter's "women-with-wolves" tales very much, for they empower fellow women and girls to break the chains and provide a counter-discourse against the mainstream, patriarchal ideologies. After my undergraduate studies, I am very interested in taking up Carter's "demythologizing business". I am planning to pursue a postgraduate degree in women's, gender and/or sexuality studies, to further strengthen my understandings on these very complicated issues; and I would explore the possibilities to work in non-profit organizations which strive to combat

gender, sexuality and/or sexual orientation discriminations. Hopefully, this research would provide an adequate foundation for my further studies and career development.

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A Labyrinth of Nothingness:
Contours of Meaning in Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy*

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Submitted to: Professor David Huddart

1.   Introduction: The Precariousness of Meaning

If the labyrinth of life is but a bundle of chaos, humanity would descend into mayhem. Yet for Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy*, that seems to be the case: fragmented clues compile into mountains of nothingness, characters simply walk off the page, moments of suspense build to disappointment. Propelled by an innate desire for meaning, the *Trilogy* sends readers going back and forth in hopes of unearthing the truth behind its mysteries. To avoid tumbling into existential void, the essence of the human experience is to find purpose. As readers would rummage the pages for proof to give the novels meaning, humanity would gather empirical evidence to verify that life follows meaningful principles, such as science or religion. Behind these systems established to make sense of reality is the fundamental philosophy of inductive reasoning. Using logical thinking to make generalizations from specific observations, we imbue meaning to the results in the present by claiming to have found its cause in the past. But these premises cannot possibly give full assurance of the deductions. Humanity is at last, situated in-between omniscience and ignorance. Whether it is in the pages or the granite streets of reality, we can never ascertain a single, unified meaning. Meaning is thus, perpetually in flux.

The more I read into the *Trilogy*, the harder it is to conclude what the novels mean. Hence, I turned to academics before me, who have also tried their hands at decoding Auster's signature work. In his analysis of *City of Glass*, William Lavender highlights the "indeterminate reflexivity" (224) in its Russian doll constructive narrative, which sabotages literary theories. Scott A. Dimovitz goes further to read the *Trilogy* as a transcendence of critical theories altogether. William G. Little underlines the notion of nothing, contending that the absence of a final illumination (133) forces us to reassess our methods of bringing the "truth" to light (161). Dazzled by the abundance of angles

one could take, I realize that as along as one could support their arguments logically, a kaleidoscope of meanings can be found in one text. Worse, as I rely on their studies, their originality becomes a weight of inadequacy on my shoulders. It is a lament reminiscent of the postmodern concern that creativity has been exhausted: every time I get to something that seems unique, the frustrating realization that it has already been done follows.

Ironically, as meaning eludes my embrace, the self-defeating cycle is precisely the structure of the *Trilogy*. *City of Glass*, *Ghosts*, and *The Locked Room* are different installations, but at the same time, they tell the same story. The novels are all relayed by a narrator looking back, while its protagonists, Quinn, Blue and the anonymous "I", obsess over finding meaning in what appears to be insignificant. Collecting evidence, Quinn and Blue deny the meaninglessness of their investigations, just as how "I" tracks his childhood friend down in disbelief of his arbitrary disappearance. However, logic fails in the *Trilogy*: fleeting moments of discovery by Quinn, Blue and "I" come to naught, bringing them back to square one in a directionless mobius strip.

At length, the novels fall back on themselves, retracing their steps rather than charting a course forward. If these novels crumble in progression, then I shall turn to look backwards. By examining how seeing in retrospect only seems brings the ability to understand, we will find that meaning refuses to be tethered to our subjective conceptions of it and is ultimately, malleable. By revealing the inherent folly behind humanity's way of reasoning, the *Trilogy* may bring us closer to deciphering, or better, embracing the irreconcilable mysteries in reality.

2.   Context

2.1   The Reality of Fiction

Autobiographical undertones are palpable across the staggering volume of works produced on Auster's German Olympia. Auster injects the horror of witnessing a boy being killed by lightning at summer camp into his screenplay, *The Music of Chance* (McCaffery and Gregory 7), and his latest fiction, *4,3,2,1*, where the protagonist is killed in a storm. Early memoirs like *The Invention of Solitude* shadow his subsequent writings, as pieces of the past manifest as broken father-son relationships and lone-wolfs. The *Trilogy* "grows directly" (Mallia) out of *Solitude*, with *City of Glass* as a "fictitious subterranean autobiography" (Mallia) of an alternate Auster without his wife, Siri. Incessant interest in the multiplicity of identity explains the doppelgangers in his screenplay, *Smoke*, starring a Paul Benjamin who shares Auster's first and middle name, and of course, the fake Paul Auster in *City of Glass*. Auster's literary idols like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry David Thoreau feature the *Trilogy*. This curious mixture of reality, allusions and historic anecdotes creates what Linda Hutcheon terms, historiographic metafiction (Barone 5). These stories written under the roof of his Brownstone home are thus, built on looking backwards.

The tendency for metafictional connections sends readers into a wild chase for grains of reality buried in Auster's fiction—and one could hardly blame them. In *City of Glass*, Quinn had "published several books of poetry, had written plays, critical essays, and had worked on a number of long translations" (4). Having translated texts of the French existentialists like Sartre and Camus, published poetry, plays and essays, Auster seems to have inserted his past into that of Quinn's. The same could be said for Fanshawe in *The Locked Room*, whose torn sister links to Auster's real sister, who "snapped in her 20s and has never put herself together again" (Auster, "American Dreams"). The nomadic travels of Fanshawe also seems to take a page out of Auster's book:

> [Fanshawe] had dropped out of college…and wound up on a ship of some sort for a while. An oil tanker…or perhaps a freighter. After that, he lived in France for several years—first in Paris, then as a caretaker of a farmhouse in the south. (205-6, ellipsis added)

It is no shock that Auster also dropped out of school—as documented in his *Hand to*

Mouth—worked on an oil tanker, and drifted for four years in Paris (Auster, "American Dreams"). If Quinn in *City of Glass* is Auster's imagination of an unmarried self, then Fanshawe in *The Locked Room* is a self who never 'succeeds' as a writer. The convergences between reality and fiction points to Auster's fascination with the gap between his writer self and his "mysterious other" printed on book covers (McCaffery and Gregory 14). While the insight provides a motive, it fails to give meaning to these self-references. Smart observations such as the anagram of Siri in the name Iris (Vallas 9), the fictional Auster's wife, at best draws out the real Auster's habit of projecting himself into fiction. Readers become excited by these clues, scouring the pages like a detective in a crime scene, but the evidence amounts to nothing definite that could ground the text in meaning.

Behind the destruction of the fourth wall is a deeper paradox: as fiction seeks to surpass reality, its inherent similarity with reality prevents it to. To borrow Lavender's words, "to the post-modern statement that fiction is not truth", Auster's metafiction "opposes a new paradox: fiction cannot lie" (236). How imagination intersects with reality is a result of universal order, that reality is like fiction, "full of surprises and befuddling" (Auster "I'm going to speak out"). As Auster put it in his introduction to *True Tales of American Life*, many "true stories that sounded like fiction" (2) in his National Story Project. The snapshots of American reality had "unlikely turns, events that refuse to obey the laws of common sense" (3), proving that existence is as absurd as imagination allows. The associations made between Auster's past and his texts have no bearing on the present nor the future. They are but coincidences, shape-shifting in the air like puffs of smoke.

2.2   *A Parody of Theory: The Anti-Detective*

The method of understanding the world backwards applies to how literary movements and genre are determined. A checklist of characteristics is noted, which are then divided into groups. The definitions produce certainty in meaning, albeit done in retrospect, accounting for the existence of otherwise inexplicable forms. Yet the endeavour to periodize and categorize literature has increasingly become fruitless. Until a new form appears that distinguishes itself from its predecessors, setting clear temporal boundaries for literary periods is impossible. More so, the classifications only hold true to existing forms, without guarantee of a single unified meaning that extends towards the future. On

that account, our way of rationalizing reality is uncertain.

The case of *The New York Trilogy* is problematic in terminology. Sporting the look of crime fiction, it subverts conventional expectations of such. Tzvetan Todorov outlined the genre in his "The Typology of Detective Fiction" in a "purely geometric architecture" of two stories, one of the crime and the other of the investigation, with the latter a medium between the reader and the story (Kravitz 46). However, investigators of the *Trilogy* are actively entangled in the mysteries. An obvious crime is not even present, let alone the two stories of 'whodunit' Todorov required. The *Trilogy* also reverses the rulebook of S.S. Van Dine. In his "Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories", the investigators should "never be the culprit", nor should the "truth of the problem" be obscured (qtd. in Sterling). The opposite occurs in the *Trilogy*: the investigators' obsession worsens matters, and less information is known as the pages turn. In contrast to the "monographic approach" (Erdmann 13) of crime fiction, which rarely strays from the formulaic sequence of murder, suspicion and resolution, Auster inspects notions of language and identity concerning the "unfathomable schemes of determinative social and political systems" (Kravitz 47). Rather than restoring order, the *Trilogy* unravel themselves, leaving only the unavailability of truth.

Auster is certainly not the first to break the unspoken rules of detective fiction. Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965) has been cited by Russell and Peacock as the pioneer in allowing an unsolvable case. Kravitz mentions the film, *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), though the brooding Humphrey Bogart remains unbothered by his inability (48). Scholars have had different names for these transgressions of the genre. In the 1970s, William Spanos introduced the term, the "anti-detective story", to name crime fiction that relay postmodernist themes. Stefano Tani expands on Spanos's theory to create the "metafictional anti-detective novel" in his *The Doomed Detective* (qtd. in Dimovitz). In the 1990s, Jamie Dopp settles with "postmodern detective", while Patricia Merivale and Susan Sweeny dubs it the "metaphysical detective" (qtd. in Kravitz).

The New York Trilogy fits well into the mould of anti-detective fiction, and Auster's contemporaries were quick to tie its epistemological questions with postmodernist theories. Alison Russell sees the *Trilogy* as deconstructing not only archetypes of genre, but fiction too. Lacking the traditional structure of "linear movement, realistic

representation, and closure" (71), the Trilogy embodies Jacques Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction (71). Similar to Derrida's overturning of binaries, Kravitz suggests that in the *Trilogy*, "conventional oppositions such as true verses false, real verses imaginary, present verses past become indeterminable" (47). Linda Hutcheon's postmodernism also supplies a compelling explanation. Considering postmodernism as denaturalizing presuppositions of 'normal', Hutcheon suggests that parody, unlike Frederic Jameson's pastiche of purposeless parody, is "repetition with critical distance" to prove a point (qtd. in Barone 6). Taken up in analyses of the *Trilogy* such as Espejo's "Coping with the Postmodern", Hutcheon's parody serves to both legitimize and subvert the genre, totalizing the emphasis on diction, whilst undermining its unrealistic predictability at the same time.

Regardless of whether the terms hold true to the *Trilogy*, a fundamental paradox lies in the attempts. As Barone points out, while postmodern theory contends that there are "no monolithic unities" of meaning (6), it contradicts itself by providing "stable, overarching definitions for itself" (6). There is also no apparent end to the period of postmodernism. To define it is then to ironically, historicize contemporary fiction, but that is another discussion. Nevertheless, to limit the *Trilogy* as a genre is to bind the text by shapes of meaning founded on the past, when in fact it seeks to transcend history. Auster clearly notes that the genre is significant only for him to "get somewhere else entirely" (McCaffery and Gregory 22), and as for where that is, Dimovitz proposes this:

> Auster's works deploy the arguments and concerns of postmodern theories not in a desire to validate those theories, but in an effort to generate a creative space outside of those theories' logical conclusions…rather than exploiting traditional detective fiction to stage epistemological problems, *The New York Trilogy* in reality exploits the already exhausted antidetective genre to explore dimensions of ontology, ultimately reaffirming a metaphysical system in which chance overrides all questions of postmodern indeterminacy. (614, ellipsis added)

Perhaps *The New York Trilogy* is not so much a parody of crime fiction, but a parody of our methods of perceiving reality. Rather than being interpreted strictly under

postmodernism, Auster's *Trilogy* is more interested in the extent to which one could strip away constructs of meaning. Ultimately, patterns of universal order are no more than arbitrary coincidences, drawn together in a futile attempt to make sense of reality.

3.   Seeing in Retrospect Within Fiction

3.1   Bearing and Direction: Past, Present, Future

Unless you make it up as it goes, storytelling requires a basic premise: the event has ended (whether it is resolved is another question). This is why stories are commonly narrated in past tense, as the storyteller essentially returns to the start for readers. In this sense, stories have already concluded themselves before they even begin. *The New York Trilogy* places such a mechanism of storytelling at the forefront with a consistent emphasis on literary structure. The novels begin with a paragraph that overshadows the stories—a synopsis, if you will:

> It was a wrong number that started it…Much later, when he was able to think about the things that happened to him, he would conclude that nothing was real except chance. But that was much later. In the beginning, there was simply the event and its consequences. (*City of Glass* 3, ellipsis added)

> First of all there is Blue. Later there is White, and then there is Black, and before the beginning there is Brown…That is how it begins. The place is New York, the time is the present, and neither one will ever change…and then a man named White walks through the door, and that is how it begins. (*Ghosts* 137, ellipsis added)

> It seems to me now that Fanshawe was always there. He is the place where everything begins for me... Whenever I think of my childhood now, I see Fanshawe. He was the one…I saw whenever I looked up from myself. (*The Locked Room* 201, ellipsis added)

The paragraphs establish the setting, characters, "place" and "time" (*Ghosts* 137)

in a fable-like manner. The 'once upon a time' tone is dialled down in *The Locked Room*, as the "place" (201) becomes an abstract state of identity, rather than an actual place as in *City of Glass* and *Ghosts*.

Regardless of the differences in tone, there is an unmistakable traction between beginning and end. The opening paragraphs outline the resolutions, or the trajectories of events following the expositions. The narrator of *City of Glass* stresses on how the story "started" (3) in the "beginning" (3), disclosing a glimpse of events "much later" (3), where Quinn would "conclude" (3) what it all meant. Ghosts narrates a sequence of events going from "before the beginning" (137), "first" (137), "later" (137) to "then" (137). It does not talk about the end, but predicts that the setting will not "ever change" (137). The Locked Room mentions the point where the story "begins" (201), with more stress on the end "now" (201) that the story has ended. The demonstration of knowledge past the present proves that the narrators have already heard the entire stories. The bearing of the narrators is at the end, and they tend to tease snippets of the future as if to lure readers on.

The distinction of the narrators' perspectives is prefigured in the narrative. Only *Ghosts* is narrated in present tense, while the others are in past tense. Nonetheless, the novels are interspersed with authorial interjections written in a different time. In *City of Glass*, the beginning of what "was" (3) happening is soon interrupted by the narrator, discussing what the meaning of the story "is" (3). The narrator address readers as a collective "we" (3), implying that he is situated in the present like us. In *The Locked Room*, Fanshawe "was" (201) in the past, and the narrator "is" (201) in the present. The next paragraph places the beginning "seven years ago this November" (201), as the narrator recalls meeting Sophie to explain "how it happened" (210). A contrasting past tense is absent in *Ghosts*, which "is" (137) a story of the "present" (137). Yet juxtaposition remains as the narrator foreshadows that Blue's case "will go on for years" (138). By interjecting with "that is how it begins, then" (138), the narrator implies that he is outside the context of the story. Eventually, the alternating tenses displace the stories and the narrators in different timelines: the narrators look back to the past, while the stories move towards the future.

The temporal tensions persist throughout the *Trilogy* with an emphasis on beginnings and ends. During Quinn's encounter with Virginia Stillman in *City of Glass*,

the narrator is able to mark the "first moments" (13) of Quinn's descent into madness. Events are going "too fast" (13) for Quinn to "absorb" (13) their meaning, so he begins to lose ground and "fall behind" (13). In a wry remark of "all" (64) Quinn's mistakes "from beginning to end" (64), the narrator notes that Quinn only realizes that he wanted Virginia "long after it was too late" (63). At one point, Quinn even tries to recall life "before the story began" (128). A similar consciousness surfaces in *Ghosts*. The narrator decides that it is "going too far" (137) to say that Blue has doubts about the case "at this [early] point" (137) of the story, as Blue is yet to know what "the future might hold" (138). The insight on progress recurs when the narrator flags Black's meeting with a woman as the "first twist" (155) of the case, whereas Blue's encounter with his ex-girlfriend indicates "the beginning of the end" (165). The dramatic irony of how Blue muses that they "haven't come to the end yet" (184) intensifies the novel's metafictional self-consciousness of its structure. There are indeed a few more scenes to unfold, even as Black is "urging [Blue] on towards" (184) the end.

The narrator of *The Locked Room* can discern the sequence of his mistakes. Commissioning a biography for Fanshawe is his "second crucial mistake" (246), which "followed directly from the first" (246) of publishing his manuscripts. Possible only with comparison, the precision returns when the narrator prepares readers for "the worse" (269) of the story, which is when he becomes completely consumed by the project. The narrator directly discusses the story, stressing that what happened so far is "only the beginning" (237), a "prelude" (237) that "comes before the story" (237) he set out to tell. The motif of ending then repeats in succession. Sophie anticipates about "coming to the end" (286), and Fanshawe fulfils his promise that "this is where it ends" (301) by concluding that he and the narrator have "probably come to the end" (312) of their conversation. The narrator speaks too of "coming to the end" (289), assuring readers that he has only "one thing left" (300) to say, as he is "nearly at the end" (300). Eventually, the conclusion is "clear" (294) to the narrator: "the entire story comes down to what happened in the end" (294), which helps him sort out his history with Fanshawe. All in all, despite being coloured in retrospect by the backward-looking narrators, the novels deliberately highlight the passage of time from beginning to end.

3.2 *Knowledge in Hindsight: The Narrator's Perspective*

It seems natural to continue by considering the impacts of stories that examine their own anatomy. But I would like to propose instead the reason behind such lucidity: the retrospective position of the narrators bring clarity. Seeing the stories entirely allows one to set events next to the other, forming cause-and-effect relations to tie them together. In doing so, the narrators can pinpoint the beginnings, turning points and endings, infer the motivations behind actions. Interpretation in hindsight manifest in *City of Glass* as the narrator's reconstruction of Quinn's "detailed account" (114) on the red notebook. Embedded in this timeline is Quinn's recollection of the past, implying that aside from taking notes of Stillman, Quinn also spent time documenting what happened. The theory answers for the indications of "much later" (3). In this "later," Quinn would "think about the things that happened to him" (3) and "reflect on" (13) the past, which allows him to "reconstruct the events" (6) and "piece together" (13) his fragmented memory into a reasonable flow. The expectation of knowledge in hindsight explains the recurrence of how Quinn "would remember" (6,10) things later: looking at the clock in the Stillman apartment (6), recalling when Peter Stillman called as it was his parents' anniversary (10), or remembering his encounter with Virginia (13). Even for Quinn, looking back offers the luxury to sort jumbled thoughts. Removing the overwhelming currents of the present, it brings clarity.

For the narrator, seeing in retrospect is more about reconstructing the story. At times, we "cannot say for certain what happened" (114) because it is "difficult to decipher" (133) Quinn's handwriting and subjectivity. Knowing how it all ended, the narrator reassembles the fragmented clues into a logical sequence. Performing "diligent research" (119) on the information "provided" (114) by the notebook, decisive moments such as the date of when Quinn cashes his cheque, are "confirmed" (119) after having "considered the evidence carefully" (119) and "sifted through" (119) other possibilities. The narrator is cautious in his methodology, making sure to stay impersonal and within the "bounds of the verifiable" (114), away from "any interpretations" (133). Though there are certain blanks in the story, the narrator gives readers a logical story of what happened to Quinn by decoding the notebook. The mode of using the end to understand the beginning is in fact, proposed by Quinn earlier. After missing two days of Stillman's traces, Quinn comforts

himself with this thought:

> But perhaps he would be able to make up for the past by plunging forward. By coming to the end, perhaps he could intuit the beginning." (69)

Unfortunately for Quinn, plunging forward only meant sinking into deeper waters of delusion. But for our objective narrator, using the end to intuit the beginning is a success.

The presence of endings is also significant for the omniscient narrative view in *Ghosts*. Though the story has established its place in the present, the narrator notes in the end that all of it "took place more than thirty years ago, back in the days of our earliest childhood" (198). With that said, *Ghosts* is then a product of reminiscence, instead of a current event developing with time. The objective angle explains the omniscience of the narrator, who has information of the entire story and could therefore, discern the meaning of moments inaccessible to Blue at the time. The mystery of Ghosts is at last, more about Blue's unfamiliarity with solitude than Black's impenetrable behaviour. The narrator interprets Blue's incomprehension of Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* in the context of Blue's lack of self-knowledge, leading to his downfall:

> What he does not know is that were he to find the patience to read the book in the spirit it asks to be read, his entire life would begin to change, and little by little he would come to a full understanding of his situation (165)

If Blue had explored himself, he may not have lost himself to Black. Sadly, Blue lacks the narrator's impartiality and becomes overwhelmed by the present. "Even though Blue does not know it" (192), all the time that Blue was searching for Black, the answer was "precisely" (192) inside Blue. Having seen the final showdown between them, the narrator can hence declare that the pair are essentially the same earlier in the story, when Blue is still oblivious to this 'truth'.

