

- Arguments between Boon and Mother
- Boon-only scenes
- Jeremiah and corpse
- Mother-only scenes

Act 1

- Sc1: Property agents and Boon promoting showflat
- Sc2: First argument between Boon and Mother on sale of house
- Sc3: Director and Jeremiah on new burial system
- Sc4: Property agents teasing Boon
- Sc5: Boon's monologue about Father
- Sc6: Jeremiah's first meeting with Corpse
- Sc7: Second argument between Boon and Mother on sale of house
- Sc8: Mother's recount on seeing Zion Mansion for the first time
- Sc9: Jeremiah's monologue about corpses
- Sc10: Mother's chat with Female Neighbour
- Sc11: Jeremiah, Colleague and Director response to letters
- Sc12: Jeremiah and Colleague conversation about corpses
- Sc13: Mother's memory of red underwear
- Sc14: Corpse's monologue on death
- Sc15: Jeremiah and Director conversation about site report
- Sc16: Third argument between Boon and Mother on sale of house (Boon 离家出走:)
- Sc17: Mother's memory with Father, where Father has to leave for a business trip again
- Sc18: Jeremiah's second meeting with corpse
- Sc19: Agent 2 gives Boon keys to showflat
- Sc20: Boon's memory of Father painting over loanshark marks

Act 1 Scene 1

- Boon is being thought by property agents on how to entice buyers
- The Singapore Dream** (ownership of property): unattainable
- Progress**: property agents exploit progress for their own material gain - a perspective of the negative impacts brought by progress

Showflats

- Represented the Singapore Dream which everyone wants to attain, further amplifies that **money buys happiness**
- The way the agents manipulated the people to make them view the showflats more grand than it actually is signifies that **what you see may not be what you get**
- People are often **driven by dreams, illusions, choosing a house based on fake settings**, like the example of the showflat.

Singaporeans are being drawn into the meaningless and endless material wealth

Property agents are:

- Manipulative - instead of selling houses, they were selling **illusions**
- Cunning/machiavellian - "your most powerful tools are their own desires"

Contriving Scheming

"There will be no more **arguments**, no more **tantrums** with that panoramic **seaview**."

-Don't go together; illogical

-Comparing tangible & intangible to make people think that their life will be perfect

Illusions

"the trick is imagination"

Made use of people's drive to chase for perfection which are a part of humans

They used high-class words like cusp, giving buyers an impression that they will breathe through high-class air con air. This gives the perception of the agents as very professional, which leads the people to trusting them and buying the flat.

The Singapore Dream is always on the edge of achieving but impossible to attain. Many want to attain a perfect home, which is impossible because home is not a perfect place

What the property agents did:

They listed many good things about the showroom to allow the people to **picture their own view of their perfect home rather than physically viewing the flat**. This **increased the people's expectations** of the flat they viewed as the Singapore Dream which **tempted them even greater to get the flat**.

They used **hyperboles** like panoramic view, luxurious living, heaven, paradise which **exaggerated what the actual flat could offer and manipulated the people to picture that the flat is very grand**.

They used **imagery to describe the details of the flats to evoke senses to the people**.

"Snuggled under a goose-feather duvet" which is a **tactile imagery evokes an immersive experience of comfort and luxury to the people**

Use of irony: A house is usually a **symbolism to give people a sense of belonging, safety, security, and a place to rest and create memories**. However, the people were **too driven by the Singaporean Dream, the desire to attain their perfect house of luxury**. They **focussed too much on material things and forget immaterial things and the main purpose of a house**.

What are your impressions of the agents?

The agents are manipulative. Instead of selling houses, they claimed they were selling illusions.

They said "the trick is imagination" "let them imagine being woken up in the morning, by the gentle chirping of orioles" this showed that their mindset is not about selling the flat by showing them how it looks like, but to play into the Singapore Dream ideal living lifestyle, and rely on the the buyers own imagination to make them think that the house is more grand than it actually is. They said "your most powerful tools are their own desires" "the more unattainable the vision, the more their hearts will desire it" this shows that the agents are using their own descriptive words like using imagery to describe the details of the flats to evoke senses to the people. "Snuggled under a goose-feather duvet" which is a tactile imagery evokes an immersive experience of comfort and luxury to the

people to lure the buyers into handing them the cheque. This way, the buyers get exploited by the property agents to buy the house. Thus they are manipulative.

The agents are money-minded. When agent 1 was giving his speech, he said “you are selling a lifestyle. That is, a style of life that they do not yet possess, but are on the cusp of attaining.” To achieve their goal of making buyers buy the house so they could earn money, the agents listed many good things about the showroom to allow the people to **picture their own view of their perfect home rather than physically viewing the flat**. This **increased the people’s expectations of the flat** they viewed as the Singapore Dream which **tempted them even greater to get the flat**. They **thus** “use” clients as tools to achieve profit and exclude their moral conscience on what is the right thing to do. When they ended their speech, they said altogether “bring that cheque” this ending on a high note to gain buyers attention to hand the cheque further amplifies that the agents eyes are only lying on the cash. All the good points about the house was to persuade the buyers to hand them the money, showing how important money is to the agents. Thus through the words they use and the persuasive way to convince the buyers to hand the cheque to them, i can tell that the agents are money-minded.

Theme: Singapore Dream

Singapore Dream is well-fought after. Many Singaporeans pursue the Singapore Dream of 5 Cs- Condo, Car, Cash, Credit card, Country club. They believe that acquiring material wealth equates to gaining success, respect, status in Singapore’s society. Thus one’s property is an indicator of one’s status– status symbol, causing them the strong desire to buy the new luxurious houses introduced by the agents. When giving their speech, one of the agents said “let them imagine being woken up in the morning, by the gentle chirping of orioles” this showed how intense the Singapore Dream has been inbuilt into Singaporeans’ minds, causing them to dream about their ideal living lifestyle. Their desire to achieve the Singapore Dream is so strong that they can rely on their own imagination to convince themselves to buy the house, without needing to physically see it. Another agent said “your most powerful tools are their own desires” To the agents, it is so easy to manipulate the buyers into buying the house because Singaporean’s mentality to achieve the Singapore Dream is so strong that little work needs to be done by the agents. Thus this shows that many people want to achieve the Singapore Dream.

The Singapore Dream encourages a materialistic mindset. They believe that acquiring material wealth equates to gaining success, respect, status in Singapore’s society. Even the agents have a strong desire to obtain the Singapore dream. They do so by trying their best to convince people to buy the house, even if it means going against their conscience. When they ended their speech, they said altogether “bring that cheque” this ending on a high note to gain buyers attention to hand the cheque further amplifies that the agents eyes are only lying on the cash. All the good points about the house was to persuade the buyers to hand them the money, showing how important money is to the agents in their chase for materialism. Thus through the words they use and the persuasive way to convince the buyers to hand the cheque to them, it amplifies the materialistic mindset the agents have in their process of achieving the Singapore Dream.

[Can tweak to answer Materialism]

Act 1 Scene 2

-Boon feels that the house is old , worn out, in a mess, like a “dump”

Characters: Boon and Mother

-comfortable relationship

-use of informal, colloquial language adds authenticity

-even though Boon is an adult, mother still cares for him, showing their love for each other, and they mean a lot to each other

Family: intimacy between Mother and Boon is apparent despite their differences in perspective and attitudes

Mother

-cherishes memories

-hoards things as she feels they are physical memories of the past, she uses them to remember the memories “whole shelf full of tacky souvenir figurines”

-treasured memories “ still remembers figurine from 1974 which was very long ago”

-sentimental

All the items as necessary and keeps them because she links each important memory to a part of the house. They contain happier memories of the past, which mother constantly look back on and holds onto because she cannot relieve them anymore.

Long-standing disagreement

- Mother objects against modernity

- Boon supports modernity and is disdainful towards the past (in the way he reacts towards his childhood memory of playing Superman) and aspires to have the Singapore Dream (“I mean, wouldn't you like to have an amazing view of the sea?”)

What are your impressions of Boon?

Boon is filial [add 1st point of loves each other here]

When mother recalls an embarrassing memory of him and asks him a question, he says “(after a long pause) Kryptonite” This shows that he does not become rude or angry to mother when she is talking about something he does not want to listen to. Instead, he goes along and answers her, seeing that she is very happy recalling all the memories of him. Thus he still wants mother to be happy and is a filial son.

Boon is very determined for change and wants to move out of the house. He was “examining the furnishings with a critical eye” This shows that he was already evaluating on how he should make the house ready for en bloc even before he has got mother's consent. He is very eager to en bloc the house so he can quickly move out to a bigger house and wants to get away from the old house. He later tells mother to “imagine snowflakes drifting down, melting when they touch your skin” This shows that he is really yearning for a different experience, an experience to somewhere he has not went before. He wants to feel a different sensation instead of just living the same boring life every day in the house that he does not like. Thus he is very determined and chases after change.

Boon has no regard for the sentimental value of objects in the house. He wants to throw away and clear all of the objects as he views them as useless things. “Buyers can't stand a place that's got so

many old memories” This shows Boon’s total disregard for the memories, and finds them a burden when trying to raise the monetary value of the house. He does not see the benefit of keeping the memories and the old objects. “Throw away these hideous statues” To Mother, each of those “hideous” statues had a memory in her heart. Throwing the statues away means throwing away mother’s valuable memories. However, Boon loosely saying to throw the statues away suggests that Boon holds no regard for the memories made and he does not see the importance of the memories. He views them as trash that needs to be cleared and thus he has no regard for sentimental value of objects in the house.

What are your impressions of mother?

Mother is very sentimental to the objects that are around her. When she saw Boon taking her statues, she told him to “put that down” and said it was “Malacca. September 1974. Honeymoon” This shows that She is able to distinctly & vividly remember the specific dates of events in the past and can recall without hesitation. She frequently recalls the past and has thorough familiarity with it as the memories are all ingrained in her mind. She extremely values and protective of her items and does not want Boon to accidentally break it because it is very precious to her. Furthermore, she can clearly remember when she got the statue and the memories which held within. This showed how much the statute meant to her even though it was old. When Boon suggested to cut the tree, mother said “Don’t touch my tree” “Don’t touch my statues” “Don’t touch my things” the repetition she uses emphasises that she takes ownership of all her things and they are her possessions. To her, they are more than ordinary objects and are significant to her. Thus mother is very sentimental

What are your impressions of the relationship between mother and Boon?

Mother loves Boon a lot. Boon told her that she “ can’t even bear to peel off those ugly stickers on the wall” What Boon thought as ugly stickers reminded mother of Boon’s childhood. This suggests that while these memories may be embarrassing and have no value to him, it is nonetheless valuable to mother, showing that he is very precious to her, she makes it a point to remember about and could not bear to throw them away. Mother cherishes everything about Boon, even if it is as something from a very long time ago. Afterwards, mother is able to recall an entire childhood memory of Boon, the way she vividly describes it shows that mother has been watching Boon grow up since he was little. She pays close attention to his every move, and even what he wears. This further suggests that Boon is one of mother’s priorities and she charges him a lot. It also tells us that time cannot wear away the many memories that are important to mother. When Boon wanted bring Mother to see snow, she said “You want, you go lah” this shows that although she does not want to go and has memories to keep her company, she understands that Boon still has a future ahead of him and does not hold him back from the opportunity to explore and have fun. This shows that even though they have very different perspectives and opinions, Mother understands Boon and loves him very much.

They share a close and comfortable relationship. When Boon tells mother he his working on another project, mother replies with “another one?” This shows that they talk about Boon’s projects for many times and is a very common topic between them. They are very comfortable to each other that Boon updates her of small happenings in work and his life. Mother also mkes the effort to remember these conversations. When Boon asks mother if she would like to have an amazing view of the sea, she makes a retching sound. Boon replied with “xiao zha boh” Mother’s act is deemed as childish, and

mother is comfortable to show it in front of Boon. She knows that Boon will not judge her and she is able to express any of her true emotions to him. Boon is also comfortable to comment to mother and tell her she is crazy, because he knows that she won't take it to heart. Thus they both have a relaxed and comfortable relationship.

They show love for each other. Boon asks mother "You want to go see snow or not, Ma?" This shows Boon wants Mother to feel happy and is a filial son who wants to bring Mother along wherever he goes. He will always look after his mother, no matter how desperately he wishes to be free of the house. He cannot bear to abandon Mother and leave her to fend for herself. Although Boon could have chosen to simply leave home, he did not do so in worries of something happening to mother, with no one around to help her.

He does not want to leave her behind, makes room for her in his busy schedule. Moreover, even though he is looking for a better life, he is still looking out for mother.

[Add 2nd part of mother loves boon here]

Theme: Materialism

Materialism can cause conflicts in relationships.

"Please clear away this rubbish" "Buyers can't stand a place that's got so many old memories"

Despite it being his own home, Boon does not view his home in the eyes of a homeowner. Boon finds his mother's memories inconvenient and does not see the objects in his house as memories and valuable, but treats them as rubbish and useless items. He is discontented with life and aspires to achieve a better house and more money. He is unable to appreciate what Mother sees as memories in the house. Moreover, he sees the house through the perspective of a housing agent, and finds ways to raise the monetary value of the house. He aims to repurpose the house into a clean, cold house with no memories so buyers can buy it. Boon's total disregard of the memories in the house and finds them a burden, shows that he prioritises money over memories, which further amplifies the theme of materialism.

Theme: Progress and change

Progress & change may not be welcomed by everyone

Mother, representing the older generation, finds the house very valuable because of the amount of precious memories made in that place. When Boon suggested to cut the tree, mother said "Don't touch my tree" "Don't touch my statues" "Don't touch my things" the repetition she uses emphasises that she wants these items to be kept close to her and does not want to leave them or let Boon throw them away. When Boon asks mother if she would like an amazing view of the sea, mother "shakes her head" She does not want a view of the sea, lest it makes her nauseous. She is unwilling to move house as she has memories to keep her company which is all within the house she spent years in. She is emotionally attached to the old house and thus does not want to move into a new house. Thus this shows the older generation is not fond of change and progress and they prefer a simple life, continuing to live in their old environments.

Act 1 Scene 3

Director is:

- Dictatorial boss
- uncaring towards people's feelings
- unsentimental and do not respect the dead
- very task focussed and has fully adopted the official stand/perspective

Use of imperative words "go" "interview" shows that she commands and orders Jeremiah to get things done and wants work to be done with minimum problems and delay.

What are your impressions of the director?

The director is a dictatorial boss. She is very oppressive towards Jeremiah and takes her stand very firmly. She says to him "You are not aware, surely, of the circumstances of our country" This shows that she expects Jeremiah to agree with her and understand that all the decisions made is for the best of the country. She later tells Jeremiah to "make a site visit to the cemetery and interview the relevant stakeholders. Go see what the situation on the ground is." The tone she used was very commanding and she is not influenced by Jeremiah sympathy towards the disease and uses an ordering tone and tells Jeremiah to follow what she says and spring into action. Thus she is very firm in her words, which makes her dictatorial.

The director lacks empathy. When Jeremiah said that the deceased had suffered so much already and should have the right to rest in peace for more than 15 years. She replied "What are you talking about?" So this shows that she thinks Jeremiah's concern is absolutely ridiculous and doesn't feel sympathy for the corpses who has suffered many hardships and even thinking of making them suffer even more by reburying them. She says that "It is only natural that we should optimise our most precious resource. Why should the living suffer for the dead?" This shows that she feels that it is unreasonable for the living to be considerate for the deceased and it is normal to make sure of all the resources, even if it means disturbing the deceased. Thus this shows that she does not care for the deceased and thus lacks empathy.

Director VS Jeremiah

Says that "dead don't pay taxes, living do" shows she does not care about the dead and only cares about the living, taxes for the nation's use. She feels that **dead has less needs** and are not urgent while **living has urgent needs**. The **dead can be sacrificed for the living**. Whatever government do is for the living. They need to answer the living to be accountable.

Jeremiah cares for the dead because his parents are dead. They **still have a place in his heart and he wants to protect them**. It is hard for him to accept that the government wants to dig the dead up.

Jeremiah is:
Sincere
Good-natured
Obedient

What is your impression of Jeremiah?

Jeremiah is empathetic. He tells the director "They've suffered so much already. Shouldn't they have the right to rest in peace for just a bit longer than fifteen years?" This shows that he cares and put himself in the shoes of the deceased. Despite not personally knowing how it feels like, Jeremiah still

tries to relate to those on the ground and attempts to speak up for them in office. There was no need for him to do so but he took the initiative. From this, it shows how Jeremiah is actually compassionate, and truly cares for the public. He is considerate to them and takes the effort to attempt to persuade the director not to use the land. When the director asks him if the living or dead is more important, he reluctantly says "living" this shows that deep down, he feels that both living and dead carry the same amount of importance and the same priority should be placed on them. The living should also be considerate to the dead. Thus I can see that Jeremiah is empathetic

Jeremiah is submissive. This can be seen through his interactions with director. When the director asks him if sand or gold is more precious, he says "Um...sand" This shows he is uncertain, unconfident and uncomfortable when talking to the director, but still tries his best to answer her, showing that he meekly obeys orders given by her. When director asked him to interview the relevant stakeholders at the cemetery, he said "But..." He did not openly express his concerns to director and is afraid to voice his views out loud or refuse suggestions and orders given to him. Thus as a subordinate position, Jeremiah listens to directors orders and instructions and meekly follows what he has to do.

Themes: Progress and change

Progress is necessary for the nation and people to meet their goals.

Progress comes with a cost.

Because of change, the government has come up with the new burial system. Corpse cannot be buried underground anymore as the space is needed to build new houses for the living. These corpses would thus have to undergo changes and be cremated. The director says that "It is only natural that we should optimise our most precious resource. Why should the living suffer for the dead?" Thus because of change, the living must utilise what they have now to construct and create new houses, allowing new lifestyles and progress to occur. This means that the dead have to sacrifice their space for the living, placing them at a disadvantaged position as they cannot rest in peace. Jeremiah says that "it's just 15 years. The flesh has hardly gotten a chance to decompose" Even though the corpse had barely started the process and cycle of life and death, progress cannot be stopped. The time has come for the dead to be reburied, bringing inconvenience and discomfort to the corpses, causing disturbance to them. Thus even though some may see progress as an opportunity for new hopes and dreams for better lives, progress always comes with a cost, which in this case is disturbing the dead, not allowing to rest peacefully.

Act 1 Scene 4

-Property agents have internalised The Singapore Dream

"Dangling his keys **triumphantly**, in a sing-song tone"

"Keys to **paradise**"

Paradise - perfect place = home

-Pressurised atmosphere to attain The Singapore Dream

Agent 1 has a **sneering/condescending tone, indirectly implying that Boon is useless**

"Don't tell me you're still staying with your mother?"

"Can't afford to buy a condo, nevermind. Still no girlfriend right?"

What are your impressions of the Agents?

Agent one is rude and condescending when he talks to Boon. When Boon did not reply to where he was currently staying, he said "don't tell me you're still staying with your mother?" This shows that he feels that living with his mother is embarrassing to him. Boon is not independent and still needs to rely on his parents just like a child. He looks down on Boon for this. Afterwards, he said "can;t afford a condo nevermind, still no girlfriend right?" This shows that he immediately jumps to conclusions that Boon still stays with his mother because he does not have enough money to buy one. He mocks Boon for not being capable of finding a girlfriend, implying that he is weak and a loser. In addition, he looks down on Boon for not having the ability to achieve the Singapore Dream, still having to stay at Zion Mansion, while he is staying at his new villa which he just bought. Thus from the way that he rudely speaks to Boon, I can see that he's disrespectful.

