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**A trans-media reading of a white-collar workplace bestseller
and its TV and film adaptations**

A Story of Lala's Promotion and Go Lala Go

跨媒體分析：白領暢銷書《杜拉拉升職記》及其影視改編

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Translator's Introduction

The book I have chosen to translated is a non-fiction scholarly book, written by Shenshen Cai, a Lecturer in Chinese Studies at Swinburne University of Technology, on the topic of Chinese study through popular culture, examining the social, cultural and political trends of contemporary Chinese society reflected by some popular Chinese TV drama serials. Among the 6 chapters in the book, I have selected the one which discusses the Western office culture, the white-collar lifestyle, the “strong woman” phenomenon and middle-class consumption patterns and aesthetics. The first time I read this book was that when I was searching references for the assignment of a courses I took in the last academic year. The topic of this chapter impressed me a lot and gave me a new insight into the potential of cultural and society study through the entertaining TV genre. I also found the “strong women” phenomenon addressed in the book interesting, therefore I would like to have a better understanding of this social phenomenon, and decided to translate this chapter for my capstone project. In the following parts, the analysis on readership and translation style, the translation procedures and the translation difficulties encountered will be discussed.

Readership and translation style

The source text (ST) is an academic writing which has an informative function (Newmark, 1988). The dominant target readers (TR) are the academic researchers, probably in the field of contemporary china study, social science, media and cultural study. Besides, the TR may also be the general public

who could be interested in studying the contemporary China society or the audience of the novel, film and drama who are curious about the cultural phenomenon reflected in the story. The target text (TT) targeted majorly at the Hong Kong readers, so it was translated in traditional Chinese. While under the consideration that Taiwanese who also use traditional Chinese, a glossary list of Chinese translation for some specific terms (i.e. the brand names) is also included (See p. 11) for the Taiwan readers' reference.

Given the function and genre of the ST, as well as the target readers of both academic researchers and general public, the style of the ST is basically neutral in formality and difficulties (Newmark, 1988), which means the vocabularies and expressions used are easy, concise and explicit so that the readers could easily understand the points made in the text. Nevertheless, as the ST is a study based on the literary work of a novel and its film and TV adoption, many dialogues are quoted. For these quotes, a more colloquial style of translation is adopted. The dominant approach adopted in this translation project is communicative translation, agreeing with the suggestion made by Newmark (1988) for the informative text.

Translation Procedure

This translation project follows the criteria of faithfulness(信), expressiveness(達) and elegance(雅) advocated by Yanfu, a remarkable Chinese translator, to a large extent. Before I started translating, I read the ST thoroughly and check for the glossaries. After clarifying the ideas in the ST, I started translating the text into Chinese, focusing on preciseness, then double-checked if all the ideas

were translated. When the drafted ST was faithful enough, I then looked into the expressiveness of the ST, checking the grammar, the suitability of sentences' length, and the cause-and-effect relationships. Finally, the last step was to modify the word choices and collocations and ensure that the expressions would not be too informal while not difficult to understand, for the purpose of being elegance. For instance, 4 characters structure is extensively used in the TT (e.g. "male-dominated and females are a marginalized subclass" is translated as "男人主導、女人作輔") for making the sentence parallel and rhythmic.

Translation difficulties and solutions

The translation difficulties will be categorized into 3 groups: translation of lexis, translation for the academic references and the syntactic discrepancies.

First, the translation of lexis, including the technical terms, cultural specific terms and other proper terms was one of the challenges I occurred. The terminologies in the ST were kept but elaborated by adding extra information in the TT. From the perspective of the general readers, I had thought of using generalization approach to these terms at first. However, the TR may include those professionals who have background knowledge about the terms, so these terms are retained, attaching extra information via footnotes and in-text elaborations for catering other readers. For example, the technical terms for movie shooting "narrative arc" and "*mise-en-scène*" are translated as "敘事弧" and "場面調度場面調度（如場景和燈光）" where footnotes are added for explanation and for "*mise-en-scène*", the in-text

elaborations “（如場景和燈光）” were also added at the same time for the convenience of the readers so that they could understand this term immediately when they read it.

Footnotes were also added for the cultural-specific terms. The term “ ‘ugly duckling’ men and women, (*fenghuangnan/ fenghuangnu*)”, was translated as “鳳凰男和鳳凰女”; this Chinese translation seems to be common in the mainland China while still not familiar to most Hong Kong readers, therefore, a footnote is added to explain this neologism.

On the other hand, non-translation skill was also used for the proper names of some international brands, like Cartier, Nokia and Hermes, because the Hong Kong readers are more familiar with the English brand names than the Chinese one. Nonetheless, as mentioned before, a glossary list of Chinese translation of the brand names was also prepared for the potential Taiwan readers.

Second, the translation of academic references was also complicated. Because of the academic writing genre of the ST, many quotations and citations were used in order to support the ideas of the writer. For dealing with the references in the ST which were quoted and cited from Chinese sources, I searched the original Chinese texts and used the original expressions, for example, the names and the job titles of the characters, as well as some dialogues in the novel *A Story of Lala's Promotion*, so that the accuracy was ensured. For the English references, because some of them are not of the field that familiar to me, I reviewed the original reference texts to have a brief understanding of the views before I started to translate, guaranteeing that the messages are translated correctly. For the translation of the names of the references' authors, names of those Chinese authors were translated while the name of

foreign authors were non-translated for the convenience of the readers to look back to the sources easier.

The differences between English and Chinese in the syntactic level was also challenging for me in the translation process. My solutions of dealing with the problems in terms of long sentence, use of pronoun and passive voice will be discussed below:

English sentences tend to be long and complicated, and this feature is even more significant in thesis writing. English sentences are hypotactic, emphasizing the structural forms, while Chinese sentences are paratactic, emphasizing the meaning (Li, 2011). When translating a long sentence, I tended to break it into small pieces and restructure the order, as well as omit some useless elements, for instance the conjunctions, the subordinators and the prepositions. For example, the translation for the long sentence in the ST “Compared with its film version, which is..., the TV adaptation is...” (refer to p. 14) which has 61 words, adopted the restructuring method that clipping the one sentence composed of one subject (the TV adaptation) and one main verb (is) into 2 sentences, while a semicolon was used for indicating the close relationship of the 2 sentences: “電影版本更為...；電視劇版本則...”(refer to p. 45). After reordering the sentence structure, the ST became more concise and easier to comprehend.

Moreover, the ST included many descriptive parts of the main character Du Lala in the novel, resulting in the frequent use of pronouns in the ST, which is also a feature of English but not suitable

in Chinese. To cope with this problem, I took advantage of the paratactic feature of Chinese and reduced the number of pronouns as much as possible:

In the case of Lala, **who** started from a junior marketing assistant without any connections in DB, **she** relies solely on **her** exceptional ability and unparalleled assiduousness to gain acceptance with **her** colleagues and win favor from **her** supervisors.

杜拉拉剛入職時只是個初級市場助理，在 DB 裏沒有任何背景關係，能夠獲得同事接受和主管信任，靠的都是自己優秀能力和勤奮耐力。

In this example, five pronouns were used to refer Lala in the ST, while in the TT, only one reflexive pronoun “自己” was used. By omitting the pronouns, the ST became less clumsy and more “Chinese” in tone and style.

Furthermore, utmost efforts were put to avoid the passive voice structure of English in the TT. As the Chinese passive voice usually render a negative meaning, it has long been suggested that translator should convert passive into active when doing EC translation. Therefore, most of the passive structure in the ST were abandoned in the TT through different measures. For example, “Wang Wei is gradually moved by Lala’s hard work and persistence” was translated as “拉拉的努力和毅力漸漸打動王偉” where the passive meaning was evaded by changing the object of the ST into the subject of the TT.

Other alternatives of the word “被” that convey less negative sense, like “把”, “受” and “獲” were also used for expressing the passive meaning, for example, “are employed” was translated to “獲聘”, “... way of life is ... normalized” was translated as “...並把這種生活方式正常化” and so on.

In summary, the most challenging parts for this project were the translation of the lexis and academic references, as well as the process of dealing with the syntactic differences of English and Chinese in an effort to make the ST in accord with the Chinese language habits and avoid translationese while maintaining the formality of the academic genre of the ST. Among the 2 major approaches, the semantic translation and communicative translation, proposed by Newmark (1988), I personally more prefer using the latter which focuses more on readers' response, because there is no absolute equivalent between two languages (Nida, 1969). As a result, translator should put more emphasis on how to transfer the messages of the ST in the language that is the most comfortable and readable to the TR instead of sticking on following the form of the ST, so that cultural exchange, one of the goal of translation, could be achieved.

Glossary

English	Chinese
Lenovo	聯想
Cartier	卡地亞
Mazda	馬自達
Lipton	立頓
Nokia	諾基亞
Dove	德芙
Lotto	樂得
Hermes	愛馬仕
Louis Vuitton	路易威登
Burberry	柏博利
Gucci	古馳
Loewe	羅威
Roger Vivier	羅傑·維威耶
Tod's	朵姿
Dior	迪奧
Valentino	華倫天奴
Moschino	莫斯奇諾
Blumarine	藍色情人
Giorgio Armani	亞曼尼
D&G	杜嘉班納

Footnotes:

1. 源自法文 *mise-en-scene*，意為「將動作舞台化」。所謂場面的調度，就是指導演為攝影機安排調度某事件的場景以利拍攝，元素包括：場景、服裝與化妝、燈光和演出（動作與表演）（曾偉禎，2001）。
2. 指故事從頭到尾的發生順序（碁峰資訊）。
3. Lenovo（聯想集團有限公司）是中國跨國科技公司，收購了 IBM 個人電腦事業和摩托羅拉行動技術公司。
4. 一款為時尚的大都市女性設計的跑車。
5. 指那些經過個人努力，基於先天過人的天賦和後天過人的勤奮而實現階層躍升，從鄉村底層流動到城市社會中上層的農村精英分子（王文龍，2014）。

A trans-media reading of a white-collar workplace bestseller and its TV and film adaptations

A Story of Lala's Promotion and Go Lala Go

Introduction

In 2007, Li Ke's novel *A Story of Lala's Promotion* (Du Lala shengzhiji), became a bestseller among Chinese white-collar workers in joint ventures or foreign-owned (Western) companies. The novel revolves around office politics, Western company culture, the white-collar lifestyle, the “strong woman” phenomenon and middle-class aesthetics. In order to decipher the embedded cultural codes of this book, this chapter undertakes a textual analysis of the plots of *A Story of Lala's Promotion* and its TV and film adaptations, *Go Lala Go!* . In this transmedia study (from fiction to TV drama and film), this chapter examines three interrelated themes in the novel, the film and the TV serial. First, focusing on the influence of Western corporate culture on Chinese white-collar workers, the extensively followed norms of Western work culture are interpreted, and the acculturating process of Western culture over its Chinese counterpart is made clear. The chapter also asks how, on the platform provided by foreign companies and with the impact and training of Western corporate culture, intelligent and diligent young Chinese women aspire, struggle and realize their dreams in the workplace. Second, employing a feminist perspective, the analysis addresses the situation of contemporary Chinese professional women represented by the fiercely debated social phenomenon of

“strong women,” and how they symbolize female independence and individualism. And third, through an analysis of the film and TV adaptations and a focus on white-collar females’ lifestyle and consumption habits, this chapter also highlights the modern-day Chinese pursuit of a middle-class identity and aesthetic that mirror the overwhelming consumerism of post-socialist China.

