

East Versus West: Eastern Man and Western Man
in the Novel of Shanghai Baby
ตะวันออกปะทะตะวันตก: ผู้ชายตะวันออกและผู้ชายตะวันตก
ในนวนิยาย เรื่อง เซี่ยงไฮ้เบบี้

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Abstract

This research article intends to explore both Eastern and Western men's portrayals in the Chinese patriarchy through Chinese women's perspectives. The study examines how men in both regions are presented in the realm of Chinese female narration where woman has all the power to write her own stories. Chinese man, Tian Tian, the major male character and German man, Mark, another important male character are compared to each other because both of them have the great impact on the female protagonist, Coco. The novel is read thoroughly. Next, those two male characters are deeply scrutinized and compared. The masculinity theory both from the Western and Chinese (ying/yang's and wen wu's theory) is also applied to analyze those two characters.

In the Western masculinity theory, Tian Tian is not qualified for the ideal Western man at all for his physical weakness, financially dependent and lack of self-confidence whereas Mark is the good example of the Western ideal man who is strong, attractive, and rich. For Eastern masculinity theory, Tian Tian is yin whereas Mark is yang. For wen/wu's theory, Tian Tian can partly fit with wen's theory while Mark is suitable for wu's theory. As seen above, the author intends to make the Chinese male character looks feminine and make the Western man looks more masculine. It is the crucial message from the author to stand up for women's right. Yet, Hui still realizes the reality that wild behavior does not truly liberate woman. In fact, it loses woman's self-esteem and self-worth. Besides, adoring the Western male character implies the threatening of Western power over the Chinese society. It seems like Chinese people embrace the new arrival of Western culture without discerning about its empowerment over the old Chinese tradition just like Coco cherishes and succumbs to Mark's sexual appealing.

Keywords: Chinese Patriarchy, Masculinity, Chinese Men, *Shanghai Baby*

บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาภาพลักษณ์ของผู้ชายตะวันออกและตะวันตกในสังคมปิตาธิปไตยจีนผ่านทางมุมมองของผู้หญิงจีนในนวนิยายเรื่องเซียงไฮ้เบบี้ โดยศึกษาตัวละครที่เป็นผู้ชายจีนและผู้ชายเยอรมัน เพราะทั้งสองคนมีอิทธิพลกับตัวละครเอกหญิง การวิจัยครั้งนี้ใช้การวิเคราะห์ด้วยบทเป็นหลัก โดยมีการใช้ทฤษฎีความเป็นชายที่เกี่ยวข้องทั้งทฤษฎีตะวันตกและทฤษฎีจีน 2 เรื่อง ได้แก่ ทฤษฎีหยิน หยาง และ เวิน วู เข้ามาใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ด้วยบท

ในทฤษฎีความเป็นชายของตะวันตกนั้น เทียน เทียน ไม่มีคุณสมบัติผู้ชายในอุดมคติตามแบบฉบับของชาวตะวันตกเลย เนื่องจากเขามีความอ่อนแอทางด้านร่างกาย ไม่สามารถหาเงินเลี้ยงชีพเองได้ และขาดความเชื่อมั่นในตนเอง ในขณะที่มาร์คเป็นตัวอย่างของชายในอุดมคติตามแบบฉบับของผู้ชายตะวันตก เขาเป็นคนแข็งแรง มีเสน่ห์ และรวย สำหรับทฤษฎีความเป็นชายของจีนว่าด้วยเรื่องหยินและหยาง เทียน เทียนมีลักษณะตรงกับหยิน ในขณะที่มาร์คมีลักษณะตรงกับหยาง ในส่วนของทฤษฎีเวินและวูนั้น เทียน เทียนมีบุคลิกตรงกับทฤษฎีเวิน ส่วนมาร์คมีบุคลิกตรงกับทฤษฎีวู จากข้างต้นจะเห็นได้ว่าผู้เขียนตั้งใจที่จะให้ตัวละครเอกหญิงเด่นและมีพลังอำนาจมากกว่าตัวละครชายจีน เพื่อแสดงถึงสิทธิสตรี อย่างไรก็ตามผู้เขียนก็ตระหนักว่าการประพาดิตินที่ผิดศีลธรรมไม่สามารถทำให้ผู้หญิงมีเสรีภาพที่แท้จริง การบูชาตัวละครชายตะวันตกมีความหมายเป็นนัยยะว่าชาวจีนเทิดทูนวัฒนธรรมตะวันตกโดยไม่รู้ตัว เสมือนโคโคที่เทิดทูนและยอมแพ้ต่อความมีเสน่ห์ทางเพศของมาร์ค