The agents are grateful to what's the people around them. Agent 2 says "I stay with my in-laws and to I want to vomit blood" This shows that he's very fed up and does not like the people who stay with him. Instead of showing gratitude to the people who give him a roof to live in, he talks bad and complains about them. In the text, Agent 2 tells agent 1 "stay in poskin do while your father stays in tai ping lau ren yuan" this shows that Agent 1 is very unfilial and selfish. He is not thankful to his father who brought him up and gave him a house to stay. He sees him as an inconvenience and is not willing to give him an area in the villa that he owns that the agents are unappreciative to the people who have helped them and do not respect their family members.

Theme: Materialism

Materialism may strain relationships. In this passage, the agents are showing off their apartment while criticizing others. Agent one criticizing Boon's apartment, "Zion mansion... wah lau, wasn't that built in the Qing dynasty or something?" showing that materialistic Agent one looks down on Boon for staying in an old house. This increases toxicity and could potentially ruin relationships if one gets offended or jealous.

[Tweak to answer Singapore Dream]

Act 1 Scene 5

Boon is very repulsed/haunted by the memories of the past

- residue
- cobwebs
- stains
- scuff marks
- black grime

Choice of diction, associated with decay, degeneration, deterioration

Personification: "black grime **strangles** the bathroom taps"

Simile: "Like alien tentacles out of a B-grade movie"

Metaphor: "trying to **scrub the stain** of him from the floor"

Boon resents his father.

Simile: "[father is] buried like **kryptonite**"

Just as kryptonite weakens Superman, Boon also felt weakened / hurt / broken by his father.

Boon is very **suffocated** by his past.

Effect of the corpse

-element of surprise and comedy in the dialogue with Jeremiah allows the audience to consider this sensitive issue of death with some humour.

-a sense of pathos (evokes pity/sadness) remains especially when the corpse protests against the idea of being killed again with burning or cremation.

Significance of the corpse:

-challenge of progress

-a parallel to mother

-a voice to the dead:

Corpse is there because the dead cannot speak. But the corpse is depicted to be able to communicate with Jeremiah.

She therefore gives a voice to the dead about the idea of exhumation which is that the dead deserves to rest in peace.

Bigger picture:

Jean Tay parallels the relocation of living and the dead to highlight and emphasise:

-the difficulties of progress

-the loss of preserved memories, history and sense of belonging

What are your impressions of Boon?

Boon is very repulsed by the memories of the past. He feels his past is a burden and wants to be set free. "Black grime strangles the bathroom taps, like an alien tentacles out of a B-grade movie" The words used in the personification and simile are associated with decay, degeneration, and deterioration. Boon treats these memories as "residue", something that is unwanted, and tries desperately to get rid of them. However, his efforts are all futile as he is simply sweeping them under the carpet and in actual fact still mentally unable to let go of his past and move on. It shows that Boon feels that he is overwhelmed with darkness of the past. He realises how hard it is to forget past memories and the imperfections of life. He describes as being "Buried like kryptonite." This shows that just as kryptonite weakens Superman, Boon feels that he feels hurt and broken by his father. He is suffocated by the past and feels that he has no freedom. He wants to be a hero and wants to be set free to chase his dreams to obtain the Singapore dream. But he is being stopped by past memories and pushed back, unable to proceed life smoothly. Thus this shows that he is very repulsed by the memories of the past.

Theme: Memories

Memories have an impact on one's future

Boon want to get away from his bad memories, memories haunt him and prevent him from moving on, constantly lives under the shadow of father. [add impressions of Boon]

Act 1 Scene 6

Jeremiah said the booming sound was the constructors “building castles”. This shows that the Singapore Dream which homes everyone wants is compared to castles, further emphasising that the Singapore Dream is unattainable. The homes Singaporeans want are grand and big, like places for kings to live. They treat the houses not just a place for rest, but as a form of who they are, the status they own. Home is where they feel pride.

Corpse said “no name”, showing that it represents the dead voices which are ignored. The dead are disregarded and insignificant. They have lost their identity.

What are your impressions of the corpse?

Corpse is stubborn. Corpse’s repetition of “no” towards Jeremiah’s questions shows how he is firm in his decision and does not change his mind easily despite Jeremiah’s persuasion, adamant. When Jeremiah says that “I’m trying to help you!”, the corpse says “You’re trying to kick me out!” In the Corpse’s frustration at Jeremiah persistently asking for his help, he upfront rejects Jeremiah’s help by accusing him of “kicking him out”. He fails to recognise Jeremiah’s goodwill and did not care about Jeremiah’s feelings when he said it. He wants peace, no relocation. When Jeremiah furthers initiate to help him, he says “I’m not going! Not going!” The Corpse upfront rejects Jeremiah’s help. To him, Jeremiah helping him is disturbing to him, he does not look deeper and find out how Jeremiah was going to help him. This shows that he does not even consider listening to Jeremiah. He is focused on his opinions and just wants his way, showing that he is very persistent in his decisions.

What are your impressions of Jeremiah?

Jeremiah is caring. He empathises with the corpse, expressing his intentions of helping the corpse. When the corpse says that he could not remember his name, Jeremiah asks him “Well, then what about your family?” This shows that he is determined to help the corpse and is willing to go out of his way and do all he can, even if it means adding on to his own workload and doing more than what is required of him. There was no need for him to take the initiative to continue helping the corpse. It was just a mindless being and was unimportant in modern society as it does not contribute economically or politically. When the corpse told him to go away, Jeremiah says “I’m trying to help you!” Jeremiah taking the time to dig further into the case even after submitting the site report and completing his job shows that he truly cares for the corpse and genuinely wants to help him. He feels that helping others is more important than just going by the book and getting his job over and done with; he is more concerned about the people and has differing attitudes as compared to his fellow colleagues who are fixated on completing their tasks, showing how unlike his colleagues, he genuinely has the heart to serve. Thus Jeremiah genuinely wants to help the corpse find his identity, and his family, showing that he is very caring.

Theme: Progress

Progress comes with a cost.

Because of change, the government has come up with the new burial system. Corpse cannot be buried underground anymore as the space is needed to build new houses for the living. These corpses would thus have to undergo changes and be cremated. When Jeremiah tries to tell the corpse that he has to be reburied, the corpse says “You’re just trying to kick me out!” Thus because

of change, the living must utilise resources they have for progress to occur. This means that the dead have to sacrifice their space for the living, causing them to get disturbed and not allowing them to have a place on earth. To them, exhumation means that they will get forgotten. When the corpse mentioned about the sound “Boom boom boom”, Jeremiah says “They’re building castles. The process of construction has brought disturbance to the corpse, not allowing them to rest in peace. The root cause of the booming sounds are to build new houses for new lifestyles for the living. The living now aspire for new, modern, grand houses, which is why the construction occurs, bringing inconvenience and discomfort to the corpses. Thus even though some may see progress as an opportunity for new hopes and dreams for better lives, progress always comes with a cost, which in this case is disturbing the dead, not allowing to rest peacefully.

Progress may not be welcomed by everyone

Because of change, the government has come up with the new burial system. Corpse cannot be buried underground anymore as the space is needed to build new houses for the living. These corpses would thus have to undergo changes and be cremated. When Jeremiah tries to tell the corpse that he has to be reburied, the corpse says “Don’t touch me!... Die one time already! No more!” Corpse does not want to be cremated due to the 15 year exhumation policy. Also brings out the point that loved ones might not want the dead to be moved from their resting place to be cremated just to make way for new developments for the government.

Act 1 Scene 7

What are your impressions of Boon?

I have the impression that Boon cares about mother’s opinions. He wants to make sure that she is happy to move out too. He knows that his mother is attached to the trees, so he said. “We can find a new condo around here somewhere with a fantastic view of trees, hundreds of them, if you like.” He puts himself into Mother’s shoes and knows how much the tree means to Mother. Despite detesting the tree, does not want to see Mother being too upset. To ensure mother was happy Boon is willing to make alternative arrangements for Mother and went to an extent where he was willing to find a condo with many trees to make mother accept and satisfied with the new house. He tries his best to please her, and wants her to be happy even after the move. He cannot bear to cut mother out of his life no matter what. He wants her to constantly be by her side, and look out for her unconditionally, making room for her in many different ways, not wanting to leave her alone. When mother told him that if he did anything to her home, she will have no son like him, he said “Ma!” This shows that Boon also cares for the relationship between him and mother. As far as he wanted to get out of the house and move on, he also wants mother to be happy and not get annoyed with him. Boon still cherishes mother even in his pursuit of progress. Thus this shows that he cares about mother’s opinions.

I have the impression that Boon is very determined to persuade his mother to move out of the house. In line seven, I tell you, people here will be jumping at the opportunity” this shows that Boon was trying his best to persuade his mother that this was a special opportunity that she should cherish and that it is the best chance for her to get rich and lead a much better life. “For the amount

of money you can get, we can buy a really nice place. And I mean a really nice place” To Boon, this was the house he desires to attain and feels that mother would also want to live in. He is trying very hard to convince his mother that if they moved out, the future that laid ahead of them would be full of light and hope, allowing them to enjoy a more comfortable life. Thus I can see there, Boon is very determined to persuade his mother to get out the house.

What are your impressions of mother?

Mother is sentimental. She is very attached to her old memories and is not fond of progress. She cherishes the simple things and is contented with the simple house and the memories she has made. Thus she does not want to sell the house to move into a better house.

“You know how I feel about this place” Even though Mother can shift houses and get lots of money to get a better house, she still prefers her old house. She is not moved by money. To her, the memories and bonds she created and shared with the people she loved in the old house means so much more to her than money. Unlike Boon, she feels that the house has significant value and thus she is very protective of the house. When mother said that if Boon does anything to her house, she said “or else I will have no son like you” Through this sentence, it is a very serious mistake to mother if Boon en bloc her house. She is a person who treasures relationships and thus would not say to “disown Boon” casually. This further amplifies the importance of the house to her, showing that she is very sentimental.

Mother is very stubborn. She rejects modernity and change and wants to stay in her past. When Boon tried to convince mother by telling her that he is willing to find “somewhere with a fantastic view of trees. Hundreds of them”, mother replied “ Don’t like. Don’t want hundreds, I only want one. My one.” This shows mother wants that one specific tree to stay with her forever, and does not want to leave the tree even during circumstances where majority of the people have agreed to en bloc. When Boon tells mother that the house is “falling to pieces” and “for the amount of money you can get, we can buy a really nice place”, mother replied with “I mind, I mind a lot.” Even when mother gets the opportunity to live in a new house to live more comfortably, she is unwilling to move out of her old house which is not maintained well. This shows that even though she can choose an option of changing into living a better life in a better house, she does not want to move on with the rest and prefers to live in the environment she has been in for the past 15 years. Thus she is very stubborn.

Theme: Materialism

Materialism is well-sought after by many

“Some of these uncles have never even dreamed of earning that much money in their lifetime”/ “Once they see the numbers, I tell you... they’ll be queueing up to sign. You’ll be crazy not to.” This suggests that Boon assumes everyone is aiming to obtain big money, similar to his mentality that money is very important and his desire of getting huge sums of money. He also mentions that those who refuse to sign are “crazy”, which hints that Boon believes that the sum of money is enough to override the memories and relationships forged in the neighbourhood. Thus, it shows that Boon thinks very materialistically.

Pursuit of materialism can cause conflicts

[Tweak from progress and change can cause conflicts]

Theme: Progress

Progress and change may not be welcomed by everyone.

(Boon) "Wouldn't you like an amazing view of the sea?" (Mother) "Makes me want to vomit" Boon prefers to move into luxurious items and spaces with good views, such as that of the sea. After living in the old house, he embraces progress and longs to move to a brand new one. He is unable to appreciate what Mother sees and why she is so attached to the old house. However, Mother is the complete opposite of Boon and does not want a view of the sea, lest it makes her nauseous. She is unwilling to move house as she has memories to keep her company which is all within the house she spent years in. She is emotionally attached to the old house and thus does not want to move into a new house. This shows the contrast in perspectives between the young and the old, whereby the young want to possess luxurious items and live in places with nice scenery. They embrace change and new beginnings. On the other hand, the older generation is not fond of change and progress. They prefer a simple life, continuing to live in their old environments.

Progress and change can cause conflict

Boon embraces progress and change while mother rejects modernity, and their differing opinions can cause conflict between their relationship. When mother said that if Boon does anything to her house, she said "or else I will have no son like you" Through this sentence, mother expresses her annoyance and anger at Boon and warns him if he tries to demolish the house, mother would "disown" him. It is a very serious mistake to mother if Boon demolishes her house. All along, mother's and Boon's are very loving towards each other and have a comfortable relationship. However, when Boon starts to convince her to move out of the house for change, she becomes very stubborn and rejects all of Boon's ideas. Boon is very determined to seek change and move out of the house, and mother is very determined to stay in her old house. This thus starts a conflict of differing opinions between mother and son, which can affect their relationship. Thus the process of seeking progress and change can cause conflict.

Theme: Singapore Dream

Pursuit for Singapore Dream can cause conflicts. Boon believes that acquiring material wealth equates to gaining success, respect, status in Singapore's society. Thus he is very determined to persuade his mother to move out of the house, so he is able to buy a new house and achieve the Singapore Dream. When mother still does not want to move out of the house, Boon said "Well I'm not sure everybody else feels the same way you do" When Boon's hopes of achieving the Singapore Dream was diminishing, he started to get annoyed and angry at how persistent mother is. His feelings got the better of him and he started to be rude to her. When mother said that if Boon does anything to her house, she said "or else I will have no son like you" Through this sentence, it is a very serious mistake to mother if Boon demolishes her house. In the past, mother and Boon have a very loving relationship and rarely have any conflicts. Mother is a person who treasures relationships and thus would not say to "disown Boon" casually. This further amplifies during the pursuit of Singapore Dream, conflicts arise between the mother and son.

Act 1 Scene 8

Young mother is:

- down-to-earth (not materialistic - has smaller dreams)
- careful

-conservative

Young father is:

- materialistic
- takes risks
- ambitious

Young Father's cavalier* attitude towards borrowing money to obtain material possessions is worrying. He seems to take a light-hearted view towards borrowing. The off-handed way in which he says this shows that he does not see the consequences of his actions. Young Mother cautions him against this saying that if they borrow, they would have to "pay it back". He is not so circumspect. Even after hearing Young Mother's cautionary statement, he did not see the error of his ways.

*Cavalier - Showing a lack of proper concern

Has similar traits to Boon. Singapore Dream is passed down from 1 generation to another. Many want luxury. Past always influence present.

Mother has always been loyal to father (30 years) true love

When they talk, they have a bating tone

What is your impression of young father?

Young father is very materialistic. Money is very important to him and he has a strong desire to obtain huge sums of money. When young father tells mother that he will do anything for her, he says that "it's an investment, can still sell and make money." This shows how money-minded he is and that he treats the house as a place to make money. He does not consider that the house a place to create beautiful memories with those around him. In line 19, young mother says that he is "everything also money, money, money." This further amplifies the drive that the father has in achieving the Singapore dream, where he owns a big bungalows and lots of money. This house is still not enough for him as he wants to obtain more money to get a better house. This is a contrast from mother's attitude where she likes the house, even the walls. Thus, I can see that he is materialistic.

Young father is overconfident. He constantly thinks that he has the ability to obtain lots of money and that it is a very easy task to achieve. When mother asks him if he has enough money, he said "not enough then borrow lor" his tone shows that he does not bother much about money and finding a way to return the money borrowed is not an important factor to him. He believes that he has the ability to easily borrow money and obtain what he desires. Father sees borrowing money as something that is not a big deal and can be repaid back easily. This suggests that he says to borrow the money so easily and carefreely, shows that he is very confident that he can repay the money and is worried or bothered by the result of borrowing money.

When young mother says his dreams are too big for me, young father replies "and yours are too small." this shows that he has just attained a house and feels that he is able to attain a bigger house by himself. Unlike mother who is satisfied and happy with the new house, he is not contented and is

confident that he is the ability to go further and attain better houses and more money without carefully thinking through the steps on how to do so. Thus I can tell that he is overconfident.

Young father is reckless. he speaks with a nonchalant tone when mother brings up her concerns about him. When mother asks him if he has enough money, he said "Not enough then borrow lor" Father does not treasure money and spends/borrows money without concern or worry. He does not understand the stress of having loan sharks chasing him to return the money back and the hardships of returning the money and interest on time. He dismisses mother's worries, and his tone shows that he is very careless when handling money. Money is not easy to obtain and requires lots of effort to earn, and the fact that young father says to borrow the money so easily and carefreely, shows that he is not worried or bothered by the result of borrowing money. He is not being particularly concerned about his finances, or whether he has enough money to even purchase the house. he spent money without much thought for the future. he does not think about the ramifications on the family or his finances for the future, which in turn could cause emotional turmoil for everyone. When young father tells mother that he is willing to do anything for her, he says "It's okay, you know, if you don't like it. We don't have to stay here. Can still sell and make money." Young father thinks that selling the house is a very easy task and could guarantee him large sums of money. He believes that there would be a wide array of houses for him to choose from, which is very reckless. Selling the house does not mean that he can immediately buy a suitable house. In the worst scenario, both of them might not even have a house. Thus, young father's actions are not carefully thought through, thus showing that he is reckless.

Young father loves mother very much. He tries his best to make mother happy by spending all his money that he had to give her a better life.

Just after father had shown mother the house, he says "Come here. I got a surprise for you." Young Father also includes little touches to surprise Young Mother, even after getting her a house. The surprise is like the icing on the cake. He considers what she likes and tries his best to keep her happy, not only providing her with material needs. When young mother says she liked the door knobs, young father said that he will get her another house "got spiral staircase and marble floors. Outside a big garden full of rambutan trees and your very own swimming pool." Young Father tells Young Mother that if she wishes so, he would buy her a bigger house that could have all of these. He seems to have ideas that are beyond his means. The material things that he wants to give Young Mother are beyond the reach of an ordinary working class man that he is, although he does say that it is contingent upon his being able to "make enough money". The fact that he believes that Young Mother would enjoy all these luxuries that he was able to vividly describe with the visual imagery shows that he thinks these are important. The fact that he thinks that they are proof of his love for her shows how he views material things. To Young Father, being able to provide material possessions is proof of his love for his wife.

What are your impressions of their relationships?

They have a loving relationship. This can be seen through their interaction of caring for each other. When young father says that if he had not enough money, he will borrow, young mother says "Borrow from people also one day have to pay back. You sure or not?" This shows that mother is concerned about Father's well-being and would rather not have the house than let Father overwork

himself to afford the house. She is also concerned if he could afford the house and does not want him to get into any danger or trouble in the midst of having to repay the money he borrowed. When young mother wanted to relax in the house, young father said "Can...for you, anything also can" young father is willing to sacrifice his time, effort, and energy to work so as to achieve everything mother wanted, surprise her and make her happy. His love is demonstrated through material possessions like the house and the tree that he has purchased for her. She has just told him that she wanted to live a carefree life and he indulges her. Her happiness and well-being is his greatest concern. He is a good husband and supports the family. Thus from the way they show care and to each other, I can tell that they have a loving relationship.

We have a very comfortable relationship. This can be seen through the interactions as they use dialects to communicate with each other. When young mother says "le si lang tau" and says "xiao ah" to father, father does not take offence in her words. These words are used to insult and hurt others. However, mother and father use them as their own language of love and how they tease each other. This is their way on how they express their love for each other and thus uses them as endearments to each other. Furthermore, mother and father both have very different personalities but suit each other very well. Mother says that "your dreams are too big for me" and father said "And yours are too small." This shows that mother is practical and treasures memories while father is materialistic and has big aspirations. However, despite their differences, they are still able to complement each other very well, and can communicate with each other very comfortably. Thus both of them have a comfortable relationship.

Theme: Singapore Dream

Property is an indicator of one's status [young father]

Money is very important to young father and he has a strong desire to obtain huge sums of money. young mother says that he is "everything also money, money, money." This further amplifies the drive that the father has in achieving the Singapore dream, where he owns a big bungalows and lots of money, to prove that he is capable of achieving big things. Afterwards, he told young mother that "next time when I make enough money, I'll buy you a bungalow." Even though they just bought a house, the house is still not enough for him as he wants to go a step further and achieve greater and more luxurious houses. The mentality of aiming to achieve a better house for a better status is constantly on his mind, thus showing the importance of achieving Singapore Dream which indicates the high status of young father.

