

Yihan Lin's and Siqu Fang's Writing, Speech and Resistance in *Siqu Fang's First Love Paradise*

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Introduction

Siqi Fang's First Love Paradise (Paradise) is the only novel that the Taiwanese writer Yihan Lin left behind before she committed suicide in 2017. Lin was seduced and raped by her cram school teacher Guohsing Chen (also known as Hsing Chen, his pseudonym), developed serious psychological conditions and wrote her experience into the novel. In the novel, Siqi is raped by her middle-aged neighbor Guohua Lee, who has been very experienced in raping and manipulating his cram school female students for years. Throughout a nightmarish period of five years, Siqi keeps deceiving herself that she loves Guohua Lee so that she can get rid of the shame of being raped. Guohua Lee, on the other hand, fabricates beautiful words and rhetoric into his tool to trick Siqi into deeper fascination with him. Yiting Liu, Siqi's bestie, and Yiwen Hsu, the enlightenment of literature and the mature female model to the two girls, have tried their best to rescue Siqi's tormented mind but in vain.

Lin's death and her autobiographical novel gave rise to intensive public discourse around the inequality between instructors and students in the education environment and the phenomenon of victim-shaming that is believed to have its root in traditional Taiwanese ideology of women. What I found in news reports of the incident and literary analyses of the novel, however, was that Lin and her attempt to fight against the patriarchal system was not the center of these discourses. As soon as Guohsing Chen had been confirmed to be the predator, his name struck every newspaper's headline like an inevitable storm. News reports paid more attention to his background and whether he was guilty than to Lin and her story. In many literary analyses, the analysts tended to put Siqi at the position of a vulnerable, passive victim and Guohua Lee a cunning, sophisticated exploiter of the structure. They ignored Siqi's voice and resistance when they were contextualizing the structural violence of patriarchy that the novel reflects. In my

opinion, these news reports and literary analyses are perpetrator-centric and ignorant of Lin and Siqui's resistance, and thus implicitly victimize Lin and Siqui again. They all fall into the trap of patriarchal narrative – the traditional narrative in which the powerful and the privileged are always at the center.

In contrast to these victimizing reports and analyses, I discovered that Lin was an active rebel that resisted the system by creating her own language in her novel. She literally constructed her own language with the lip-reading between Siqui and Yiting and Siqui's diary. These two languages are kept away from Guohua Lee, symbolizing the feminist secret that will never be corrupted by Lee's perverse words and rhetoric. Through these two languages, Lin was able to break free the trap of patriarchal narrative and gained her agency through her writing. Furthermore, I examine how Lin depicted Guohua Lee the perpetrator, to see how she managed to contextualize the patriarchal violence without falling into the trap of patriarchal narrative.

This scope of analysis can serve as a more empowering way to look at narratives of trauma. By putting at the center the victims and their resistance instead of the oppressors and their means of oppression, it is possible to manifest the structural problem without further victimizing the victims.

Victimization or Empowerment: Social and Scholarly Discourse around Lin and *Paradise*

In her interview with Readmoo, an eBook company in Taiwan, Lin mentioned that she based Guohua Lee, the predator in the novel, on a real person in her life. "He is the shrunken fake of the shrunken fake of Lancheng Hu," she said. At the very beginning of *Paradise*, she also wrote, "Adapted from a true story." All these clues pointed to a hidden predator that was not immediately revealed after Lin's death in April 2017. Lin's parents suggested that their daughter

