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Analyzing Digital Narratives as Global Social Work Texts: A Case Study of "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker"

Tara La Rose

"The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker"[1] created by tuber[2] Wright Kan[3] is a digital narrative text that serves as an example of social workers' use of digital media technologies and internet-based social media sharing for critical reflection and resistance. Through Internet-based sharing, reflections and contemplations about workplace experiences that once remained personal and individual become digital texts available to a global audience. The accessibility afforded by Internet-based communication technologies fosters the potential for connections to be made between and among social workers across time and space.[4]

1. On YouTube, the title of this digital story appears as: "The discreet charm of the (Bourgeoisie) social worker" and "Le charme discret de la (bourgeois) sociale orker [sic]." For the purpose of the paper the title will be written as: "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker."

2. The term "tuber" denotes a YouTube user who contributes content for sharing, see Patricia Lange, "Videos of Affinity on YouTube," in Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vondereau, eds., *The YouTube Reader* (Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 2009), 78–88.

3. "The discreet charm of the (Bourgeoisie) social worker," YouTube video, 2:01, posted by "Wright Kan," 15 March 2010.

4. Nick Couldry, "Digital Storytelling, Media Research and Democracy: Conceptual Choices and Alternative Futures," in Knut Lundby, ed., *Digital Storytelling, Mediatized Stories: Self Representations in New Media*. (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 41–59.

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For social workers in Canada, this text challenges our understandings about the power of globalization and professionalization to promote particular values and beliefs and to produce superior practice outcomes.[5] As a self-regulating profession, social work in Canada is tied into provincial/regional, national, and international regulatory frameworks. This system of regulation constitutes what it means to be a social worker and to practice social work,[6] limiting the use of the title "social worker" to those who meet the formal educational and licensure requirements. While regulatory bodies may set out the ideals, individual social workers are responsible for actualizing these requirements in practice. In doing so, workers must negotiate a host of challenges and complexities, contexts which receive little acknowledgement from the regulatory organizations.[7] The lack of acknowledgement of systemic barriers that limit workers' capacities to fully actualize these idealized subjectivities may leave individuals with a sense that they are somehow failing as social workers.[8]

Digital media technologies, Internet-based social media sites (like YouTube), and the use of digital media storytelling enhance social workers' capacity to create, distribute, and access representations about their work that are created by the people who do the work.[9] "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker" is an example of this kind of representation. It is a text presenting notions of the contemporary challenges and contradictions facing social workers. These representations are important resources for promoting resistance to the individualization of workplace issues[10] and to the denial of institutional barriers commonly promoted under neo-liberalism.[11] The

5. Steve Hick, *Social Work in Canada*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 2011).

6. Dorothy Kidd and Clemencia Rodríguez, introduction to Clemencia Rodríguez, Dorothy Kidd, and Laura Stein, eds., *Making Our Media: Global Initiatives Toward a Democratic Public Sphere*, vol. 1, *Creating New Communication Spaces* (Creaskill: Hampton Press, 2010), 1–22.

7. Amy Rossiter, "Self as Subjectivity: Toward a Use of Self as Respectful Relations of Recognition," in Deena Mandell, ed., *Revisiting the Use of Self: Questioning Professional Identities* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2007), 21–33; Donna Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice: Building Transformative Politicized Social Work*, 2nd ed. (Black Point: Fernwood Publishing, 2011).

8. Stephen Brookfield, "The Concept of Critical Reflection: Promises and Contradictions," *European Journal of Social Work* 12, 3 (2009): 293; Barbara Heron, *Desire for Development: Whiteness, Gender, and the Helping Imperative* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007).

9. Kidd and Rodríguez, introduction to *Making Our Media*, vol. 1, 1–22.

10. Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*; Tara La Rose, "One Small Revolution: Unionization, Community Practice and Workload in Child Welfare," *Journal of Community Practice* 17, 1 (2009): 223. Tara La Rose, "Digital Stories Through Multi Modal Analysis: A Case Study of Erahoneybee's *Song About A Child Welfare Agency*," *Journal of Human Services and Technology* 30, 3/4 (2012): 299.

11. Kristin Smith, "Occupied Spaces: Unmapping Standardized Assessments in Health and

possibility of social workers witnessing this kind of reflection promotes the potential these workers may consider how these examples relate to their own experiences and hence holds emancipatory opportunity.[12] Furthermore, these representations may allow stereotypes about social work and social workers to be challenged, making room for experiential understandings of professionalization to be considered and alternative understandings of work life to be explicated.[13]

This paper considers the digital media story "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker" as a case study demonstrating the potential depth of meaning that may be made through the use of digital media storytelling. Here Anthony Baldry and Paul J. Thibault's approach to multi-modal analysis is used to deconstruct meanings,[14] demonstrating the ways globalization has not only made social work a transnational profession but has also made the problems facing workers in the field something that may be represented and recognized globally, potentially creating the conditions for the building of a kind of international social work solidarity.

Selecting the Text

Representations of social work, like those presented in "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker," allow us to consider the meaning of globalization within our contemporary practice context. What constitutes this global practice is codified within documents created by organizations like the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) who, together with the Social Development Council (SDC), have created "The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development" (commonly referred to as The Global Agenda by social work organizations). By launching The Global Agenda at the Joint IFSW, IASSW, and SDC world conference in Hong Kong in 2010, these organizations have laid claim to Hong Kong as an important global social work location, framing this place as the "nexus of globalized professional social work." On this basis, consideration of "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker" becomes an interesting (and perhaps ironic) exploration of the experience of global professionalization within the field.

"The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker" was originally selected as part of a larger research study looking at social workers' use of digital media as a tool for critical reflexivity because of its poignant and

Social Service Organizations," in Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*, 197–205.