People become reckless in the process of chasing the Singapore Dream [young father impressions]

Act 1 Scene 9

Past matters in a different way:

Boon - memories

Mother - souvenirs

Jeremiah - corpse

Act 1 Scene 10

The neighbour says “they are offering us peanuts.” “Peanuts” are very small, and are used to denote a very small amount of something, in this case, money. This is juxtaposed and contrary to the fact that going en bloc would give the residents a lot of money. This shows that the neighbour feels that no matter how much money they give them for the enbloc, they would still feel that it is too little, and thus not worth it.

Mother's and young mother's memories

- past is precious
 - emphasis on the time spent, treasures familiarity
 - cannot be replaced, sentimental
 - memories of past captured in the apartment
- Generation gap between mother and Boon:
- mother understands Boon has his own future, wants to carve out his own destiny
 - she acknowledges differences
 - but to her, moving out means all her memories are gone

Mother:

- strong-willed, determined to stay in Zion mansion (1-2 signatures needed left but still doesn't want to give in and sign), doesn't bow down to the majority
- stubborn
- memories are important to her
- admirable but stubborn (she has to accept change, change is continual and inevitable)

What are your impressions of mother and the neighbour?

Mother and her neighbour are sentimental. They are very attached to their old houses and do not want to move out. While chatting with the neighbour, mother says that “This place is worth more than any amount of money” shows that they really treasure their flat and are unwilling to even sell it for the big amount of money they can get from it. They view their flat as more precious than gold. They prioritise the memories created with the people whom they loved in the house and the trust that developed with the people around them over the years. And moving out means that they would lose all these memories. To them, the memories are worth much more than money. When they were reminiscing about the past and how they met, Mother said “How much can they give me, for a memory like that?” This suggests that they are very nostalgic and cling on to memories of the past dearly. She feels that the memories captured in the apartment cannot be replaced. This shows how consumed mother is by the past that she views it as something more valuable than money, which is significant as she was unlike most Singaporeans who craved wealth and would do anything to earn it. No matter how much money is offered to mother, she would still not sell it. They treasure the time spent in the house and thus Mother and her neighbour are sentimental.

Mother and her neighbour are stubborn. They are unwilling to sell their flats, no matter how much convincing and persuasion, they firmly reject the idea of progress. They have this obstinate belief that they have no future ahead of them, which is one of the main reasons that they are adamant on refusing the en bloc. They want to preserve the memories that they have already made, and do not see the need to create more. The female neighbour told Boon's mother that the committee “stayed for almost two hours last night” to talk to her ah lau for signing the en bloc sale. However, she is still

resistant after the long talk. To the female neighbour, two hours is a long time. The fact that a two hour talk cannot persuade the female neighbour shows that she is stubborn in moving out the house, which is her past, her memory.

When the neighbour asks mother if the committee came to talk to her, she said "They gave up trying to talk to me. Ever since I gave them a big scolding." This indirectly implies that Mother was unwilling to sign the en bloc sale, to the point where even the committee had given up on trying to persuade her, emphasising that Mother stood her ground strongly, even scorning the committee for trying to change her mind. She does not bow down to the majority. Therefore, Mother and her neighbours are extremely stubborn and can be seen wanting to preserve their houses as well as tradition.

Theme: Progress

Contrast between Young and Old Generations

Older Generation appreciate things for its sentimental value (memories), while the Younger Generation only appreciates things for its surface value (novelty/ money)

"This place is worth more than any amount of money"/ "Young people don't care lah. Everything must have new one." Mother, representing the older generation, finds the house very valuable because of the amount of precious memories made in that place. In contrast, Boon and the other people of the younger generation finds the houses in Zion Mansion run-down and old, wishing to move into newer and better houses. They crave novelty (new things) and have a big future ahead of them. As they are the new generation, they have no strong attachment to Zion Mansion, and thus readily agree to sell the house.

Progress and change may not be welcomed by everyone

They are unwilling to sell their flats, no matter how much convincing and persuasion, they firmly reject the idea of progress. They have this obstinate belief that they have no future ahead of them, which is one of the main reasons that they are adamant on refusing the en bloc. They want to preserve the memories that they have already made, and do not see the need to create more. Mother converses with her female neighbour and they indulge in reminiscences of the old days. She said "Singing the Superman song lah. I see already, laugh until tau lau jio" This emphasis on time spent over the years in this place shows that they treasure the familiarity they feel living in a place where they know each other. They find comfort in knowing who their neighbours are, feels that it gives them a sense of belonging to this community.

Progress and change can cause conflict

Boon and the other younger people embrace progress and tries to convince mother and the neighbour to sign to en bloc the house. However, both of them reject modernity, and their differing opinions can cause conflict when the young and old generation communicate. When mother is talking to the neighbour, the neighbour said "They're offering us peanuts. They think I'm stupid is it?" "Peanuts" are very small, and are used to denote a very small amount of something, in this case, money. The diction of the words she used suggests that she feels the agents look down at the residences by offering them something worth so little. She feels that her house and her worth is much more than what the agents could offer her. The tone she used suggests that she is very displeased with how the agents are treating her, and feels that they are treating her as someone gullible, thus this creates tension whenever the agents try to speak to her. When the neighbour

asked if the agents went to her place, she said “They gave up talking to me. Ever since I gave them a big scolding. But every time they see me, all face black black.” This shows that because of mother’s unwillingness for change and to move out of the house, tension rises between her and the agents. The agents also disrespect mother and does not like her because of her denial to comply with them to allow change to happen. However, when Boon starts to convince her to move out of the house for change, she becomes very stubborn and rejects all of Boon’s ideas. Boon is very determined to seek change and move out of the house, and mother is very determined to stay in her old house. This thus starts a conflict of differing opinions between mother and son, which can affect their relationship. Thus the process of seeking progress and change can cause conflict.

Theme: Memories

Shared memories forges bonds

Mother and Female Neighbour have fond memories of past times which both of them share. Through these memories, they pull them closer to each other and create a mutual understanding and sparks happiness in both of them. Mother converses with her female neighbour and they indulge in reminiscences of the old days. She said “Singing the Superman song lah. I see already, laugh until tau lau jio” The Female Neighbour also recalls Boon running around with her husband’s underwear on his head, playing Superman. By reminiscing the same happy memory that both of them experience together, it forges deep bonds in them over a long period of time, allowing them to understand each other more and communicate with each other more enjoyably. Thus shared memories create close bonds between mother and the neighbour, allowing them to find another friend whom they can share their opinions openly to.

Memories are a form of nostalgia

Through spending many years in the house, Mother created many fond memories that she would never want to forget. Memories of Boon growing from a child to an adult, the happy times they spent together, memories of love between her and father, mother often looks back dearly and thinks about them. When they were reminiscing about the past, Mother said “How much can they give me, for a memory like that?” This suggest that they are very nostalgic and cling on to memories of the past dearly. She feels that the memories captured in the apartment cannot be replaced as she gets to relief moments of the past where she enjoyed herself very much together with the people whom she loves. The memories she created in the house gave her a sense of belonging to her house, and thus she treasures these memories dearly, looking back at them with lots of love and nostalgia.

Act 1 Scene 11

The roles of government are to take care of people, meet the needs of people, advance the nation, unifying the country towards achieving national goals. If the public has any concerns, they write in a letter. However, the government replies with a standard reply with no sincerity.

Irony as this shows that efficiency is more important than the people but the role of the government is to prioritise the people.

The caller calls on different days, showing that he really wants his voice to be heard and the government to carefully consider what he has to share but all he gets in return is a generic email.

The government uses stock phrases, giving the public an impression that government doesn't care about their opinions, not that important

What are your impressions of the government?

Government is pragmatic. In this scene, the whole outline of a standard reply to a complaint letter is verbally stated by the Director, Jeremiah, and the Colleague. The letter first starts off with "Dear Sir/Madam". This shows that what the government does is standard. They do not care about the small details, not can they be bothered to individualise each and every reply to the citizens. This suggests that the government officials have a lack of respect towards the public. It is then relatable to the audience as the audience themselves would have experienced instances whereby the government officials were rude, indifferent, or unconcerned about the problem. They do not stop to assess the situation, and instead brush it off.

Act 1 Scene 12

Jeremiah's tension: he has to care for people but his job requires him not to get too entangled into people's life. He represents not just the people but also the dead. He bridges the past to the present.

The colleague POV: materialistic. He has simple understanding of what land means to people. Its not just about money

Mother's POV: sentimental

The government does not:

- have a sincere heart for people and the willingness to listen to people's opinions
- see themselves equal to the people
- take their job of caring for the people seriously

What are your impressions of the government?

Government is detached from the public. When Jeremiah and the colleague were talking, the colleague said "People throw money at her, still complain." This shows the detached attitude of the government. The government official (colleague) does not understand why Mother is refusing to leave despite being offered a very huge sum of money. The colleague complains of how Mother keeps insisting the sentimental value of her fig tree is more than any sum of money the government can offer. To the government, it is all about the money. No sympathy or empathy is felt for the minority of the public who are displaced in the name of progress.

[insert folding airplanes (jeremiah and colleague is representative of the government)]

What are your impressions of Jeremiah and his colleague?

They are insincere towards the people whom they are serving. In their workplace, they "are folding paper areoplanes and crushing the complaint letters into paper balls". The complaint letters were from people who spend the time and effort to write in hopes of allowing the government to listen to their point of view and perhaps change plans to suit them. However, Jeremiah and his colleague do not take the letters seriously and treat them like nothing but trash and use them for their own entertainmant, indirectly showing that the people's opinions do not matter and are unimportant.

When Jeremiah wanted to find out more about Boon's mother's fig tree, the colleague replied with "sentiment value blah blah blah. Like that also can." The incredulous tone that he uses to reply suggests that the colleague thinks mother's reason is totally ridiculous and does not take the effort to remember the details of her reason. He contempts the mentality of Boon's mother and does not understand that mother's sentimental attachment towards the house. His behaviour shows disrespect and no sign of trying to empathise with the people and try to make the situation better. Thus this shows that Jeremiah and his colleague are insincere to the people whom they are serving.

Act 1 Scene 13

Boon is:

-playful

-innocent

-wants to be strong and powerful (face up to his problems)

Past is manifested in a real-life memory: "red underwear" memory repeated a few times

Shows Boon's time of innocence, when he was still young and had a good relationship with Mother.

Both of them were having fun, Boon running away with the underwear cheekily while Mother chases after him, laughing at his actions and cuteness.

"Superman" shows Boon wants to be invincible, powerful, and more than just a normal person.

However later when he grows up, he is emotionally attached by memory to Father

The progress of Boon's and Mother's relationship. Through their interactions in this scene, it helps us see their good relationships and helps us understand why they love each other. It also evokes sympathy in the reader when they witness how the both of them got angry at each other when Boon grew up and tried to convince his mother to move out. Both of them had different views.

Memories are important as they create emotional connections (in contrast with govt and Boon's view, where material things matter only).

Theme: Memory

Memories are a form of nostalgia

Through spending many years in the house, Mother created many fond memories that she would never want to forget. Memories of Boon growing from a child to an adult, the happy times they spent together, memories of love between her and father, mother often looks back dearly and thinks about them. When mother reminisces of the red underwear memory, she was "laughing and screaming at him" This suggest that the happy memories are very nostalgic and mother cling on to memories of the past dearly. She feels that the memories captured in the apartment cannot be replaced as she gets to relief moments of the past where she enjoyed herself very much together with the people whom she loves. The memories she created in the house gave her a sense of belonging to her house, and thus she treasures these memories dearly, looking back at them with lots of love and nostalgia.

Act 1 Scene 14

Monologue: corpse tells readers what he is feeling

Corpse is:

-real, cannot be ignored, significant in bringing out theme, evokes feelings of disgust, horror

It is somehow consciousness, self-aware of what's going on (technically still a human)

It is remorseful, repentant, left family with debts. He is unable to leave behind material possessions like money.

Evokes sympathy from the readers. Allows readers to understand why people protest against exhumation, makes the trade-offs clear.

Theme: Progress and change

Home, memories, sentimental value, people eventually become part of the land, which has monetary value from the government's perspective. Even the dead's resting place is worth fighting for.

Progress comes with a cost

Because of change, the government has come up with the new burial system. Corpse cannot be buried underground anymore as the space is needed to build new houses for the living. These corpses would thus have to undergo changes and be cremated. The corpse says "I want to rot slowly" But he is not able to do so, because of change, the living must utilise resources they have for progress to occur. This means that the dead have to sacrifice their space for the living, causing them to get disturbed and not allowing them to have a place on earth. To them, exhumation means that they will get forgotten. Corpse also says "Rot in piece. In one piece. Not rot in pieces." The process of construction has brought disturbance to the corpse, not allowing them to rest in peace. The root cause are the building of new houses for new lifestyles for the living. The living now aspire for new, modern, grand houses, which is why the construction occurs, bringing inconvenience and discomfort to the corpses. Thus even though some may see progress as an opportunity for new hopes and dreams for better lives, progress always comes with a cost, which in this case is disturbing the dead, not allowing to rest peacefully.

Progress may not be welcomed by everyone

Because of change, the government has come up with the new burial system. Corpse cannot be buried underground anymore as the space is needed to build new houses for the living. These corpses would thus have to undergo changes and be cremated. Corpse says "I just want to leave something behind" Corpse does not want to be cremated due to the 15 year exhumation policy as it equates to leaving the corpse forgotten, not being able to leave a part of himself on earth. Thus even though many people favour progress, progress may not be welcomed by everyone, which in this case is the dead, as it causes them to be forgotten and never seen again.

Act 1 Scene 15

Director is

-inflexible (decides when things must be done and the way they should be done, no negotiations)

-domineering (no one can argue and change her mind)

-tyrannical (not afraid to scold subordinates)

-prescriptive (does not try to empathise/give subordinates a chance to choose what they should do)

-task focussed

-impersonal (not influenced by Jeremiah's feelings and words)

She is specified as a woman and possesses the qualities that a guy usually has instead of being kind, patient, softspoken. She is not understanding towards Jeremiah (subordinate, less power). He has to choose his words carefully before speaking, while the director can afford to say hurtful comments.

Jeremiah is (in the boss's perspective)

-cowardly

-weak-skilled

What is your impression of the director?

The director is insensitive to Jeremiah. She does not want to hear Jeremiah's reason and way of thinking that made him unwilling to go back to the cemetery. When she hears from Jeremiah that the corpse does not want to be cremated, she said "so why the hell are you gathering feedback like a primary school student on assignment?" the director uses insults at Jeremiah and is condescending to him. She compares him to a primary school student, implying that he is unprofessional and lacks knowledge in dealing with the problem. When Jeremiah asks her if she could ask someone else to complete the site report, the director said "just because somebody's a scholar, then certain assignments become too... distasteful to carry out, is it?" the director's mocking tone towards Jeremiah shows that she is indirectly implying to Jeremiah that to her, he should not think so highly of himself, and still has to listen to her commands. However, she does not even bother to find out the real reason that was stopping Jeremiah from making the site reports and is very rude to him. Thus she is insensitive to Jeremiah.

The director is dominating. She is very oppressive towards Jeremiah's actions in handling the situation and takes her stand of getting the site report done by Jeremiah very firmly. When Jeremiah says that the corpse does not want to be moved, she said "This is not a consultation process. This is an implementation process!" her authoritative tone suggests that it is already decided that the moving of the corpse will take place, no matter what other conditions or opinions. When Jeremiah says that she does not understand, she said "What is there to understand?" "I just want that site report, on my table by next Monday. Is that so unreasonable?" The tone she used was very commanding and she is not affected by any other factors that Jeremiah wanted to raise. She does not care and see why Jeremiah is so hesitant to make the report. She only wants him to follow what she says and spring into action to submit the site report on time. Thus she is very firm in her words and allows no exception and excuses from Jeremiah, which makes her dominating.

What is your impression of Jeremiah?

Jeremiah cares about the corpse's feelings and opinions. When the director tells him to change the name of the corpse, he said "it's going to be tricky. And the corpse...it doesn't want to be moved." He listens to their opinions and tries to save them from being moved out. He does not stop from trying to raise this concern up to the director, even if it means going against his work beliefs and getting scolded by the director. When the director was still very certain of her decision to make the site report, Jeremiah said "couldn't you just send someone else" This shows that he cannot bear to break the news to the corpse as he feels he is going against his values that the living is as important as the dead. Thus Jeremiah cares about the corpse's feelings and tries his best to listen to their needs.

Jeremiah lacks courage when he speaks to the director. To him, the director is like the big boss and most powerful, and thus he does not dare to speak up about his opinions. When director said that she needed that site report, Jeremiah said "I can't go back there. I really can't" This shows that he does not want to tell director of his ability to talk to corpses, and what he thinks and feels. He feels that she would judge him and brush off his ridiculous idea. Thus he is placed in a corner where he feels very small and allows himself to be interrupted by the director, not knowing what to do. When director demanded the site report on Monday and asked him if it is so unreasonable to complete, he said "Yes. I mean no. I mean. Monday. Monday is fine." He is unconfident when he speaks to director. Even when he really does not want to do the site report, he does not want to agitate the director even more by trying to make her understand his reason, and thus he had no choice but to agree. Thus through Jeremiah's uncertain and hesitant tone when communicating with director, I can see that he lack courage when he speaks to her.

Act 1 Scene 16

Evokes more sympathy for mother, some for Boon

Singapore Dream: mother achieved it with young father, Boon wants to do it too

Relationship between Boon and Mother: things they say to each other hurts, but deep down Boon knows that he should not say these words. They were impulsive because Boon had enough persuading mother. Anger overpowering their love for each other. Boon likes money. Mother treasures memories.

Mother is

-down to earth

-sentimental

-stands up for herself and beliefs (may be seen as obstinate (stubborn) and uncompromising (not willing to listen to others))

Boon is

-materialistic

-prideful

-stands by his views

-obstinate

Relationship development between Boon and mother

-changes overtime

At first, they are loving, trusting, playful, care for each other despite different views

Then, Boon starts to nudge mother more to give up the house - they become thorny, unable to compromise, but still caring

Boon and mother start to argue, and they become hostile, full of conflict and hurt, loss of trust

What are your impressions of mother?

Mother is attached to the house. Young father gave the house to young mother as a representation of their love. Mother loved the house, and also had to defend her home with sweat, trying to clear the debts. The memory of Mother has already been embedded into the walls of the house, which is

why Mother claims she can taste her own blood and sweat. She put in all her love, hard work, and effort into the home, represented by marks left on the walls overtime. The house is so dear to mother that she can smell it, because it represents all the memories she created with young father and with Boon. She treasures them as much as she values this house. It also represented all the years she invested in the house. It is thus understandable why she is so attached to the house, and despite Boon's persuasion of the large sum of money given if she en bloc the house, mother refused to. She rather the old house than the new house and money altogether, and she is very determined about that.

Mother is very stubborn. After many times of Boon trying to convince and negotiate with her, she is still adamant to move out of the house. When mother asks Boon to taste the walls, she says "That's my sweat you taste hor. My blood." This shows that she is so attached to the house and counts the house a part of herself that she does not want to separate from it. When Boon said that he thinks mother cannot take care of herself, she says "That's not true. I don't need you" Mother would rather to stay in this house alone than to move out of the house with Boon. Mother only wants to live in this house and rules out all the other possibilities of getting a new house. Thus she is very stubborn.

What are your impressions of Boon?

