

國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士班碩士論文

指導教授：姜翠芬 教授

Advisor : Professor Tsui-fen Jiang

洩密的故事：

馬汀麥當納《枕頭人》中的「說故事」與「自我欺騙」

The Tell-Tale Tale:

Storytelling and Self-Deception in Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman*



研究生：何曉芙 撰

Name : Hsiao-fu Ho

中華民國 一〇一年七月

July, 2011

The Tell-Tale Tale:
Storytelling and Self-Deception in Martin McDonagh's

The Pillowman



A Master Thesis
Presented to
Department of English,
National Chengchi University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Hsiao-fu Ho
2011

To my parents and my family
獻給我的父母及家人



Acknowledgement

This thesis owes its completion to the assistance of many people.

First and foremost, I am deeply indebted to my dear advisor, Dr. Tsui-fen Jiang, who has supported me throughout the writing of my thesis with her patience and knowledge while allowing me the room to work in my own way. She is also the first teacher who enlightens me to explore the world of western drama. Without her encouragement and instruction, this thesis would not have been completed or written.

I would also like to convey my gratitude to my committee members, Dr. Chien-chi Liu, of Shih Hsin University, Dr. Yin-i Chen, of National Chengchi University, and Dr. Yen-bin Chiou, of Chengchi University for reading this thesis and digging out many beneficial and important questions and suggestions for me to further think over.

In addition, I am very grateful to the teachers who have taught me in the Department of English in Chengchi University. The education I have received during these years, including the four-year college life and three-year academic training striving for the Master degree, has nurtured me to become a self-confident person.

I am much obliged to my family, especially to my parents and my younger brother. My parents have supported and encouraged me to study English literature since I was a senior high school student. They have always expressed their full trust in every decision I have made. They are the pillars of my life. My brother helped me to borrow many books from the library of National Taiwan University during these years. Thank you. Please remind me of returning all the books.

Also, I would like to thank all my dear friends who always trust me when I doubt myself. Their encouragements gave me a great sense of uplift. Special thanks go to my classmates, Benny, Alice, Nika, Violette, and Clara. They have not only given me spiritual supports, but also provided many academic suggestions and comments for me to improve my arguments and writing. Thank you.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Godot Theatre Company and all of the friends I made acquaintance during the one-year working experience and the two-year volunteer experience. You have enriched my life, helping me to realize that there are various ways to lead my life. Studying literature and drama is interesting, but studying the real life is more fascinating.

This page cannot cover all my gratitude. Thank you and love you all. All of you contribute to part of this thesis, and part of me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement.....	iv
Chinese Abstract.....	vi
English Abstract.....	vii
Chapter 1 Introduction: <i>The Pillowman</i> and Storytelling.....	01
1.1 Introduction.....	01
1.2 About the Author.....	02
1.3 Plot Summary of <i>The Pillowman</i>	07
1.4 Theater Review and Literature Review.....	08
1.5 Thesis Argument.....	11
1.6 Theoretical Approach.....	16
1.7 Chapter Organization.....	18
Chapter 2 The Storyteller and Self-Deception.....	20
2.1 Introduction.....	20
2.2 Storytelling as a Means of Self-Deception.....	21
2.3 Katurian as a Self-deceptive Storyteller in Spatialized Stories.....	33
2.4. Conclusion.....	53
Chapter 3 The Story-Listener and Self-Deception.....	54
3.1 Introduction.....	54
3.2 Similarities within Transference, Transferential Relation, and Storytelling.....	55
3.3 Self-Deception in Transferential Relations in <i>The Pillowman</i>	64
3.4 Conclusion.....	90
Chapter 4 Conclusion: Self-Deception or Self-Consolation?.....	92
Works Cited.....	99

論文名稱：

洩密的故事：馬汀麥當納《枕頭人》中的「說故事」與「自我欺騙」

指導教授：姜翠芬 教授

研究生：何曉芙

論文提要內容：

本論文分析劇作家馬汀麥當納的劇本《枕頭人》中的「說故事」與「自我欺騙」，論證「說故事」提供本劇四位主要角色自我欺騙式的慰藉，使其得以處理創傷和逃避現實。說故事行為裡的想像和詮釋給說者及聽者／讀者機會去重新建立和詮釋悲慘過去，但同時也讓他們陷入自我欺騙的狀態及真實虛幻交錯的混亂，因為說故事可能使他們開始否認進而承認某種身分，甚而處於特定的故事情節結構，即使面對創傷也能獲得自我安慰。論文第二章檢視卡初利安的自我欺騙。卡初力安是劇中的主要說故事者。此章剖析他如何埋頭於自己創造的想像空間，並將過去的傷痛回憶轉化成自己能接受的故事情節。第三章剖析其他三位聽故事者——麥可、塔帕斯基，和艾瑞爾——的自我欺騙。此章論證聽／讀故事亦造成自我欺騙式的安慰。這三人靠詮釋故事為創傷取得自我安慰的解釋，雖然此舉仍然只是對過去的自我欺騙和逃避，但讓他們可以稍微諒解過去，面對現在。說故事行為和自我欺騙深深影響劇中四位角色，並成為他們自我安慰的方法。雖然自我欺騙蒙蔽他們，使他們無視真正的現實，當他們往回看不忍卒睹的過去時，自我欺騙卻可以稍微抒解他們的傷口。

關鍵字：說故事，自我欺騙，枕頭人

Abstract

This thesis analyzes storytelling and self-deception in Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman*, contending that storytelling provides the four main characters in *The Pillowman* with self-deceptive relief of dealing with their traumas and evading the reality. With the potential of imagination and interpretation, storytelling not only grants storytellers and story-listeners/readers a chance to reconstruct and reinterpret their distressing past, but it also throws them in a state of self-deception and confusion of the interpenetration of reality and fiction when they start to disavow and avow a certain type of identity and live in a specific plot structure that can soothe themselves from their traumas. Examining Katurian, the main storyteller in this play, Chapter Two of the thesis argues that as a storyteller/story-writer, Katurian falls into self-deception which buries himself into an imaginary space he creates and which consoles himself by transforming those agonizing recollections into the versions he can accept. Chapter Three tackles the other three story-listeners, Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel, to argue that in a way, storytelling leads to self-deceptive relief because it provides them with self-consoling explanations for their past to face with their present even though the three characters are trapped in their self-deception and self-evasion in the confrontation with their traumas. Thus, storytelling and self-deception deeply affect the four characters and serve as self-consolation for them. Although self-deception blocks their eyes to see reality, it comforts them to some degrees when they look back to their past.

Key words: storytelling, self-deception, *The Pillowman*

Chapter One

Introduction: *The Pillowman* and Storytelling

1.1 Introduction

Although the critic Brian Cliff states that *The Pillowman* is “so far the least widely known play” written by the London-born Irish playwright Martin McDonagh (132), it is an acclaimed one that has been widely performed in many countries.¹ As the first finalization of McDonagh that was completed at almost the same time with his first well-known play *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *The Pillowman* was not performed on the stage until November in 2003. It was produced by Royal National Theater in London and won the Laurence Olivier Award. In 2005, *The Pillowman* opened at the Booth Theatre on Broadway on April 10. The American production won a New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best (foreign) Play and received Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk, as well as Tony nominations for Best Play.²

As Martin McDonagh’s sixth play on the stage,³ this play maintains McDonagh’s habitual writing style with the amalgam of comic and tragic elements that incites the reader/the audience to simultaneously burst out laughing and have a fit of melancholy. The theatre columnist Charles McGrath observes from the New York Booth Theater production that even though some audience scurry out in the half of the play, other viewers remain till the end, and still others “sometimes gasp with horror and sometimes shak[e] with laughter” (McGrath N. pag.). Michael C. O’Neill also mentions the mixture of the slapstick and the hideousness with “an atmosphere of

¹ The international performance of *The Pillowman* includes the productions in Britain, Ireland, the United States, Germany, Holland, Austria, and Japan (Jordan 175). Several Asian theater troupes have also staged this play, including Ren-shin Co-ops Theater in Taiwan (2008) and Windmill Grass Theatre in Hong Kong (2010).

² The award-winning records are based on *Martin McDonagh: A Casebook*, in which Richard Rankin Russell compiles in the appendix the chronology of Martin McDonagh’s life and works from 1970 to 2006.

³ Factually McDonagh finished his draft of *The Pillowman* in 1994, but not until the London run of *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* did he rework it.

comic horror that explodes into violence,” which reminds him of Harold Pinter’s early “comedies of menace” (O’Neill 689). Elysa Gardner declares that *The Pillowman* is McDonagh’s most brutal and most tender work which “examin[es] how the redeeming and restorative powers of love and creativity can mitigate or be undone by darker impulses” (Gardner N. pag.).

This thesis analyzes storytelling and self-deception in *The Pillowman*. With an investigation of a tale writer as the suspect of the serial murders as the foreground, this play is interwoven into many narrations of tales and life stories told by the four principal characters. These stories are full of multifaceted traumatic memories, including child abuse, thorny fraternal relation, and parricide. Through storytelling and reading tales, the four characters are granted with the faculty of interpretation and imagination that enables them to reinterpret, reconstruct, and reorganize their traumatic past. They treat their past like stories with plot structures which they can rearrange. Greatly influenced by the tales, the four characters even identify themselves with the fictional roles of the tales and disavow their identity in reality. Storytelling provides space of imagination and interpretation where the four characters can revisit their past and give themselves consoling explanations for their sufferings. However, they do not really face with their misery or make compromises with their whirling traumatic past. This thesis argues that in *The Pillowman*, with the potential of imagination and interpretation, storytelling makes storytellers and story-listeners/readers fall into a state of self-deception when storytelling motivates them to disavow and avow a certain type of identity and enables them to live in a specific plot structure that can soothe themselves.

1.2 About the Author

Born into an Irish immigrant family in London with his father originated from Galway (in Lettermullan) and his mother from Sligo (in Killeenduff), McDonagh is the second generation Irishman who was reared, educated, and socialized in the United Kingdom. After the London premiere of his touchstone *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* in 1996, Martin McDonagh has become one of the most promising English playwrights since the late nineteen-nineties. In the subsequent two years, three plays were rapidly mounted onto the stage, and McDonagh rose quickly to fame as a result. Influenced by the parentage and the relatives, in his early five plays, McDonagh sets the locales in the rural West of Ireland: Leenane for the Leenane trilogy of *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996), *The Lonesome West* (1997), and *A Skull in Connemara* (1997); Aran Islands for *The Cripple of Inishmaan* (1997) and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (2001). The successive works, including *The Pillowman* (2003) and *The Behanding in Spokane* (2010) are placed in an unidentified dictatorship state and the United States respectively. Other than a playwright, Martin McDonagh is also a scenarist and a film director. His short movie *Six Shooter* (2005) won him an Academy Award for the Best Short Film, and the following film *In Bruges* (2008) was nominated for the Best Original Screenplay in the Academy Award. McDonagh never hides his fondness of films. He once admitted that compared to the theater, movies interest him more; he even often treats theater from “a film fan’s perspective” (O’Toole, “Nowhere Man” N. pag.).⁴

It is baffling to categorize the writing style of Martin McDonagh. Three of the most distinctive peculiarities are violence, grotesque mixture, and idiosyncratic Irishness. Among all, violence is the most recognizable one. That violence prevails in his plays makes McDonagh frequently associated with the latest “enfant terrible of

⁴ Fintan O’Toole launches many interviews with Martin McDonagh.

theatre” (O’Hagan N. pag.),⁵ and British “in-yer-face theatre” in which the plays are considered so confrontational, violent, provocative, and visceral that shock the audience with the invasion of personal space and transgression of normal boundaries (Sierz 4). For example, in the dénouement of *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, the forty-year-old spinster Maureen who gets trapped into the rural Ireland with her old mother Mag throws hot oil into Mag’s midriff when she realizes that it is Mag who deceives her to prevent her from escaping with her lover to the United States. In *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, the terrorist Padraic strafes his family as well as friends and scatters the corpses merely because of the discovery of the death of his pet cat. In this sense, McDonagh is aligned with British playwrights such as Anthony Neilson, Sarah Kane and Mark Ravenhill, who employ a great amount of shock tactics like swearwords, nudity, sex and violence on the stage, to apparently challenge the physical and emotional endurance of the audience, and most importantly, to force the audience to touch upon intimate subjects and come to terms with “what is both most central to our humanity and most often hidden in our daily behavior” (Sierz 9).

In spite of violence, Martin McDonagh is characterized by the addition of black humor and absurdity in his works which moulds his plays into a grotesque mixture of tragic elements and comic ones. Werner Huber asserts that McDonagh’s black humor works on the juxtaposition of “zanies and paddywhackery with elements of horror and the macabre,” and this characteristic supplements the perplexing aspect to the excesses of physical violence and brutality (20). McDonagh also acknowledges that he indeed manages to blend comedy and cruelty since he thinks that one illuminates the other, and “people can see things more clearly through exaggeration than through

⁵ The notorious nickname as *enfant terrible* reflects not only on the reviews of McDonagh’s plays but also on his anecdotal verbal clash with Sean Connery in the ceremony at the 1996 Evening Standard Theatre Awards where he won Most Promising Newcomer Prize. But McDonagh explains that it was merely a “drunken eejit stuff” (O’ Hagan N. pag.).

reality”(O’Hagan N. pag.). As a result, McDonagh’s works, from a positive perspective, are considered as postmodern fusion of old and new in which the traditional realism is superimposed unto “something strange, uncanny and atypical” (Chamber 1). Fintan O’Toole claims that this blending is surreal and unsettling but at the same time maintains the “universality of violence,” representing the universal motif of violence. (“Introduction” xvii).

The blending of tragedy and comedy, at the same time, changes the Irishness shown in his plays into a bizarre distortion, which stimulates discussion and scrutiny. With the setting in the West of Ireland, the plays are often censured for portraying the non-Irish rural Ireland. From the positive viewpoints, McDonagh is considered talented to add creativity in the fusion. Werner Huber points out that his image of Ireland is an unconventional one that shows “an outsider’s view characterized by satire, black humor, cartoon-like reductions, and grotesque and ‘Gothic’ distortion” (15). Richard Rankin Russell states that with a traditionally pastoral setting, however, McDonagh’s works do not become resigned to the conventionally bucolic depiction and nationality of Irish identity; instead, the atmosphere in his works is saturated with “the pugnacious” (1). Laura Eldred claims that McDonagh for the one thing emulates the convention of Irish dramatist forebears, such as John Synge and Sean O’Casey; for another, he integrates the elements of contemporary violent films and horror entertainment appropriated from Hollywood directors (198-199).

Yet many critics disparage McDonagh’s fusion as caricature and stereotype (Chamber 1). Joan FitzPatrick Dean attributes McDonagh’s noted features to his fondness of clichés, such as mistaken identity, hidden truths, running gags, and sudden reversals that “fuel the breakneck momentum of farce” (Dean 27). Ondřej Pilný compares McDonagh’s representation of Ireland to the films of Quentin

Tarantino portraying urban life in the United States and claims the shallowness of McDonagh's plays which "progressively satirise the pervasive concern of Irish theatre discourse with the issue of Irish identity, simply by offering an absurd, degenerated picture as a version of 'what the Irish are like'" (Pilný, "Martin McDonagh" 228). Chamber also points out that McDonagh is frequently criticized as catering into "old stereotypes of Irishness" with puppet-like and depthless characterization (7).

For McDonagh, the true Irishness or Irish identity is not his concern. His real motive is simply to tell stories; storytelling is his ultimate and universal objective, no matter what his nationality and identity is. Even though some critics connect the motif of storytelling revealed in his play to the Irish tradition, McDonagh denies the direct influence and inheritance. For him, storytelling is the universal representation of how people see this world, more than "the way you've been brought up or your history of storytelling" (O'Toole, "Martin McDonagh" N. pag.).⁶ O'Toole associates McDonagh's stylistic features of "speed and violence and a slightly surreal feeling" in his plays with the "fairy-tale dimension." When being queried about this association, McDonagh admitted that many of his stories were inspired by fairy tales since he practiced writing by rewriting some famous tales, and even created his own works by imitating the styles of fairy tales, writing them "almost like fairy-tale stories" ("Martin McDonagh" N. pag.). Theater for McDonagh is merely a form of storytelling among many others,⁷ which is "a box to tell a story in" (McKinley N.

⁶ Many critics allude McDonagh's style to the Irish playwright John Synge of the early twenty century and the tradition of the allegorical narrative of Irish dramas. McDonagh himself denies the direct influence. Asked by Fintan O'Toole the question about the impact of storytelling tradition in Irish culture, McDonagh asserts that "[t]he whole history of Irish storytelling didn't really come into it [...]. So I couldn't say that it had any kind of influence in it" ("Martin McDonagh" N. pag.). However, Laura Eldred doubts the renunciation of McDonagh. She argues from the similarities of the styles to declare that McDonagh is "quite conscious of his predecessors" (202), especially in the employment of violence and brutality which are usually used by Synge and O'Casey "to disturb an audience, often to show the limitation of Irish society" (200).

⁷ As mentioned above, Martin McDonagh never conceals his preference for films over theater. Films influence him more than theater does. In McKinley's interview, McDonagh divulges his opinion of

pag.). Richard Rankin Russell also perceives in McDonagh's works an essence of the art of storytelling, and connects it to the convention of the earlier Irish dramatists, such as W. B. Yeats, John Synge, and Lady Gregory (Russell 2). However, for McDonagh, storytelling is just the way to see the world, which is mostly influenced by American films and South American novelist, Jorge Luis Borges (O'Toole, "Martin McDonagh" N. pag). McDonagh once disclosed in the 2006 interview with Fintan O'Toole that he likes Borges so much that he read lots of works written by Borges and that led him into storytelling and imagination (O'Toole, "A Mind" N. pag.).

1.3 Plot Summary of *The Pillowman*

The locale of the play is set in an interrogation room in an unidentified dictatorship⁸ where two police detectives, Tupolski and Ariel, are questioning Katurian Katurian Katurian,⁹ who is a tale writer, for serial child murders because not only the murder patterns are similar to the plots of his horrible tales, but the fingers of one of the victimized children are found in Katurian's house. At the same time, Katurian's retarded brother, Michal, is also captivated by the detectives to extort the confession of the murders. Realizing that his brother is imprisoned in the

elitism of theater: "[i]t's strange to be working in an art form that costs \$100 to participate in" (McKinley N.pag.).

⁸ Eamonn Jordan in his essay associates *The Pillowman* with indications of nationality and Irishness. For example, Kamenice, the town where the Katurian brothers live, has no specific direction, though, "towns by that name can be found in Northern Albania and in the Czech Republic." Moreover, "The Little Green Pig" connotes Irishness in two senses. First, the color green has "a fundamental association with Irishness." Second, "classical British stereotypes have long associated the Irish with pigs." For further discussion on the Irishness in the play, please see Jordan's "War on Narrative: *The Pillowman*," page 191.

⁹ In *The Pillowman*, the full name of the protagonist Katurian is "Katurian Katurian Katurian," with the same word for his first, middle, and last name. The political or historical signification of this name is neither explained nor referred to in the play. But José Lanter discusses the concept of simulacrum with the association of Katurian's full name and the initials "KKK" with the empty reference. Lanter raises the following questions which are not answered because the text does not provide clear connection: "Do the initials evoke the Ku Klux Klan and therefore suggest Katurian's sinister intentions? Or do they merely signify mindless repetition, and therefore evoke postmodern concepts like simulacrum and endless production?" (Lanter 13).

neighboring cell, Katurian sneaks into the cell, attempting to ease Michal's anxiety. In talking with Michal, Katurian realizes that it is Michal who butchered the children to death in order to experiment if the plots in Katurian's stories were too far-fetched to be carried out. To protect his brother from the torture of the detectives, to redeem his own guilt of the parricide, and to save his own works from being destroyed by the police, Katurian smothers Michal and confesses to the police to have committed all the murders, including his parents' and Michal's deaths. Katurian makes concession with the police: he confesses the truth on condition that his tales will not be burned even though he will be executed on the account of the murders. At last, whereas Katurian is shot by Tupolski, his tales are preserved and sealed by Ariel.

1.4 Theatre Review and Literature Review

The Pillowman has aroused many theatrical and academic discussions since it was premiered in 2003. These discussions mainly revolve around storytelling, the presentation of allegories, as well as the odd twists and turns throughout the play. In the theatrical manner, theatre critics mention storytelling as a motif and storytelling as story-within-the-story as a frame to concern how the content and the form of this play are enchantingly intertwined to present the process and the effect of storytelling. In the academic manner, other than storytelling, some critics offer interpretations of the bizarre convolutions of the plots from positive and negative angles to argue the worth of this play.