Since its publication in 2007, *A Story of Lala’s Promotion* has continuously ranked at the top of the bestseller lists for eighty-eight weeks on Dangdang Web (Dangdang Web is one of the most popular online shopping websites in China). In 2008, its sequel, *As Time Goes By* (*Nianhua sishui*), was published and, in 2010, another sequel, *In This Struggling Year* (*Wo zai zhe zhandoude yinianli*), was released. Also in 2010, the film adaptation of *A Story of Lala’s Promotion*, *Go Lala Go!* by the well-known Beijing-based young actress-writer-director Xu Jinglei was released, and the box-office revenue of the film reached 100 million RMB only a couple of days after its release. In the same year, a thirty-two-episode TV drama adaptation based on the same novel also aired and it similarly enjoyed huge popularity among the TV audience.

Compared with its film version, which is more concerned with personal and romantic relationships between the main characters and is similar in many ways to a Hollywood-style romantic comedy, the TV adaptation is closer to the content and essence of the original novel in terms of its meticulous and vivid portrayal of office politics and the trend towards globalization of workplace culture. There are many challenges for the film’s director, who has to compress the rich plots of the book into a less than two hour movie, and so many wonderful elements of the novel cannot be

included in the filmic version of the story. In particular, for those audiences who have familiarized themselves with the book, the movie seems to betray many facets of the novel and does not meet the expectations of these filmgoers. Therefore, the TV rendition of the novel functions as a more suitable means to untangle the cultural traits prompted by *A Story of Lala's Promotion*.

The backdrop of *A Story of Lala's Promotion* is the business and cultural landscape of a foreign-owned company that is operating in China, and includes its operational mechanisms, company culture, human resource (HR) management and interpersonal relations. Focusing on a core group of characters, including Du Lala (HR and administration manager), Wang Wei (marketing director), Lester (HR director) and Howard (CEO of the Chinese division of the company), the novel foregrounds office politics, Western corporate culture and the lifestyle and values of white-collar workers, particularly female employees. Du Lala is a goodlooking woman in her early twenties and is from a small city in southern China. She is from a working-class family and has had to rely on her intelligence and hard work to make a living after graduating from university and moving to the larger metropolis. Unlike other “rich second generation” and “official second generation” people who are wealthy and have various connections to help them, Lala has to rely on her own attributes and attainments to achieve what she wants and dreams of. She works in a state-run enterprise for a year, until she finds a sales job with a privately owned company. However, after working there for four years, and being sexually harassed by her boss, Lala quits. She finds a new position as a marketing assistant in a foreign-owned, global top-500 enterprise, called DB. As a result of her ability and diligence, she is promoted to

administrative supervisor and then to HR and administration manager in just a few years. After years of hard work and continual struggle and when she is in her late twenties, Lala finally becomes a member of the newly formed Chinese middle class.

The main characters in A Story of Lala's Promotion are:

Howard – CEO of the Chinese company

Lester – HR director

Wang Wei – marketing director

Rose – administration manager

Du Lala – HR and administration manager (after Rose leaves the company)

Zhou Liang – HR and administration supervisor

Pamela – HR and administration supervisor

Westernization and globalization reflected in the workplace

Since China opened up to the outside world at the end of the 1970s, and as the world economy has steadily but surely globalized, joint ventures and foreign invested enterprises (mainly Western companies from North America and Europe) have become an indispensable part of China's market economy. The engagement of these joint ventures and foreign-operated companies with the Chinese economy is not simply a process of internationalization – “a mere quantitative increase in the contacts and flows across nation-state boundaries or an increasing outward orientation of the nation-state”

(Albert 2007: 167, quoted in Loubere 2010: 72). Instead, it represents globalization, a process which

“influences and structures processes of economic production and exchange, political authority, the formation of individual and collective identities, or cultural frames of reference” (Albert 2007: 167, quoted in Loubere 2010: 72). This comparison between internationalization and globalization helps us apprehend the utility, philosophy and politics of joint ventures and foreign-invested enterprises, which signify not only an extension of the Western capitalist economic form, but also a cultural penetration of the receiving countries. According to Yu (2008: 157), “[e]conomic globalization has not only changed production, consumption, and exchange, but it has also altered modes of thinking and behavior, and has had a major impact on national cultures.” China’s current economic model compels foreign-invested companies to play a critical role in sustaining the prosperity of China’s economy: thus, Western work modes, office politics and interpersonal relations, which are part of corporate culture, have an immense influence on Chinese workers in these enterprises.

Some scholars have offered different observations regarding this cultural globalization unfolding in foreign corporations operating in China. They indicate that traditional Chinese values such as an emphasis on the maintenance of harmonious relations among colleagues, preservation of the collective, agreement to prearranged social structures and power hierarchy, holism, contextualism, saving face and reciprocity of relationships and *guanxi* (ties and connections) influence Chinese staff working in foreign-run enterprises, particularly when settling conflicts (Kirkbride, Tang & Westwood 1991: 365– 86; Ding 1997: 31– 45; Chan, Luk & Wang 2005: 464). In contrast to these observations, traditional Chinese work modes and values have been replaced by Western workplace standards and

culture in *A Story of Lala's Promotion* and its film and TV drama adaptations. In the narratives of the novel, the movie and the TV show, which all center on Du Lala's experiences, the operational mechanisms, management concepts and corporate culture of the foreign company is simply transplanted into the Chinese socio-economic system and cultural milieu. Consequently, they directly or indirectly critically engage with and adjust the thinking and behavioral manner of their Chinese employees who have long been immersed into and assimilated by Western company culture. Therefore, the experience of Chinese white-collar workers affiliated to these foreign companies is a microcosm of the broader Westernizing and globalizing fashion of the world economy and culture. Despite Chinese workers encountering and negotiating with both local and international or Western values during the transformative process of localizing a transnational corporate culture, an overwhelming stimulus of Western company culture on the Chinese workforce is clearly flaunted in Du Lala's story. Through a detailed analysis of Du Lala's experiences, as a typical Chinese employee in a foreign or multinational organization, we gain a clear picture of the globalizing trends in contemporary China.

DB, a global top-500 American communications company where Lala works, is an archetypal Western enterprise; both its organizational structure and management strategy represent American-style corporate culture. According to Chan, Luk and Wang (2005: 466):

Corporate culture refers to the values, beliefs, and principles that serve as a foundation for an organization's management system, and the set of management practices and forms of behaviour that both exemplify and reinforce those basic principles.

At DB, classic Western management ideas, such as SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based) signify the high efficiency, rationalization and pragmatism of this management style.

From careful budgeting to painstaking negotiations, and from thorough investigation to results analysis, Lala gradually familiarizes herself with Western management concepts and tactics, eventually becoming highly skilled at them. Shifting from a slow-paced and less effective working style in the state-run and arguably privately owned Chinese company to a fast-tempo, efficient and logical Western working approach, Lala transfigures herself into a qualified, successful and aspiring female professional at DB's management level. Here, Lala's conversion verifies the corporate culture of DB which is "keeping dynamic and forging ahead." Further, Lala personifies the impact that globalization exerts over China; in particular, its influence on young aspirational Chinese women and their work and life experiences.

According to Fan and Regulska (2008: 94– 95), Chinese women's emancipation, at both the economic and physical levels, as promoted during the Mao era, did not "necessarily enrich women's identity with the desire for professional success and economic independence." Further, changes initiated under socialism "didn't eliminate gender discrimination as reflected in wages, occupational attainment and promotion." The situation has worsened in the post-socialist transition eras: when a

market economy with Chinese characteristics was implemented by a state with a developmental approach, traditional gender ideology and practices in the labor market were resumed and overt gender discrimination when hiring was common (Fan 2000: 423– 424; Fan 2003: 27; Fan 2004: 284; Fan & Regulska 2008: 96– 100). For example, men still dominate the job market in positions such as heads of government and enterprises, managers and senior clerical staff. Under these general conditions, Western companies provide opportunities for young motivated Chinese female staff to develop their skills and knowledge and compete equally with their male counterparts in business circles. Eventually, it is expected that many proficient Chinese women will become supervisors and managers in foreign corporations, like Rose, Lala and Pamela in the Du Lala phenomenon.

Other traits of the Western business world revealed in the novel and its film and TV drama adaptations are its cruel competitiveness, often leading to an employee's "crisis of consciousness." Within DB, there is pitiless competition among staff and departments. This is exposed when Lala is promoted to the position of HR and administration manager; however as she is not familiar with the HR routines at DB (her previous duties were mainly administrative), the HR staff are reluctant to train her for fear that Lala would perform better than them. This callous contest among colleagues is likewise revealed by Lester's non-trusting relationship with Rose and by Rose's (Lala's former boss) non-trusting relationship with Lala; as well as Lala's own defensiveness with Zhou Liang and Pamela. For example, Lala's manipulation of Zhou Liang and Pamela follows Lester's instructions to her:

I am not saying that we are building a harmonious team and everyone needs to listen to you; what I am trying to explain is how to balance your subordinates. If they are perfectly united, it might be the beginning of a nightmare for you. Never make your subordinates too united and never trust any one of them too much. You should make them compete against each other so that you can control the whole situation. Another point is that when you are training them, you should always do it separately. Remember, you are irreplaceable.

(Li 2010: 138)

In one scene of the TV serial, Lester teaches Lala a motto which is highly useful and instructive for her survival and advancement at DB, given the intense competition among colleagues. “It does not matter how well you perform, the point is which way best suits your own needs.” This harsh competitiveness of Western companies fuels a sense of crisis among the employees. Lala is in constant fear of new staff members outperforming her. In order to stand out from other employees and to gain a promotion, Lala frequently works late at night and rarely takes any paid annual leave, especially when she is in charge of major projects. In the TV drama version of the novel, many scenes show Lala arriving at work earlier than her subordinates so that she can deal with the pile of documents that she must attend to. She also works extra hours without having meal breaks. Lala’s desperate efforts to impress her superiors serve as a foil to the ruthless competition and unstable future of the Western business system (Hou 2010: 25).

In the TV drama, Wang Wei, the director of sales (in the novel Wang Wei's position is marketing director), is under constant stress – just like Lala. The sales division is one of the core departments of a company like DB, and its success to a large degree determines the future of the company, as well as the destiny of its executives. Thus, competition within this sector is vicious. In addition to its internal struggles, the sales department has tense relations with other departments. In one plot of the novel – seen in both the film and the TV show – Lala is directing an office-renovation project. On the day that the office area must be vacated, Wang Wei and his staff members refuse to obey the order issued by Lala's administrative department, leading to a quarrel between Wang Wei and Lala. At the outset, Lala tries to be reasonable, but Wang Wei refuses to cooperate. However, ultimately Lala's stubbornness and resolve is too much for Wang Wei and she wins the argument.