Because of the third-person perspective in *City of Glass* and *Ghosts*, the narrative voices are more indifferent, as if they are only analysing data to produce a sound story.

The perspective becomes more intimate as the narration shifts into first person in *The Locked Room*. Seeing in retrospect is no longer a means to complete a puzzle, but a personal endeavour to make sense of the past from the vantage point of the present. The narrator must return to his memories and watch his life play in front of him, stepping into a "museum of [his] own past" (258). Whether it is as far back as when he was "five, six, seven years old" (212), or "eight years earlier" (249), the narrator uses remembering as a mechanism to understand each event in the shadow of the other. Though it does not yield a straightforward answer, he reaches a newfound level of lucidity:

> The truth is far less simple than I would like it to be. That I loved Fanshawe…these are facts, and nothing I say can ever diminish them. But that is only a beginning, and in my struggle to remember the things as they really were, I see now that I also held back from Fanshawe, that a part of me always resisted him. (211, ellipsis added)

Apart from the known fact that he loved Fanshawe, remembering helps the narrator extend from this point of "beginning" (211) to see that he had always resisted Fanshawe. The new perspective sheds light on what was "unknown" (211) to the narrator "at the time" (211) of the past.

"Looking back on it now" (241), he sees that he was too occupied by his problems to recognize Fanshawe's plan for himself to marry Sophie, which was "all so obvious" (241) even "at the start" (241). By a similar token, the narrator grasps in hindsight that hiding the truth about Fanshawe from Sophie was his "greatest failure of all" (241), though "at the time" (241), "there seemed to be no other choice" (241). By removing himself from the context of what was happening, which is only possible "much later" (244), the narrator could finally see what he was not "aware of" (244) before. He registers how he was obsessed with Fanshawe "day and night" (244), and how badly that he was deceiving himself into thinking that he and Sophie were inseparable (244). "Hindsight" (233) also tells the narrator that he was looking for trouble when he started publishing Fanshawe's work. Yet again, he was unconscious of this dark agenda "at the time" (233). Of his impulsive decision to sleep with Fanshawe's mother, the narrator produces the

following analysis:

> I am fairly certain now that the things that followed had as much to do with the
> past as with the present, and I find it odd, now that I have some distance from it,
> to see how a number of ancient feelings finally caught up with me that afternoon.
> (266)

The narrator surprisingly speaks in a calm manner in remembering such a disturbing experience. Using phrases like "I am fairly certain" (266) and "I find it odd" (266), having "some distance from" (265) the past has to some degree, insulated him from the emotional baggage. The room for rational judgment brings him to understand the incident as a result of his suppressed lust for the woman as a young boy. Seeing in retrospect therefore, allows the narrator to unveil what he was blind to before, explaining how he is able to tell the story with such clearness.

3.3   *The Deceit of Reconstruction: The Fickleness of Clarity*

The promise of understanding in hindsight creates expectations for a resolution, which fall short the next instant, as the answers cannot yield the entire truth. For *City of Glass*, the issue is that the narrator's reconstruction hinges on Quinn's memory. Though it was established that thinking in retrospect helps recover lost memories, the bigger truth is that Quinn cannot possibly recall everything. In reality, time moves faster than Quinn's perception, resulting in instances where Quinn cannot remember how he got to a certain place. Simply as he is getting ready to go to the Stillman apartment, Quinn "found himself doing the good imitation of a man preparing to go out" (12) as if he is in a "trance" (12). His body acts prior to his consciousness, and he "found himself" (12) choosing between suits. After entering the Stillman apartment, he again, "found himself" (14) seated. Without being able to "say how long it had been" (14), Quinn only remembers that Virginia had told him to wait there (14) after a while. Having visited during the day, Quinn only realizes that they were sitting in the dark after Peter Stillman's "words had stopped" (23). Once more, "how long it had lasted Quinn could not say" (23). The temporal blackouts are so serious that Quinn feels "as though his stay had lasted three or four hours at most" (36), when according to his calculations afterwards, he had been there

for "more than fourteen hours" (36).

Even if we disregard the discrepancies between perception and the objective indicator of time, Quinn's memory may not even be reliable in the first place. The nature of memory is irregular: it comes "every once in a while" (5), like how Quinn would occasionally feel the "physical sensation" (5) of holding his dead son, as if the past left an "imprint" (5) in him for a brief flicker. Quinn "had no control over it" (5), knowing that the "work of memory" (13) had a "tendency to subvert the things remembered" (13). Quinn acknowledges that some moments will be inaccessible forever, such as how he admits to be uncertain about his memories of the case:

> Like so many of the things that happened to him over the days and weeks that followed, Quinn could not be any sure of any of it. (30)

When the girl who took over his apartment comes home to Quinn, she either screamed or dropped her bag, or vice versa—Quinn "could never be sure of which" (125) went first. At the very least, Quinn's fragmented documentation should be taken with a grain of salt, which leaves limited material for the narrator, who mentions Quinn's unreliability:

> The account of this period is less full than the author would have liked…Even the red notebook, which until now has provided a detailed account of Quinn's experiences, is suspect. We cannot say for certain what happened to Quinn during this period, for it is at this point in the story that he began to lose his grip. (114, ellipsis added)

Other than the fact that information is "scarce" (114), the narrator is also conscious of how memory may be subjective, that madness may affect the accuracy of what Quinn recalls. As a result, the narrator's rendition has a "certain margin of error" (119) and "inaccuracies" (133), depriving readers of the satisfaction that comes from solving the mystery with scrutinizing detail.

On top of all that, the narrator cannot remain completely impartial. The narrator claims to have "followed the red notebook as closely" (133) as possible, sticking to the

facts. Treating the notebook as a "suspect" (114) and one of his "investigations" (119), the narrator's self-critical tone resembles that of a brooding detective. Even if we trust the narrator, whom I believe is unconvincing exactly because of the deliberate attempts to persuade us, the narrator's authorial decisions may also be affected by his unintentional bias. More importantly, the narrator knows of details unknown even to Quinn. Twice in the story Quinn dreams, with one returning to childhood (72) and the other in Broadway with the fictional Auster's son (106). However, Quinn "later forgot" (72, 106) both instances, which contradicts the narrator's claim of having stuck only to what Quinn wrote. Later when Quinn crawls into the Stillman apartment and lies down, the narrator mentions a "electric light" (131) available in the room, which Quinn "had long ago forgotten" (131) about. The narrator's insistence on his objectiveness is clearly false. While it will never be known whether the extra information was obtained in another way or simply invented, the inconsistency places the narrator's neutrality in jeopardy. In the end, the determined nature of the past does not equate reliability, as perceptions of it change with time and subvert the facts. The past does not hold the entire truth, and may even be too fragmented to amount to any meaningful conclusion.

For *Ghosts*, the problem of memory is absent. Omniscience not only lets the narrator ponder on what might have been, it allows foreshadowing. But moments of anticipation soon let eager readers down. Earlier, the narrator calls Blue's girlfriend "the future Mrs Blue" (138, 147), suggesting that they will get married. The narrator misleads readers, and the girlfriend turns out as "ex-future Mrs Blue" (166). This deviation may be deliberate, but other prophecies also turn out false. In the beginning, the narrator comments on the ignorance of Blue in an ominous voice:

For knowledge comes slowly, and when it comes, it is often at great personal expense. (138) Setting up expectations for grave danger, the narrator continues to anticipate that "something is about to happen" (165), and "once it happens nothing will ever be the same again" (165). Technically, this leads to Blue running into his ex-girlfriend, making him realize the "personal expense" (138) of having thrown away his life for the investigation. Yet, it is not the same when Blue accepts that he must confront Black, where the narrator foretells that "from this moment on, there is only one word that speaks for Blue, and that word is fear" (189). Despite the final showdown and action—in

stark comparison to its absence in *City of Glass*—what that "knowledge" (138) is remains ambiguous. Instead, in the film-noir-like face-off, Blue and Black speak in cryptic terms: Blue asks of "the story" (196) that Black is supposed to tell him about; Black confesses that he needed Blue to remind himself of "what [he] was supposed to be doing" (196). Black either gets killed or knocked out, and readers will never know what exactly was going on between them. The demonstration of omniscience along the way leads to no final discovery.

Enlightenment brought by looking back is also short-lived in *The Locked Room*, since the narrator's reflection on the past also depends on memory. "Memories can be false" (212), though he doubts that his "feelings [about the past] can lie" (212). Even so, this confirms that memory is intuitive and unreliable. The narrator reiterates this presumption when he thinks back on his night in a brothel with the disclaimer, "if memory serves" (217), which presupposes that memory is flawed. The narrator's days in Paris only come back "in fragments when they come at all" (293), returning as "bits and pieces that refuse to add up" (293). Reminiscent of Quinn, the narrator's consciousness detaches from the body as he was "fucking the brains out of [his] head" (293) with alcohol. This leads to instances where he would "see [him]self" (293) falling down drunk, seeing only "images" (293) of himself at a distance" (293). The only reason that the narrator could write about this period is because he has "certain documentary evidence" (293), such as his passport, to "prove" (293) his stay. Yet, he notes that this is "very different from remembering" (293):

> None of it feels like memory, which is always anchored within; it's out there beyond what I can feel or touch, beyond anything that has to do with me. I have lost a month from my life, and even now it is a difficult thing for me to confess. (293)

The narrator's segregation from his memories continues in his chase after a random man he calls Stillman. He could "remember trying" (299) to protect his face in the fight with 'Stillman', but "nothing else comes back" (299) and "everything else" (299) about what happened "is gone" (299). After returning to Sophie, the narrator lied about needing

to consult papers, but he cannot remember "what papers they were supposed to be" (302), only that they have "something to do with an article" (302) of his. Even this trivial detail is provided with a tentative "I think" (302), as the narrator "could be wrong" (302). The motif of seeing the self as "somebody else" (293) comes back later, where the narrator has "no memory of what happened" (312) after his final conversation with Fanshawe. He "found [him]self" (312) outside the building of their rendezvous, claiming to have fallen down with an uncertain "I think" (312). His fluctuating memory is then restored for a moment to help him "remember waiting in a corner" (312) for a cab. When the narrator describes what Fanshawe left him in the red notebook, the narrator stresses that he "could be wrong" (313), as his "judgment is possibly askew" and biased "at that moment" (313). When even the basic facts can be false, the promise of how seeing at a distance brings clarity comes to nothing. The inaccuracy of memory renders 'lessons learnt' from the past illegitimate for the narrator, who could have distorted the past with his subjective need to see meaning in them.

Even if we trust the narrator, looking back cannot unearth all the questions buried. Sophie's smile to the narrator for taking over Fanshawe's manuscripts remains ambiguous, as the narrator "could never tell" (210) whether it was "from happiness or disappointment" (210). "Close to six years after" (267) Fanshawe's mother seduced him, the narrator "still [hasn't] come up with the answer" (267) of whether she was aware of her actions. "Recently" (267), the narrator has "begun to wonder" (267) if Fanshawe's mother shared his hatred for Fanshawe, which drove her to prove it via an "extravagant act" (267). The brief understanding is a mere "if" (267), rather than a striking dawn of epiphany. Looking back on how he was hung up on researching Fanshawe's past, the narrator is "still baffle[d]" (269) by "why" (269) he had persisted like that. He knows that the purpose is to find Fanshawe, but he "could never take it farther than that, could never pin down an image of what [he] was hoping to achieve" (270) in meeting Fanshawe. On the whole, the clarity brought by seeing in retrospect is incapable of yielding a complete truth in the present nor future.

3.4   *The Foppery of Reason: Mad Quests for Meaning*

The inadequacy of inductive reasoning is more apparent for the protagonists, who

are, in some form or the other, bent on finding meaning. The characters turn to detective methods, as the *Trilogy* parodies traditional crime fiction that trusts reason in bringing clarity. In *City of Glass*, Quinn shares the conventional view, that "no sentence, no word" (8) is insignificant in a "good mystery" (8). The "most trivial thing" (8) can be crucial, and "nothing must be overlooked" (8). Quinn assumes that "the key to good detective work was a close observation of details" (67), that the more "accurate the scrutiny, the more successful the results" (67). But to reiterate, the question of genre is of less importance, as it is a medium to reflect the larger folly of reasoning with reality. The more Quinn tries to rationalize Stillman's movements, the more he feels the "impenetrability" (67) of the man. Though Stillman "seemed to do nothing" (59), Quinn insists on "ransacking the chaos" of his behaviour for "some glimmer of cogency" (69). Propelled by the fixation to see meaning, Quinn traces letters out of Stillman's walks, convinced that a message is left in the map. Quinn soon realizes that it may have simply been a product of hallucination:

> He had imagined the whole thing. The letters were not letters at all. He had seen them only because he wanted to see them. And even if the diagrams did form letters, it was only a fluke…it was all an accident, a hoax he had perpetrated on himself. (71, ellipsis added)

Similar to the narrators, Quinn may see meaning only because he wants to. Motivated by the fear of emptiness, Quinn continues to "disbelieve the arbitrariness of Stillman's actions" (69). Quinn "wanted there to be a sense" (69) to his observations, "no matter how obscure" (69). For example, Quinn thinks that Stillman's red notebook is a "secret link" (59) to his own red notebook, that it "contained answers to the questions" (59) about the perplexing man. At length, the faith in close observation implies that "human behaviour could be understood", that there is "finally a coherence, an order, a source of motivation" (67) beneath the "infinite façade of gestures, tics, and silences" (67). Except "the facts of the past seemed to have no bearing on the facts of the future" (67), and the unfortunate truth is that the life cannot add up like logic. There are "no clues, no leads, no moves" (91), and Quinn is merely trying to force answers out of a body that does not hold it.

The nature of Blue's investigation in *Ghosts* is similar to that of Quinn's, as both are assigned to watch a person who does nothing. "Little of anything happens" (145), and

Black never walks to "any purpose" (153). Blue sees that he can "no longer depend on the old procedures" (149) like "clues, legwork, investigative routine" (149). Instead of being a critique on crime fiction, the failure of the detective represents the insufficiency of reason. Like Quinn, Blue is petrified of the hollowness of the "blankness of the unsolved case" (167) and the uneasiness of having "to do nothing" (141). Driven by the blind faith that "all the hard work will eventually lead to something out of the ordinary" (182), Blue attacks his reports with "aggravating precision" (149) and "faithfully recorded" (172) Black's activities. But Blue's observations offer nothing but a "paucity of detail" (149): instead of "drawing out the facts and making them sit palpably in the world" (149), his words have "induced them to disappear" (149). "Nothing makes sense" (182), and though Blue keeps looking out "for some pattern to emerge, for some clue to drop in his path" (154), Blue "gets nowhere" (149). The more information Blue collects, the less he knows about Black:

> He has learned a thousand facts, but the only thing they have taught him is that he knows nothing. (172)

"No rhyme or reason can be read into anything" (154), as looking back does not lead to a conclusion: "the present is no less dark than the past" (138), and the mystery of the present is "equal to anything the future might hold" (138). In the end, there is "no story, no plot, no action" (172) left, and Blue becomes a "prisoner" (171) of the case and his own obsession.

The mystery in *The Locked Room* has more to do with the narrator's emotional connection with Fanshawe rather than a 'crime'. After looking back to his past, the narrator begins an investigation to find Fanshawe. In the guise of making a biography for Fanshawe, the narrator "dug into his past" (269), "gathering information" (269) and "facts" (269) about Fanshawe. The narrator was "piecing together the story of a man's life" (269), using logic to make connections, "correlating" (271) different fragments of Fanshawe's life. "Hunting for leads" (271), the narrator was a "detective" (283), pursuing things that "held even the slightest promise" (271). Exhausting all possibilities in doing "the necessary legwork" (277) and "asking enough questions" (277), the narrator believed

that there was "one path" (283) to truth amongst the "million bits of random information" (283) and "million paths of false inquiry" (283). However, the things he learned "did not go against any of the things [he] already knew" (283), and the "break" (283) in the mediocrity the narrator was looking for "never surfaced" (289). The narrator is left "burrowing blindly" (289) in the "empty spaces" (288) of meaninglessness, propelled by a denial to accept the failure of his method. Once again, there are "no leads, no clues, no tracks" (289) left to follow, and the narrator spirals into delirium, grasping for the unavailable truth like a "buffoon clutching at straws" (291).

As bystanders of the *Trilogy*, we see Quinn, Blue and the narrator as madmen, who are oblivious to the ridiculous lengths they go to for the cases. But as we look down on the demented Quinn camping in the alley, the crazed Blue passing out in Black's apartment, or the frantic narrator chasing down a random person; we are complicit in the madness because we too, hunt for clues to give the novels meaning. The *Trilogy* toys with this tendency of readers to find meaning in the tiniest detail, leaving clues everywhere. In *City of Glass*, Stillman's book was published in 1960, which is same as the year Stillman locked up his son, Peter (49). The motif of the stone also reoccurs. In Quinn's first meeting with Stillman, Stillman describes that people see words as immovable "stones" (75), whereas in the second, Stillman boasts that he would "leave no stone unturned" (83). The realization that the fictional Auster is not a detective leaves Quinn's body heavy like a "stone" (97). In the final chapter, as Quinn writes in delirium, his words are severed from him to become "as real and specific as a stone" (131). Apart from this, Daniel Quinn, the fake name Quinn gives himself has coincidentally the same initial as *Don Quixote* (130), while Daniel is also the fictional Auster's son. Wandering around New York, Quinn sees a juggler on a slack rope (107), which happens to be Peter Stillman's final dream to become a "high-wire walker" (19). A reader who is familiar with the real Paul Auster would also find Quinn's first detective novel, "Suicide Squeeze" (52), unmistakably similar to Auster's first detective novel, *Squeeze Play*. There are also many connections between the three novels. For example, Quinn appears also in The Locked Room as a private detective that stalks Fanshawe (283), but he seems to be a different character. *City of Glass* ends with New York being "entirely white" (133) with snow, while snow also falls midway in *Ghosts*, where "everything has turned white" (142) in the city.

I could go on and on to give more of these seemingly meaningful observations. The point is, while we can never refute the possibility of these correspondences as significant, it could also be equally possible that we are reading too much into the story, that they are merely coincidences. While we may never know the answer to that, all these linkages amount to nothing conclusive for the novels. It is almost as if the *Trilogy* is constantly reminding readers of the possibility of meaninglessness, lest we drive ourselves insane like the characters within the pages.

4. Seeing Beyond Fiction

4.1 *The Substance of Nothingness*

As if well aware of the readers' anticipation for a final revelation, the *Trilogy* seems to deliberately refuse being defined by a single interpretation. Instead, the novels return to square one, as if they are undoing themselves with the conclusions. *City of Glass* ends in a climax of nothing. After coming up empty in his final lead, which is meeting with the fictional Paul Auster, Quinn becomes paralyzed in a state of "nowhere" (104), where

> He has nothing, he knew nothing, he knew that he knew nothing. Not only had he been sent back to the beginning, he was now before the beginning, and so far before the beginning that it was worse than any end he could imagine. (104)

Not only has Quinn ended up with nothing after all of his investigations, he seems to have fallen even further back. He has "come to the end of himself" (126), and with his apartment confiscated, Quinn truly has "nothing left" (126). Finally, Quinn literally returns to the beginning, that is the Stillmans' apartment. Yet, even this place has been "stripped bare" (127), and "the rooms now held nothing" (127) but emptiness. "Everything was gone" (126), and Quinn writes himself out of existence by using up the pages of the red notebook. Rather than giving readers a conclusion to justify all of Quinn's suffering, Quinn simply walks out of the story.

Despite being the novel with the most action, *Ghosts* also ends in a summation

of nothing. The suspenseful meetings between the disguised Blue and Black seem to promise a departure from nothingness, but with "each word" (177) Black speaks, Blue "finds himself understanding less and less" (177), seeing "nothing at all" (177) from their conversation. When the undercover Blue enters Black's apartment, there is "nothing on the walls" (186) of the place, which feels like a "no man's land" (187). Breaking into Black's place later, Blue discovers that what he thought Black was writing are "nothing more than his own reports" (191), "meaning nothing, saying nothing" (191), pushing Blue "as far from the truth of the case" (191) as he has ever been. The final confrontation between Blue and Black does end their rivalry physically, but it denies Blue the satisfaction of resolution. The "whole thing is played out" (195) for Black, but Blue, having been "lost from the first day" (196), is still "nowhere" (196) meaningful spiritually. At last, Blue also leaves the story.