Many theatre reviews provide observations on the association between the structural frame of the story-within-the-story and the discussion of storytelling and art in *The Pillowman*. Among the critics, Caryn James, Hilton Als, and Elyse Sommer focus on the enthralling structural design that enables the play to display a semi-

realistic atmosphere and perform a wonder like what McDonagh's precursors did. Caryn James (2005) acclaims that the story-within-the-story device blurs reality and fantasy and helps to arouse more "emotional resonance" than most naturalistic plays (James N. pag.). Hilton Als (2005) compares McDonagh with the playwright Luigi Pirandello who is famous for his play *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and think that both plays deal with the "intellectual components of fiction" by displaying the metatheatrical effect (Als N. pag.). Elyse Sommer (2005) parallels McDonagh with Kafka to state that, aside from the parental abuse and the concern of the obligation of writers, the structural essence of this play is like a "Kafkaesque police investigation" (Sommer N. pag.). On the other hand, Charles McGrath and Ben Brantley notice that the essence of the play is to present the spirit of storytelling. Charles McGrath (2005) mentions that this play is partly about "the nature of storytelling" full of touches of slapstick and farce, "of Kafka, Mamet and Beckett, of the Grimm Brothers" (McGrath N. pag.). Ben Brantley (2005) asserts that McDonagh aims not to preach the power of stories but to "redeem or cleanse or to find a core of solid truth hidden among life's illusions." (Brantley N. pag.) He also observes that every character in this play is in a sense a storyteller; the relationship between narrator and listener "has its sadomasochistic aspects" (Brantley N. pag.). These theatre critics pay attention not only to the similarities between *The Pillowman* and its predecessors, but also to the significance this play carries.

Compared to the theatre reviews, literature reviews scrutinize more perspectives in addition to storytelling. Some of the critics explore the multiple twists in the play which are more significant than merely being treated as pastiche and parody. Lisa Fitzpatrick (2006) looks into this issue from the linguistic perspective, dissecting Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman* and *A Skull in Connemara* from the mixture of

Hibernia and Londoner English. She argues that the characteristic of McDonagh's theatrically linguistic tactic of "the repetition of 'stichomythic sequence'" is not to parody the Irish identity nor to engage the audience into an emotional identification, but to alienate the audience to realize the "human condition" (148-149). Eamonn Jordan (2006) examines the twist from the dialogical relation from the play and other texts by appropriating Bakhtin's Carnavalesque to detail the transgressive twist in *The Pillowman*, such as the violation of innocence and reversal of roles. Jordan retorts some critics who label McDonagh as pasticheur; he reads his works as "palimpsest," on which the old texts and the new ones can be intertextual and dialogical. He also points out that this play reverses the stereotypical conception about parables and fairytales, which are treated as an access for children to social values and common emotions. In this sense, this play is actually a "comment on the process of representation" of literature, parables and fairy tales (Jordan 184).

Unlike the previous two positive critics, Ondřej Pilný (2006) criticizes the inconsequentially nebulous themes and the shallow characterization of *The Pillowman*. He regards this play as a "grotesque entertainment" which is, for one thing, composed of the blending of different genres and switching of themes, with the uncanny as a device. For another, the characters lacking profoundly psychological depiction are just like assortment of puppies, "swung around by their manipulative creator, while the ultimate aim seems to be to shunt the audience to and fro in a similar way without losing a firm grip over it" ("Grotesque Entertainment" 219).

Hana Worthen and W. B. Worthen (2006) and Brian Cliff (2007) study the storytelling and allegorical aspect of *The Pillowman*. Hana Worthen and W. B. Worthen appropriate the dialectic of allegory from Walter Benjamin to study the allegories in the play and the dialectical relation between the author and the reader/the

audience. The allegories thus become a contentious site which “blur[s] the distinction between allegory and *allegoresis*” (Worthen and Worthen 165, italic in the original). Brian Cliff analyzes the redemption function of storytelling in *The Pillowman* by disclosing two themes of *The Pillowman*: one is the connection between art and suffering, and the other is that art works (or tales, in the sense of this play) satisfy the desire of redemption, “not through art itself, but through his [Katurian’s] commitment to the idea of being an artist” (Cliff 136). However, in terms of redemption, Cliff claims that in this play filled with violent and comic elements, the preservation of Katurian’s manuscripts by Ariel is a finishing stroke that brings to light the gravity, redemption, and potential grace, and this potential grace proves Katurian’s art to be “transformative” because of its “redemptive impulse” (143).

1.5 Thesis Argument

The abovementioned critics provide multiple perspectives to approach *The Pillowman*, assisting the reader and the audience to understand and interpret the profound meanings of this play. Some of them notice the exchanges of life stories within the four characters and the importance of storytelling as a recurrent gesture throughout the play, and others point out that the metatheatrical scaffolding creates an illusionary ambience for the play, which makes this play stand out. However, while most of the critics dissect storytelling and the metatheatrical frame into separate parts to discuss, none of the critics study the motif of storytelling and the metatheatrical form as a whole. Also, few of the critics examine the correlation between storytelling and trauma which is another motif of this play. Storytelling makes a great impact on the characters in the confrontation with their traumas, but previous criticisms do not analyze the effect of storytelling on the characters.

Storytelling and trauma are two significant and correlated themes in *The Pillowman*, a play full of storytelling, narrations, and life stories. In the play, because the modus operandi of the murders are very identical to the plots portrayed in Katurian's tales, along with the confession of the murders from Michal, the detectives, Tupolski and Ariel, keep inducing Katurian to narrate his tales and manage to discuss his stories to dig out the associations between the tales and the murders. The examination and the debate over Katurian's tales not only gradually expose Katurian's traumatic past, but also motivate the other three characters—Michal, Ariel, and Tupolski—to retrieve their distressing life stories and to find self-consoling explanations for their traumas. Yet, although storytelling stimulates the characters to encounter their past again, they never really face up to their traumas and tackle them. Storytelling merely serves them as a painless way to comfort themselves. It becomes a self-deceptive means to resist the confrontation with their traumas.

My argument of this thesis is that storytelling provides the characters in *The Pillowman* with self-deceptive ways of dealing with their traumas and evading their reality¹⁰. The characters always stay in their self-deception and self-evasion, failing to face up to their traumas or heal their scars, but through self-deception and evasion, they seem to obtain certain conciliation with their traumatic past. The four main characters are all trapped in their violent and traumatic memories, including child abuse (Katurian, Michal, Ariel, and Tupolski), parricide (Katurian, Michal, and Ariel) and child loss (Tupolski). During the reciprocal storytelling within the four characters, they transform themselves from readers/listeners into storytellers who narrate their life stories; all of them are listeners and tellers. The process of storytelling enables the

¹⁰ "Reality" mentioned in this thesis is objective and tangible reality comparable to fiction and imagination, rather than "psychical reality," which is defined by Laplanche and Pontalis as a term "used by Freud to designate whatever in the subject's psyche" regarding "unconscious desire" and "phantasies" (363). The ontological, philosophical and psychological definitions of reality are too complicated to be covered and coped with in this thesis.

characters to reconstruct and interpret their past by offering an imaginary space and transference space where imagination can step in to influence their interpretation of reality. Hereby they attain a sparkle of self-consolation, as well as tenderness and empathy toward each other. However, the conciliation with the past maybe self-deceptive consolation for the characters, because they still avoid themselves from facing up to the traumatic memories. To a large degree, storytelling reinforces self-deception and self-evasion of the characters that prevent them from mentioning and looking directly at their past and reality. Without obtaining real solution to traumas, the characters are just trapped into an endless cycle of storytelling and traumatic memories.

The chief concern in the development of my argument is self-deception. Firstly I will scrutinize the issue with a thorough analysis of Katurian who is the main storyteller employing his tales to create an imaginary space where he transforms himself into a new identity and lives through a new revision of the traumatic past. As to the other three characters who are the story-listeners, I will explore how they are affected by the narrations of Katurian and become storytellers, how they render a self-consoling account for their traumatic past through storytelling, and how they resist the past and dodge reality. Self-deception blocks the characters from clearly seeing through their traumas. Although storytelling grants them opportunities to find consolation for their disturbing past, they do not really walk out of their traumatic memories.

To expand on the main concern, I will particularly interpret metatheatrical enactment and the dynamics in the narrative relations in *The Pillowman*. The enactment of Katurian's tales is distinctive of this play. It is the embodiment of self-deception of Katurian. In Act One Scene Two, Katurian narrates and enacts his tale

“The Writer and the Writer’s Brother” in an abstract and imaginary space where Katurian is simultaneously the narrator and the character. At the end of this tale, Katurian blurs the boundary between the imaginary tale and his life stories by suturing his traumatic past with the tales. With this transition and sudden shift, the enactment of the story becomes the enactment of his life; the imaginary space of the tale is thus woven with the space of memory, becoming the mixture of imagination and reality. The case is the same with the ending of *The Pillowman*. At long last Katurian is executed by Tupolski, but then “[t]he dead Katurian slowly gets to his feet [...], and speaks” (McDonagh 102),¹¹ and he starts to narrate the finale of his life as similarly as he narrates his tale in Act One Scene Two. This master-stroke ending displays the mind-space of Katurian who devises his final story and acts it out in his mind. It not only obfuscates the boundary between the real and the fictional to create an illusion for the whole play, but also reveals the confusion of self-identification of Katurian between the narrator and the character. Such confusion forces him to fall into self-deception to soothe away his trauma and mental suffering, as well as to make compensation for his sense of guilt of parricide and fratricide. The enactment of the tales transform Katurian into the fictional roles created by himself and provides him an identity that undertakes the atonement and the responsibility for his murders.

The dynamics in the narrative relations is another peculiarity in *The Pillowman*. Here I emphasize the process of transmission, reception, and the potential of transformation in the narrative relations. In the process of storytelling, listeners will be influenced by the storytellers and their stories will be elicited. At that moment, the listeners turn out to be storytellers as well. The other three characters, Michal, Ariel, and Tupolski, undergo such transformation in the play. Originally, Tupolski and Ariel

¹¹ Martin McDonagh, *The Pillowman* (New York: Faber and Faber, Inc., 2003) p. 102. All subsequent references to this play will be noted parenthetically in the text.

are two detectives who desperately try to find out the evidence to convict Katurian of his crime from his tales. During the investigation, attempting to detect the associations between the tales and the life experiences, they are also two listeners who keep heeding Katurian telling his dark tales as well as his devastatingly traumatic childhood experiences. Nevertheless, in Act Three, the roles as the listener and storyteller are reversed: the two detectives transform themselves into the storytellers narrating their life experiences and tales to Katurian.

Michal, Katurian's retarded brother, is another instance as a listener who changes into a "storywriter" by demonstrating his "writing" with hands-on experiment on the plots based on the tales of Katurian. As a victim suffering from the parental maltreatment for seven straight years, Michal seems to be afflicted with brain damage and becomes indifferent to right and wrong. However, he is not unaware of killing children as a wrongdoing and crime. He also knows that his traumatic suffering can excuse himself from punishment. Through acting out Katurian's tales, Michal buries himself into self-deception of becoming the characters of the tales and lives through the plots he likes.

Storytelling provides these characters a chance to reconstruct their distressing past and to see their life as stories. In their life stories, they are both the roles and the narrators at the same time. As the roles, they associate themselves with tales and enact the plot in the tales; as the narrator, they create the desired plot structures they want. They keep avoiding themselves from dealing with their traumas and facing with reality. The reinterpretation of their life solely helps them to ease their anxiety and dodge sense of guilt. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that they gain solace from reinterpretation and from disavowal and avowal of their life stories. Self-deception

may be necessarily a self-consoling means for them to put aside their past and in order to live at their present.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

In this thesis I primarily employ the self-deception theory of Herbert Fingarette to analyze the aspects of self-deception in the four principal characters in *The Pillowman*. In Chapter Two, I adopt the discussion of “I-ME relations” in self-narratives to approach the metatheatrical enactment of tales. As for the narrative dynamics within the characters in the discussion of Chapter Three, I appropriate the study of transference by Peter Brooks, including the transferential situation of narrative and transferential space to discuss how the characters change into the storytellers and how they are motivated to tell their own stories.

According to Fingarette, self-deception is involved with disavowal and avowal of identity. It concerns “the capacity of a person to identify himself to himself as a particular person engaged in the world in specific ways, the capacity of a person to reject such identification and engagement” (Fingarette 90). On the one hand, the self-deceiver avows to have a certain identity and spells out his engagement of the world in a specific way; but on the other hand, he refuses to admit his other identity and refuses to spell out his engagements of the world. The disavowal of the engagement of the world leaves some gaps in the real life story. To supplement the part that he does not spell out, the self-deceiver has to fabricate stories to fill in the gaps, so the self-deceiver has to come up with some “cover-story” (Fingarette 48) and spell out the cover-story that can complete the sequence of his stories. Eventually, he will start to believe his cover-story when he continues to spell it out and it turns out to be his life

stories that “he tells [people] he also tells himself” (61). At this moment, he avows to be another identity and engage in the world in a certain way

The “I-Me relations” is proposed by many critics. It describes that when writing autobiographical self-narratives, the author will imagine the story as a space and there is a character representing the author to act in the space. At this moment, whereas the author who narrates the story as an outsider is *the Author I*, the character who is created to live along in the story is *the Character Me*. This conception is similar to the notion of “mind-space” expounded by the psychologist Julian Jaynes. Jaynes spatializes consciousness as a “mind-space” (46). In that space there is a subject “Analog I” and an object “Metaphor Me.” The former moves into the imagination to map out things that do not truly happen, and the latter is the object that is illustrated and narrated. Adriana Cavarero proposes the analogous idea as “the narratable self” (33). For her, an autobiographical self-narrative is an interplay between *the I* and *the self*; *the I* is the narrator and *the self* is the narrated. The interplay of the two is likely to cause the ambiguity which makes people fail to “distinguish *the I* who narrates it [the life story] from *the self* who is narrated” (Cavarero 34, italics in the original). Eventually, people will live their life as if they are living their stories.

In addition to the self-deception theory for the analysis of the storyteller in the play, I also use Freudian theory of transference and Peter Brooks’ theory of storytelling to read the story-listeners in the play. With the assistance of Freudian transference, Brooks compares storytelling with transference and proposes storytelling as a transference relation. Based on the originally psychoanalytic conception of Freud, transference bears two shades of denotations: for one thing, it means that individuals transfer their past experiences to the present and they respond to the current situation based on the past experiences; in other words, it is

“displacement from the past into the present” (Erwin 567). For another, this displacement and the retrieval of the past are actualized in the clinical relation between the analyst and the analysand. Storytelling and transference denote the similar dynamic relation between the teller and the listener. For Brooks, storytelling is indeed a “dialogic relation of narrative production and interpretation” (Brooks, *Psychoanalysis* 50). He furthermore asserts that most narratives present the “transferential condition,” which is related to the eagerness to the transmissibility of the stories, “the need to be heard” (50). This dynamic relation resembles a transactional relation between the analyst and the analysand in psychoanalytical therapeutic process. Because the transferential relation is a process of transmission, interpretation, and reconstruction, between the teller and the listener, there is a marginal space of interpretation and filling of imagination defined as the “transferential space.” As claimed by Brooks, it is the place “of fictions, of reproductions, of reprints, of repetitions,” the marginal space where change is effected, “through interpretation and construction” (68). In *The Pillowman*, the transferential relation between the storytellers and the listeners presents such space of interpretation and reconstruction.

1.7 Chapter Organization

This thesis is separated into four chapters. Chapter One is the prefatory chapter laying out the introduction of Martin McDonagh, his plays, *The Pillowman*, and the contents of this thesis. Chapter Two, “The Storyteller and Self-Deception,” examines Katurian who is the main storyteller in this play. This chapter argues that Katurian employs storytelling as a self-deceptive way to console himself from the distressing past without really facing up to the trauma. Katurian writes tales to produce an

imaginary space where he creates another self to live in the revision of his traumatic past. Thus he attains a self-deceptive way to console himself by transforming those agonizing recollections into the versions he can accept. Eventually he identifies with the fictional characters created by himself and gets preoccupied with his own imaginary life structures. Chapter Three, “The Story-Listener and Self-Deception,” deals with the other three characters to argue that although the other three characters keep evading looking back to their past and even living in self-evasion, to some extent, they attain self-deceptive explanations for their traumas. Through the narrative relations in storytelling, Michal, Ariel, and Tupolski, as the story-listeners, interpret and construct the meanings of the tales of Katurian. The interpretations of the tales help them to reinterpret and to reconstruct their past. Thus they find self-deceptive explanations for their traumas and reach an empathetic consensus with Katurian by reinterpreting their traumatic past. At the same time, they are storytellers who spell out the self-comforting plot structures for them to confront with their present. However, they always hold resistance to facing up to the traumas. All of the three characters are trapped in their self-deception and self-evasion in the confrontation with their traumas. Chapter Four “Self-Deception or Self-Consolation?” is the concluding chapter that wraps up how storytelling and self-deception affect the four characters and how self-deception is served as self-consolation for these characters. Although self-deception blocks their eyes to see reality, it comforts them to some degrees when they look back to their past.

Chapter Two

The Storyteller and Self-Deception

“Since then, at an uncertain hour/That agony returns, /
And till my ghastly tale is told/This heart within me burns.”
-----Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

“All our interior world is reality, and that perhaps more so than our apparent world.”
-----Marc Chagall

2.1 Introduction

Storytelling, or narrative, is ubiquitous in the human world. According to Roland Barthes, narrative is present in “almost infinite diversity of forms,” such as myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, drama and so forth (Barthes 80). Theodore Sarbin proposes that narrative is a “root metaphor” of psychology since it is “an organizing principle for human action” (9). So immersed in narrative, people also apply narrative to “recount and reassess the meaning of our past” and even to forestall the future (Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* 3).

Storytelling is also the essential heartbeat of *The Pillowman*; the protagonist is a storyteller; many tales written by the protagonist are narrated and related in the play; the written tales are enacted in Act One Scene Two and Act Two Scene Two. Because the progression of the plot in this play is propelled by many stories and tales, storytelling is pervasive in *The Pillowman*.

Among all the characters, the storyteller, Katurian, is the main storyteller triggering other people not only to argue over the essence of storytelling but also to tell stories to confront with their traumas and to relieve themselves. Being an involved victim of parental maltreatment and the murderer of parricide, Katurian deals with his traumas by tale-writing which enables him to build up an imaginary space to suture reality and imagination. By so doing Katurian reconstructs the past and constructs reality in order to relieve himself of the sense of guilt of the parricide and of the

disturbing memory. He operates storytelling as a self-deceptive way of soothing his traumas.

This chapter argues that as a storyteller/story-writer, Katurian falls into a state of self-deception and buries himself into an imaginary space he creates. Writing tales grants Katurian a potential to revise his life stories as new versions accepted by himself. When writing tales, Katurian fabricates the new plot structure and new identity for his stories. Preoccupied with his own tales, he starts to go through a self-deceptive way by living in the fabricated plot structure and identifying with the character created by himself. With reality and fiction interpenetrated and undifferentiated, ultimately the storyteller becomes a self-deceiver who disavows and refuses to admit reality.

2.2 Storytelling as a Means of Self-deception

Storytelling makes people get immersed in self-deception very likely when people are inclined to treat life as stories. The faculty of storytelling helps people to contrive a plot structure to interpret and construct their life experiences, but it possibly affects people to misrecognize their life as their imaginary plots and to live in self-deception. Storytelling is indispensable in human life, because people tend to interpret and construct their life experiences by cutting continuing life into chunks of life stories to rationalize and to organize their thoughts and lived experiences. Assembling fragments of life into clusters of stories depends on one's ability of organization and imagination. With imagination, people can not only come up with plots to arrange their life stories but also visualize themselves as characters who take action in the stories. Once they treat themselves as characters, presumably they will become too preoccupied by their identity as characters to differentiate reality from

imagination. In the end, they misidentify themselves and get engrossed in illusion and self-deception.

2.2.1 Storytelling as an Organizing Principle

Storytelling is a psychological mechanism that has tremendous impacts on people because it shapes and organizes thoughts. Sarbin proposes that the narrative is an organizing principle for human action. People tend to describe daily life with an implicit or explicit application of plots, and plots influence the flow of action: “[t]he narrative is a way of organizing episodes, actions, and accounts of actions; it is an achievement that brings together mundane facts and fantastic creations; time and place are incorporated. The narrative allows for the inclusion of actors’ reasons for their acts, as well as the causes of happening” (Sarbin 9). In other words, the narrative and storytelling is a means for people to order, to arrange, and to explain the past, so as to sort out causes and effects in daily life. It provides an explanation and disposition for life which streams in ongoing time and space.