This scenario reveals not only the aggressive nature but also the openness of Western corporate culture, which encourages staff to speak out and communicate with each other. Although Wang Wei is Chinese, he has long been accustomed to Western office politics. At the beginning of their disagreement, Wang Wei wants to teach Lala – the newly promoted administration supervisor – a lesson. He tries to intimidate her so that he and his department can win the upper hand. This way, in their future dealings, Wang Wei hopes that Lala will take notice and behave. However, to Wang Wei's surprise, Lala has also gained insight into Western business culture and office politics, and instead of enduring his bullying, she speaks up for herself with confidence. In her previous job at the privately owned Chinese company, Lala only resigned when she could no longer tolerate the owner's sexual

advances. Also, in another scene, when Rose intentionally finds fault with Lala not long after Lala started working in the administration department, Lala just thanked Rose for her advice; however, after becoming more familiar with Western business culture, she begins to use Western ways of solving problems. Therefore, in her fight with Wang Wei, when Lala – a junior female administration supervisor – challenges the authority of a senior male sales director, she epitomizes the assimilation that has occurred in company culture as a result of globalization. Moreover, her career struggles and successes display the contemporary Chinese female worker's sense of rights and independence in the workplace (Du 2010: 24). Here, it is worth mentioning the *mise-en-scène* of the sequence, in particular the acting of the performers, which renders the manners, gestures and lines of both Wang Wei and Lala dominating and aggressive, indicating their thinking and behavioral patterns have also been acculturated by the Western business culture and principles.

Another distinguishing feature of Western business culture as exhibited in the Du Lala phenomenon is its promotion of fair competition. In Chinese culture, a strict system of seniority, in conjunction with personal connections, determines whether someone – especially a newcomer – survives in a workplace. Therefore, in the Chinese workplace, it is often the case that people can survive only if they have connections and it doesn't matter whether or not they are proficient in the job. However, the Western workplace situation is different. In the globalised business world, Chinese white-collar workers like Du Lala operate in a much more independent and impartial environment than they did pre-globalization. In the case of Lala, who started from a junior marketing assistant without

any connections in DB, she relies solely on her exceptional ability and unparalleled assiduousness to gain acceptance with her colleagues and win favor from her supervisors. The open and unprejudiced working environment and performance assessment fostered by Western corporate culture make it possible for Chinese staff, especially female workers like Du Lala, to struggle, compete and succeed in the workplace. This also turns Du Lala's case into a classic example where an entry-level female clerk can become a middle-class, successful career woman.

However, despite its impartial competition and transparent management system, the foreign-invested enterprise has its own weaknesses, such as its exploitative nature, which could be detected in Lala's description about Lester's different attitudes towards her: "Whenever he wants me to work for him he treats me with the warmth of spring; whenever I ask for a promotion, he treats me with the coldness of winter." Almost every time Lala receives a promotion, her new title does not match her sharply increased workload. Furthermore, she only gains the promotion by negotiating directly with her supervisor or manager:

Lester, the renovation project has been completed successfully. I've also managed all the administrative departments across the country over the past six months, and everything has gone smoothly. As a result, I believe I have the capacity to be an administrative manager. Is there an opportunity for promotion for me?

This speech (and Lala's behavior) demonstrates that in the Western workplace, taking the initiative and safeguarding the interests one deserves is likely to enhance an employee's opportunities for

success. This is in sharp contrast to Chinese workplace culture, where an employee needs to adopt a humble manner to progress.

In today's globalized climate, joint ventures and foreign-invested enterprises operating in China bring not only advanced management technology, but also an efficient and impartial corporate culture into the Chinese economic and cultural milieu. Chinese white-collar employees of these corporations operate in a more rational, autonomous, industrious and proactive way than staff in traditional Chinese companies. The Du Lala story is about how Chinese company culture and working practices have been subsumed by global (Western) standards, through the performance and behaviors of Chinese employees in foreign firms. In addition, the characters from the novel and its film and TV renditions, like real Chinese employees, act as mediums and catalysts, transferring foreign concepts, manners and culture into the Chinese socio-economic context. In this way, cultural assimilation occurs.

The new female image and the “strong woman” phenomenon

Recently, a number of popular novels focusing on female office workers or “office ladies” (OL) in foreign firms have appeared in China, and undoubtedly *A Story of Lala's Promotion* is the most successful among them. For those people actually employed by foreign and multinational corporations, these novels have become quasi-textbooks: they showcase realistic workplace issues, situations, relationships and difficulties (Guo 2010: 231; Peng 2010: 50– 1). When Zhang Wei, the scriptwriter of the TV version of *A Story of Lala's Promotion*, was collecting materials for the script, she went to several multinational companies. There, she saw many young female workers using a pen to underline

the classic sayings of Du Lala in the novel (Zhang 2010). For those who are simply interested in the phenomenon, these books are also informative and intriguing. Due to the massive appeal spawned by the white-collar “office lady” bestsellers, film and TV producers and investors are keen to cash in on this hot cultural sensation. An inherited focus of these “OL” themed visual narratives from the original novels is the focus given to the endeavors and accomplishments of these talented and aspiring contemporary Chinese career-oriented women. From a feminist perspective, these popular visual texts reflect the changing situation of modern-day Chinese middleclass professional women.

“White-collar beauty” (bailingiren) is a term which has been used since the “Opening Up” economic reforms to describe young Chinese women working in joint venture or foreign-owned companies. The phrase implies that these are attractive bourgeois women. There is a general perception among the Chinese public that these women are good looking (they are known as “flower vases”), that they earn good salaries and that they have clerical roles such as receptionists and secretaries. They are employed partly for decoration, and their duties are relatively mundane. The emergence of the Du Lala– style of gifted and ambitious female managers and executives in foreign firms provides an alternative to the traditional image of the “white-collar beauty.” Lala has the looks of a “flower vase” and begins with DB as a junior office clerk. As a result of her skills and persistence she eventually makes it to the senior management ranks, which is conventionally male-dominated and females are a marginalized subclass. In this sense, Lala’s career journey changes the ideas about “white-collar beauty.” The more commonly accepted understanding is that the “white-collar beauty”

enjoys a less stressful job, with more leisurely duties, but the Du Lala phenomenon reveals the fierce contests and the fragile job security in foreign-owned companies, and changes the image of white-collar females from “flower vase” to “super-girl.” This renewed image of white-collar females emphasizes women’s career performances, pursuits and desires. The customary identity of professional women employed by foreign companies is given a nuanced and positive twist, and instead of holding positions such as secretary, receptionist, typist and assistant, Du Lala and many of her female co-workers are supervisors and directors who challenge their male colleagues in the workplace.

The opening sequence of the TV drama, through strong visual and acoustic arrangements, begins a lengthy narrative arc on the Du Lala character who is a hardworking and persistent young professional woman. Via an off-screen narrative voice, Du Lala introduces herself to the viewers. She is accompanied by the theme song of the show, with lyrics which highlight the struggles and determinations of an aspirational professional woman to overcome those hardships and setbacks in the career marketplace. The camera uses long takes and follows Lala closely to shoot one of her busy mornings during which she has to catch an extremely crowded bus to the company headquarters. Although at this time Lala works for the private local company as a junior office clerk, her diligent and tenacious manner is carried on throughout her career, even after she is promoted to the managerial level at DB. The camera shot then adopts an angle that faces the approaching bus, which runs at a high speed and creates an effect of stressfulness, competition and maybe even oppression. As Lala gets on the bus, she trips and finds herself on the bus floor, and even though she is lying on the floor in an

extremely embarrassing situation she still manages to smile to all those onlookers who surround her but do not attempt to offer any help. Hesitating for a couple of seconds, Lala manages to stand up by herself, pretending that nothing has happened while smiling to others. With the help of a rich combination of visual and acoustic elements, the sequence successfully creates the image of a professional woman who has inner strength, is tough and tenacious and endures hardships, all of which invite empathy, respect and even admiration from the audience.

In addition to its function as a signifier for strong professional women, the Du Lala phenomenon has turned itself into a representative of the “strong woman”; a controversial socio-cultural phenomenon in contemporary China. Lala achieves economic independence in her early twenties and by her late twenties she has become a successful single woman in the business world. In China the phrase “shelved ladies” or “left-over women” refers mainly to independent single females who have a decent job and earn an income high enough to give them financial freedom and social respect (Cao 2010: 56). They are also autonomous in matters of love and marriage. Zhang calls the “shelved ladies” the “3S ladies,” where the three s’s stand for “single,” “seventies” (born in the 1970s, nowadays those single women born in the 1980s have joined the legion of “shelved ladies”) and “stuck” (2011: 20). “Stuck” does not have a negative intent; the “shelved ladies” choose to remain “stuck” and to retain their independence and have high expectations for marriage (Zhang 2007: 8). Ma uses a more aggressive title to describe the characters of many “shelved ladies”: *baigujing*, where *bai*, *gu* and *jing* serve as abbreviations for *bailing* (white-collar), *gugan* (backbone) and *jingying* (elite) (2006:

115). According to Ning (2008: 222), the “shelved ladies” normally have three “highs” – high qualifications, high intelligence and high income – plus an above-average outlook, which increases their employment opportunities. Because of these advantages, they also have high standards when choosing a partner.

The Chinese sociologist Li Yinhe (2010) notes that economic autonomy and affluence is the principal contributing factor to the “shelved ladies” phenomenon. In Du Lala’s case, as highlighted in the storyline of the TV drama, her family comes from a comparatively underdeveloped city in southern China. Her parents long to have their own home in Shanghai, the most advanced and colorful metropolis of modern-day China, where Lala is currently based. The mother urges Lala to purchase an apartment in Shanghai so she and her husband can move from their hometown to live with their daughter in their dream city. Later, without letting Lala know in advance, the parents move to Shanghai to live with her and the three of them have to rent a place temporarily. While Lala is still saving for a down payment on an apartment, her father is diagnosed with an early carcinoma of the stomach.

Her father’s attending physician is moved by Lala’s filial piety towards her parents as she struggles between working and looking after her sick father, and he becomes attracted to her. However, he is not Lala’s ideal type and she refuses his advances. Instead of relying on a man to help her out during hard times, Lala borrows money from her best friend and works even harder to support the entire family. Later, the father recovers and Lala is promoted to the managerial level at DB which

leads to a huge increase in her salary. According to the novel, when she is promoted as HR and administration manager, Lala earns 230,000 RMB per year and is now able to purchase a spacious apartment to accommodate the whole family. When she brings her parents to the display suite of their future home, the mother is surprised by the size and quality of the rooms in the show apartment, but she has doubts about Lala's long-term financial ability to pay for such an apartment in Shanghai. However, Lala replies with assurance and confidence that she earns more than enough to pay the mortgage.

Due to their economic capability, the “shelved ladies” do not need to count on others (in particular a husband) to provide a comfortable lifestyle. As such, they are not in a hurry to get married and they will not be submissive in their relationships with men. According to Fan (2000: 423; Fan 2003, cited in Fan & Regulska 2008: 99):

In China, Confucianism designates specific roles to individuals based on their gender, social class, and position relative to others; it erects boundaries and defines relations between members of society. Thus, women are subordinate to other male members of the family and are expected to be submissive and to sacrifice their interest to those of man.

Even in today's China, these established Confucian ideas and expectations towards women are still effective and forceful in the mind-sets of many Chinese people, in particular the older generations. In one scene of the TV drama, Wang Wei is gradually moved by Lala's hard work and persistence, falls in love with her and tries to persuade Lala not to be so determined to be a strong woman. In Wang

Wei's opinion, "a woman is supposed to stay at home and assist her husband and bring up children.