Boon is materialistic. Boon is determined to convince mother to move out of the house so that he can attain material wealth to live in modern houses. After getting rejected by mother so many times, he stills tries to persuade mother, showing his strong desire to gain lots of money by moving out of the house. When mother says that the walls smell like her sweat, he says "It's bad enough that I'm squeezed into that pathetic excuse of a room, without having to live with salty walls as well!" He feels that his reason for moving out of the house to gain materialism is so much more reasonable than mother's hard work she put into the house. He chases for materialism so much that his emotions started to get the better of him when mother still does not to move out of the house and expresses his annoyance at mother's unreasonable reasons for not moving out. Thus Boon is materialistic.

Boon is rude to mother. In other scenes, he is usually filial to mother, but in this scene, his emotions overwhelmed him. He tried his best to persuade mother to move out of the house by talking nicely to her and trying to negotiate with her for multiple times. But after getting rejected, he starts to get annoyed and angry. Boon starts to disrespect mother and When mother and Boon started to quarrel, she says "Le zao lah!" and Boon replied "Fine! I'm going!" In the past, Boon knows that he could not be separated with his mother and his very filial to her, but now, his emotions had got the better of him and he starts to talk very rudely to mother. When mother says she does not need Boon, he says "If not for me, you die here also nobody know" this shows that Boon starts to hurl hurtful comments at mother, words that he would not say in the past to mother. This shows how Boon was overwhelmed with annoyance at anger on mother's persistence of not moving out with caused him to be so rude to her.

Theme: Progress

Progress causes conflict

Boon is very determined to seek change and move out of the house, and mother is very determined to stay in her old house. This thus starts a conflict of differing opinions between mother and son, which can affect their relationship. After failing to persuade mother to move out of the house, Boon

starts to disrespect mother and When mother and Boon started to quarrel, she says “Le zao lah!” and Boon replied “Fine! I’m going!” In the past, Boon knows that he could not be separated with his mother and his very filial to her. However, due to mother’s denial of progress, conflict between Mother and Boon has caused them to hurt each other, even to the point where they go their separate ways. Even if it is just for one night, this deeply impacts their relationship, which is now one of conflict, hurt, hostility and without trust. Thus the process of seeking progress and change can cause conflict.

Theme: Materialism

Materialism can cause conflicts in relationships. Boon aspires to chase for material wealth by wanting to persuade mother to move out of the house. He finds his mother’s memories inconvenient and does not see the objects in his house as memories and valuable. He is discontented with life and aspires to achieve a better house and more money. He is unable to appreciate what Mother sees as memories in the house. + points from progress causes conflict

Property is an indicator of one's status

Boon constantly tries to persuade mother to move out of the old house so that he can attain a better house. He feels the need to do so as he feels that people around him like the agents are looking down on him for still living in an old house. He also envies his fellow agents who can stay in new houses and villas. To him, attaining a modern and luxurious house equates to success in life. He is then able to impress others around him and feel good about his high status as a rich person.

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Act 1 Scene 17

Similarity between Boon and Father - ambitious and desire to attain SG Dream
Mother and Father have different wants

What are your impressions of young mother?

Young mother loves father very much. She is upset that young father is constantly going overseas because she wants young father to always stay by her side. When Father tells Mother he needs to go to Bangkok for another business trip, she “pounds even harder”, her way of showing her discontentment and venting her frustration and anger without hurting Father because she cannot stop him too. She is very upset that he has to go for business trip because at the end of the day all

she wants is to spend time with him. When young father tries to pacify mother and tells her that he would buy the dried mangoes that she liked for her, she said “Everything also don’t want” This shows that even when she was able to get to eat her dried mangoes that could only be found at Bangkok, she would still rather not let father go to overseas, highlighting how much she wanted father to stay in Singapore. Thus through her unwillingness to see father leave for Bangkok, I have the impression that she is very devoted.

Young mother dislikes change. She treasures what she has at the present and wishes things to stay the way they are forever. When young father suggested to buy the dried mangoes for mother, mother said, “Everything also don’t want.” Young mother does not want father to spend money on her but more importantly, she wants father and Boon to stay by her side, and does not want father to leave for Bangkok. Young mother also said, “Don’t anyhow waste money. I don’t want to go anywhere.” This suggests that mother is contented with what she has at present and does not wish for change or new experiences. She prefers things as the way they are now. Thus I have the impression that mother dislikes change.

What are your impressions of young father?

Young father loves young mother very much. He tells mother “You like the dried mango there right? I bring back something for you lah.” He tries to appease her with materialistic goods, being nice to her to make her less angry, he knows mother likes it so he is willing to give it to her.

Young father also told her “If things work out this time, I tell you, you are going to live like a queen.” A queen lives in a palace with a grand house, servants, and can afford anything, does not need to do work, and is well looked after by everyone surrounding her. He puts in effort and works hard to make his wife happy and wants the very best for her. Making her happy is a driving force and centre of life in him. The goals and the Singapore Dream he wishes to achieve is for mother to live comfortably. Young father also says, “I’ll always come home, as long as you are here.” He reassures mother by telling her that he will always come back to find her no matter what. This love for mother is why mother stayed in the house for fifteen full years patiently waiting for father’s return. Mother is still waiting for Father to return because she believes he would. Thus, through the words he says to make mother happy and accept that he is going overseas, I have the impression that young father loves young mother very much.

Young father is ambitious. He wants to make a big change in Mother’s live and let her live happily and comfortably. Young father told her “I got a good feeling about this trip. If things work out this time, I tell you, you are going to live like a queen.” A queen lives in a palace with a grand house, servants, and can afford anything, does not need to do work, and is well looked after by everyone surrounding her. This smile highlights the big dreams that father ambitions to give to mother. He believes that just by one business trip, he is able to change Mother’s live and provide her with happiness. Mother replies, “Xiao ah. You think so easy ah.” Young father grins, but continues singing. It shows that he has high hopes and sincerely believes he would be able to achieve his goal. Thus he is ambitious.

Young father is very materialistic. Money is very important to him and he has a strong desire to obtain huge sums of money. He considers what she likes and tries his best to keep her happy, not only providing her with material needs. The material things that he wants to give Young Mother are beyond the reach of an ordinary working class man that he is, although he does say that it is contingent upon his being able to “make enough money”. The fact that he thinks that they are proof of his love for her shows how he views material things. To Young Father, being able to provide material possessions is proof of his love for his wife.

What are your impressions of their relationships?

Young mother and young father share a loving relationship. This can be seen through their caring and looking out for one another. When young father tells young mother that he would be going overseas for business, young mother says “why must you keep going to Bangkok?” This shows that mother wanted to father to stay by her side. She loves young father very much and does not want to be separated from father and thus was upset at father even though he was going Bangkok for business purposes. he is worried that young father may leave and not return forever. Young father going overseas meant that she would not be able to look out for him and be next to him. Young father could see that young mother was not happy with him. Instead of arguing with young mother for being unreasonable as he was going overseas to do business, young father tries to pacify mother and tells her that he would buy the dried mangoes that she liked for her. This shows how he tried to allow mother to feel less angry at him and tries to make her happy by promising to give her something she likes. Afterwards, when young father started singing “One Small Umbrella” “young mother tries to remain stern, but after a while she relents and smiles” Even though both of them have disagreements, they always try to understand each other and give in to each other, showing their love for one another.

They understand each other very well. When Father tells Mother he needs to go to Bangkok for another business trip, she “pounds even harder”, her way of showing her discontentment and venting her frustration and anger without hurting Father because she cannot stop him too. Even though mother does not essay it aloud, father understands mother very well and realises she is not happy. He then tries to make her feel better by telling her all his ambitions to give her a better life. Young father told her “I got a good feeling about this trip. If things work out this time, I tell you, you are going to live like a queen.” A queen lives in a palace with a grand house, servants, and can afford anything, does not need to do work, and is well looked after by everyone surrounding her. This smile highlights the big dreams that father ambitions to give to mother. He believes that just by one business trip, he is able to change Mother’s live and provide her with happiness. Mother replies, “Xiao ah. You think so easy ah.” Young father grins, but continues singing. It shows that he has high hopes and sincerely believes he would be able to achieve his goal. Young father also says, “I’ll always come home, as long as you are here.” He reassures mother by telling her that he will always come back to find her no matter what. This love for mother is why mother stayed in the house for fifteen full years patiently waiting for father’s return. Mother is still waiting for Father to return because she believes he would. Thus both mother and father are able to understand each other feelings without the need to communicate them verbally. They also know how to make each other feel better, highlighting their close relationship.

Themes:

Family can provide unconditional love

He tries his best to make mother happy by spending all his money that he had to give her a better life. When young father tells young mother that he would be going overseas for business, young mother says “why must you keep going to Bangkok?” This shows that mother wanted father to stay by her side. She loves young father very much and does not want to be separated from father and thus was upset at father even though he was going Bangkok for business purposes. She is worried that young father may leave and not return forever. Young father going overseas meant that she would not be able to look out for him and be next to him. Young father also told her “If things work out this time, I tell you, you are going to live like a queen.” A queen lives in a palace with a grand house, servants, and can afford anything, does not need to do work, and is well looked after by everyone surrounding her. He puts in effort and works hard to make his wife happy and wants the very best for her. Making her happy is a driving force and centre of life in him. The goals and the Singapore Dream he wishes to achieve is for mother to live comfortably.

Chase for singapore dream encourages a materialistic mindset

Young father is materialistic and desires to obtain the Singapore Dream. Money is very important to him and he has a strong desire to obtain huge sums of money. He told her “If things work out this time, I tell you, you are going to live like a queen” This highlights the big dreams that father ambitions to give to mother. His aim of going for the overseas trip was to earn heaps of money so that he could provide mother with a better life. He is very ambitious and has high expectations of the overseas trip, and has high hopes that he will be able to let mother live luxuriously.

Memories have an impact on one's future

Young father promised mother that “I’ll always come home, so long as you are here”. The memory of him reassuring mother with this sentence was the biggest reasons mother was still reluctant to leave the house even after 15 years. She still clings to the belief that father would definitely come home one day because she is still there. This is also why she is still unwilling to move out of the house even though majority has already been achieved. He will always come back to find her no matter what. This love for mother is why mother stayed in the house for fifteen full years patiently waiting for father’s return, clinging on to the believe that father is still alive. This impact is seen when Jeremiah broke the truth to her, she cannot come to terms that Father has passed away. Mother tells Boon that Jeremiah is a “lousy liar”. She uses it as a coping mechanism to convince herself that father has not died. She strongly believes that Father is still alive and is unable to let him go. she is unable to accept the fact that father is truly gone forever, no longer living on Earth, and rejects any idea of father being a corpse.

Act 1 Scene 18

Jeremiah experiences character development

Jeremiah is:

- persistent
- sensitive
- empathetic

What are your impressions of Jeremiah?

Jeremiah is persistent. He is determined to identify the corpse's family even though the corpse had not been cooperating with him during his previous visits with the corpse. When he greeted the corpse, he said, "It's me again" when the corpse told him that he already said go away, Jeremiah said, "I think I may be able to help you" This shows that even when the corpse was not cooperating with Jeremiah during his first visit, he is still determined to help the corpse and makes another trip down in hopes for gathering more knowledge of the corpse. When the corpse asked Jeremiah to go away, he said 'Look, I just need a name. Your family's name. Something.' 'There's got to be something.' This shows that Jeremiah tries his best to nudge the corpse to attempt to recall any detail in his life. He strongly believes that the corpse will be able to recall and does not back down even when the corpse repeatedly tells him that he remembers nothing. Thus through his single-minded aim of helping the corpse by identifying his family, I can see that Jeremiah is persistent.

Jeremiah is empathetic. Despite not personally knowing how it feels like, Jeremiah still tries to relate to those on the ground. When the corpse told him that he did not want Jeremiah to help him with the cremation, Jeremiah said, "so if you can identify your family. If they come and claim you, they could request for reburial instead of cremation." Jeremiah is compassionate and truly cares for the public. He feels that both living and dead carry the same amount of importance and the same priority should be placed on them. The living should also be considerate to the dead, thus he attempts to ensure that the corpse is also given the freedom and right to choose if he wanted to undergo cremation and reburial. He respects the corpse's desire of not wanting to be cremated and thus tries to help him avoid cremation by making the effort to prompt the corpse to recognise his family. When Jeremiah was explaining to the corpse, he corpse says "Hot" "Burning", which were vague memories he started to regain. As the corpse starts to recall the feelings he felt during the accident, Jeremiah continues to probe in and describes how he felt for the corpse to relinquish and hopefully get some of his memories back. When the corpse refuses to cooperate, Jeremiah says, "I should be in my ivory tower right now, swivelling around my ergonomic chair, sipping my mocha frappuccino. Not out here, swatting like a frog and sweating like a pig," Even though Jeremiah could just choose to work comfortably in his workplace, he took the initiative to help those in the ground and improve their situation. He feels that helping others is more important than just going by the book and getting his job over and done with. He is more concerned about the people and this made him go a step further to sacrifice his comfort level to help the corpse find his identity and family. He genuinely has a heart to serve, and thus is empathetic.

Themes:

Memory gives identity

Family is where one belongs to and a clue to their identity. The home address the corpse lived while he was still alive is also a clue to identity as it is where he existed and lived, making many memories there. "Don't have! Got no home. Nothing!" However, the corpse is nameless, does not remember anything about itself or anything in its life, does not belong to anyone, has no connection to anyone, no family to tell his background. He does not have any memories because he cannot remember

anything, and thus has no clue to who he was and the family belonged to. This causes him to be someone with an incorrect name thus losing his identity.

In other scenes, Jeremiah's life is marked by family tragedy. Having lost his parents in a gruesome car accident, he lost his family at a young age and feels the sting of not having a family. He has no relationships with anyone other than at work, purely for business, no one to link with as parents who were his only form of connection are now gone. This tragic memory and incident caused him to miss his family so much that it has shaped him into a person with an identity of wanting to know how it feels to die, and to experience the pain that his parents went through. His identity emphasises the reason why he wanted to help those on the ground, because he felt that both living and dead carry the same importance, and cares for his parents which he missed dearly. The memories that the corpse forgot and the tragic memories that Jeremiah experienced affects the way they act shows that memories give one's identity.

Pursuit of progress comes with a cost

Because of change, the government has come up with the new burial system. Corpse cannot be buried underground anymore as the space is needed to build new houses for the living. These corpses would thus have to undergo changes and be cremated. When Jeremiah tries to tell the corpse that he has to be reburied, the corpse says "I already said go away!" To the corpse, Jeremiah is disturbing him. Jeremiah wants to help the corpse of change. Thus because of change, the living must utilise resources they have for progress to occur. This means that the dead have to sacrifice their space for the living, causing them to get disturbed and not allowing them to have a place on earth. To them, exhumation means that they will get forgotten. The process of construction has brought disturbance to the corpse, not allowing them to rest in peace. Thus even though some may see progress as an opportunity for new hopes and dreams for better lives, progress always comes with a cost, which in this case is disturbing the dead, not allowing to rest peacefully.

Progress is not welcomed by everyone

Because of change, the government has come up with the new burial system. Corpse cannot be buried underground anymore as the space is needed to build new houses for the living. These corpses would thus have to undergo changes and be cremated. When Jeremiah tries to tell the corpse that he has to be reburied, the corpse says "No, don't want!" Corpse does not want to be cremated due to the 15 year exhumation policy. This also brings out the point that loved ones might not want the dead to be moved from their resting place to be cremated just to make way for new developments for the government.

Act 1 Scene 19

What are your impressions of Boon?

Boon is jealous of others living in the beautiful new condos. He wishes to live in a luxurious, modern house but cannot do so because of mother's stubbornness to enbloc the house. When Boon was talking to agent 2, he said, "Every day I got to go and see these beautiful new condos, smelling of fresh paint and varnish. And then every night I got to go back to that place, that pigsty...where even the bloody walls smell like her armpits! Wah lau!" A pigsty is a pen or enclosure for pigs. Boon compares the new condo to his house which he calls a pigsty, showing that in his eyes, his house is extremely untidy and dirty, a place where no one wants to live in. He then compares the walls to the

smell of his mother's armpits, highlighting that he feels the whole house is sickening to him and that he yearns to live in a place which is not dilapidated. Boon's exasperation further highlights his strong desire to move out of the house given his poor house conditions. When agent 2 asks about the walls smelling like Boon's mother's armpits, Boon said, "Why is the grass so damn green on the other side?" This highlights the fact that the new condos which Boon dreamt of living in appealed to him so much that he started to get angry at mother's stubbornness and refusal to leave Zion mansion. Thus through Boon's desire to live in a newer house but is restricted by mother shows that he is jealous.

Boon is materialistic. Boon desires to move out of the house so that he can attain material wealth to live in modern houses. He chases materialism so much that his emotions start to get the better of him when mother still does not move out of the house and expresses his annoyance at mother's unreasonable reasons for not moving out to agent 2. When agent 2 suggested him to live in the "Paradise Gardens show flat", it shows how the chase for the Singapore Dream has caused both of them to prioritise status and wealth over homes. The showflat is merely a place to showcase the potential flat that buyers may be interested in. It is not a home or a place to live in. The fact that agent 2 suggested to Boon to stay in the showflat showed how even a temporary place could make Boon content to live in, highlighting how obsessed both of them were in chasing for materialism. Thus, The Singapore Dream encourages a materialistic mindset. He tells agent 2, "I've had enough of her, and enough of that stupid house!" He chases materialism so much that his emotions started to get the better of him when mother still does not move out of the house and expresses his annoyance at mother's unreasonable reasons for not moving out. He feels that his reason for moving out of the house to gain materialism is so much more reasonable than mother's hard work she put into the house. Thus Boon is materialistic.

Theme:

The chase for The Singapore Dream can cause conflicts in relationships. Boon is determined to move out of the house so that he can attain material wealth to live in modern houses. He tells agent 2, "I've had enough of her, and enough of that stupid house!" He chases materialism so much that his emotions started to get the better of him when mother still does not move out of the house and expresses his annoyance at mother's unreasonable reasons for not moving out. He feels that his reason for moving out of the house to gain materialism is so much more reasonable than mother's hard work she put into the house. When Boon was talking to agent 2, he said, "And then every night I got to go back to that place, that pigsty...where even the bloody walls smell like her armpits! Wah lau!" His chase for materialism caused him to throw an insult of the walls smelling like mother's armpits, indirectly connoting that mother's armpits are smelly. The hurtful words about mother and the house were said because mother's stubbornness stopped Boon from chasing materialism and living in a luxurious and modern house. Having to be stuck in an old house full of mother's memories upsets Boon. Thus the chase for The Singapore Dream can cause conflicts in relationships.

Act 1 Scene 20

Important scene as it shows a turning point

Boon's remembers the traumatic memories that father made him go through, these memories scarred him for life

Mother's and Boon's life was all shattered because of this incident

What are your impressions of Young Father?

Father loves mother very much. He does not want mother to know that he is owing money because he knows she will strongly disapprove. At the start of the scene, "Young Father is busy painting over some ugly red scrawls on the wall". As Father does not want to tell Mother about borrowing money, he paints over the red paint to hide from Mother. In an attempt to cover up for his mistakes, he uses paint to conceal the vandalism, hoping the Young Mother will not notice.

When Boon said that Mother would be so angry, father said, "You better not tell her, or else..."

He just doesn't want her to worry about paying back the loan sharks, even if it is having to bear the whole burden on his own, to the point where he threatens Boon with a consequence because he does not want him to spoil his plans. This shows how desperate and insistent his plans to work are, even if his sons has to bear the burden of foiling it. He does not mind having to shoulder the problems on his own, as long as Mother leads a carefree life. Thus I have the impression that Young father loves and cares for mother very much.

Young father has a bad temper which he cannot control. When Boon provokes and challenges Father's emotions by kicking the pot of paint, father loses his temper. He roars at him with anger, "catches him, and drags him to the backyard, with a huge chain and padlock" and "forces him to his knees." This highlights the fact that father cannot control himself and mete out a punishment that is totally not in proportion to what Boon did. When Boon struggles to let go, father said, "You see if you're still so cocky after I'm done with you." "I don't care what you want." he threatens Boon in an intimidating manner.