Sarbin borrows Stephen Pepper’s notion of “root metaphor” to explicate the narrative as a crucial root metaphor because people are inclined to pin down ever-changing and infinite life to a finite story with the scaffolding of contexts. Root metaphors, as Pepper defines it, are the piloting categories that direct people to understand, explain, and define this world: “[i]n terms of these categories he [every individual] proceeds to study all other area of facts[...] He undertakes to interpret all facts in terms of these categories” (qtd. in Sarbin 5). According to Pepper’s definition, there are four root metaphors: formism, mechanism, organism, and contextualism. Among the four, the idea of contextualism, as Sarbin appropriates, is related to the narrative. Contextualism purports to explain fluctuating and fluid life incidents in a

contextual cause-effect frame. Sarbin explicates it as “an ongoing texture of multiply elaborated events, each leading to others, each being influenced by collateral episodes, and by the efforts of multiple agents who engage in actions to satisfy their needs and meet their obligation” (6). Hubert Hermans and Harry Kempen expound that contextualism presupposes to form multiplicity of past, present, and future as an interconnected unity and totality. Eventually contextualism helps life to reach a “final causation” (Hermans and Kempen16). In so doing the person as a storyteller is in a continuous process of meaning construction for arranging events as a whole and is oriented to “the active realization of purpose and goals” (Hermans and Kempen 16).

Peter Brooks also asserts the importance of storytelling as drawing lines for life and regularizing human life and psychology. In his viewpoint, plot is the most crucial principle that makes stories “finite and comprehensible,” so that the narrative “demarcates, encloses, establishes limits, orders” (*Reading for the Plot* 4). This characteristic also contributes to psychoanalysis which interprets chaotic dreams, because analysts are able to “reconstruct intentions and connections, [and] to replot the dream as narrative” (Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* 5). Psychoanalysis is a science of interpreting narratives related by patients; narratives told by patients are composed of certain events in patients’ life. To help patients, analysts reexamine their life events, which furtively but enormously influence patients, and analysts in turn extract “clinical significance” and interpret patients’ narratives (Erwin 336).

The characteristic of organizing life of storytelling thus helps people to deal with their trauma. Since narrative facilitates people to put chaotic incidents into orderly structure, it rescues victims of traumatization from upheaval back to normal. Michele Crossley asserts that narrative helps people to maintain coherence, unity, meaningfulness and identity after experiences of traumatization by bringing the

disrupted routine back to normal order and connection, which “re-establish[es] a semblance of meaning in the life” (11). In addition to its normalizing function, storytelling also induces catharsis. Richard Kearney explores ways in which narrative provides cathartic release for victims of trauma by having victims return to their past and search for a way to make a compromise with their future: “[t]he recounting of experience through the formal medium of plot, fiction or spectacle permits us to *repeat the past forward* so to speak [...] In the play of narrative re-creation we are invited to revisit our lives—through the actions and personas of others—so as to live them otherwise. We discover a way to give a future to the past” (51, italic in the original). Narrative provides a plot structure and new characters for victims of traumatization to revisit the past with a more disinterested and unaffected attitude so that the victims can adjust their past to their present and future more easily. Therefore, the components of the narrative, such as “displacement”, “condensation”, “emplotment”, “schematism”, “estrangement” and “synthesis” enable people to touch upon “the reality of the suffering which could not be faced head-on or at first-hand” (56).

2.2.2 Storytelling and Imagination

Composed by reality and imagination, narrative helps victims to revisit their past and re-construct it to tread on their present and future, and to re-order their smashed past broken by the attack of trauma.¹² Storytelling, or narrative, serves such purpose because it provides people with a context to give explanations and interpretations for their traumatic past. Moreover, storytelling makes available an in-between space

¹² Nerea Arruti discusses the academic repertoire of the concern in trauma and representation, including writing about trauma. But she doubts if such representation is able to serve therapeutic function, since “the interconnection between critical thought and art cannot erase the shattering of the glass, the wounded word” (7).

where reality and imagination coexist, since reconstruction needs imagination to fill in the gaps between the addition and omission of reality. Since stories consist of reality and imagination, storytelling is filled with real and imaginative dialogues. Hubert Hermans and Els Hermans-Jansen make suppositions for narratives: “stories acknowledge both the perception of reality and the power of imagination (e.g., in filling the gaps in one’s memory and in anticipating future events); whereas stories combine fact and fiction, the telling of stories involves real and imaginal (sic) dialogues” (11).

Imagination and fantasy contribute integration to our recognition of this world. In psychoanalytic exposition, fantasy is an unconscious psychical structure underlying neurotic behavioral traits or symptoms. It is also a consciously imaginative narrative or scenario experienced in daily life; therefore, it consists of “repressed material (in disguised form)” and “items derived from genuine childhood experiences” (Erwin 188). Sigmund Freud regards fantasy as the product of the unsatisfied wishes: “[t]he motive forces of phantasies [fantasies] are unsatisfied wishes, and every single phantasy is the fulfillment of a wish, a correction of unsatisfying reality” (qtd. in Erwin 188). Developing from psychoanalytical elucidation of fantasy, Bruno Bettelheim puts stress on the credit of fantasy to complete personality and give people stimulus to meet the difficulty of life:

The unconscious is the source of raw materials and the basis upon which the ego erects the edifice of our personality. In this simile our fantasies are the natural resources which provide and shape this raw material, making it useful for the ego’s personality-building tasks. If we are deprived of this natural resource, our life remains limited; without fantasies to give us hope, we do not have the strength to meet the adversities of life. (Bettleheim 121)

In this way, fantasy and imagination grant people possibilities to form their personality and their perspective of seeing the world. With the assistance of fantasy, people are able to re-construct their recognition and to confront with their sufferings by providing themselves with explanations and justifications.

2.2.3 Storytelling and I-Me Relation

Since stories are made up of reality and imagination, storytelling is also an action combined with real undertaking and imaginative maneuver. When plotting the stories, a storyteller or a storywriter has to produce imaginary roles and characters to participate in stories. To narrate stories, construct the fictional world, and plot the imaginary events, a storyteller needs to invent and develop roles and characters in the tales, as the characters are normally the agents taking actions in plots and events. Therefore, storytelling or story-writing is always a process with regard to imaginary interaction with characters in stories.

When a story is autobiographically related to the life of the narrator, the imaginary character will become the narrator himself. The narrator and the narrated character are the same person, sharing the same self. The distinction between the two lies in the former is the subject *I*, while the latter changes into the object *Me*. The storyteller, at this moment, splits into two selves. While one lives his life, the other tells life as if he is an outsider; living and telling become concurrent: “lives are told in being lived and lived in being told” (Carr 61). Sarbin also utilizes it to interpret narrative writing. While *the I* expresses the author, *the Me* can be seen as the character. When it comes to self-narrative, *the I* is the self as an author, whereas *the Me* is the self as a protagonist in the narrative. This narrative construction enables the author to “imagine the future and reconstruct the past” (Sarbin 18). With *the Me* as

the imaginary character, the author, or *the I*, is able to map out the world in the story, retrospect the past or envisage the future.

In psychological studies, I-Me relation is discussed very often to describe the split of self. Julian Jaynes explains consciousness with a spatialized metaphor “mind-space” (46). In this mind-space, there is an “Analog I” which is the subject moving in our imagination and doing things that we are not really doing. There is also a “Metaphor Me,” a kind of object and “autoscopic images” that we see of ourselves (63). These two attributes work in our consciousness by means of narration which is a process for the “Analog I” to explain and to illustrate the “Metaphor Me” in the streams of ongoing consciousness. Through explanation and illustration of the object of the self, the “Analog I” thus obtains references to examine himself. With this course of action, the image of the “Metaphor Me” will gradually influence the “Analog I” and determine the latter; the two will become reconciled. This reconciliation designates our life story in a more compatible form. As Jaynes states, “situations are chosen which are congruent to this ongoing story, until the picture I have of myself in my life story determines how I am to act and choose in novel situations as they arise” (64). In this sense, the “Analog I” depends on the “Metaphor Me” to reconstruct his life story and to scheme the ongoing plots for the life story.

Adriana Cavarero connects self-narrative to psychological development of the narratable self. For her, writing an autobiographical story is to satisfy the desire of unity. Cavarero establishes her conclusion from Hannah Arendt’s conception of “the narratable self.” In Arendt’s view, every human being perceives this world and himself or herself through the interaction with the other. To construct, to understand, and to tell the life-story of the self, the self needs an other to perceive itself. At this moment, the narratable self comes into being as the other of the self. Ambiguously,

the narratable self is an in-between mechanism, an identity simultaneously as the subject (the self) initiating the narration and as the object (the other) being narrated, which creates ambiguity. The interplay of this ambiguity makes people live their lives as they are living their own stories, “without being able to distinguish the *I* who narrates it from the *self* who is narrated” (Cavarero 34, italics in the original). When narrating the life-story of the self, personal memory interferes and influences the narration, because it operates to “go on forgetting, re-elaborating, selecting and censoring the episodes of the story that it recounts” (36). In addition, memory stimulates the self to narrate what has been reified by the exposure to the world; therefore, the story may turn out to be a “false perspective”; and the one who writes his/her own story actually does not tell the truth about the self, but “*claims* to be telling it” (40, italic in the original). Extending Arendt’s theory, Cavarero concludes the whole mould of the narratable self as the outcome of pursuing the desire of unity. To synthesize the split subject and object as a unity, the narrator can only condense his/her life-story into a story that he/she accepts. Self-narration is a plausible way to attain a desirable identity and unity, since “[n]o identity can in fact gain a better unity than that which condenses itself in the narration of a single act of the hero [the “protagonist” in the self-narration]” (44). By regarding the self as the hero of the self-narrative, the narrator can obtain a unified self-image and identity.

Nevertheless, in Cavarero’s theory, although self-narrative contributes to the coexistence of *the I* and *the Me*, it may cause a false perspective of seeing the self and label the self with a wrong identity and image. Sarbin also raises such problematic possibility in self-narrative. People may become excessively preoccupied with a narrative figure, and even the narrated figure they create by themselves: “a person may become overinvolved in a narrative figure portrayed in a novel, play, biography,

folktale, or film, so may that person become overinvolved in the narrative figure (*the me*) created by the self as author (*the I*)” (Sarbin 18, italics in the original). In this case, self-deception comes into being.

2.2.4 Self-deception

Storytellers/storywriters and story-listeners/story-readers may fall into a state of self-deception of their identity when they terribly identify with or extremely do not identify with the characters in the stories. At this same time, they put aside their authorial selves while the narrative figures dominate their selves. They start to repudiate who they are and what they have truly done but to transform themselves into what they recognize with. That is a mental activity inclusive of disavowal and fantasy.

Herbert Fingarette dissects self-deception with disavowal and avowal of identity in the engagement of the world. He defines a self-deceiver as a person who refuses to identify himself as the person he essentially is:

In general, the self-deceiver is engaged in the world in some way, and yet he refuses to identify himself as one who is engaged; he refuses to avow the engagement as his. Having disavowed the engagement, the self-deceiver is then forced into protective, defensive tactics to account for the inconsistencies in his engagement in the world as acknowledged by him.

(66)

Disavowing the genuine engagement of the world, the self-deceiver will acknowledge and avow another form of engagement by “identify[ing] himself to himself as a particular person engaged in the world in specific ways” (90). In other words, self-

deception is built up on the disavowal of the certain identity and the avowal of another kind of identity.

Fingarette examines self-deception and the maintenance of a certain identity from the perspective of “spelling-out of one’s engagements in the world” (48). For Fingarette, “spelling-out” is one’s capability and skill to describe his engagement of this world which is actually “*his world*” (40, italics in the original). “Spelling-out” refers to “becom[ing] explicitly conscious of our engagement” (42) and articulates one’s “description of an individual’s engagement in the world,” which includes “aims, reasons, motives, attitudes and feelings” as well as “understanding and ‘perception of the world and himself’ (39).

Usually, people exercise “spelling-out” to engage in this world. Nevertheless, self-deception is “the situation in which there is overriding reason *not* to spell-out some engagement” (Fingarette 42, italic in the original). It involves two shades of meanings of *not spelling out*: a person does not spell out their engagement, and at the same time, he avoids himself from spelling out his not spelling out. That is to say, a self-deceiver “avoid[s] becoming explicitly conscious of [his] engagement,” and he “avoid[s] becoming explicitly conscious that [he is] avoiding it” (42). In this way, the self-deceiver is not able to “admit the truth to himself” even though “he knows in his heart it’s so” (46).

Not spelling out some engagement in the world, however, is dependent on spelling out some other engagement of the world to bridge gaps between the parts that are not revealed. At this moment, the self-deceiver will adopt “self-covering policy” to supplement the “hidden areas,” such as “certain memories, perceptions, desires, actions,” that are readily spelled out but refrained from spelling out (Fingarette 48). To fill the gaps, “a self-covering policy” reminds the self-deceiver of spelling out an

elaborate “cover-story” that makes the story more like “a natural consequence” and concurrently removes the inconsistency between “the actual engagements” and “cover-story” (48-49). At long last, the self-deceiver is “forced to fabricate stories in order to keep his explicit account of things and the way things really are in some kind of harmony” (61), although he may not be explicitly conscious of his own operation that the fabrication he tells people he also tells himself (61). At this time, the self-deceiver disavows his actual engagement and identity but avows a certain engagement and identity which he did not have previously.

Sarbin extends and connects Fingarette’s concept of self-deception, disavowal and avowal of identity, and spelling-out to self-narrative. When self-deception arises, one will become a self-deceiver who lives in his plot structure and a storyteller who “tells stories both to self and to audiences” (Sarbin 16). To “maintain or enhance self-identity,” the teller will “reconstruct” his life stories through two skills: “the skill in spelling out engagements in the world” and “the skill in not spelling out engagements” (16). Sarbin explains the two as follows: the former means to articulate and “find reasons for actions of the narrative figures,” especially by providing contextual reference for the outsider to trace the story. The latter is opposite by refusing to let listeners and readers accept the plausibility of stories to avoid controversy and to prevent people from “render[ing] the story inconsistent, unconvincing, or absurd” (16).

The disavowal and avowal of identity can be illustrated by “Quixote Principle” which is originally proposed by Harry Levin. It initially illustrates readers who are so immersed in the protagonists in stories that they identify themselves with the character, and afterwards they will start to act like that character. As Hermans and Kempen clarify, “after the role of this character is enacted in imagination, it is enacted

overtly and guides the reader's behavior" (20). Sarbin claims that this "Quixote Principle" does not merely occur in reading, but also occurs in "imaginings stirred by orally told tales or by the direct or vicarious witnessing of the actions of role models" (17). In this way, the boundary between reality and imagination will be blurred; it causes fusion and confusion of the two. It is what Levin declares: "the rivalry between the real world and the representation that we make of it for ourselves" (qtd. in Mancing 598). To extend this conception to self-narrative, *the author I* will become fascinated by *the protagonist Me* and thus live *the I* along with the plot designed for *the Me*.

To conclude, this section, I expound how people see their lives as stories which serve as a space of the mixture of reality and imagination where people are simultaneously the character and the narrator in their life stories. With the double roles as a character and a narrator, a storyteller may reconstruct his past, envision his future, and even alter his identity in a self-deceptive manner. A storyteller employs storytelling, whether it is in the oral form or written one, to incorporate his self-image and to recognize himself as a completed identity. Identifying with a complete self assists the storyteller in tackling the traumatic past that shattered the unity of the self. Also, in the ongoing process of storytelling, a storyteller always gets opportunities to adjust himself because the teller can make every moment and fragment of life as a complete story and to define that story and to give that story meanings. Like what David Carr clarifies, the retrospective view of the narrator is not irreconcilable with action of the agent in the narration; instead, it is "an extension and refinement" that creates meanings for action and the narration (61).

However, concomitant questions arise: by telling stories does the storyteller really face with and conquer his traumas? Is it a gesture to relieve his disturbing

feelings by repudiating their traumatic past? Or, is it only a self-deceptive method to displace and replace reality by imagination? The storyteller may attempt to find solutions in his re-constructed stories and he seems to reconcile with his past, but actually he still gets stuck in the past and even trapped in the development of the story. Katurian, the tale-writer in *The Pillowman*, is such a storyteller who gets baffled in his own tales which confine him in self-deception.

2.3 Katurian as a Self-deceptive Storyteller in Spatialized Stories

In *The Pillowman*, Katurian is a self-deceptive storyteller who takes advantage of storytelling to relieve himself from his traumatic memory of parental maltreatment and his sense of guilt of parricide. Katurian's self-deception can be examined in two perspectives: the disavowal of the connection between his tales and his life, and the avowal of the imaginary space and fictional characters he creates. Firstly, Katurian keeps denying the association between his life experiences and his tales. He engages in the world in a way of writing his life experiences into his stories, but he refuses to admit such engagement and "refuses to avow the engagement as his" (Fingarette 66). Secondly, he lives in the plot structure he fabricates and even becomes the character he creates. By writing tales and narrating stories, Katurian obtains possibilities of modifying and justifying his past. In the imaginary space established by those stories, he is able to create for himself a new version of the plot and a new ending of the past. He revises his past and integrates it into his tales. However, the revision of his life story offers an imaginary space where he becomes a self-deceiver telling the version of the story of the past he desires for. The stories provide him with the space for placing his past and his imagination simultaneously without granting him a way out. With his stories, Katurian not only gets stuck in his past, but he also gets trapped in

his imaginary space. He applies his *cover-story*, and *spells out* his engagement in his world as a certain identity similar to the characters he creates and although he avoids himself from explicitly conscious of this consequence. He becomes a self-deceiver who loses himself in the imaginary space where he has become the fictional character.

2.3.1 Tales with Katurian's Traces

Storytelling is of great significance for Katurian. As a storyteller and a tale-writer, Katurian cherishes his tales very much because his tales are sites where the traces and memories of his life experiences are stored. His tales are the only beauty and benefits of his miserable lived experiences. The gloomy and cruel plots portrayed in the tales display how his disturbing past influences his imagination and cognition and how pessimistic he has become. The tales are his value of living and surviving from miserable memories; they are his consolation for the dismal life. His tales are even more worthy of preservation than his own life. Through plotting the remnants of his past into tales, Katurian finds a way to revisit his life and to "live [it] otherwise" (Kearney 51).

Both a storywriter and a storyteller, Katurian tells his tales in a way cruel, bloody, imaginary, full of the episodes of child-torture and retaliation. He has written about four hundred stories and seven of them are narrated or mentioned during the investigation to evidence Katurian's crimes. "The Little Apple Men" describes how a little girl cruelly abused by her father kills him with some razor-hidden little men carved from apples but other apple men slay her in return because she kills their "little brothers" (12-13). "The Tale of the Three Gibbet Crossroads" is about a prisoner caught in an iron gibbet and shot dead without knowing what his crime is (15). "The Tale of the Town on the River," the only one being published, is based on the story of

the Brother Grimms' "The Pied Piper." As the story antecedent to "The Pied Piper," it illustrates why the boy, the only survivor in the story of "The Pied Piper," becomes crippled. While the cause of his physical disability is seen as absurd at the first sight, it is also his handicap and tardiness that prevent him from being abducted by the piper's music (19).¹³ "The Writer and the Writer's Brother" is the solely autobiographical tale, which Katurian admits (76). It depicts that a boy is raised and nurtured by his parents to become a good tale-writer. When he grows up as a teenager, he finds out that he has an older brother who has been imprisoned and tortured by their parents for seven straight years. To rescue his brother, the tale-writer smothers his parents to death with a pillow (31-35). "The Pillowman" portrays a person who kills children to save them from their possibly miserable life in the future. In "The Pillowman," the title character, the Pillowman, is able to foresee heartrending destiny of children, so he kills children in disguise of accidents in case that they suffer more as grownups. However, realizing his distress in eliminating lives, the Pillowman also moves forward to his self-destruction, by burning himself at last (43-47). "The Little Green Pig," a tale that does not involve murder plots, depicts a little green pig which is satisfied with its difference from others because his skin color is "glow-in-the-dark-green." Other pigs are very jealous of its peculiarity so they paint him pink

¹³ "Pied Piper of Hamelin" is a legendary folklore with various versions, and that of the Brother Grimms is the most well-known and prototypical one among them. The story sets in a plague-stricken town called Hamelin. One day went a piper who claimed himself as a rat-catcher. The townspeople called him Pied Piper because he was always dressed in a multicolored coat. Pied Piper promised the townspeople that he could eradicate rats and mice for Hamelin with his pipe. When he blew his pipe, all rats and mice heard the music, appeared and followed him. Pied Piper led them to walk into the river and thus all of them got drowned. Pied Piper successfully eliminated rats for the people, yet they refused to pay him. Pied Piper was so angry at the perfidiousness of the townspeople. One night he began to blow his pipe again, but this time children living in the town followed him as if they were all hypnotized. Pied Piper led children to troop into the mountain, but all over the town there were two kids not being mesmerized. One of them was blind, and the other was mute.

To read the original tale of the Brothers Grimms and other versions concerning this folktale, please refer to the folklore Professor D. L. Ashliman's website: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/hameln.html> Dr. Ashliman is a retired folklore professor conducting folklore research projects in University of Pittsburgh.

all over with irremovable paint. However, one day it pours green rain; every pig is turned into a green pig, while the little green pig still remains pink. This way, he still retains his idiosyncrasy (65-67). “The Little Jesus,” the cruelest one among all, is about a little girl who is persecuted by her merciless stepparents but still harboring a self-comforting faith of treating herself as the little Jesus (67-72).