คำสำคัญ : สังคมแบบปิตาธิปไตยจีน ความเป็นชาย ผู้ชายจีน เซียงไฮ้เบบี้

Introduction

Most society especially Mainland China is the patriarchal society. For Chinese men, being dominant is very important because it gains them self-esteem. The thought of being superior to women has deeply been rooted in the mind of Chinese men for so long that it is hard to erase from their consciousness. The concept of men being dominant and women being submissive in Chinese society evidently lied in the Confucius, traditional Chinese teaching that women must behave properly by their three different roles: women, mothers and wives (Tan, 1993). Most Chinese women accepted their fate without any resistance while some were not happy with being oppressed: they wanted more freedom and visibility. They did not succumb to their fate and tried to fight for their right.

Shanghai Baby was written by Wei Hui in the late nineties after the Post Mao era, the period in which the anti-patriarchy's thoughts and the ideas of striving for their right rose for some women. With the arrival of Western feminism in the nineteenth century, it encouraged Chinese women to stand for themselves since they realized that they were not the only groups of women who had suffered from male dominant world (Zheng, 2016). This novel, thus, reversely presents Chinese men and Chinese women in divergent angles that would easily irritate and arouse Chinese men's anger. Its existence in

Chinese literary world absolutely stirred Chinese patriarchal society which led to the ban of this book with the condemnation and harsh criticism on the book's contents and the writer herself. The suppression of the book, however, brought the curiosity to the Chinese audience that they attempted to reach for the book underground. Surprisingly, this book was gained the international acclaim which turned Wei Hui into the international writer whose work has been translated worldwide (Zhu, 2005). The unacceptance of this text may come from Chinese men that feel insecure of their superior territory. They might be threatened by women's roles, power and mischief that are clearly described in this novel. *Shanghai Baby* is totally a women's call for liberty and social position with the presentation of women's abilities, intellect and freedom of explicit sexual expression.

Larson (as cited in Koetse, 2012) asserts that the centering of sexuality is as "a force working for personal or social change". Koetse (2012) affirms that "there is a strong connection between the expression of sexuality and societal progression." As a result, there is the implication of male characters' weakness in the text. The male weakness is presented through Chinese man, especially Tian Tian, Coco's boyfriend. At the same time, the other Chinese male characters are depicted

as “very small, unattractive or homosexual”. Superficially, Mark, the German man, seems to empower over Coco’s sexuality. In fact, she uses him as a way to search for her sexual pleasure along her sexual journey. She does not love him since she does not surprise that he has a family in Germany. She just uses him to seek for another side of her that she does not know what it is like before.

According to Zhu (2005), love is the only factor for Tian Tian to keep him alive. His love is spiritual not the physical one because he is impotent. Coco’s relationship with Mark causes from her hunger for sex and Mark’s “curiosity about exotic oriental women”. As a result, for Mark, his relationship with Coco is just lust. Coco’s life equilibrium causes from the fulfillment both of these men give her: Tian Tian gives her love; Mark gives her “orgasm”. She, however, encounters the dilemma in her life: “she constantly struggles between the split desire of her soul and flesh and cannot find home in either man”.

Coco’s “strong sexual desires and aggressive seduction” only make Tian Tian suffers from his impotence. “Her invitation” to enter her body is even worse. Tian Tian runs away from his depression and problems by taking drugs. Besides being physical impotence, he also encounters psychological impotence. (Zhu, 2005).

There are the similarities between Coco and Tian Tian’s mother, Connie: they both have the impact on him. They are related to the destruction of Tian Tian’s masculinity. Coco’s strong sexual desire emphasizes his impotence whereas the absence of his mother makes him long for the maternal love and protection (Zhu, 2005).