The notion of nothing also overwhelms the ending of *The Locked Room*. The narrator feels as though "the sensation of life had dribbled out" (298) of him as he lost himself to irrationality, tasting an "undeniable odour of nothingness" (299). On contrary to restoring a sense of purpose, Fanshawe's final words to the narrator left him feeling as if "the life were being sucked out" (312) of him. The "explanation" (311) that Fanshawe owed the narrator supplies no great reveal, as like readers, the narrator will "never know" (312) what is "true or not true" (312) of Fanshawe's motivations, nor the truth of what was written in the red notebook. Nothing specific is said about the contents of the notebook, as the narrator "understood very little" (313) about it:

> All the words were familiar to me, and yet they seemed to have been put together strangely, as though their final purpose was to cancel each other out…Each sentence erased the sentence before it, each paragraph made the next paragraph impossible. (313, ellipsis added)

The more the narrator reads, the more elusive the contents seem, forming a tormenting paradox in which Fanshawe had "answered the [narrator's] question by asking another question" (313). The physical presence of the notebook is therefore an absurd juxtaposition to the intangibility of its meaning, as "everything remained open, unfinished, to be started again" (313). Like its antecedents, *The Locked Room* ends with the protagonist "faltering

in the darkness" (313) for the unreachable truth. Finally, even the tangible notebook is obliterated when the narrator tore out all of its pages (314), leaving readers with truly nothing.

The easy way out is to deem the novel as a story about nothing, but I would like to believe that we are not that self-delusional to equate the unavailability of truth with insignificance. Nothing is still something, as when calling something nothing is still acknowledging its existence. In simpler terms, not being able to understand the endings does not erase what happened. Reading the *Trilogy* is at long last—at least to me—just like reading Fanshawe's notebook. Like Fanshawe denying the narrator of an answer, Auster seems to have set out to "subvert every expectation" (313) readers had for the *Trilogy*, declining us of the closure that comes with resolutions. Yet despite finishing the novels with confusion, an "odd" (313) feeling of "great lucidity" (313) survives from the bewilderment. Perhaps the *Trilogy* is powerful precisely in its meaninglessness: its actual significance remains ambiguous to us, so we stand in awe of its dream-like quality, convinced that it means something magnificent. As the narrator in *The Locked Room* chased after the random man, calling him Fanshawe knowing full well that he isn't, he could not have put this "vertigo of pure chance" (298) and arbitrariness better:

It made no sense, and because of that, it made all the sense in the world. (298)

4.2   The Beginning of An End

Having spent the entire time looking back to the past, it is fitting that the *Trilogy* ends on a continual note, moving beyond the pages. The narrator of *City of Glass* mentions "events that follow this last sentence" (132) of Quinn's notebook, but they will "never be known" (132) because we have come to the last page. "It is impossible" (133) for the narrator to say "where he is now" (133) or "wherever he may he have disappeared to" (133). The red notebook is eventually, "only half of the story" (133) of Quinn. The story also goes on for *Ghosts*, which ends with Blue predicting that "they'll be coming before he knows it" (197). Blue will have "hell to pay" (197) by then, but readers will never know what and how. "Anything is possible" (198) past the trammels of the story, and the narrator imagines that Blue "went far away" (198), travelling to America or even "sailing to China" (198). *The Locked Room* can "do nothing but go on forever" (237) as well. In

the preface to the ending, the narrator confesses that his "only hope is that there is an end" (237) to what he is saying, hinting that the story may continue. Indeed, Fanshawe still *and* will continue to influence the narrator, and perhaps he "must die before [his] part in it is played out" (237) into a clear ending. The final image of coming to the last page is paired with a continual image of a train "pulling out" (314) of the platform, showing a glimpse of the moment after the end.

As they approach the end, there is a striking metafictional awareness of the limits of the novels' actual pages. The "dwindling pages" (131) of Quinn's red notebook in *City of Glass* coincides with the thinning pages of the physical novel, while Blue's "final moment" (197) in Ghosts is to leave both his room and the space of the story. "From the moment" (198) Blue "walks through the door" (198) beyond the page, "we know nothing" (198). As *The Locked Room* reaches the final page, the narrator inside the story is simultaneously tearing out the pages from Fanshawe's notebook "one by one" (314), and the final sentence is the narrator arriving at "the last page" (314). Though the novels end with ambiguous continuation, the dramatic irony brings the real and fictional realms together for one last time, creating a sublime yet inexplicable feeling of closure.

Ultimately, the novels retrace their steps since they are "finally the same story" (294), while also forming a three-step progression, as "each one represents a different stage in [the author's] awareness of what it is about" (294). Witnessing character and thematic development, each novel modifies our awareness of the final interpretation of the last novel (Dimovitz 622). At the same time, their form of storytelling and ensuing reception differ, contributing to their distinctiveness. After all, the *Trilogy* is a frustrating yet bewitching paradox of succession and reversal. In spite of all that, the concluding action of tearing apart the notebook signifies that the writer has finally come to accept his inability to find true meaning. As the narrator says in *The Locked Room*,

> In the end, each life is no more than the sum of contingent facts, a chronicle of chance intersections, of flukes, of random events that divulge nothing but their own lack of purpose. (219)

Rather than culminating on a postmodernist deconstruction of reality that leaves only meaninglessness, the narrator in *The Locked Room* comes to accept his inability to grasp

meaning and truth as he crushes the pages. As Auster says, he finally comes to "tolerate the presence of ambiguities within himself" (Mallia), and learns to live with the inescapable power of chance.

5.   Conclusion

Seeing in retrospect in *The New York Trilogy* symbolizes rationality, and what logic excels in conventional crime fiction becomes fatal hamartia in the world of Auster. Meaning is not restored in retrospect, but distorted into what its seeker yearns to see. The detective's uncovering of the crime is analogous to the reader's deciphering of the plot (Lavendar 230), who are oblivious to the absurdity of their fixation. The inability to define the *Trilogy* goes to show, as M.M. Bakhtin puts it, that it has "no canon of its own" (qtd. in Lavendar 238). It is only right to call the *Trilogy* metafiction, since the term "deserves its prefix not because it is 'above'" (Lavendar 238), but because it is "fiction in a state of metamorphosis" (Lavendar 238). Transcending theory, the ambivalence of meaning is compensated by a clear proximity with the world: the novels are reality.

With that said, the uncertain conclusion is not evasion from the cliché of resolutions, but a representation of its misconceptions: stories do not end because we cannot see them. As Max Klein of Auster's *Squeeze Play* says: "we get so used to seeing only parts of people, the parts we come to contact with, that it's almost as if they cease to exist as soon as they're out of sight" (qtd. in Dimovitz 621). The *Trilogy*'s lack of closure is hence, a result of our limited perspective of reality: meaning is not absent, but simply surpasses our field of vision. Ultimately, if we see our own inadequacy, the white spaces of meaning form no cause for nihilistic despair. As the narrator puts it delicately in *The Locked Room*, lives "veer abruptly from one thing to another" (253), and

> A person heads in one direction, turns sharply in mid-course, stalls, drifts, starts up again. Nothing is ever known, and inevitably we come to a place quite different from the one we set out for. (253)

The mysteries in life are at last, like Fanshawe's notebook. Not knowing what had been done, we know it was still something nevertheless.

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The Change in Gender Representation in Superhero Movies of The Last Decade

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Reflection

In the last decade, gender issues regarding equality and stereotypes have been given a rising importance in our societies. In 2010, the United Nations established the UN Women, to embrace "gender equality and women's empowerment" (UN Women) and address discriminations as faced by women worldwide. In 2015, the United Nations included "Gender Equality" as one of the 17 sustainability goals to be achieved by 2030. Although many parties, such as the United Nations and worldwide companies have been building efforts in raising awareness towards gender stereotypes and representation issues, more works are needed in order to deliver a real and fundamental change in the public. Furthermore, most of the time, only females' representation and stereotypes are being concerned. However, it is also important to address males' as they are always stereotyped with traditional masculinity- for example, being strong and rational at all times. Gender issues and its representation are not just solely about how females are represented or stereotyped, but also about how both genders interact with each other. The perception and interaction between genders are important as this is one of the most significant ways that leads to inequality. In recent years, I have realized that the movie industry is actually delivering impactful changes in gender representation within movies, especially in the last decade (2010- 2020), where a growing number of female-centered movies and movies featuring male characters with soft boy behaviors, which male characters are involved in more emotional developments, expressively demonstrate their emotions and a personality with good intentions, are being produced and released.

I am really delighted and grateful for being able to explore more gender-related topics during the second term of my year three studies in Professor O'Sullivan's course, *ENGE 2140- Superheroes in Graphic Novel, Comics and Film*. There were quite a few intriguing gender-related topic discussions based on superheroes' representation, such

as the change in female representation, the transition of traditional masculinity to soft boy masculinity. In this particular course, not only were there discussions on females' representations and males' traditional masculinity, but also the analysis on the soft boy genre. Under the context of the Superheroes genre, the changes in gender representations are clearer for analysis as traditional masculinity is demonstrated in most male superheroes movies and the breakthrough of female status in the recently released superheroes movies focusing on female characters such as the *Black Panther* (Coogler, 2018)*, Black Widow* (Shortland, 2021) and *Wonder Woman* (Jenkins, 2017)*. These topics have greatly sparked my interest in dedicating this paper to further explore gender issues under the context of superheroes movies, especially in movies that are produced in the last decade.

My dedication towards gender representation does not just stop with my graduate studies. Instead, I hope to further my interest in gender-related topics to my future careers. During my undergraduate years, I have been working as an intern in FWD Life Insurance and Jardine International Motors, focusing in the same field, the Corporate Communications Department. These two companies put high focuses on diversity, and are working towards the goal of raising gender awareness and equality by enhancing employees' education and altering existing internal policies. I believe communications is an important tool for delivering messages to the public while understanding their thoughts and desires, and being under Corporate Communications, I have the ability to deliver campaigns and messages that could create an impact to society.

Through these two years of experience under Corporate Communications departments, I have realized that gender-related issues and campaigns are a growing trend in many international companies, and therefore, it is the greatest channel to communicate with people both internally and externally regarding gender representations. I am dedicated to develop my future careers in companies that value gender equality, and put an emphasis on gender representation. I hope to deliver a change on gender issues to not just the company itself, but also society as a whole, to raise the awareness of acceptance and respect for people of different kinds.

Introduction

Movies and films have been an influential medium for delivering ideologies and cultural concepts through pictures and motions on screen. Often, movies have the ability to affect human behaviors, where people could learn new cultural information and habits through the movies' settings and character portrayals. The reason why movies have the ability to alter audiences behaviors through movies as they have the "opportunity to project (themselves) into situations and in some degree share in experiences" (Fearing, 71) while watching the story development in movies. At the same time, movies are also a "means through an individual understands himself, his social role and the values of his group" (Fearing, 70). Therefore, movies have the ability to foster self-understanding among audiences, and understand and see the values among himself and society through movies as what is being portrayed on screen could be a familiar experience that has happened in reality as experienced by the audiences. Since movies have the ability to alter audiences' personality and behaviors, it is often used as a tool to deliver certain ideologies to, or to manipulate audiences through movies. Sometimes, movies are produced because certain "social and cultural forces (are) operating on the persons who make films, and the audiences for whom they are intended" (Fearing, 71). Therefore, it would be easy for audiences to project themselves into the movies as the settings are similar to our current society, and their thoughts and ideologies would be altered through messages as movies are produced to meet the needs and desires of the public.

In the past decade, there has been rising awareness and recognition towards gender equality, where more international organizations are paying more attention to gender issues and representation, by taking part in and leading the initiatives to foster females' values and rights. The United Nations has been taking up leading roles in promoting gender equality, where they have established the UN Women organization in 2010, and put gender equality as the fifth Sustainable Development Goals to "empower women and girls and ensure their equal rights" (UN). At the same time, women are more willing to speak up to unfairness and discriminations as experienced in the workplace, schools and society as a whole. One significant feminist movement would be the #Metoo movement, that was originated by Tarana Burke in 2006 to fight against her sexual violence experiences. However, the tag went viral in 2017 after the sexual abuse accusations on

Harvey Weinstein, where the hashtag united women from around the world to voice out their experience of sexual violence on the internet. These have reflected the rising significance towards gender equality and the rights and protections on women to fight against discriminations and sexual violence.

To address the rising importance of female's rights and gender equality, the movie industry does make changes to the gender representation of both male and female in character portrayals, especially in the superheroes genre. In earlier decades, female characters were often depicted as "physically weak, dependent, a victim and fearful" (Ottosson, 2012) where they were not involved in handling missions, but presented as a victim to reflect the strength of superheroes during their rescues, while male characters were being "physically strong, independent, a leader and brave" (Ottosson, 2012) where they would perform toxic masculinity. However, in the last decade, a significant change in gender representation was shown in superheroes movies, where movies featuring female superheroes have been released, and altered their purpose of existence within the movies to not solely for romance or to reflect the strength of men, but also to showcase women's strengths and capabilities within movies. Such change in gender representation is not just limited to raising women's ability to dominance, but also breaking through the toxic masculinity expectation of men that has existed in our society for centuries. In the last decade, male characters' representation have changed from performing toxic masculinity to soft boy personalities, where men characters are more expressive in emotions and weaknesses, and being less independent. Examining the superheroes genre of the last decade could better reflect the change in gender representation as gender stereotypes such as strength and power, intelligence, inequalities are being heightened within the genre. Therefore, in this paper, the change in gender representation of the superheroes genre of the last decade will be discussed through the changes in both female and male character portrayals and the societal reasons leading to such changes.

The Changes in Female Character Portrayals in the Last Decade

Comparing the character developments and settings of female roles from superhero movies released before the last decade and within the last decade, some significant differences could be seen through the character portrayals of female roles. In the following,

the changes in female portrayals focusing on STEM intelligence and warfare capabilities, and the demonstration of dominance and leadership within superhero movies will be discussed.

A.   The Depiction of STEM Intelligence and Warfare Capabilities

In the last decade, the superhero genre has changed the depiction of female characters by demonstrating their tech-intelligence and capabilities to be involved in warfare and science. Trace back to earlier superhero movies, women are often depicted as less intelligent or educated as men, and they are often neglected in roles that are related to technology or warfare, just as the reality where "women's under-representation in both scientific and higher education employment" (Bebbington, 2002) does exist, especially in the field of technology and science. Take *Superman Returns* (Singer, 2006) as an example, the female supporting role- Lois Lane, was depicted as a reporter and the former lover of Superman, who is not involved in any technological related abilities or warfare intelligence. Instead, in the movie, the stereotype of male being more intelligent in science and technology is being demonstrated through the depiction of the male character of Lex Luthor, being an expert of science and technology, who manages to create military weapons of his own. Similarly, in *Iron Man* (Favreau, 2008), Pepper Potts is depicted as the personal assistant of Tony Stark in the beginning of the movie. Though Potts is being promoted as the CEO of the Stark Industries, she is not depicted as a character who has tech-intelligence or being able to be involved in assisting Tony in designing his gear and weapons. The same representation could be seen in reality where "women's under-representation in both scientific and higher education employment" (Bebbington, 2002). Therefore, these have shown the stereotypes in both reality and in the superhero genre before the last decade where women are less involved in the fields of science and technology. However, in superhero movies that were released in the last decade, the depiction of female roles are not just breaking the stereotypes that women are being less involved in the field of science and technology, but also their capabilities in taking up significant roles in these fields by delivering impacts to other male characters with their knowledges and abilities. This could be because "women's under-representation in academia is increasingly being recognised" (Bebbington, 2002). In *Captain America: The*

First Avenger (Johnston, 2011), Peggy Carter is depicted as an agent who is responsible for assisting in warfare of the American army in the Second World War, and for being in charge in transforming Captain America into the Super Soldier. Her intelligence in assisting in warfare and mathematics are also being demonstrated through being one of the founders of S.H.I.E.L.D, an agency responsible for military counter-terrorism. Similarly, in *The Flash* (Berlanti, 2014), the female supporting role of Caitlyn Snow has showcased women's capabilities in science by depicting the character as an experienced and professional expert in bioengineering, where she works in STAR Labs to monitor and provide Barry Allen (the Flash) with medical support and advice. In the movie of *Black Panther* (Coogler, 2018), Shuri, the younger sister to Black Panther, is responsible for Wakanda and Black Panther's weapon designs and technological development. She provides her brother with assistance during his missions and teaches him the techniques and skills of using those tech-driven weapons as designed by her. These changes in female portrayals have showcased women's capabilities and knowledge in the field of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, by portraying women's participation in inventing and being involved in these fields, breaking through the stereotypes of men being more intellectually-educated and taking up more professional roles than women.

B.   The Demonstration of Dominance and Leadership in Female Roles

In previous decades, superhero movies have mainly featured male characters, where the movie industry produced movies with male-leading roles, and female characters are mostly taking up supporting roles. Take superhero movies produced by DC Films as an example, the first female-led superhero movie- *Supergirl* (Szwarc, 1984) was published in 1984, while the second female-led *Catwoman* (Pitof, 2004) was published in 2004. It took 20 years for another female-led movie to be released, while DC was continuously producing other male-led superhero movie series such as those featuring *Superman* and *Batman.* However, in the last decade, the release of *Wonder Woman* (Jenkins, 2017), was the first release of superhero movies featuring female characters ever since the last publication of *Catwoman* (Pitof, 2004). Since the release of *Wonder Woman* (Jenkins, 2017), its sequel *Wonder Woman 1984* (Jenkins, 2020) was released three years after its initial release. Another female-led superhero movie *Black Widow*

(Shortland, 2021), though it will be released on screen in 2021, was also being produced in the year of 2019 and 2020. These have shown the increasing trend in the last decade, in which the movie industry is putting more emphasis on female-led characters, producing movies that are based on their character stories, where female characters are no longer only taking up supporting roles in other male-led superhero movies. Apart from their growing dominance in movies' production, female-led characters are demonstrating more leadership and dominance through their character developments. Instead of only taking part as supporting roles, just as what Pepper Potts is being depicted in *Iron Man* (Favreau, 2008), where she is a personal assistant to Tony Stark or Lois Lane in *Superman Returns* (Singer, 2006), where she is only a supporting role of being a reporter, in the last decade, female characters are presented as leaders or maestros in superhero movies, leading other characters through missions. In *Iron Man II* (Favreau, 2010), Tony Stark has appointed Pepper Potts as the CEO of his company, where she has the opportunity to showcase her leadership skills. In *Captain America: The First Avenger* (Johnston, 2011), Peggy Carter is depicted as an agent with voicing power towards warfare issues during the Second World War. In *Wonder Woman* (Jenkins, 2017)*,* not only is Diana being the main character of the movie, she is also demonstrated as the leader when she is fighting and guiding the American soldiers through the First World War against the Germans. Shuri, in *Black Panther* (Coogler, 2018), is appointed as the head of Science and Information Exchange, where has the platform to demonstrate her dominance through weapons' designs for Black Panther, and through being the leader in handling the technology and science development of Wakanda. Therefore, in the last decade, no matter female characters are taking up either supporting roles or leading characters under the superhero genre, they are given more opportunities to showcase their leadership capabilities and dominance through characters settings, and with the release and production of more female-led superhero movies, theses are reflecting a significant change in female representation as compared to those released before the last decade.

The Changes in Male Character Portrayals in the Last Decade

In superhero movies of the last decade, there have been some significant changes in the male characters, especially in superhero roles, where their character developments

challenge the concept of traditional masculinity with soft boy personalities, by being more expressive in emotions and weaknesses, being more dependent in team businesses, and being more family-oriented. In the following, these breakthroughs in stereotypes as seen in the last decade will be discussed by comparing them with superhero portrayals before the last decade.

A.   The Demonstration of Emotional Complexities

In the following discussion, in terms of emotion development within characters, "traditional masculinity" is being defined as expectations which men should have better control in their emotions than women, in other words, men should be "more alienated from their feelings" (Pleck, 1976). In superhero movies of the earlier decades, male characters are developed as unemotional, where one "does not show emotions" (Ottosson, 2012), in order to maintain their images of being strong not just physically, but also emotionally. Just as the character depiction of Tony Stark in *Iron Man* (Favreau, 2008), where he has a strong emotional defense mechanism that stops him from being emotional towards his experience or people around, which demonstrates his reluctance towards revealing his feelings or emotions to others. In the character depiction of Superman in *Superman Returns* (Singer, 2006), he has been alone in missions as he would not reveal his identity of being Superman to anyone else, and therefore, his emotions and feelings as experienced with his identity of being Superman are also being hidden through his personality. Audiences rarely see Superman or Iron Man's weaknesses, as they are built to be strong and armed with super powers. These have shown how male characters, in order to demonstrate their image of being physically strong and to maintain expectations towards their traditional masculinity, their internal emotions are less developed within movies, especially where audiences could not explicitly experience their internal feelings of being sad or weak at certain defeated times. On the contrary, there has been a rising trend that started from the last decade, especially among celebrities and younger generations where they demonstrated a "soft boy" culture, which basically means "someone who subverts the expectations of masculinity and claims traits that are traditionally coded as feminine" (Strapagiel, 2019). These soft boy personalities have also transformed the character portrayals of superheroes in movies of the last decade, where they are willing and have

the courage to show their emotions, even when such expressions would demonstrate their internal weaknesses to audiences. One illustration that could demonstrate the change in character portrayals in the last decade would be the comparison between *The Flash* (Kurt, 1990) released in 1990 and that released in 2014. In the series published 1990, the Flash is not as sensitive and emotional as that in 2014, showcasing a less vulnerable and stronger character. However, in the character portrayal of *The Flash* (Berlanti, 2014), he is different from what is being seen in the 1990 series, where has the courage to demonstrate his sadness, vulnerability and emotions when he is being defeated through tears. Also, in the character portrayal of Black Panther (Coogler, 2018), it also challenges traditional masculinity in terms of emotional expressions. He has demonstrated his grieving and mourning feelings with complex development in emotions and tears towards his father's death. Furthermore, he is not hiding his emotions and loving feelings towards his mother and sister, where he explicitly demonstrates them through their interactions in movies. Such character portrayals have challenged traditional masculinity by demonstrating the reality that even showing vulnerability or crying through defeats do not necessarily turn men any weaker than before. When comparing back to other superhero characters before the last decade, their complexity of emotional developments are weaker, while the characters from the last decade are more expressive in emotions. Breaking such traditional stereotypes which men are being less emotional, have demonstrated a fuller experience in character development, while being able to maintain their superhero images.