These stories are unlike common fairy tales that provide soothing plots of what Bettelheim generalizes: fantasy, recovery, escape and consolation (143). They are cruel, violent, seemingly purposeless and even ludicrous. Most of them do not provide consoling endings like conventional tales do. However, these stories have some conspicuous motifs in common. While some of them are related to child abuse (“The Little Apple Men,” “The Writer,” “The Pillowman,” and “The Little Jesus”), others concern purposeless punishment and maltreatment (“The Three Gibbet Crossroads,” “The Town,” “The Little Green Pig,” and “The Little Jesus”), and still others touch upon a cycle of comeuppance (“The Little Apple Men” and “The Writer”). Two of them even turn the misfortunes into fortune in the dénouements (“The Town,” and “The Little Green Pig”).

The plots in this tales more or less correspond with the life stories of Katurian, although Katurian insists that they are merely stories, “without trying to say anything at all” (16). Nevertheless, in spite of Katurian’s protest and declaration, some slight clues of the connection between the tales and the writer’s life can still be detected. The endless cycle of comeuppance in “The Little Apple Men” epitomizes the endless cycle of violence Michal and Katurian suffer. Tortured by his parents when he was little, Michal repeats such violent behavior and butchers children when he grows up. At the same time, Katurian is like the apples which take revenge for their brothers. As to the second story, the prisoner’s unawareness of the reason for his imprisonment

echoes that Katurian is caught by the detectives without knowing what crime he has committed; here writing and this story can represent life because sometimes things in life go without reasons. Katurian and Michal are maltreated without reasons, and those child victims of murders are chosen to be killed without particular purposes. The third story signifies that life should be comprehended in a broader spectrum when we judge the value of it. Mishap may turn out to be good luck, and vice versa. Michal is saved from parental torture, but his survival brings about the deaths of other innocent children. "The Pillowman" is the most noticeable representation of reality of Katurian. This mixed image of the Pillowman as a rescuer and a self-eliminator reverberates with the life of Katurian. Katurian smothers his parents with a pillow at the age of fourteen to wind up Michal's adversity. Afterwards, to liberate Michal from persecution of the detectives, to atone for Michal's crime, and to save his tales from the danger of being burned, Katurian also smothers Michal with a pillow in the prison cell and confesses all the murders to the detectives. He walks into self-destruction willingly, like what the Pillowman does. Katurian and the Pillowman thereby bear resemblance to each other.

Katurian's stories are indeed embedded with fragments of his life. It is found that the seemingly fictional stories are related to reality (in the play). Those stories are not merely fabricated by imagination; they are composed by the blend of reality and imagination. Katurian's stories are partly derived from his personal experiences, no matter how he denies this fact. Writing dark tales with despondent endings reflects his viewpoint toward men's miserable life. When Michal asks why he does not have the writer's brother survive in the tale "The Writer and the Writer's Brother," Katurian expresses his pessimism about life by replying, "There are no happy ending in real

life”(59). The tales help Katurian to dilute his miserable life experiences and to see his past in a more disinterested and unaffected perspective.

Katurian is thus a storyteller who places his *traces* into his stories and passes the traces down. The stories narrated by Katurian are made of layers of experiences and memory; they are stories filled with his traces. According to Walter Benjamin, storytelling should be an unremitting course of passing experiences, so that stories will always be an unfinished composition of multiple memories. The experiences embedded in the story are the *traces* extracted from the lives of the teller, which “cling to a story the way the handprints of the potter cling to a clay vessel” and are deeply implanted into the stories (Benjamin 149). Although Katurian only admits “The Writer and the Writer’s Brother” as his sole autobiographical story, some of his other tales also comprises the traces of his life experiences. His tales, paradoxically, are distilled from traces of his life experiences to some extent.

Since the tales are the extracts and the essence of Katurian’s life, he values them so dearly in his life that he is willing to trade his life for the preservation of the tales. When arguing about the tragic ending of “The Writer and the Writer’s Brother,” Katurian and Michal hold different viewpoints toward the value of life:

Katurian. That was a happy ending.

Michal. (*almost tearful*) What? That I am dead and left to rot, that’s a happy ending?

Katurian. What was left in your hand when you died? A story. A story that was better than any of my stories. See, ‘The Writer and the Writer’s Brother’ ...you were the writer. I *was* the writer’s brother. That made it a happy ending for you.

Michal. But I was dead.

Katurian. **It isn't about being or not being dead. It's about what you leave behind.** (60, emphases added)

For Katurian, storytelling is an act to maintain and to enhance his limited life. He employs his stories to save—retrieve and rescue—his memory as well as the value of life. His stories are born after he has lived through those miserable moments. They are extracted from his life. Therefore, he would rather die than burn down his stories; he is willing to make false confession in order to prevent his stories from being destroyed. Saving his stories is the one and only condition for his confession:

Katurian. I've confessed to everything truthfully, just like I promised I would. **And I believe that you'll keep all my stories with my case file and not release them until fifty years after my death, just like you promised you would.** (75, emphases added)

Katurian's insistence on preserving his stories, to some extent, resonates with his pessimistic perspective of life. He knows that he is going to be executed due to parricide and fratricide. He has been left alone, so he is not afraid of sacrificing his life. But at least, he can leave his stories as the only happy ending for his life.

When being questioned by the detectives why he makes false testimony, Katurian answers that he owns nothing but his stories which are the only thing that he possesses:

Katurian. [...] I thought that if I tied my self into all of it, like you wanted me to, at least I'd be able to save my stories. At least I'd have that.
(Pause.) **At least I'd have that.** (99, emphases added)

His talent for story-writing and his tales help him strong-mindedly face with his death. In this sense, he is a true storyteller who will consume his life for the everlasting tales, like what Benjamin concludes: “[h]is gift is the ability to relate to his

life; his distinction, to be able to relate his *entire* life. The Storyteller: he is the man who could let the wick of his life be consumed completely by the gentle flame of his story” (162, italic in the original). Benjamin thus calls the storyteller, “the righteous man [who] encounters himself” (162). While the storyteller passes away as a natural cycle, his story, sutured with his experiences, memories, knowledge and wisdom, stays forever by transmitting itself to other storytellers. In this way, a story conveys “the idea of eternity” because it does not end with death (Benjamin 150). It echoes the ending of *The Pillowman* that Katurian is willing to make a full confession and accept execution on condition that his stories can be preserved without being burned. He dies for the eternity of his stories.

2.3.2 The Disavowal of the Connection between Tales and Life

Although Katurian’s tales are embedded with the traces of his life, Katurian always self-deceptively rejects the association. While the detectives assert the associations between the tales and Katurian’s life, Katurian keeps denying the connections. In *The Pillowman*, the interrogation of Katurian by Tupolski and Ariel is similar to an argument over storytelling in which both the interrogators and the interrogated assert their views about storytelling. For the two detectives, a story is a *representation* of the real life of its teller/writer since the composer always makes up the story based on his personal experiences. When they inquire into Katurian by directly questioning and by examining his tales to track correlated clues involved with the murders, they believe that the story must epitomize reality. For example, Tupolski tries to find some similarities between the vicious murderer of the serial child murders and the cruel father in Katurian’s tale “The Little Apple Men:”

Tupolski. He represents something, does he?

Katurian. He represents a bad father. He *is* a bad father. How do you mean, 'represents'?

Tupolski. He is a bad father.

Katurian. Yes. He slaps the little girl around.

Tupolski. This is why he is a bad father.

Katurian. Yes.

Tupolski. What else does he do to the little girl, 'he is a bad father'?

Katurian. All the story says, I think, is the father treats the little girl badly.

You can draw your own conclusions. (10-11, italics in the original)

The detectives are deeply convinced that the tales written by Katurian must express the personality and thoughts of Katurian. For the detectives, especially for Tupolski, underneath the surface of the tales must be some hidden significance that connotes the real purpose for Katurian to write such tales. The tales are "pointer[s]" of overtones (18). In particular, the plots of the tales are very much equivalent to the murder patterns. Therefore, the detectives keep making an attempt to have Katurian confess his crimes by inducing Katurian to admit the similarity between the tales and the reality. The stories "send out a signal" of the murders. (30).

On the contrary, Katurian insists that Tupolski over-interprets the texts which are simply tales for their own sake; his tales do not serve any political or ideological purpose. He is "not trying to say anything at all," as he refutes Tupolski's indictment (16). Katurian declares that there are no other back-stories behind his stories, so if there are some correlated issues revealed in the tales, they are "accidental" (16). For Katurian, he writes solely to meet his own imagination instead of treating his stories as a vehicle for spreading his ideologies and "go[ing] in for that 'esque' sort of stuff" (18). To some extent, the argument of storytelling between the detectives and

Katurian reflects the agency of the readers to construct and interpret the text. The detectives' interrogation of the case is as the reader's reading of a text. The process of reading and listening to the text is similar to the way that detectives analyze and interpret the clues to get to the truth and solve cases. It is the process that "meaning is not inherent in a text but is rather constructed by readers on the basis of what they bring to it by way of context" (Lanters 11).

Nevertheless, Katurian's disagreement on the assertions of Tupolski regarding his tales as pointers is self-contradictory. Although he denies the correlation of reality, the connection between reality and tales is still revealed throughout the investigation. Trails of his life permeate his tales. Katurian admits that the tale "The Writer and the Writer's Brother" is indeed a tale adapted from his own experience. The lunatic parents in the tale *are* not only insane parents; they *represent* Katurian and Michal's progenitors who maltreat and torture Michal, and the brothers in the tale *represent* Katurian and Michal.

Katurian hence becomes an equivocal and ambiguous character who simultaneously disavows autobiographical elements in the tales but substantiates the correlation between his stories and his distressing memory. His past trauma has been deeply rooted in the stories; however, he intensely declines the influence. This vacillating state of Katurian shows his dodge from confronting with his trauma. He is engrossed with self-deception when he avoids himself from spelling out the engagement of real life in his tales. However, at the same time, he employs his stories to tackle remnants of past traumatic recollections by burying them into his dark tales. He creates fantasy to persuade himself into making compromises with his scarring past while the real scar has not been healed. In other words, storytelling/story-writing is the manifestation of his self-deception in dealing with trauma.

2.3.3 Stories as an Imaginary Space of Self-Deception

The self-deception of Katurian lies not only in his avoidance of spelling out the association between his life and his tales, but also in his perplexity between reality and tales when he starts to live in the plot structure he creates and become the character he invents. He employs storytelling to mingle his experiences with his tales and rewrite his past into new versions. However, eventually he ends up with the confusion between imagination and reality, as well as between fictional characters and his real identity. He gives himself over to self-deception when he starts to avow his identity as the fictional character he creates, which is the Pillowman.

The metatheatrical enactments of *The Pillowman* displays Katurian's self-deception, embodying his mind-space and his mental bewilderment between reality and fiction, as well as spreading the atmosphere of the interpenetration of reality and imagination, which echoes Katurian's confusion and self-deception. *The Pillowman* contains three enactments of Katurian's tales acted in mimes in Act One Scene Two, Act Two Scene Two, and the ending of this play, respectively. The enactments exhibit the effect of metatheater and story-within-the-story. What's more important, they do not solely establish a structure of form, but they are also in close association with the content and the theme of self-deception. The metatheatrical enactments materialize Katurian's tales as the imaginary space where he gets trapped in his self-deception, self-evasion, and confusion of reality and illusion.

2.3.3.1 Metatheater as the Embodiment of Katurian's Self-Deception

This play employs metatheatrical elements to embody the stories as an imaginary space where Katurian presents his self-deception. Metatheater is defined as a term

“used to describe a play that calls attention to itself as a work of theater and self-consciously examines the nature of drama” which contains all the theatrical issues, including languages, forms, and contents; when a play discusses theatrical issues or portrays a play within the play, it then can be seen as metatheatrical (Barnet 1521). Coined by Lionel Abel, the term *metatheater* refers to “the particular self-awareness, self-reflexivity, and self-knowledge” (Puchner 2). According to Lionel Abel’s explanation, metatheater is characterized by the “self-consciousness” of the dramatists and of the characters (152). The characters in the metatheater are those who have full self-consciousness and who “cannot but participate in their own dramatization” (153). It means that the characters self-consciously treat their reality (in the plays) as a stage where they are *acting*—taking action and performing a role. Reality and illusion become inseparable. In addition, fantastic elements are essential at the heart of reality. This way, in the metatheater, “life *must* be a dream and the *world* must be a stage” (Abel 154, italics in the original). Following the definition proposed by Abel, Richard Hornby categorizes metatheater into five varieties and techniques: The Play within the Play, The Ceremony within the Play, Role Playing within the Role, Literary and Real-Life Reference within the Play, and Self-Reference (Hornby 32).

The metatheatrical enactments in *The Pillowman* emerge in Act One Scene Two and Act Two Scene Two; they are the enactments of Katurian’s tales, “The Writer and the Writer’s Brother” and “The Little Jesus” respectively. The enactments display the play within the play. Both enactments are represented in the form of mime, with several characters acting out the plot, doing action mainly and talking little. The most special part is that Katurian is a metatheatrical character in the mimes. During the enactment, he takes charge of double roles: he is the narrator of the story, and the character in the mime. In “The Writer and the Writer’s Brother,” Katurian plays the

role of the writer, while in “The Little Jesus,” he plays a role of an old blind man. For example, in “The Little Jesus,” Katurian, for one thing, narrates the tales, describes the characters’ actions, and addresses the audience:

Katurian narrates the story that the girl and the parents act out. [...] (67, italics in the original)

For another, he plays a role and takes part in the enactment:

Katurian plays the blind man. She [the main character, Little Jesus, in the tale] rubs dust and spittle over his eyelids. (69, italics in the original)

Thus, in the enactment, Katurian shifts the roles between the narrator and the character in the frame of stories.

The enactments can be treated as an incarnation of the mind-space of Katurian the writer who is thinking, plotting, imagining, and animating his own mental images. “The Writer and the Writer’s Brother” is such an instance. What’s significant in the enactment of “The Writer and the Writer’s Brother” is that after the ending of the narration, Katurian the narrator sutures this tale with his life by providing a truer ending:

Katurian’s story ‘The Writer and the Writer’s Brother’ ended there in a fashionably downbeat mode, without touching upon the equally downbeat but somewhat more self-incriminating details of **the truer story**. (34, emphases added)

With this transition, the enactment of the story becomes the enactment of his life; the imaginary space of the tale is thus woven with the space of memory, becoming the mixture of imagination and reality. It is at this moment that we find that this story is based on Katurian’s life experiences with concealment of vindictive plots of parricide. When his real life is written into a tale, the ending is revised into a more pitiful and

miserable edition with a “downbeat mode.” In addition, *Katurian the narrator* and *Katurian the character* are now merged into a whole, as Katurian himself. He narrates and acts out the murder at the same time; Katurian is the self who narrates himself. The whole enactment becomes *Katurian the narrator* who looks back to his past, viewing the past as a story with himself telling the story, dissecting his own action, and acting out the past.

This process of *Katurian the narrator* and *Katurian the character* merged demonstrates the “I-Me relation” that this thesis has discussed earlier. Katurian writes down his past experiences, revises it as a story with a new plot and a new ending, and transforms himself into a character who enables himself to live according to the new edition of life story; he lives in his own “plot structure” (Sarbin 16). He is *the Author I* who creates and manipulates *the Character Me* to replace himself to re-live for two purposes: in the story, *the Character Me* replaces *the Author I* to make compensation for the parricide because *the Character Me* does not kill his parents at the end; in a sense, Katurian the character seems to help Katurian the author to sooth away his sense of guilt derived from the parricide. On the other hand, *the Character Me* replaces *the Author I* to kill his parents in the semi-imaginary reality in the truer edition of the story. It is not *the Author I*, but *the Character Me* who suffocates his parents. Ultimately, the mixture of imagination and reality makes it difficult to tell: is the former part of the story the reality that the two brothers have undergone? Or is it merely an imaginary and excusable development to explain what the two brothers have suffered from their parents?

The story is treated by Katurian as compensation and a representation of his love for Michal as well. If the plot of the tale “The Writer and the Writer’s tales” is true to reality, Michal is tortured by his parents due to Katurian: the affliction suffered by

Michal is part of an artistic experiment for nurturing Katurian as an outstanding tale-writer. Knowing this fact, Katurian always feels pity for the suffering of Michal. Before Katurian smothers Michal to death, he distressingly and heart-rendingly whispers to Michal:

Katurian. [...] You like that one, don't you, Michal? (*Pause.*) You used to like that one. No little toes in it...no razor blades in it. It's nice.
 (*Pause.*) Maybe you should've acted out that one. (*Pause.*) It's not your fault, Michal. It's not your fault. (67)

Katurian holds pity and helplessness toward Michal's crime. For him, the outcome of Michal's murder-committing is due to traumatic torture he is forced to suffer in his childhood. "The Writer and the Writer's Brother," to some extent, is like an epiphany and an atonement for Katurian to show his fraternal love, because he writes Michal into the story with the most ideal ending for life: Michal is the writer who passes away with many excellent stories left behind. During the argument between Michal and Katurian about if that story has a happy ending, Michal questions whether one can call that a happy ending because the writer's brother in the story is dead. But Katurian insists that it is a happy ending since it is Michal who is "the writer;" the talented writer portrayed in the tale is Michal, and what is left in the hand of the deceased writer is a story better than any other stories written by Katurian:

Katurian. What was left in your hand when you died? A story. A story that was better than any of *my* stories. See, "The Writer and the Writer's Brother"...*you* were the writer. I was the writer's brother. That made it a happy ending for you. (60, italics in the original)

In this sense, the story becomes a method of compensation for Michal's miserable suffering. The ending of the tale becomes a representation of fraternal love and self-deceptive relief of Katurian to provide his brother with a good ending.¹⁴

Near the end of this play Katurian again enacts a story in his mind-space, which is "a footnote" to the tale "The Writer and the Writer's Brother" (102). This last enactment finalizes the transformation of Katurian from Katurian to the Pillowman, the character he creates, and produces the air of confusion between reality and illusion. In the end of the investigation, Tupolski is counting down ten seconds for the execution of Katurian, but he shoots Katurian when there are about two seconds left. During the seven and three-quarter seconds he is given, Katurian comes up with "a final story in lieu of a prayer for his brother" (102). At the end of the play, the dead Katurian "slowly gets to his feet, takes the hood off to reveal his bloody, bullet-shattered head, observes Ariel at the table, and speaks" about his final story (102). In that story, on the eve of his torture by his parents, the happy, healthy little Michal meets the Pillowman, and the latter asks him if he wants to go with him to avoid the following misery. Michal rejects his suggestion because if so his brother will not hear

¹⁴ In my opinion, compared to the other two enactments, the enactment of "The Little Jesus" has little to do with Katurian's self-deception. But this tale reflects Katurian's accusation of parental maltreatment and purposeless suffering. With profanity toward God and Jesus, Katurian expresses his contempt for religion.

Moreover, in terms of the visual effect of *The Pillowman*, the enactment of "The Little Jesus" creates two effects for the viewers of the play: the witness of violence and a twist between resentment and mercy. Firstly, the detailed descriptions of enactments let the viewers feel ferocity and brutality of the violence. It is relevant to a certain "live performance" that "heightens awareness, increases potential embarrassment" and can "make the representation of private pain on a public stage almost unendurable" (Sierz 7). The enactment brings to life the violence to a visible representation, which is initially created by the imagination and the interpretation of individuals. They not only shock the viewers, arouse sympathy from the viewers, but also have the viewers experience and empathize the pain and the helplessness for the protagonists in the tales. Secondly, after the viewers have witnessed the cruel enactment of "The Little Jesus" and have started to feel sympathetic for the third girl victim, who is reportedly murdered based on the pattern of this tale, they will feel startlingly relieved when seeing at the ending of the play that Michal actually acts out is "The Little Green Pig" rather than "The Little Jesus." This unpredicted twist somehow stimulates mercy from the viewers toward the survivor and Michal as well, especially when the viewers have known the traumatic childhood experiences of Michal after seeing the enactment of "The Writer and the Writer's Brother."

his torture nor he can create excellent stories. Afterwards, *Katurian the narrator* sutures the story with the future reality again to say that the story keeps going with Michal being tortured and Katurian writing those stories. But then *Katurian the narrator* tells the story of what happens after the death of *Katurian the character*: Ariel does not burn the stories; instead, he places the story carefully with Katurian's case file, "which he then sealed away to remain unopened for fifty-odd year" (104).