based Siqi Fang on herself and that she was raped by a cram school teacher. About a month later, a Kaohsiung city councilor stood out and claimed that Guohsing Chen was the predator. After this, nearly all newspapers shifted their focus from Lin to Chen. Examining the headline of news after May 2017 by *Liberty Times Net*, *United Daily News* and *China Times*, the three biggest news companies in Taiwan, I found that “Guohsing Chen,” “Hsing Chen” and “狼師 (láng shī, which means predatory teachers)” took the place of Lin’s name. From May 9th to May 25th, *Liberty Times News* had 11 consecutive online news reports that had “Guohsing Chen” or “Hsing Chen” in its headline, while Lin’s full name appeared only twice. From May 4th to June 21st, *China Times* had 25 online news reports with “Guohsing Chen,” “Hsing Chen” and “狼師” in its headline, while Lin appeared for fewer than ten times, sometimes as her full name, sometimes as “the female writer” or “the female whose last name is Lin.” *United Daily News* had less news about this incident, but Lin was also frequently absent in the headline or appeared not as her full name but as “the female writer.” The disproportionate appearance of Lin’s and Chen’s names in news headlines implied that these news companies were putting Chen at the center of their news stories, while the phenomenon that Lin didn’t appear as her full name implied that she was no longer considered an active subject within the social discourse in which she was supposed to be the most important figure. News reports have strong power in leading the public conversation about significant issues, influencing the public’s opinions, and inspiring meaningful social or political movement. These news reports, however, were not promoting feminism by pursuing the truth behind this incident or decentralizing the patriarchal narrative but centralizing the perpetrator and obscuring Lin. Furthermore, the contents of these news reports were mainly about Chen’s education background, his side of the story and whether he was going to be sentenced to a penalty. Giving the perpetrator more attention can implicitly prevent the public

from reflecting the issue from the victim's point of view and make the perpetrator some kind of icon or celebrity that certain groups of people can utilize to trigger negative conversations. Lin, as the victim, had been submerged by the narrative that the patriarchal society generated to manipulate victims. In the social discourse circumstanced by news reports with biased focus on the perpetrator, Lin was again muted and victimized.

In scholarly discourse, we can also see further victimization of Siqu and perpetrator-centric analysis. Kun Liu, a Ph.D. of Chinese Literature from Nankai University, published a review on *Paradise* titled "The Three Original Sins of Reading Siqu Fang's First Love Paradise" ("閱讀《房思琪的初戀樂園》的三重原罪"). In this review, Liu mainly focuses on the formation of the patriarchal society and Guohua Lee's strategy of deception, seduction and exploitation, but hardly does she mention Siqu's resistance. Siqu's position as a victim is firmly anchored: "I have a sense of an original sin, an original sin of gender – those raped girls in the novel could be me, my peers, neighbors or sisters. We have been anchored as 'victims' by a kind of logic of gender" (33). Liu doesn't fall into the trap of patriarchal narrative simply because of her argument that women are inherently victimized by gender discrimination. The argument reflects the important insight that rape is a structural problem rooted in gender discrimination. The reason why she cannot achieve an empowering feminist statement, however, is that she put the perpetrator at the center of her review instead of the victim. Apart from the original sin of gender, she then goes on to elaborate the original sin of career and profession. She contends that Guohua Lee, as a cram school teacher who teaches Chinese, utilizes the Chinese tradition of "honoring the teacher and respecting their teaching" (尊師重道) to control Siqu with self-shaming and mesmerizes her with "magnificently ornated words and loves words as if he is lecturing on the stage" (34). Guohua Lee exemplifies Liu's argument that "every Chinese man

has a dream of being the emperor, a dream that cannot be realized through politics or reality. Through ‘gender politics,’ through men’s invasion, exploitation, insult, and oppression, however, these men can be perversely satisfied” (35). It isn’t difficult to notice that Liu’s review is not really about Siqu, but about Guohua Lee. This kind of perpetrator-centric analysis allowed Guohua Lee to rob Siqu of the opportunity to voice herself as he robbed her of her life. How can victims like Siqu draw the attention of the public if they are left in the darkness, while the predators are immersed in the spotlight? Despite her clear consciousness of the correlation between misogyny and rape, Liu still cannot avoid falling into the trap of patriarchal narrative.