Father is impulsive. He does not think of the consequences of his actions. At the beginning of the scene, "Young Father is busy painting over some ugly red scrawls on the wall" This highlights his recklessness of borrowing money and reflects that he does not think through how he was going to return the money before borrowing. Furthermore, he did not spare any thought for young mother's reaction and opinion during the circumstance where he could not pay off his debts. He did not consider the stress of having loan sharks chasing him to return the money back and the hardships of returning the money and interest on time. He did not want mother to know that he could not pay his debts because he knew she would strongly disapprove. Thus he tries to avoid and erase the markings on the wall. When Father was angry at Boon, he said, "You see if you're still so cocky, after I'm done with you" he then "drags Boon over so they are right in front of the tree and forces him to his knees." His assertive actions again amplifies that he does not think of the consequence of his punishment, how Boon would feel hearing the hurtful and harsh words, the sufferings that Boon had to endure, and how mother would react to his severe punishment. Young Father did so out of a fit of anger and thus does not give thought to the results of his actions. Thus I have the impression that he is impulsive.

Father is strict. When Boon tries to anger Father, he said, "You get into the house." The use of imperative verbs suggest that it is an order from Young Father to Boon. He expects Boon to listen to what he says, even if it is without explanations. He doesn't expect retaliation from young Boon. When Boon finally kicked the pot of paint which was the last straw for Father, Father wanted to "Teach" him "a lesson he won't forget". He hopes for Boon to learn from his mistakes, and expects him to behave in a certain way. Boon stuck his nose into things that did not concern him, when

Young Father was already at the edge of exploding, agitated. Father puts down Boon's rudeness immediately. Boon was persistently disobedient, and disregarded the threat of being scolded, continuing to argue and point out his wrongs. Thus young father is strict in educating his son.

What are your impressions of Boon?

Boon is irritating. He challenges his father's emotions and repeatedly comments on his actions to annoy him. When Boon asked father what he was doing, father told him to go into the house and mind his own business. However, Boon continued asking, "But why like that?" "I never do anything wrong." Even though he knows that father was not in a good mood and going inside the house was what he should do to stop father from getting angrier, he chose to stay and continue to find out what father was doing. He knew father did not want him to see him painting over the red scrawls, but continued to push father even more to make him angry. When Boon finally goes into the house, he "kicked over the pot of paint" After already making father very angry by questioning him and being defiant, Boon purposely kicked over the pot of paint, provoking father even more. Young father was already in an anxious state trying to cover the red paint but Boon continuously tries to annoy him and makes him furious. Thus, I have the impression that Boon is irritating.

Boon is disrespectful towards father. He does not listen to what father tells him to do. When father tells him to get in the house, he said, "But I never do anything wrong." Boon does not listen to his parents and even tries to talk back to father by stating that he did not see the need for him to go back to the house even after being ordered by an elder. When Boon tries to blame father for the mess that he has got himself into, he said, "How I know? You should know better than me." Boon does not heed father's advice of going into the house and further tries to aggravate father by rudely hinting to him that it was his own reckless actions of borrowing money that put him in such a situation. Thus, Boon is disrespectful towards father.

Boon is hurting physically and mentally from father's punishment. When Father was angry at Boon, he "drags him to the backyard, with a huge chain and padlock. Boon struggles." His assertive actions highlights the sufferings that Boon had to endure. Chains and padlocks are usually used to imprison criminals, showing how Boon was unable to escape physically, stuck to the tree. Metaphorically, Boon is also chained to his past memories, scars and emotional burden that he cannot shrug away. When father tied him up, Boon says, "I hate you! Leave me alone! I don't want! Don't want!" This repetition amplifies that Boon was trying to call for help to get him away from his pain but to no avail. This leaves Boon tied to the house and sees the house as a place he cannot free himself from. Thus, he is hurting physically and mentally from father's punishment.

Themes:

Memories have an impact on one's future. It can be negative, scarring and traumatic.

The memory of his father has scarred Boon. An unpleasant traumatic experience with his father has scarred his memory with his father. In this flashback scene, Boon shouted to young father, "I hate you! I hate you! Leave me alone!" Boon remembers the horrifying experience of being tied up to a tree and links all his suffering to young father who caused him so much pain. The incident of father tying Boon up to a tree, causing him to suffer so much pain has resulted in the bad impression that Boon has of father. In his heart, his father is an evil and cruel person. It blurred all pleasant times he

might have had at Zion mansion, so much that he wanted to leave the house as soon as possible because the house reminds him of father all the time.

Family can foster strong loyalty.

Family has shaped him to be unable to leave his mother for his own interests. Filial piety and love towards his mother leaves Boon tied to Zion mansion, against his wishes. It has prevented him from pursuing his own interests because of his close relationship with his mother. He has created deep bonds with his mother that it has become an obstacle to his own progress. When Boon was tied up to the tree, mother's "arms were full of Magnolia milk and tissue boxes and Mopiko cream." "She looked like shit" "Even...worse than me" Mother stood by Boon and tried her best to ease the suffering of his pain. She tried to soothe Boon by giving him mopiko to ease the itchiness from the mosquitoes. It pained mother when she empathised with her son and seeing him in such a dire state, so much that it affected herself and made her want to suffer with Boon too. Boon was engulfed with suicidal thoughts when he was constantly punished and abused by Father. However he also saw how much mother loved and cared for him. Because Boon could not bear to leave Mother or make her upset, he continued to live for her. From this, it can be seen that Boon loves Mother a lot, and would endure any type of pain for her. All those years which Mother took care of Boon and sacrificed so much for him made Boon indebted to her. He saw how hard his mother worked to keep the house and warded off the loan sharks and cleaned walls. He knew that he could not ever be like his father and abandon his mother. This shaped Boon to always stay by mother to protect her and to ensure she is happy. He wants to bring Mother along wherever he goes and will always look after his mother. He still lives in dilapidated Zion mansion with her, no matter how desperately he wishes to be free of the house. Although Boon could have chosen to simply leave home, he did not do so in worries of something happening to mother, with no one around to help her. He cannot bear to abandon Mother and leave her to fend for herself. Thus, family has shaped Boon to become a filial son who does not leave Mother alone because of the strong bond between the both of them and the desire to ensure that Mother is safe by his side.

Pursuit of materialism can cause reckless behaviour

Father is impulsive and reckless when he pursues materialism. He does not think of the consequences of his actions. At the beginning of the scene, "Young Father is busy painting over some ugly red scrawls on the wall" This highlights his recklessness of borrowing money and reflects that he does not think through how he was going to return the money before borrowing. Furthermore, he did not spare any thought for young mother's reaction and opinion during the circumstance where he could not pay off his debts. He did not consider the stress of having loan sharks chasing him to return the money back and the hardships of returning the money and interest on time. Thus when father left, mother had to deal with the loan sharks by herself. It was difficult for mother after father left. She had to put in lots of effort to clean the once-polished walls, showing that Father's actions do have consequences and these consequences were placed on mother to carry. Father had unknowingly placed the responsibility of his actions on mother, causing her to carry the burden and constantly live in fear of when the loan sharks would attack again.

Pursuit of materialism can cause someone to neglect family bonds.

When Father was angry at Boon, he said, "You see if you're still so cocky, after I'm done with you" he then "drags Boon over so they are right in front of the tree and forces him to his knees." Because of

this strong desire for materialism which caused him to be involved in a situation with the loan sharks, his assertive actions again amplifies that he does not think of the consequence of his punishment. Young father was so caught up in trying to hide his mistakes that he neglected how Boon would feel hearing the hurtful and harsh words, the sufferings that Boon had to endure, and how mother would react to his severe punishment. He did not think about how Boon would view him as a father after this incident. Thus, father's desire for materialism caused him to be impulsive and failed to consider his bonds with his son.

Pursuit of materialism can cause conflicts within family

Loss of one's relationship

The red scrawls were on the wall because father could not return the money to the loan sharks. He had been too focussed on gaining material wealth that he failed to consider that fact that he may not be able to return the money, causing the loan sharks to indirectly disturb his family and people whom he loved. The symbolism of the "ugly red scrawls" is disfiguring and tarnishing, ruining mother's precious wall with a "stain". Father can try to paint it white, but it will just be temporary because the loan sharks would come back and repaint it. It shows how father's mindset of borrowing money and not returning became a stain in his relationship with mother and Boon, and can also cause his reputation to be affected. Because of the loan sharks, he had an argument with Boon where his emotions got the better of him and he meted out a punishment totally disproportionate to what Boon did. As a result, Boon saw his father as a horrendous person who is not afraid to kill his own son. This reflects the emotional and physical pain father, who was someone who loved him, made Boon feel. It had scared him and caused him to feel hate towards his father. It was difficult for mother after father left. Boon saw mother scrubbing walls and saw the effort and pain she put in to clean the walls. Thus this made Boon angry at father as he assumed that he abandoned mother and him to escape from his debts and troubles, leaving the loan sharks behind for mother to deal with. Father lost his relationship between mother and son because of his materialism. Thus because of this drive for materialism, he strained the relationship with his son.

Act 2

Sc1: Memory of loan sharks visiting the house

Sc2: Boon with Father as his conscience at the showflat

Sc3: Director mocks Jeremiah because of his site report

Sc4: Boon's monologue about being chained to the tree

Sc5: Director and Colleague marketing the columbarium

Sc6: Jeremiah's third meeting (pt. 1) with corpse, telling corpse about the columbarium and his parents

Sc7: Mother's conversation with Male Neighbour

Sc8: Boon's fight with Male Neighbour + Mother cleaning up Boon + another argument

Sc9: Jeremiah's third meeting (pt 2.) with corpse, corpse telling him about the fig tree

Sc10: Mother and Female neighbour second conversation, Female Neighbour sold house

Sc11: Jeremiah and Colleague figures out the fig tree, Jeremiah's argument with Director priorities

Sc12: Fourth argument between Boon and Mother on leaving the house

Sc13: Mother's dream on Father returning home

Sc14: Jeremiah finds Mother to explain situation but Mother in denial

Sc15: Fifth argument between Boon and Mother about Father's state and leaving house

Sc16: Boon chops the tree down

Sc17: Jeremiah's fourth meeting with corpse, corpse recounts accident

Sc18: Sixth argument between Boon and Mother on chopping down the tree and leaving the house

Sc19: Mother's monologue on the new house

Sc20: Jeremiah at cremation of corpse, corpse on Mother

Act 2 Scene 1

Symbolism - offensive words painted on the wall, threatening

Signifies disfiguring, tarnishing element

Father tries to erase and paint it over, but the loan sharks will paint it back again, shows that his act of borrowing money but never finding a way to return back can become a strain in their relationship, affecting not only his reputation but also people he love, including Boon and Mother.

Actions have consequences, leaving a stain, ruining the once clean polished white wall

What are your impressions of young mother?

Young mother is resilient when she dealt with the loan sharks. At the start of the scene, "young mother enters fearfully" "As expected, it is the loan sharks outside" "steeling herself, finally she gathers the courage to shout back" This was not the first time the loan sharks had come to find father. Deep down, young mother is worried and afraid of the loan shark. She is scared that she might not be able to deal with them. However, she reassures herself and gathers up the courage to face them. When the loan sharks still refused to leave, young mother said, "I warn you...I already call police ah! They'll be here in five minutes." When mother tries to think of weapons she said, "And...and...parang!" The ellipses in these evidences shows mothers fear and she desperately thinks of ways to scare the loan sharks away. When mother failed to chase away the loan sharks by explaining to them that young father was not here, she attempted to be quick thinking and thought of a way to threaten the loan sharks by calling the police in hopes of them leaving her house. She also pressurizes the loan sharks that the police would be coming shortly. Thus, young mother continue to put up a brave front and tries her best to scare the loan sharks away, not showing any signs of her fears even after the constant return of the loan sharks, thus showing that she is resilient.

Young mother is very protective of her house. She does not want the loan sharks to touch her house. When the loan sharks approached the house, young mother said "He's not here! I tell you, he's not here!" This repetition highlights the strong desire mother has for the loan sharks to quickly go away and not disturb Boon, her house and herself. She hopes that once the loan sharks realises that father is not in the house, they would leave, thus not damaging the house. When young mother realises that the loan sharks took their actions up a notch and were 'about to paint the wall', she said, "OI!!! Don't touch my walls! Don't you dare...I swear I'll kill you. I got a big pot of bak kut teh and I'm not afraid to use it. I also got parang, okay?" "I'll die before I let you paint on my walls again!"

mother suddenly gets defensive when she witnesses the loan sharks almost painting on the walls. Her house is so important to her that she places it above herself. She loves the walls of her house and thus tries to be intimidating in hopes of scaring the loan sharks away, leaving her walls white as they were at first. In order to protect her house, she rises to the occasion and does not back down or give in to the loan sharks. She even thought of all the weapons she could use to attack the loan sharks if they were to paint on her walls. This shows that her walls meant so much to her that she is willing to fight the loan sharks by herself in order for them not to paint on her walls. Thus I have the impression that she is very protective of her house.

Themes:

Pursuit of materialism can cause reckless behaviour (cause problems to family)

Pursuit of materialism can cause conflicts within family

Loss of one's relationship

Act 2 Scene 2

Father still has the authority, Boon still respects father

Boon is a figment of his subconscious (guilty/abandoned) He says he is not like father but he has the habits of father

What are your impressions of Boon?

Boon blames father for leaving mother. He faults father as the cause for mother's suffering. When young father told him, "You selfish boy. You don't know what you are doing to her.", Boon says, "How could you say that...after what you've done to us. You got no right to tell me what to do." Boon tells father that he is in no position to reprimand Boon, telling him that he left mother alone. To Boon, father was the person who suddenly left him and mother to fend for themselves, deal with the loansharks and father's debts. In Boon's eye, father abandoned them and left mother suffering and putting in so much effort to keep things together. When there is no reply from father, Boon says, "I am not like you. (defiantly) I won't be like you" Boon extremely disapproves father's action of leaving the house. Even though father is an elder to Boon, he talks backs to him and strongly puts his stand that he does not look up to father. This shows how much Boon blames father and sees father as a selfish person who avoids his problems and pushes it to his family.

Boon is fearful of father. When father realises he has been living here, Boon said "No... I... sorry. It won't happen again."/ "I understand"/ "I...no. It was just...I...uh...lost my key and..." From the ellipses present and he compliant tone of these quotes, Boon is displayed to be very timid and obedient in the presence of Father. Despite always calling him names in front of Mother, and seemingly hating him, from this, it suggests that Boon is actually still afraid of Father despite him already having disappeared for 15 years, This shows how strict Father was towards Boon and that Father was so fierce that Boon was still afraid of his disciplinarian ways 15 years after his disappearance.

Boon is materialistic. He desires to achieve the Singapore Dream so much that he is more than contented living in a showflat. At the start of the scene, "Boon gets wheeled out like an emperor on a

luxurious king-sized mattress” Boon marvels at the showflat’s luxurious design as he comments that ‘long zong si foreign import’. Boon’s thinking is very Singaporean as he thinks that items made overseas are more exquisite. His listing of the wonderful items shows his dedication to pursuing the Singapore dream. He is highly materialistic and superficial as he is very easily impressed by branded objects. Furthermore, he sees himself as an ‘emperor’ in the showflat. Boon looks forward to a decadent lifestyle, over-indulging himself as he aspires for physical satisfaction and luxury, living in a place with high standards and treating himself like royalty.

The showflat is merely a place to showcase the potential flat that buyers may be interested in. It is not a home or a place to live in. The fact that Boon chose to stay in the showflat and still is enjoying his life living as a luxurious king showed how even a temporary place could make Boon content to live in, highlighting how obsessed chases for materialism. He says, “Wah, shiok ah...I’ve died and gone to heaven. What else do you call this?” Boon left zion mansion because of an argument with his mother. He resorted to living in a showflat but is beyond happy with the place he is living because the showflat has luxurious furniture and modern designs, which is how Boon wants his own house to look like. The showflat is heaven to him, a place where he has always dreamt of living but never got an opportunity to do so. The showflat is a place with no memories created in it, but Boon stills treats it as his house and enjoys his life living materialistically in the showflat. Thus given the fact that Boon does not consider the memories made in zion mansion but aims for luxurious living lifestyles in search of homes, I have the impression that he is materialistic.

Themes:

Chase for singapore dream encourages a materialistic mindset

[Boon is materialistic]

Chase for singapore dream can cause someone to neglect family bonds

Boon is rude to mother. In other scenes, he is usually filial to mother, but the chase of materialism caused his emotions to overwhelm him. He tried his best to persuade mother to move out of the house by talking nicely to her and trying to negotiate with her multiple times. But after getting rejected, he starts to get annoyed and angry. Boon starts to disrespect mother. In the past, Boon knew that he could not be separated from his mother and was very filial to her, but now, his emotions had got the better of him and he ended up living in a showflat. Thus Boon’s desire of materialism cause him to fail to consider his relationship with mother, neglecting family bonds

Chase for singapore dream can cause conflicts in relationships

Boon’s character is parallel to father. Both of them chase materialism. Boon aspires to chase for material wealth by wanting to persuade mother to move out of the house. He finds his mother’s memories inconvenient and does not see the objects in his house as memories and valuable. He is discontented with life and aspires to achieve a better house and more money. He is unable to appreciate what Mother sees as memories in the house. Because of his chase for materialism, the argument with mother led Boon to leave the house, amplifying how the chase for materialism can cause conflicts within family.

Progress and change can cause differing opinions

Mother’s house, which is old and ratty, holds many memories and friendships forged in the neighbourhood. It also holds the kinship between the family members like Mother and Father in the past, as well as Boon and Mother in the present. The house has a so-called “personal touch”, in

which Boon refers to as the “smell of [Mother’s] armpits”. When Mother asked Boon to “taste the walls” she meant for Boon to feel the amount of effort placed into making the house her home. The home has endured Mother’s hardships of being a single mother, losing her husband, and being the sole breadwinner of the house, which is why Mother really values the house. However, Boon prefers the new condominiums, and finds it torturous to see the “beautiful new condos”, in the form of their showflats, while having to live in a “pigsty” himself. However, showflats are empty and fake representations of a house. It lacks the warmth existence of a family, or happy memories. Boon sees a cold, empty, and fake house as a “beautiful” home, with the smell of “fresh paint and varnish”, showing that he, representing the younger generation, prefers novelty and luxury, over the warmth of a home, and family. This contrasts with Mother, representing the older generation, who sees no importance for luxury and expensive items, and wishes to keep her happy memories in her old and ratty “pigsty” home.

Act 2 Scene 3

Director is superior while Jeremiah is the subordinate - top-down approach

What are your impressions of Jeremiah?

Jeremiah is submissive. He is very hesitant whenever he talks to director and is unconfident of his responses. When director questions Jeremiah’s site report quality, he says, “I know it’s a little unorthodox but...” “I understand but” “I was thinking of making another trip down. Just to clarify things. That might help.” This highlights that Jeremiah says that his own report is different, showing that he doubts his site report and is very uncertain when he tries to give the director a reason. Jeremiah constantly adds on to his previous sentences, which suggests that he is unconfident of what he himself is saying. He constantly tries to improve on what he said previously, as believing his previous sentences are not good enough, and tries to justify his own words and actions. The repetition of “but” before trailing off shows Jeremiah’s hesitation in speaking up in front of his superiors. Jeremiah lacks courage and self confidence to voice out his own thoughts in the presence of the Director. When Jeremiah tries to explain that he was trying to help the corpse and serve the public by reaching out to them, he said, “I understand but...” Director cuts him and said, “No buts.” Jeremiah gets interrupted by the director multiple times when he wants to reason his intentions and viewpoints to director. Jeremiah also does not stand up for himself and allows director to cut him off, thus showing that he is unconfident and submissive.