12. Kidd and Rodríguez, introduction to *Making Our Media*, vol. 1, 1–22.

13. Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice.*

14. Anthony Baldry and Paul J. Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis: A Multimedia Toolkit and Course Book With Associated On-Line Course* (Oakville: Equinox, 2006).

compelling critique. However, as research reflecting a post-structural orientation, this analysis is meant, simply, to be read as an example of social workers' use of Internet-based digital media storytelling, rather than to suggest the text holds fixed and/or empirical meaning[s]. The text was selected using what some scholars have referred to as the "shiny crow method,"[15] which attends to digital media research as a subjective process relying on researchers' intertextual knowledge as the basis on which digital materials are chosen.[16]

"The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker" was created and tubed[17] in March 2010, paralleling a time when Hong Kong's role in this future was emphasized by the IFSW. Based on the IFSW's framing of Hong Kong, we can understand "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker" as an accessible multi-lingual digital text that considers social work in Hong Kong as a representation of global social work. The Global Agenda and "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker," encourage understandings of social work as a globalized profession with standardized skills, knowledge, and activities. Based on these notions, social workers should be able to make meaning from this and other texts about social work, even when these texts are not created in the social workers' locality.

Furthermore, building on the traditions of post-structuralism, the purpose of this paper is to read the digital media text as it is presented, and to engage in particular forms of analysis with an understanding that other researchers and/or other research contexts may arrive at different understandings and interpretations. As post-structural research, this research does not seek to create a "singular reading as truth,"[18] but rather presents a reading of the research informed by the perspective of multi-modal analysis.[19] This research also draws on notions of rhetorical analysis and narrative research, considering in detail the ways in which "thought, language and identity" are part of the process of

15. Megan Boler, "The Politics of Making Claims: Challenges of Qualitative Web-based Research," in Kathleen Gallagher, ed., *The Methodological Dilemma: Creative, Critical and Collaborative Approaches to Qualitative Research* (Toronto: Routledge, 2008), 11–33.

16. There is a significant body of knowledge about digital media research, hyper-media research, and Internet research suggesting that establishing a "media field" in Internet research is a challenge due to the scope of material available and the presence of machine learning algorithms. As a result, what might be understood as "non-conventional approaches" to identifying and selecting materials become necessary and rigorous activities within this type of inquiry; see Bella Dicks, Bruce Mason, Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson, *Qualitative Research and Hypermedia: Ethnography For The Digital Age* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2005).

17. Tubed is a term, which refers to the uploading of material to YouTube. See Lange, "Videos of Affinity on YouTube," 78–88.

18. Sharon Rosenberg, "An Introduction to Feminist Poststructural Theorizing," in Nancy Mandell, ed., *Feminist Issues: Race, Class and Sexuality,* 4th ed. (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 2004), 33–57.

19. Baldry and Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis.*

making a particular argument or presenting a particular idea within a representation. In this way, "form and content are not easily separated."[20] Within multi-modal analysis, digital stories are understood as complex texts and are deconstructed with consideration for the multi-modal and multi-vocal nature of the text.[21]

Complex texts are understood to convey multiple meanings simultaneously, using multiple forms of media, which in turn create multiple layers of content and context through convergence.[22] The process of the research emphasizes deconstruction and attends to the importance of context as a fundamental aspect of meaning making. Telling stories and creating representations of experience are understood to be processes of analysis and inquiry, as creators must understand the situations or issues they seek to represent in nuanced ways in order to be able to recreate and reflect these understandings to others.[23] We must also understand the ways in which rhetorical processes, metaphors, and symbols can be used to express understandings beyond words and beyond the literal in order to create representations that are engaging. Finally, the complexity of multi-modal texts and the process of convergence means that these texts can convey unconscious or unanticipated meaning and allow for intertextual processes to support a broad range of interpretations by audiences who engage with these texts.[24]

Multi-modal analysis embraces elements of narrative analysis, in which deconstruction facilitates an "opening up" of the text, facilitating explorations of "themes and notions" as processes that "systematically exclude or inhibit other themes and categories."[25] Heather Fraser describes narrative analysis as a process of deconstruction and meaning making that relies on supporting knowledge such as theoretical, philosophical and political literatures that consider the role and function of narratives in communication and in shaping social processes. Narratives can operate in real or imagined worlds, in worlds that are "materially based" or mystically constructed, and have the potential to consider understandings of justice and "rights" held by the narrators;

20. Pushkala Prasad, *Crafting Qualitative Research: Working In The Postpositivist Traditions* (Armok: ME Sharpe, 2005).

21. Baldry and Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis*.

22. Jan Fook, *The Reflective Researcher* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1996); Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974/1976); Prasad, *Crafting Qualitative Research*.

23. Baldry and Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis*.

24. Prasad, *Crafting Qualitative Research*.

25. Heather Fraser, "Doing Narrative Research: Analysing Personal Stories Line by Line," *Qualitative Social Work* 3, 2 (2004): 180.

thus narratives can be understood as texts that reveal "beliefs" about "how things should be."[26]

Analyzing The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker

Narrative Summary

Wright Kan's digital story "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker" conveys meaning, in part, through the use of genre and mimetic connection to the famous 1970s film *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*.[27] These connections serve as the basis for Wright Kan's critical reflection on the state of contemporary social work practice in Hong Kong. Through analysis of the meaning of bourgeoisie identity, the "successful" social worker is someone who practices effectively in contemporary institutional settings. The supremacy of this framing of social work under professionalization contrasts traditions of the field emphasizing lived experience as knowledge, collaboration with clients, social change ideals, and social justice goals. This narrative presents several contemporary tensions including: professionalization and the limiting of social work identity, contradiction as inherent in social work, and the restrictive nature of social work workplaces. It implies a parallel between bourgeois class status and professional social work.

The protagonist in "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker" is the social worker. Audiences witness the worker's moral crisis and his attempts to use reflective practice to resolve this crisis, an activity that globalized social workers understand as "good practice."[28] In reading this text, audiences witness a form of critical reflexivity sometimes described as *reflection on reflection on action*. While critical reflection may be used as a tool for resolving ethical dilemmas, in this case, the existential quality of the workers' crisis means this process leads him into even greater angst and internal conflict, rather than producing a tidy resolution. This outcome suggests a limit to the potential of reflecting one's self out of the trouble presented, a trouble that extends beyond the individual.[29]

26. Ed Cannon, "The Discreet Charm of Bourgeoisie [Storyline]," *IMDb.com*, accessed 8 August 2012, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0068361/.