Lei Chang and Lei Tao, a pair of scholars from Nanjing Medical University, also published a review on the novel with the same problem. The title of their review is “The Exploitation of Thoughts by ‘Sex’ – An Analysis on Siqu Fang’s Sin of ‘First Love’” (“ ‘性’ 对思想的掠夺——房思琪的 ‘初恋’ 之罪的分析”) which falsely identifying Siqu’s love of Guohua Lee as a sin. At the very beginning of their review, they depict the raped victims as “[girls] kidnapped by traditional ethics, afraid that such embarrassment would bring about sneering and condemnation, forcing themselves to endure and accept the trauma; neither do they have adequate knowledge about sex, nor do they know how to escape” (33). Just like Liu, Chang and Tao are aware of the social pressure upon women, but their description further shapes them into passive victims that have little strength. The two scholars conclude from the novel three social aspects that lead to the silence of raped victims: family, gender inequality and sex education. They analyze how parents impose the traditional teacher-student ethics onto their children, how women are forced to keep themselves “clean” so that they are socially appropriate, and how the conservative sex education results in children’s lack of knowledge about sex and intimate relationship. In all these analyses, victims never claim their own voices. In terms of

family, they are those who “obey” parents’ teaching and “silently endure” the violence by their perpetrators’ in terms of gender, they “shut themselves up” and “cannot acknowledge their values or the social status of women and men;” in terms of sex education, they “don’t know what sex is and persuade themselves to accept [rape] as the consequence of love” (33). Chang and Tao tend to describe victims with words that possess the quality of silence, ignorance, obedience, and passiveness. Of course, women are silenced, prevented from knowledge, and denied the right of taking action by the patriarchal tradition, but simply pointing this out doesn’t help empower women. Effective empowerment lies in effective contextualization of women’s struggle and obstacles while keeping them at the center of discourse.

News reports around this incident were mostly unable to generate constructive discourse on Lin’s resistance in the novel because they only focused on relevant figures that were alive. In a sense, Lin’s value of being studied was entirely denied by her own death – for news companies, they only cared about those who could deliver distinct opinions and reveal exciting secrets; those who couldn’t speak, on the other hand, didn’t help with their readership. But Lin was speaking – she was speaking through her novel, through Siqu’s resistance against the patriarchal narrative and fight for her right of speech.

And although Lin’s voice in *Paradise* is not emphasized in some scholars’ reviews, there are other scholars that notice her resistance. Xiaodan Wang, professor of Law and Women and Gender Studies in National Chengchi University in Taiwan, presents three different “possible routes for escape” that she found in “Paradise in her analysis Why Does the Realization of Feminism Miss Siqu Fang? (3): let’s revisit *Siqu Fang’s First Love Paradise* and reflect on the possible route for escape” (“女性主義實踐為何漏接了房思琪？（三）：讓我們重讀房思琪，反思可能的逃逸路線”). Wang contends that Lin returns Guohua Lee’s male gaze with

her feminine gaze, notices his ridiculousness and self-contradiction, utilizes metaphor and sarcasm, and re-presents her body experiences via “écriture feminine.” She doesn’t marginalize Siqu and Lin at the position of a passive victims but demonstrates how they actively fight against the patriarchal narrative with feminist strategies. “*Paradise*,” as Wang explains, “... can be using ‘narrative’ as a kind of resistance to challenge the established mainstream speech and to find some oppressed and marginalized experiences” Lin and Siqu, in Wang’s analysis, are empowered as “narrators” – they hold the power of writing and speech, with which they manage to break through the traditional patriarchal narrative. Above all, Wang let their voices lead her words. What Wang is doing is not simply explaining how the patriarchy works but illuminates how victims navigate themselves through the patriarchy. Only via this victim-centric discourse can Wang bring her audience’s attention to the dire feminist issue.