The final enactment changes the real space into an imaginary space again, and leaves the whole play with a confusing ending. This surreal gesture conjures Katurian up to be a narrator who tells the story of what Katurian thinks about when Tupolski is counting down for his execution. The interrogation room becomes an imaginary space simultaneously embodying Katurian's mind-space and Katurian's story. *Katurian the narrator* invokes Michal back to life as a character of his final story. The audience is brought into not only Katurian's mind-space to see his mental state but also the imaginary space to see the enactment of the story. The trickiest part is that the audience cannot differentiate if the ending is the ending of the reality (in the play) or the ending of Katurian's story. *Katurian the narrator* tells the following outcome of Katurian's stories. The revelation of the outcome of Katurian's tales concludes the whole story of interrogation and establishes a "contextual marker" for the ongoing life (Sarbin 16). This gesture encloses and demarcates the continuing life to grant the life a closure like a story with a denouement. It arouses the question whether the whole play is not reality but all Katurian's fabrication. This ending not only turns the whole play into a confusion of reality and imagination, but also creates an "alienated reality" that causes "dissociation from the real" (Chambers and Jordan 10).

What's more important, Katurian's final story reveals his self-deception with his avowal of the identity he creates. He *spells out* his engagement in the world he

produces when in the final story he transforms himself into the Pillowman. In the enactment toward the end of the play, Michal plays the role of Michal, while Katurian plays the role of the narrator and the Pillowman. It is Katurian who converses with Michal the character in the name of the Pillowman without a character named the Pillowman appearing:

Michal. But if I do away with myself, my brother will never get to hear me
being tortured, will he?

Katurian. **“No,” said the Pillowman.** (103, emphases added)

At this point, Katurian blends himself with the Pillowman. Katurian has confused his own identity with the character he creates in the story. He identifies with the characters, starting to spell out the engagement of his fabrication, which he tells his readers and listeners and which “he also tells himself” (Fingarette 61). The identity of the Pillowman vindicates his parricide and fratricide; he is now really the Pillowman who commits murders for saving the miserable children from their predictable tragedy. He has become the character he creates.

In the final analysis, Katurian falls into self-deception in two perspectives. First, he lives in his own plot structure and assumes that life can be changed according to his plot structure. Therefore, he believes that he has given Michal a new good ending when he portrays Michal as the protagonist writer in the tale “The Writer and the Writer’s Brother” (60). He keeps believing that a good ending for a man’s life is to leave something behind and he thinks that it is a good ending for everyone (60). Moreover, he makes a compromise with Michal in his final story. He buries himself into his plot structure and creates an illusion of forgiveness and mutual understating from Michal. However, in reality, Michal is not willing to accept his own sufferings since he frequently complains about it (55). Second, Katurian becomes a self-deceiver

when he avows his another identity, “identify[ing] himself to himself as a particular person engaged in the world in specific ways” (Fingarette 90). He identifies himself as the Pillowman. It is evidenced in two aspects. For one thing, he becomes a real Pillowman when he smothers his parents and brother with pillows so as to rescue Michal from his misery. For another, he transforms himself into the character of the Pillowman in his final story. Thus, he becomes his own character and lives in the plot structure he creates.

2.3.3.2 The Interpenetration of Reality and Imagination

Other than the embodiment of Katurian’s mind-space, the metatheatrical enactments also create the effect of interlacing of reality and imagination, which echoes Katurian’s confusion of reality and fiction. The enactments embody the tales, while at the same time crystallize the tales from an imaginary space to a visible space. In this way, they blur the boundary between imagination and reality, confusing the viewers to wonder if the enactments are part of the reality related to the rest of the play. The enactments of the tales are self-referential metatheater in Hornby’s classification in which “the world of dramatic illusion undergoes a displacement” (Hornby 116). According to Hornby, self-referential metatheater is grounded on “the boundary between foreground (the dramatic illusion) and background (the ‘realities’ that define the illusion)” (116). The self-referential metatheater turns over the foreground and the background when “background is foregrounded” and vice versa (116). The enactments in *The Pillowman*, with Katurian playing the part of the narrator and the character, thus twist the foreground (the tales of Katurian) and the background (the reality, which is the interrogation) to juxtapose the fiction and the

reality on the same surface. It becomes baffling to tell if the enactments take place in the reality (the interrogation room) or in the mind of Katurian, which is his illusion.

Except that the enactments transport the written tales to a visible space which is juxtaposed with the reality (that is, the interrogation in the play), the tales also penetrate into the reality and become actual happenings of the reality. The tale “The Pillowman” is one of the examples of the tale intruding on reality. “The Pillowman” is originally a tale written by Katurian, but the four major characters all “imagine themselves as pillowmen” since all of them have embraced the fantasy of protecting people from the sufferings (Dean 39). Among the four, Katurian and Ariel even put the tale into practice and transform themselves into real pillowmen: they kill their parents with pillows. Ondřej Pilný employs Freudian “the canny” to elaborate on the effect of interpenetration of reality and imagination. As Pilný puts it, “the fantastic tale of the Pillowman is transferred into reality” (217). Such interpenetration between reality and fiction causes “the uncanny” so that “imagination and reality is effaced” (qtd. in Pilný 218) and the audience of this play “can hardly ever be sure about the status of what they are told” (Pilný 218).

The surreal and bizarre moment also comes at the sight of seeing the third child victim—the mute little girl—alive and painted totally in “bright green,” like the portrayal in the tale “The Little Green Pig” (95). The mute girl cannot speak, so she says hello to the people present “in sign language” (95). At this moment, the plot of the tale penetrates into the reality, and “the presentational intrudes on the representational” (Dean 37). This scene is analogous to the enactment of the mimes in Act One Scene Two and Act Two Scene Two, but this time this enactment takes place in the reality (in the play) rather than an imaginary space. The tale becomes part of the reality. Ultimately, the boundary between tales and reality becomes difficult to

differentiate when the two are interpenetrated. The interpenetration spreads the atmosphere of uncertainty and bewilderment that resonates Katurian's self-deception and entrapment of illusion.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter examines Katurian, Katurian's tales, and the enactment of tales to argue that Katurian is constantly trapped into his tales which are an imaginary space for him to self-deceptively revise his past without really tackling and solving his traumas. In doing so, he finds a way to pacify himself and to pretend everything is fine. Katurian in *The Pillowman* uses his tales to create an imaginary space where he weaves imagination into reality and creates a new edition of the past. Stories are always composed of reality and imagination. With the assistance of imagination, a person employs stories to retrospect and to reconstruct their life experiences. When he is looking back to his past, he engenders the split of self as *the Narrator I* and *the Character Me*. *The Narrator I* organizes and constructs the story, while *the Character Me* is a role living in the constructed story of *the Narrator I*. This process provides *the Narrator I* with a new identity and new possibility to reinterpret the past and to envisage the future. Moreover, this process helps *the Narrator I* to manipulate self-deception to soothe away his past trauma and mental suffering. Katurian in this play thus gets stuck in self-deceptive storytelling because he tends to live in his own story structure and to become the character he creates. The ending of the play is the last enactment in Katurian's mind-space but it also builds up a frame of a story-within-a-story, which echoes the atmosphere of helplessness for the failure of finding a way out of this self-deception and illusion.

Chapter Three

The Story-Listener and Self-Deception

“We tell stories because, in order to cope with the present and to face the future,
we have to create the past, both as time and space, through narrating it.”

-----W.F.H. Nicolaisen

3.1 Introduction

Storytelling naturally involves a storyteller and a story-listener. As I have examined in Chapter Two, to Katurian, the main storyteller narrating stories and tales in this play, storytelling serves as a vehicle of self-consolation and self-deception, helping Katurian to deal with his traumatic memory. To the story-listeners Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel, storytelling also has a tremendous impact on them. In this chapter, I shift the focus from the storyteller to the listeners to dissect the reciprocally narrative relations between the storyteller and story-listeners. I aim at analyzing how storytelling brings about self-deception for the other three characters in the confrontation with their traumas.

Filled with storytelling, *The Pillowman* presents dynamic interaction between tellers and listeners within the four characters. While Katurian is the main storyteller of his tales and of his lived experiences, the other three characters, Michal, Ariel, and Tupolski, are story-listeners who receive, interpret, and reconstruct the meanings of the stories narrated by Katurian. The stories of Katurian evoke their traumatic memories and influence their ways of interpreting and re/constructing the past and the present. Through interpretations, the characters seem to obtain self-deceptive explanations for their traumas.

This chapter scrutinizes self-deception of the story-listeners engendered in storytelling and argues that, in a way, storytelling leads to self-deceptive relief that makes Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel turn a blind eye to their own traumas and bury

themselves in the stories as well as the plot structure created by themselves. When a storyteller or a story-writer creates stories as the conduit for his own self-consolation and as the representation for his self-deception, stories may be treated by the listeners as ways of evasion as well. With interpretive and constructive potential, stories build up a transference space for the listeners to associate their life with stories and to reconstruct their past with the assistance of imaginative power embedded in stories.

3.2 Similarities within Transference, Transference Relation, and Storytelling

Storytelling is similar to the psychoanalytical transference: the narrative dynamics between a teller and a listener is similar to the transference relation between an analysand and an analyst. While the former is the one who speaks out his repressed unconscious, the latter listens to the content and analyzes the significance of the content. Both relations get involved with the reconstruction and reinterpretation of the stories. The parallels between the transference and storytelling stimulate Peter Brooks to appropriate the Freudian concept of transference to elucidate the narrative dynamics as the transference relation and scrutinize the potential power of change in storytelling that influences the teller and the listener to alter their perspectives on reality.

Due to such similarities within the transference, the transference relations, and storytelling, some traits discussed in the transference and the transference relations, such as “compulsion of repetition” and “countertransference” can be applied to examining storytelling and the narrative dynamics in *The Pillowman*. In addition, Peter Brooks’ theory of transference condition can also be utilized to explore the interpretive and transformative dynamics among Katurian, Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel, which explicates their self-deception produced during storytelling.

3.2.1 The Reciprocal Narrative Relation in Transference

Storytelling is a reciprocal and active process between teller/writer and listener/reader. Hubert Hermans and Els Hermans-Jansen explicate this reciprocity: “[w]hen there is a story, there is always someone who tells the story to someone else. It is the reciprocity between teller and listener that makes storytelling a highly dynamic interactional phenomenon” (9). The interaction between the teller and the listener involves a process of transmission. Walter Benjamin’s discussion of the storyteller sheds light on the transmission of memory between the teller and the listener in storytelling; it is an “assimilation” of the memory of the two (149). Peter Brooks extends the psychoanalytic conception of transference to describe this dynamic interaction. He defines the reciprocal relation between the teller and the listener as the “transferential relation” (50).¹⁵

The conception of the transferential relation proposed by Brooks is originated by transference raised by Sigmund Freud. Transference is a dynamic interaction between the patient and the therapist because the former transfers his emotions and feelings caused by the repressed and the unconscious past onto the latter as displacement and projection. Edward Erwin explains transference in two shades of denotation: for one thing, it means that individuals *transfer* their past experiences to the present and they respond to the current situation based on the past experiences; in other words, it is “displacement from the past into the present” (567). For another, this displacement and the retrieval of the past are actualized in the clinical relation between the analyst and the analysand. Based on the discoveries of Freud, Sandor Ferenczi contends transferences are “the re-impressions, and reproductions of the emotions and

¹⁵ The references of Peter Brooks cited in this chapter all come from his book *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling* (Oxford:Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1994).

phantasies that have to be awakened and brought into consciousness during the progress of the analysis, and are characterized by the replacement of a former person by the physician” (15). According to Freud, transference awakens, arouses, and makes conscious the repressed pasts which have become “new editions or facsimiles of the tendencies and phantasies” (qtd. in Klein 236). Since it is a “new edition,” this revived past does not belong to the past anymore. Instead, it is the past “applying to the person of the physician at the present moment” (qtd. in Klein 236).

Transference is a struggle and negotiation between the therapist and patient for pulling out the unconscious so as to reproduce it in the treatment. In this course, the work of transference plays tug-of-war with the resistance of the patient. In his “The Dynamics of Transference,” Freud elucidates the relation between transference and resistance in light of sexual desire. During the process of evoking and awakening the repressed and the unconscious past originated from libido, the wrestling with the self-perception of this craving for sexuality from the patient gives rise to *resistance* against the work of transference. If the work of transference overcomes the mechanism of resistance, it will be *positive transference*, which causes affectionate feelings, such as sympathy, friendship, and trust that help to better our lives. In Freud’s view, these affectionate emotions can be traced back to erotic desires which “have developed from purely sexual desire through a softening of their sexual aim” (Freud, “The Dynamics of Transference” 32). However, if the work of transference fails to overcome the mechanism of resistance, it becomes *negative transference* that engenders emotions of hostility and ambivalence. When the transference is confined to the negative one, “there ceases to be any possibility of influence or cure” (Freud, “The Dynamics of Transference” 34).

The dynamic transaction between transference and resistance arouses the patient to remember his past with repetition of the past. It causes “compulsion to repeat which now replaces the impulsion (sic) to remember” (Freud, “Remembering” 151). In Freudian assumption, during the process of transference, because the resistance of the patient interferes with the exposure of the repressed and the forgotten past, the past is not provoked by merely uttering, but by *repeating* and *acting it out*; compulsion of enactment from the patient is his way of remembering. Transference is thus a medium for the patient to remember, to enact and to repeat his repressed unconscious. The strong disavowal and resistance to the revival of the past stimulate the patient to employ acting out and repetition to replace his remembering. Freud thus states that “[t]he greater the resistance, the more extensively will acting out (repetition) replace remembering” (“Remembering” 151).¹⁶

In the transference situation, when the analyst is likely to displace and project his emotions onto the patient, countertransference also arises at this moment. Countertransference refers to the analyst’s transference response to the patient’s transference; it represents “the analyst’s reactions to the patient’s productions and actions” (Erwin 571). Laplanche and Pontalis explain countertransference as: “The whole of the analyst’s unconscious reactions to the individual analysand—especially to the analysand’s own transference” (92). The analyst is not a passive object who inertly receives the projection of emotion from the patient. Because he owns agency to respond to transference from the patient, he displaces and projects his emotions

¹⁶ Following Freud’s proposition of transference situation between the analyst and the analysand, later discussions about transference focus on a variety of possibilities connected with clinical relations between the analyst and the analysand. Elizabeth Zetsel assumes that transference serves the function of mitigating the threat of superego for the analysand, and helping the analysand to develop his ego. Herman Nunberg extends it to explicate the object correlation between the internally unreal object of the analysand (the unconscious) and the externally real object (the analyst). Heinrich Racker also proposes that transference is a psychological means to dealing with an internal object and making the internal conscious by the assistance of the external object (the analyst). In the viewpoint of Melanie Klein, transference is the deflection and revision of “total situations” from the patient, including his past, emotions, defenses, and object-relations (243).

onto the patient as well. When the analyst displaces and projects his emotions onto the patient, countertransference steps into the transference situation. Traditionally countertransference and transference are considered as two different and separate concepts, but they are gradually regarded as intertwined and blurred. They are like two sides of one coin, ubiquitous and inevitable in the clinical treatment.

Freud in his “The Future Prospects of Psychoanalytic Therapy” proposes countertransference as one of the “innovations in technique” in psychoanalysis (Freud, “Future” 19). For Freud, the better and advanced process of transference between the analysand and the analyst is made up of two parts: one is “what the physician infers and tells the patient,” while the other is “the patient’s work of assimilation, of ‘working through what he hears’” (Freud, “Future” 17). The process of transference therefore becomes mutual acts of relationship between the analysand and the analyst. The analyst interprets what the analysand talks about and helps the analysand to deal with the association between the past and the present. The response from the analysand at the same time elicits the repressed and the forgotten personal experiences of the analyst. As a result, the analyst may also generate transference emotions towards the patient, and this is countertransference, “which arises in the physician as a result of the patient’s influence on his unconscious feelings” (Freud, “Future” 19). Simply put, countertransference is the reversal of roles in the transference relations. The analyst becomes the one who displaces and projects his emotions and repressed desire onto the analysand.

Countertransference from the analyst may engender empathy towards the analysand. Heinrich Racker specifies such countertransference as “concordant identification” (134). It is based on “introjection and projection,” on “recognition of what belongs to another as one’s own (‘this part of you is I’),” and on “the equation of

what is one's own with what belongs to another ('this part of me is you')" (134). The concordant identification is realized by the identification of the analyst who "identif[ies] each part of his personality with the corresponding psychological part in the patient" (134). It is actually positive countertransference and empathy, as what Racker puts it: "it should be borne in mind that the disposition to empathy—that is, to concordant identification—springs largely from the sublimed positive countertransference, which likewise relates empathy with countertransference in the wider sense" (136). In this way, countertransference causes the analyst to feel empathetic toward the analysand.

Transference and countertransference are an active and dialectical interaction between the analyst and the analysand, or the patient and the therapist. Transference is not a one-way analytic treatment for the patient. Rather, it is a mutual impact operated on the analysand and the analyst; the analyst is not an unaffected and mandatory listener who receives the messages from the analysand regarding his repressed unconscious, either through narrating or through acting out. In the new model of transference, the position of the analyst is also valued as a unique individual, "with his own theory of how therapy works, his own idiosyncrasies, his own conflicts, his own past, and his own strength and weakness" (Goldstein and Goldberg 39). While the analyst catalyzes the analysand to remember and provoke his unspeakable past, the analysand, to some extent, also becomes as stimuli to elicit the analyst's unutterable past. In this way, the positions of the analysand and the analyst are blurred; the boundary between transference and countertransference also become indistinct and nebulous. The relationship between the analysand and the analyst is thus very dynamic and dialectical.

3.2.2 Transferential Relation and Transferential Space in Storytelling

Peter Brooks appropriates the dialectical interaction in transference to interpret the narrative relation between the storyteller and the story-listener and between the text and the reader. The dialectics between the analysand and the analyst can be associated with the dynamics between the storyteller and the story-listener as well as that between the text and the reader. Brooks asserts that most narrative relations between tellers and listeners speak of the “transferential condition” between tellers and listeners, which involves “their anxiety concerning their transmissibility,” “their need to be heard,” and “their desire to become the story of the listener as much as of the teller” (50). According to Brooks, transference bears analogies to “the nature of a narrative text between narrator and narratee—and eventually between authorship and readership” (53). Brooks proposes this parallel on account of the process of the construction of meanings in storytelling.

Storytelling and transference bear the similarities of the production, construction, and interpretation of narratives. Both bring into play “the dynamic interaction of the teller and the listener of and to stories, the dialogic relation of narrative production and interpretation” (Brooks 50). In psychoanalytical transference, the analysand is the storyteller who tells (or acts out) his past stories, and the analyst is the listener who reacts to the story. During the course, due to the mechanism of resistance and renunciation of reproducing the past, the analysand may tell or unconsciously repeat fragmental or inconsistent stories. The analyst has to interpret, reconstruct, and piece together meanings of the stories with incomplete narrations and repetition in order to comprehend the analysand’s repressed past and life experiences, and in turn interpret the association of the past with the present. The analyst has to treat words and symbolic acts of the analysand as actual and active forces of the present, but he

simultaneously “attempt[s] to translate them back into the terms of the past” (Brooks 53).

Likewise, storytelling is also a process of reconstruction and interpretation. The meanings of the narrative are partly dependant on the reconstruction and interpretation of the story-listener or the text-reader. Brooks states that, in the dynamic relation of storytelling, the listener or the reader substantiates his “conviction of the truth of the construction” of the story and provides the story with “narrative truth” by piecing the whole picture and interpreting the meanings for the story (59). Brooks borrows psychoanalytical transference to render the conviction from the story-listener/the reader with the construction of narratives either in the form of oral tales or of written texts. In such transference relation, the analysand (the storyteller) must “possess the true stor[ies]” that need to be construed, but some stories that are restored and retrieved may not actually be remembered or retold by the analysand (Brooks 58). Instead, it is the analyst (the narratee) who constructs the stories and renders meanings to the stories, which he uses to interpret and associate with the repressed conscious of the analysand. The construction of the analyst is “unsubstantiated, unverifiable, yet carries conviction” so it is believed that the construction “must be right” (Brooks 59).

In the narrative dynamics, the construction and association of the stories by the listener/the reader thus becomes the narrative truth which makes him believe that the stories occur and develop in the way he pieces it together. Such deep belief in the narrative from the listener grants power to convince people that “things must have happened in this way” because the construction and interpretation of the stories will become the only explanation for the stories that “make sense of things” (Brooks 59).

Such interpretively analytical constructions from the analyst may lead to delusions of the analysand (Brooks 60). Brooks appropriates Freud's discovery of transference dynamics to explain that the conviction of narrative truth may turn out to be "the experience of fantasy" (60). Such experience of fancy influences the analysand to construct and treat his own past based on the transference interaction with the analyst. But such construction is not necessarily true to his real past; it is delusional. Brooks renders the constructions from the analyst and the analysand to be dialogical and inter-influential so that they are equivalent to "two versions of narrative that test themselves [the two versions of one another] against one another" and they work together to make a complete and satisfying narrative (60). Dino Felluga concludes that Brooks thus explores "the power of narrative to possess our imagination [imagination from people]" that leads us to "narrative closure" (Felluga N. pag.). The listener or the reader possesses such force of imagination that helps him to interpret and construct the story to give the story an explanatory ending.