Why are you so stubborn and copy others to become a successful professional woman? You would be better off getting married while you are still young and learn to be a virtuous wife and a caring mother." Moreover, Wang Wei warns Lala that she concentrates too much on her work, which results in her losing her femininity and charm as a woman. Based on Wang Wei's observation, Lala only becomes gentle and meek when she is worn out at work. Here, Wang Wei's words and viewpoints expose the male chauvinism embraced by many Chinese men and signify the disparagement of the general social attitude towards the "shelved ladies." However, Lala cannot agree with Wang Wei, as she has different ideas regarding a woman's role in the family and in society, even though she is also interested in him and eventually becomes his girlfriend.

A comparison of the literary, filmic and televisual embodiments and interpretations of the Du Lala figure indicates that the TV drama narrative, more than the film and novel, foregrounds the independent and strong woman persona of this character, especially regarding her opinion on marriage and other relationships. In the concluding episodes of the TV serial, when Wang Wei is leaving DB and heading for another city, he wants Lala to give up everything she has gained at DB and go with him. However, Lala declines his request, as her career advancements and prospects at DB mean more to her than her relationship with him or any other man, which forces Wang Wei to change his mind at the very end of the show.

Employment at this foreign-owned firm has already transformed Lala from a novice in the career field to an aspiring and effective professional woman, and it continues to provide a platform for her to expand her career ambitions. In sharp contrast to the Confucian-styled desirable female subjects, “shelved ladies” such as Du Lala are self-governing individuals and strong woman characters, whose experience to borrow Keane’s argument, “has provided an opening in China for a new-liberal ethic of self-cultivation,” which sheds a contrasting light on the Maoist-style socialism that negates the self-governing subject (Keane 2007: 62). These self-determining strong women support themselves and they choose to work hard, and compete with men in the workplace. In Lala’s case, she works harder than her male colleagues and supervisors, she disagrees and argues her point with them over projects and competes with them for promotions. Du Lala symbolizes the ideal post-1970s and 1980s middle-class Chinese woman (Peng 2010: 50–51). As Qian (2010: 299) states:

[This ideal woman is] young, beautiful, fashionable, virtuous and dutiful, considerate, strong and independent. At home, she should be able to run the automatic washing machine and intelligent microwave; outside, she should be a skilled woman, who drives a car and competes hard in the workplace.

Here, the Du Lala-style autonomous, diligent, righteous and respectable young female professionals offer a fresh and affirmative image of the contemporary Chinese woman. In present-day China, materialistic and hedonist values are popular among some young women – the “gold-digger” figures

who find rich husbands or “sugar daddies.” In the TV show, Daisy, Wang Wei’s former wife and a marry- only-for-money woman, divorces her husband for his lack of ambition when compared with other, wealthier men and then finds a rich foreign boyfriend. In contrast to Daisy, Lala is not interested in the lavish lifestyle Wang Wei could possibly provide for her. In real life, some of these “material girls” like Daisy, willingly or reluctantly, become “second wives” or mistresses of private businessmen or bureaucrat-entrepreneurs. These new men of wealth in China, who are “both advanced productive forces and also corrupt polluters of socialist morality” (Jeffreys 2008: 232), offer a luxurious lifestyle or promotional opportunities for women in exchange for their sexual services and companionship, which suggests the moral decline within the Chinese business community and the entire society. Therefore, these “concubine” women represent lazy, parasitic and indecent female figures. Du Lala was also offered a chance to become the mistress of the manager of the privately owned Chinese company. However, she rebuffed the man’s seduction and resigned from her job. Lala’s continual sexual harassment in her previous job was a major factor in her determination to find work in a foreign company. According to Lala, “there is less sexual harassment in foreign enterprises, as the managers and directors are all very busy due to the fast-paced and high-efficiency working manner and environment” (Li 2010: 13). Here, Lala’s choice not only highlights the effectiveness of foreign companies, but also builds an image of a self-esteemed and morally virtuous contemporary Chinese woman. In her relationship with Wang Wei, Lala never had any intention to befriend the more powerful people at the company, even when she was just a junior staff member, thus she never thought

about taking advantage of her intimate bond with Wang Wei in order to advance her own career at DB.

On the contrary, her career ambitions are realized by struggling through issues and challenges on her own, which gives her equal footing with Wang Wei in their romantic relationship. In seeking equality, Lala does not drive Wang Wei away from her; rather, it consolidates the man's respect for her and lays the foundation for a stable and harmonious relationship. As Lester says to Lala when he retires from the HR director position (Lala becomes his successor in the TV show adaptation):

You are too frank and adhere to principles. I always tried to persuade you to adapt to the environment. However, you eventually changed the environment and changed everybody around you. I know that your future is full of possibility and hope.

Here, Lester's words condone the way Lala has achieved career success by her determination to avoid all the negative aspects of workplace culture. Instead, Lala transfers positive energy to her co-workers, who share upbeat feelings with her, and together they contribute to the maintenance of a positive ethos in the workplace.

Besides her high moral quality, Du Lala's career aspirations and her longing for social recognition ensure that her story is full of practical significance to the "shelved ladies" (Cao 2010: 56–57). The success of Li Ke's bestseller and the film and TV adaptations suggest their accurate and insightful reflection of the topical shelved ladies social stigma. As a representative of the shelved ladies, the Du Lala figure justifies the existential veracity of this female subject's position and defends

criticisms of it from the social and cultural spheres. The shelved ladies are often equated with “left-over” women, with the pejorative reference of being “left over” suggesting that a woman has been left behind by her peers in terms of choosing a spouse and implying that the left-over women are not attractive enough or are too fastidious in picking a suitable partner. This superficial understanding of the left-over women phenomenon oversimplifies the trend, which is popular among successful single females who are highly educated and middle-class professionals working in well-paid jobs who care more about their self-value and their own career, personal success and prosperity than conventional gender ideology that prioritizes women’s duty and role in marriage and family. The left-over women are rendered absurdly and sarcastically in columns, news reports and cartoons in the state-run media, which portray them as covetous and motivated. Thus, the official media has to pressure them to be “less materialistic and ambitious and lower their criteria and hurry up to find a husband before they become unwanted” (Cooper 2014). However, the Du Lala character offers a counter-example to that created by state propaganda; one who is extremely rational and clear-minded in dealing with relationships and in choosing her future Mr Right.

Configuring middle-class identity through consumption and career choice

Apart from being self-governing in issues of career choice and development, relationships and marriage, the autonomy and confidence of female middle-class professionals is also highlighted in the TV drama and film adaptations through manufacturing pleasant viewing experiences, promoting

consumerism and employing drama to depict the impediments that these women must overcome due to their career choices. In the Chinese socio-cultural lexicon, foreign companies and professional workers are automatically juxtaposed with high incomes, skyscrapers, beauty, the middle class, high fashion, luxury goods and an expensive lifestyle. Therefore, both the TV and film versions of Du Lala's story exploit the rich symbolic meanings and cultural connotations of these socio-economic signs to manufacture visual selling points. The framing of the TV serial and film provides an enjoyable and instructive viewing experience for the audience, which maps out the living and working environment and conditions of the emerging middle class in contemporary China. For instance, the interior design and decoration of the company buildings and offices reflect a modern aesthetic. The spacious open-plan working areas and the stylish staff cafe reflect middle-class employees' expectations.

Furthermore, through their visually rich and splendid narratives, the film and the TV serial cater to the illusionistic and hedonist logic of a consumer society, by seeking to continuously manufacture and promote sensual stimuli and emotional outlets for the audience (Peng 2010: 50). The filmic adaptation's highly criticized inclusion of commercial products is a good example of this hedonistic logic. Based on the enormous appeal Li Ke's novel garnered among readers, Xu Jinglei's film attracted many companies to advertise their products in it. Therefore, Xu, in part, turns the film version of the novel into a product placement show. For example, brands like Lenovo (Lenovo Group Ltd. is a China-based multinational technology company which has acquired IBM's personal computer business and Motorola Mobility), Cartier, Mazda, Lipton, Nokia, Dove and Lotto are favored by the

film's characters. These include: the white Lenovo desktop on the modern office desks; Lipton tea bags in the office tearoom; the Mazda MX5 (a sports car designed for fashionable metropolitan females) driving past the business center of Beijing. These all represent the trendy and luxurious lifestyle of middle-class office workers. These product placements in the movie possibly function as "television advertisements, infomercials and shopping programs" that "bombard Chinese audiences with messages and ideas about consumption . . . informing them about the latest trends in the market, and teaching them the skills needed to meet the demands of a modern lifestyle" (Xu 2009: 151).

Additionally, through their characters' consumption of lavish brands such as Hermes, Louis Vuitton and Burberry, which designates the social strata and cultural aesthetics of their users (middle-class white-collar Chinese workers or China's nouveau riche social echelon), the TV play and film texts exhibit how globalization and Westernization influence and acculturate the collective identity, consumption customs and lifestyle preferences of the Chinese middle class. This "showing" of the newly acquired extravagant consumption habit of the emerging Chinese middle class is especially underscored in the film adaptation of the novel at an unprecedented level. The director, Xu Jinglei, invited the Hollywood fashion designer Patricia Field, the stylist of *Sex and the City*, to design clothing for the characters in the film *Go Lala Go!* Ms Field chose Gucci, Loewe, Roger Vivier, Tod's, Dior, Valentino, Moschino and Bluemarine and designed more than seventy fashionable appearances modelling for the film characters. More than fifty of them were adopted in the film by Xu Jinglei, turning *Go Lala Go!* into a filmic version of a fashion magazine. In one scene of the movie, after Lala

has a quarrel with Wang Wei, she goes shopping and purchases international big brands, such as Giorgio Armani, Toga, D&G, Hermes and Agnona. Thus, the film shows that by consuming trendy and expensive international – mainly Western – brands, the Chinese female professional creates her social identity and forms her cultural and aesthetic pursuits, and this seems to validate the globalization of consumption. In addition, procuring luxurious Western brand goods highlights the economic independence and strength of female Chinese middle-class office workers and consolidates their confidence.

Here, both the TV and film renditions of *A Story of Lala's Promotion* serve as examples of a typical cultural product, which successfully transfers the Du Lala phenomenon into a popular cultural sensation. Yu (2008: 173) observes:

With the rise of the culture industry, culture is exerting influence in many new areas besides education, including consumption, aesthetics, economy, entertainment, and so forth. Culture not only affects the ideology and value systems of human beings; it also exerts deep influence on their lifestyle, consumption style, manufacturing style, and their social psychology.

Through foregrounding the lifestyle and consumption patterns of Chinese female business professionals, and further revealing the aesthetic inclinations and collective psychology of this social stratum, the TV serial and film accurately reflect the middle-class taste and culture which have become so alluring in contemporary China's social and cultural sphere. Xu (2009: 151) comments on the

tendency of contemporary Chinese programmers to bow to middle-class taste. This trend also occurs in books, films and TV drama series in China:

[A]lthough almost all Chinese citizens have access to television, more recent consumer programming has become increasingly specialised and upscale, addressing and shaping the growing middle-class market with programs on everything from the latest technological gadgets and foreign travel to art investment. These programs embrace icons of global consumer culture and highlight their symbolic meanings, while acknowledging the middle class's striving for empowerment and self-expression within the sphere of consumption.