In her analysis “In Regard to the Struggle for Discourse Power of ‘Fang Siqu’” (“有关‘房思琪’的话语权斗争”) Zhiqian Han also elaborates how Siqu and Yiting together break free the patriarchal narrative established by Guohua Lee. She proposes the interpretation that Yiting plays Siqu’s “surviving persona”. She believes that “what really defeats Siqu is not only the violence imposed on her body, but also the oppression of speech supported by power, ‘everything is constructed by his language,’” and that Yiting is the real narrator of the novel to break down Lee’s power of speech (86). Yiting has the “responsibility to crush Guohua Lee’s system of speech” (86) – she is to “pull [Lee] off his pedestal and ridicule him” (87). Han effectively illustrates how Lee uses rhetoric and words as his tool of manipulation and puts Siqu and Yiting at the center of her analysis at the same time. In her words, Siqu is an active rebel: “... Siqu must utilize “the intention beyond texts” to intervene in Lee’s language so that she can pass through the mist of rhetoric. She must enter and get out of Lee’s system of speech again and

again, otherwise she is unable to discern the speaker's intention or to reveal the tragic state of language being oppressed and exploited" (87). The difference between Han's analysis and Liu's and Chang's and Tao's reviews lies in the empowerment of Siqu in her interpretation. At the center of the discourse, Siqu stands out and claims her right of speech. Han provides Siqu "a possible route of escape" that Xiao-Dan Wang mentions in her analysis: "the key to the escape route for 'self' lies in understanding what 'self' looks like in the eyes of the other." Han's idea of "entering and getting out of Lee's system of speech again and again" resonates with Wang's idea of "understanding what 'self' is in the eyes of the other" – Siqu can actively retrieve her "self" by understanding and breaking down Lee's power of speech. Since Siqu is the reflection of Lin, Siqu's resistance embodies Lin's resistance. Han's analysis empowers Siqu and Lin by putting great emphasis on their strategy of resisting the patriarchal narrative.

In her book "The Gender Writing of Women's Life Experiences in Chinese Literature in the 20th Century" ("20世纪中国文学女性生命体验的性别书写"), Yanlin Liu contends that "the focus of [research of feminist literature] should be put on the texts and the feminist writers themselves to re-discover the oppression and misinterpretation of them, to reveal from their writing the reality of female life experiences and life existence that has been suppressed, hidden, and contorted by ideology" (11). Reading *Paradise*, then, we should decentralize Guohua Lee's narrative and concentrate on Siqu's voice of resistance to understand how Lin dealt with her "reality of life" with her writing.

System of Writing and Speech as Resistance in *Paradise*

Later in her book, Liu further points out that "if feminist writing is to re-claim female's body, not only do feminist writers have to break down the historical deception of patriarchal narrative into

pieces with their own direct life experiences, but they also have to break free the language system of patriarchal narrative and construct the language system and syntax of their own.” (173). I believe Lin was constructing her own language in *Paradise* as her “escape route” from the shackle of patriarchal narrative. I noticed that Lin kept using the sentence “later Yiting will read in Siqui’s diary that ...” to unveil how Siqui deals with the experience of being raped and cement the intimacy between the two protagonists and let them escape from the haunting patriarchal narrative through their secret lip-reading. The secret lip-reading of Siqui and Yiting is the system of speech Lin utilizes to reflect on the patriarchal narrative that had lingered throughout her life, while Siqui’s diary is the system of writing that Lin constructs to re-claim her voice.

Lip-reading plays a complicated role in the novel. At first it serves as the secret language that protect Siqui and Yiting from the invasion of the patriarchal narrative, the system of speech that secure both protagonists’ right of speech. In *Paradise* “Guohua Lee cannot read their lips ...” (71). Lip-reading allows them to comfortably communicate with each other on any occasion. The way Lee interprets Siqui’s lips also manifests his arrogance and perversion. When he first tries to rape Siqui, he mistakes “不要” ([bù yào], which means “no”) for “婊” (biǎo, which means “bitch”). “不要” is “the lip-reading that [Siqui] and Yiting would use when they are faced with difficulty,” but Lee, in his narrative, only sees what he wants to see (61). But as the story goes on Yiting comes to realize that she cannot read Siqui’s lips. Siqui’s unacceptable relationship with Guohua Lee was originally kept in secret from Yiting since Siqui was too embarrassed to tell her best friend. Yiting, as Siqui’s “twin of soul,” symbolizes a sleeping force of assistance that the victim is unable to wake up. Siqui is suffocated by Guohua Lee’s manipulative grip, the grip of power and deception, so she lost the ability to ask for help. When Siqui is suffering from countless