Peter Brooks spatializes such dynamic transference relation between the storyteller/text and the story-listener/reader. In the transference relation, there is some interpretive margin of construction and imagination. Brooks defines this margin as the "transference space." According to Brooks, the transference space is "the place of fictions, of reproductions, of reprints, of repetitions," through which interpretation and construction are effected (68). It is an "artificial space for the reworking of the past in symbolic form" (Brooks 53). This transference space allows fillings of imagination and fantasy. With this transference space, the teller narrates his stories, elicits his repressed memory, or fills his forgotten memory with illusions. It is a space "of conversation in which repressed or forgotten experiences are expressed or made public" because in that space, the past of the teller will be exposed

through storytelling (Vilaseca 183). During the dissemination, stories and memories from the storyteller are transmitted and transferred onto the listener who supplements and reconstructs them with the listener's experiences or imagination to make sense of what he hears and comprehend it in his own ways. The stories and memories are thus under reformations and are granted new meanings. Alison Landsberg proposes the transferential space as a site in which "people are invited to enter experiential relationships with events through which they themselves did not live" (66), because it affects the teller and the listener to enter into the realm of reconstruction, which is composed by the interconnected life experiences and imaginations from the two parties. Stories of others thus become a kind of imagination to supplement the real life of each other. The transferential space is a leeway where imagination is allowed to organize and clarify stories as a completion in the transferential situation. Both the teller and the listener hover around the space mixed of reality and imagination.

To conclude, the theory of Peter Brooks about the transferential relation and the transferential space aims at tackling the potential power of change of narratives. The dynamics engendered during the storytelling has an impact on both the storyteller and the story-listener, changing their way of seeing the reality. Brooks believes that, like transference, storytelling may not affect the two parties to change their past, but to "rewrite its [the reality's] present course, and prepare an altered future" (68). Through the transferential dynamics, the listener and the textual reader will "find himself modified by the work of interpretation and construction" (72).

3.3 Self-Deception in Transferential Relations in *The Pillowman*

Brooks raises the concept of transferential relation to overturn the traditional formalist narratology which regards narratives merely as a "referential function" (72).

In this chapter, I borrow the idea of transference and the conception of transference relation to scrutinize the narrative dynamics within the four characters in *The Pillowman* to examine how the three main story-listeners, Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel, interpret and construct Katurian's tales and how their constructions affect them to react in the reality. I argue that transference dynamics through Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel change their ways of seeing their traumas. The changes elicit their self-evasion from their past, but they also attain self-deceptive consolation that enables them to face with the present.

3.3.1 Transference Relations in *The Pillowman*

The transference dynamics of storytelling between the storyteller and the story-listener are pervasively displayed in *The Pillowman*. This play conveys the multiple transference relations between the multifarious reciprocal narrative interactions of storytellers and listeners/readers. Other than Katurian who is the main storyteller, the other three characters, Michal, Ariel, and Tupolski, are the listeners of stories of Katurian. They interpret and reconstruct meanings for the stories of others. In terms of Tupolski and Ariel, they are originally the listeners and the textual readers who read, construct, and interpret Katurian's tales. In Act One Scene One, the footing within Tupolski, Ariel, and Katurian is an interrogative relation between the two detectives and the prime suspect; however, at the same time, it also demonstrates the transference relation between two readers/listeners and a storyteller. The two detectives are the readers of Katurian's tales, who desperately comb through the tales to reconstruct Katurian's life stories that can be associated with the murders. They are not only passive readers or listeners who receive transmission of the stories, but also two aggressive analysts who attempt to scrutinize from the dark tales the true colors

of Katurian and his repressed personality that might cause him to commit child murders. Michal is also the listener of Katurian's tales since Katurian often reads his tales to Michal. When the detectives ask Katurian the connection of Michal to the murders, Katurian claims Michal's innocence because he reads those stories to Michal (15). Michal is indeed a constant listener to Katurian's tales because even when the brothers stay in the prison cell alone in Act Two, Katurian reads two stories to Michal, "The Pillowman" and "The Little Green Pig."

Because of countertransference, the transferential relations in storytelling will affect the listeners to transform themselves into the tellers who relate their own stories. The transferential relations revealed in *The Pillowman* not only show interpretive possibilities in the transferential space where the characters apply their own imaginations to filling the interpretive margin of the tales and to construe implications of the tales. Storytelling also becomes reciprocal and dynamic interactions when the teller influences listeners and stimulates the latter to turn into tellers. Countertransference occurs when the narrative roles are reversed when the listeners project their life experiences and emotions onto Katurian, identify with Katurian, and empathize Katurian with "recognition of what belongs to another as one's own" (Racker 134). Storytelling stimulates the self-exposure of the listeners. Katurian's tales trigger the other three characters to associate themselves with their traumatic life stories and to share their traumas. Dino Felluga compares storytelling to transferential "repetition compulsion" to illustrate the compulsion of transmission in storytelling, especially in traumatic narratives: "[w]hen we hear a traumatic story, we feel obliged to tell it ourselves to others; through such repetitions, we manage to bind the traumatic elements of the transmitted tale, though we also thus pass on the wound, so to speak, to others" (Felluga N. pag.).

The Pillowman presents the reversal of the position of the tellers and the listeners. As the interrogation proceeds, the narrative roles between the detectives and Katurian are reversed. Katurian becomes more resolute after he decides to throw caution to the winds and confess all the crimes, so he turns out to be a bold and assertive catechizer who starts to examine the two detectives. At this time, the tales of Katurian impel and provoke the traumatic memories of the two detectives. They narrate their life trauma and confide to Katurian their self-consolation obtained from Katurian's tales, especially from the title story *The Pillowman*. Whereas Katurian's miserable past is gradually exposed with the progress of the play, the dark past of the two detectives are also brought to the light.

Katurian is also the storyteller who inspires his retarded brother, Michal, to become a storyteller by acting out and repeating the content of the stories he hears from Katurian. Katurian's stories elicit his repressed unconscious containing his unspeakably distressing past parental maltreatment; however, his mental damage blocks him from verbally expressing his stories completely. Through "repeating" Katurian's stories—through committing murders, he actually conveys his unutterable traumatic memory, his restrained desire of revenge, and his unconsciously empathic kindness. Michal's experimental hands-on reproduction of Katurian's stories is his way of "articulating" his stories.

The roles of the storytellers and story-listeners in the transferential relations presented in *The Pillowman* become intermixed. It is complicated to define the tellers and the listeners because the characters are simultaneously the tellers and the listeners. They construct and interpret the meanings of the stories given by one another and transmit their stories to others. The transferential relations become fluid. The stories from the two parties are thus granted more meanings in the dynamic

relations of reciprocal transmission. Like what Brooks proposes, any narrative text “exists only insofar as it is transmitted, insofar as it becomes part of a process of exchange” (50). Moreover, the transferential relation between the teller and the listener is “part of the structure and the meaning” of a narrative (Brooks 50).

With the reciprocal construction between the tellers and the listeners, storytelling will influence their way of seeing the reality. Such reciprocal and fluid dynamics stimulate the two parties—the tellers and the listeners—to work together to re/construct and interpret the narratives. At this time, the “delusional system” derived from the both parties also interact together, “working toward the construction of fictions that can never be verified other than by the force of the conviction that they convey” (Brooks 60). The firmer the conviction of narrative truth is, the more likely people treat the narrative as a fact. When the narrative is seen as the fact, it may change the way of seeing reality. The stories thus penetrate into reality and affect people to view their engagement in reality.

3.3.2 Self-Deception of Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel

The dynamic transferential relations among Katurian, Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel affect their ways of viewing reality, interpreting their past, and envisioning their present. Through storytelling, the four characters gain self-deceptive relief that makes them not only dodge the confrontation with their traumatic past but also enables them to arrange their present and future life; they disavow their past and avow their present arranged in the plot structure they want. They fall into self-deception when the process of storytelling makes them *spell out* their engagement of the world in a certain way, and at the same time, they may actually be engaged in the world in another way, yet they “refuse to identify [themselves] as one[s] who [are] so

engaged” (Fingarette 66). As illustrated in Chapter Two, self-deception is involved with the avowal of a certain identity and disavowal of a certain identity. According to Fingarette, a self-deceiver is a person who “identif[ies] himself to himself as a particular person engaged in the world in specific ways” and who “reject[s] such identification and engagement” (90). The disavowal of identity relies on the avowal of a certain identity to “spell out” the engagement of the world. Then the self-deceiver will continue to live and tell himself as what he tells other people (Fingarette 61). Sarbin explicates that the self-deceiver “lives according to an ongoing plot structure” and “tells stories both to self and to audiences” (16). To maintain self-deceptive belief, the self-deceiver will exercise two skills: “the skill in spelling out engagements in the world, and the skill in not spelling out engagements” (Sarbin 16).

Because of the transferential relations and transferential space, the story-listeners in *The Pillowman* become preoccupied with such self-deception. Storytelling, in some ways, influences the listeners to misbelieve the self-interpretations of their own traumatic past even though they know the doubtful correctness. The potential of interpretation and imagination of storytelling enables them to associate their lived experiences with the stories, to interpret the tales according to their own traumas, and project themselves onto the interlocutors. In so doing they may not only find consoling interpretations for their own traumatic past but also engender empathy toward the storyteller.

Furthermore, to disavow their past, the listeners are likely to identify themselves with the tellers or even the roles in the stories and arrange their desirable life structures relevant to the tales. Once the story-listeners identify a specific way of engagements of the world, admit or refuse to be certain identities, they will become tellers who “spell out” their “plot structure” and their engagements of the world as the

announcement of their disavowal and avowal of identification. Through the transferential dynamics interacting with Katurian, they may identify with Katurian or the characters created by Katurian and in turn spell out a certain engagements in their world. These characters avow a certain identity but disavow another kind at the same time to help them to find comforting explanations for their traumas and to face up to their present and the future. They keep living through their own plot structures which they tell “both to self and to audiences” (Sarbin 16).

3.3.2.1 Self-Deception of Michal

Michal is the listener who falls into self-deception because of the tales narrated by Katurian. Katurian's tales influence Michal to believe the stories, enact the plots of tales, and even identify with the characters. Affected by the tales and the mimicry of the tales, although Michal falls into the illusion of reality and fiction, he obtains self-deceptive compensation which somewhat helps him to make reconciliation with his miserable past. Michal, Katurian's retarded brother, is the victim of parental torture; parental abuse is always his trauma. According to Katurian's autobiographical story “The Writer and the Writer's Brother,” Michal has been treated as sacrifice to Katurian for the artistic experiment executed by his parents: his parents manage to create an environment full of ordeal and wretchedness for Michal to inspire Katurian to write good but dark stories. Therefore Michal has been abused by his parents without knowing the reason since he was a child. Not until he is fourteen does Katurian discover that Michal has been locked in the adjacent room and been tormented by his parents for seven straight years. While in the tale written by Katurian, Michal is found dead with “the sweetest, gentlest” story that the writer in the tale has ever read (34), in reality, Katurian ends Michal's misery by suffocating

their parents with a pillow. However, Michal has become mentally damaged, unable to be nurtured and educated like a common person. Since then Katurian becomes his caretaker and keeps his company.

Here I would argue first that the portrayal of Michal is ambiguous and inconsistent to some extent; Michal seems to sway between normality and abnormality. The detectives considered Michal to be “retarded” (9) and “spastic” (25). Although Katurian renounces the description of “retarded” and “spastic,” he admits that Michal is “slow to get things” (9) and goes to “special school” due to “learning difficulties” (13). According to Katurian, Michal “gets frightened easily, and he doesn’t understand these things [the interrogation]” (15). Michal also shows his mental problem when he is memorizing Katurian’s tale “The Little Green Pig” and trying to narrate it on his own in the beginning of Act Two Scene One (36). Katurian’s autobiographical tale “The Writer and the Writer’s Brother” and the conversations between Michal and Katurian also evidence the reliability of the brain harm Michal suffers.

However, the play also reveals that Michal is neither totally mentally retarded nor ignorant, because he displays amazing eloquence and logical reasoning during the argument with Katurian in Act Two Scene One. For instance, Michal declares that he does not want to kill children in the first place; he does not even know what he has done is murder or what he has done will cause death (51). All he wants to do is merely imitating and reproducing Katurian’s stories, “doing Katurian’s stories” (55). He defends for himself that he does not like killing children or butchering those children: “[a]nd I *didn’t* enjoy killing those kids. It was irritating. It took ages. And I didn’t *set out* to kill those kids. I just set out to chop the toes off one of them and to put razors down the throat of one of them” (51, italics in the original). He does not

want to hurt anybody like what his parents did on him. Nonetheless, he can perfectly distinguish the dissimilarity between “vicious butchering” and his “gentle acting out the tale” (50).

Moreover, he exactly knows that his traumatic past can excuse his killing, so he tells his brother that he should be excused in such crime (55). Michal’s explanation illustrates that he knows clearly the definition of murder and how such traumatic experiences of his and Katurian’s can be taken as “extenuating circumstances” like what Ariel tells Katurian later. Therefore, Michal is not that severely ignorant or retarded. The inconsistent portrayal of Michal may be a slip of the pen of Martin McDonagh in his characterization, but it may also divulge that Michal is not so mentally retarded. He still owns part of normal cognition as a common person does.

Katurian and Michal always maintain the footing of transferential storytelling: the former is the storyteller while the latter is the listener and reader receiving and interpreting the former’s stories. As a listener who is mentally damaged, Michal does not only interpret Katurian’s tales in his own manner, he is also greatly influenced by the tales. Katurian’s tales retrieve Michal’s memories about his traumatic childhood, stimulating Michal to remember his painful life stories, to remember the torture he has suffered.

Nevertheless, Michal never really faces up to his traumas. Traumatic memories of parental torment tyrannize Michal’s consciousness and decide his attitude toward his trauma. Michal keeps dodging mentioning the trauma. He cannot stand hearing about or discussing about his parents. For him, “Mum” and “Dad” are nightmarish figures who are not his family but two evils:

Katurian. You’re going to go to a little room in a little house in a little forest, and for the rest of your time **you’re going to be looked after**

not by me but by a person called Mum and a person called Dad, and they're gonna look after you in the same way they always look after you, except this time I'm not gonna be around to rescue you, 'cos I ain't going to the same place you're going, 'cos I never butchered any little fucking kids.

Michal. **That is just the most meanest thing that any person has ever said to any other person** and I am never never going to speak to you again ever. (57-58, emphases added)

The parents are analogous to incantation that will bring Michal back to the dark and the meanest world where he never wants to return again. They are the forever trauma and threat for Michal. Whenever Katurian mentions Mum and Dad, Michal breaks down and stops Katurian from continuing the conversations (54).

Michal's childhood trauma affects his interpretation of Katurian's tales; Katurian's tales also influence Michal to reconstruct his lived experiences. The interpenetration of the interpretations make Michal gradually avow the identity of the Pillowman and spell out his engagements of this world like what the Pillowman does: to liberate the children from their possible torture. The parental harm influences Michal's interpretation of Katurian's tales. As the story-listener of the tales, Michal employs his own life experiences to interpret the tales. The interpretation of the tales also affects Michal to reconstruct his past and interpret his present. Due to his own suffering, he believes that Katurian's tales are correct to impose tragic sufferings on children. At the same time, because the children in the stories all suffer from cruel torment, Michal starts to believe that all children in the reality live horrible lives. Therefore, to him, his killing of those children is an act of rescue in a way. By so doing, he associates himself as the Pillowman, rescuing children in advance to

prevent the possible torture that is going to befall to them. Both the Pillowman and he are saviors for children from horrible parental maltreatment; they are “heroes”:

Michal. [...] And he's [The Pillowman is] the hero! And I'm not criticizing.

He's a very good character. He's a very very good character. He reminds me a lot of me.

Katurian. How does he remind you of you?

Michal. You know, getting little children to die. All that.

Katurian. The Pillowman never killed anybody, Michal. And all the children that died were going to lead horrible lives anyway.

Michal. You're right, all children are going to lead horrible lives. You may as well save them the hassle.

Katurian. Not all children are going to lead horrible lives.

Michal. Erm, hmn. Did *you* lead a horrible life since you was a child?

Yes. Em, did *I* lead a horrible life since I was a child? Yes. That's two out of two for a start. (52, italics in the original)

Michal compares himself to the Pillowman who eradicates the lives of the children to die to annihilate future suffering for them. In his viewpoint, he ends the possible agony and brings forth a better future for children. Traumatic memories and the interpretation of the tales of Michal have twisted his cognition and comprehension which influence his behaviors of the present and his attitude toward his future.

Greatly influenced by the tales, Michal recognizes himself as the characters in the tales and even abides by the plot structure of the tales. Reality and fiction are intertwined as a whole. Michal stitches the tales and his life tightly together; tales become part of his life. He cannot acknowledge the ending of the tale “The Writer and the Writer’s Brother,” because he totally recognizes himself as “the brother” in

the tale so he cannot accept that he is dead in the ending while his parents remain alive eventually. The death of himself is not “a happy ending” (59). In this way, changing the ending of the tales is as equally important as changing his own life. He has become a listener who “enters the story as an active participant in the creation of design and meaning” (Brooks 51). The involvement of the tales changes his perspective on the real life.

More than a passive listener, in this transferential relation, Michal starts to “spell out his engagements in the world” in a certain way and to “tell” stories by “acting out” the plots of Katurian’s tales and by having the tales turn into his own life experiences. Through the transmission of stories, the stories from the storyteller may influence the story-listener so much that they are engraved onto the memory of the listener and become part of the experiences of the listener. Walter Benjamin pores over this transmission and transformation of storytelling. For him, stories become a place where the storyteller claims his memory, passes the memory, and integrates the memory into experiences of the listeners, and in turn “makes [the experiences] the experiences of those who are listening to his tales” (Benjamin 146). When the stories become part of the listener’s experiences, the stories will be repeated someday. Once the stories of the teller are profoundly incised into the mind of the listener, and are internalized as if they are the lived experiences of the listener, the listener will be much likely to articulate the stories: “the more completely the story is integrated into the latter’s [the listener’s] own experience, the greater will be his inclination to repeat it to someone else someday, sooner or later” (Benjamin 149). Benjamin emphasizes the drastic influence of the storyteller on the listener who receives the story as if it is his own life experience. Once the story is internalized as part of his experiences,

which affects his consciousness and unconsciousness, the listener will be likely to repeat the story when he is articulating his own story.

The acting-out of tales from Michal displays the inclination of the listener to repeating the stories of the tellers. Michal repeats what Katurian has told him and puts those tales into practice. When Katurian asks Michal why he commits murders to the children, Michal answers that it is the impact of Katurian:

Katurian. What did you do it [killing children] for?

Michal. You know. **Because you told me to.**

Katurian. (*pause*) Because I what?

Michal. Because you told me to.

[...]

Michal. [...] That's a bit strong. **And I wouldn't have done anything if**

you hadn't told me, so don't you act all the innocent. Every story you tell me, something horrible happens to somebody. I was just testing out how far-fetched they were. (50, emphases added)

These stories are deeply rooted into Michal's consciousness that he repeats the tales Katurian has read to him by acting them out. Michal materializes the tales with the enactment and changes them into his own life stories. The enactment is analogous to his way of articulation to repeat the stories he has heard and to "tell" his life stories.

In addition, acting out the plots presents and expresses Michal's repressed unconscious of ambiguous emotions, which consists of desire for revenge and sympathy. According to Freud, in the transference situation, the patient reproduces his repressed and forgotten traumatic memories through "action": "the patient does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course,

knowing that he is repeating it” (Freud, “Remembering” 149). Edward Erwin compiles two situations in terms of acting out: if acting out is functioning as a “defense against recalling painful memories,” it can be regarded as an alarm for the interpreter to elicit the repressed; if it is functioning merely as “a way of communicating psychic contents,” it should be translated as “the unconscious communication embedded in the particular behavior” (6). Either way of acting out is a hint for the repressed and unconscious.

To some extent, Michal’s enactment acts out his repressed mentality of revenge aroused by the stories, and satisfies his “compulsion to repeat” which “replaces the impulsion (sic) to remember” (Freud, “Remembering” 151). He always lives in the shadow of his early trauma and never reaches compromise with it. The memories of torture haunt Michal in his lifetime: when Katurian threatens Michal by saying that he will be subjected to the torment of the detectives, Michal says he can “take it,” because he has suffered “for a lifetime” (55). His remarks reveal that he clearly remembers the suffering in the childhood and has not yet gone over with it.

Michal. It [the torture in the childhood] excused the two *you* murdered.