Additionally, Coco takes mother’s role for Tian Tian. He tremendously suffers from his father’s death and his mother’s accusation of cheating and murdering him. He longs for the maternal protection since his mother has been gone for so long. Fortunately, he finds it in Coco. She “treats him like a son”. The evidence is seen in Coco’s description of Tian Tian. Mostly, he is described as a child. She is like a mother to Tian Tian because

she encourages him to be confident and realize in his artistic talents. She urges him to sell his own painting shirts. Her role is entirely reversed with Mark. (Zhu, 2005)

Coco’s sexual role with Tian Tian and Mark is totally different. According to “her sexual aggressiveness” to him, she is the seducer who encourages him to have sex with her. On the contrary, she is “submissive” to Mark in terms of sexual behavior. “She waits for Mark to seduce her, to protect her and to satisfy her.” She surrenders to him and “plays game that is ruled by Mark”. Furthermore, her emotion is gradually attached to him but she attempts to tell herself that her relationship with Mark is just lust (Zhu, 2005).

Reversely & Zhu (2005) remarks that both Tian Tian and Mark has sexual control over Coco in two diverse ways: Tian Tian has “mental control” over her while Mark has “mental control and physical control”. Although Zhu does not state clearly about the physical control, her description about Coco’s relationship with Mark suit well with this term. For Tian Tian, he clearly tells Coco that his life completely depends on his love with Coco. His implication is that his life is in her hand. He tells Coco to never lie to him. Zhu points out that there is the underlying meaning in which he wants her to be loyal to him. As a result, she has to ensure her love to him by telling him that she loves him very often. For Mark, she absolutely feels guilty for having an affair with him. At the same time, she plays sex games according to Mark’s rules. However, there are no previous studies that compare these two men together. Most of the earlier research focuses on the female protagonist, Coco.

Nevertheless, this article will focus neither on the female protagonist’s role nor feminism. Its central issues will be the masculinity, male issues and male crisis that appear in male characters in this story instead. It is interesting and challenging to investigate how men are portrayed in the story that has woman as the major character who has the power of controlling the story through her narration. The notable male characters here are Tian Tian and Mark who are both related to the

female protagonist, Coco. It is compelling to scrutinize how men are presented through the eyes of women.

To explore this topic clearly, the issue of masculinity cannot be ignored since it will enhance the understanding of men's behavior and characteristics in this novel. Masculinity is the condition of men including their "behavior, languages, and practice, existing in specific cultural and organizational locations which are commonly associated with males and thus culturally defined as not feminine". (Clatterbaugh, Whitehead & Barret as cited in Abumere, 2013).

As seen above, masculinity has both positive and negative sides. This concept defines the male characteristics that are socially and culturally stated to belong to men. All of the other personal traits that show the softer or the sensitive sides belong to the "Other" or Feminine (Clatterbaugh, Whitehead & Barret as cited in Abumere, 2013).

Due to the comparison between the Western and the Eastern men in this research, the concepts of masculinity of both regions will be discussed in order to see the similarities and differences of the ideal men in both zones to prove if the two characters, Tian Tian and Mark, can be applied by those theories.

Since the theory of masculinity was originally created in the Western, it will be described along with the Chinese masculinity's concept. "The dominant masculinity model within most Western societies" is anticipated to have the physical strength and well being: "strong, powerful, heterosexual, wealthy, capable, self-dependent, self-confident, physically able-bodied, sufficient, respected and honored". These stereotypes of ideal men are valued throughout the Western region. Furthermore, it authorizes, "control, and rule over all other forms of masculinities and women throughout power and authority". Those men who cannot meet those requirements are doomed to failure. Furthermore, those men who do not possess the "hardness" but belong to the "softness" seems to disqualify for being masculine or even encounter masculine crisis (Şenel, 2017).

To elaborate Chinese men status, the issue of masculinity is discussed here to render more vivid pictures of what Chinese men are like. Louie (2012) addresses that men studies and masculinity had been neglected for a long time. Even when the time that Asian women studies had been the concern, men studies still had been ignored. The research of men and masculinity, however, became recognized in the late 1980s (Wong, 2016).

According to Velding (2015), the gender norms" are the concepts of "ideal femininity and ideal masculinity" that demonstrate the proper manner of women and men. Femininity is the performance and "thinking like a normative female; masculinity, the practice of acting and thinking like a normative male. Due to Connell (as cited in Velding, 2015), scholars assert that masculinity neither naturally nor permanently belong to men but it is fluid and "produce[d]". Masculinity, hence, depends on physical appearance: being muscular and tall. These characteristics portray the male strength and power (Kimmel as cited in Velding, 2015). Consequently, men suffer from "an Adonis Complex" which mainly focuses on the body image to be the real men. This social construct results in "body dissatisfaction" Additionally, society is the one who identify the ideal men which include being muscular, "eating healthy, working out, and proper grooming". Those male traits are not alternatives but "rather necessity" (Pope, Phillips, and Olivardia as cited in Velding, 2015).