27. Deena Mandell, "Use of Self: Contexts and Dimension," in Mandell, *Revisiting The Use of Self*, 1–19; Rossiter, "Self as Subjectivity," 21–33; Barbara Heron, "Self-Reflection in Critical Social Work Practice: Subjectivity and the Possibilities of Resistance," *Reflective Practice* 6, 3 (2005): 341; Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice.*

28. Mandell, "Use of Self: Contexts and Dimension," 1–19; Kam-shing Yip, "Reflectivity in Social Work Practice with Clients with Mental-Health Illness: Promise and Challenge in Social Work Education," *International Social Work* 49, 2 (2006): 245.

29. Iain Ferguson and Michael Lavalette, "Beyond Power Discourse: Alienation and Social Work," *British Journal of Social Work* 34, 3 (2004): 297.

The social worker's reflection suggests institutional "success" may be a costly achievement, requiring both moral and material sacrifice. Presenting audiences with yet another conflict that in contemporary professional practice is seen as a failure. In the end, reflection helps the social worker consciously feel alienation, leading to a deeper understanding of the role of the institution[s] and society in this experience.[30] The narrative concludes with the phrase "Shall I choose something else…" which leaves the audience to wonder if this means "something else" within this workplace, within the field of social work, or if this "something else" might refer to some other more radical, abstract and/or ethereal choice.

Multi-modality Analysis

Showing and Telling

As a multi-modal text, "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker" conveys multiple kinds of information on a variety of levels.[31] Wright Kan shares his reflection through what is said and shown, through editing and effects used to enhance the artistic nature of the text, and through his choice to publicly share this text through YouTube. These layers may, for example, suggest meanings by illustrating or illuminating contradictions when one layer of the text "says" one thing and another "shows" something else, suggesting disagreements, disconnections, or disjunctures, which signal tensions and dichotomies existing in the experience of practicing social work.[32] Moments of dissonance like those presented by Wright Kan can motivate audiences to consider what they see and hear more deeply, signaling the need to seek out explanations that extend beyond this particular text.[33]

YouTube Channel

Wright Kan's YouTube channel adds meaning to the story.[34] The channel shares an additional 60 publicly accessible digital texts (as of 30 June 2014) covering a wide range of topics. Some are highly produced texts, while others are "amateur videos" without post-production editing. Several of Wright Kan's texts discuss issues related to the Hong Kong Social Workers General Union (HKSWGU).[35]

30. Lange, "Videos of Affinity on YouTube," 78–88; Couldry, "Digital Storytelling, Media Research and Democracy."

31. Baldry and Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis.*

32. Baldry and Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis.*

33. Dicks, Mason, Coffey, and Atkinson, *Qualitative Research and Hypermedia.*

34. Baldry and Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis.*

35. No new texts added to this channel since 2012; we do not know why this tuber is no longer uploading content.

Union Connections: Hong Kong Social Workers General Union

Wright Kan's connection to the HKSWGU suggests there is merit in framing social workers as "workers" in this analysis, and other content on his YouTube channel clearly suggests that working-class experiences helped define "bourgeois" social workers. [36] Together these elements suggest a particular orientation to social work in which politicization, resistance and social justice are important elements of practice.[37] The HKSWGU is an important social work organization in Hong Kong representing the interests of social workers and clients outside of the regulatory regimes common in globalized social work.

The founding of the HKSWGU in 1980 is explained in the organization's literature as a response to changes in government policies and strategies for social welfare services and social workers.[38] In other literature, formation of the HKSWGU is described as a response by social workers to the arrest of community organizers who engaged in peaceful protest around issues of inequality at the neighbourhood level in 1980.[39] Since its inception, the HKSWGU has worked on a variety of campaigns to raise awareness of the effects of policy changes undertaken both before and after Hong Kong's return to governance by the People's Republic of China.

Among processes designed to politicize social workers and encourage critical reflection by members, the HKSWGU has embraced Internet-based communication practices as a resource for building and maintaining solidarity. The HKSWGU has facilitated social justice communication among their members through the development of the Hong Kong SWForum, an online digital discussion site allowing social workers to share information and engage in critique about systemic change, encouraging practices of resistance at both the individual and collective level, in both the digital domain and in the material world. Based on this information, "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker" may suggest experimentation with other digital practices, extending the HKSWGU's Internet presence beyond their institutional website and beyond the SWForum.

36. I thank one of the anonymous reviewers of this paper for drawing my attention to this point.

37. C.S. Leung, C.W. Lam, T.Y. Uay, and W. Chu, "Re-Empowering Social Workers Through Online Community: The Experience Of SwForum In Hong Kong," *Critical Social Policy* 30, 1 (2010): 48.

38. C. W. Lam and Eric Blyth, "Re-Engagement and Negotiation in a Changing Political and Economic Context: Social Work in Hong Kong," *British Journal of Social Work* 44, 1 (2014).

39. Leung, Lam, Uay, and Chu. "Re-Empowering Social Workers through Online Community," 48.

Analysis of Auditory Elements

Sound is an important element in "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker." The single verbal element in the text is that of voice-over narration. The narrator sounds normatively female; she speaks slowly in French. The tone and intonation of the narrator's speech is meaningful even when the language spoken is unknown to the audience. Her voice has a mystical quality; the narration is uneven, its rhythm broken by uneven pauses and periods of silence. These uneven breaks mean listeners cannot easily predict when the next phrase will be uttered. The tension created by this uncertainty means the audience must maintain their focus and attention in order not to miss what comes next.

Another layer of sound, the soundtrack [40] consists of constant drumming; this non-verbal "voice" enhances the overall meaning of the story. This drumming might be read metaphorically as representing heartbeat or history.[41] Taken up this way, the drum-beat suggests the sound might be the bourgeois social worker's heart, meant to remind listeners of the core desire of social workers – always in the background and easily ignored. It may also speak to traditions. Values and beliefs carefully positioned behind this outwardly "global" social work,[42] values and beliefs that may be lost if the globalization of social work can also be understood as a neocolonial practice.[43]

Visual Analysis

The primary visual elements in this text are digital video and text-based captions or subtitles. Audiences see the image of a man dressed in Western business attire (dress pants, a white-collared shirt with a suit coat hung in the background). His "professional appearance" is further presented in his clean-shaven face and short tidy hairstyle. He is shown in an office cubicle with standard business effects (computer, books, papers, etc.) surrounding him.