Why shouldn’t it excuse the two I murdered? (55, italic in the original)

Michal’s accusation uncovers his mental imbalance because he thinks that he deserves forgiveness and compensation for what he has suffered in the childhood. The enactment is exactly his acts of revenge. As what I have mentioned in Chapter Two, the tales written by Katurian are connected to Katurian’s life experiences, some of which are also closely associated with Michal’s life experiences. Michal chooses to act out one story about comeuppance (“The Little Apple Men”), the tale about a girl who takes revenge from her father who keeps agonizing her, and the other story about unreasonable suffering (“The Tale of the Town on the River”). Both of the stories are

associated to his distressing trauma in a way. As Eamonn Jordan observes, Michal's murdering of children is his "expression or articulation through mimicry" (189). Enacting these stories reflects the doubt and exasperation of Michal about his childhood trauma.

At the same time, the repressed desire of retribution is in conflict with the unconscious sympathetic and empathetic mercy inside Michal, because the stories Michal chooses to enact sheds light on mercy and justice. The first story "The Little Apple Men," in which the little girl is also killed by the little applemen as requital for killing her father, illustrates a strange sense of justice; the second story "The Tale of the Town on the River," conveys a twisted sense of mercy because the boy whose five toes were scythed away survives the abduction of the Pied Piper. As to the final story, Michal lies to Katurian that he acts out one of the cruelest story "Little Jesus," but in fact he enacts "The Little Green Pig" which is one of the tender and gentle stories that reveals warmth and mercy from inside of this "child abuser."

Acting out "The Little Green Pig" represents that Michal has the repressed unconscious of mercy. It is a story of consolation and forgiveness that can soothe his retribution and abomination of the unfairness of this world that makes him suffer from parental maltreatment. He asks Katurian to read this tales as a condition for forgiveness and conciliation; otherwise, he will not forgive Katurian for making mean and terrible utterances provoking his traumatic memory:

Michal. Tell me a story.

Katurian. I thought you wanted to burn all my stories.

Michal. Tell me the one about the little green pig. I don't wanna burn that one, tell me that one. And then I'll forgive you.

Katurian. Forgive me for what?

Michal. Forgive you for saying those mean things that Mum and Dad would be in charge of me for all time in the little forest and no one would ever come rescue me. (63)

This tale symbolizes “the *good* olden days” of Michal (64, italic in the original). In “The Writer and the Writer’s Brother,” the reason of the writer’s brother (Katurian) discovering the imprisonment of the writer (Michal) is because the writer passes him a note which reads: “They have loved you and tortured me for seven straight years for no reason other than as an artistic experiment, an artistic experiment has worked. You don’t write about little green pigs any more, do you?” (32-33). Therefore, “The Little Green Pig” is actually written in the early age of Katurian when Michal has not been tortured. It represents Michal’s naiveté and kindness that has not yet been contaminated by parental persecution.

Through storytelling, Michal lives in a self-deceptive relief which enables him to affirm a desirable present that compensates for his miserable past. The transferential dynamics stimulates him to change from a listener into a storyteller. As the listener of Katurian’s tales, Michal constructs and interprets the tales of Katurian. The construction of the tales influences him to reconstruct his past, reinterpret his trauma, and react to his present in reality. With the association with reality, the tales of Katurian are deeply carved into his mind and become part of Michal’s life experiences. Later, he becomes a “storyteller” because he repeats, reproduces, and “articulates” the stories with enactment of Katurian’s tales. Through the enactments, Michal throws himself into self-deception by weaving the tales and his life tightly together and recognizing himself as the characters in the tales, following the plot structures of the tales. The tales stir Michal to act out the plots of the tales and to behave like the fictional characters in the tales. The enactments allow a capacity for

“rewrit[ing]” the present even though he can not change “past history” (Brooks 68). Thus, although he lives in self-deceptive illusions when he identifies with the characters in Katurian’s tales and lives through the plots of the tales with the enactments of the tales, such self-deception somewhat helps him to make reconciliation with his past.

3.3.2.2 Self-Deception of Tupolski

The transferential relation between Katurian and Tupolski also transforms Tupolski into a teller who narrates his own stories. Through storytelling, Tupolski obtains a self-deceptive relief when he avows to be a self-controlled person unaffected by his past and when he gains consoling interpretation for his trauma with Katurian’s tales. For one thing, storytelling pushes Tupolski into a state of self-deception of living the life structure according to his will and becoming the certain type person he wants to be. He strives to be a self-possessed man burying his traumatic past. For another, by interpreting Katurian’s tales, Tupolski can reinterpret his traumatic child loss and feel relieved from the sadness.

The interrogation between the detectives and Katurian also presents the transferential relation, which is “the dialogic relation of narrative production and interpretation” (Brook 50). During the interrogation, originally Katurian is the storyteller and tale-writer, and the two detectives are the listeners and the readers who construct meanings of tales and who interpret life stories of Katurian. Between the two detectives, Tupolski is the main interrogator. He is more like a textual reader in the transferential relation with Katurian. Compared to Ariel who tends to solve cases in a brutal and direct way, Tupolski sticks to the construction of meanings from the tales written by Katurian and finds clues from paperwork. For Tupolski, Katurian’s

tales are always the “pointers” distributing some hidden meanings, which is like what he tells Katurian: “on the surface I am saying this, but underneath the surface I am saying this other thing” (19).

Because the transference dynamics can arouse the positive countertransference and “concordant identification,” Tupolski somewhat projects his emotions onto Katurian and becomes a storyteller to narrate his stories to Katurian. Tupolski narrates two types of stories: one is an allegorical tale that sums up with his “world view” (89), and the other is a story with his past experiences. With the allegorical tale that he fabricates and tells to Katurian, “The Story of the Little Deaf Boy on the Big Long Railroad Tracks. In China,” Tupolski compares himself to an old wise man who cleverly avoids a possible disaster. In the tale, because of his accurate calculations and intelligent detective work, the old wise man successfully rescues a deaf retarded boy from a potential railway crash. Tupolski declares that the story represents his own “world view” that although he is detached from other people, and although his help is unnoticed by them, he always protects them with his cleverness and carefulness (89-90). Therefore, in the case of Katurian, he shoulders the similar responsibility—to pull back Ariel who is gradually influenced by Katurian (90).

This allegorical tale also discloses the fact that Tupolski is preoccupied with certain self-deception because he reveals his spelling-out of the specific engagement and follows such engagement to live in this world. Tupolski always adheres to this “plot structure” as a detective. He once tells Katurian that while Ariel is a policeman who polices, he is a detective, who “like[s] to detect” (85). Through storytelling, Tupolski reveals his self-control and self-pride. Tupolski is very self-conscious of being a “high-ranking police officer in a totalitarian fucking dictatorship” (23) and proud of his demanding manner to be a “detective” detecting cases rather than a

police who solves cases with brute force (85). His pride causes his self-importance, inflexibility, and self-defensiveness to some extent, so he is not able to accept opinions from others and all he trusts is no one but himself and his own way of doing things. He believes that every step and action he takes during the interrogation is flawless because he always abides by “the guidebooks” (82). He is also convinced that his detective prowess can lead Ariel to clear up the case. In his view, Ariel is inferior and emotion-abiding, and easily affected by Katurian due to the similar background of their traumatic childhood. Tupolski believes that his resoluteness can guide Ariel on the correct path.

Nevertheless, the avowal of being a self-controlled and self-possessed detective reflects his avoidance from mentioning his own traumatic past. He once leaks that he also has a problematic childhood with an alcoholic father, but he keeps denying that his childhood has anything to do with his life: “My dad was a violent alcoholic. Am *I* a violent alcoholic? Yes I am, but that was my *personal choice*” (80, italics in the original). Even though his remark shows the possible parental influence, Tupolski always denies the direct influence from the family. That he keeps emphasizing his difference and superiority to Ariel reveals his self-evasion of the miserable past.

Other than the articulation of the desirable life plots, Tupolski’s interpretation of “The Pillowman” discloses his self-deception which helps him to comfort himself from the child loss. The tale of “The Pillowman” elicits his empathetic projection which arouses his self-articulation of the trauma of the loss of his son. Tupolski admits to Katurian that his son got drowned when fishing on his own (93). Empathy is a mental projection of one’s situation into another person’s similar situation to understand him/her. With this empathetic projection, one will be provoked to have self-articulation and will also start to tell out, “through the use of someone else’s story

of suffering, loss, exploitation, pain” (qtd. in Radstone 23). In this case, the title story “The Pillowman” is reassurance of his child loss because that story provides him a comfortable and consolable explanation to interpret that incident as an accident to prevent his son from future suffering:

Tupolski. (*pause*) There was something about “The Pillowman” that stayed with me. There was something gentle about it. (*Pause.*) And the idea of, if a child died, alone, through some accident, he wasn’t really alone. He had this kind, soft person with him, to hold his hand and whatnot. And **that it was the child’s choice**, somehow. Made it somewhat, reassuring, somehow. That it wasn’t just a stupid waste (92, *emphases added*).

In the transference relation, Tupolski, as a listener, associates the tale with his own unrecoverable and unspeakable traumatic memory of the child loss. He constructs the meanings of this story as a self-consolation and relief for himself, persuading himself into believing that the death of his son is not a horrible thing because the Pillowman keeps his son company and takes care of him. He interprets the meanings for “The Pillowman” according to his personal experiences, and his interpretation turns the tale into a self-deceptive consolation for his trauma, and probably his sense of guilt when he says that “it [getting drowned] was the child’s choice” (92).

Although the tales of “The Pillowman” helps Tupolski to gain self-consolation which relieves him from suffering from the child loss, he does not face up to his scar because he always evades talking about his trauma. Tupolski shifts the topic when Katurian tries to explore more on the child loss (93). Due to his strong sense of self-importance and self-pride, Tupolski does not allow himself to reveal the true color and his scar in front of people; he holds strong resistance, defense, and self-protection

in comparison with Ariel. He always identifies himself as a “good cop” (12) and a “high-ranking police officer in a totalitarian fucking dictatorship,” (23) who has to comply with the professional principles. He is restless with his self-exposure of trauma since self-exposure expresses fragility and sensitivity. As a result, he always tries to elude this issue. When Katurian asks him if he loses a child, he answers him that he does not “go into those sorts of things with the condemned” (93). But after a pause he cannot help but briefly tell the truth, and then feels so anxious that he closes the topic quickly and restlessly by starting to prepare for the execution (93). Shortly afterwards he retrieves his coldness, and he even employs a more indifferent attitude to execute Katurian in the end. As Tupolski confesses to Katurian and Ariel, he just tries “not to let his true emotions come out at work” (98). This forceful resistance blocks the possible mutual understanding and sympathy between Tupolski and Katurian. A flickering empathy is finally smothered within him.

Although storytelling brings self-deception of Tupolski, it also brings relief for him. For the one thing, the process of storytelling reveals Tupolski’s self-deception in his tendency to disavow and avow certain identities and in his obedience of that fabricated life structure. He refuses to become a person who is influenced by personal emotions and the distressing past. As a consequence, he avoids revealing his feelings and past; he refrains from spelling out the emotion-abiding engagements in the world. However, such disavowal makes him become a certain person who is apparently uninfluenced by his traumatic past and possesses power to face with the present. For another, as the listener/the reader, the interpretation of “The Pillowman” soothes his distress of child loss and affects him to believe that the fate of his child is chosen by his own. Such belief may be a self-deceptive one, but it makes him feel better to continue to live his life.

3.3.2.3 Self-Deception of Ariel

Through transferential relation, Ariel attains a self-deceptive relief when he avoids spelling out his traumatic past, and avows to be a child-savior with a certain type of engagement in the world. Ariel has more similar traumatic experience with the Katurian brothers: he is a victim of fatherly sexual abuse when he is little. One day he cannot stand it anymore so he smothers his father to death with a pillow out of self-defense. Since then he aspires to be a police with the ability and authority to save children who miserably fall into the identical situation as he does. Because he suffers from sexual abuse, he hates children abusers so much that he wants to be a protective figure to keep those abused children safe. To keep his faith in mind, he always maintains resolute and forceful attitudes and manners to handle possible suspects of child abuse. For him, righteous coercion is a useful and plausible way to confront with the evil force, even though it may harm innocent people unwillingly:

Ariel. [...] And sometimes I use excessive force on an entirely innocent individual. But I'll tell you this. If an entirely innocent individual leaves this room for the outside world, they're not gonna contemplate even raising their *voice* to a little kid again, just in case *I* fucking hear 'em and drag 'em in here for *another* load of excessive fucking force. (78, italics in the original)

Holding this fearless attitude, during the interrogation, Ariel is more headstrong and physically intimidating, while Tupolski verbally pressurizes Katurian.

The trauma caused by sexual harassment in the childhood fashions forcefulness and a sense of justice of Ariel. He avows to become a child-savior. His personality and his choice of life are determined by his traumatic childhood experiences. He

wants to be a “good policeman” (78) who stands for something, like his self-statement that, “I may not always be right, but I stand on the right side. The child’s side” (78). His trauma fashions his uprightness that pushes him to be a heroic figure abhorring evil as a deadly foe. Such philosophy of life moulds his attitudes and behaviors. However, in this way, Ariel is also a man of self-deception who lives in his own plot structure and tries to be steadfast to his own principles by spelling out his certain way of life and articulating to Katurian his self-anticipation to be “a good policeman ” (78).

The problematic childhood is also his unrecoverable trauma with which he is reluctant to face. Such unyielding person takes obstinate reaction to his own trauma as well; Ariel harbors strong resistance to his unspoken traumatic memories. When he can eloquently and honestly asserts his ideal and self-expectation, he can never tolerate the discussion of his childhood. He refuses to describe his childhood as “problem childhood” and he even denies others—Tupolski in particular—to speak it out:

Ariel. (*to Tupolski*) You keep chipping away with that shit, don’t you? With that ‘problem childhood’ shit?

Tupolski. I don’t keep chipping away with anything. You’re the one keeps bringing your problem childhood up.

Ariel. I’ve never said a word about my problem childhood. I wouldn’t *use* the phrase ‘problem childhood’ to describe my childhood. (80, italics in the original)

This trauma is so unrecoverable and unspeakable that he always resists mentioning it. Though he denies admitting it as painful memory, the trauma keeps haunting him in his life, so overwhelmingly that he can never get rid of that nightmare and that hatred:

“I[Ariel] wake up with it[the hatred]. It wakes me up. It rides on the bus with me to work. It whispers to me, ‘They will not get away with it’” (77).

However, in the transference relation with Katurian, his traumatic memory is forced to be exposed during the narrative dynamics. While Ariel is one of the two investigators who interpret and reconstruct Katurian’s narrative in Act One, Katurian becomes the interpretive analyst who keeps asking questions and tries to reconstruct Ariel’s traumatic past in Act Three. In his declaration of the self-expectation, Ariel expresses his sympathy toward the parental maltreatment of the Katurian Brothers (78). Then Katurian asks the key question which induces the following discussion of Ariel’s trauma:

Katurian. And who was the first one who told you to kneel down, Ariel?

Your mum or your dad? (79)

As a listener who heeds Ariel to narrate his lived experiences, Katurian tries to construct and interpret Ariel’s past experience which causes his perspectives on life. Afterwards, Katurian manages to ask Tupolski a series of questions to peel the layers of traumatic life of Ariel (81), and “seek to understand not only what the narrative appears to say but also what it appears to intend” (Brooks 61). But Ariel is so anxious about the discussion of his traumatic childhood that he makes efforts to prevent his trauma from being dug out and laid bare by Katurian and Tupolski. He tries to bring the focus back to the investigation from the digression of his childhood. Ariel always buries himself into self-evasion and keeps avoiding “spelling out” his engagement of this world in the past.

Through the transference dynamics and mutual interpretation between Ariel and Katurian, countertransference happens to Ariel. Concordant identification emerges between the two parties. Ariel becomes the person who Katurian trusts most because

he believes that Ariel will keep his promise to preserve his tales (99), even though Ariel does not appreciate those stories at all (101). Likewise, the similar childhood experiences elicit the empathy of Ariel toward Katurian and Michal. Ariel's headstrongness and coercion are ascribed to his empathetic kindness for those who are trapped in the similar situation. After Ariel tells his own story in Act Three and after he later finds out that the third girl victim does not get killed, Ariel bursts into empathy toward the Katurian Brothers who share the similar encounters with him: parental abuse and patricide (which is even committed in the same way with a pillow suffocating the father). The situation of Katurian softens Ariel's stubborn and unyielding will of fulfilling his mission, because he knows that Katurian is forced to kill his parents, like what he has done in his childhood:

Ariel. (*pause*) **I know all this isn't your fault.** I know you didn't kill the children. I know you didn't want to kill your brother, and **I know you killed your parents for all the right reasons, and I'm sorry for you, I'm really sorry for you,** and I've never said that to anybody in custody before. (100-101, emphases added)

Ariel undergoes the emotional transformation during the course of investigation. The more he knows Katurian, the more he sees through their likeness in traumatic childhood. As a result, Ariel and Katurian achieve a kind of mutual understanding and harmony: the former comprehends the latter's "extenuating circumstances" (98) and even tries to beg intercession for the latter. He also keeps the promise of his own: he always stands by the child's side—that is Katurian's side. Katurian also believes that Ariel will keep his stories for him, as he promises.

The transference relation between Ariel and Katurian stimulates Ariel to retrieve his traumatic memory and to gain his empathetic understanding toward the

Katurian Brothers who have the similar experience with him. The narrative dynamic between Ariel and Katurian makes the former hold ambivalence toward Katurian. For one thing, he asserts himself as a strong and stout representative of the harassed children who can “stand on the right side” and who is not afraid of torturing child abusers (78). His forceful action is a kind of “sadist vengeance fantasies” in the eyes of Tupolski (80). For another, due to concordant identification caused in the countertransference, he is the one who expresses empathy, keeps the word and preserves the tales of Katurian.

The transference situation also induces Ariel’s traumatic memories and provides him with a self-deceptive relief. Although he always buries himself in self-evasion from the unpleasant past, he still arranges for himself a desirable plot structure to face with the present. The self-evasion and denial of the past can be seen as his self-deception since he always avoids spelling out these traumatic experiences. However, in a way, the denial of the past is also his momentum which stimulates him to be a better man who wants to save children from the possible misery.

The interrogation room in *The Pillowman* is analogous to a huge transference space with manifold transference relations among Katurian, Michal, Tupolski and Ariel. The dynamic narratives motivate these characters to recall their traumas and provide them with self-deceptive ways of “making the past and its scenarios of desire relive in signs” and such re/construction of the past will “achieve the effect of the real” (Brooks 68). Although the potential of interpretation and imagination attained in transference dynamics and transference space grant them a possibility of burying themselves into a certain plot structure they long for, to be a certain person they are eager to be, and to stop being a kind of person they abhors. Absorbing in their self-deception, Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel factually resist the confrontation with their

traumas. The transference reciprocity helps the characters to construct and reinterpret their past; the reinterpretation of their past change their attitude in the present.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter examines multiple transference relations and self-deception in *The Pillowman*. In this play, while Katurian is the initiative storyteller and writer, Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel are listeners and readers who construct meanings of the tales and life stories narrated by Katurian. During the interrogations and conversations, the teller and the listeners swap their roles in the relation. The listeners are influenced by the stories told by the teller and start to narrate their traumatic memories. At that moment, their traumatic pasts affect how they interpret their present lives and how they treat Katurian. The whole play is like a huge transference space composed by tales written by Katurian where several transference spaces are interwoven by different transference relations.

The storytelling for these characters is a way to lay bare their scars and reinterpret their past trauma with self-deception and self-evasion. During the transference relations, the characters are influenced either by the tales of Katurian to reconstruct the past and construct the present, or they are influenced by the lived experiences of Katurian to reassure their present. With the enactment of tales, Michal transforms the tales into his own life experience and lives in an illusion, swaying between the real and the fictional and following his own plot structure when practicing Katurian's stories; with the tale "The Pillowman," Tupolski gains relief from his child loss; with the conversations with Katurian, Ariel narrates his future ideal which helps him to reassure his present. Nevertheless, their behaviors are ways of self-deception, self-evasion, resistance that shows their timidity in facing up to

their past and tackle their trauma. Although storytelling does not help these characters to remove their traumas, and even pushes them to plunge into self-deceptive illusions to evade from facing with the past, it helps them to spell out their perspectives on the present and avows certain engagements in the world that compensate for their misery. Their self-deception may be consolation for them.



Chapter Four

Conclusion: Self-Deception or Self-Consolation?

This thesis tackles storytelling and self-deception in *The Pillowman*. With storytelling, both the storyteller and story-listeners/the readers tend to give themselves over to self-deception and become self-deceivers. Storytelling provides the four characters, Katurian, Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel, with the feasibility of interpretations and imaginations to reconstruct and to reorganize their life experiences. Telling out their traumatic past as telling stories dilutes the harm of the traumas and neutralizes the chaotic and distressing personal memories into more disinterested and unaffected stories and tales that enable the characters to touch upon “the reality of the suffering which could not be faced head-on or at first-hand” (Kearney 56).