Bret Hinsch (as cited in Wong, 2016) traces the history of Chinese masculinity from the Confucian era to the contemporary period. He pinpoints that there are four main factors that have the impact on Chinese masculinity which are "filial piety, the engagement between manhood and the state, economic change, and foreign influence". Before the intrusion of the Western, Chinese men status was various according to their class. In the historical time, men who were educated and had political power which was called "Shi" is the superior class to other men (Zhou, 2012). According to Zhou (2012), there were two theories related to Chinese masculinity: the yin/yang theory

and the wen/wu theory. The yin represents feminine, cold, downward, passive whereas the yang symbolizes “masculine, hot, upward, aggressive”. The yin/yang relationship is fluid. The yin does not have to always belong to women. Meanwhile, the yang does not have to always belong to men. These two terms can be changed according to the power one has at that moment. When men have the feminine characteristics or inferior to others in the certain circumstances, they will switch from the yang to the yin position. At the same time, if women possess the stronger and more powerful characteristics, they belong to the yang status. As a result, this theory was based on the power possession rather than “the difference of gender bodies.” For cultural meaning of “being male” in Imperial China was “being powerful and dominant” (Geng as cited in Zhou, 2012).

Louie & Edwards (as cited in Zhou, 2012) disagree with the yin/yang concept. They do not think yin and yang can defy Chinese masculinity since two of them exist in everyone both men and women. They, thus, come up with the idea of “wen” and “wu”. Louie (as cited in Wong, 2016), addresses that “wen” is referred to “men’s cerebral power including literary and cultural attainments”. Those two concepts, however, are mostly identified by “political and social constructs”. On the contrary, “wu” is referred to men who have the physical strength and the capability of martial arts. Those kinds of men would be “glorified and honored”. In addition, people who are able to judge those qualities are the emperors or the leaders. In the past, “wen” is always considered as “superior” to “Wu” (Zhou, 2012).

The theories of “wen-wu” are no longer the solid ground of Chinese manhood since it is replaced by novel values of masculinity in the consumer culture after the Post-Mao era. Men are valued by their wealth and possession. Men who have the ability to earn a large amount of money and be in the high position in the business world are honored. The ideal Chinese men, thus, have to be “rich and have the finance ability” (Wong, 2016).

Being a Chinese man is not that easy. There is the social expectation on the Chinese men’s stereotype. That is why Tian Tian is facing the masculine crisis with his feminine characteristics.

According to Verberg (2018), there are five terms that stereotype Chinese men: sissy boy, the chauvinist, Phoenix man, Wretched or Vulgar man and Mommy’s Boy. Firstly, sissy boy is referred to “androgyny men” whose personality and appearance is quite feminine. This kind of man takes a good care of their appearance. Some of them wear make up and are “interested in shopping” On social media, people assume that men who have “soft behavior” probably come from the “over protection” from their family that make their children unaware of their “gender awareness”. Secondly, the chauvinist is a man who takes a pride on their own values and ignore others especially women’s. They tend to draw women’s attention by buying gifts to impress women. Thirdly, Phoenix man is a man who grows up in the “poor rural areas” but come to study and live in the city but they still maintain the old convention and perceptions. Fourthly, wretched or vulgar man. This group of men are the ones who offend or abuse women or harm other people. This shameful behavior probably caused by their sexual repression. Fifthly, mommy boy is a man who strictly believes and obeys their mother in every aspect of life: work, marriage and way of life.

This study will gain the understanding of how Chinese men were portrayed after the Cultural Revolution period in which women were more liberated and how western men are viewed in Chinese context at the same time. Whether the presentation of Western man enhances the more distorted characteristics of Chinese men or the Western man is differently characterized from those of Chinese men. Since Tian Tian and Mark intertwine with Coco, the female central character of this story, she will be discussed as well in terms of her relationship with both male characters.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate how Chinese men are portrayed in the novel of *Shanghai Baby*.