Visual elements create tension for audiences, demanding once again our attention and focus. At some moments the screen image is too bright, at other times too dim, making viewing uncomfortable. At some moments, the social worker is shown in the centre of the screen, at other moments portions of his body remain outside of the frame, suggesting, perhaps, that at any given

40. Baldry and Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis.*

41. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

42. Angelina W.K. Yuen and Denny K.L. Ho, "Social Work Education in Hong Kong at the Crossroads: Challenges and Opportunities Amidst Marketization And Managerialism," *Social Work Education* 26, 6 (2007): 546.

43. Tara La Rose. "Reading 'World Social Work Day 2010' Through Multi-Modal Analysis," *Critical Social Work* 16, 1 (2015): 243.

moment audiences may not see the "whole" story. The images are at times disjointed where editing has removed portions of the temporal progression, creating a kind of unevenness in the visual elements. In these seconds, viewers cannot predict when change will come, and if it will occur abruptly or in fluid progression – an editing technique that may be read as another metaphor of social workers' experiences. Captions appearing across the bottom of the screen, translating the text from French (verbal) to English (subtitles); for English speakers, this requires a focus on the written-text materials, indirectly back-grounding what is occurring visually.

Convergence

The layering of various communication modes allows for multiple interpretations. As these layers converge, more layers of meanings are created. This convergence reinforces the idea of genre as a meaning-making tool. The interruptions and breaks in both the audio and video are consistent with the traditions of "Surrealism" and "German Impressionism," relying heavily on "silence, convention and narration"[44] elements that echo the film styles used in *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie.* For example, the visual image of the bourgeois social worker is that of a normatively and "hegemonically" male actor. While the choice may mean very little on its own, its meaning is made significant by the fact the voice-over narration is presented as normatively female.

The incongruence between the visual and the auditory provides an opportunity to engage in explorative "questioning"[45] as a means of considering possible explanations where the text provides no firm answers. Explorative questioning affords audiences opportunities to "ope[n] up possible meanings without foreclosing other meanings,"[46] to consider multiple-metaphors and to apply interpretations based on their own intertextual understandings.[47] In this exploration, audiences might ask questions like: does the incongruence between the disembodied voice of the narrator and the embodied gender of the worker have intended meaning? This query may create the potential for more questions like:

1) Does this incongruence suggest that the voice of social work is a female voice?[48]

44. Marsha Kinder, ed., *Luis Buñuel's The Discreet Charm Of The Bourgeoisie* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

45. Baldry and Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis.*

46. Rosenberg, "An Introduction to Feminist Poststructural Theorizing," 33–57.

47. Baldry and Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis.*

48. Demographics suggest the field of social work is dominantly female with approximately

2) If the voice of social work is female, how does this lead us to consider the idea of social work as maintaining a feminine consciousness?[49]

3) How might this feminine consciousness lead us to consider a unique position, a particular moral understanding, a different kind of voice[50] as it were, which guides the morality of social work and which in turn, guides our understanding of the problem with the neoliberal social work depicted in this story?[51]

The visual materials provide us with an image of the social worker's actions and attitudes even when not reinforced by the soundtrack of the story. These actions deepen the meaning of the words expressed and suggest metaphors that link reflection and action.[52] The social worker's feelings are shown physically through facial expressions (which are frequently sad or "flat"). He is shown looking in a mirror several times during the narrative, which may be understood as the action of reflection and the metaphoric presentation of reflection at the same time. His actions and reflections reinforce each other in what has been described as a co-constitutive process.[53] It seems, the more he looks, the more he seems to see himself, and to respond facially to his own reflection. This suggests he is engaged in "praxis" with multiple layers of reflection and action resulting in the social worker's deepened understanding of his circumstances, which informs his next set of actions.[54] Looking, it seems, leads to seeing, which suggests the benefit of looking in order to see more.

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86 per cent of all social workers identifying as "female." See Robert Schilling, Jennifer Naranjo Morrish, and, Gan Liu, "Demographic Trends in Social Work: Over a Quarter-Century in an Increasingly Female Profession," *Social Work* 53, 2 (2008): 103–114.

49. The origin of social work is understood to come from the charity work of women supported by historical understanding of women's biological inclination to caregiving or what some scholars refer to as "maternal feminism." See Carol T. Baines, Patricia M. Evans, and, Sheila M. Neysmith, *Women's Caring: Feminist Perspectives on Social Welfare* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart: 1991).

50. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

51. These are but a few possible questions, with many more potential questions emerging from the audiences' own interpretations and understandings of the materials presented; see Baldry and Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis*.

52. Mandell, "Use of Self: Contexts and Dimension," 1–19; Izumi Sakamoto and Ronald O. Pinter, "Use of Critical Consciousness in Anti-Oppressive Practice: Disentangling Power Dynamics at Personal and Structural Levels," *British Journal of Social Work* 35, 4 (2005): 435; Yip, "Reflectivity in Social Work Practice with Clients with Mental-Health Illness," 245.

53. Baldry and Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis;* Mandell, "Use of Self: Contexts and Dimension," 1–19; Sakamoto and Pinter. "Use of Critical Consciousness in Anti-Oppressive Practice" 435; Yip. "Reflectivity in Social Work Practice with Clients with Mental-Health Illness," 245.

54. Jean Fay, "Let Us Work Together: Welfare Rights and Anti-Oppressive Practice," in Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*, 64–78; Meaghan Ross, "Social Work Activism Amidst

This action of looking in the mirror may also be understood as metaphor and as symbolically representing the ability to engage in self-reflection as a measure of morality. When the bourgeois social worker looks in the mirror, he may be understood symbolically to be testing, or checking his moral integrity.[55] Our readings of these actions are supported by the captions, which translate the narration. For French-language speakers, the narrator's words may simply serve this purpose, but for Anglophones like me, reading what we take to be thought and felt by the bourgeois social worker is necessary to inform understanding.