Storytelling also creates the space of the borderland between reality and fiction where the characters can bury themselves in self-deception and turn their blind eyes to their past and present, keeping believing their self-consolation. Storytelling seems to offer the characters a way of facing with their past, but those characters merely elude themselves from the past. In the space with interpenetration of reality and fiction, the four characters are able to map out desirable plot structures different from reality, avow to be a certain person they are want to be and disavow to be a certain person they fear to be. The four characters refrain themselves from *spelling out* the engagements of the world in a specific way, but instead they *spell out* the engagements of the world in a way they dream for. As Fingarette illustrates it, “the self-deceiver is engaged in the world in some way, and yet they refuses to identify himself as one who is so engaged” (66).

The storyteller can be the creator of such imaginary space. Chapter Two of this thesis focuses on the main storyteller who tells tales to dodge reality. By telling stories, the storyteller can weave his life experiences into a story and in turn create an imaginary space in his mind-space where he is able to place himself into the story as a character. The character serves as his new identity that provides him an opportunity for reconstructing his past and fabricating his future in a satisfactory manner. The imaginary space is a place where the teller can displace and replace his self. It is the site that *the I* (the self as the narrator) and *the Me* (the self as the character) encounters and stands in for each other.

Katurian in *The Pillowman* is such a storyteller who writes tales based on his personal life experiences. The only autobiographical tale by Katurian portrays the heart-rending lived experiences of Katurian and Michal. In the end of the tale, Katurian revises his life to give a downbeat ending for the story. In the enactment of that story, the metatheatrical technique embodies the double roles of Katurian as a narrator (*the Narrator I*) and a character (*the Character Me*) in the imaginary space of the tale. In the end, *Katurian the narrator* and *Katurian the character* become intermingled and undistinguishable. Katurian becomes the character created by himself and acts himself in the self-deceptive sphere of fiction.

The final story narrated by Katurian in the ending of *The Pillowman* presents another example of Katurian's self-deception, since it demonstrates how Katurian, in his cognition, has transformed himself into the fictional role "the Pillowman" he creates for his tales. He avows to take up the identity of the Pillowman who takes away the life of children to save them from the possible danger and torture in the future. Becoming the Pillowman enables Katurian to justify his parricide and fratricide because he can imagine that his murder-committing is also a kind of heroic

act that rescues his brother from torment. Moreover, in this final story, with the identity of the Pillowman, Katurian makes an imaginary compromise with his brother, Michal. The reconciliation is not realized in reality because Michal has never really put aside the resentment and doubt of his traumatic childhood. The imaginary reconciliation reveals Katurian's self-deception as well.

Through storytelling, the teller will affect the listener and makes the latter live in self-deception. Chapter Three veers the focus from the teller alone to the listener and the interactions between the teller and the listener. Storytelling entails a transference relation, an interaction between the teller and the listener that is analogous to that between the analysand and the analyst in transference. While the teller (the analysand) narrates his story to the listener (the analyst), the latter has to reconstruct and to interpret the story. In the dynamic and dialogic process of interpretation and construction of the narrative, there is the margin "of fictions, of reproductions, of reprints, of repetitions" for the teller and the listener to understand and reconstruct the story (Brooks, *Psychoanalysis* 68). The interpretive margin is the transference space. In that space, the listener retrieves his past with reconstruction, reinterpretation, and imagination. With the assistance of stories narrated by the tellers, although the listeners are able to interpret their own life stories in a satisfactory manner and to gain self-consolation in turn, such self-consolation may disorientate the listener and deprive his sight of directly viewing his past. It turns out to be self-deception and self-evasion.

In addition, the psychoanalytic transference relation may engender countertransference ; i.e., the analyst projects his emotions onto the analysand. Such is also the case in the narrative transference relations. The listeners of the stories will project and displace their experiences and feelings onto the teller or the stories related

by the tellers. At this moment, “concordant identifications” may arise. Both the teller and the listener will engender empathetic feeling for each other. Such empathetic and concordant rapport will elicit the listener to tell stories and become a teller as well.

In *The Pillowman*, Katurian and the other three characters, Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel, compose several relations of storytelling and transference interactions. While Katurian is the main storyteller, the other three are listeners or readers who interpret his stories with their own life experiences. Their lived experiences influence them to grant new meanings for the tales of Katurian. At the same time, their interpretations of the tales also induce them to think about their past, and affect how they interpret and reconstruct their traumas.

During the process of storytelling, the three listeners also become storytellers. Michal acts out the tales of Katurian to change the tales into his own lived experiences. The enactments of tales reflect his repressed exasperation and vengeance of his dismay caused by childhood. They enable him to live on the border of the real and the fictional where he does not have to face with his past and his present. By acting out the tales, Michal grants himself another identity and changes the fictional plot structures into real life experiences. He spells out his engagement of the world in a certain way and lives according to his plot structures.

The tales of Katurian also have a great impact on the two detectives. For one thing, the tale “The Pillowman” elicits Tupolski to associate with his distressing child loss. The tale offers him a reassuring explanation for the death of his son. The tales of Katurian also motivates Tupolski to narrate an allegorical tale which represents his world view. The narration of the tale is similar to a gesture of announcement and *spelling out* a certain engagement which is composed by his steadfast faith as a responsible detective. Because of this avowal of being a responsible and professional

detective, Tupolski has to repress his empathetic emotions without exposing his true feelings. Tupolski is also a self-deceiver who lives according to his own plot structure and avoids “becoming explicitly conscious” of the fact that he is actually avoiding spelling out a certain engagement with the world (Fingarette 42).

For another, the narrative relation between Katurian and Ariel induces the latter to narrate the blueprint of his life and the plot structures he longs for. Due to his miserable childhood, Ariel dreams to be a child-protector who liberates children from the torture of child abusers. He wants to be a hero for all the children. The transference dynamics elicits Ariel’s traumatic childhood memories as well. Through the conversations with Katurian, Ariel is forced to expose his miserable childhood as a victim of sexual harassment, but he keeps dodging the discussion of his past and he disavows his childhood as “problematic.” He avoids spelling out the engagements in the world with the traces of child abuse.

The whole play is like a story-within-a-story, a story comprising many small stories. All of the stories are composed of real and fictional elements that make them both believable and unbelievable at the same time. Due to the interpenetrations of fiction and reality, those characters’ stories mingle with reality in the play and make reality surreal. At the same time, reality penetrates into the fiction and becomes part of the stories. Trapped in this narrative cycle, all the characters find no way out; they can do nothing but shuttle within the stories, their traumatic past, and their self-deceptive present. Storytelling may cause confinements as well.

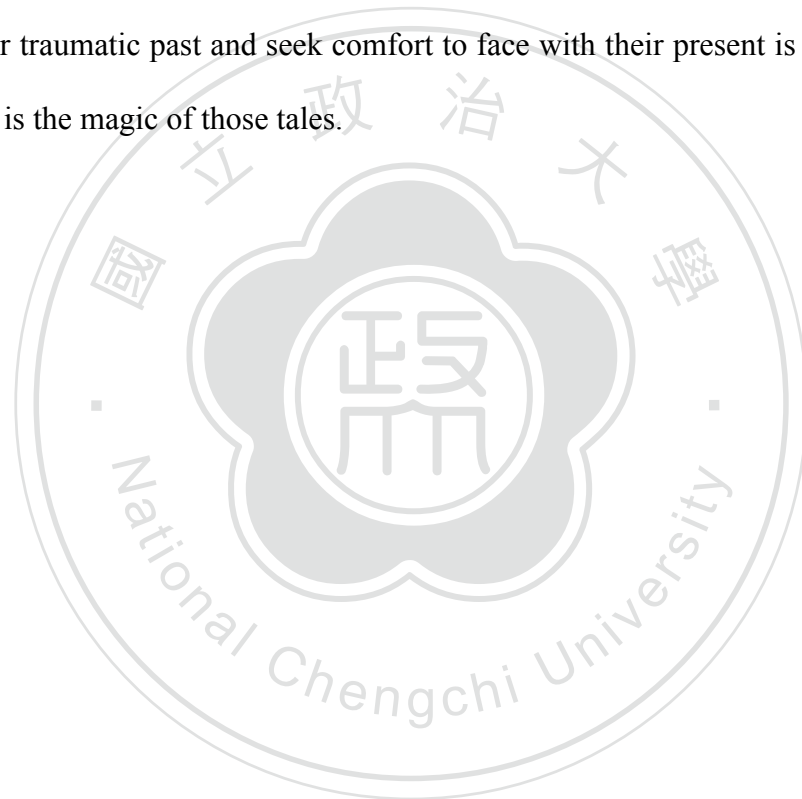
The metatheatrical enactments in this play reinforce such ambiguity of illusion and reality. The enactments not only spatialize the stories and materialize those tales, but also display the nature of drama which establishes a make-believe world between

reality and illusion and stimulates people to wander the semi-imaginary space in-between.

Nevertheless, self-deception may serve as a means of self-consolation, when storytelling serves as the outlet of the traumatic past. The four characters in *The Pillowman* obtain comfort from their self-deception. Katurian mitigates his sense of guilt of parricide by providing himself a new plot and suturing it with the fictional roles. With the new plot of “The Writer and the Writer’s Brother” different from reality, he changes the ending for his parents and makes them live in the story as a compensation. Lastly, he solaces himself with an imaginary reconciliation with his brother. As to Michal, the *articulation* and enactments of the tales make known his repressed desire of revenge. The characters in Katurian’s tales comfort Michal to believe that this is a torture-ridden world where children always suffer from abuse and harassment, so his enactments also save the suffering children. Moreover, Michal retrieves the comforting happiness of the good olden days when he has not yet been tortured. The tale “The Little Green Pig” reminds him of his life which has not turned dark yet. Through storytelling and/or reading Katurian’s tales, Tupolski eases the anxiety of the loss of his son, whereas Ariel is able to drive away his traumatic memories by declaring himself to be a better person.

The Pillowman is a play filled with storytelling and self-deception, in which the characters employ storytelling to deal with their traumas. Storytelling isolates Katurian, Michal, Tupolski, and Ariel in an eternal cycle of traumatic memories, storytelling, and deception. When they keep telling stories and treat stories as the representations and metaphors of life, they may be deprived of the ability of frank confrontation with their real life. They may not directly face up to their past and their life. Their life will become stories, and stories their life. To them, reality and fiction

cannot be clearly differentiated anymore. However, the self-deception, in a way, may turn out to be the momentum for them to live on and make them feel relieved with an illusory belief in the better result for their life stories. *Katurian the narrator* explains Ariel's empathetic act of preserving the tales in the ending of the play as the act of "keeping the spirit of the thing": "A fact which would have ruined the writer's fashionably downbeat ending, but was somehow...somehow...more in keeping with the spirit of the thing" (104). Perhaps the faculty of storytelling that helps these men to shun their traumatic past and seek comfort to face with their present is the spirit of the thing; it is the magic of those tales.



Works Cited

- Abel, Lionel. *Tragedy and Metatheatre*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publisher, Inc., 2003.
- Als, Hilton. "Tears Before the Bedtime: Martin McDonagh's Perverse Twist on the Children's Story." *The New Yorker*. 25 Apr. 2005. Web. 25 Oct. 2010.
<http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/04/25/050425crth_theatre?currentPage=all>
- Ashliman, D. L., ed. and trans. "The Pied Piper of Hameln." *Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts*. Pittsburg University, 14 Jan. 2009. Web. 23 May 2011.
<<http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/hameln.html>>
- Arruti, Nerea. "Trauma, Therapy and Representation: Theory and Critical Reflection." *Paragraph*. 30.1 (2007): 1-8.
- Barnet, Sylvan, et al (eds). *Types of Drama: Plays and Contexts*. 8th ed. New York: Longman, 2001.
- Barthes, Roland. *Image-Music-Text*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1977.
- Benjamin, Walter. "The Storyteller: Observations on the Works of Nikolai Leskov." *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Vol.3 1935-1938*. Trans. Edmund Jephcott, et al. Eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 2002.
- Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York: Vintage, 1989.
- Brantley, Ben. "A Storytelling Instinct Revels in Horror's Fun." *The New York Times*. 11 Apr. 2005. Web. 25 Oct. 2010.
<http://theater.nytimes.com/2005/04/11/theater/reviews/11pill.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=a%20storytelling%20instinct%20revels%20in%20horror%27s%20fun&st=cse>

- Brooks, Peter. *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling*. Cambridge (USA): Blackwell Publishers, 1994.
- Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. London: Oxford UP, 1984.
- Carr, David. *Time, Narrative and History*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986.
- Cavarero, Adriana. *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*. Trans. Paul A. Kottman. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Chambers, Lilian and Eamonn Jordan. "Introduction: The Critical Debate." *The Theatre of Martin McDonagh: A World of Savage Stories*. Eds. Lilian Chamber and Eamonn Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2006. 1-12.
- Cliff, Brian. "The Pillowman: A New Story to Tell." *Martin McDonagh: A Casebook*. Ed. Richard Rankin Russell. New York: Routledge, 2007. 131-148.
- Crossley, Michele L. "Introducing Narrative Psychology." *Narrative, Memory and Life Transition*. Huddersfield: Huddersfield UP, 1-13. Web. 21 June. 2011.
<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/5127/>
- Dean, Joan FitzPatrick. "Martin McDonagh's Stagecraft." *Martin McDonagh: A Casebook*. Ed. Richard Rankin Russell. New York: Routledge, 2007. 25-40.
- Eldred, Laura. "Martin McDonagh's Blend of Tradition and Horrific Innovation." *The Theatre of Martin McDonagh: A World of Savage Stories*. Eds. Lilian Chamber and Eamonn Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2006. 198-213.
- Erwin, Edward (eds). *The Freud Encyclopedia: Theory, Therapy, and Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Felluga, Dino. "Modules on Brooks: On Transference." *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory*. 15 May 2011. Purdue U. Web. 15 May 2011.

<<http://www.purdue.edu/guidetotheory/narratology/modules/brookstransference.html>>.

Ferenczi, Sandor. "Introjection and Transference." *Essential Papers on Transference*.

Ed. Aaron Esman. New York: New York UP, 1990. 15-27

Fingarette, Herbert. *Self-Deception*. 1969. Berkeley: California UP, 2000.

Fitzpatrick, Lisa. "Language Games: The Pillowman, A Skull in Connemara, and

Martin McDonagh's Hiberno-English." *The Theatre of Martin McDonagh: A World of Savage Stories*. Eds. Lilian Chamber and Eamonn Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2006. 141-154.

Freud, Sigmund. "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-through." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol.9. London: The Hogarth Press, 1959.

----"The Dynamics of Transference." *Essential Papers on Transference*.

Ed. Aaron Esman. New York: New York UP, 1990. 28-36.

----"The Future Prospects of Psychoanalytic Therapy." *Essential Papers on Countertransference*. Ed. Benjamin Wolstein. New York: New York UP, 1988. 16-24.

Gardner, Elysa. "'Pillowman' is Season's Best." *USA TODAY*. 10 Apr. 2005. Web. 3

Nov. 2010 <http://www.usatoday.com/life/theater/reviews/2005-04-10-pillowman_x.htm>

Goldstein, William, and Samuel Goldberg. *Using the Transference in Psychotherapy*.

Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006.

Hermans, Hubert and Els Hermans-Jansen. *Self-Narratives: The Construction of Meaning in Psychotherapy*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1995.

Hermans, Hubert and Harry Kempen. *The Dialogical Self: Meaning as Movement*.

New York: Academic Press, Inc., 1993.

Hornby, Richard. *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception*. Cranbury: Associated UP, 1986.

Huber, Werner. "The Early Plays: Shooting Star and Hard Man from South London." *The Theatre of Martin McDonagh: A World of Savage Stories*. Eds. Lilian Chamber and Eamonn Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2006. 13-26.

James, Caryn. "A Haunting Play Resounds Far Beyond the Stage." *The New York Times*. 15 Apr. 2005. Web. 25 Oct 2010.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/15/theater/newsandfeatures/15pill.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&sq=critic&st=cse%27s%20notebook:%20a%20haunting%20play%20resounds%20far%20beyond%20the%20stage%20&scp=1>

Jaynes, Julian. *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976.

Jordan, Eamonn. "War on Narrative: The Pillowman." *The Theatre of Martin McDonagh: A World of Savage Stories*. Ed. Lilian Chamber and Eamonn Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2006. 174-197.

Kearney, Richard. "Narrating Pain: The Power of Catharsis." *Paragraph* 30.1 (2007): 51-66.

Klein, Melanie. "The Origins of Transference." *Essential Papers on Transference*. Ed. Aaron Esman. New York: New York UP, 1990. 236-245.

Landsberg, Alison. "America, the Holocaust, and the Mass Culture of Memory: Toward a Radical Politics of Empathy." *New German Critique*. 71 (Spring-Summer 1997): 63-86.

Lanters, José. "The Identity Politics of Martin McDonagh." *Martin McDonagh: A Casebook*. Ed. Richard Rankin Russell. New York: Routledge, 2007. 9-24.

Laplanche, Jean and J. B. Pontalis. *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: The Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1973.

Mancing, Howard. *The Cervantes Encyclopedia: L-Z*. London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004.

McGrath, Charles. "The Pillowman' Audience: Shocked and a Bit Amused." *The New York Times*. 26 Apr. 2005. Web. 25 Oct. 2010.

<<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/26/theater/newsandfeatures/26whip.html?scp=2&sq=a%20storytelling%20instinct%20revels%20in%20horror%27s%20fun&st=cse>>

McKinley, Jesse. "Suffer the Little Children." *The New Yorker Times*. 3 Apr. 2005. Web. 19 Oct. 2010.

<<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A07EFDA123FF930A35757C0A9639C8B63&pagewanted=all>>

McDonagh, Martin. *The Pillowman*. New York: Faber and Faber Limited, 2003.

Nunberg, Herman. "Transference and Reality." *Essential Papers on Transference*. Ed. Aaron Esman. New York: New York UP, 1990. 221-235.

O'Hagan, Sean. "The Wild West." *The Guardian*. 24 Mar. 2001. Web. 23 Sep. 2010. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2001/mar/24/weekend.seanohagan>>

O'Niell, Michael C. "Review: Theorizing the Performer." *Theatre Journal*. 56.4 (Dec. 2004): 688-691.

O'Toole, Fintan. "Martin McDonagh." *BOMB*. 63 (Spring 1998). Web. 3 Nov. 2010. <<http://bombsite.com/issues/63/articles/2146>>

-----"Nowhere Man." *The Irish Times*. 26 Apr. 1997. Web. 22 Sep. 2010.

<<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/weekend/1997/0426/97042600183.html>>

----- "A Mind in Connemara: The Savage world of Martin McDonagh."

The New Yorker. 6 Mar. 2006. Web. 23 Sep. 2010.

<http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/03/06/060306fa_fact_otoole>

-----“Introduction.” *Martin McDonagh Plays:1*. London: Methuen Drama, 1999.

Pilný, Ondřej. “Grotesque Entertainment: *The Pillowman* as Puppet Theatre.” *The Theatre of Martin McDonagh: A World of Savage Stories*. Ed. Lilian Chamber and Eamonn Jordan. Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2006. 214-223.

-----“Martin McDonagh: Parody? Satire? Complacency?” *Irish Studies Review*. 12.2 (2004): 225-232.

Puchner, Martin. “Introduction.” *Tragedy and Metatheatre*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publisher, Inc., 2003.

Racker, Heinrich. *Transference and Countertransference*. London: Marsfield Library, 1968.

Radstone, Susannah. “Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics.” *Paragraph* 30.1 (2007): 9-29.

Russell, Richard Rankin. “Introduction.” *Martin McDonagh: A Casebook*. Ed. 1-8. Richard Rankin Russell. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Sarbin, Theodore. R. “The Narrative as a Root Metaphor for Psychology.” *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct*. Ed. Theodore R. Sarbin. Westport: Praeger Publisher, 1986. 3-21.

Sierz, Aleks. *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2001.

Sommer, Elyse. “The Olivier Winning *Pillowman* Comes to Broadway with an American Cast.” *The Curtain Up Theatre Review*. N.d. Web. 25 Oct. 2010.

<<http://www.curtainup.com/pillowman.html>>

Vilaseca, Stephen Luis. “From Spaces of Intimacy to Transferential Space: The

Structure of Memory and the Reconciliation with Strangeness in El Cuarto de
Atras.” *Bulletin of Hispanic studies* 83.3 (2006): 181-192.

Worthen, Hana, and W. B. Worthen, “*The Pillowman* and the Ethics of Allegory.”
Modern Drama. 49.2 (Summer 2006): 155-172.

Zetzel, Elizabeth. “Current Concepts of Transference.” *Essential Papers on
Transference*. Ed. Aaron Esman. New York: New York UP, 1990. 136-149.