2. To examine how Western man is presented in the novel of Shanghai Baby.

3. To compare the Chinese men and western man's portrayal in the Chinese patriarchy through the eyes of Chinese women.

Research Methodology

The novel is thoroughly read to be able to understand the entire story and the messages that the author wants to convey. Next, the Chinese man, Tian Tian's and Western man, Mark's characteristics and portrayals are scrutinized throughout the whole story. The textual analysis is mostly employed because it is crucial to analyze the male characters in the certain circumstances and what causes those actions or problems. Furthermore, both of Western and Eastern masculinity theories that related to those two characters are also discussed.

This study also explores the difference of these theories that are related to the story because these two male characters are from two different regions. The masculinity concept in the West is applied to both Eastern and Western man since it is the origin of masculinity theory. Additionally, Chinese masculinity theory: yin/yang and wen/wu are investigated to see which one is more suitable with those Western and Eastern men.

Findings

Tian Tian is the Chinese man who has the outstanding roles in this story. He, however, has the distorted characteristics from what conventional Chinese men have been presented. He is unemployed, weak, sensitive, uncertain, impotent and a drug addict. On the contrary, Mark is a wealthy and successful man who has sex appealing, well-built figure. He is determined, attractive, strong, and has sexual well performing.

Tian Tian is unemployed and financially dependent man who lives his luxurious life with money he receives from his mother who lives in Spain. He cannot be the leader of the family. In contrast, he is more like a loser. Although he does not like his mother, he does not want to earn his

own money. He has no idea how he can get his own money or what kind of work he can do. Coco, his girlfriend, is a person who reminds him of his artistic talent and urges him to sell his painted T-shirts. At this time, he is so surprised that he can make his own money: "We had just earned nearly 1,000 RMB. Tian Tian jumped about, then hugged and kissed me. "I can earn my own money after all! I never knew that," he said, surprised but pleased", (Hui, 2001).

Tian Tian's characteristics are quite complicated. He is psychologically wounded. His state of mind has been hurt since he was a child. The absence of his father since he was young makes him lost and does not know how to express his masculinity. There are no male relatives whom he can rely on or look up as an idol. It was even worse when his grandmother kept telling him that his mother was the one who killed his father. He, therefore, has believed that his mother did betray his father. Even though he cannot prove that it is true, he does not really have the good relationship with his mother. It makes him feel horrible when his mother left to Spain and settled down there. The absence of his father and mother totally affect him in different ways. The absence of his father makes him lose masculinity but has more feminine characteristics instead. Moreover, the absence of his mother leaves the scar in his heart which leads to his depression in life since he can not feel love and warmth from his own mother despite her financial support.

Mark's childhood is not mentioned except for his own family which consists of his wife and a child. Since his childhood is not revealed, it is assumed that he does not have the mental scars like Tian Tian which makes him to be a confident and self-esteem man.

Tian Tian is an impotent man who cannot fulfill his girlfriend, Coco's sexual satisfaction. Coco states that "In the male world, being able to perform sex normally is as important as life itself, and any shortcoming causes unbearable pain. He cried, and so did I..." (Hui, 2001). Being impotent is like being castrated since he has lost all the

sexual impulse. Moreover, castration is the traumatic for men since having the penis symbolizes men's power over women. Losing all the sense of sexuality reduces his self-esteem. Although he attempts to give Coco pleasure through all the foreplays, reaching orgasm from penetration seems to be the most important thing that can fulfill Coco's sexual pleasure. He tries to solve the problems by visiting the doctor but finally surrender to the treatment since he cannot tolerate the questions that have been asked by the doctor. Actually, the doctor claims that there is nothing wrong with his sexual organ but there is something to do with his mind: "Your reproductive system is quite normal. The key lies in your mind. He recommended that Tian Tian join a psychiatric therapy group at the center and take some medicine as a supplementary treatment" (Hui, 2001). There is neither clear conclusion nor evidence of how his impotence causes but from what the doctor diagnoses it can be assumed that his spiritual loss has the great impact on his mind and feeling.

Mark is presented as the sexually powerful man who can satisfy Coco's sexual desire. He tries to seduce her in spite of knowing that she has a boyfriend and he himself has a family. Although Coco knows that she commits the bad deed from having the affair with Mark, she cannot resist her sexual drive and the temptation from the sexy Western man. Mark is like the Western predator who hunts down for the Asian woman. The verbs that Coco use to describe about Mark often shows his authority over Coco: "...No sooner had the words escaped me than Mark seized me like a bank robber, allowing no argument, and dragged me out of the gallery in a flash, depositing me in his BMW. Basking in masochistic joy, my mind went kaput" (Hui, 2001). This description shows that she is submissive and surrender to his sexual control although she is not willing to.