times of unwilling sex, Yiting becomes more and more distant from Siqu because of Siqu's deteriorating mind and her envy of Siqu. Both girls admired Guohua Lee as a knowledgeable, mature gentleman before they knew his dark side. Only Siqu fell victim to Lee because Yiting's appearance is less appealing than Siqu's. On the one hand, Yiting doesn't know Siqu's tremendous physical and spiritual pain of being raped. On the other, she can't curb the envy of Siqu in her mind, which somehow blocks her away from recognizing Siqu's suffering. Their biggest fight about Siqu's relationship with Lee shows how their secret language gradually breaks down:

“... just like most people don't understand why “we” talk like this (lip-reading), and nobody else understands what “we” are talking about. You and I have an invisible string of clue, which I keep low key about but proud of as well – but what about “you”? Do “you” have your own language ...” Siqu was shocked, “Who are you being jealous of, me or him?” “I don't know, I don't know anything right now ... What else would be between us except language? And what about you ... I am so confused – you look unprecedentedly happy and unprecedentedly painful. Can't you escape even by hiding yourself behind our language ...” “You don't even understand what you're jealous of. You are so cruel. We were just thirteen ...” Siqu let out a wail. Her tears made her face contorted and eroded the shape of her mouth. Yiting really couldn't read her lips (185-186).

Yiting's ignorance of Siqu's pain and Siqu's difficulty of saying the truth flat out leads to the collapse of the system of speech that they establish to fight against Lee's power of speech. Lin,

however, is not indicating the failure of their resistance. By putting the two protagonists at the center instead of the perpetrator, she is exploring how their constructive system of language breaks down from the point of view of the victims. In this way, she manages to avoid falling into the trap of patriarchal narrative and reflects on the oppression via her own narrative. Moreover, Siqui's diary plays a key role in helping Yiting empathize with her.

Siqui's diary is the key to her resistance, the key that allows Yiting to walk into her horrible memory and shoulder the responsibility as the narrator as Han mentions in her analysis. Right after Yiting found Siqui's diary, she read the page where Siqui depicts Lee's first attempt with disturbing words:

... I have to write this down, let the ink dilute my feelings, otherwise it will drive me crazy. I went downstairs and took my composition for Mr. Lee. He took it out, and I was forced to the wall. He said nine words, “不行的話，嘴巴可以吧 (If you can't do this, do it with your mouth).” I said five words, “不行，我不會 (No, I don't know how).” Then he squeezed himself in. It felt like drowning. Able to speak again, I said, “I am sorry” ... He said, “This is the way I love you, understand?” I thought he misunderstood – I am not that kind of kid who would mistake a penis for a lollipop ... Thinking over and over, the only solution I came up with was that I can't just “like” Mr. Lee, but I have to “fall in love” with him. Those who love you can do anything to you, can't they ... I must love Mr. Lee, or this will be too painful ... Why “I don't know how”? Why not “I don't want to”? Why not “you can't do that” ... He squeezed himself in, and I apologized for this (30-31).

It is at this moment that Yiting realizes how Siqi has been torn into pieces. It is through Siqi's diary that Yiting realizes how immature her envy is. Yiting is woken up – the relationship that she longs for so long is not the romantic story as she imagines, but a terrifying, violent horror movie. Siqi, though muted by Lee with all imaginable and unimaginable means of embarrassment and oppression, manages to find her way out of the silence with her writing. Her diary is a system of writing that she invents not only to face her own trauma that she is afraid of speaking out, but also to contemplate the tricks of Lee's narrative. She is finally aware that “association, symbolism, and metaphor are the most dangerous thing in the world” in her diary (80). Siqi, as an actively resisting victim, reveals to herself what Lee's trap is and understands the oppressing system of narrative in her own sense. Most important of all, Siqi is clearly conscious of why she writes: “Now I often keep a diary. I found that ... to write is to retrieve dominance. When I write things down, I can put down my life as easily as I put down my diary” (168). Siqi's effort to resist the patriarchal narrative is conspicuous. She longs for dominance and the right of narrating her own experience with her own pen and her own words. Lin, of course, was writing her life down as well. By writing her experience into *Paradise*, she is demonstrating to her audience how she cracked the patriarchal narrative into pieces with her strong determination of resistance.