B.   Being Dependent on Their Own Team and Family

Traditionally speaking, two stereotypes that demonstrate the image of men being associated with traditional masculinity are that a man should be independent who "is self-sufficient and does not depend on other people" (Ottosson, 2012). In superhero movies that are released before the last decade, the image of male characters and superheroes are more on their own, often without the physical need and psychological support of a team or family when they are out for missions. Take the character Superman as portrayed in *Superman Returns* (Singer, 2006) as an example, during his fight with Luthor towards the end of the movie, he is fighting against Luthor alone, without the aid or support of a team. In fact, in most movies featuring Superman, not only is he all alone in his battles only

fighting with his superpowers, seldom does he develop his relationship with his family. This character setting of Superman demonstrated the traditional trait of independence in men, where they are not depending on others, not even their family.

However, when it comes to superhero movies of the last decade, the portrayal of superheroes on screen challenges the traditional masculinity trait of being independent, where they have demonstrated their reliance on their team during missions and their need for emotional support from their family. One obvious change in gender representation would be the comparison of *The Flash* (Berlanti, 2014) and that released in 1990. In the character portrayal of the Flash (Kurt, 1990), though Barry is being supported by Dr. Tina Mcgee, she is only responsible for helping him to understand his superpowers, but not assisting him by providing tactics during his fights. He is portrayed as being independent during his missions. However, in the Flash (Berlanti, 2014) as released in 2014, Barry Allen is never alone on battlefield or handling missions. His team, including Cisco Ramon and Caitlin Snow, is always responsible for monitoring his physical conditions and giving him advice and tactics during his fights against other enemies. Not just his teammates, Barry's character has portrayed his reliance on family through his close relationship with his father Joe. Though Joe is not Barry Allen's biological father, he would communicate with Joe whenever he is emotionally unstable or whenever he needs support. These relationship differences have shown a great change in character portrayal within the same superhero in different decades. Similarly, in *Black Panther* (Coogler, 2018), T'Challa values the support and help from his own army- Dora Milaje and also his sister- Shuri, who would assist him on his missions by providing long-distanced support to help him with his fights. Another worth noting trait that challenges the traditional masculinity would be his close relationship and dependence on his parents, where T'Challa values the words and teachings from his parents, and accepts assistance from both his mother and sister with respect. These have shown the differences in character portrayals when compared to those before the last decade, as those in the last decade have challenged the stereotypes of traditional masculinity by portraying the coexistence of both dependence and masculinity. In movies featuring Black Panther or the Flash and other superheroes in the last decade, they have demonstrated that even when male characters are dependent on others and explicitly express their care and need

of their family, they do not pose harm or threats to their image of being superheroes, or weaken their masculine portrayals. Instead, they are reflecting a new kind of masculinity which demonstrates a fuller experience of humanity, which men are also allowed to be dependent at times, breaking the stereotypes on men that lasted for centuries.

The Changes in Gender Representation of the Last Decade to Address Social Demands

The foundation of superheroes' creation are a representation of the American's culture and social trends, to address the need and changes in societies. Their creation and representation have been "linked to American hopes, desires, fears, need and social norm" (Johnson, 2014). Take the creation of Superman in 1938 by Jerry Siegel and Captain America in 1940 created by Jack Kirby and Joe Simon as an example, these Superheroes' creations have "mirrored and molded American social trends and changes" (Johnson, 2014). Superman was created in the period of the Great Depression, while Captain America was created during the Second World War. In both the character portrayal of Superman and Captain America, they are depicted with a savior image, in which their abilities and superpowers are capable of saving and protecting the country through wars, terrorist attacks and injustice. Superman's character personality is set to be heroic and highly moral, while Captain America is portrayed as patriotic, heroic and upholding high morality. The physical strength and masculinity image as portrayed in both Superman and Captain America are a result of "the lack of faith in masculine power in society" (Stevens, 2015). In the times of the Second World War, there was a need for the United States to "encourage young men to join the military" (Johnson, 2014). In response to the war, the representation in gender of Superman and Captain America and other superheroes have laid the focus on the portrayal of strong masculinity within men, especially on the demonstration of physical strength and their patriotic hearts, in order to encourage young men's participation in the second world war. One example of Superman would be the masculine portrayal of him "standing in front of a shield bearing the stars and stripes of the American flag" (Johnson, 2014) in one of his book covers in 1942. These have demonstrated the reason for the need of a strong masculine image in superhero characters, to fulfill the need of society of that

period, to address the need for the entire country to be united and encouragement to the younger generations to be part of the war, representing America, and be a patriot. The same gender representation can be seen in the settings of *Captain America: The First Avenger* (Johnston, 2011)*,* the strong and masculine representation of Captain America helps to remind the victorious history of the United States during the Second World War, and thus, rebuilds the American's faith towards the country, and encourage the patriotism within audiences by reliving the character traits in reality. They are on one hand, representing the desired image of what the United States wanted people to perceive, the image of upholding righteousness, the desire to chase for justice and truth. On the other, such portrayals of characters are also shaping a change in the public by demonstrating personalities on screen. While addressing the need for a strong male image to unite and rebuild Americans' faith towards the country, it is also sending external messages to audiences overseas by demonstrating the values and strength of the United States through superhero movies' production.

However, in the last decade, the rising awareness of the public towards gender equality and the increasing voices among women have definitely posed an impact into changing the gender representation of superheroes movies that are released in the last decade, not just in the American society, but also the entire world. Despite the continuous efforts by the United Nations on promoting gender equality before the last decade, the public recognition was not as effective as that in the last decade, where not just the United Nations, but also celebrities have been giving high awareness to issues regarding gender equality, which includes the traditional stereotypes that are being placed on women, and also gender-related discriminations. The involvement of celebrities did help to raise social awareness and importance on gender issues. In 2010, the United Nations set up UN Women, focusing on gender equality issues to help women around the world. Moreover, with the viral #Metoo and Times Up movement which was started by Hollywood celebrities in 2018, to fight "for gender equity at every level of society" (Time's Up, 2018), and to "increase women's power and influence" (Time's Up, 2018), the significance of women's equality in all aspects and gender representation in the movie industry have been heightened. One significant reason for the introduction of more female-led movies and the increasing significance of other female characters from the last decade would

definitely be the success of *Wonder Woman* (Jenkins, 2017), as released in 2017. DC's Wonder Woman is "seen as the founding female figure in the (superhero) genre" (Curtis, 2018), even though she is not the first ever female leading role in the history of superhero movies. After the initial release of Wonder Woman in cinema, its success is being proven through being "the highest-grossing superhero origin film of all time" (Hughes, 2017) in the box office. This has shown the popularity and demand within the public regarding superhero movies that are featuring women characters. After the great success in *Wonder Woman* (Jenkins, 2017), and in response to the public pressure as to the gender inequality issue since their first launch of *Iron Man* (Favreau, 2008) and their demand for more female hero characters in MCU, Marvel Studios' president Kevin Feige has made a promise where "there will be more female superheroes in the Marvel Cinematic Universe than male characters" (Bacon, 2018). Addressing the public's rising expectations and demands towards the importance of women representations and equality could be seen as another reason for the changes in female representation within the superhero genre in the last decade. Realizing gender equality does also require a change in men's representation and stereotypes, so to encourage men to "embrace aspects of what conventionally go under the rubric of femininity" (Waling, 2019). Therefore, with the rising importance of gender equality and breaking through traditional gender stereotypes, male superhero characters of the last decade have changed to embrace traits that are traditionally considered as feminine.

The change in gender representation of the last decade has shifted from the need to rebuild national confidence and demonstrate American's exceptionalism by creating strong and righteous male superhero characters, to introducing more female superhero characters and breaking through both traditional stereotypes on men and women, to address the social awareness and expectation of gender equality and representation.

Conclusion

To address the societal needs and demand towards gender equality and awareness on gender stereotypes, there have been significant changes in the movie industry of the last decade, which changes the gender representation in both male and female superhero characters. Female characters are no longer solely depicted as victims or romantic roles

to support male superhero characters, instead, their importance in movies have been increased, demonstrating women's abilities in leadership, STEM and warfare intelligence and dominance. On the other hand, male superhero characters have also challenged traditional masculinity, showing their embracement towards traditional feminine traits of being emotional and dependent.

Although there are obvious changes in superhero characters' portrayals in movies of the last decade, more ongoing efforts are needed in order to truly achieve gender equality in our society. In recent years, despite the rising significance of gender equality in our society, women's situation in employment are still experiencing certain difficulties. According to a research done by the Centre for The Study of Women in Television and Films, "the percentage of women working in key behind-the-scenes roles" are only scoring 34%. Similar situations are being seen in the field of STEM and military. In the STEM industry, "under-representation occurs in every region in the world" (Wood, 2020) where women are still the minority. Take the United States' military force as an example, despite the continuous growth in women's involvement, women are still "representing less than a fifth of service members" (Ryan, 2020). These have shown that in reality, women are still fighting their way through gender equality and recognition for their abilities. As said, superhero genre's character portrayals are affected by our societal needs and demands, despite the effort in changing gender representation within movie characters, it is not a simple task to fundamentally alter the thoughts and ideology towards gender stereotypes that have existed in our society for centuries.

The movie industry, indeed, created changes towards gender representation in superhero characters and these would in a sense lead to the change in ideology in the audiences, but perhaps more efforts are needed to fundamentally alter the thoughts and embracement towards gender equality. Back into our society today, women are still the minority in employment of certain aspects that are conventionally considered to be more suitable for men. Therefore, more efforts are required in order to truly achieve gender equality, not just in movie character portrayals, but also in our society as a whole, where both genders could experience the same treatment that breakthrough traditional stereotypes towards men and women.

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Mindfulness in Milton's *Paradise Regained*: An Anatomy of the Second Temptation

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The temptations Milton faced in his life mirror those in the second temptation of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke. Through imitating Christian mindfulness, Milton asserts control over these earthly desires. The second temptation contains four "sub-temptations", which corresponds to four of the most important facets of Milton's life. They include the temptation of wealth, political commitment, Roman empire, classical wisdom, and intellectual fame. By outlining these four sub-temptations, Milton also reflects upon his autobiography. Essentially, Milton is questioning these values that he had been upheld his whole life – values that either he, or Milton Senior, or God deemed virtuous. The latter two pressured Milton to do the right thing – such as performing obligation – throughout his whole life. These authoritative voices all crystalize into one single voice of temptation, which is embodied by Satan in Paradise Regained. Through imitating Christ's mindfulness, Milton systematically scrutinizes everything that is important to him. After these actions have been examined, they are purified from any self-interested motive and only then can Milton re-discover what they mean to him. This includes Milton's vision of being a prophetic poet chosen by God and how he should utilize his poetic abilities to live out his vision.

Milton's meditation on his vision is carried out through Jesus's practice of mindfulness in *Paradise Regained*. The epic's biblical background reveals a long history of mindfulness practice in Christianity: taking inspiration from Matthew 4, Milton expands this short verse into hundreds of lines, describing and dramatizing the psychology of the desert. Mindfulness and the desert are inseparable in Christian doctrines since St John the Baptist. He emerges from the desert as wild and unkempt as a beggar, "clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist", observed St Mark (Mark 1). John has a truly prophetic soul who despises the powers of the world – the very antithesis of desert wonderers – and shares with his master, Jesus, the same habit of challenging authorities.

Similar to John rising from the desert, Jesus also begins his ministry in those wastelands – his first step after being baptised at the hands of John. Therefore, Jesus withdraws right after his baptism to battle Satan, the classic inhabitant of wastelands. Thus, Christianity recognizes that entering the desert is a necessary stage in a spiritual journey. As Peter Tyler noted in his chapter of "The Mindful Psychology of the Desert", desert spirituality is not attained by merely wandering into the physical desert, but is attained by "a dwelling in the inhospitable places within" (Tyler 2). It invites its wanderers to enter a space of loss, pain and grief that is masked by consumerism, violence and greed in our everyday lives. This space full of "passions" and "demons" is documented in detail in the works of the Desert Fathers, a group of Christians who moved to live in the deserts of the Middle East at around AD 312, when the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity and it became the state's religion (Dunn 1). They wrote in *Praktikos* and *Chapters on Prayer* that it is in these uncomfortable places – where we are subject to primitive desires and basic urges – when we refrain from doing the most, that God will reveal himself to us. Furthermore, they also outlined two key principles on how to resist these temptations: stability and silence. The former suggests that when we confront these passions, we should first recognize and observe them. As we continue to reflect upon our own struggles, the Desert Fathers guaranteed that these passions will disappear altogether when the running mind is stabilised, then a state of deep peace and inexpressible joy surfaces (Pratikos 12). The latter is not describing a physical silence, but an internal silencing of the heart. One of the Desert Fathers, Abba Poemen remarked that "A man may seem to be silent, but if his heart is condemning others he is babbling ceaselessly. But there may be another who talks from morning till night and yet he is truly silent; that is, he says nothing that is not profitable" (*Sayings* 27). This type of silence refers not to our muted words, but to a state of attained contentment and purity when we live solely on the word of the Divine in meditative prayer; some even call it "a waste of time with God" (Tyler 2). As we shall observe in *Paradise Regained*, Milton's Jesus utilizes these two principles throughout the second temptation to resist the many kinds of enticements offered by Satan, and these correspond to those Milton faced in his own life. Through practising spiritual mindfulness in the body of Christ, Milton also attempts to stabilise and silence the internal demons that had been haunting him throughout his life and career as a prophetic poet. As Jesus

pronounces his final judgment in the third temptation, a prayer that is "exceedingly fervent and fiery", he unites with the divine – the ultimate end of spiritual mindfulness – and discovers his vocation. Milton's vision of being a prophetic poet is also realized at this point where he serves as a human conduit of divine revelation. Thus, to understand how Christian mindfulness interweaves with Jesus and Milton's journeys of self-discovery, this paper is going to consider each sub-temptation of the second temptation chronologically, starting with the temptation of wealth and conclude with the third temptation.

Milton faces the first sub-temptation of wealth in the 1630s. Satan first tempts Christ with wealth, then hurries Him to *"Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap— "* (Book II, Line 427). Using the same word "get" twice creates a sense of urgency. The pressure is further enhanced with the imperative mood of the sentence. The repeated phrases echo a parent reasoning his child to pursue a more lucrative career. Satan urges Christ to seek riches as he believes that money talks. Christ's road in becoming saviour will be much easier if he had monetary success. This shows that the devil seduces by pretending to think in our shoes. Milton references this kind of parental goodwill to temptation in *Ad Patrem* in 1630s. In the poem, he begs his father *"to stop scorning the sacred Muses: don't think them as worthless or unprofitable."* (Carey 159). Even though Milton Senior has good intentions, they distract his son from becoming a poet, a vocation Milton regarded as divine and free of earthly gains. Similar to Christ's mission, the goal of becoming Saviour cannot be rooted in earthly benefits. Through imitating Christ's mindfulness, Milton resists the lure to "gain a sceptre" and preserves his purity of a perfect poet. Thus, Milton's response to his father is related to Christ's answer to Satan. The answer given by Christ is a state of "needless(ness)" when He rejects Satan's offer of wealth (Book II, Line 484). Not only is this a state of impoverishment, but also a state of peace of mind. One does not see the need for materialistic gains when one's connection to the divine fulfils any earthly desires. Milton imitates Christ's rejection of monetary success and this creates his own peace of mind through his poetry. His genius is the example of God's divinity manifested in human language. Chasing after earthly fame will only taint the purity of poetic arts. Milton once commented that *"Nothing shows our celestial beginnings, our heavenly seed, more clearly"* than poetry (Carey 159). Milton holds a strong belief that the truest form of poetry is divine and unadulterated. A great

poet like himself should produce poetry that celebrates God's goodness as is. Through actively rejecting wealth, Milton preserves his identity as a poet. Moreover, he repays his heavenly father through protecting the beauty of arts itself. He can finally live up to his identity as a poet because he is no longer troubled by desires for earthly wealth.

To Milton, the temptation of wealth has a second layer of meaning, one that is especially problematic because it is more difficult to resist than monetary success. The problem arises from the core of Milton's understanding of his vocation as a poet. On the surface, being a poet is his occupation. On a spiritual level, the significance resides in God's calling Milton to be a great poet. The calling from God came to Milton when he was a young poet. In *The Reason of Church Government*, he outlined that "an inward prompting" motivated him to be a great poet and this intimate experience awakened his poetic aspirations (Hughes 668). This prompting asks two questions that continued to trouble Milton throughout his career as a poet: What is a "calling", and how does one know one has a calling? In *The Reason of Church Government*, Milton tries to answer these two questions with "labour and intent study" (Hughes 668). It is not merely by a miracle that he suddenly becomes a poet, but by a journey of strenuous hard work inspired by God. However, this mindset presents a paradox: Milton could not prove his calling without producing a great work, but he could not produce a great work without feeling inspired by a calling. These two definitions are constantly competing with each other, and this reflects a deep anxiety in the concept of *Calvinist predestination*. Predestination in Calvinism asserted that election does not rest on anything man does, but solely on God (Palmer 33). The passiveness of man connotated in predestination tempted Milton to search for proof of his calling in the second temptation. Having a degree of visible success that is measurable – such as wealth – would reassure Milton that he is indeed chosen by God to be a great poet.

Before *Paradise Regained*, Milton sought this type of reassurance from The Parable of Talents and the Parable of the Vineyard. The former puts an enormous amount of weight on Milton's shoulders. The story warns us of the dangers of postponement and anticipation of profit, and urges us to engage in immediate production. Similarly, Milton had been waiting for a long time for inspiration to write a great work after graduation. The concerns of both fathers were expressed in *Ad Patrem*. In his earthly father's eyes, his son

is sitting in idle while wasting six years of education. His Heavenly Father expected him to use his rhetorical gifts serving the church. The Parable of the Vineyard offers reassurance that the late comer will still be rewarded when he engages in production. Thus, these two parables constitute a vicious cycle: The Parable of Talents provokes anxiety to motivate Milton to engage in production, while the Parable of Vineyard calms him by offering consolation. Satan, thus, tempts with some of Milton's deepest anxieties: as Christ rejects wealth, this action symbolizes that Milton ceases to rely on this type of reassurance – the visible success that comes with money – to confirm his divine vocation.

After looking at some of the foundation questions that troubled Milton since his graduation at the 1630s, we will examine the temptations he faced when he became a poet. In the 1640s, Milton faced the second sub-temptation which is the temptation of political commitment: whether he should apply his literary energies to the Puritan Revolution in the hope of reforming the corrupted state and church. As Milton believes he is indebted to England, he wants to repay his country by being the nation's liberator. Just as Jesus is destined to free Israel from the Romans, Milton too wants to fulfil his "*duty to free/Thy country from her heathen servitude"* (Book III, Lines 175). It is impossible to discuss the temptation of political commitment without considering the political context of Milton's time. The following session is going to consider *Paradise Regained* in relation to the English Revolution during the 1640s and Milton's views on Christ's government. This session aims to show how spiritual inwardness presents a new view of politics and kingship, embodied by Christ in his firm responses to Satan's alluring temptations in the wilderness. The following paragraphs will take inspiration from Quaker texts about religion and politics from the period 1640-60s, together with radical writings from authors such as George Wither, Gerrard Winstanley, Thomas Ellwood and more.

During a time of revolutionary culture, the early Quakers were the largest and most active participating group in social, political, and religious protests. They especially deserve our attention because of Milton's close association with the group in 1660s, when they took refuge in London and neighbouring cities (Marx 112). Although Milton never officially referred to them and their religious beliefs in any of his later pre-Restoration writings, he became closer to the Quakers than any other radical religious communities of that time. One of the most significant persons that Milton shared close ties with was

his Quaker friend Thomas Ellwood, who prompted Milton to write *Paradise Regained*. When Ellwood was imprisoned in Aylesbury prison in 1660s, it was believed that Milton's characterization of Jesus drew inspiration from the stoic attitude of his friend. It is important to consider *Paradise Regained* not only with the works of Milton's associates, but also a wide range of texts from prophetic writers believing in Quakerism, so that we can understand the full picture of the spiritual poem during the radical religious climate of the Restoration and the Interregnum. As Quaker writings generally discuss similar themes as *Paradise Regained*, they are especially insightful when we want to investigate the relationship between mindfulness, politics, and kingship. These themes include the "interiorization of power and kingship, the exhortation and denunciation of temporal authorities, unadorned prophetic speech, great perseverance in the midst of spiritual trials, temptations, and warfare" (Loewenstein 244). These discussions allow us to understand how the inward Jesus remains unmoved towards the temptations of political commitment and Roman Empire.