These metaphoric representations allow audience members access to the "internal" thought processes and reflections of the social worker. In his reflection, he discusses the tensions existing between compensation, wages and benefits, work design, workload, work-life, and his own sense of self and desires, all relayed through the use of symbols, metaphors and discourses common in social work. Here the text relies on audiences' situated knowledge of "all things social work" to make meaning.[56] In this context, the more situated an audience member's knowledge, the more complex the meanings become. For example, "paperwork" may be understood as a symbol of managerial practice,[57] but a more complex situated symbol such as the term "MPS" may require specific knowledge and/or decoding for meaning to emerge. The term MPS most likely refers to the Civil Service Master Pay Scale,[58] suggesting the wage level this social worker is paid. However, in the contemporary context of social work in Hong Kong, the MPS is also symbolic of changes in government funding structures within non-governmental organizations. Changes to the funding formulas mean that many organizations can no longer pay competitive salaries to experienced workers,[59] an experience that may be understood as a metaphor which ties into contemporary discourses that argue social work is increasingly devalued under neoliberal regimes.

Neoliberalism: A Big, Broad Tent of Activism," in Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*, 251–264; Gerard Egan, *The Skilled Helper: A Problem-Management and Opportunity-Development Approach to Helping* (Pacific Grove: Thomson Brooks/Cole, 2009).

55. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By.*

56. Couldry, "Digital Storytelling, Media Research and Democracy," 41–59.

57. Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice.*

58. "Master Pay Scale," Civil Service Bureau, The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, last modified 17 July 2015, http://www.csb.gov.hk/english/admin/pay/42.html.

59. Lam and Blyth, "Re-Engagement and Negotiation," 1; Yuen and Ho, "Social Work Education in Hong Kong"; Leung, Lam, Uay, and Chu, "Re-Empowering Social Workers through Online Community," 48.

Disjuncture

Convergence presents us with another disjuncture when we consider the racial identity of the social worker, the language spoken by the narrator and the language of the story's subtitles. The narrator speaks in French, the subtitles are in English and the racial appearance of the social worker is "Asian." From the information provided in Wright Kan's channel profile, we know that he lives in Hong Kong and, therefore, we might presume his nationality to be Chinese, although this may be an error or misinterpretation. Hong Kong's history as a British colony complicates this understanding,[60] so nationality and cultural identity are amorphous when we think about this social worker, particularly when placed in the context of globalized social work as promoted by the IFSW.[61]

The presence of these identity markers might be used normatively to create particular meanings about the identity of the social worker. This desire for phenotypology[62] may lead to experiences of dissonance for audiences because the race, gender, nationality, and linguistic traditions presented in this story do not align hegemonically. In this case, the multi-modal elements do not reinforce normative understandings of gender, racial, and national identity as uniform categories or as ordering processes, suggesting the need to problematize identity and develop more complex notions of identity when working in global contexts.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality is an important aspect of reading complex texts through the lens of multi-modal analysis. Mimetic connections exist between Wright Kan's text and the film *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie,* established through the referential title, genre, and editing techniques employed in the digital narrative. These mimetic connections suggest the benefit of establishing an intertextual relationship between these two texts and from the broad range of scholarly literature that also reference Bunuel's film.

There is a significant body of literature built upon the content and context of *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*[63] exploring and analyzing a variety of different social situations and environments. This breadth of scholarship

60. La Rose, "Reading 'World Social Work Day 2010.'"

61. Hick, *Social Work in Canada.*

62. Hick, *Social Work in Canada.*

63. Dominique Russell, "Luis Buñuel," *Senses of Cinema*, last modified April 2005, http://sensesofcinema.com/2005/great-directors/bunuel/.

includes considerations of: bureaucracy,[64] performativity,[65] surrealism,[66] attraction,[67] innovation and growth,[68] feminist economics,[69] new digital media,[70] and narrative.[71] Of particular note are texts focusing on middle class identity and the relevance of locality in the construction and maintenance of middle class identity.[72]

The film title is a reference to particular themes and representations, requiring further deconstruction and analysis. Exploring the intertextual meaning of the title through consideration of the discourses activated through the title-meme is prudent. The idea of "being discreet" may mean undertaking "speech and actions" designed to "avoid embarrassment," maintain "confidentiality" or remain "unobtrusive."[73] Thus notions of secrecy, covertness, and selective acknowledgement as "codes of behaviour" are part of this mimetic meaning.

The concept of "charm" also holds meaning in the title. Charm is sometimes defined as a "blessing," "spell or incantation," or the "infusion … [of] … holiness, divine will or…hopes"[74] or as a process of "losing control." As a

64. Alexandru Cistelecan, "The Discrete Charm of Bureaucracy: A Lacanian Theory of the Bureaucratic Mechanism," PhD thesis, LUISS Guido Carli, 2011.

65. Ibon Izurieta. "Performativity in Buñuel's 'The Phantom of Liberty' and 'The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie,'" *The Modern Language Review* 103, 3 (2008): 735.

66. Roger R. Rejda, "Surrealism and Bunuel's 'The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie,'" PhD thesis, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1981, Paper AAI8122601.

67. Paul Begin "Buñuel, Eisenstein, and the 'Montage of Attractions': An Approach to Film in Theory and Practice," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 83, 8 (2006): 1113.

68. Gerald Silverberg, "The Discrete Charm of the Bourgeoisie: Quantum and Continuous Perspectives on Innovation and Growth," *Research Policy* 31, 8 (2002): 1275.

69. Deirdre N. McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain The Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

70. Marsha Kinder, "Hot Spots, Avatars, and Narrative Fields Forever: Buñuel's Legacy for New Digital Media and Interactive Database Narrative," *Film Quarterly* 55, 4 (2002): 2.

71. Harmony Wu, "Unraveling Entanglements of Sex, Narrative, Sound, and Gender: The Discreet Charm of Belle de Jour," in Kinder, ed., *Luis Buñuel's The Discreet Charm Of The Bourgeoisie*, 213.

72. Michal Buchowski, "The Unbearable Lightness of Metaphor and its Discreet Charm," *Narodna umjetnost: hrvatski* časopis *za etnologiju i folkloristiku* 33, 1 (1996): 9; Olga Mesropova, "The Discreet Charm of the Russian Bourgeoisie: Oksana Robski and Glamour in Russian Popular Literature," *The Russian Review* 68, 1 (2009): 89; Denis Donoghue, "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie: Taste and Middle-Class Values," review of *Taste: A Literary History* by Denise Gigante, *Harper's Magazine*, 1 February 2006, http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-142479807.html.

73. *Oxford Dictionaries*, s.v. "discreet," accessed 2 March 2014, http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/discreet?q=discreet.