Furthermore, in their sexual relationship, Mark does not really care about Coco's feeling. He has sexual intercourse with her in the improper place such as the nightclub's toilet despite Coco's resistance. While he is having sexual activity in the

public toilet with her, she really feels uncomfortable, lost her self-respect, self-esteem and disgusted with herself. When she asks him what they are doing in the toilet, he says that they are making love. Ironically, he does not respect her despite her resistance of having sex in the public toilet. It seems like he just follow his instinct and have his sexual release instead of making love because he makes Coco feel terrible: "I feel totally disgusting, like a criminal- and even more like I'm being tortured..., "Put me down right now. I feel like a specimen nailed to a wall!. Mark, however, creates the more tension and confusion which enhance her identity crisis. She still wants sex with Mark although she is not willing to sometimes and feel guilty every time. She describes her disturbance and chaotic situations when she have the affair with Mark:

I began to cry. This was all so inexplicable. I was increasingly losing my self-confidence and suddenly felt even cheaper than the prostitutes dancing downstairs. At least they had professionalism and a certain coolness, while I was awkward and horribly torn between two personalities. I saw reflected in the grimy mirror.

Something in my body had been lost, leaving a gaping hole (Wei, 2002)

Tian Tian and Mark are both compared to the different kinds of animal that illustrates their characteristics: Tian Tian is compared to dolphin whereas Mark is compared the predator: "...There was something disquieting in his casualness, almost like the restraint of a hunter confronting his longed-for prey. Most of my attention was focused on him, the painting before me become a mass of chaotic colors and random lines" (Hui, 2001); "...I looked vacantly at him. His eyes were shining in the darkness, like those of an animal lurking in the shrubbery. I was surprising by the feeling those eyes gave me" (Hui, 2001). He acts as a sex hunter without realizing whether his action is immoral or not. He attempts to give her a sign that he is

interested in her. He calls and sends her an invitation card to the art exhibition with the messages revealing his feeling: "You left a deep impression on me at that party. Hoping to see you again" (Hui, 2001). Coco describes him as "predator". It seems like Coco knows that this hunting game is going on but she tends to be willing to get in the trap.

Despite his spiritual weakness, Tian Tian has profound influence on Coco's mind. He urges her to pursue her dreams of becoming a famous writer. He has faith in her. He totally believes that she really has writing talents and often reminds her for that. He makes her feel precious because he brings back her self-esteem which leads to self-worth. Whenever Coco feels frustrated of her incapability in becoming a writer, Tian Tian will reassure her of her writing ability, encourage her to read her works out loud, praise her for the nice works she has done, compliment her talents to the others, and pressure her to have discipline in writing her works. There is undoubtedly why Coco does not leave him despite their sexual incapability. Mark does not really care that he cheats on his wife. He also comforts Coco that she does not do anything wrong. Actually, what she has done with him is totally sinful. He, therefore, is selfish because he does care about neither his wife's feeling nor Coco's self-disgusting. In fact, what he has concerned is his own desire. He does not care if his immoral act will hurt anyone. His affair with Coco does not accidentally happen. He intends to have sexual intercourse with her when he tries to get close to her since the beginning.

Noticeably, Mark does not seem to care for Coco's writing. All he seems to care is having sexual intercourse with her. Mark does not lift up Coco's spirit at all. In contrast, he renders her the sense of self-loath because she feels guilty every time she has the secret affair with him and he does nothing to make her feel better. He, thus, can only fulfill her physical need which is not enough for Coco.

The relationship between Tian Tian and the heroine, Coco is quite complicated. Although Coco

discovers that Tian Tian is impotent, she insists on staying with him. At first, she confesses that she is not sure if she can bear this but then she finds out that Tian Tian means so much to her that it is beyond the realm of sexual intercourse. Tian Tian's sensitivity and gentleness surprisingly fill Coco's emptiness. It is interesting that woman does not always look for the masculinity in men. Coco feels that it is her duty to protect Tian Tian, cheer him up, and get him out of his depression. She can feel the pure love that Tian Tian gives her. She feels safe when she is with him. Consequently, she does not think of leaving him. There is the delicate bond between Tian Tian and Coco. They seem to complement each other. Coco is devastated again when he is dead because of drug overdose. She cannot forget him. She still feels that he is around her checking on her writing process. He leaves the memorable traces on her mind that she cannot erase.