Jeremiah is empathetic. Despite not personally knowing how it feels like, Jeremiah still tries to relate to those on the ground and attempts to speak up for them in office. When director says, “I have never seen anything like this,” Jeremiah says, “I was thinking of making another trip down. Just to clarify certain things.” Even though director strongly disapproves of his multiple site visits and getting no outcome, he is still determined to make the effort to go to the cemetery and try to help the corpse find his family. There was no need for him to do so but he took the initiative. From this, it shows how Jeremiah is actually compassionate, and truly cares for the public. When director rushes Jeremiah and says that “Minister urgently needs the responses to the PQs by Friday”, Jeremiah says, “I understand but,” In order for Jeremiah to submit his site report for director to hand it over to the Minister, he needs to help the corpse find his family so the corpse do not need to be exhumed.

Jeremiah could have avoided all the trouble by directly sending the corpse for exhumation without listening to his opinion, but unlike the other civil servants, Jeremiah has the heart to serve the people. Thus, Jeremiah is empathetic and has a kind heart to help the corpse.

What are your impressions of director?

The director is dominating. She is very oppressive towards Jeremiah's actions in handling the situation and takes her stand of getting the responses to be submitted to the Minister done by Jeremiah very firmly. When director rushes Jeremiah and says that "Minister urgently needs the responses to the PQs by Friday", Jeremiah says, "I understand but," The tone she used was very commanding and she is not affected by any other factors that Jeremiah wanted to raise. To her, Jeremiah's reasons and opinions are all unreasonable and does not even try to listen to his perspective. When Jeremiah says he understands the tight deadline of the PQs, director said, "No buts. I want you at your desk, working! Not scampering around cemeteries, getting a suntan!" the authoritative tone she uses highlights the control she has towards Jeremiah, ordering him to complete what she tasked him to do. Thus she is very firm in her words and allows no exception and excuses from Jeremiah, which makes her dominating.

Director is practical. To her, the site report is a very simple and quick task. She does not see why Jeremiah takes such a long time to complete a site report which was still not up to her standards. When Jeremiah says "I was thinking of making another trip down. Just to clarify certain things." She interrupts by saying, "Enough already! You want to write a sequel to this or what?" She does not care and sees why Jeremiah is so hesitant to make the report. She prioritizes the more important and urgent tasks and instructs Jeremiah to spend less time on the site report which is not as essential as the responses to be submitted to Minister. She expects him to follow what she says and spring into action. When Jeremiah asks her about the site report, she says, "screw the site report." This amplifies the fact that she is impatient that Jeremiah continuously dwelling on the site report that she orders him to stop all work involving the site report. In this way, Jeremiah can start working on the responses to be submitted to Minister and hand it to director on time.

From this, it can be inferred that the Director does not care about the feedback given by the public minority directly affected by the policy implementation. Instead, the Director is concerned about the minister (a higher ranking official), chasing him for the answers to the Parliamentary Questions. This then also makes the play more relatable to the audience as they can relate to the cold demeanor and attitude of the government officials, who only care for the higher-ranking official. The government's job is technically to serve the public. However, many have lost sight of that, and instead, strive to please the top-ranking officials, like the Ministers, or Members of Parliament.

Act 2 Scene 4

Many literary devices

Symbolism of tree: constant memory of what happens, reminding Boon of the traumatic pain father brought upon him

What are your impressions of Boon?

Boon is very repulsed by the memories of the past. He feels his past is a burden and wants to be set free. At the beginning of the scene, he says "fifteen years later. And I am still hanging there, chained to that bloody tree. Can still feel the rough bark scraping against my back. The iron chains, warm and heavy against my flesh. And the ants. The ants are still crawling up my thigh, and the mosquitoes growing fat on my blood...wah...buay ta han." Boon is traumatized by the horrible punishment father made him go through. After so many years, he cannot forget the incident. He remembers it so clearly that he could vividly describe his traumatic, negative experience with all the little details, insects and the immense pain he felt. The sensory imagery amplifies how Boon could still experience the memory fresh and new, showing the physical and emotional pain the memories had affect him. He then continues to say "And the pain in my arm where he grabbed me. I thought I was going to die that night. On that tree." "I wanted to show him what a monster he was" Boon clearly remembers the aggressive force father used, and Boon likened him to a monster when he tied him up. Boon feels that he feels hurt and broken by his father. He is suffocated by the past and feels that he has no freedom, always being pulled back by that one specific tree in the backyard. He saw his father as a horrendous person who is not afraid to kill his own son. This reflects the emotional and physical pain father, who was someone who loved him, made Boon feel. It had scarred him and caused him to feel hate towards his father, depriving him of the other positive memories he could have potentially made in zion mansion. It highlights how even a positive relationship can be clouded by one traumatic, negative experience. He is unable to move on because he cannot let go of this memory. He is being stopped by past memories and pushed back, unable to proceed with life smoothly. Thus this shows that he is very repulsed by the memories of the past.

Boon is filial to mother. He was immensely touched by how mother stood by him the entire night and promised himself that he will protect mother no matter what. When Boon was tied up to the tree, mother's "arms were full of Magnolia milk and tissue boxes and Mopiko cream." "She looked like shit" "Even...worse than me" For the entire night Boon was suffering, mother tried her best to ease the suffering of his pain. She tried to soothe Boon by giving him mopiko to ease the itchiness from the mosquitoes. It pained mother when she emphathised with her son and seeing him in such a dire state, so much that it affected herself and made her want to suffer with Boon too. When Boon saw mother in such an awful state, he said "And I knew I couldn't do it." Boon knows that he will not leave his mother. He constantly tells himself that he could not ever be like his father and abandon his mother. After all the hard work and love mother devoted for the house and to him, Boon will always stay by mother to protect her and to ensure she is happy. He wants to bring Mother along wherever he goes and will always look after his mother. Although Boon could have chosen to simply leave home, he did not do so in worries of something happening to mother, with no one around to help her. He still lives in dilapidated zion mansion with her, no matter how desperately he wishes to be free of the house. He cannot bear to abandon Mother and leave her to fend for herself. He prioritises mother over his own dreams and aspirations, showing how important mother is to him and the filial piety he has towards mother.

Themes:

Memories have an impact on one's future. It can be negative, scarring and traumatic

[Boon is very repulsed by the memories of the past.]

Family can provide unconditional love

Family can foster strong loyalty

[Boon is filial to mother]

Act 2 Scene 5

Parallel to the advertisements to condominiums for the living - highlighting the cycles of life or death.

Ludicrous to market the columbarium - all about making money

Devoid of emotion - connection to the past advertisements

What are your impressions of the director and colleague?

The director and colleague are money-minded. Instead of listing the practical and realistic benefits of the columbaria, they use tactics similar to marketing a condo by presenting potential buyers with a wide variety of material gains, so that they can quickly achieve their aim of making money through the columbaria. As they started to advertise the columbaria, director said "I'm telling you it's all about location location location." To many Singaporeans, location of the house is one of the most important factors when it comes to buying a house. Parallel to the advertisements to condominiums for the living, director uses the material benefits buyers will get if they were to buy the columbaria, even when these material factors are not even essential reasons. Director proceeds to explain that "The Yishun Columbarium is conveniently located within the HBL heartland and is just a 10-minute walk away from the Yishun MRT Station." They put across the point that the columbaria is very convenient and accessible, but it is not a place for the potential buyers to live in, nor is it a place that they visit often. Thus it is unreasonable for them to market the columbarium using material gains in line to the Singapore Dream. They are ludicrous to market the columbaria in this way. This is solely because of the reason they want to make money by persuading as many people as possible to buy the columbaria, showing how money is so important to them and they are willing to do anything just to convince buyers to buy the columbaria.

The director and colleague are manipulative. They are marketing the columbaria but advertises it as though they are selling a condo. When they market the place, they said, "How about a panoramic view?" "From the upper storeys, one can even view the blue waters of Selectar Reservoir." A columbaria is a room or building with niches for funeral urns to be stored. The view is not a big reason why people would want to buy the columbaria, but is a huge reason when it comes to buying houses. The director and colleague understand how Singaporeans are living under the strong desire to attain the Singapore Dream that they have decided to include factors which people consider when buying their ideal house into marketing the columbaria. Furthermore, Director also used fanciful and sophisticated words such as "beautifully landscaped environment" "maximum natural cross-ventilation and natural skylight" Buyers will listen to these words and picture the ideal image of their columbarium in their own minds, persuading them even more to get the columbaria. This makes the columbaria be more attractive to the potential buyers, as they get tricked into all the benefits that the director and agent put across to buy the columbaria. This way, the buyers get exploited by them to buy the columbarium. Thus they are manipulative.

Themes:

Chase for singapore dream encourages a materialistic mindset

Director proceeds to explain that "The Yishun Columbarium is conveniently located within the HBL heartland and is just a 10-minute walk away from the Yishun MRT Station." These selling points have no real value or practical use. However, they are statements of luxury and thus are highly demanded by buyers. The agents then exploit the wants of potential buyers, using these useless features as selling points. This shows how one of the aspects of the Singaporean Dream is to constantly upgrade to something that represents the higher echelons of society.

[The director and colleague are money-minded.]

Pursuit of materialism can force people to make compromises

People's desire for materialism has caused change, which disturbs the corpses, preventing them from peacefully resting in their permanent resting place

Pursuit of progress comes with a cost (losing memories, tradition)

Displacement can cause loss of one's home

Displacement can cause loss of one's memories

Because of change, the government has come up with the new burial system. Corpse cannot be buried underground anymore as the space is needed to build new houses for the living. These corpses would thus have to undergo changes and be cremated, forcing them into the columbaria. Change caused the dead to be displaced and thus unable to have a permanent resting place. The living now aspire for new, modern, grand houses, which is why the construction occurs, bringing inconvenience and discomfort to the corpses. Thus even though some may see progress as an opportunity for new hopes and dreams for better lives, progress always comes with a cost, which in this case is disturbing the dead, not allowing to rest peacefully. This also brings out the point that loved ones might not want the dead to be moved from their resting place to be cremated just to make way for new developments for the government.

Act 2 Scene 6

Jeremiah:

Loves his family, loves his parents, takes time off to care for them, empathy

Traumatized by death

Looks for closure

Goes beyond his responsibilities

Change in corpse:

A1S6: Corpse replies Jeremiah with as few words as possible, does not show any interest, ask Jeremiah to leave him alone

A2S6: Conversations are more casual, opening up to one another, getting to know each other

What are your impressions of Jeremiah?

Jeremiah is seeking for closure. He is traumatised by his parents death and seeks closure by constantly asking the corpse how it felt when he died. When the corpse tells Jeremiah he should go to the library to study instead of the cemetery, he said, "last-minute mugging...combined with an overdue sense of filial piety." Jeremiah is greatly affected by the death of his parents that he still thinks of his parents. He is unable to let go of the past and wants to seek for closure. He takes the effort to come down to the cemetery, in hopes of finding more clues of the dead. Later in the scene, he asks the corpse, "About dying. I need to know. Please." Jeremiah's desperate tone amplifies how much he wanted to understand the corpse's feeling and thoughts and relate them back to his parents. His ability to communicate with the dead further drives his desire for closure. Thus, I have the impression that Jeremiah is seeking for closure.

Jeremiah is empathetic. He goes beyond his scope of responsibility to help the corpse because he hopes to help the corpse and allow the corpse to accept cremation. When Jeremiah tries to offer the corpse the brochures he brought, he said, "Just think of it as downgrading, you know... from landed property to a high-rise condo with a nice view. That's not so bad right?" Despite not personally knowing how it feels like, Jeremiah still tries to relate to those on the ground. There was no need for him to do so but he took the initiative. Jeremiah puts himself into the corpses shoes and tries to convince him that being cremated and moving into the columbaria is not necessarily a bad thing. He makes the effort to bring the brochures and makes an effort to come down to the cemetery. He continues to say, "You get a nice clean niche, much better than this muddy, mosquito-infested grave". He attempts to make the corpse feel better of the idea of cremation by stating the benefits of the columbaria. He does not want the corpse to be forced into cremation and thus tries his best to convince him to accept cremation. From this, it shows how Jeremiah is actually compassionate, and truly cares for the public. He feels that both living and dead carry the same amount of importance and the same priority should be placed on them. He genuinely has a heart to serve, and thus is empathetic.

Themes:

Memories have an impact on one's future. It can be negative, scarring and traumatic
[Jeremiah is seeking for closure]

Pursuit of progress comes with a cost

Progress is not welcomed by everyone

When Jeremiah visits the corpse, the corpse says, "Enough. First boom boom boom. Now click click click. Cha si lang. Go home, government man. You got no business here." Progress has caused disturbance to the corpses, preventing them from peacefully resting in their permanent resting place. Even though they are no longer living on Earth, they have to keep up with change and make way for the living. They have to sacrifice their land for the living.

Act 2 Scene 7

Pursuit of materialism is not wrong - only the OBSESSIVE pursuit is wrong

Pursuit of materialism can make people

-aggressive

-sensitive (whom may otherwise treat others colloquially nice and friendly)

Comparing

Flat - large scale, affects many households under the same block

Mother - 1 person desperately trying to stand her point, defend herself and stop the enbloc

What are your impressions of male neighbour?

Male neighbour is materialistic. He desires to attain the Singapore Dream and thus wants mother to sign the enbloc so that he could move to live in a new house. He tells mother, "Even the wiring is like shit like that. Every week short circuit at least one time. If it were a person, it'd be suffering from cancer." "Terminal cancer, the kind that you only got six months to live" Zion mansion is compared to human bodies, which are described to be suffering from serious illnesses. This shows how damaged and destroyed the building is, needing a great deal of maintenance. However, he feels that it is too old to be fixed and it is only a matter of time before it breaks down. On the other hand, The male neighbour is also extremely pragmatic and utilitarian as he finds the building useless due to its bad condition. Thus, he desperately wants to speed things up and persuade mother to sign the enbloc so he could move out and obtain the Singapore Dream. When male neighbour says "more than three quarters of us, are stuck." "I don't want them to be chained here until the whole bloody building falls down and buries them alive. This place may be good enough for you, but not for them." Male neighbour has children and moving into a modern and luxurious house is a sign of change for the better. The young wants new materialistic things and do not want to stay in dilapidated and old houses. He gets to live with more comfort and joy, thus yearning for the quick enbloc. Male neighbour starts to get more and more aggressive and threatens mother to sign the enbloc. His emotions get the better of him and thus ignores mother's side of the story, all because of his desire to attain the Singapore Dream. To him, material gains are much more important than the memories made in Zion mansion. Thus, male neighbour is materialistic.

Male neighbour is insensitive. He does not attempt to understand mother's concerns and says hurtful comments when mother did not want to sign the enbloc. When mother tells him he is wasting his time talking to her, he said, "It's just a building, Auntie. It's not like it's made of flesh and blood. It's just bricks and cement. What's the big deal?" "Do you know how selfish you are being?" Male neighbour feels that mother is very unreasonable and does not show any concern of mother's standpoint and try to empathise with where she was coming from. He only wants mother to sign the enbloc which is fuelled by his advance in life. When mother still refuses to give in, he says, "You're really too much, you know." Male neighbour starts to get more and more aggressive and hurls insulting comments to mother to sign the enbloc. His emotions get the better of him and thus ignores mother's side of the story. Thus he is insensitive.

What are your impressions of mother?

Mother is sentimental. She is very attached to her old memories and is not fond of progress. Male neighbour describes the house as, "Terminal cancer, the kind that you only got six months to live" He compares Zion mansion to a person who is sick, highlighting that it needs a great deal of maintenance. When male neighbour says mother can help him by signing the enbloc, she says, "I can't...I want to live here. I want to die here." Even though Zion mansion was very dilapidated, mother still refuses to move. She cherishes the simple things and is contented with the simple house

and the memories she has made. Thus she does not want to sell the house to move into a better house. When male neighbour says that the house is just bricks and cement, mother says, "My home. More than just bricks and cement." Even though Mother can shift houses and get lots of money to get a better house, she still prefers her old house. She is not moved by money. She is unwilling to restart life again in a new place as she protected the house, putting her life on the line, fighting so much and worked so hard for the house, creating many precious memories over the years. Moreover, she is still patiently waiting for father to come back to find her. Mother misses father who has been missing for the past fifteen years. However, she knows father will return because he promised to do so. If mother signs the enbloc, she will not be able to see father anymore because father will not know where she is. To her, the memories and bonds she created and shared with the people she loved in the old house means so much more to her than money. Unlike male neighbour, she feels that the house has significant value and thus she is very protective of the house.

Mother is stubborn. She rejects modernity and change and wants to stay in her past. When male neighbour tries to talk to mother, she tells him, "You're just wasting your time." Trying to convince mother to move out of the house is useless because she stands her ground firmly and will not let anyone change her mind. Even though she can choose an option of changing into living a better life in a better house, she does not want to move on with the rest and prefers to live in the environment she has been in for the past 15 years. When male neighbour says "more than three quarters of us, are stuck." "I don't want them to be chained here until the whole bloody building falls down and buries them alive. This place may be good enough for you, but not for them." Even with a large proportion of people wanting the enbloc, mother is unwilling to sell their flats, no matter how much convincing and persuasion, she firmly rejects the idea of progress. She wants to preserve the memories that she has already made, and does not see the need to create more. Mother does not bow down to the majority and opposes enbloc even when faced with persuasion to sign from her son, the committee and male neighbor. Therefore, Mother is stubborn and can be seen wanting to preserve her house as well as tradition.

To Mother, each of those "hideous" statues had a memory in her heart. Throwing the statues away means throwing away mother's valuable memories.

Themes:

Pursuit of progress comes with a cost (losing memories, tradition)

Progress is not welcomed by everyone

[Mother is stubborn.]

Progress may cause conflicts between older and younger generations.

Mother, representing the older generation, finds the house very valuable because of the amount of precious memories made in that place. In contrast, male neighbour finds the houses in Zion Mansion run-down and old, wishing to move into newer and better houses. They crave novelty (new things) and have a big future ahead of them. As they are the new generation, they have no strong attachment to Zion Mansion, and thus readily agree to sell the house. This differing opinions can thus stir up tensions between both sides. He tells mother, "Even the wiring is like shit like that. Every week short circuit at least one time. If it were a person, it'd be suffering from cancer." "Terminal

cancer, the kind that you only got six months to live” Zion mansion is compared to human bodies, which are described to be suffering from serious illnesses. This shows how damaged and destroyed the building is, needing a great deal of maintenance. However, he feels that it is too old to be fixed and it is only a matter of time before it breaks down. On the other hand, The male neighbour is also extremely pragmatic and utilitarian as he finds the building useless due to its bad condition.

[Male neighbour]

Displacement can cause loss of one's home

Displacement can cause loss of one's memories

Displacement can cause loss of one's relationships

Male neighbour complains to mother that “Just because of the few of you, the rest of us are stuck.” Constant development has forced people to sell their houses, and those who are reluctant to change are seen as a burden to the society. This minority group is then pressured to sell their unit. This also tells us that memories and sentimental values have to make way for continuous development. Memories are lost when there is change. Shows that the change and progress of the society can create tension, turning friendly neighbours into bitter enemies, highlighting that change can cause lost in relationships.

Chase for singapore dream can cause conflicts in relationships

[Male neighbour (whom may otherwise treat others colloquially nice and friendly)]

Act 2 Scene 8

Boon

Filial piety - he defends mother and helped mother treat her injury because he cares for mother and feels it is his duty to protect her, just like how she protected him all these years and raised him up, stayed beside and took care of Boon when he was chained to the tree
(Boon's and mother's relationship is mutual)

What are your impressions of Boon?