The middle class's endeavors to seek empowerment and self-expression through consumption have been reflected in contemporary Chinese popular TV drama serials and films which themselves focus on middle-class life: all characters enjoy a comfortable lifestyle, residing in modern housing, driving expensive cars, dressing in fashionable clothing, using expensive foreign brand appliances, dining at chic restaurants and traveling constantly abroad. Contemporary Chinese audiences, who are no longer "members of a collective political body, but, rather, [are] individuals engaged in various stages of striving for middle-class status" (Qian 2015: 160), take their cultural cues from these televisual works.

Moreover, in their manufacturing of a middle-class flavor, the TV serial and the film adaptations cleverly enlist celebrities with an established middle-class image from their previous screen roles. For example, Wang Luodan (starring as Du Lala in the TV drama adaptation) and Xu Jinglei (starring as Du Lala in the film version) share the stereotypical appearance of female white-collar workers and

may be considered independent, intelligent and intellectual. Li Guangjie (starring as Wang Wei in the TV show) and Huang Lixing (starring as Wang Wei in the movie) have a classic collection of suits that highlight their cosmopolitan image and capable and experienced personalities that are common among business elites. Chen Huishan (starring as Rose in the TV drama) and Mo Wenwei (starring as Rose in the movie) display feminine charm and elegance through their fashionable appearances and convey the traits of the effectiveness and resolution of strong professional women through their acting (Peng 2010: 50).

In addition to the above-mentioned strategies adopted by the TV serial and the movie to highlight a middle-class image and culture, Du Lala's struggles in the workplace change her from a novice to a successful professional woman and illustrate a middle-class journey for many contemporary Chinese people. Coming from an average working class household in a second-tier or third-tier city, with no connections and networks on which she can rely to find a good job in the big metropolis, Lala is a standard "ugly duckling woman" who emerges from nothing but achieves a lot in her career. For these "ugly duckling" men and women, (*fenghuangnan/fenghuangnu*) of today's China, the only capital they hold is their youth and a university qualification. By receiving a higher education and acquiring a high-profile professional job, some young Chinese with lower socio-economic backgrounds have joined the ranks of the expanding middle class. By relying on their knowledge and skills, and unremitting efforts in their chosen fields, these "ugly ducklings" realize their middle-class dream in terms of securing a high-income job in a big city, purchasing a spacious apartment and driving an expensive car. Thus, Du

Lala's experiences exemplify for many the struggles of China's budding middle class. From another perspective, the Du Lala character may also be read as a modern Cinderella figure who depends on her high moral quality, virtues, humble nature and tolerance and finally wins the respect and love from the prince.

The dramatic plots of the novel and its TV drama adaptation, which foreground Du Lala's workplace struggles and achievements, and her "practical- cum-romantic" love relationship with her own fairy tale prince, Wang Wei, create a widely accepted and popular middle-class woman persona. As the novel and TV serial narratives convey, the struggle for career recognition is central to the female middle-class business professional's existence, and romance is something she dreams of but does not pursue. These traits of Lala strike a chord with many upwardly mobile middle-class professional women who count on their own ability and intelligence to gain financial well-being and social recognition. In one of Lala's classic lines in the TV drama, she reveals her belief in the significance of a career for women when she says that "a career is absolutely important for women, for if you try hard, your efforts will pay off." In other words, middle-class professional females such as Du Lala are more realistic in their expectations because they know what is required for success and what is not. Thus, romance is a bonus they want and deserve, but it is only after and in addition to their career goals. In Lala's case, her career success gains her respect from Wang Wei and she finally gains his love as well. Moreover, through transforming Daisy, an original "gold-digger" character, into a qualified female white-collar professional (after she is deserted by her rich foreign boyfriend) who

follows the career path of many middle-class employees, the show inserts a positive connotation to the middle-class social identity in contemporary China, which endorses and praises hard work and independence. Daisy's realization of her errors and her change of moral direction criticize those who only seek materialism, and confirm the wise choice of the majority of young contemporary Chinese women.

In summary, the white-collar, middle-class way of life is detailed and normalized in the TV serial and film adaptations of *A Story of Lala's Promotion*. The enormous popularity of these texts and other novels, TV dramas and movies with similar themes that describe the trend towards a middle-class lifestyle and culture as both a socio-economic phenomenon and a cultural movement, verifies the status of the prevailing white-collar and middle-class value system, not only in literary and artistic creation, but also in the lives of contemporary Chinese people.

Conclusion

The success of *A Story of Lala's Promotion* and its TV and film adaptations is not accidental. The theme of the Du Lala phenomenon that is reflected in these literary and visual narratives – the life of white-collar middle-class employees in joint ventures and foreign-invested enterprises – has recently become a prevalent subject in Chinese popular culture. Through a trans-media plot and character analysis of *A Story of Lala's Promotion* and *Go Lala Go!*, this chapter has shone a light on the overall economic and cultural trend towards assimilation and globalization, where Western economic and cultural paradigms have gained the upper hand. In addition, by examining the successful

transformation of contemporary Chinese female white-collar workers from “flower vase” to “super-girl” in the workplace (on a platform provided by foreign/Western companies), this chapter has highlighted the “shelved ladies/left-over women” phenomenon and explored current trends in studies concerning Chinese women. Moreover, the globalization of consumption, lifestyle and culture has also been reviewed in this chapter. The nuanced combination of consuming habits and preferences and the lifestyles and aesthetics of white-collar office clerks further underlines the socio-cultural identity and pursuits of the contemporary Chinese middle-class reflected in the Du Lala phenomenon.

(8149 words)

Source:

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跨媒體分析：白領暢銷書《杜拉拉升職記》及其影視改編

前言

2007 年，李可寫的小說《杜拉拉升職記》，成為了合資公司或外資（西方）公司中國白領的必讀書籍。小說圍繞辦公室政治、西方企業文化、白領生活模式、「女強人」現象以及中產審美觀。本章節對《杜拉拉升職記》小說及電視劇和電影版本的情節進行文本分析，從而解讀當中隱含的文化現象。本跨媒體（從小說到電視劇和電影）研究將探討小說、電影和電視劇裏三個互相關聯的主題。首先，本章以西方企業文化對中國白領的影響為重點，詮釋西方工作文化裏的最為常見的規範，闡明西方文化同化中國文化的過程，並討論在外資公司環境裏，以及西方企業文化的影響和培訓下，聰明勤奮的年輕中國女性是如何在職場上訂立目標、掙扎求存並實現夢想。第二，本章以女性主義的角度，就備受爭論的「女強人」社會現象，分析當中反映的當代中國職業女性的情況，以及探討她們如何象徵女性獨立和個人主義。第三，透過分析電影和電視劇改編，以及研究白領女性的生活與消費習慣，本章指出現代中國人對中產階級身份和審美觀的追求，以及當中反映的後社會主義中國過度消費主義。

自 2007 年發行以來，《杜拉拉升職記》連續 88 週於中國最受歡迎的網購網站之一「當當網」暢銷榜位列榜首。在 2008 和 2010 年，其續篇《杜拉拉 2：似水年華》和《杜拉拉：我在這戰鬥的一年裡》分別發行。同樣在 2010 年，《杜拉拉升職記》改編電影正式上映，並由知名北京年輕演員徐靜蕾擔任女主角，徐靜蕾同時是這部電影的編劇兼導演。電影上映短短幾天，票

房收益已達到 1 億人民幣。改編自同本小說的 32 集電視劇亦於同年播出，並同樣獲得觀眾的熱烈喜愛。

電影版本更為著重個人描寫以及主角間的感情關係，多處與好萊塢風格的浪漫喜劇相似；電視劇版本則對辦公室政治和職場文化全球化趨勢的描繪得一絲不苟、鮮明逼真，與原版小說的內容和核心思想更為貼近。電影導演需要應付許多難題，因為要把原著豐富的內容壓縮至不到兩小時的電影，很多精彩元素都得捨棄。特別是對於那些熟悉原著的觀眾來說，電影版本似乎許多地方遜於小說，未能滿足觀眾的期望。因此，電視版本更能解釋《杜拉拉升職記》裡所描寫的文化特徵。

《杜拉拉升職記》是以一家中國外資公司的商業與文化面貌作題材的故事，講述該公司的營運機制、公司文化、人力資源管理和人際關係。小說主角包括人力資源兼行政經理杜拉拉、市場總監王偉、人力資源總監李斯特和中國行政總裁何好德，突顯了辦公室政治、西方企業文化，以及（女）白領階級的生活方式和價值觀。杜拉拉二十歲出頭，樣貌娟好，來自中國南方小城，在工人階級家庭長大。大學畢業後，為在大都會謀生，只好依靠自己的聰敏和勤奮。跟有錢、有關係的「富二代」和「官二代」不一樣，想獲心頭好或實現夢想，拉拉只能自己爭取。她在國營企業工作了一年後，在私營公司找了份銷售工作，在那里工作了四年，卻遭老闆性騷擾，拉拉只好辭職。後來又在一家位列全球 500 強的外企 DB 找了份新工作，擔任營銷助理。拉拉工作能力出色，做事態度勤奮，短短幾年就獲升為行政主管，然來更獲升為人力資源兼行政經理。經過多年努力和持續奮鬥，快要踏入三十歲關口前，拉拉終於晉升新中國中產階層。

《杜拉拉升職記》主要角色如下：

何好德——中國總裁

李斯特——人力資源總監

王偉——市場總監

玫瑰——行政經理

杜拉拉——人力資源兼行政經理（玫瑰離職後）

周亮——人力資源兼行政主管

帕米拉——人力資源兼行政主管

職場西方化與全球化

自 70 年代末，中國向世界開放，加上世界經濟穩步全球化，合資企業和外資企業（主要是來自北美與歐洲的西方企業）均已成為中國市場經濟不可或缺的一部分。這些合資企業和外商經營公司與中國經濟關係並不僅僅是一個國際化過程，即「民族國家跨界聯繫和流動的增加，或者民族國家的外向趨勢」（Albert，2007: 167，引自 Loubere，2010：72）。這種關係更代表了全球化，即「影響和構成經濟生產與交流、政治權威、個人與集體身份形成或文化參照框架」的過程（Albert，2007: 167，引自 Loubere，2010：72）。比較國際化與全球化，我們可以了解合資與外資企業的效益、哲學和政治層面，這些層面不僅反映西方資本主義經濟形式的擴大，甚至反應了這種經濟形式對接受國家的文化滲透現象。俞可平（2008：157）指，「經濟全球化不但改變了生產、消費和交流模式，甚至改變了思考和行為方式，對民族文化有重大影響。」以中國現時的經濟模式來看，要維持經濟繁榮，外資企業扮演了十分重要的角色。