However, I do not mean to imply that Milton's epic should only be illuminated by one single movement or ideology, such as Quakerism. Milton continued to assert his status as a religious individualist in the later years: he never joined any separate congregation, nor was he converted to Quakerism. Nevertheless, some of his later works raised similar concerns advocated by his Quaker counterparts. In *A Treatise of Civil Power*, Milton emphasises the importance of listening to the guidance by the inward Spirit, the complete refusal of tithes to fund a parochial clergy, the rejection of civil magistrates over religious issues (Kolbrener 101). Thus, this session aims to show that *Paradise Regained* is Milton's reimagining of some of the most fascinating radical religious notions of his time. Milton, too, derives and develops his own variations from these beliefs and instils them with his perspective towards this period of political uncertainty.

he religious climate of trial and temptation was exceptionally intense when *Paradise Regained* was published in 1671. Amidst radical religious groups, the Quakers faced particularly harsh trials and malice at the time of the Interregnum and the Restoration when their faith was continuously tested by worldly authorities. The situation of the Quakers bears a striking resemblance to the adversity faced by Christ. Just like in *Paradise Regained*, their "firm obedience" as a faction and as individual saints, was

"fully tried // through all temptation" (Book I, Lines 4-5). Enduring "various exercises, trials and troubles" mean laborious preparation for a divine vocation for many Quakers (Fox 1). This concept is pervasive in George Fox's *Journal* and is essential to provide solace to Quakers who were imprisoned at that time. For example, Isaac Penington the younger, who was sentenced to prison after listening to Fox's preaching, was a close Quaker friend of Milton. During his imprisonment in 1661, he observed that saints should anticipate "Straits, Wants, Tyrals, Temptations, inward Weaknesses, buffetings from the Enemy… which God seeth necessary to Exercise the Spirits of his with, that he might fit them for himself." (Penington 5). Indeed, Penington demonstrated the same strong vigour as he firmly condemned the Cavaliers because of their exploitation of Friends. His tireless attitude showed the "constant perseverance" (Book I, Line 148) and "Saintly patience" (Book III, Line 93) during the time of the Restoration. Milton's Jesus is characterised by the enduring of trials, practice of patience and suffering. These themes are so central to the poem that they resonate with a different spiritual and emotional energy when we bring the politics of Quakerism into consideration – a religion-driven political movement distinguished by trials, adversity and steadfastness throughout the 1650-60s and beyond.

Therefore, Jesus's memory of his own testing, suffering and dangers would resonate specifically to a more urgent and dire situation in the context of the Restoration. From the early to mid-1660s and 1670-71, Quakers, Baptists and other dissenters would be persecuted by civil governments and religious establishments. The circumstances became more severe with the Clarendon Code, Quaker Act and the Act of Uniformity legislated by the Cavalier Parliament during the 1660s (Dudley 65). Under such repressive laws, dissenters who rejected the customs and power of the Church of England were constantly abused, penalised, fined, imprisoned and prosecuted. When the Conventical Act was enacted in 1670, a year before *Paradise Regained* was published, Marvell remarked that this treatise was the "Quintessence of arbitrary Malice" (Ashton 241). Such strong language indicates that the act was a political weapon targeted at the dissidents who engaged in "the growing and dangerous practices of seditious sectaries and other disloyal persons" (Horle 1). The act encouraged a climate of prosecution against the devout, even though the authorities could not avoid private worship of dissidents. Ellwood commented that it was an "unjust, unequal, unreasonable and unrighteous law . . . was rigorously

prosecuted against the meetings of dissenters in general, though the brunt of the storm fell most sharply on the people called Quakers." (Ellwood 124). Milton's Christ is comparable to one of the divine eyewitnesses who undergoes and tolerates the torment of oppressive authorities. In *Paradise Regained*, Christ expresses the same kind of insights towards his suffering in Book III:

> "What if he hath decreed that I shall first
>
> Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
>
> By tribulations, injuries, insults,
>
> Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
>
> Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
>
> Without distrust or doubt, that He may know
>
> What I can suffer, how obey?" (Book III, Lines 188-194)

There is truly no other radical Puritan group in 1650-60s that endured the same degree of suffering and brutal prosecution as the Quakers. As they relied on the guidance of the Spirit within and defied every kind of worldly power, they introduced a new apostolic approach towards turmoil and temptation. Milton places heavy emphasis on the inward faith and calming expectation exemplified by the messianic hero who quietly bears through his hardship and trials. Similar to the saints who had "come through great Tribulations" are "refined and purified" by that gruelling process (Burrough 462), Jesus's inner strength and faith are fully trialled and proven by the temptations in the wild. In the wilderness of *Paradise Regained*, the inward Christ goes through "just trial" (Book III, 196) and "by merit" (Book I, 166) proves that he is worthy to become the King of Kings.

In Milton's radical Puritan poem, the austere Christ is tried fully by an extensive range of temptations, including the physical, active and contemplative. But as Penington wrote, the saint who bore with "many straits and exercises" was expected not only to withstand physical suffering and resist "open force", but "also (temptations) with enchantments" (Penington 453). This brings our attention to the third sub-temptation of the Roman empire. When Milton faced the temptation of empire – including its associations with courtly success and military glory – during the rise of Oliver Cromwell in the 1650s. This temptation illustrates a more beguiling type of seduction, which includes the temptation of "regal arts, // And regal Mysteries" (Book 3, Lines 248-249). Satan offers

Christil:

> A Table richly spread, in regal mode,
>
> With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort
>
> And savor, Beasts of chase, or Fowl of game,
>
> In pastry built, or from the spit, or boil'd,
>
> Grisamber steam'd… (Book II, Lines 338-344)

Milton also gives the Satanic banquet many political implications. It simulates a feast of a lavish Cavalier or a French court – its attractive meals symbolize riches and privilege – and thus anticipates the epic's later temptations of luxury, regal power, and Roman extravagance. In 1660, Milton spoke out against the "enticements and preferments" presented by the court of Louis XIV, of which they "daily draw away and pervert the Protestant Nobilitie." (Milton 6). These enticements included "the eating and drinking of excessive dainties" and "pompous Delicacies" as put by Christ in *Paradise Regained* when he rejected Satan's banquet. Belial, who represents the spirit associated with "Courts and Chambers" (Book II, Line 183), proposes that Jesus shall be tempted by "amorous Arts and enchanting tongues" (Book II, Line 158). Thus, the essence of cavalier indulgence is not lost on Satan, even though he rejected the proposal by Belial earlier. Unlike Milton's austere Quaker associates – who preferred a simple culture of unadorned language, dress, and artistic styles – such a beguiling and sensual temptation would have a unique aesthetic appeal to the poet of *Paradise Regained*. It evokes some of Milton's poetic ideals, including his immense attraction – still manifested in this grand description – to the language of romance and the world of enchanting sensual pleasures.

Satan's imperial Rome also similarly communicates a sense of decadence when the devil shows Christ the most glorious of "all // The kingdoms of the world" (Book IV, Line 88-89). The splendid architecture of Rome crafted by the "skill of noblest architects" and "hand of famed artificers" communicates the image of visual splendour (Book IV, Lines 33-37, and Lines 44-60), while connotating a temporal power who, as Milton put it in *The Readie and Easie Way*, "can display with such vanitie and ostentation his regal splendour so supereminently" (Milton 3). Milton's critique of regal exhibition from the late tract resembles the allure of "grandeur and majestic show // Of luxury" in *Paradise Regained* (Book IV, Lines 110-11), suggesting that Satan's Roman empire does

mean to depict the extravagance of regal culture during the Restoration. When we consider that Milton was introduced to the plain culture and aesthetic ideals from the Quakers – who also stressed on the importance of architecture without ornamentation extending from speech – Jesus's stern refusal of Satan's exuberant display becomes more pointed. Indeed, Jesus is not conciliated in the face of the kingdoms of the world. In this regard, the Messiah in *Paradise Regained* is different from some of the Quakers in post-revolution England. Even though they disagreed on inherited monarchy, they tolerated regal rule if they can practise their religion freely and thus, many took refuge under the returned Stuart king; some even believed that Charles II is a king of "of sober countenance" (Greaves 240). Therefore, Jesus rejects Satan's "politic maxims" (Book III, Lines 400) all together during the temptation of the Roman empire without giving a complaisant response. Unlike some of Milton's milder Quaker contemporaries who possessed a more moderate attitude: "though after outward power, authority, rule, government or dominion we seek not, not do desire it, yet we despise it not, but do own it in its place." (Furly 54) By presenting the dictator Tiberius as old and committing "foul affronts // (and) Abominations" (Book III, Lines 161-162), Satan persuades Jesus that "with Regal Virtues" (Book IV, Lines 108), he could become the King of the Roman empire with ease, so that he could free his servile people. But Christ's complete refusal of Satan's gift of Rome during the time of Tiberius puts *Paradise Regained* in an antimonarchical culture that is less compromising than Milton's contemporary Quakers. Indeed, Tiberius was singled out and attacked by many who spoke about political resistance against tyranny including John Knox, Christopher Goodman and Milton himself. Their criticism towards such authoritarian rulers was laid out clearly in the highly provocative and radical text *Mene Tekel: The Downfal of Tyranny* in 1663. It illustrates that even though these Antichristian rulers "spend (their) time in wantonness, luxury, prodigality and tyranny", "they (may) endure long, (but) they will not endure alwayes." (Greaves 223). Christ does not only strive to wipe out the gruesome Tiberius and other ostentatious monarchs but to tackle the root of the problem – which is the "Devil who first made him such" (Book IV, Lines 129). Without accepting any of Satan's regal offerings, Jesus targets and eradicates the source of temporal power directly. When seen in relation to the radical political environment of the Restoration, the scornful yet inward responses of Milton's Christ towards the Satanic temptations of regal authority

and Roman empire dramatizes the role of Christ as an anti-monarchist.

Milton's poem further takes a detailed and provocative look into the socio-political aspect of the King of Kings by presenting him as obscure, private and poor. These adjectives about mindfulness particularly connotate an unorthodox view on society and politics in relation to the radical religious culture of the 1600s. Satan mocks Christ as "low of birth" (Book II, Lines 413) because he was "Bred up in poverty and straits at home" (Book IV, Lines 415). As someone who has such humble origins, Jesus barely qualifies as a noble epic hero, let alone a conventional emperor surrounded by regal magnificence, authority and wealth – all indications that Milton described as "regal prodigalite" before the Restoration (Milton 460). Being a carpenter's son, Jesus has never experienced the world's "glory, // Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts" (Book III, Lines 236-237) and it is not probable for him to ascend to the Roman throne and acquire the heights of political power. The epic thus suggests Milton's inward and mindful Saviour as a contrast to models of privilege and epic status. By emphasizing the poor and obscure status of Christ "being tried in a humble state" (Book III, Line 189), the poem also redefines his political ministry as an example showing that mighty meekness can still unsettle "the kings of the earth": Milton believes that "the mystery of his coming (was) by meane things and persons to subdue mighty ones" (Milton 951). Thus, our poet captures the edge of which the humble, yet prophetic Jesus was perceived as a threat by many dictators including Herod. The Messiah condemns Pharisees and dismisses the tyrant by declaring "I cast out devils" (Luke 13:32): hence, "although hee himself were the meekest, and came on earth to be so," as Milton regards, "yet to a Tyrant we hear him not voutsafe an humble word" (Milton 217). Therefore, the radical religious poem itself relates back to "that mysterious work" of Christ stated in *The Reason of Church Government* – someone "by lowlines" can still reach "to confound height" with "the mighty operation of the spirit" (Milton 833).

This portrayal of mighty mindfulness would have a highly symbolic cultural significance for England at the time when radical religious prophets, rulers and authors were particularly conscious of their vocation and social status. Thus, the depiction of the practitioner of mindfulness as humble yet powerful connotates a politicized meaning, which challenges conventional beliefs about social hierarchy, aristocracy and government.

Many saints, like the lowly Jesus, also characterised themselves and their supporters to be "poor, despised, and rejected", "yet Dreadful and Mighty, because the Majesty and Presence of the Lord God is with us, who hath called us, and chosen us", quoting the words of Edward Burrough (Penington 462). God may pick those who are abundant in faith and piety to accomplish his greatest designs, such as unthroning earthly powers. It is not unusual that God "delights to bring about great and mighty things to pass, by very unworthy, and very unlikely Instruments," remarked by a radical preacher commenting on Cromwell's army in the parliament (Cardell 13). Even the most modest individual can have immense value in God's eyes and is fit to be the human conduit of divine revelation. Though these individuals were chosen to effect holy deeds that are "above heroic", they might paradoxically come from a lower social class. Jesus explains this idea through the examples of biblical leaders, such as David, who rises from "lowest poverty" and modest stations to accomplish "highest deeds" and attain important roles:

> "Gideon, and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad
>
> Whose offspring on the throne of Juda sate
>
> So many ages, and shall yet regain
>
> That seat, and reign in Israel without end." (Book II, Lines 438-42)

Like Gideon and Jephtha, the obscure and poor Messiah can also "do mighty things, and could contemn // Riches tough offer'd from the hand of Kings" (Book II, Lines 448-49). Milton's Jesus then challenges the convention that heroic political rulers have to be aristocratic, as well as the concept that kingly power is associated with honour, wealth and nobility. The notion of a prophetic leader as someone who possesses rustic and georgic qualities – humble in external image and vocation but mighty in the power of God – presents a social and religious culture that is both unconventional and subversive. Therefore, through *Paradise Regained* and its meek yet prophetic Jesus, Milton too questions the presuppositions, symbols and language of worldly authority, hegemony and monarchy.

When Christ meditates on his vocation on earth, which includes his political role: "To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke; // Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the earth, // Brute violence and proud tyrannic power, // Till truth were freed, and equity restored:" (Book I, Lines 217-220). Rather than opting for military revolution by arms to liberate a

country, Jesus chose a "more humane, more heavenly" means, which is to employ "winning words to conquer willing hearts, // And make persuasion do the work of fear" (Book I, Line 174). This way, Jesus differs from a traditional epic hero who aspires to "victorious deeds" and "heroic acts" (Book II, Lines 15-16). Considering the immediate religious and political situation of *Paradise Regained*, He also diverges from the extremist military radicals – the Fifth Monarchists – whom Milton disdained in *The Readie and Easie Way*. In the 1650-1660s, the Fifth Monarchists believed that the Second Coming of Jesus would trigger a series of violent revolution in society, with saints and prophets seizing state and military power (Milton 12). These worldly kings, whom Milton's Jesus scorns, would only perish. The radical religious movements sparked by the Fifth Monarchists resulted in many arrests and persecution of quakers including Thomas Ellwood. Indeed, Ellwood mocked that these authoritarians "little understood the nature of His kingdom, though He Himself had declared it was not of this world." (Ellwood 55). Many quakers also stressed the nature of God's kingdom was one of mindful inwardness, that Jesus's weapons in the battle against the world were spiritual, "not carnal, yet are they mighty through God to… overturning the foundation of Satans kingdom." (Burrough 29). Seeing how Christ resists the temptation of the Roman Empire, Milton also discovers that there are alternate powerful weapons other than those of military uprising to overthrow worldly monarchs – the quelling power of God's word – can topple the kingdoms of the earth.

In conclusion, when we observe his poem through the dimensions of spiritual interiority, Milton redefines the nature of politics and kingship. The epic does not only repudiate secular kingship; it also brings kingship and authority inward. Milton redefines them and their contemporary connotations in relation to a spiritual kingdom of the mind. Jesus's aim rests with a completely different idea of kingship – a mindful ruler who is independent of any worldly "force" (Book II, Lines 477, 479) or external power but rules with the guidance of the inward spirit and an active faith:

> "Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
> Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king—
> Which every wise and virtuous man attains;
> And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
> Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes,

Subject himself to anarchy within,

Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.

But to guide nations in the way of truth

By saving doctrine, and from error lead

To know, and, knowing, worship God aright,

Is yet more kingly…" (Book II, Lines 466-476)

Jesus's sharp answer to Satan's temptation of empire is strikingly similar to the vision of the inward politics in Milton's *Treatise of Civil Power* in 1659: "Christ hath a government of his own… it governs not by outward force… it deals only with the inward man and his actions." (Milton 21). Therefore, through the body of Christ, Milton redefines kingship that is separated from earthly authorities and external forms: the power that Jesus possesses, as he relies mindfully on the navigation from the inner spirit, is internalized and yet ironically "more kingly".

After failing so many attempts to tempt the Son into political glory and Roman empire, Satan nonetheless fails. He then decided to tempt with reverse psychology and appeal to Jesus's mindful inwardness in the fourth sub-temptation of classical wisdom and intellectual fame. Satan portrays Athens as a place of "sweet recess," "studious walks," "studious musing," and "retirement" (Book IV, Lines 242-49): all the wisdom, eloquence and learning that will prepare Jesus to become "a King complete // Within (himself)" (Book IV, Lines 283-84). Through evoking the beauty of Greek poetry, arts and knowledge, Satan stirs some of Milton's deepest intellectual and aesthetic cravings, hence producing an uneasy tension at this moment in the epic. This is undoubtedly the most difficult desire to resist both for Jesus and Milton because it not only reminds them of these intellectual yearnings, but also the pleasures of domestic sphere. Since Jesus has left his mother Mary to begin the search for his vocation in world, Satan connects the familiarity of home with classical literature to tempt Jesus into a space of warmth and comfort: "*These here revolve, or, as thou likest, at home,*" (Book IV, Line 281). The use of the word "revolve" is particularly shrewd because Christ uses the exact same word to describe how he felt towards Mary's "growing thoughts" about his vocation before he sets off to the journey (Book I, Line 227). Thus, Satan's temptation of classical wisdom reminds Jesus of the heartwarming teachings from his mother. Milton also finds it difficult

to resist this kind of motherly affection when the origins of classical literature – Athens, the "mother of arts // And Eloquence" (Book IV, Line 240-41) – possesses every possible kind of learning that Milton has pursued since his studious retirement after college. Once again, the word "revolve" recalls Milton's most private and personal memories: that he could indulge, read and ponder on these works in his own home. And yet, Jesus remains firm and administers "a sharp and corrosive sentence":

> "Deep-versed in books and shallow in himself,
>
> Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
>
> And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge,
>
> As children gathering pebbles on the shore." (Book IV, Lines 327-330)

Jesus dismisses all secular learning as mere toys fit for children, which has the same ring to Milton Senior accusing Milton of childishness. When Christ resists pagan culture, Milton too resists the maternal inheritance that is associated with literary Athens. As the Son has to display sole perfect obedience to the Father, thereby he must resist the symbolism of motherhood related to classical fame and wisdom. The Son's rejection of the classical literature also parallels Milton's own as he writes *Paradise Regained*. The lack of classical references is an important dimension of Jesus's contentious responses to Satan's third and final temptation, including the paternal test of perfect obedience.

Milton realizes his calling at the same moment when Christ realizes His in the final temptation. The climactic movement arrives when Satan challenges Christ to cast Himself down from the temple. This moment is similar to the climactic moment of Satan's fall from heaven in *Paradise Lost*. It is parodied and re-staged to emphasise Christ's realisation, through mindfulness, of his identity. In *Paradise Lost*, by flaunting his skills in poetic display, Milton is communicating to his Heavenly and earthly father that his literary gifts did not go to waste. He is also responding to the Parable of Talents by producing a great work and not simply waiting for inspiration from God. Thus, the battle between Satan and the Son in *Paradise Lost* is not only a battle between two divinities, but also an internal battle between Milton and his anxieties towards production. The Son's victory is similar to that of a heroic epic. Milton creates a vivid image of Zeus when the Son struck his foes with "ten thousand Thunders" (Book VI, Line 5). The Son not only wields a powerful weapon, but his omnipotence is highlighted with the defeat of

his enemies. They suggest that revolting against Heaven is futile and the Son's triumph is inevitable. His win is brought to life through Milton's language. Milton's language is also the medium of and end to his own internal battle. He repays his earthly father by utilising his gifts to write a great epic, while pleasing his Heavenly Father by producing something worthy of divine creation. Thus, Milton also triumphs over his struggle of production when writing *Paradise Lost*.