Boon is very protective of mother. He defends and stands up for mother when she was being threatened by the male neighbour. Male neighbour hurls insulting comments at mother, Boon “punches the male neighbour out cold.” “Mother goes and get some iodine to put on his wounds.” Boon is not afraid to take action against those who are disrespectful to his mother. He beats male neighbour and exerts lots of strength on him that he got hurt himself. This shows he was willing to get hurt himself by fighting to ensure that male neighbour does not come to disturb mother anymore. Mother later asks Boon, “I thought that one your best friend?” Boon said “No lah...Who ask him to call you names?” Previously, male neighbour was Boon's friend. However, because of the disrespect that he showed to mother, Boon forgets neighbour as his friend and saw him as someone who was hurting mother. Boon wanted to ensure no one speaks to mother in such a rude way, and does not tolerate anyone talking bad about mother. He comes back to her and defends her even after a quarrel, family will always defend one another and are the only ones with the authority to scold one another, will not tolerate anyone insulting Mother like male neighbour, can fight with each other as

much as they like but will not accept an insult offered to a family member, protective of one another. He puts his foot forward to stand up to anyone who bothers mother. Thus he is protective.

Boon is filial. Just like how she protected him all these years and raised him up, Boon stays beside mother and ensures she is safe and happy. At the start of the scene, mother says, "But then I like it when he's fighting for me." When mother was being threatened by the male neighbour, Boon defends mother because he cares for mother and feels it is his duty to protect her. He knows mother cannot beat the male neighbour up and thus helps her by exerting lots of his strength. Mother later asks Boon, "I thought that one your best friend?" Boon said "No lah...Who ask him to call you names?" Despite the differences and numerous fights between Mother and Boon, Boon still comes back and fights for Mother. In this case, he is going against his friend, who is the Male Neighbour, as he cursed Mother to die. This shows that no matter how angry Boon is at Mother, in the end he would still return home, and back to defend and protect Mother, displaying the unwavering love Boon has for Mother.

When mother says that the house is still father's, Boon said, "Don't talk rubbish! He's got no right to this house." Boon tried to explain to mother that it is not worth it waiting for father and she has the decision to decide if she wanted to enbloc the house. Regardless of mother's decision, Boon knows that he will not leave his mother. He constantly tells himself that he could not ever be like his father and abandon his mother. Boon will always stay by mother to protect her and to ensure she is happy. He wants to bring Mother along wherever he goes and will always look after his mother. Although Boon could have chosen to simply leave home, he did not do so in worries of something happening to mother, with no one around to help her. Boon fought for Mother although they have differing views, for example, on the en bloc sale and tensions were high. Even so, he is protective over Mother and does not want her to get bullied by Male Neighbour. Boon is not completely obsessed with the Singapore Dream yet, showing his internal struggle between chasing the Singapore dream and his conscience as he knows what really matters. This action borne out of love shows how he protects Mother as she means a lot to her. He still lives in dilapidated zion mansion with her, no matter how desperately he wishes to be free of the house. He cannot bear to abandon Mother and leave her to fend for herself. He prioritises mother over his own dreams and aspirations, showing how important mother is to him and the filial piety he has towards mother.

Boon cannot believe that Mother is still waiting for a man who has abandoned them, contrary to what he wants. When mother tells Boon that the house still belonged to father, he said "You worked like mad for it!" Boon feels that Mother has every right to the house since she sacrificed so much for it, so she should have the right to decide whether or not the house gets sold as the house is hers rightfully earned, Boon witnessed her suffering and knows how much she went through just to pay off the house, even if it had been a gift from Father. He also tells her, "Don't talk rubbish! He's got no right to this house." Boon feels that since Father left them to suffer for the house, Father is unable to claim the house any longer, viewing Mother's opinion about Father owning the house as invalid and making no sense at all, since Mother put her heart and soul into protecting the house, giving her the rightful ownership of this house.

When he finally realises that mother is still waiting for father, he said "That's it, isn't it? You're still waiting for him to come back! Le xiao ah!" Boon is flabbergasted about this, cannot believe the reason behind Mother's insistence to not sell the flat being longing for a man who has left them to

return, not having any of this, even calling Mother crazy for thinking so, Boon is furious. He does not understand why Mother would be so persistent in waiting for Father.

Themes:

Family can foster strong loyalty

When Boon tells mother that she worked so hard for the house, she said, "So what? It's still his house." Despite having gone missing for 15 years, Mother is still waiting in hopes that Father comes back home. She has never seen herself as the owner of the house, and refused to change the ownership of the house to become under her name, as Father was the one who bought the house for her, and she treasures the memories that she and her husband made in that house. This thus indicates how Mother is still clinging on strongly to the memories of her and Young Father and refuses to give up on the chance that he might one day come back. This also displays Mother's strong love for Father.

Family can provide unconditional love

[Boon]

Pursuit of progress comes with a cost (losing memories, tradition)

Progress is not welcomed by everyone

Act 2 Scene 9

What are your impressions of Jeremiah?

Jeremiah was living in denial. He is traumatised by his mother's death cannot come to the fact that it has happened. He tells the corpse, "When I held her hand that last time, it was still warm. I swear. I could sense her still." "I swear I could hear it" When someone dies, their body turns cold. Jeremiah strongly believes that his mother is still alive and is unable to let his mother go. He refuses to believe that he is no longer living on Earth. The repetition of the word "swear" shows how certain he was to convince himself and those around him that mother has not died. He tells corpse, "The memory imprinted on her retina even as it decayed. So I told everyone she was sleeping." Mother's death impacted Jeremiah so much that even as the retina decayed, Jeremiah could still see himself pleading to mother for her to wake up. He is in denial and refuses to admit that mother has passed away. Telling himself that she was just sleeping was his coping mechanism. Jeremiah is extremely desperate for mother to wake up, highlighting how much he wanted her to be alive. Thus, I have the impression that Jeremiah is living in denial.

Jeremiah cares for his mother very much. It pained him to hear his mother's screaming because it shows that she is suffering greatly in her death. When he talks to corpse, he said, "I don't know if it was from the coffin or somewhere inside my head, but it didn't stop. So please. Tell me." "Did I imagine it?" Jeremiah is concerned about mother and thinks of how she would feel while being cremated. His imagination shows that he pictured mother hurting in pain when she was covered in flames to be burnt. Thus this drove him to find out from the corpse if it was his own thinking or was it really how mother felt. When the corpse could not give him an answer, Jeremiah said, "At happy as ashes get, I guess. At least I don't hear her screaming anymore." Jeremiah is happy that mother is not in suffering in misery anymore, and pictures her to be resting in peace, which calms his heart. This further amplifies how mother's emotion affects Jeremiah's, showing that she is an important

person in his heart, and is concerned for her. Thus, I have the impression that Jeremiah loves and cares for mother very much.

Themes:

Loss of loved ones

Memories have an impact on one's future. It can be negative, scarring and traumatic. He is traumatised by his mother's death and cannot come to the fact that it has happened.

[Jeremiah was living in denial]

Family can foster strong loyalty

[Jeremiah cares for his mother very much]

When the corpse started to recall about his past life, Jeremiah asked him about his wife and he said, "Yes of course. I gave her one." The first memory the corpse regains years after his death is something regarding his wife. The corpse really cares about Mother. This shows that the corpse's top priority, even after death, is, and will always be his wife. He remembers that "She used to sit at the kitchen window and stare at it everyday." Corpse can remember everything that his wife used to do but could not even remember his own name. Forgetting one's own name is akin to forgetting one's identity. This shows that the corpse places his wife in higher regard than him, and that his wife is of utmost importance.

Act 2 Scene 10

Mother is not selfish; even though she is stubborn, she understands Boon wants to move on with his own life, thus has empathy

Neighbour: old age, does not want to be disrupted in lifestyle

What are your impressions of mother and the female neighbour?

The female neighbour has accepted change. She realises that change is inevitable and thus accepts moving out of the house she was very attached to. When she describes her home to mother, she said, "Got nice view." "But you can't have everything. I'll have my own room there." The comment she made serves as a stereotypical representation of how Singaporeans talk, and has a slight emphasis that she is not particularly excited about her new house, as if she only agrees to the new flat after much persuasion. She will miss her old home, but has to come to terms with the fact that she has to let go eventually due to change. She later says, "What's the point in fighting? I'm too tired to go on fighting. I just want my own room." Female neighbour feels defeated and has resigned to fate of giving in to the majority. She has accepted that it is not possible to fight, and that wanting to stay in Zion mansion is nothing more than a foolish desire. She has not succumbed to progress completely, but has no choice but to give in, showing that she acknowledges change.

Mother empathises with Boon. Although she is stubborn in moving out, she understands that she should not be pulling Boon behind with her. When she chats with female neighbour, she says "No. He shouldn't be stuck here with me, living in a house he hates." Mother puts herself in Boon's shoes and realises her own actions are chaining Boon down to a life that he does not want, depriving him of the opportunity to achieve his dreams. Mother wants Boon to pursue his own interests and find his happiness, and thus believes he should move on. Later, she says, "He is not a little boy anymore. I

don't have to sit at the gate and wait for him to come back home from school every day. Not like last time." Mother starts to reminisce the precious memories at Zion mansion in the past and understands how much things changed from the past. Mother recounts her memories of the past, time spent together, which shows their cordial (warm and friendly) relationship. Not only the both of them, but also extended to the rest of the community. Their gathering which shows the camaraderie and friendship. She is filled with nostalgia, and however much she is unwilling to change, she understands that young people, like Boon, wishes to move on. This has caused her to attempt to come around and take in the fact that things will not be the same as before anymore. She is stubborn about staying put, but for the sake of his son's happiness, she is conflicted about moving out of the house. Thus I can see that mother is empathetic.

Themes:

displacement can cause loss of one's home

displacement can cause loss of one's memories

displacement can cause loss of one's relationships

When she describes her home to mother, she said, "Got nice view." "But you can't have everything. I'll have my own room there." Female neighbour explains to Mother all the good facilities in her new condominium. She continuously repeats the perks of her new condominium at the start and at the end of the conversation, perhaps to convince herself that she would be happy at her new house. By repeating the good perks of her new house, the female neighbour may just be trying to trick herself into being optimistic about her new home, and ignore the harsh reality that she has been uprooted from her friends, and forcefully removed of her precious memories. She insists that Mother has to visit her, so that she would not have lost everything. This shows that in the process of progress (heh), the friendships forged between neighbours are not just lost due to the conflict and tension between neighbours with different mindsets. Some friendships forged are also lost when everyone is forced to move out, whether they want to or not.

Pursuit of materialism can force people to make compromises

[Female neighbour]

-shared memories forges bonds

-memories creates nostalgia

-can create strong relationship bonds

-can be positive and uplifting

pursuit of progress comes with a cost (losing memories, tradition)

Progress is not welcomed by everyone

The neighbours at Zion mansion can never have the same bond once the enbloc occurs. They cannot create amusing incidents and memories.

Act 2 Scene 11

Other civil servants

-prioritises policy before people

-do not identify people as individuals

-give them stock replies

Jeremiah CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

- not a typical civil servant
- prioritises people over policies
- coming out of his submissive self and voices out his opinion and stance even though he is not supposed to do so to his superior (director) does not hesitate to step out and do what he thinks is right, what he wants to do contribute to society to help people most, what he feels is important

What are your impressions of Jeremiah?

He is passionate about serving the people. He sincerely wants to help the corpse and prioritises helping him find his family. At the start of the scene, he "(mutters to himself) No flower fruit. No flower fruit." When he talks to the colleague, he says "There are more important things in life than PQs." "Do you happen to have her name and address?" What the corpse previously told him had an immense impact on Jeremiah and his attitude. He developed an even greater drive to find the corpse's wife. The corpse's case has been constantly on his mind and he tries to get information from the colleague to gain further clues. He spent much time piecing the clues together and made connections to Boon's mother. Thus he asks the colleague for information of the mother, showing that he is willing to put all in to help the corpse. When Director asks Jeremiah "what could be more important than the PQs?" Jeremiah said "The corpse! I think I can help him." To the director and other civil servants, serving the people is not a priority to them. Policies are much more important. However, to Jeremiah, he stands up to director and directly tells her that he will solve the corpse's issue first before doing the PQ. This shows that he is determined to help the corpse and is willing to go out of his way and do all he can, even if it means adding on to his own workload and doing more than what is required of him. There was no need for him to take the initiative to continue helping the corpse, but he still did because he believes that people are much more important than policies. He has a genuine heart to serve. Thus, Jeremiah is passionate about serving the people.

Jeremiah is breaking out of his submissive self. Previously in all the scenes with director, Jeremiah is always unconfident and doubting himself, always meekly listening to director and her orders. When director asks him to get into her office, Jeremiah says, "Um...no" There is a significant change in Jeremiah's character as he makes his stand and decides for himself what task is more important to him to complete. He defies director, and voices his perspective to director. When director advises Jeremiah that they have priorities, Jeremiah said, "Well...so do I, Director." "Screw the PQ!" In the past, it was Jeremiah to ask director what he should do with the site report. However, now, Jeremiah has the courage to speak up for himself and uses strong words to put his point across to director. Thus he experiences growth in his character, coming out of his submissive self.

What are your impressions of the civil servants?

They are insincere towards the people whom they are serving. They do not prioritise the people's interests. When Jeremiah asks the colleague for mother's address, he said, "The letter's probably somewhere in this stack of rubbish. Don't know if I can find it... Whats the big deal? She's just another cranky old lady." The people's opinions are not taken seriously and are treated as rubbish, unimportant and irrelevant. He also uses disrespectful words to describe mother, and no sign of trying to empathise with the people and try to make the situation better. Colleague later explains to

Jeremiah, "Sure, go down there. Get all sweaty and dirty, chit chat a bit, wayang a bit. But after that, leave them there." Colleague encourages Jeremiah to put up a show to the public, acting as they are genuinely interested in helping the people, but in fact are just pretending. This shows that the civil servants do not have a heart to serve the public, and see them as unreasonable people full of nonsense. Thus, they are not sincere in helping the people.

They prioritise policies over people. When Jeremiah says he has very urgent things to do, Director says, "what could be more urgent than Minister?" This shows that Minister carries a greater importance than serving the people itself. They do not identify people as individuals and thus do not take the effort to go deep into helping them. Instead, they use policies and make people listen to them. Colleague tells him, "Come back here, formulate your policy. At the end of the day, they're just part of your job scope." the civil servants purpose of going down to check on the site condition was to have an idea of what the situation was like, before forming more policies for people to comply to. They do this instead of going down to personally help the public to make them happy, make their lives easier. Thus, they only care about policies and do not prioritise the people's needs.

"We're about policies, not people, right? Nothing personal."

This illustrates the attitude of the government officials, which is to prioritise the Parliament Minister, chasing the Director for the answers to the Parliamentary Questions, over the minority who are directly affected by the newly implemented policy. This then shows the unconcerned side of the government, who does things very practically, and does not think about the minority who is at a disadvantage. Instead, they focus on the majority who benefits from the policy.

Act 2 Scene 12

What are your impressions of mother?

Mother is living in denial. She is still unwilling to move out of the house even though majority has already been achieved. When Boon says it is legal for mother to leave, mother replies, "Rubbish. I don't take their money lah." When she says that she will tear up the cheque, Boon says, "Then you will really have nothing left." Mother is rooted deep in denial. She is defiant and stubborn to move out and does not want to accept the fact that once majority has been reached, mother will be forced to move out too. Mother doesn't believe in change and progress, and refuses to leave. She is unwilling to restart life again in a new place as she protected the house putting her life on the line, dealing with the loan sharks. She stubbornly continues to hold out from the majority who wants to move out. Mother has lost her husband and her home. If she tore up the cheque she would have lost everything she had, such as her memories. However, she still does not have any regard for the Land Authority's money, and treats it as nothing but paper. When Boon tells mother the developers will tear down everything, she said, "They want to tear down, can tear down around me. Want to build, build around me." This is because she would rather keep the house than to move out of it, despite how old it is. This imagery allows readers to visualise developers tearing down the building while she remains, showing how stubborn she is and her refusal to accept the fact she has to leave. She is sentimental and averse to materialism. Mother disregards the land developers' actions of

demolishing the units because she is strongly attached to the house and refuses to leave it behind. Thus, mother is living in denial.

Mother yearns for father's return. After fifteen years, she is still patiently waiting for father to come back to the house. When Boon said father was a "piece of shit who left all of us alone and is never coming back", mother says "Le mai luan luan gong." Mother defends father because she knows father will come back to her. Mother believes in father because father promised him that he would always come back to look for her no matter what. Through her defensiveness and threatening tone, Mother shows her love for father. When Boon told mother they had to leave because the majority had been achieved she said, "Let them come with their tanks! I'm not afraid!" Tanks are armed military vehicles used in wars. From this, it shows that Mother is willing to go to war with the government just to make sure she can stay with her house and tree. Mother hopes father will come back one day, and misses him dearly. Without his unconditional love, she is lonely and sad. Her deepest desire is to patch her unfinished love with young father, and the only way she can possibly do so is to live in the very house he gifted her so he can find her again one day. She stays in the house and is unshakeable, knowing that it is the only place that father will go to find her, and patiently waits for him. To willingly fight against a whole powerful government thus shows Mother's determination to stay in her house to patiently wait for father's return.

Mother is protective of Boon. Mother finally tells Boon that he told father, "I told him to go. Get out of my house. And he did." This shows that Mother blames herself for Father's disappearance. Despite loving Father very dearly, Mother still yells at him, and asks him to get out of the house after he chained Boon to her tree. From this, it can be inferred that Mother loves Boon more than she loves Father. Mother is willing to kick Father out of the house, and risk never seeing him, the love of her life, ever again, just to ensure that Boon is safe from him. This then shows the deep motherly love Mother has for Boon.

What are your impressions of Boon?

Boon is annoyed at how mother still believes that father will come back. Boon cannot understand why mother is still defending father. When mother tells Boon that father is not a monster, he says, "When are you going to open your eyes, Ma? You think he believed that we would live happily after without him? You think he didn't know those loan sharks would come after us?" He shows his irritation to mother by trying to convince mother how horrible father is. The repetition he used highlights Boon's strong disapproval of mother defending father. To him, mother's love for father has caused her to be oblivious to the truth. He tries to put his point across by telling her to stop being blinded in believing that father will return. After Boon realises that it was mother who told father to get out of her house, mother said that father would still come back because she is "still here". This caused Boon to "wrench the door open violently" and "glares at Mother" before storming out. Boon feels that mother's reason is extremely ridiculous and unreasonable. He is angry at mother as she still loves father despite what Boon and her had to endure and suffer without him. To Boon, father did not deserve mother's love and time. Thus he is displeased with how mother believes that father will come back.

Boon dislikes father. He saw his father as a horrendous person. When mother tells him, "Just like your father like that. Little bit problem also run away." Boon says, "Bullshit. Bullshit. I am not like that bastard at all." Boon is very defensive whenever mother comments and likens him to father. He never wants to be like father because father caused him lots of emotional and physical pain, causing him to feel hurt and broken by his father. Thus he never looked up to father as an inspiration, and saying that Boon is like his father angers him a lot.

Boon continues to tell mother, "What kind of man would chain an 11-year-old boy to a tree overnight? He wouldn't care if I died." "How can you defend a monster like that?" Again, Boon recounts the traumatic memory of father chaining him up to the tree. Because of father, he is suffocated by the past and feels that he has no freedom. His horrible memory is still engraved in his mind. It had scarred him and caused him to feel hate towards his father, depriving him of the other positive memories he could have potentially made in Zion mansion. He thinks of father very lowly and compares him to a monster, who is evil and menacing. Hence, Boon does not like father.