Lin's ambition to construct feminist languages shows the “audacity” which Jennifer Cooke explains in her book *Contemporary Feminist Life-Writing: The New Audacity* as “a public challenge to conventions, characterizes by boldness and a disregard for decorum, protocol, or moral restraints” (I-II). Lin demonstrated the courage to unsettle the tradition of powerful-centric narrative that has been dominating the world of literature for centuries. Furthermore, her autobiographical writing is “an act of audacity, a refusal of shame, a repudiation of

stigmatization, and a reassertion of agency through witnessing” (28). Cooke argues that “autobiographical accounts of rape are culturally and socially significant: they contribute to how women might resist the disempowering effects of being cast as a ‘victim’ ...” (30). *Paradise* embodies Lin’s most powerful resistance: it challenges the evil that the society has been taking for granted with her power of creativity, her painful insight of her trauma, and her fearless writing of the unspeakable.

Depiction of the Perpetrator in *Paradise*

As I mentioned, news reports and some scholars often put their attention to the wrong figure within Lin’s incident and her novel. Their mis-focus on Guohsing Chen or Guohua Lee in a way mutes the victims and might lead their audience to think about the incident from the perpetrators' perspective. But what about Lin herself? How did she portray this disturbingly disgusting perpetrator in *Paradise*? Was she able to secure her own voice while demonstrating to her audience this perpetrator’s thoughts and means? I believe that not only did Lin construct her own languages to resist the patriarchal narrative, but she also successfully shaped the perpetrator’s image from her own perspective and exposed his fakeness and weakness.

In *Paradise*, Lee’s arrogance is emphasized to a large extent. He is so confident in himself that he’s been seducing and raping his cram school students for years. The thing that he’s proudest of, however, is his knowledge in Chinese literature. This pride can be seen in how he seduces Siqu. He always fabricates beautiful sentences with sophisticated rhetoric or difficult allusions to affirm his knowledgeable image. For Siqu, a literature-lover only 13 years old then, these sentences are of course very fascinating. She worships Lee as an inspiring teacher, while Lee thinks of her not as a student but as a prey. He takes pleasure in his unethical use of

literature. All his knowledge about literature is merely his tool to deceive these young, naive girls into self-destructive love and unconscious obedience.

Lin, nevertheless, managed to see through his pride with her feminist gaze. While Lee is extremely convinced that he knows everything about literature, Lin tells her audience the truth: he knows nothing about literature. Lin implies this at many moments in the novel. For example, Siqi once tests Lee's capability:

[Siqi] plucked up her courage and asked, "what do you like the most when having sex with me?" He replied with only four words, "嬌喘微微 [jiāo chuǎn wēi wēi] (which means weakly moaning)." Siqi was shocked. She knew that's the sentence from *Dream of the Red Chamber* for 林黛玉's [lín dài yù] first appearance. She almost cried, asking, "To you, is this what *Dream of the Red Chamber* means?" He didn't even hesitate, "*Dream of the Red Chamber, Chu Ci, Record of the Grand Historian, Zhong Zi*, they all mean these four words (嬌喘微微) to me." At that moment, her greed, agitation, life and death, dirtiness and cleanliness, fantasy and curse in this relationship, all fell apart (150-151).