74. These are but a few possible questions, with many more potential questions emerging from the audiences' own interpretations and understandings of the materials presented.

trait, charm is described as "charisma" and as the capacity to "draw people in."[75] Taken together, we might understand this to mean bourgeois codes of behaviour produce a kind of control of others (through discipline, desire, mystique, and/or coercion) extending to the expression of particular attitudes and behaviours maintained through the desirability of bourgeois identity.

Bourgeois[ie] Subjectivities in Social Work

Barbara Heron has established a relationship between bourgeois identity and social work identity in which the work of helping is understood as a process that allows "abject subjects" to gain greater social status. She suggests people who take on helping roles often do so out of a desire for personal moral redemption, or as a means of gaining (or maintaining) greater social status and upward mobility. The desire for this kind of social advancement may occur consciously or unconsciously, which raises questions about the "hidden agenda" of helping activities. This in turn raises questions about the potential of the globalization of professional social work as a kind of neocolonial activity[76] since professionalization in social work reinforces this notion of increased social standing and positive moral recognition as important benefits stemming from this kind of social work identity.

Discourses of "professional respectability" show how particular codes of behaviour produce the kind of respectability associated with middle class identities and which have also become required in "professional identities."[77] In this way, professionalization may be understood as a kind of "making" middle class; in social work, this "making" includes the normalization of certain behaviours through sanction and codification,[78] making certain actions, values, and beliefs necessary for recognition as a social worker, while prohibiting others.[79] Professionalization constitutes social work as an identity[80]

75. *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Charm," accessed 2 March 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charm.

76. Michael André Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival: Resentment and the Abject Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1992); Geoffrey Brennan and Philip Petit, "The Hidden Economy of Esteem," *Economics and Philosophy* 16 (2000): 77; Barbara Heron, *Desire for Development.*

77. Kate Huppatz, "Respectability and the Paid Caring Occupations: An Empirical Investigation of Normality, Morality, Impression Management, Esteem in Nursing and Social Work," *Health Sociology Review* 19, 1 (2010): 73.

78. Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice;* Deborah Brock, "Moving Beyond Deviance: Power, Regulation and Governmentality," in Deborah Brock, ed., *Making Normal: Social Regulation In Canada* (Scarborough: Thomson-Nelson, 2004), 9–13; Brennan and Petit, "The Hidden Economy of Esteem," 77; Huppatz, "Respectability and the Paid Caring Occupations," 73.

79. Judith Butler. "Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transexuality," *GLQ* 7, 4 (2004): 621; Hick, *Social Work in Canada.*

80. Robert Adams, Lena Dominelli, and Malcolm Payne, *Critical Practice in Social Work,* 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2009); Hick, *Social Work in Canada*; Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive*

and, therefore, particular acts of respectability and middle class identity must extend to social workers' behaviour and actions even beyond work hours.

Social work identities activate notions of bourgeois identities constituted through the framing of an "ideal subject" who is white, male, heterosexual, able-bodied, and Christian. In the context of Hong Kong, this reinforces the introduction of social work as an element of British colonial rule.[81] Those of us who do not fall into the category of the "ideal subject," who embody "other" identities, are, in this framing of social work, "always already lacking"[82] and are, therefore, always having to prove worth, morality and authenticity consistent with what it means to be professional.[83] This "lacking" status may be used to manipulate social workers, to keep them complacent, and to prevent them from mobilizing for their own best interests.[84]

Michal Buchowski suggests the metaphors of *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* present the "light and shadows of bourgeois life," framing this positionality as, at times so paradoxically "light" as to be "unbearable" and "highly dubious,"[85] yet these identities are already always desirable and correct. In this way, Wright Kan may be inviting considerations of the dubious nature of professional social work and the dubiousness of the subjects' understood (and required) to maintain this position. It is a position consistent with the views of politicized social workers who have called into question reforms to social welfare practices described as improvements to the system,[86] including global professionalization.[87]

Professionalization

Wright Kan challenges understandings of the rewards of global professionalization presented by organizations like the IFSW. The social mobility,

Practice.

81. Lam and Blyth, "Re-Engagement and Negotiation," 1; Yuen and Ho, "Social Work Education in Hong Kong at the Crossroads," 546.

82. Brock, "Moving Beyond Deviance"; Heron, *Desire for Development*; Tanya Titchkosky, "Disability in the News: A Reconsideration of Reading," *Disability and Society* 20, 6 (2005): 655–668.

83. Brennan and Petit, "The Hidden Economy of Esteem," 77; Brock, "Moving Beyond Deviance."

84. Brookfield, "The Concept of Critical Reflection," 293; La Rose, "One Small Revolution," 243; Sakamoto and Pinter, "Use of Critical Consciousness in Anti-Oppressive Practice," 435.

85. Buchowski, "The Unbearable Lightness of Metaphor and its Discreet Charm," 9.

86. Leung, Lam, Uay, and Chu, "Re-Empowering Social Workers through Online Community," 48.

87. Bob Mullaly, *The New Structural Social Work*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2007).

respect, authority, and other rewards linked to professionalization have largely failed to materialize.[88] Wright Kan's story suggests that our desire for this kind of recognition has a cost, as professionalization eliminates a number of other aspects of social work that workers also desire.[89]

The comparison of institutional social work and middle-class lifestyle is a significant theme presented in this narrative. Analysis of middle-class representations presented in *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* show the middle class to be "profoundly complacent … self-satisfied and self-serving," maintaining understandings of the world as "all for the best, even when plainly not the best for all.…"[90] This critique of the original text suggests professionalization is a self-serving act, one that benefits regulators, produces complacency, and alienates workers from many client populations; this professionalization makes social workers politically impotent because challenging the system means challenging the privileged place the profession has carved out for itself and the benefits brought to individual workers.[91]

In establishing further parallels between the film *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* and the digital media story "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker," the concepts of repression and self-discipline appear as common themes. Dominique Russell suggests repression and self-discipline are fundamental tasks of middle class identity and can be seen as elements extending across many aspects of middle class life.[92] Marsha Kinder and Russell identify sexual and political repression as specific examples considered in *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*; here repression is produced through violence and is used recursively to explain the production of violence.[93]

This repression and violence is shown to occur at both the individual and societal levels. When violence is exposed, it is often dismissed by the bourgeoisie as "bad manners" or as a miscalculation to be remade as a breach of

88. Beverley J. Antle, Joan MacKenzie Davis, Donna. Baines, et al., *OASW Quality of Work Life Survey: Final Report*. (Toronto: Ontario Association of Social Workers, 2006); Marylee Stephenson, *In Critical Demand: Social Work in Canada; Executive Summary*, Canadian Association of Social Workers, accessed 23 June 2002, http://www.casw-acts.ca/en/critical-demand-social-work-canada-volume-1-final-report-2000; Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*; Huppatz, "Respectability and the Paid Caring Occupations," 73; Mullaly, *The New Structural Social Work*.