Theme:

Pursuit of progress comes with a cost (losing memories, tradition)

Progress is not welcomed by everyone

Some will be unwilling to accept it and hate it, it pushes and intrudes into other's peaceful lives forcefully, they are helpless against it and cannot stop it, not amenable to all, constantly rebuilding in a short span of time. Change affects the older sect more than others, not so open to the idea of new things, too many things unwilling to let go, generation gap difference in mindset and values, don't see eye to eye all the time, causes rifts, conflicts, fracture of relationship due to difference in thinking as country relentlessly progresses

When mother tells Boon that she is not afraid of the developers, he said, "You can't fight bulldozers." Bulldozers are representative of change and cannot be stopped no matter how much the old try to prevent it, the old have to lose everything they value without being able to prevent it. Boon explains that "the developers are going to come in here and they're going to tear everything down" No matter what Mother tries to do, her efforts will be futile against the ongoing march of time that inescapably brings about change and progress, change and progress will take place without sparing a thought for feelings or sentiments, happens swiftly with everything that is treasure by Mother being torn down in a matter of seconds.

When mother heard that she has to move out of the house, she said "I'll tear up their cheque." This shows the resistance that Mother has to change, desperately searching for ways to combat it, to prevent it, even though tearing up the cheque will only bring harm to Mother and no one else. Even in the face of unavoidable change, Mother is still feisty, fully prepared to fight for what is hers regardless of whether she is able to change anything. Mother fiercely resists change, but still is hopeless against whatever change and progress will bring to her. In the end, by tearing up the cheque Mother is on the losing end as she will continue losing out unless she learns to embrace change.

memories have an impact on one's future. It can be negative, scarring and traumatic
[Boon dislikes father.]

Family relationships can cause traumatic memories

[Boon dislikes father]

Act 2 Scene 13

Mother was always waiting for him

What are your impressions of mother?

Mother is yearning for father's return. She loves him to the point of dreaming of him returning to the house, yearning for her dream to become a reality 15 years after his leaving. She recounts, "His shoulders hunched like that, hands tucked into the pocket, like some naughty boy who did something wrong." Mother visualises and describes the posture of father facing mother. Even though the incident never happened, mother's desire of father's return was so strong that she could imagine this all by herself. She is also very familiar with father's actions that even after fifteen years of not seeing him, she can still picture him very clearly. She easily recognises him entering the house by his mannerisms, by the way he pushes the grille open, by the way he walks, by the way he coughs. He is so familiar to her that she even knows his standing position even when she is not looking at him. This shows how she has been constantly thinking of father such that the memory of father is still clearly ingrained in her mind. She tells father, "you idiot, you stupid fool, you worthless bastard. Le si lang tau". She later says, "But I waited. All I wanted was to hear him say my name. Just once. To hear my name in that voice of his, all choked up with mud and rocks." Mother has a strong desire to hear father's voice. She immensely misses his voice and shows her desperateness for him to come back to her. She is angry but still has an unwavering love towards him, thus she would not leave Zion mansion as she believes father will return so long as she is there. Even though she suffered because of him, she loves him too much to be truly angry at him. She insults him, but her words are affectionate, not being all that angry at him. The way she describes his voice has negative connotations. However, she still longs for him, for him to say her name. He is the love of her life, and his voice serves as the sweetest music to her. She stays in the house and is unshakeable, knowing that it is the only place that father will go to find her, and patiently waits for him. Thus, mother is yearning for father's return.

What are your impressions of their relationship?

(use above loves father)

When father comes back home, mother asks him "how did you know I would be here? Where else would I be? He said." Father always knows mother will be waiting for him. Home to both of them where their love is, not just a house. No other place that means so much to her, he would go to look for her. Father trusts she will be there, and she trusts that Father will return.

Themes:

Memories create nostalgia

Memories mother shared with father made her feel better whenever she thinks of father.

Family can create strong relationship bonds

Family can foster strong loyalty

Act 2 Scene 14

What are your impressions of mother?

Mother is in denial of father's death. When Jeremiah said, "The corpse", mother spits at him and said, "Choy choy choy!" She chases Jeremiah away and responds indignantly and defensively because she does not want to hear more information of father's death. When Jeremiah shows up at her house and provides enough evidence to show that the corpse is indeed father, she enters a state of denial and brushes off all his allegations and remains hopeful that father is still alive to return to her, to reconcile and repair their broken relationship. She also realises that father is probably dead, but does not want to accept the truth. She strongly believes that Father is still alive and is unable to let him go. She is unable to accept the fact that father is truly gone forever, no longer living on Earth, and rejects any idea of father being a corpse. Thus mother is living in denial.

Mother is aggressive. When Jeremiah tells mother about father's death, she repeatedly shouts at Jeremiah, "Get out of my house!" "I said get lost!" This repetition highlights that the news affect her so much that she does not respect the government man and orders him to leave her house. She takes offence at Jeremiah's news. She proceeds to tell him, "My husband is a bastard. He is a stupid idiot. He is a rotten scum, a piece of dog shit...but he is not a corpse!" "How dare you? Come here and say such things..." In previous scenes, mother has never sworn, but in this scene, she uses offensive language to confront Jeremiah that father can never be dead. This shows her strong stand that father is still alive, and refuses to believe what Jeremiah says. Thus mother uses strong language when she felt that Jeremiah is spouting nonsense, showing that she is aggressive.

Act 2 Scene 15

What are your impressions of young mother?

Mother is living in denial. She cannot come to terms that Father has passed away. At the start of the scene, mother says, "Le zao! Le zao! Only know how to talk rubbish!" She chases Jeremiah away and responds indignantly and defensively because she does not want to hear more information of father's death. When Jeremiah shows up at her house and provides enough evidence to show that the corpse is indeed father, she enters a state of denial and brushes off all his allegations and remains hopeful that father is still alive to return to her, to reconcile and repair their broken relationship. She also realises that father is probably dead, but does not want to accept the truth. Thus, Mother tells Boon that Jeremiah is a "lousy liar". She uses it as a coping mechanism to convince herself that father has not died. She strongly believes that Father is still alive and is unable to let him go. she is unable to accept the fact that father is truly gone forever, no longer living on Earth, and rejects any idea of father being a corpse. Thus mother is living in denial.

Mother is stubborn in moving out because she is strongly attached to the house. She is still adamant in moving out even though majority has already been achieved. When Boon persuades her to leave the house, she says, "As long as the tree stays, I stay too". Mother is unable to let go of the past, stubbornly clinging on to the hope that father will one day return. The tree is a living representation of Father's love to Mother. Since Father gifted it to her, it means a lot to her and reminds her of her husband, even though he has not come back for 15 years already. Mother tries to resist moving out

of her house, that holds the many memories she has, and is an extension of her. She cannot bear to part from the house she spent so much time building on and leaving all her memories within it behind. She treasures the memories as much as she values this house. When Boon said, "It's not up to you any more, Ma." She replied, "I'm staying here. This is my house. My walls, my ceilings, my floors, my windows, my doors, my doorknobs, okay?" The repetition she used highlights that the house is her possession. The memory of Mother has already been embedded into the walls of the house, which is why Mother claims she can taste her own blood and sweat. She put in all her love, hard work, and effort into the home, represented by marks left on the walls overtime. The house is so dear to mother that she can smell it, because it represents all the memories she created with young father and with Boon. She has forged deep bonds and a strong sense of memory with the house that it keeps her rooted and thus she is so stubborn to move. It is a part of herself when father was not there. Mother disregards the land developers' actions of demolishing the units because she is strongly attached to the house and refuses to leave it behind. Thus, mother is stubborn.

Themes:

displacement can cause loss of one's home

-displacement can cause loss of one's memories

-displacement can cause loss of one's relationships

-pursuit of progress comes with a cost (losing memories, tradition)

-progress is not welcomed by everyone

Act 2 Scene 17

What is your impression of the relationship between mother and father?

Mother and father love each other immensely. Even when they are physically separated, they never stop thinking about each other. When the corpse regained his identity and recounted the past, he said, "So scared of what I had done to them. And so scared of what was going to happen to us, to the house. But if I stayed... then so scared of what else I would end up doing to him. Or to her." This repetition emphasises how afraid father felt to hurt mother and Boon. Fear caused him to run out. He realised that although he is a grown man, he overreacted inappropriately due to frustration. He loves Boon, and realises the hurt and pain he had done to him. Thus he wanted to create distance to prevent himself from losing control and harm them even further. He left mother and Boon because he was afraid of what he could have done to them, and left in her best interests, to ensure that he couldn't hurt her any further, and put some distance between them. He left in order to protect Mother and Boon. But afterwards, a random tree made him go back. He was worried for Mother and Boon and knew that he could not leave them alone. However, when the bus was on fire, the corpse felt "My skin. Burning. Blistering. So much pain. Even my bones, burning. But then I see her. In the flames, I see her face. Almost reach her, but the flames, the fire. (screams) Ah Moi!" even when father was in so much pain, with his life at stake, he still thought about mother. In Act 2 scene 13, mother yearned for father to say her name "Just once." Father does that involuntarily during the last moments of his life. Her name was the final words he spoke. Father will never forget mother. His self-sacrificial love was what drove him to leave them. In addition, he was desperate to leave, to go

back to mother and reconcile with her, to repair the broken relationship, realising that he did not have a future without her. Father would not have abandoned mother because of their passionate love.

Themes:

Family can foster strong loyalty

[Mother and father love each other immensely.]

Act 2 Scene 18

What are your impressions of Boon?

Boon is compassionate and filial to mother. He understands that Mother has not fully accepted the truth and thus tries to calm her down. When mother continuously throws all her statues, Boon said "Stop it, Ma! Or you'll have nothing left!". Mother shouted at Boon, "Why should I listen to you? You ... murderer!" Mother's emotions got the better of her, and thus throws her precious items out of anger, without thinking. Boon knows how much the statues mean to Mother and how much she treasures them, serving as a reminder of Father, hence he prevents her from breaking any more statues. Boon is aware of how much she has lost and does not want her to lose even more memories, knowing that she would be heartbroken as she is an extremely sentimental person. Even when mother hurls hurtful comments at Boon, he does not fight back. He does not get angry because he understands that Mother is going through a tough time. He does not want Mother to be even sadder with nothing to reminisce about, or anything at all to remember Father by, even if he will never go back to her. Mother asks Boon what he was doing when he picked up the statue, he said, "Scotch tape." In Act 1, Boon was disgusted by the old and ancient statues, wanting mother to throw them away. However, now, he takes the effort to fix it even when it is broken. He still wants mother to keep it even though it looked uglier than before. He patches the statue up, but it will never become the same again. Similarly, Mother cannot get back what she used to have in the past. Boon still tries to fix it and appease Mother so she is not so hurt, trying to comfort her by slowly piecing together what she has broken, serving as a metaphor to slowly repiece their life together again. This shows how Boon tries to comfort Mother after she has lost so much, wanting her to be able to save as many memories as she can left so she does not hurt from losing even more, highlighting that he is very compassionate and filial towards mother.

When Boon realises that mother cannot live without the tree, he says "Drag it along with you, stuff it in your cupboard, under your bed". Logically, bring the tree to the new condo would not only ruin the atmosphere of the house, but it would also be nearly impossible to transport a fully grown tree into a room. However, to placate Mother, Boon readily agrees to let Mother bring her precious tree into the new home. Boon is willing to make alternative arrangements for Mother as she had already lost the house she treasured the most. He knows how much the tree means to Mother and despite detesting the tree, he does not want to see Mother being too upset. So he relents, and allows Mother to bring her last link to Father, the tree, to their new home.

Boon is a realist, pushing mother to face the truth. Boon knows that mother has to accept that she has to leave the house, accept that father has passed away, and accept that things will not be the same again. When Mother is still not willing to leave the house, Boon said, "But we got to go, Ma" Boon knows the harsh truth that there is absolutely no way that Mother will be able to remain

there, and knows that she needs a wake up call and face reality. Boon is fully aware that Mother cannot keep running away from the issue and emphasised that they had to get out of the house. This revealed how Boon tried to get Mother to confront the bitter realities of change and progress, and that they had only two choices, either leave on their own accord or get forcibly removed from the premises. It does not matter even if she puts up a fight, as the inevitable is upon them. When mother asks Boon, "Why can't I die here?" Boon said "There's nothing left. Nothing. He's gone. The house is gone. The tree is gone. You only got me, okay?" The repetition he used emphasises a matter-of-fact tone, knowing that she has to accept the truth, and wants her to realise that he is right. Boon has no intention of trying to make light of the situation, but instead breaks the bubble of denial that Mother is in in a straightforward manner to get Mother to stop coming up with ways to stay there and avoiding the issue. He only wants the best for Mother, hence pushing her to come to terms with the facts. Mother has no other person in her life left except for Boon, emphasising how even if she holds on to the house she would still have nothing if Boon is not by her side, wanting to let Mother see how everything else is meaningless even if she continues fighting for the house, tells Mother that she is utterly alone to make her face up to the fact that she has got nothing left in her possession, and that Boon is the only thing she has to stay by her side. Thus Boon is practical and tries to help mother accept reality.

Themes:

Pursuit of progress comes with a cost (losing memories, tradition)

Progress is not welcomed by everyone

Mother still desperately looks for other ways in order to stay there. After Boon cut down the tree, she proclaims that she doesn't need anyone or anything except her house or her tree, though Boon is the last thing she has left. everything else she has is gone. even so, she is adamant that she wants to stay in the house and even go as far as to saying that she wants to die there.

- displacement can cause loss of one's home
 - displacement can cause loss of one's memories
 - displacement can cause loss of one's relationships
- pursuit of materialism can force people to make compromises

Act 2 Scene 19

What are your impressions of mother?

Mother misses her old home. At the start of the scene, she says "(dispirited) We found a place. Not too far away from here." "Got all the facilities, swimming pool, tennis court, gym" In mother's eyes, the new "house" is just a place. It can never replace zion mansion, which housed all her precious memories she has with Father, with Boon, with her neighbours. She tries to state all the modern facilities the new house offers, but still cannot help to think of her old home. Like female neighbour in scene 10, Mother realises that change is inevitable and thus accepts moving out of the house she was very attached to. In the last sentence, mother gently touches the dead branches of the tree and said, "Wah ai deng chu". Even though her zion mansion is not the same as it was, Mother is still connected to what is left, and still treasures the remains, like the dead branches. She speaks in

hokkien and only uses hokkien when she truly expresses herself. She will miss her old home, but has to come to terms with the fact that she has to let go eventually due to change. She has accepted that it is not possible to fight, and that wanting to stay in Zion mansion is nothing more than a foolish desire. She does not really like the new house, but has to accept reality. She has not succumbed to progress completely, but has no choice but to give in. Thus she misses her old home and yearns to go back.

Mother opposes the people's pursuit of Singapore Dream and materialism. She does not like material wealth. When she described the cars she said, "All shiny and lovingly handwashed by their overworked maids at 6am every morning." Cars are expensive and represent higher status. Having maids shows that the people afford maids to do the dirty work for them, so that they can show off. The place she lives in now revolves around the Singapore Dream, where everyone is hungry to gain wealth. Mother is disgusted by their lifestyles because there is no more genuine community in their new estate, she got ripped out of the heart of her own people and her home she knew so well. Now, because of change and materialism, she has no ties to her new home, no hope for the future. When she saw the shiny cars, she said, "I wish I was a bird, a pigeon, or a mynah, with a whole lot of bird shit stuck inside me. And then I would swoop out of the window, fly out and go over those cars." "I'd poke at their shiny silvery paint with my beak, till it looks like they have poke marks all over the place." Mother is not happy with her surroundings full of materialistic gains, but she cannot change reality. She expresses her discontentment with the Singapore Dream through her imagination. She sees it as nothing more than an illusion. Thus, Mother strongly opposes the Singapore Dream and materialism.

Themes:

Pursuit of materialism can force people to make compromises

Pursuit of progress comes with a cost (losing memories, tradition)

Progress is not welcomed by everyone

Displacement can cause loss of one's home

Displacement can cause loss of one's memories

Displacement can cause loss of one's relationships

[Mother misses her old home]

Add for A1S2:

Mother yearns for father's return. When Boon tells mother "It's been 15 years, Ma", she replies "So?" Despite having waited 15 years with no reply or hint of Father's return, Mother is still unwilling to accept the idea that Father may have really left them for good. Mother treasures the house greatly, protects it and even puts her life on the line, house is a symbol of their never ending love for each other, another reason why she will not let any harm come to the house, waits 15 years without fail, fidelity for him and adamant on not selling the house as still waiting for him to come back, remembers every moment they spent together, waiting endlessly for absent husband to come back as strongly believes that he will, house was given to her by a man she loves dearly, worries about him all the time, forgives him for all he has done is a form of love too, to Mother the family is incomplete if Father is not restored. So she patiently waits, and does not even wish to claim the house as hers. Even after 15 years, Mother still stubbornly waits for Father to return back to the house, and return back to her. Mother sees no point to the statement when Boon states that it has been 15 years, which shows that 15 years meant nothing to Mother when she is waiting for Father.

This also suggests that as long as Father is coming back, Mother does not care about the time she will waste waiting for him. When Boon hints to mother that he wanted to move out, she says "Not mine either. It belongs to him." Despite having legal ownership of the house, Mother still sees Father as the legal owner of her house. This shows that Mother is still waiting for Father to return because she believes he would. Thus, mother longs for father to come back.

Themes:

Family

- can foster strong loyalty
- family relationships can cause traumatic memories
- can provide unconditional love (door knobs, help mother live her dream)

Memories

- shared memories forges bonds
- memories create nostalgia
- can create strong relationship bonds
- can be positive and uplifting
- memories have an impact on one's future:
- can be negative, scarring and traumatic
- can foster a sense of belonging

Singapore Dream

- chase for singapore dream can cause conflict
- chase for singapore dream encourages a materialistic mindset
- chase for singapore dream can cause conflicts in relationships

Materialism (use also for singapore dream)

- pursuit of materialism can cause reckless behaviour (cause problems to family)
- pursuit of materialism can cause someone to neglect family bonds
- pursuit of materialism can cause conflicts within family
- pursuit of materialism can force people to make compromises
- pursuit of materialism can cause people to become arrogant

Displacement (movement of home, grave)

- displacement can cause loss of one's home
- displacement can cause loss of one's memories
- displacement can cause loss of one's relationships

Displacement can cause loss of one's relationships - Mother hopes father will come back one day, and misses him dearly. Without his unconditional love, she is lonely and sad. Her deepest desire is to patch her unfinished love with young father, and the only way she can possibly do so is to live in the very house he gifted her so he can find her again one day. This is why mother is so stubborn of not signing the enbloc. The house is also filled with many wonderful memories she has of her neighbours, just like Female Neighbour. The past provides many others like them with happiness.

However, after realisation dawned on mother that father was involved in an accident which stole his life, she had to accept that things are not the same as before anymore. With the majority achieved in enbloc, mother has to move out of Zion mansion. To mother, the loss of her house means the loss of all the nostalgic memories and relationship she has forged over the years with Boon, Father, and her neighbours. She has lost her house, her memories, and the person whom she loved and patiently waited fifteen years for.

Progress and change

- pursuit for progress can cause conflict
- pursuit of progress comes with a cost (losing memories, tradition)
- progress is not welcomed by everyone
- progress can cause people to become wealthy - living conditions can be created with better facilities)

Pursuit of progress comes with a cost - Tradition and the past is exchanged for progress. Progress has erased important parts of our past and identity. Progress could also be criticized as relatively pointless. It also involves the sacrifice of our collective identity.

Pursuit for progress can cause conflict - affects the older set more than others, not so open to the idea of new things, too many things unwilling to let go, generation gap difference in mindset and values, don't see eye to eye all the time, causes rifts, conflicts, fracture of relationship due to difference in thinking as country relentlessly progresses

Progress and change may not be welcomed by everyone - some are unwilling to accept it and hate it, it pushes and intrudes into other's peaceful lives forcefully, they are helpless against it and cannot stop it, not amenable to all, constantly rebuilding in a short span of time.

Mother is a representative of the elder community clinging onto memories, while the world changes dramatically around them, leaving them in denial. They are forced to adapt and keep up with the times against their will, having to give up things that they hold great value in.

Boon is a representative of the younger generation, seeking luxury and greener heights, adhering to the SG dream, longing for change, newer things and constant upgrades.