因此，西方的工作模式、辦公室政治和人際關係等企業文化，均對外資企業的中國員工有著巨大影響。

對於在中國營運的外企所呈現的文化全球化現象，部份學者有不同的看法。他們發現，著重維護同事關係和諧和集體意識、認同約定俗成的社會階級、權力階級、整體論、語境論、維護面子和關係互惠等傳統中國價值觀，影響在外企工作的中國員工，特別是在他們處理衝突時，這些中國價值觀的影響尤其明顯（Kirkbride，Tang 和 Westwood，1991：365–86；丁志強，1997：31–45；陳國賁，陸何慧薇和王珣，2005：464）。在《杜拉拉升職記》的小說、電影和電視劇版本裏，影響員工的都是西方職場標準與文化，而不是傳統中國工作模式與價值，與上述學者的觀察正正相反。小說、電影和電視劇版本均以杜拉拉的經歷為重心，並將外國公司的營運機制、管理理念和企業文化默默地搬進中國的社經體系和文化環境當中。潛移默化下，中國員工的思想和行為方式，均受外國公司直接或間接感染。因此，相對更大規模的歐化和全球化潮流，中國白領在外國公司工作的經歷便是個縮影。儘管在接納跨國企業文化的轉變過程中，中國員工對本地和國際或西方價值觀難以作出取捨，但在杜拉拉的故事裏，西方公司文化對中國員工的影響卻是顯而易見。要研究在外國或跨國公司工作的中國員工，杜拉拉是典型的例子。透過詳細分析她的經歷，我們可以清晰了解當代中國的全球化趨勢。

杜拉拉工作的 DB 是全球五百強的美國通訊公司，是典型的西方企業，其組織架構和管理策略都代表著美式企業文化。陳國賁，陸何慧薇和王迅（2005：466）指：

企業文化是指能支撐組織的管理系統、管理實踐和行為方式的價值觀、信念和原則，而同時管理系統、管理實踐和行為方式亦能體現且強化組織的企業文化。

在 DB，典型的西方管理概念如 **SMART** 理論（**S**pecific:目標具體；**M**easurable 目標可衡量；**A**ttainable：目標可達；**R**elevant：目標具相關性；**T**ime-based：目標具完成時限）象徵了這種管理風格的高效率、理性化與實用性。從精心策劃到機關算盡，從詳細研究到結果分析，拉拉逐漸熟悉西方的管理理念和策略，最後更是得心應手。拉拉在國營和私營的中國公司工作過，那時工作節奏緩慢，效益較低；後來到了外資公司，那裏的西方工作方式節奏快速、事半功倍且合乎邏輯，拉拉終於成為了合格、成功和雄心壯志的職業女士，躋身於 DB 的管理層。拉拉的蛻變驗證了 DB 的企業文化：「保持動力，速步向前」，更演繹了全球化對中國的影響，特別是對年輕、有志向的中國女性的工作和生活經歷的影響。

范芝芬和 Regulska（2008：94-95）認為，毛澤東時代所推動的中國婦女解放運動，在經濟和物質層面上，都「不一定會增加婦女對事業成功和經濟獨立的追求」。此外，根據「工資、職業和晉升情況所反映」，社會主義帶來的改變「沒有消除性別歧視」。這種情況在後社會主義過渡時期甚至有所惡化——具發展目標的國家一旦引入具有中國特色的市場經濟時，勞動市場上會回復傳統的性別意識形態和做法，企業招聘員工時會經常出現性別歧視（范芝芬，2000：423- 424；范芝芬，2003:27；范芝芬，2004：284；范芝芬和 Regulska，2008：96-100）。例如，在擔任政府首腦、企業主管、經理級別和高級文員等職位上，男性仍然佔主導地位。在這種一般情況下，西方公司為年輕、有衝勁的中國女性員工提供機會，讓她們發展才能和知識，與男性公平競爭。最終，許多有能力的中國女性在外資公司均有機會晉升為主管或經理，正如故事裏的玫瑰、杜拉拉和帕米拉。

小說、電影和電視劇版本還揭露了其他西方商業世界的特徵，那就是時常引致員工「危機意識」的殘酷競爭。在 DB 裏，員工和部門之間便存在無情的競爭。杜拉拉晉升為人力資源兼行政經理時便出現了這種競爭情況：由於拉拉之前主要負責行政，對於 DB 人力資源的工作並不熟悉，人力資源部門的員工都不願意對她進行培訓，生怕杜拉拉表現比他們出色。這種冷酷無情的競爭同樣出現在李斯特與玫瑰，以及玫瑰（拉拉的前上司）與拉拉間的不信任關係，亦表現於拉拉對周亮和帕米拉的自我防禦態度上。例如，拉拉對周亮和帕米拉處處操控，是因為受到李斯特的指示：

我不是讓妳創造一個和諧的團隊，讓每個人都聽聽話話，而是想告訴妳如何平衡下屬。他們要是完全團結一致，那就是妳噩夢的開始。別讓下屬太過團結，也別太信任任何人，要讓他們相互競爭，這樣才好控制大局。另外一點是，要單獨培訓他們。記住，妳的位置無人能替。（李可，2010：138）

在電視劇裡，李斯特教了拉拉一句座右銘：「重要的不是做得有多好，而是有多符合自己所需。」同事之間競爭激烈，這句座右銘對拉拉在 DB 生存和晉升非常有用和具啟發。西方公司裏的強烈競爭，提高了員工之間的危機感。杜拉拉一直很怕有新同事表現得比她好，為了脫穎而出並獲得晉升，她經常工作到深夜，很少放有薪年假，特別是在負責重大項目的時候，那就更不用說。在電視劇版本裏，杜拉拉經常比下屬上班要早，處理一堆必須完成的文件，甚至時常不去吃飯，超額工作，拼了命地想給上司留下好印象，這襯托出西方商業體系裏的無情競爭和不穩定未來（侯舒文，2010：25）。

電視劇裏，銷售總監王偉（小說裏其職位為市場總監）跟拉拉一樣，長期處於壓力當中。

在像 DB 這樣的公司裏，銷售部作為主要部門之一，其成功與否很大程度決定公司的未來，以及公司高層的命運。因此，銷售部的內部競爭相當激烈。除了內部競爭，銷售部與其他部門的關係，也十分緊張。在小說（以及電影和電視劇版本）的其中一幕裏，拉拉正在指導辦公室的翻新工程。那天，拉拉的行政部門發出指令，要各部門騰空辦公室，但王偉和他的下屬拒絕服從，便與拉拉發起爭執。剛開始，拉拉嘗試理性解決，王偉卻依舊拒絕合作。最終，拉拉的固執和堅持，讓王偉不得不妥協。

這一幕不只揭露了西方企業文化雄心勃勃的特質，也反映了這些企業的開明文化，讓員工勇於發聲、互相溝通。王偉雖是中國人，但早已習慣了西方的辦公政治。剛開始與拉拉起爭執時，王偉本想給這個行政主管好好上一課，嘗試威嚇一下她，好讓自己部門占領上風。如此，在未來的相處裏，拉拉就會有所警惕，循規蹈矩。出乎王偉意料的是，拉拉也頗熟悉西方的商業文化與辦公室政治，沒有任由王偉欺負，反而自信地為自己發聲。拉拉之前在一家中國私營公司工作時，正是因為無法忍受老闆的性騷擾才辭去工作。另外，在故事另一幕中，拉拉剛開始在行政部門工作不久，玫瑰總是對拉拉吹毛求疵，拉拉只是禮貌地對玫瑰的建議表示感謝。然而，在更加熟悉西方商業文化後，拉拉開始懂得以西方的方法解決問題。因此，在與王偉的爭鬥中，每當這個小小的初級行政部女主管，要挑戰一名資深銷售部男總監的權威時，這都是在演示著全球化下的企業文化同化現象。此外，拉拉事業的高低起伏，反映了中國當代女性員工在職場上的權利意識和獨立自主意識（杜軍，2010：24）。值得一提的，是畫面的場面調度

¹（如場景和燈光），特別是演員的演技。演員的一舉一動，包括舉止、姿勢和台詞，都詮釋

著王偉和拉拉支配慾強和極度好勝的人物特色，亦反映著他們的思維和行為模式均受西方商業文化和原則影響。

杜拉拉故事反映的另一項西方商業文化的明顯特徵，就是員工可以靠著公平競爭獲得晉升。中國文化有一套論資排輩的嚴格規矩，一個員工（特別是職場新手）能否在職場生存，都取決於他的人脈關係。因此，在中國職場裏，很多人只靠關係便能生存，工作能力並不重要。然而，西方職場的情況則不一樣。在全球化的商業世界裏，像杜拉拉這樣的中國白領，他們的工作環境比全球化前的更獨立、更公平。杜拉拉剛入職時只是個初級市場助理，在 DB 裏沒有任何背景關係，能夠獲得同事接受和主管信任，靠的都是自己優秀能力和勤奮耐力。西方企業文化鼓吹的這種開明、公平的工作環境與表現評估機制，讓杜拉拉這樣的中國（女）員工得以在職場裏力爭上游和公平競爭，從而獲得成功。杜拉拉的故事是個典型例子，證明一個剛入職的女文員也可以成為成功的中產事業女性。

外資企業容許公平競爭，亦擁有高透明度的管理制度，但當中也存有缺點，例如剝削員工。這點在拉拉對萊斯特對她態度轉變的描述裏就可以發現：「每次讓我做事就熱情如火；每次讓他升我職就冷淡如水。」拉拉幾乎每次升職，工作量都會大大增加，與新銜頭不成正比。而且，她要直接向主管或經理爭取才獲得晉升：

老板，裝修項目總算是順利完成了，另外，我代理了這半年的全國行政，一切運作也都正常。工作結果證明，我是勝任行政經理這個崗位的。我想知道，是否會有進步的機會。

（李可，2008）

拉拉的這一段話和行為，解釋了在西方職場，只要主動捍衛應得利益，員工便有機會取得成功。在中國職場，員工要懂得謙卑才有晉升機會，與西方職場文化截然不同。

在今天這個全球化環境，中國的合資和外資企業不僅為中國的經濟和文化環境帶來先進的管理技術，更帶來了高效、公正的企業文化。這些公司的中國白領比傳統中國公司的員工表現得更理性、自主、勤快和積極。杜拉拉的故事通過展現中國員工在外企的表現和行為，講述中國的企業文化和工作模式如何融入全球（西方）標準。另外，小說、電影和電視劇中的人物，像真正的中國員工一樣，扮演著媒介和催化劑的角色，把外國的概念、處事風格和文化轉移進中國的社會經濟環境裏，文化同化過程便會發生。

新女性形象與「女強人」現象

近年，中國出現很多以外國公司工作的辦公室女性（OL）為題的流行小說，《杜拉拉升職記》無疑是當中最成功的。對於那些真正在外資或跨國企業工作的讀者來說，這些流行小說仿如成為她們的教科書，因為小說展現出真實的職場問題、狀況、關係和難題（郭軍勝，2010：231；彭俊宜，2010：50-1）。《杜拉拉升職記》電視劇版本編劇張巍，在為劇本搜集資料時走訪了好幾家跨國企業，發現很多年輕女員工都在小說上標記杜拉拉的經典語錄（張巍，2010）。對於那些只是想瞭解女強人現象的讀者，這些小說也提供很多資訊，十分有趣。女白領暢銷書引起了巨大回響，因此影視製作人與投資者紛紛投資在這個熱門文化議題上。原著裏以 OL 為主題的視覺描述，凸顯了這些有才華、有抱負的中國當代職業女性的努力和成就。從女性角度來看，這些流行文學反映了現代中國中產職業女性不斷改變的處境。