However, the same kind of poetic display is nowhere to be found in *Paradise Regained*. Milton's writing style became less grand in the later course of his life. This change can be observed from the image of Christ. In hindsight, the Son does not have the same vigour as the Son in *Paradise Lost.* There is no description of the Son's appearance, nor is there any trace of his strength or power. Milton only uses few adjectives such as "meek" and "sage" to illustrate the humility of Christ (Book IV, Line 285). These adjectives connote a humble human being, rather than an almighty hero or warrior. At the third temptation – supposedly the same epic moment when the Son casts Satan out of Heaven in *Paradise Lost* – there is no trace of any physical action. It is concluded with only one sentence, *"To whom thus Jesus: "Also it is written, // 'Tempt not the Lord thy God.'"* (Book IV, Lines 559-560). The phrase "To whom thus Jesus" is straightforward, clean and to the point. There is no drama happening outside of the two main characters. Unlike the climax in *Paradise Lost* - where there are many supporting elements showcase how terrible the Fall is. The Son's reaction is now completely free of Milton's imaginative elements. Milton does not interpret, nor create anything new from the verse. He simply quotes a fact, a definitive rule from the Bible. Through the act of quoting, the Son relinquishes the right to pronounce His own judgement. The act of surrendering one's authority and only rely on God's word is especially admirable to Milton because the Son's surrender is the epitome of perfect obedience. When Milton reduces the amount of poetic display, he also surrenders his authority over his poem. However, this does not mean that Milton gives up his authorial claim to *Paradise Regained*. He is practising the highest form of dedication by giving the voice of authority to God willingly – his surrender is not defeat, but liberation and complete contentment. Thus, Milton imitates Christ's perfect obedience by presenting the original, unadulterated version of God's word. It is especially important for Milton to represent the essence of the word at the later stage of

his life. After meditating on his epic, he found that perfect obedience is not characterised by the grandeur showcased by the Son in *Paradise Lost*, but a simple act of submission. Only by refusing poetic action and return to the Word can we focus on God's wisdom. Too many flashy elements will only distract us from the truth. At this point, Milton has also realised that his previous work – which is full of poetic action – has become his own distraction. His epic constitutes a deviation from the original vision of being a poet, where the inspiration should come "… from devout prayer to that eternal spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases." (Hughes 668). Milton references the Old Hebrew prophet Isaiah – that he, too, could write a great work when he was chosen by God. Milton's aspiration was never to write something so full of poetic action that it obscured the truth of God, but to transcribe divine knowledge. Milton strongly believed that it pleased God to choose him to serve as a human conduit for the conveyance of divine knowledge. Thus, he should have willingly submitted his own poetic ability and dedicate it solely to God's command. Ultimately, he should strive to be a passive vehicle through which the Deity transmits His awe-inspiring message. Therefore, Milton also actualizes his own perfect obedience towards God when the mindful Jesus quotes the scripture in the final temptation.

In conclusion, the second temptation from the Gospel of Luke deserves our attention because it is chosen precisely to be the crowning moment of Christian history in *Paradise Regained*. Through Milton's extensive elaboration building upon the biblical verses, we can observe that mindfulness is interwoven with the temptations the poet faced in his life. Mindfulness, to Milton, is not only a response towards these temptations, but also a meditation on his vocation, contemporary politics and kingship. Most importantly, Milton rediscovers what it means to be a great prophetic poet through the practice of resistance and reliance on the mindful spirit within.

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The Hong Kong *Metamorphoses*: Stories of Transformation in Hong Kong Folklores

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1.   Introduction

As stated by Malinowski, "Myth is a vital ingredient of human civilization; it is not an idle tale, but a hard-worked active force; it is not an intellectual or an artistic imagery, but a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom." (100) The study of mythology is undoubtedly important for the understanding of a civilization and the culture of it. However, for Hong Kong mythologies, there are still extremely few studies looking into it through a comparative literature perspective. Since Hong Kong mythology is a relatively uncharted territory in literature, this project aims to shed light on this interesting and niche topic to inspire more people to study the ideology behind Hong Kong folklore.

This paper will focus on the theme of metamorphosis, and the archetype of women who undergo physical transformations in mythologies. Two popular tales in Hong Kong folk stories are selected for this paper, namely the story of the Seven Sisters and the story of Amah Rock, and compare them with, primarily, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and other world mythologies in order to study the theme of transformation in the two stories. A qualitative approach will be used to analyze the texts, and extensive research will be illustrated through the comparison with myths from over the world, including Iran, China, and Ireland.

2.   Literature Review

I.   <u>What is folklore?</u>

The idea of folklore only began to conceptualize in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century (Ben-Amos, 1). The concept of folklore includes "myths, folktales, legends, folksongs, proverbs, riddles, games, dances," and many others (Bronner, 55). Generally, a song, a saying, or a story has to possess the quality of "traditionalism, irrationality, and rurality" in order to be considered as a part of a folklore culture (Ben-Amos, 1). If something has any one of the aforementioned characteristics, it is likely to be considered as a part of local folklore.

Folklore is generally considered to originate from mankind's contact and experience with nature. It is thought to be men's response to the world before the full development of "city, commerce, civilization and culture" (Ben-Amos, 1). Folklore is an "autobiographical ethnography", which means it is humans' description of themselves (Bronner, 55).

Folklore represents a great part of the culture of an early society; it is an expression of people's traditional beliefs and customs. According to Dan Ben-Amos, there are three types of relationship between folklore and its society (26). Firstly, folklore is a possession of the people (Ben-Amos, 26). Folklore is owned by a community, and it is often exclusive to outsiders. However, it is at the same time fragmented within its culture; there is no one member in a culture who can "command all its facets", and therefore it has to rely on the collective effort of a group to preserve and perform the tradition (Ben-Amos, 26). This characteristic is particularly apparent in the ceremonial aspect of folklore, as activities such as festivities and rituals require every member of the group to participate and prolong. Secondly, folklore is a representation of a society's culture (Ben-Amos, 26). Folklore represents "a particular mode of collective and spontaneous thought", as it originates from the conventional, collective modes of primitive human thought which lack individuality (Ben-Amos, 26). According to Joseph Rysan, folklore is a "collective objectification of basic emotions" of humanity, such as fear and desire, compiled by a

social group (10). It exposes the particular thinking patterns of uncivilized men through their reaction towards nature and their interpretation of it. Thirdly, folklore consists of creation and re-creation of a society (Ben-Amos, 26). In folk literature, it is apparent that communal creation and re-creation is involved. For example, folk songs, especially ballads, require the collective contribution of a community to produce and perform (Ben-Amos, 27). The songs are subjected to the continuous rework of its composers and performers after its initial creation, and since folk literature passes on for generations, such reworking is inevitable and an integral part of folk culture.

II. <u>Why do people study folklore and mythologies?</u>

In an interview, renowned British author Neil Gaiman said the reason why he studies and rewrites mythologies is because they teach society about the meanings of "being human" (Serrao). Gaiman described mythology as something "glorious" and "timeless", and he felt a need to retell them (Serrao). The study of folklore and mythology allows people to learn about the culture and tradition, especially oral tradition, of a place prior to its urbanization.

Folklorists are often motivated by the desire to record, preserve and protect their national heritage (Bronner, 56). For example, the Grimm Brothers in the nineteenth century were inspired by their "nationalism and romanticism" to collect folktales and legends in order to establish and understand the German culture and heritage (Bronner, 56). The Grimms then rewrote the folk stories they collected into children's literature, which many nineteenth-century collectors did as well (Bronner, 56).

According to Righter, the theory of myth is also a theory of fictions (86). Although created in different ways, "story", "fiction", and "myth" share more similarities than differences in their nature. By adopting myths, authors are appropriating historic fiction into their own, and thus give significance to their work as a social commentary. Righter raised James Joyce and his reference to The *Odyssey* in his novel *Ulysses* as an example, pointing out that the parallel use of myth in it gives "significance to the immense panorama

of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (34). Therefore, myths serve as a foundation for many great literary works in terms of supporting the construction of plot devices, character building, and adding humanitarian themes in literature.

III.   The Idea of Universal Myth

There is one consensus among folklorists– folklore is universal (Ben-Amos, 3). The existence of folklore itself, of course, is universal. Folklore manifests in various forms, such as folktales, ballads and amulets, in different corners of the world (Ben-Amos, 3). But the universality of folklore is also thematic (Ben-Amos, 3). There are many common thematic elements in folk stories and myths in different cultures, including but not limited to themes, metaphors, and certain archetypes of characters (Ben-Amos, 3). For people who lived in different countries and continents, who spoke entirely different languages, our various folklore cultures share an uncanny degree of similarity for strange reasons which folklorists are still trying to explain.

It is not uncommon to see the same narrative and verbal or visual images appear in different cultures' folklore, but it is nonetheless striking when one realizes the parallels.

According to McGonagill, common themes in folklore include tales about family and gender relationships, such as the infamous archetype "wicked stepmothers". Heroic, magical events and figures are also popular, such as the archetype of "tricksters" and the focus of this paper, the mystic event "Metamorphoses" (4).

IV.   Stories of metamorphoses and shapeshifting around the world

Shapeshifting, or metamorphosis, is a ubiquitous trope in world mythology. Stories about physical transformations, or mythological creatures that can perform shapeshifting, are very popular and well known in both the East and the West.

In Greco-Roman culture, there are countless stories about transformation in

physical form; one of the most significant pieces in Greco-Roman classical literature would be Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which the whole narrative poem is centred around the idea of transformation through magic and miracles. Atalanta in *Metamorphoses* is turned into a lion as a punishment after she offends a temple dedicated to Cybele. Homer's The Odyssey is another well-known text in Greek mythology; in one of its most memorable scenes the enchantress Circe transforms Odysseus' men into pigs. In Greek literature, transformation can be both a punishment or a gift; for example, in accordance to *Metamorphoses*' narrative, after Medusa is raped by Perseus, Medusa's hair is transformed by Athena which she can use the power to turn intruders into stones, as a way for her to protect herself.

In other European cultures, such as Celtic mythology, the idea of transformation is also very prevalent, especially in female characters. In the Celtic and Scottish tradition, there are many tales about the mythological creatures Selkie, which are mermaids that have seal-skin. Selkies can remove their skin and turn into human form, to spend time on land. In typical folktales about Selkies, they are often under the predatory eye of human men, in which fishermen would steal and hide the Selkie's skin in order to trap them on land and claim them as wives.

In Asian culture, the ability of transformation seems to take on a much less passive form. In East Asian countries, there are various stories about different ghost spirits that have the ability to take on different human forms and threaten human beings. The idea of fox spirits, which can change their appearance into attractive women to seduce men can be seen in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean mythology. In Chinese culture, such spirit is called *huli jing*; meanwhile, in Japanese and Korean culture, they are referred to as *kitsune* and *kumiho* respectively.

It is apparent that the idea of transformation is intriguing to many different cultures in the world, and this theme will be the main focus in this paper; stories from Hong Kong that have a similar streak will be analyzed while compared to similar stories from other cultures.

V. The modernity of myths

Stories about mythologies, magic and folklore are very popular among contemporary novelists in the current world. Neil Gaiman, Madeline Miller and Margaret Atwood are all avid modern authors who are dedicated to the recording, interpreting, and rewriting of ancient folk stories and mythologies. Gaiman has written his own account of *Norse Mythology* in 2017, and his personal literary works, such as *The Sandman*, are also heavily influenced by mythologies and folktales from different cultures. The American novelist Madeline Miller has earned her cult following among young adult readers after the publication of her rewrite of Homer's *The Iliad, The Song of Achilles*. Her interpretation of *The Iliad* with a contemporary, homoromantic narrative proves to be widely accepted and celebrated by modern readers. The Canadian author Margaret Atwood has also written *The Penelopiad* in 2005, which is a rewrite of the story of Homer's *The Odyssey* from the wife Penelope's perspective.

While the popularity of mythology in contemporary literature is undeniable, one must question the reason behind its allure. What is in it that intrigues readers? How do people relate to these ancient stories in the modern world? And most importantly, can this trend replicate in Hong Kong as well?

3. **Research Questions**
   I. What are the similarities between the Hong Kong folk stories, the story of the Seven Sisters and the story of Amah Rock, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*?
  II. What is the significance of the transformation motif in Hong Kong folk stories and world mythology?
 III. How does Hong Kong folk literature relate to Hong Kong's history?
  IV. How are women portrayed in Hong Kong folk stories? What does it reflect?
   V. What is the importance of studying Hong Kong folk literature?

4.   Methodology

This paper will focus on the theme of metamorphosis, and the archetypes of women who undergo physical transformations in mythologies. I have selected two popular tales in Hong Kong folk stories, the story of the Seven Sisters and the story of Amah Rock, to compare them with, primarily, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in order to study the theme of transformation in the two stories.

Overall, this paper will take a qualitative approach to search for the connection between Hong Kong folk stories and other cultures' folk literature, and also understand the importance and perception on the study of folklore in Hong Kong. According to Dan Ben-Amos' book *Folklore Concepts: Histories and Critiques*, there are four main scholarly paths to study folklore (41). They are namely, thematic, holistic, archetypal, and functional approaches.

In the thematic approach, folklore is examined and analyzed by their themes, and it can be classified into genres such as legends, *märchen* (fairy-tales), fables and proverbs (Ben-Amos, 41). This approach helps folklorists to classify tradition and compare folklore from different cultures. Meanwhile, the holistic approach aims to find structure and connection within a folklore culture (Ben-Amos, 42). It illustrates how different elements in folklore relate to one other and "constitute distinct fields of actions" (Ben-Amos, 42). The archetypal approach taps onto the idea of "universal myth", in which it focuses on folklore's structural patterns, social usages and content (Ben-Amos, 46). Lastly, the functional approach focuses on the relationship between the forms of folklore and a society's existing "cultural, psychological, and social needs" (Ben-Amos, 47). This path evaluates the social function of folklore and bases itself on the perception and identity of the society which the folklore belongs to (Ben-Amos, 47).

In this research paper, the analysis will mainly take the archetypal approach, as it aims to identify and analyze the similarities between Hong Kong folk literature and mythologies from other places.

Besides the regular analysis and literature review, interviews and field research are

also carried out to give this paper a more comprehensive view of Hong Kong's folklore culture and a genuine reflection on the study of folklore and Hong Kong culture.

Two separate sets of interviews were carried out, with Dr. Kirsten Lamb from the English Language Department of Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Mr. Ding and Mr. Chan, who are Hong Kong residents and visitors of Amah Rock. The interview with Dr. Lamb aims to understand her view on the two Hong Kong myths, whereas the interviews with Hong Kong locals aim to investigate the popularity and oral tradition prospect of the two myths in Hong Kong society.

5.   Analysis

I. <u>Two stories of shapeshifting in Hong Kong folktales</u>

The quest for an authentic, detailed English record of Hong Kong folk stories is a challenging one. In the first place, records of Hong Kong folk stories are rare; to find English versions of them proved to be a herculean task– even travel books rarely cover these stories. Fortunately, they have not entirely vanished from the library.

For this paper, the two stories that are chosen are on the more popular side, as they are both closely related to Hong Kong landmarks. The Tsat Tsz Mui Road (七姐妹道) in North Point is said to be named after the story of the seven sisters (Sze, 21). Meanwhile, the Amah Rock is a popular hiking destination for Hongkongers on the Lion Rock Mountain. Therefore, these two stories that are picked for this study of metamorphoses are already relatively well-recorded in books compared to other Hong Kong folk stories.

After research, the most comprehensive record of the story of the seven sisters one can find is in Dung Kai-Cheung's *Atlas: The Archaeology of an Imaginary City*. He included two different versions of this story in the Tsat Tsz Mui Road chapter, in which the more well-known version is quoted below,

> "Once there were seven girls who were inseparable: they thought alike, they
> looked alike, and they loved one another dearly. They decided to make a vow

to become sworn sisters and always "dress their own hair." ...It came about that the third sister committed suicide by throwing herself into the sea in order to avoid an enforced marriage arranged by her parents. Honouring their pledge that 'though not born on the same day, month, or year, they would die on the same day, month and year," the remaining sisters also threw themselves into the sea... It was (also) said that their bodies were never found, and the next day a reef appeared at the place where they had drowned, resembling seven sisters holding hands and standing in a row from the tallest to the shortest." (Dung, 94-95)

In the other version of the story cited in *Atlas*, the sisters vow to be wed on the same day instead, and they are arranged to marry seven brothers (Dung, 95). However, the third sister "fail(s) to bleed" on the wedding night, and thus infuriates her groom (Dung, 95). The third sister throws herself into the sea, unable to live with her husband's suspicions and disgust (Dung, 95). The remaining sisters follow suit (Dung, 95). In this version of the story, the reef represented the brothers who turned into rock as they looked into the sea searching for their wives (Dung, 95).

In Sze's *A Comprehensive Guide of Hong Kong Urban Legends*, the seven sisters story has another spin; this version describes a foreign gang of men who invade the village where the seven sisters live in, and want to rape the sisters (Sze, 22). The seven sisters try to run away, but find themselves at a dead-end by the sea. Hopelessly, they throw themselves into the sea together and turn into the reef (Sze, 22). Seven days later, the gang is found dead under mysterious circumstances (Sze, 22).

From the three versions of the story, one can already identify several of the key elements of the seven sisters story. Although the sisters face disparate challenges in different versions, the plot follows a similar pattern of the sisters encountering patriarchal oppression and sexual persecution, commit suicide by the sea, and transform into stone. There is also significant binary opposition in the story between the men and women, parents and children. The authority of male and parental figures are stressed on and contrasted with the weaker, passive daughters; the traditionally authoritative side is framed as the

antagonizers and oppressors in this narrative.

Surprisingly, the Amah Rock story was harder to search for in books. Perhaps it is due to how common it is, that one did not feel the need to record it down. After countless searches, an English retelling of the story was ultimately found on the Hong Kong Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department's website:

"Amah Rock is a small knoll above Hung Mui Kuk in Shatin. Rising about 200 metres above the sea, this unusual rock is linked to a moving tale. A farmer left his wife and new-born son reluctantly to seek livelihood across the seas. Longing for her husband's return, the wife climbed up the hill everyday to look anxiously into the distance. Regrettably her husband never came back, for he had met with a fatal accident at sea. Hopeless and helpless, the young woman stood atop the hill day after day, until the gods showed pity and turned her into a rock statue to keep watch over the bay." (Hong Kong Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department)

In *Lost Tales* written by Hong Kong folklorist Chow Shu-Kai, the story told is largely similar with added details such as the age of the wife, which is nineteen, and her childhood as an orphan raised by her future husband's family (70). It was also stated that the wife is of Hakka origin (Chow, 69).

The book *Hong Kong Handtales*, which was published in 1982 and commonly referenced by journals related to Hong Kong folklores, has provided a much more comprehensive and dramatic retelling of the story. In *Hong Kong Handtales*, the wife is given a name, Lady Sek– which means stone in Cantonese (Chun, 39). Lady Sek is described to be "fierce" and "unapproachable" (Chun, 39); in this version, Lady Sek also has two children, and she would bring her children up to the mountain in her arms every day to wait for her husband. This description echoes to the form of the actual rock, which resembles a woman holding a child in her arms.

The story of Amah rock remains relatively consistent throughout different versions, about a lady who waits for her husband to return from the sea and ultimately turns into stone after ages of waiting. It is apparent that this story is celebrating the traditional virtue of faithfulness (忠) and fidelity (貞), which is often attributed to women.

I. <u>Similarities with stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*</u>

To begin with, thematic similarities between these two Hong Kong folk stories and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* can be immediately discerned.

The first similarity is how in these stories, women transform into inanimate objects out of fear, grief or as a means of escape. Much like the story of Apollo and Daphne in *Metamorphoses*, the story of the seven sisters revolves around the escape from the unwanted courtship of men. In the book of *Metamorphoses*, Apollo falls for Daphne's beauty and wishes to marry her. Daphne is unwilling, however, and she prays to the god of the sea. As a result, she is turned into a laurel tree by the gods to avoid the marriage with Apollo. This story parallels the seven sister's story, as both the seven sisters and Daphne attempt to escape from courtship, and ultimately experience a transformation which leaves them untouchable yet immobile. Although they attempt to run away from the traditional cage named marriage, by successfully escaping they still surrender their freedom through their metamorphosis.

The story of Athamas and Ino from *Metamorphoses* also bears striking similarities with the two Hong Kong folk stories. In the Greek myth, Ino attempts to escape from her husband, Athamas, who attempts to murder her under magical influence; out of grief for her dead son and fear for her own life, Ino throws herself into the sea. Her maids who follow her also turn into stone by the shore out of grief. In the story of Ino, two major similarities with the two Hong Kong myths can be identified. Similar to the story of the seven sisters, Ino runs away from the threat of men and jumps into the sea. The story also features a transformation into stone prompted by grief, which resembles the story of Amah Rock.

It is very interesting that in these stories, in order to seek freedom or out of longing for things that they want, women are turned into inanimate objects and die from this desire. The way women in these stories are turned into resilient and enduring natural objects is incredibly cruel and ironic– while it attests to the fortitude of their character, unyielding and dignified, they remain immobile and static. This almost resembles a kind of punishment for the hunger for freedom and love; perhaps in a way, it is hinted that in a traditional society, women are bound to be trapped and immobile no matter how much they change.