On the contrary, the relationship between Mark and Coco is not complicated. Although Coco thinks that it is love that she has for Mark after many times of sexual intercourses, it can be understandable why she is mistaken her relationship with Mark as love. The closeness from the intimacy can create the bond between two people but as long as they have never shared anything else together except lust then it is clearly seen that love does not exist at the first place. She confesses that even though she does not meet Mark, she might have the affair with another man who can fulfill her sexual need : "...Of course, even if I hadn't met Mark I might have met someone else who would have seduced me" (Hui, 2001). Mark and Coco do not seem to share their difficulties to each other. Mark does not show his caring to Coco at all except his saying that he cares about her. Meanwhile, Coco does not love him since the beginning. Mark makes her feel guilty and disgusted with herself for having the affair with him. Only one thing that Mark can give her is sexual pleasure and it is only sexual pleasure that she wants out of Mark. When Mark has to leave her to return to his country, she tells him to forget her. She can

finally cut him out of her life.

The portrayal of Tian Tian as a Chinese man in this story terribly upsets Chinese male dominance. Although he is the only Chinese man that is described this way in the novel, he is the most outstanding Chinese male character in the text. He, thus, inevitably represents Chinese men. Gender role switching and being impotent is the huge issues for Chinese men. It is as if they were insulted by women. The ideal men are destroyed. Men are no more the center of the society. Phallocentrism is collapsed. Chinese patriarchy is stirred. Their power is significantly lessened. As a result, Tian Tian appears to be the pathetic male character who is likely to be a loser. His dynamic characteristics, however, do not label him as a real loser since he is the main factor that highly motivates Coco to pursue her writing career and bring out the self-esteem and self-worth in her. Strangely and ironically, he himself feels empty and do not realize that he also has talent of painting. He does not find the self-worth in himself but he finds it in another person. In contrast, Coco tries to do the same to him. She attempts to encourage him to believe that he has a talent but she fails. It is probably because she does not try hard enough unlike Tian Tian who tries every effort to awaken her from idleness and bring her back to follow her dreams. Nevertheless, the audience cannot help having the sympathy and fall in love with this character at the same time.

Tian Tian's complicated mind is probably caused from his childhood. The absence of his father plays the crucial role in his life. There are no men to guide him how to be masculine or how the proper man should be like. He is raised by women, his grandmother particularly since his mother moves to Spain when he was very young. He is lost because he has no one to look up to as his role model. Having neither father nor mother to look up to, he becomes depressed and alienated from the outside world. Fortunately, he meets Coco who makes his world become a lot more colorful. He, therefore, undoubtedly cling on to her. He says he cannot live without her. It might

seem exaggerated but when he realizes that Coco has the affair with another man, he finally passes away. Although castration is the big issue, Tian Tian is not likely to blame with all the fragilities he has had.

Mark demonstrates the power over women especially Coco. He acts as if he were a single man who sleeps with another woman without feeling guilty for his wife and his children. He makes Coco becomes the disloyal girl who hurts her sensitive and gentle boyfriend, Tian Tian. Although it is not only his fault, he should stop Coco from participating in this bad deed. Actually, Mark reinforces Coco of being sexually oppressed. Instead of liberating herself from patriarchy, Coco lets herself indulge in the immoral relationship between Mark and her.

The female narrator of this story does not attempt to portray Tian Tian as the worst Chinese man. Although she describes Tian Tian's soft and weak side, his gentleness, sincerity, true love for her and especially his faith in her make this Chinese male character pathetic and lovable at the same time. It cannot be denied that Tian Tian tremendously helps the female narrator to continue on her writing as it is one of the most important things to make her gain self-worth and self-esteem and it seems that the narrator realizes and appreciates this fact very well. For Mark, the tone of narrating this Western character is, hence, adoring and distasteful at the same time. It is probably because the narrator wants to show both the positive and negative side of westerners that have power over China in the late nineties. The narrator's admiration for Mark's physical appearance may refer to the arrival of western culture and way of life that is totally new and interesting to the Chinese but his predator behavior may refer to the Western that gradually empowers and takes away Chinese's national identity.