自中國經濟改革開放以來，「白領麗人」這個詞就用來形容在合資或外資公司工作的年輕中國女性，即指有魅力的資產階級女性。中國大眾一般都認為，這些女性長得好看，工資可觀，擔任接待員或秘書等文職職位，有人稱她們為「花瓶」。她們獲聘的部分原因是因為外貌，職責相對簡單。像杜拉拉這樣在外資公司工作，有天賦、有抱負的女經理或女高層，為「白領麗人」的傳統形象提供了多一種詮釋角度。拉拉擁有「花瓶」的外表，在 DB 從一個初級辦公室文員做起。憑著個人能力和堅毅精神，最後爬到了高級管理層，打破男人主導、女人作輔的傳統定位。在這個層面來說，拉拉的職業歷程改變了「白領麗人」的觀念。對於「白領麗人」，比較普遍的理解是她們工作壓力較小，工作較休閒，但杜拉拉故事揭示了外資公司裏競爭激烈和欠工作保障的事實，將女白領的「花瓶」形像變為「超女」形像。這個女白領的全新形象，強調的是女性的工作表現、追求和欲望。在外資公司工作的職業女性有別於其他女性：杜拉拉和許多女同事都是擔任主管或總監，可以與男同事在職場上較量，並非一般的秘書、接待員、打字員或助理。

電視劇版本開始的一幕，透過強烈的視覺與聽覺安排，以一個冗長的敘事弧²開始，敘述杜拉拉這個勤奮和堅毅的年輕職業女性角色。杜拉拉通過幕後旁述，向觀眾自我介紹。旁述伴隨著電視劇主題曲，歌詞強調一個有抱負的職業女性在職場上剋服困難和挫折時的掙扎過程與決心。鏡頭以長鏡拍攝手法緊貼拉拉，記錄她在忙碌的早上，在回公司總部途中，擠上一輛極度擁擠的巴士的經過。雖然在這個時候，拉拉還是一家本地私營公司的初級辦公室文員，但她勤奮和頑強的態度卻貫徹她整個職業生涯，後來在 DB 升到管理層時也依舊如此。鏡頭後來換了另一角度，面向一輛高速駛近的巴士，營造緊張、競賽和有壓迫感的效果。拉拉上車後不小

心跌倒，雖然跌坐地上十分尷尬，也沒有旁人過去扶她一把，拉拉還是保持笑容，猶豫了幾秒便自己站起來，假裝沒事發生，繼續面帶微笑。一連串的視覺與聽覺元素，成功塑造了一個有內涵、夠堅強又吃得苦的職業女性形象，博得觀眾同情、尊重，甚至欽佩。

除了象徵堅強的職業女性，對於「女強人」這個具爭議性的中國當代社會文化現象，杜拉拉故事也成為了典型例子。拉拉二十歲出頭便經濟獨立，三十歲不到更成為成功的商界單身女。在中國，「盛女」（又稱「剩女」）這個詞主要用來形容那些有份體面工作，收入可觀，足以財政自由和獲得尊重的獨立單身女性（曹瑞霞，2010：56）。盛女的愛情和婚姻自主，張亞軍（2011：20）稱她們為「3S女」，即「Single」（單身）、「Seventies」（70後，現80後單身女性也加入到盛女一族）和「Stuck」（停留現狀）。「Stuck」並沒有負面意思，因為她們自己選擇維持「Stuck」的狀態，繼續獨立自主，對婚姻抱有高渴望（張樂，2007：8）。馬秀蘭（2006：115）甚至以另一個更有攻擊性的詞來形容「盛女」特點，就是「白骨精」，即「白領」、「骨幹」和「精英」的縮寫。寧鴻（2008：222）指，盛女通常有三「高」，分別是高學歷、高智商和高收入，加上她們外貌屬中上水平，提高了就業機會。因為種種的自身優勢，盛女的擇偶標準便較高。

中國社會學家李銀河（2010）發現，經濟自主和環境富裕是「盛女」現象的主要成因。在杜拉拉故事裏，正如電視劇所強調，她來自中國一個相對不發達的南方城市家庭，父母渴望能在上海擁有自己的家，而拉拉現在正正就是生活在這個現代中國最先進最多彩的大都市。母親一直催促拉拉在上海買套房子，好讓她和女兒父親從老家搬出來，在這個夢寐以求的城市和女

兒一起生活。後來拉拉父母沒有提前告知拉拉，便跑來了上海要跟她住在一起，於是這三口子只好臨時租了個地方住下來。拉拉還在存錢付房子首期時，父親卻確診患上早期胃癌。

拉拉邊工作邊照顧生病的父親，她的孝順深深感動到父親的主治醫生，並且吸引住他，不過拉拉對這個醫生沒有興趣，於是拒絕了他的心意。在這段艱難的日子裏，拉拉沒有投靠男人，反而向最好的朋友借了點錢，更加努力工作，獨自撐起整頭家。後來父親終於康復，拉拉也晉升到 DB 的管理層，薪金升了一大截。在小說裏，拉拉當上人力資源兼行政經理時，年薪已有 23 萬人民幣，足以買一套寬敞的房子給家人。她帶父母去看的示範單位又大又好，母親十分驚喜，但又擔心拉拉的長遠經濟能力能否負擔得起這樣的一套上海房子。拉拉自信滿滿地告訴母親，她賺的錢足夠償還按揭有餘。

「盛女」擁有經濟能力，不需要依靠別人或丈夫，也能享受舒適的生活。因此，她們不急於結婚，對男人也不會千依百順。范芝芬（2000: 423; 2003, 引自范芝芬& Regulska 2008: 99）指：

在中國儒家思想下，人們根據不同的性別、社會階層和相對他人的地位，會有特定的角色定型。這種儒家思想建構了某些框架，定義了社會上各人的關係，因此女性在家裏的地位次於男性，必需服從男人，甚至要犧牲自己的興趣利益來成就他們。

儘管在今日的中國社會，這種影響深遠的儒家思想以及對女性的期望，依然深刻地烙印在在很多中國人心中，尤其是在老一輩心中。在電視劇裏，拉拉的努力和毅力漸漸打動王偉。他愛上了這個女人，並試著勸告拉拉不要那麼堅決要當女強人，他認為「女人就應該待在家裏，伺候丈夫和帶孩子。為什麼那麼固執，非要像別人一樣當個成功的事業女性呢？趁還年輕趕快結

婚，學做一個賢妻良母，這樣會過的更輕鬆。」王偉甚至警告拉拉，她過分專注工作，已漸漸失去女人應有的女人味和魅力。他發現，拉拉只有在工作累透時才會變得溫順。王偉的言論和觀點反應了許多中國男人的大男人主義，顯示出普遍社會對「盛女」的輕蔑態度。拉拉雖然也喜歡王偉，還成了他女朋友，但卻不同意王偉的觀點，因為她對女性在家庭和社會的角色有不同的看法。

比較了文學、電影和電視劇作品對杜拉拉形象的詮釋，我們可以發現，比起電影和小說版本，電視劇的描寫更加凸顯這個角色的獨立個性和女強人特色，特別是在她對婚姻和人際關係的觀點描寫。在電視劇尾段，王偉想要離開 DB 去到另一城市時，他希望拉拉放棄在 DB 得到的一切，跟他一起離開，但是拉拉拒絕了，因為對她來講，比起他倆的關係或與任何男人地關係，她在 DB 的事業發展和前途更為重要。因此王偉最後只好改變主意。

在這家外資企業打拼的日子裡，拉拉從職場新手蛻變成一個有志向、有能力的職業女性，她的工作抱負也繼續壯大。杜拉拉這樣獨立自主、性格強悍的「盛女」，與儒家思想所讚頌的女性形象大相逕庭，盛女「在中國開展了新的自我修養自由道德觀」，並且逆向解釋了反對獨立自主的毛澤東社會主義（Keane 2007:62）。這些自主的女強人獨立自強，在職場上努力工作，與男人相互比拼。就像杜拉拉那樣，她比其他男同事和男主管更努力，在各個工作項目上與他們據理力爭，發表意見，亦會為升職而與他們公平競爭，是典型的 70 後及 80 後中國中產女性（彭俊宜 2010:50-51）。Qian（2010:299）指：

[典型的 70 後及 80 後中國中產女性]不但年輕美麗又時尚，而且還要賢良淑德、孝順體貼

和堅強獨立。她們在家裏懂得操作洗衣機和微波爐；在外面也要有一技之長，能自己開

車，還要努力工作。

杜拉拉這樣獨立自主、工作勤奮、為人正直和值得尊敬的年輕職業女性，為當代中國女性建立了一個鮮明的嶄新形象。今時今日，中國有些女性崇尚物質和享樂主義，就是那些想嫁入豪門或認「契爺」的「拜金女」。在電視劇裏，王偉的前妻 Daisy 便是個為錢結婚的女人，她認為王偉不如其他有錢男人般有野心，所以和他離婚，然後找了個富有的外國男友。拉拉則不一樣，她對王偉能夠給她的奢華生活根本不感興趣。在現實生活裏，有些像 Daisy 般的「物質女」會自願或被迫地當上私人企業生意人或官僚企業家的「二妻」或情婦。這些新一代的中國有錢男人，既是「最新的經濟動力來源，又是導致社會主義道德敗壞的元兇」（Jeffreys 2008: 232），他們以奢華生活和工作晉升機會，換取女性的性服務和感情關係，反映出中國商業社會以及整個社會的道德衰落。所以，這些當人情婦的女人像徵著懶惰、依賴和不正經的女性形象。杜拉拉還在那家國營公司工作時，也曾有過機會成為經理的情婦，但她拒絕了，並辭去工作。她決定在外資公司工作，其中很大程度是因為在之前的工作一直遭受性騷擾。她認為「外資企業較少發生性騷擾事件，因為裏面的工作節奏急促和高效率，主管和經理都忙得不可開交」（李可 2010:13）。拉拉的選擇不僅透露了外資企業的工作效率，同時為當代中國女性塑造了一個有自尊和道德高尚的形象。與王偉談戀愛時，拉拉雖然只是個初級職員，卻從來沒有要和公司裡職位高的人打關係，也從未想過利用與王偉的親密關係在 DB 上位。相反，她靠著獨自面對困難和挑戰，實現職業上的目標，在與王偉的戀愛關係裏地位相

同。雖然拉拉處處追求平等，但王偉並沒有因此離開她，反而更加尊重她，鞏固了兩人穩定和諧的感情關係。李斯特從人力資源總監（在電視劇版本裡，拉拉當了她的接班人）一職退休時對拉拉說了以下一番話：