II. <u>Earth and Sea as motifs</u>

One particularly significant motif in the aforementioned myths, is the sea. When women in these stories are seeking refuge, all of them run towards water. What is remarkable in this is the sea often serves as this masculine symbol and the earth as a feminine symbol in many cultures. In Greek mythology, the sea god is the male deity Poseidon whereas the goddess of earth and agriculture is Demeter. In Hong Kong and Macau culture, Tam Kung is the sea deity worshipped by many (Chinese Temples Committee). Originated in Huizhou, Tam Kung is a young male figure who can command rain and forecast weather (Chinese Temples Committee). Meanwhile, the greatest earth deity in Chinese folklore is Houtu, the "Queen of the Earth" (Yang, 135).

In the interview, Dr Kirsten Lamb attributes this connection between women and the earth to the "volatile" yet "nuturing" female sex. On one hand, mythology often features a nurturing mother figure which parallels the agricultural and life-giving side of the earth, and on the other hand these goddesses, such as Demeter, also have a volatile side that echoes to the unpredictable, volatile catastrophes on earth. Meanwhile, the sea owns a streak of traditional masculinity; it is powerful and potentially disastrous. Much like the moody, bad-tempered Poseidon, the sea has the characteristic of being unpredictable and dangerous. Unlike rivers and lakes, one cannot drink or irrigate with seawater. It lacks the life-giving and nourishing qualities of the earth from the perspective of a primitive

agricultural society. Thus, the sea is placed as the polar opposite of the earth and its nurturing femininity.

How women in these stories run to the sea in order to escape from other men perhaps suggests that there is no way for women to run away from the patriarchy, or that ultimately women have to rely on the help of men in a rural society to achieve a relative degree of freedom and security.

I. Feminine grief in relation to stones

Reading into these stories, perhaps one may wonder, why do the seven sisters and Lady Sek turn into stones instead of other objects? When compared to myths from other cultures, one may identify that stones are closely related to the idea of female grief in many societies.

The allegory of Patience is a popular figure in Europe in the Renaissance period (Inferno). Commonly depicted as a burdened young woman, the iconography of Patience adorns many tombstones as stone statues (Inferno). In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare relates to this allegory, "She sat like patience on a monument, // Smiling at grief" (2, 4, 113-114), which shows how widely known this female stone figure is in relation to the experience of grief and pain.

In Persian mythology, the patience stone (*syngue sabour*) is also a myth related to pain and suffering (King). This stone in the myth is a magical black stone that receives the problems of people who confide in it, and when it has absorbed all the pain of a person, the stone will shatter and set the individual free from their woes (King). For oppressed women in Middle Eastern cultures, the patience stone is a tale that passed through generations to help them "[seek] an outlet in marriages and patriarchal relationships" (Beesley). From this, it is apparent that stone is a universal subject that symbolizes the grief and pain of women.

In the interview, Dr Kirsten Lamb explained the female transformation into stones in the two Hong Kong myths as a manifestation of their stoic devotion and commitment. This steadfast devotion echoes to the perseverance of stones; created under strong pressure and heat, stones are perceived as a symbol of persistence and eternity, as seen in the Chinese idiom "till the sea dries and stone decays (海枯石爛)", which means "till forever". At the same time, a stone is solemn, still and quiet. For a woman in a traditional, patriarchal society, pain is often unspeakable and indescribable, due to women's lack of access to education and how they are silenced by conventions. Reflected by Cordelia's line in *King Lear*, "Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave // My heart into my mouth" (Shakespeare, 1:1:91-92), there are many situations when women are unable to express themselves, especially their pain, freely in real life or in literature. The silent and ineffable grief a woman experiences, in reaction to society's injustice and oppression, manifests into quiet, static stones in mythology and literature.

I. Postcolonial and Localist Sentiment in Hong Kong Folk stories

Apart from the similarities between Hong Kong myths and Greek myths, there is one distinct feature in Hong Kong myths, which is a strong postcolonial, localist sentiment. In the two stories picked for this paper, readers can identify a prominent localist attitude which is against foreign invaders and rejection of colonial subjugation.

In multiple accounts of the story of the seven sisters, there are descriptions of men foreign to the village who wish to forcefully marry the sisters. For example, from *A Comprehensive Guide of Hong Kong Urban Legends*, the invaders of the North Point village attempt to rape the sisters and the sisters, who are not strong enough to fight back, throws themselves into the sea to preserve their dignity (Sze, 22). Under this narrative, the seven sisters are framed as a defender of local values, tradition, and stability. This reflects an anti-colonial attitude of fighting against foreign and aggressive forces. In addition, as previously stated, the traditionally authoritative figure of men and parents is framed as the oppressors and antagonists towards the seven sisters as daughters in the story's narrative. This can also be seen as an allegory for the power dynamic between the rulers

of Hong Kong and Hong Kong itself as a subordinate state, as Hongkongers often have little liberty in self-determination under the intervention of the city's mother-state, the autocratic parental figure, and the city's coloniser, the masculine and aggressive figure.

Meanwhile, the story of Amah rock contains a voice of despair of involuntary diaspora and yearning. My interviewee Mr. Ding related the story of the Amah rock to the experience of Hakka people in Hong Kong back in the 1800s and 1900s, in which the Hakka population in Hong Kong were known for becoming sailors or miners overseas to provide for their family. This statement regarding the characters' origin is also supported by Chow's research in *Lost Tales* (69). Many Hakka men during that time period would sail out to other places such as Taiwan, India or America to search for jobs, even if they are subjected to poor working conditions (Constable). In this way, the story of the Amah rock is a reflection on the society at that time. It is a metaphoric record about how people in Hong Kong were exploited overseas as cheap labour with poor living conditions, how it was easy for them to never go home, and the grief and yearning experienced by their family. Such record on their displacement is not easily seen in other mediums, due to the diminished sense of Hakka identity in Hong Kong (Constable). Therefore, in the modern days, this marginalised and obscure history of Hakka people in Hong Kong could only be recovered through the oral tradition of myth.

These Hong Kong stories are young, of course, compared to Greek or Chinese mythologies, but such youthfulness also gave Hong Kong myths a unique aspect which can be studied alongside other Asian cultures and marginalised groups.

I. <u>Why Study Hong Kong Myths?</u>

Under a strained political climate, many Hongkongers are starting to search for an anchor to ground their own identity and develop a new sense of belonging. However, what is Hong Kong culture at heart? It would seem that the past Lion Rock Spirit, which praises humble diligence and obedience, is no longer applicable for modern Hongkongers who yearn for spiritual liberty and fulfilment. What truly embodies the collective Hong

Kong spirit, not written by the elites and ruling class of Hong Kong, but by the ordinary people? This question might only be answered if we dig deep into the rarely documented oral traditions of Hong Kong, and look into the myths that sustained through generations. German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote, "Man today, stripped of myth, stands famished among all his pasts and must dig frantically for roots… What does our great historical hunger signify… if not the loss of myth, of a mythic home, the mythic womb?"(Grottanelli, 3) In this vein, our hunger for cultural identity can only be satisfied through a reconnection with our roots and traditions.

Through the study of Hong Kong myths, one can glimpse into the old Hong Kong streets and neighbourhood before gentrification. The current Tzat Tze Mui Road (Seven Sisters Road) once marked the shoreline for Hong Kong Island East; the view Amah Rock once overlooked was the Tide Cove of Sha Tin. Based on these folk stories, one can restore the natural landscape of Hong Kong and reclaim the rural history of this current metropolis.

6.   Conclusion

When I was doing my street interview, a very interesting and inspiring conversation occurred. Mr. Chan, one of my interviewees I met on the Lion Rock, said he does not think local myths are something that ought to be studied by the new Hong Kong generation nowadays. While he said he does not see it as an integral part of the Hong Kong identity, he added that these stories are something that is bound to be passed on to the next generation; people will tell these stories to their sons and daughters as bedtime stories, and it is inevitable for these stories to come up in conversations. I thought this remark is particularly romantic, because it highlights the oral tradition element in folklore and it is this nature of folklore that makes it timeless in the future, that a community is able to continue legacies without a conscious effort. The stories are consistently reinvented and refined through time and continue to relate to the modern readers.

Literature and culture are co-dependent, and in a world that needs hope and assurance, myth is an important aspect to study, much like how Willian Righter wrote in his book *Myth and Literature*, myth presents a "concrete possibility" in the face of "ultimate

questions to which we have no answers [to]" (94). Through myths, the unreasonable, illogical part of human experience is "illuminated [and] made intelligible". In the midst of a global catastrophe, perhaps many can find consolation from the innocence and nuanced symbolism in ancient mythology, and reignite the fire of hope in us when we turn back and face the real world.

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Appendix I
Interview Transcript with Dr. Kirsten Lamb

E: Emilia Wong K: Dr. Kirsten Lamb

E: (Hi. I've started recording.) Again thanks for being here today and well, let's start with the more general questions? So what do you think inspired you to start, well, learning about mythology and folktales?

00:24

K: Firstly, (it was) a very basic answer was I had these opportunities to teach myths and it became an opportunity to read myths more from the perspective of teaching and so it became a more, I suppose ,intentional approach to sort of learn myths in that sense. But before then, I found that I had an interest in myths because of the very rich capacities of stories. They seem to take you into all different directions, not only in meaning but myths of course can also be translated and retold in so many different ways. I mean, in terms of storytelling they seem to be unending and just sort of this massive wealth of stories that I feel that I've just barely scratched the surface of. (So Yeah.)

E: Indeed.

1:44

E: There have certainly been a lot of films (well, um) and novel adaptations and reinventions of different mythologies, and they are (well) incredibly popular. I would say, among young people, especially European mythologies are very popular right now and has been for the past ten years perhaps . What do you think is the significance of studying it? (Like,) Do you think it's important? Or do you think well, something you simply did out of your own interests?

2:25

K: Yeah. That's a good question. Yeah, absolutely. There has been this real, I suppose, trend hasn't there, of the European myth, perhaps especially Greek and Norse right?

E: Yeah!

2:49

K: Yeah, and I have been thinking about that and I think you know, so much has to do with the way in which these myths are retold and made popular. They translate very well to cinema, for example. They're very dramatic, you've got wonderful monsters. And just sort of wonderful opportunities for special effects to show themselves off. But on the other side, these are usually heroes stories and I think they reflect (I think) our current love of stories where the individual someow triumphs over a great enemy and I think we just sort of can't get enough of those stories. But you know in general, just to answer the second part of your question, that myths are enduringly significant and important because they are not just about the individual. It's because they actually are these attempts to answer that involve all of us. Those big questions. So myths are meta-narratives, (you know), they're big stories. They ask those questions about who we are, where we came from, and what our purpose is, and why we suffer. This is the structure of that Gods (Behaving Badly) course that we took together.

4:29

E: Yes.

K: Also, how do we solve these problems? And myths never really give us the answer, but they give us a way of answering these questions. So I think because we are always in a sense, in this posture, of asking these questions of the world and of ourselves, these stories are always going to be, always going to have a pull for us, and they're always going to capture us in some sort of way.

5:01

E: Again, first of all, thank you for your answer. Let's move forward to the two texts that I've sent you previously. Those are really short stories indeed, but upon first reading, do these stories remind you of any myths from any stories, from other cultures?

5:35

K: Yeah. You know when I first read that question, it stumped me a bit, Emilia. And I thought, well, they're not initially, to be very honest. I couldn't think of any that jumped out to me, I do recall in an odd sort of reverse comparison, there is that theme from the Greek myth where, the Greek Flood myth where Deucalion and Pyrrha are the only two human beings left alone. Two pious human beings. And they, as they're descending the mountains, they throw these stones behind them and the stones turn into human beings. So that sort of reminded me in a reversed way of the myth, the story of the wife and the child that turned into rock as they devotedly wait for the husband that never returned. So I mean, it is a very vague comparison, Emilia, but a comparison that maybe points to that way in which so many of these myths and folktales are ways of connecting us, I suppose, to their natural world. And maybe even for that local story, giving a human face to the landscape. So you know, when we see that rock we no longer see a rock we see a human being in a rock and somehow that gives a human face to the landscape which I think it's quite an important way for us to make a way for sort of a home in the world. To see ourselves in it.

7:41

E: Yeah! I was up on the mountain this morning, just to go and see the rock. My Arts student legs almost broke but that rock does look like a woman holding a child. It is very interesting. When I was doing my research, I thought to myself the story of the Seven Sisters actually reminds me of the story of Apollo and Daphne. Like how she's running away from Apollo in order to escape this kind of courtship. And just now you also mentioned Greek mythology as well in which, I think we can both

agree that some kind of transformation and shapeshifting is a very important theme in many myths in the world.

8:56

E: The next question would be… I've been quoting this story of the Seven Sisters from Dung Kai-Cheung's Atlas. I'm not sure if you've heard about it but it is mostly about Hong Kong's stories, not necessarily myths. It is about the streets and places of Hong Kong, and he himself has a recount of the story. The author mentioned that the story of the Seven Sisters is being described by many other authors as magical and erotic. Well, what are your comments on this description?

9:46

K: *laughs*

9:48

E: Do you think this story is erotic in any sense? I mean, for myself, hmm, certainly not but ...

10:00

K: Yeah, but that question perplexed me a bit when you asked it and I wondered whether it was one of those cases where things are lost in translation a bit.

10:15

E: Hmmmm.

10:16

K: I mean, that's one of the things that strikes me in myths and myths retelling that so often there are so many different versions or translated versions. In English, so often we don't get a good translation.

10:32

E: Indeed.

10:33

K: So I did wonder whether there was something lost in that, whether the eroticism might be so diluted that you can't even notice it. But other than that, the other thing perhaps they might be referring to is the, obviously, the age of the girls, and something to do with the hair. Although in the translation, that doesn't come off as erotic.

11:02

Both chuckle

11:04

E: Indeed.

11:06

E: I suppose we should move forward then. Would you mind sharing more about the motif of metamorphosis and transformation in different cultures' stories and folklores? Why do you think this theme is very common?

11:24

K: Oh yes, that was a good question. And was one I was hoping you would answer for me, Emilia. I suppose, I'm almost certain you can think of a better answer than I am giving now. So metamorphosis in general can help account for the changeable nature of life in general, giving it some sort of a face. For example, so often these myths do, explaining things that are unpredictable, that are unchangeable (unchangeable or um changeable? 12:12-14) about life, so that would be my sort of my very perhaps unhelpful answer. But can I ask you? Is it possible in an interview to ask you, what you think?

12:33

E: So far, my idea, my own explanation would be [this is] just how human beings react to the world of nature. I do realize this pattern when I was doing my research that in stories from Europe, let's say Greco-Roman myths, or stories from British or Irish myths, it is very often that this event of transformation (is) comes to us people as some soft of punishment or a show, what's the word, showcasing this kind of godly power. It is a demonstration of a higher power. It is very often that the person who is undergoing any kind of transformation is being punished, or will be put in a vulnerable situation, such as in Irish mythology where we see Selkies, the seal people, their skin are often being stolen and they're being forced on land to marry human beings. That's kind of like, kidnapping, isn't it?

14:25

K: Yeah... yeah!

14:30

E: But, well, on the other hand, Asian culture is very interesting. That this kind of shapeshifting, or creatures that are capable of shapeshifting, are often rather mischievous or some kind of trickster perhaps in Chinese or Japanese culture. The Four Spirits which are capable of turning into different form, taking on different appearance, they are, well, creatures that can tempt people. I thought this is very reflective of how in Western and Eastern culture human beings react and interact with nature; how more often than not, in Eastern culture people often choose to coexist with the nature. It is the aesthetic of being at one with nature, that is very prevalent. Whereas in Western culture, nature is something to be conquered. It is something to be overcome and it is a challenge. Well, for me, this is what I get from these stories. I'm not sure if this is a very valid view, or integral to, is it really about transformation anymore?

16:16

K: Yeah, I think that those points are fantastic. I think that in a sense shows that in order to

answer the question, you need to look at perhaps different types of different types and look at what the change means. It strikes me also that another use of metamorphosis is also used to explain the origins of something, if you recall the story of Arachne, you know, that also explains the origins of spiders. So, yeah I mean metamorphosis speaks of a whole lot of meaning and one of them is explanation. Yeah.

17:08

E: Indeed. Just now, we have mentioned multiple stories and most of them about women, including the two stories that I've picked in Hong Kong myths. Do you have any thoughts on this common trope of women escaping or reacting tragedies through death and transformation?

17:38

K: That's a good question. I suppose it if I could speak more specifically to this story, those two stories that you are looking at, those two Hong Kong examples, I think that in the case of those two it strikes me that they are descriptions of a type of feminine devotion or female devotion and with the Amah's rock story that change and the substance that she changes into also represents the nature of her devotion. That kind of stoic sort of solid, strong commitment. It's very honorable and you know, it struck me just one of the very surface reading of the girl, that their devotion is their commitment to each other, in sort of choosing not to be devoted to a man, they devote themselves to each other and it is somehow virtuous in the total commitment that they make, in keeping of their word somehow makes the act virtuous, as they all sort of jump in together. So that sort of explains their change. But I think that so often in myths women are so closely connected with nature that it seems to me that women as changeable: you've got the sort of volatile female figure and you have the nurturing mother figure that seems to be sort of the two types of female personalities that occur in these stories. And often reflecting the volatility or the nurturing catastrophe of nature itself, so you have Hera who is sort of very quick-tempered and volatile and perhaps even, Persephone and Demeter who are more nurturing. But Demeter also has that more volatile side to her as well, as the god

of agriculture and harvest (and that sort of thing). So I think the connection of the female with the Earth probably accounts for a lot of the way in which female characters often undergo change.

21:05

E: I see. I will have to admit I will have to look more into that myself, so this will be our last question, just to share your own opinion on this. Admittedly, folklores of Hong Kong are very young, Hong Kong in general is very young. Although we do have plenty of history but we are a young city and in the scheme of everything. The story that I've picked might be two of the earliest stories in Hong Kong, which can be dated back to the 1800s, which is still very young. But do you think it is appropriate for me to compare and contrast it to Western mythology when studying it? Or do you think perhaps because of this, it is rather new, it wouldn't be fair to put it on the same scale like that?

22:25

K: Well, I'm sure that if you compare it, you would find grounds for comparison. And these comparisons may be illuminating. I suppose it depends, Emilia, on the area which you tend to compare the two types of myths on. I think what is interesting is so often Western myths are or espouse values of, particularly, Western individualism. How might then those Hong Kong myths compare to those myths that are espousing individualistic values? So what can they then reveal their particular context that they're speaking out of? That I suppose might be my very general response. But I mean the way in which myths do, or are a way of making the world around us a home is by sort of giving stories a particular landmark or part of the landscape are things you see in myths you see all around the world surely. It strikes me that for a place like Hong Kong that is so ever-changing, that is so built-up, that we perhaps need these stories of landscape more than ever, particularly you know, informing this very grounded sense of Hong Kong identity that is not translatable. It is borne out of this earth. Perhaps our stories in Hong Kong, you know, could do with some grounding, because we don't have that experience enough perhaps in Hong Kong,

as other parts of the world do.

25:08

E: That's very true. Supposedly, it is the end of this interview but you've just mentioned individualism in a lot of Western mythology and it just reminds me that in Hong Kong stories other than the two I've mentioned it seems that a lot of the protagonists are not just one person, the Seven Sisters are an example and I thought of another story, which unfortunately I won't be including that in my research but there's this story is interesting I would tell you. It is about this pair of old couple, they live in a very small village on Hong Kong Island. One day, there is this plague going on in their village so they thought, we have to help them and help everyone in the village. The way to help them [is] they have to find the cure. The cure is, they have to extract the venom from this very gigantic snake deep in the mountain. So the old couple, the wife went and extracted the venom, came back and gave them to the people but unfortunately the venom is not enough. And because the wife interacted with that gigantic snake, she passed away. So the husband has to continue her work for her, he went as well. This time he managed to help the remaining villagers but he himself passed away. I just thought this is a very interesting version of the heroic quest that we see a lot in Greek mythology, but this time we don't have this very handsome and young protagonist. Instead, we have a very old couple, and it's two people. And I thought, oh this kind of collectiveness in Hong Kong stories like the Seven Sisters and, so on so forth. It seems that we always have this kind of sense that the protagonists are a whole community or simply a family of some sort.

28:19

K: Yeah. That's um… yeah I think that's very interesting. I think it's a fantastic story. You know, Emilia, it strikes me now that you asked me the question earlier, what is the importance of still studying myths today and the significance. It just strikes me, you know, looking at the current situation that we're all having to fight this virus, and this unseen enemy. It strikes me that the Western individualist model, that the hero is actually not going to work against, you know, the current enemy that we have. So,

wearing of a mask is something that everyone has to do, for example, everybody's got to do that bit. It is a collective effort today, a collective story that we're all kind of living through right now so there is not one person who could solve this. And it just strikes me that these stories, perhaps the ones from Hong Kong, could be quite valuable stories for a time such as this. A type of heroism that perhaps we lack on our screens at the moment.

29:43

E: That's very true. I suppose this interview is coming to an end, again thank you so much for saying yes to today's interview. It certainly helps a lot. I feel so ashamed saying it right now, when the deadline is so close, but it is really a very valuable conversation we've had and thank you so much for this. (I'm going to stop the recording right now)

Interview Transcript with Mr Ding

Wong: What makes you interested in Amah Rock?