The four books mentioned here are all prestigious classic Chinese literature. *Dream of the Red Chamber* deals with the rise and collapse of a rich family and the sophisticated philosophy of human emotions, love and sexuality, *Chu Ci* is one of the oldest verses in China and contains many famous poets' works, *Record of the Grand Historian* is the first official history in China and well-known for its beautiful prose-like historical passages, and *Zhong Zi* is one of the most challenging philosophical books in Chinese history that sets the basis for Taoism. Lee,

unfortunately, perversely associates all of them with the sexualized moaning. We see again how arrogant and ignorant Lee is. For him, anything can be interpreted in the way he likes. He never figures out the meaning of these classics. All he knows is how to convert them into superficially splendid love words and use them to cheat his victims into having sex with him. Siqi finally sees the truth: she is always more powerful than Lee is, because at least she really loves literature. Furthermore, she gains self-esteem when she notices that she knows literature better than he does. Siqi once noticed that Lee mistakes Fei-Yan Zhao for He-De Zhao when mentioning the allusion of 溫柔鄉 [wēn róu xiāng] (79). Later when this occurs to her again, she realizes that “when [she] finds her ravaged heart is still able to refute that it was He-De Zhao not Fei-Yan Zhao, [she] feels a kind of dignity at its lowest limit is supported” (198). By refuting Lee, Siqi is not merely correcting him, reversing the instructor-student position, but also reclaiming her agency in this relationship. She always knows how this works, she always knows how she is deceived, and she always knows how to fight back. For victims, to reflect on their own trauma and figure it out is never an easy task, but a meaningful and empowering one. Their dealing with trauma proves their capability to get back on their feet again and face the cruel world with their own strength. Siqi figures out that the biggest mistake that Lee’s made is his use of the word “love”:

Once [Siqu] asked, “Why did you do that in the first place?” He replied, “It’s just that the way I showed my love was too rude.” Such satisfaction of hearing this answer. There is no one that uses this word better than he does, nor can there be any word more incorrect than this one Literature is singing the same love poem to his fifty-year-old wife and his fifteen-year-old lover (198).

Lin, through Siqui's flow of thoughts, showed how often rapists misunderstand their behavior as some kind of love because of arrogance and ignorance. She didn't deal with this character from his perspective, but from Siqui's. We often see rapists defend themselves in news reports, while victims are often muted or even shamed. The reversal position in *Paradise* allows the audience a lens through which they can view the incident of rape from a totally different angle.

From all these examples we can see that Lin held the power to interpret her perpetrator via her pen. The power of interpretation is the power of agency. She was no longer the passive victim who can only wait for being written into daunting news reports for money. She is no longer prone to the gaze of her perpetrator. Now she is gazing at her perpetrator. Her pen is her eyes, her mouth, her sword that cuts open the dark secret of the privileged groups' game of power.

Conclusion

Yihan Lin's incident and her only novel *Paradise* have been portrayed very differently in social and scholarly conversations. While news reports tend to be perpetrator-centric for more readership, there are both perpetrator-centric and victim-centric scholarly analysis and reviews about *Paradise*. The viewpoint that the scholars take can largely influence how their audience perceive Lin and her characters. Robin E. Field, in her book *Writing the Survivor: The Rape Novel in Late Twentieth-Century American Fiction*, suggests that in rape fictions which "tell the story of the victim," "readers learn not about the sadistic pleasures derived by the rapist in his forced sexual encounters, but instead of the physical and psychological trauma suffered by the violated woman" (37). In this way, "[r]eaders feel sympathy, and perhaps empathy, ... for the

woman is portrayed as the victim ... rather than a willing participant in rough sex” (38).

Perpetrator-centric analysis and reviews reaffirms the power of patriarchal narrative and silences the voice of victims, while putting the victim at the center of discourse generates empowerment by drawing attention to the victim’s resistance. Lin’s resistance is reflected by her constructive languages and her depiction of the perpetrator in *Paradise*. She created Siqi’s diary and Siqi and Yiting’s lip-reading as a system of feminist writing and speech respectively to deal with her traumatic experience, and seized her pen to present her understanding of the perpetrator to voice her agency. *Paradise* itself serves as the metaphor for her resistance: she might be silenced by her death forever, she never stopped articulating herself through her vivid, heartbreaking words.

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