Due to the long suppression in the Chinese patriarchy, Wei Hui seems to focus on taking a revenge on Chinese men only by decreasing the masculine roles of the Chinese character in her novel. Chinese man in this text does not seem to

be successful in life: Tian Tian has been depressed, become a drug addict and finally dies of drug overdose. Hui does not take a revenge on Western man may be because Chinese women have lived with Chinese male superiority for so long that they overlook the oppression that can come from Western men as well. It is probably Hui's intention to switch Chinese men roles in whatever ways she wants since she may feel that this is her way of protesting and fighting with Chinese male dominance in her own writing or in her own territory.

Discussion

For Chinese patriarchal society, the Chinese male character, Tian Tian, in this story may be irritating since his characteristics and roles are absolutely reversed from the traditional ones. He, however, is not portrayed only the negative sides. His positive sides are also revealed. Although he superficially can be neither the family leader nor the financially independent man, he psychologically plays the important role in the heroine's life. The presentation of being impotence for Chinese character may be Hui's intention to strive for women's right. On the contrary, taking the motherly role as the gentle, dependent, and caring man might make Chinese men feels uneasy for losing men's power. Nevertheless, Hui is not too harsh on her Chinese male character. From the narration about Tian Tian, the audience cannot hate him but they sympathize him instead for having the miserable life.

Tian Tian has the way to exclude himself from the society. He retreats into his own world by smoking marijuana: "...In his hand was a plastic bag containing several ounces of marijuana. He always smoked lots of marijuana in the buildup to one of his reclusive periods" (Hui, 2001).

Due to the Western masculine theory, Tian Tian's characteristics do not meet all those masculine qualities. He is regarded as "Other" for having the "softer side" or feminine characteristics whereas Mark seems to possess all of those Western men ideals. For Chinese yin/yang theory, Tian Tian tends to have yin more than yang in his body.

He, therefore, has more feminine characteristics than the masculine ones in himself. On the contrary, Mark contains the characters of yang despite its Chinese theory. For Chinese Wen and Wu theories, Tian Tian might have some qualities of Wen: he has painting talents and he appreciates in art and literature. He, however, does not suit with Wu's qualities since he is not physically strong. For Mark, he seems to qualify for Wu's characteristics for his strong physical appearance.

This research disagrees with Zhu's opinions about the balance in Coco's life. Zhu states that she gains the balance in life from Tian Tian's love and Mark's sexual performance (2005). Actually, Coco's life is in crisis due to her affair with Mark. She has to feel guilty all the time although she receives the real sexual orgasm from him that she has never gotten from Tian Tian. The sense of remorse takes her away from the full happiness in life. It, therefore, cannot be said that she has the true happiness. It will be the real contentment if she does not feel ashamed for her wrong doing at all. Nevertheless, Zhu demonstrates Coco's confusion for having both men in her life which is ironically opposite from what Zhu states that Coco's life is balance from these two men.

Suggestions

The next research should deeply examine the relationship between female characters and male characters in this novel especially the female protagonist, Coco, and the major male character, Tian Tian by employing the textual analysis and feminism and masculinity theory to apply with the text.

Conclusions

Tian Tian, the representative of Eastern man and Mark, the representative of Western man have the impact on the female protagonist in different ways. Tian Tian is less masculine than Mark but he is the spiritual support for Coco and helps her find her self-esteem. On the contrary, Mark is more masculine and more powerful than Tian Tian but he can only fulfill her sexual desire.

Moreover, he makes her disgust herself for having the affair with him and lose her self-worth. In the Western masculinity theory, Tian Tian is not qualified for the ideal Western man at all for his physical weakness, financially dependent and lack of self-confidence whereas Mark is the good example of the Western ideal man who is strong, attractive, rich. For Eastern masculinity theory, Tian Tian is yin whereas Mark is yang. For wen/wu's theory, Tian Tian can partly fit with wen's theory while Mark is suitable for wu's theory.

As seen above, the author intends to make the Chinese male character looks feminine and make the Western man looks more masculine. This leads to the more outstanding and powerful characteristics in the Chinese female protagonist. It is the crucial message from the author to stand up for women's right. Yet, Hui still realizes the reality that wild behavior such as having the affair does not truly liberate woman. In fact, it loses woman's self-esteem and self-worth. Besides, adoring the Western male character implies the threatening of Western power into the Chinese society. It seems like Chinese people embrace the new arrival of Western culture without discerning about its empowerment over the old Chinese tradition just like Coco cherishes and succumbs to Mark's sexual appealing.

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