Ding: Amah Rock is an ancient myth. I always wanted to visit here. However, due to time constraints, we couldn't make it. I haven't been here. It is also very dull to come alone.

Wong: Do you know much about the myth?

Ding: Yes, I heard this story when I was young. People in the past liked to go overseas and seek fortune. The wife in the mythology would gaze into the sea on the high hill (waiting for her husband to come home). This area was that seaside before. She wondered about the return of her husband and waited long for his absence. She was slowly turned into a rock after a long wait. That is what the mythology said. The Rock looks like a woman carrying her son. Of course, it is just a myth. It is impossible to happen in reality. But that is pretty much the story.

Wong: Many young people in Hong Kong nowadays are not familiar with these kinds of mythology. For your generation, is Amah Rock a well-known story?

Ding: Yes, almost everyone knew it. I often want to climb up here though there is always a time clash. I was born and raised here though.

Wong: Besides Amah Rock, do you have any other local stories you found particularly interesting?

Ding: Lion Rock is also distinctive. It is widely known. Both Lion Rock and Amah Rock are widely known. It is just whether people climb the mountain. It is hard to gather people and not a good idea to come alone.

Wong: It was an exhausting journey for me just now.

Ding: Indeed.

Wong: Do you think learning mythology bears any meaning to this generation?

Ding: It is meaningful for sure, as a kind of history and culture.

Wong: Amah Rock is a mythology that a wife was waiting for her husband to come home from sailing. Is that a shared experience of people in Hong Kong in the past? For you, it could be a story that happened way earlier. When you were young, is that a

story shared with many people?

Ding: We have to look at it separately as it depends on groups. If you were a Hakka, it would be a different situation from urban people. These Hakka often sought fortune in foreign countries because their lives were more difficult on the mountain. Many people went to San Francisco to make a living twenty years ago. That was why mythology originated.

Wong: Understood. There are stories of natural landscapes derived from other things like wives who waited for their husbands and turned into a rock, or Lion Rock. For the origin of Kowloon, some said it was named after a transformation. Have you heard similar other stories?

Ding: There are many of them, but I couldn't come up with one now.

Wong: It's alright. I am just curious. Thanks!

(Original Chinese Transcript)

黃：爲什麼會對望夫石這個地方有興趣呢？

男：因爲他有一個古老的傳說嘛。我也想上來很久了。但因爲遷就不了時間和人，又因爲如果只有一個人爬上來又很無聊，所以遲遲沒有上來。

黃：你對這個傳說的理解有多少呢？

男：嗯，很小的時候就聽過了。以前的人很喜歡出去謀生的嘛，妻子每天都會站在這個高山看著海。因爲外面以前是海邊來的。就在想丈夫什麼時候回來，但等了很久丈夫還是沒有回來。她就慢慢變成石頭了。都是這樣講而已。當然是背著兒子的這個望夫石。當然只是個傳說，沒有可能會發生的。不過大概就是這樣。

黃：嗯，那現在很多香港年輕人都不是很熟悉這些傳說。那在你那個年代，這是不是一個所有人都知道的故事？

男：是呀，差不多每個人都知道。我常常都很想上來但總是合不上時間。因爲我也是在這裏土生土長的。

黃：那你覺得除了望夫石這裏，香港有沒有什麼其他的本土故事你覺得特別有趣？

男：獅子山也是，也是很有特色，已經是街知巷聞。獅子山和望夫石都是街知巷聞的了。但就是有沒有人爬上來罷了。因爲很多時候就很難湊夠人。自己一

個人爬上來好像不是太好。

黃：我剛才自己爬上來也很辛苦。

男：是呢。

黃：那你覺得如果對於現在的人來說，學習這些傳說對他們來說有沒有意義呢？

男：一定有意義的。也是一種歷史和文化。

黃：你剛才説望夫石的傳説其實是説關於妻子等待以船員的工作的丈夫回來的故事。你覺得這是不是一個以前香港人的一個共同經歷？對於你來説可能，這個故事可能在更久以前。但可能對於你小時候，你覺得是不是一個很多人經歷過的事？

男：這個就要分開來看，看那是什麼人了。例如你是客家人就和住城市裏的人不同。這些通常都是客家人，因爲他們常常出去外國謀生。因爲客家人的生活比較困難，在山區那裏。很多人都出外國謀生的。現在就比較少了。以前在二十多年前，真的很多人到美國舊金山那些地方打工的。所以傳説就是這樣來的。

黃：明白。那香港也有不少這些妻子等待丈夫然後變成一塊石頭，或者獅子山，也是從其他事物變出來的。那有人説九龍的名字的由來，也是一個變形的故事。那你有沒有聽過類似這樣的其他故事呢？

男：很多，但一時半刻想不起來。

黃：沒關係的。也只是隨口問問。謝謝你。

Wong: Were you born in Hong Kong?

Chan: No.

Wong: Then, where are you from?

Chan: I am from Fujian.

Wong: How old were you when moved to Hong Kong?

Chan: I was six at that time.

Wong: That was young for you (to move to Hong Kong). I want to know if you have heard of the story of Amah Rock? Or, why do you visit there today?

Chan: Yes, I have heard of this story. I have lived in Sha Tin for thirty years but it is my first time being here.

Wong: Your first time?

Chan: Right.

Wong: Do you think the story is widely known to people of your age?

Chan: Indeed. I saw the Rock whenever I was in a car passing through the Lion Rock Tunnel. I asked others and knew that a mother holding the kid was waiting for her husband and was turned into a rock after a long time. That is it. Right. The woman carrying the kid on her back was turned into a rock.

Wong: Do you think young people in Hong Kong nowadays are not familiar with this story? Or other mythology related to Hong Kong? Do we have to know more about it?

Chan: It is what it is. I believe people of my age, around 40s, would introduce the mythology if asked by their children. No matter if the story is true or not, we will pass it on in this way. If the kids ask, "What is this rock?" Their father will tell them the appearance of the Rock is reminiscent of a mother carrying her kid and waiting for the return of her husband. I do not know much about others. I did not hear any ghost stories related to Amah Rock. Any stories happened here?

Wong: We do not have ghost stories here but stories are happening elsewhere.

Chan: There are many places with references to ghosts in Hong Kong like High Street. A

lot of them are horrific.

Wong: This story is about a husband who sailed out and the wife waited for his return. Do you think it is a relatable story to the generation of grandparents? It could be that their family member went to work from far away. To the generation of parents, would it be a touching story as well? To you, it may not be a touching one but you went from far away. Do you find it relatable when you miss your relatives sometimes?

Chan: To me, it is just like a story. It is because the stone looks like the image of a woman carrying her child. This story has been passed on since the great grandfather's generation, and it has been circulated until now.

Wong: Alright! Thanks!

(Original Chinese Version)

黃：你是否在香港出生？

陳：不是。

黃：那你從哪裏來的？

陳：在福建。

黃：嗯，是幾歲來到這裏（香港）的？

陳：都是很小的時候了。

黃：哦。

陳：六歲的時候。

黃：嗯，那真的挺小（就來了）呢。其實我想知道，你小時候是不是已經聽過望夫石的故事呢？還是說，今天爲什麼會來這裡呢？

陳：有的，不過我住在沙田都已經三十幾年了。這此也是第一次來。

黃：啊，這次是第一次來？

陳：是呀。

黃：是小時候的時候就（對望夫石）有所聽聞的意思嗎？

陳：是呀。

黃：嗯。你覺得這個故事是不是在你童年的時候在同齡人間很流行？

陳：是，是的。因爲小時候乘車經常要通過獅子山隧道，每次都能看到這顆石頭。隨後就問其他人，才知道是說一位母親抱著兒子等待丈夫回來，然後等

了很久就變成化石。就是這樣。對，就是背著兒子等丈夫等到變成化石。

黃：那你會不會覺得，現在很多香港年輕人都不是很認識／瞭解這個故事？或者其他和香港相關的，類似鬧鬼故事的民間傳說？你會不會覺得其實大家要認識更多這樣的故事？

陳：其實認識就認識，不認識就不認識。但相信和我同年四十多歲的，如果有小孩，那他也會問的，我也會回答他。所以無論這個故事是真是假，都會這樣流傳下去。如果小孩問爸爸'這塊石頭是什麼'，那就告訴他其實這個石頭外形就很像一位母親背著兒子等丈夫。其他就不知道啦，鬧鬼故事我沒有聽説過欸。有鬼故事嗎？

黃：這裏就沒有，但可能是其他地方的鬼故事。

陳：香港很多的啦。高街之類的，很多都很猛的。

黃：嗯，那這個故事是説丈夫去出海，然後妻子等他回來。那你覺得其實對於爺爺奶奶輩的人來説是能有同感的故事？可能是親人到了很遠的地方工作。就對於你的上一輩來説，會不會是一個可能會很感觸的故事。就可能對於你來説不是。但你也是從很遠的地方來到的哦。會不會説自己有時候會挂念一些親戚，會不會覺得這個故事和你有共鳴？

陳：其實我覺得我也只是把這個當作故事來聽，只是因爲這塊石頭像，也應該只是傳聞，所以才會產生這個故事。就只是因爲這塊石頭形狀像而已。這個傳聞從太公那一輩就流傳，邊聽邊傳，就一直流傳到現在這樣。

黃：好的，謝謝你！

A Play on Words

LEE Shing Yuen Dominic
(Supervisor: Professor Julian Lamb)

This was a theatrical performance of 4 scenes – 3 monologues and one duologue – from Shakespeare and Caryl Churchill. The recording of the performance is available at https://bit.ly/3kLTkoH.

Act 1: A Dream full of Sound and Fury

[The stage is empty, the previous group has just cleared and left the stage, there is still chatter in the audience. Unlike previous performances, there is no one to set the stage. A HAND RAISES FROM THE SIDE OF THE STAGE (PREFERABLY FROM THE WINGS), HOUSE+STAGE LIGHTS FADE OUT]

[After 5 seconds, STAGE LIGHTS (TOP AND FILL) FADE ON]

(The student, center stage, adopts a semi-recumbent posture with a foot on the chair, his right arm is outstretched like the typical "Shakespeare Pose")

Student:

[In this short speech, the student struggles to remember his lines and say them truthfully, his energy is deflated]

> (Clears throat) To be, or not to be, that is the question:
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
> And by opposing end them.

(out of character) No, I can't, I can't do this. Just--stop stop, stop please. Can we have the house lights back on please Cora? *[House Lights comes back On]* Thank you.

Um, hello everyone thank you for coming to the last performance of today, and um, sorry you had to see this. I just can't. I can't go on. You know what, um let me just explain what's going on.

So when I brainstormed for my FYP, I thought, well perhaps I'll do a parody on myself and on my subject of study. Cuz these last four years, the thing you've heard most besides "哦你讀英文啊，好勁wo，係咪想做老師啊？" is "Oh English, you must study Shakespeare!" Like that's all we study, of course as English majors we are obliged to know Shakespeare by heart! "Oh yes you study English, ah To be or not to be from romeo and juliet, about 選擇困難症啊嘛！"

(Internal screams of pain and laughter) So that's what I thought, I might as well ironically choose this damn monologue, with the skull and everything because everybody knows that every Shakespeare monologue must have a skull, and oooh I'm gonna make it insightful and deep, because I'm going to set this scene where this person intentionally tries to act the monologue but then he falls into this PTSD flashback where he reenacts the memory of the second bridge. I thought that would be great, but apparently I have shitty ideas because it looks and feels fake as fuck. Like It's beyond hypocrisy, like-- you know what, I'll show you.

(With triumph) To be, or NOT to be, that is the question
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> (I'm already suffering and screaming internally holding this damn skull)

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles

And by opposing end them.

To die—to sleep,

No more; and by a sleep to say we end

The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation

Devoutly to be wish'd.

      (time to cancel Shakespeare! He said something about suicide!)

                         To die, to sleep;

To sleep, perchance to--

      (and here is when I wanted to put a sound effect of sorts to indicate the PTSD, so like some sirens or screams, and I would also look at that chair, and it would remind me of…)

[The student looks at the chair and pauses. He regains himself and attempts to start over again]

and by a sleep to say we end...the heart-ache and the thousand...natural shocks that flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation devoutly to be wish'd To die, to sleep; To sleep, perchance to DREAM
ay, there's the rub;

[HOUSE LIGHTS FADE OUT]

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,

Must give us pause: there's the respect

That makes calamity of so long life;

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,

The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,

The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,

The insolence of office and the spurns

That patient merit of the unworthy takes,

When he himself might his quietus make

With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,

To grunt and sweat under a weary life,

But that the dread of something after death,

The undiscover'd country from whose bourn

No traveller returns, puzzles the will

And makes us rather bear those ills we have

Than fly to others that we know not of?

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;

And thus the native hue of resolution

Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,

And enterprises of great pith and moment

[FILL LIGHTS FADE OUT (3s) starting from the beginning of the line]

With this regard their currents turn awry,

And lose the name of action.

[LIGHTS IMMEDIATELY OUT, PLAY SOUNDCUE_1]

[End of Act 1]

Act 2: Excerpt from *Far Away*

(Actor, in the quick black out, puts on a white shirt, he becomes Harper, a member of the court audience who just listened to the verdict of the Uni student in the last scene. He has a conversation with his friend Todd [lines recorded by Kevin DG and played back] about recent news and conflict while walking away from the court)

[SOUNDCUE_1 will be playing throughout this scene, *after 20s of playing the soundcue the STAGE LIGHTS FADE ON]*

Harper: You were right to poison the wasps.

Todd: Yes, I think all the wasps have got to go.

Harper: I was outside yesterday on the edge of the wood when a shadow came over and it was just a cloud of butterflies, and they came down just beyond me and the trees and bushes were red with them. Two of them clung to my arm, I was terrified, one of them got in my hair, I managed to squash them.

Todd: I haven't had a problem with butterflies.

Harper: They can cover your face. The Romans used to commit suicide with gold leaf, just flip it down their throat and it covered their windpipe, I think of that with butterflies.

Todd: I was passing an orchard, there were horses standing under the trees, and suddenly wasps attacked them out of the plums. There were the horses galloping by screaming with their heads made of wasp.

Harper: The cats have come in on the side of the French

Todd: I never liked cats, they smell, they scratch, they only like you because you feed them, they bite, I used to have a cat that would suddenly just take some bit of you in its mouth.

Harper Did you know they've been killing babies?

Todd: Where's that?

Harper: In China. They jump in the cots when nobody's looking.

Todd: But some cats are still ok.

Harper: I don't think so.

Todd: I know a cat up the road.

Harper: No, you must be careful of that.

Todd: But we're not exactly on the other side from the French. It's not as if they're the Moroccans and the ants.

Harper: It's not as if they're the Canadians, the Venezuelans and the mosquitoes.

Todd: It's not as if they're the engineers, the chefs, the children under five, the musicians.

Harper: The car salesmen.

Todd: Portuguese car salesmen.

Harper: Russian swimmers.

Todd: Thai butchers.

Harper: Latvian dentists.

Todd: No, the Latvian dentists have been doing good work in Cuba. They've a
            house outside Havana.

Harper: But Latvia has been sending pigs to Sweden. The dentists are linked to
            international dentistry and that's where their loyalty lies, with dentists in
            Dar-es-Salaam.

Todd: We don't argue about Dar-es-Salaam.

Harper: You would attempt to justify the massacre in Dar-es-Salaam?

            Did you see the programme about crocodiles?

Todd: Yes but crocodiles, the way they look after the baby crocodiles and carry
            them down to the water in their mouths.

Harper: Don't you think everyone helps their own children?

Todd: I'm just saying I wouldn't be sorry if the crocodiles were on one of the
            sides we have alliances with. They're unstoppable, come on.

Harper: Crocodiles are evil and it is always right to be opposed to crocodiles.
            Their skin. Their teeth, the foul smell of their mouths from the dead
            meat. Crocodiles wait till zebras are crossing the river and bite the weak
            ones with those jaws and pull them down. Crocodiles invade villages at

night and take children out of their beds. A crocodile will carry a dozen heads back to the river, tenderly like it carries its young, and put them in the water where they bob about as trophies till they rot.

Todd: I'm just saying we could use that.

Harper: And the fluffy little darling waterbirds, the smallest one left behind squeaking wait for me, wait for me. And their mother who would give her life to save them. No, we don't include mallards, they are not a good waterbird. The commit rape, and they're on the side of the elephants and the Koreans. But crocodiles are always in the wrong.

             You agree with me about the crocodiles?

Todd: What's the matter? You don't know whose side I'm on?

Harper: I don't know what you think.

Todd: I think what we all think.

Harper: Take deer.

Todd: You mean sweet little bambis?

Harper: You mean that ironically?

Todd: I mean it sarcastically.

Harper: Because they burst out of parks and storm down from mountains and terrorise shopping malls. If the does run away when you shoot they run into somebody else and trample them with their vicious little shining

hooves, the fawns get under the feet of shoppers and send them crashing down escalators, the young bucks charge the plate glass windows--

Todd: I know to hate deer.

Harper: and the old ones, do you know how heavy their antlers are or how sharp the prongs are when they twist into teenagers running down the street?

Todd: Yes I do know that.

Harper: Was that a deer?

Todd: In fact it was a bear. I don't like being doubted.

Harper: It was when the elephants went over to the Dutch, I'd always trusted elephants.

Todd: I've shot cattle and children in Ethiopia. I've gassed mixed troops of Spanish, computer programmers and dogs. I've torn starlings apart with my bare hands. And I liked doing it with my bare hands. So don't suggest I'm not reliable.

Harper: I'm not saying you can't kill.

Todd: And I know it's not all about excitement. I've done boring jobs. I've worked in abattoirs stunning pigs and musicians and by the end of the day your back aches and all you can see when you shut your eyes is people hanging upside down by their feet.

Harper: So you'd say the deer are vicious?

Todd: We've been over that.

Harper: If a hungry deer came into the yard you wouldn't feed it?

Todd: Of course not.

Harper: I don't understand that because the deer are with us. They have been for
              three weeks.

Todd: I didn't know. You said yourself.

Harper: Their natural goodness has come through. You can see it in their soft
              brown eyes.

Todd: That's good news.

Harper: You hate the deer. You admire the crocodiles.

Todd: I've lost touch because I'm tired.

(Harper walks off stage)

[STAGE FADES TO BLACK]

<div align="center">[End of Act 2]</div>

(The actor becomes the Dictator [in general, no specific dictator of what or whom or where], he wears a suit jacket over his shirt as his dictator attire, in the blackout he brings a desk [covered by a black cloth] and a portable speaker/microphone and puts it in the marked position on the stage)

[WHEN THE ACTOR HAS BOTH OF HIS HANDS ON THE TABLE, SPOTLIGHT (SP) FADE IN]

Dictator:

Have you noticed the large number of meteorological phenomena lately? Earthquakes. Volcanoes. Drought. Apocalyptic meteorological phenomena. The increase of sickness. It was always possible to think whatever your personal problem, there's always nature. Spring will return even if it's without me. Nobody loves me but at least it's a sunny day. This has been a comfort to people as long as they've existed. But it's not available any more. Sorry. Nobody loves me and the sun's going to kill me. Spring will return and nothing will grow. Some people might feel concerned about that. But it makes me feel important. I'm going to be around when the world as we know it ends. I'm going to witness unprecedented catastrophe. I like a pileup on the motorway. I like the kind of war we're having lately. I like snuff movies. But this is going to be the big one.

Your friend doesn't like me. I'm getting uncomfortable. I can't tolerate being disliked. So never mind. We'll go away together. You'd like a holiday. We'll bring the baby, no problem, I love kids, babies are cupid. What are you doing tomorrow?

You think this is sudden. I think it's sudden. No I don't. I've been looking for you. It's going to happen.

Us being together forever. We both know that. So there's no point taking a long time

getting to the point which we got to the first time no even before we met no ever before I ever set eyes on you because this kind of thing is meant. Don't you agree?

What's this 'I think'? Are you backing out? Don't do this to me. I warn you. Quite straightfowardly as one human being to another.

Don't don't don't don't don't look startled. You're the only good person I've ever met. Everyone else has tried to destroy me. But you wish me well. You wouldn't deny that. No. What? what? don't dare. This is a high voltage cable. Are you going to grab it? I'm going to take care of you and the baby. You're coming with me. You don't have to worry about anything any more.

I hate it when I'm so unkind. This sometimes happens. I won't go into my childhood just now. I can't forgive myself. I feel terrible.

(increasing anger) I'm useless, I get something beautiful and I ruin it. Everything I touch falls apart. These are some people who deserve to be killed and I believe it's important to be completely without remorse. I admire that if someone has no compassion because that's what it takes. But other people such as yourself. You won't want to see me again. How could I do that? I worship you.

[LIGHTS SHARP OUT]
[AVCUE_SCENE4 Plays]

[End of Act 3]

[AVCUE_SCENE4 finishes playing]

[End of Play]

[TOP AND FILL LIGHTS FADE ON FOR CURTAIN CALL]