89. Jane Aronson and Kristin Smith, "Managing Restructured Social Services: Expanding the Social?," *British Journal of Social Work* 40, 2 (2004): 530; Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*; Smith, "Social Work, Restructuring and Everyday Resistance," 145–159; Kristin Smith, "Activist Social Workers in Neoliberal Times: Who are We Becoming Now?," PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2011; Smith, "Occupied Spaces," 197–213.

90. Buchowski, "The Unbearable Lightness of Metaphor and its Discreet Charm," 9.

91. Kinder, "Hot Spots Avatars and Narrative Fields Forever," 2

92. Russell, "Luis Buñuel."

93. Russell, "Luis Buñuel"; Kinder, "Hot Spots, Avatars, and Narrative Fields Forever," 2.

the compact that makes middle class identity exist, rather than as a matter of real harm or moral culpability.[94] We can understand this analysis to suggest a parallel with the creation of professional social work identity. Social workers in professional contexts are expected to engage in a kind of self-discipline and in the discipline of others, the loss of other aspects of social work is simply a necessary outcome.[95]

Wright Kan invites us to consider the social worker and his experience in an institutional setting through the lens of these understandings. While a variety of understandings of professional social work exist,[96] one of the core ideas in this framing is the marking of particular kinds of behaviours, attitudes and beliefs as necessary attributes of the social worker's subjective position.[97] Social workers are meant to subscribe to professional standards, codes of practice, and codes of behaviour applied when they take on this social work identity.[98] That being said, the particular interpretations of professional social work suggest social workers must occupy particular kinds of social positions, requiring particular kinds of social performances.[99] In this way, *social workers as professionals* become regulated and "disciplined bodies," a subjectification that separates them from other professionals, from other lay helpers who are not professionalized, and from clients.[100] These boundaries are set out in the texts produced by the regulating bodies[101] and enacted through the workers' practices of self-regulation.[102]

94. Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival: Resentment and The Abject Hero*; Rossiter, "Self as Subjectivity," 21–33.

95. Adams, Dominelli, and Payne, *Critical Practice in Social Work*; Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*; Bob Mullaly, *Challenging Oppression and Confronting Privilege* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010).

96. Adams, Dominelli, and Payne, *Critical Practice in Social Work*; Baines. *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice.*

97. Huppatz, "Respectability and the Paid Caring Occupations," 73; Sakamoto and Pinter, "Use of Critical Consciousness in Anti-Oppressive Practice," 435.

98. Adams, Dominelli, and Payne, *Critical Practice in Social Work.*

99. Brookfield, "The Concept of Critical Reflection," 293; Hick, *Social Work in Canada*; Huppatz, "Respectability and the Paid Caring Occupations," 73; Malcolm Payne, "Practice Theory: Ideas Embodied in a Wise Person's Professional Practice," in William Borden, ed., *Reshaping Theory in Contemporary Social Work: Toward a Critical Pluralism in Clinical Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 342–254.

100. Huppatz, "Respectability and the Paid Caring Occupations," 73; Payne, "Practice Theory," 342–254.

101. Hick, *Social Work in Canada*; Payne, "Practice Theory," 342–254.

102. Sakamoto and Pinter, "Use of Critical Consciousness in Anti-Oppressive Practice," 435; Smith, "Social Work, Restructuring and Everyday Resistance," 145–159; Smith, "Activist Social Workers in Neoliberal Times"; Smith, "Occupied Spaces," 197–213.

This kind of coded behaviour and the "boundaried" relations between social workers and clients is maintained in part by a mystique surrounding social work practice. This mystique is created, enforced, and maintained through particular uses of language and through sanctioned epistemologies.[103] Social work is, "worded into existence," coming to be known through the foregrounding of certain kinds of knowledge and the back-grounding or disregarding of other kinds of knowledge.[104] This becomes, in part, the purpose of professionalization, and in part, the desired effect of professionalization.[105] While this kind of framing of social work may be heartily embraced by some, it is also contested by many.[106]

In order to maintain boundaries and mystique, the professional organizations and associations creating and promoting this kind of social work demand a significant amount of "forgetting" from the social work "community."[107] It is forgetting and discreet behaviour that maintain this kind of social work, a forgetting that Wright Kan, the bourgeois social worker, and many others appear unwilling to undertake.[108] Here, the violence of repression presented by Russell and Kinder can be paralleled with the frustration experienced by the Social Worker at the loss of the social work activities and values he desires. He expresses frustration with the design of his work, with paperwork superseding direct client contact, and with possibilities of practice being reduced to funding applications. He is frustrated that his identity as a social worker is reduced to a "business suit" and "business mind."

Wright Kan's consideration of social work as more than funding applications, paperwork, and business thinking is a sentiment reflected across a broad range of social work literature, suggesting political labour, work for social change, critique of employers, funders and society at large, politicization, and collectivization of clients are also fundamental aspects of social work practice.[109] Furthermore, this literature suggests that in a neoliberal context these aspects of practice have been largely stripped away, replaced

103. Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*; Jan Fook, *Social Work: Critical Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2002).

104. Leung, Lam, Uay, and Chu, "Re-empowering Social Workers through Online Community"; Lam and Blyth, "Re-Engagement and Negotiation," 1.

105. Mullaly, *Challenging Oppression and Confronting Privilege.*

106. Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*; Smith, "Occupied Spaces," 197–213.