妳實在太直率，也太有原則了。我總是想讓妳融入環境，妳卻總是改變環境和改變身邊的所有人。相信妳的未來一定充滿機會和希望。

拉拉總是盡量避開一切不好的職場文化，李斯特的這番話則認同了她這種取得事業成功的方法。拉拉把正能量傳遞給同事，與他們分享樂觀情緒，共同維持正面的辦公氣氛。

杜拉拉不止道德觀高尚，她對事業充滿抱負，渴望得到社會認可，她的故事對「盛女」來說，更是具有實際意義（曹瑞霞 2010:56-57）。李可這本暢銷書，以及其電影和電視劇改編能夠如此成功，可見這些作品在盛女這個被污名化的熱門社會議題上，有著準確且別具洞悉的觀點。杜拉拉作為盛女代表，其形象證明了這樣的女性是真實存的，同時平反了來自社會和文化層面對盛女的批評。人們經常視盛女為「剩女」，把她們貶視為被「剩下」的，即在朋友圈子裡只有自己沒有找到對象的女人，暗示她們不夠吸引，或者眼光太高。這種對盛女現象的膚淺理解，過分簡化了真實的社會趨勢：這些受過高等教育、高薪厚職、屬於中產階級的成功單身女性，她們更重視的是自我價值、個人職業，以及個人成就與前景，而不是傳統意識形態所重視的女人在婚姻和家庭的職責和角色。盛女經常無理地被一些國營媒體的專欄、新聞或卡通挖苦諷刺，被描寫為貪婪、有機心的女人。所以官方媒體都會逼得她們「不那麼物質主義和雄心勃勃，甚至降低擇偶標準，要趁沒人要之前趕快嫁出去」（Cooper 2014），但對於國家宣

傳所塑造的女性形象，杜拉拉這個角色便是個相反例子，因為在處理感情關係以及選擇真命天子時，她十分理智和清醒。

從消費習慣與職業選擇看中產階級身份認同

中產職業女性在職業選擇與事業發展、人際關係和婚姻上自主，電視劇和電影亦透過營造有趣的畫面和宣揚消費主義，並以戲劇手法表達出她們因職業選擇而需克服的種種障礙，凸顯了她們的自主自信態度。在中國社會文化裏，外國公司和專業人士往往與高收入、摩天大樓、優雅美麗、中產階層、潮流時尚、奢侈品和昂貴的生活方式劃上等號，因此，杜拉拉故事的電視劇和電影版本，都利用了這些社經特徵豐富的象徵和文化意義來製造視覺賣點。電視劇和電影勾畫出當代中國新興中產階層的生活與工作的環境狀況，例如商業大樓的外觀和辦公室的內部設計與裝飾均反映了現代美學，而寬敞的開放式工作空間和時尚的員工咖啡室則反映了中產員工的美好前程，這對觀眾來說既有趣又有益。

此外，電影和電視劇通過豐富的視覺效果和精彩的敘述手法，不斷為觀眾製造感官刺激和情感宣泄途徑，迎合了消費社會的幻想和享樂主義邏輯（彭俊宜 2010：50）。電影改編裏含有眾多商業產品，雖遭大量批評，但卻很好地說明了享樂主義邏輯。李可的小說引起了讀者的巨大迴響，於是許多公司想藉徐靜蕾的改編電影來宣傳自己的產品。因此，從某種程度來說，這部小說改編電影變成了產品廣告。像 Lenovo³、Cartier、Mazda、Lipton、Nokia、Dove 和 Lotto 等，都是電影人物常用的品牌。辦公桌上的白色 Lenovo 手提電腦、茶水間裏的 Lipton 茶包和穿梭在北京商業中心的 Mazda MX5⁴ 等，這些都代表了中產上班族時尚又奢華的生活方式。這些植入廣告發揮著「電視廣告、資訊型廣告和購物節目」的功能，「不斷向觀眾灌輸消

費的信息和概念，告訴他們時下的潮流趨勢，教導他們怎樣才是現代的生活方式」（Xu 2009: 151）。

另外，電視劇和電影裏的角色使用 Hermes、Louis Vuitton 和 Burberry 等象徵了用家（即中國中產白領或新一代中國富裕階層）的社會階層和文化審美觀的奢侈品牌，展示了全球化和西方化如何影響及同化中國中產階層的集體認同、消費習慣和生活方式。電影版本更是前所未有地展現了中國中產層的這種新興奢侈消費習慣。徐靜蕾導演邀請了擔任電影《慾望都市》

（*Sex and the City*）造型師的好萊塢時裝設計師派翠西亞·菲爾德（Patricia Field）為《杜拉拉升職記》的電影角色設計服飾。菲爾德選擇了 Gucci、Loewe、Roger Vivier、Tod's、Dior、Valentino、Moschino 和 Blumarine 等品牌，為電影人物設計了超過七十種時尚造型，其中的五十多個造型都展現於電影裏，《杜拉拉升職記》彷彿變成了電影版的時尚雜誌。在某個場景中，拉拉跟王偉吵架後去了逛街，光顧了 Giorgio Armani、Toga、D&G、Hermes 和 Agnona 等國際名牌。由此可見，電影表達了一個現象，就是中國職業女性通過購買時尚且昂貴的國際（主要為西方）品牌商品，建立社會認同並形成對於文化和審美的追求，這似乎也證明了消費全球化的趨勢。此外，購買西方奢侈品可以凸顯中國中產女白領的經濟獨立和實力，鞏固她們的自信。

《杜拉拉升職記》的電視劇和電影都是典型的文化產品，成功將杜拉拉現象變成一種流行文化。俞可平（2008：173）發現：

隨著文化產業興起，文化不但具教育方面的影響力，在很多新範疇，包括消費、美學、經濟和娛樂等方面，文化也發揮著影響。文化不僅影響人的思想和價值觀，甚至對人們的生活模式、消費模式、生產模式和社交心理影響深遠。

通過凸顯中國女商人的生活方式和消費模式，並揭示她們的審美傾向和集體心理，電視劇和電影準確地反映了中產階層的品味與文化態度，而這些品味與文化態度在當代中國社會和文化層面上十分矚目。對於當代中國電視節目傾向迎合中產階層品味的趨勢，Xu（2009：151）認為這種趨勢同時出現在中國的書籍、電影和連續劇裏：

雖然現在幾乎各階層的中國市民都可以看到電視，但近期更多的消費者節目都變得越來越專業和高檔，以最新的科技產品、國外旅游和藝術投資等作主題，迎合和塑造了日益擴大的中產市場。這些節目含有全球消費文化的特徵，甚至凸顯了當中的一些象徵意義，同時認同了中產階級在消費層面上爭取權力和表現自我的做法。

中產階級努力不懈地透過消費來爭取權力和表現自我，這個現象可以反映在很多中國當代、以中產生活作主題的熱門電視劇和電影裏：所有人物都生活安逸、住在現代感十足的房子、駕著昂貴的汽車、穿著時尚的服裝、使用昂貴的外國品牌家電、在別具風格的餐廳用餐，並經常到世界各地旅行。當代中國觀眾已不再是「集體政治體制下的一員，而是各個處於不同階段追求中產社會地位的個體」（Qian 2015: 160），他們透過這些影視作品建立文化觀。

而且，為了塑造中產階層風格，電視劇和電影改編在選角上也有所取巧，演員在以往演過的電影裏已經建立了中產階層的形象。例如王珞丹（電視劇的杜拉拉主演）和徐靜蕾（電影的杜拉拉主演）的外型都是典型的女白領，給人獨立、聰明和有知識的感覺。李光潔（電視劇的

王偉主演）和黃立行（電影的王偉主演）在影視作品裏常以典型的正裝造型示人，凸顯了大多商界才俊見多識廣、能力強大和經驗豐富的形象。陳慧珊（電視劇的玫瑰主演）和莫文蔚（電影的玫瑰主演）打扮時尚，盡顯女性的魅力和高雅，透過演技表達了職業女強人的幹練和決斷（彭俊宜 2010：50）。

上述策略突出了中產階層的形象和文化，此外，杜拉拉在職場上努力奮鬥，從職場新手蛻變成了成功的事業女性，這也向很多當代中國人展現了中產階層的經歷。杜拉拉生於一個二三線城市的普通工人階級家庭，沒法依靠人際關係和網絡在大都市找到一份好工作，是個標準的「醜小鴨」，從零開始，一步步取得事業成功。對於現在的中國鳳凰男和鳳凰女⁵來說，他們唯一擁有的本錢就是青春年華和大學學歷。一些年輕的中國人雖然原本社經地位較低，但接受過高等教育並取得高薪厚職後，成功晉身不斷壯大的中產階層。這些「醜小鴨」靠著自己的知識和技能，在工作領域裏努力不懈，實現了中產階層的夢想，在大城市裏找到高收入的工作、買到寬敞的房子、駕上昂貴的汽車。因此，杜拉拉的經歷是很多中國新興中產階層的寫照。從另一個角度來說，杜拉拉這個角色是現代版灰姑娘，才德兼備、為人謙遜並且耐力過人，最終贏得白馬王子的尊重和芳心。

小說裏戲劇性情節和電視劇改編都強調了杜拉拉在職場上的努力和成就，她與白馬王子王偉的戀愛關係「既現實又浪漫」，成功塑造了一個廣泛接納和歡迎的中產女性形象。在小說和電視劇中，中產職業女性的主要目標是爭取工作上的認可，雖然渴望感情生活，卻從不爭取。很多向上層社會發展的中產職業女性，都會對拉拉的這些特質產生共鳴，因為她們也是靠著自己的能力和智慧獲得經濟成就和社會認可。在電視劇裏，拉拉有一句經典台詞：「工作對於女

性來說絕對重要，努力做就有回報」，可見她堅信工作對一個女人來說很重要。換句話說，對於像杜拉拉這樣的中產職業女性來說，職業上的夢想才是更現實的，因為她們知道怎樣才能實現。因此，戀愛關係只是她們渴望和應有的額外獎勵，但這也是建立在事業目標的基礎上。就像拉拉那樣，她在事業上取得成功，因此得到王偉的尊重和愛。另外，故事裡的 Daisy 被富有的外國男友拋棄後，開始過著一般中產職員的職業生涯，從一個「拜金女」變成一個像樣的女白領，這為當代中國的中產階層社會身分增添了一層正面的定義，就是勤奮和獨立。Daisy 意識到自己的錯誤，糾正了自己的道德觀念，這正好批判了那些物質主義的女性，同時贊同了那些做出明智人生決擇的當代年輕中國女性。

總而言之，《杜拉拉升職記》的電視劇與電影版本詳細的介紹了中產白領的生活方式，並把這種生活方式正常化。除了《杜拉拉升職記》以外，其他將中產生活方式與文化描寫為社經現象與文化運動的其他小說、電視劇和電影都極受歡迎，證明了白領和中產階層價值體系不只在文藝作品有佔優地位，甚至潛移默化地影響著當代中國人的日常生活。

總結

《杜拉拉升職記》小說、電視劇和電影的成功並非意料之外，當中反映的杜拉拉現象（即合資或外資公司的中產白領生活）最近成為了中國流行文化的熱門話題。本章通過對於《杜拉拉升職記》的情節和人物的跨媒體分析，揭示了經濟和文化的同化及全球化整體趨勢，其中西方經濟和文化風格更是更受追捧。此外，通過探究當代中國女白領如何在外國和西方公司工作後，成功從「花瓶」轉型到「女強人」，本章重點討論了「盛女」現象，並探討了時下關於中國女性的研究趨勢。本章亦回顧了消費習慣、生活方式和文化觀念的全球化現象。白領文員的消費

習慣和偏好、生活習慣與審美觀，進一步凸顯了杜拉拉現象所反映的當代中國中產階層的社會文化認同與追求。

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