107. Leung, Lam, Uay, and Chu, "Re-Empowering Social Workers through Online Community," 48.

108. Leung, Lam, Uay, and Chu. "Re-Empowering Social Workers through Online Community," 48.

109. Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*; Lam and Blyth, "Re-Engagement and Negotiation," 1; Mullaly, *The New Structural Social Work;* Smith, "Occupied Spaces"; Leung, Lam, Uay, and Chu, "Re-Empowering Social Workers Through Online Community," 48.

with administrative, managerial and actuarial functions.[110] Clinical practices have, in many cases, been replaced with case management activities, reducing the work to an assessment, eligibility and monitoring role.[111] For many social workers, this kind of work is experienced as a form of repression[112] in which, as the Bourgeois[ie] social worker suggests, workers are left "*with an idle mind*" and "*busy hands.*"

Power

The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie satirizes power as expressed through the imposition of middle class values and identities and through the imposition of binaries. The film uses individual relationships to symbolize national identities and international relations, as well as euro-centrism.[113] Corruption is shown among the socially valued characters in the film through opportunistic, self-preserving and abusive behaviours. In this text, power is maintained through the characters' capacity to engage in immoral activities continually,[114] a framing of power that concurs with those promoted in anti-oppressive social work.[115]

Wright Kan presents this theme when the social worker is unable to reflect his way out of his crisis. The narrative shows us the protagonist's attempts to reconcile and understand, pointing to the systemic nature of these issues, eventually leading to the conclusion that *continued participation is part of what maintains and recreates this system.* To remain in this work in this way, as he states, is to "choose" to become this kind of social worker; it is to give into the colonization of social work, to accept middle class values, and to subscribe to *upward mobility as a substitute for social change*.

Wright Kan presents the Social Worker as a discontented character. He is discontented with all that we as social workers are told should bring us professional satisfaction.[116] The social worker shown in the digital narrative is the consummate professional social worker – rather than being outraged by this

110. Jane Aronson and Sheila. Sammon, "Practice amid Social Service Cuts and Restructuring: Working With the Contradictions of 'Small Victories,'" *Canadian Social Work Review* 17, 2 (2000): 167; Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*; La Rose, "One Small Revolution," 243; Smith, "Social Work, Restructuring and Everyday Resistance"; Smith, "Activist Social Workers in Neoliberal Times."

111. Smith, "Occupied Spaces," 197–213.

112. Leung, Lam, Uay, and Chu, "Re-Empowering Social Workers through Online Community," 48.

113. Russell, "Luis Buñuel."

114. Kinder, "Hot Spots, Avatars, and Narrative Fields Forever," 2.

115. Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*; Mullaly, *The New Structural Social Work*; Leung, Lam, Uay, and Chu, "Re-Empowering Social Workers Through Online Community," 48.

116. Antle, MacKenzie, Baines, et al., *OASW Quality of Work Life Survey: Final Report.*

dissatisfaction, he is shown in a state of quiet crisis, which he attempts to resolve through reflection. We can understand his state as a practice of professionalism, for a professional social worker maintains control, represses emotion, is obedient and compliant to authority, discreet with troubles, assuming them to be individual realities and thus complacent in their reproduction.[117]

Reflection is shown to lead to action when the protagonist packs up his belongings, leaves his desk, and chooses "life" (as he describes it). This may be seen in part as a demonstration of the power of reflection and its capacity to bring about change,[118] though not immediately on the scale desired. The character of the social worker presents reflection as a necessary aspect of professional practice, yet he forgets the importance of breaking silences, fostering connections, building communities, politicizing individual issues, organizing and mobilizing for change.[119]

In this way, Wright Kan's story also illustrates the power of employers to shape the reality of social work as an everyday practice because they maintain control over the conditions and processes of work, easily superseding the power of professional identity and the codes of conduct presented in ethical guidelines and regulatory texts.[120] The conditions of the workplace can make the conditions of professionalization almost impossible to meet and the conditions of professionalization make the actions necessary to create workplace change forbidden.[121] Thus, the idea of being a social worker and bringing about social change becomes mostly a matter of the chase and rarely a matter of the "catch."

Conclusion

This analysis of "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie Social Worker" demonstrates how intertextuality, analysis of discrete elements in the text (captions, visual and auditory elements, genre, post-production effects, etc.), and consideration of convergence create meaning in digital narratives. These

117. Huppatz, "Respectability and the Paid Caring Occupations," 73; Payne, "Practice Theory," 342–254.

118. Heron, "Self-Reflection in Critical Social Work Practice," 341; Sakamoto and Pinter, "Use of Critical Consciousness in Anti-Oppressive Practice," 435.

119. Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*; Fook, *Social Work: Critical Theory and Practice*; Hick, *Social Work in Canada;* Lam and Blyth, "Re-Engagement and Negotiation," 1; Mullaly, *The New Structural Social Work.*

120. Donna Baines, "Losing the 'Eyes in the Back of our Heads': Social Service Skills, Lean Caring, and Violence," *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 31, 3 (2004): 31; Baines, *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice*; La Rose, "One Small Revolution," 243; Leung, Lam, Uay, and Chu, "Re-Empowering Social Workers through Online Community," 48.

121. Lam and Blyth, "Re-Engagement and Negotiation," 1; La Rose, "Digital Stories Through the Lens of Multi Modal Analysis," 299.

meanings are at times ambiguous and/or take on the form of contradiction, which encourages audiences to find out more about the potential meanings of what is presented. Analysis of these layers using disciplinary specific theoretical materials and/or scholarship further enhances the meanings created, allowing the potential of these texts to exist in more than one context at the same time.

For social workers, digital media narratives afford opportunities for shared experiences to be realized between and among colleagues who are neither temporally nor proximally connected. The IFSW's notion of global social work suggests that social workers from around the world can and do make shared meaning from these stories while at the same leaving space for different interpretations based on the context, environment, inter-subjective and intertextual knowledge brought by these audiences. In this way, social media sharing of digital media narratives shows potential to support shared understandings of the challenges and successes of social work. In particular, the narratives of direct service workers whose lived experiences reveal the complexity of attempting to actualize professional goals and values illustrate the gaps existing between the ideals established by regulatory bodies and the context in which practice occurs. The shared understandings emerging suggest the potential and need for the development of a global movement of social workers outside of the formal social work institutions now in existence. Wright Kan's connection to the HKSWGU is an excellent example of the potential for organized responses that take up discourses of resistance and solidarity, rather than simply adopting those of professionalization and regulation without question.

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