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Eileen Chang and Roberto Bolaño

On rare occasions have the names “Eileen Chang” and “Roberto Bolaño” been placed side by side, yet their juxtaposition is an effort towards the actualization of the generous cultural vision represented by the intellectual ancestors of Curtius and Auerbach, who took nationalism to be a transitory, finally secondary matter: what mattered far more was the concerts of peoples and spirits that transcend the shabby political realm of bureaucracy, armies, customs barriers, and xenophobia. Standing above small-minded political affairs were both a kind of anthropological Eden in which men and women happily produced something called literature, and a world that Matthew Arnold and his disciples designated as that of “culture”, where only “the best that is thought and known” could be admired (Said, 45).

Chang’s works is the epitome of Chinese writing, particularly “Haipai” (Shanghai-style). Bolaño is the most significant Latin American literary voice of his generation. Despite their different national literary traditions and social circumstances, they write with great similarity in the avant-garde, modernist literary context, eliciting crucial responses in regard to both the form and content of their works. Regarding the forms of their works, essential questions concerning

genre, in particular the prose/verse dichotomy and even hierarchy, and the aftermath of prose-poems when the line between two different genres is smoothed, and the author's metacognition when dealing with genre are raised. By placing their work in juxtaposition, the seemingly simplest question of "What is a novel?" is bundled up in complications when the drastic differences between the Eastern and Western traditions of novel, as well as the authors' individual responses towards the tradition are taken into consideration. Both Chang's and Bolaño's works have been read as visual images rather than solely textual works, thus also giving rise to one of the most important questions in the realm of avant-garde art and literature--- the relationship between image and text. As in content, it's noteworthy that in their works, essential themes overlap, such as gender-politics, body politic, the gendering of eroticism; nationalism, colonialism and post-colonialism; Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis and mystery, reflections, mirroring and dreams; the consistency of subject matter in the totality of their works (which for Chang is women, and for Bolaño, poets); the state of the modern man, with their isolations in a transforming society, surreal imageries and plots; and most importantly, their shared fascinations with Baudelaire and Poe. Such interests have left highly identifiable traces in their works and aesthetics. Such a comparison would shed light on the concept of "avant-garde" in a "global" context.

There's no denial that Bolaño is an avant-garde in his writings, yet few Chinese literary critics have depicted Chang as an avant-garde author. One possibility might be the differences in discourse and the definition of concepts across cultures. Yet "avant-garde" should be a concept that transcends such differences along with the rising of "Weltliteratur" and "comparative literature". When two starkly different authors are placed side by side as avant-gardes, one sees more facets and possibilities of an author and his/her literary works.

[Contrapuntal Reading]

The reading of the two authors could be placed under the theoretical structure of Edward Said's "contrapuntal reading" and Susan Friedman's "the new geographics of identity". Said's contrapuntal reading refers to a structure of attitude and reference that takes into account intertwined histories and narratives. Especially when reading colonial or post-colonial texts, the perspectives of both the colonizers and the colonized should be considered. Interpreting contrapuntally is interpreting different perspectives simultaneously and seeing how the text interacts with itself as well as with its historical or biographical contexts. It is reading with "awareness for both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts." (Said, 10) Said states that this global, contrapuntal analysis should be modelled not (as earlier notions of comparative literature were) on a symphony but rather on an atonal ensemble; we must take into account all sorts of spatial or geographical and rhetorical practices--inflections, limits, constraints, intrusions, inclusions, prohibitions--all of them tending to elucidate a complex and uneven topography. To rejoin experience and culture is of course to read texts from the metropolitan center and from the peripheries contrapuntally, according neither the privilege of "objectivity" to "our side" nor the encumbrance of "subjectivity" to "theirs"! The question is a matter of knowing *how to* read, as the deconstructors say, and not detaching this from the issue of knowing *what* to read. Texts are not finished objects. They are, as Williams once said, notations and cultural practices.

Shanghai, in the 30s and 40s, was overpowered by British and French concessions, the state of *Gudao* (a piece of isolated island), *Lunxian* (the great downfall), *Wangjingwei's* government, the overlapping territory and interlaced history of the ROC and CPC parties...the political and social scenes of the era of colonialization forms a contrapuntal reading scenario for Eileen Chang, with her own life and creative experience integrated and weaved with the warfare.

Spivak has stated that the feelings toward a cultural identity is always able to predetermine a certain language. In the ten key years in Shanghai, Chang always writes about the cities of Shanghai and Hong Kong in the tongue of a Shanghainese. She has infinite feelings for the cafes, trams, and the vendors of snacks in Shanghai as she was born and raised there. However, in her writings of Hong Kong, Hong Kong is depicted as a city that has lost its sense of the “self”. She and her works both exhibit the concept of “twofold-otherness”. For western colonists, Hong Kong is the “other” that has been modified in order to hold the projections of the oriental fantasies, while for the Chinese from mainland China, Hong Kong is a distant, alien and blurry “other” as well. In Chang’s writings, Hong Kong is like what W.E. Henley has applauded as the entertainment of the Arabian Nights. Yet, standing from both the perspectives of the “viewer” and the “object of view”, Chang has a clear insight of what is originally Eastern, and what is the twisted vision to appeal to the Western’s taste and their hunger for novelty.

This is demonstrated in many of her lines that depict Hong Kong in times of colonization, for instance, the following quote from her novella *Aloeswood Incense: the First Brazier*, “Inside is typical Western furnishings, yet there are still some Chinese decorations that appeal to both refined and popular taste; on the Taiwan incense burner is the emerald snuff-bottle and ivory Guan-yin statue; the sofa is half-hidden by the small screen painted with mottle bamboo. Yet this Oriental tone is apparently for the taste of foreign friends. The British have travelled all the way to see China, so it’s impossible not to show them something Chinese. Yet the China here, is the China in the Westerner’s eyes: absurd, delicate, entertaining. Weilong has spotted her own shadows reflected on the glass door---she herself is also part of the Oriental imagery of the colony. She wears the exquisite uniform of Nanyang High School, turquoise blue robe made from starched cotton cloth, flowing down to her knees, revealing the narrow bottom of her trousers. This is still

the style of late Manchu: dressing up female students like the famous prostitute Sai Jinhua. This is how the Hong Kong government attempts to soothe the eyes of European visitors. Yet like other young girls who love fashion, Weilong adds a wool vest over her robe, looking “neither like a donkey nor a horse” in the Chinese proverb.” (Chang, 76). Another example in the book would be, “The garden celebration of Ms. Liang, is rendering the strong local sentiments. The lawns are planted with large lanterns with the Chinese character Fu written on it. Yet among the bushels of lanterns are several typically western parasols. The servants have long braids, yet they use silver platters to carry cocktails, juices and desserts...” (Chang, 96)

While writing these lines, Chang seems to be doing her own contrapuntal reading of what is going on in Hong Kong; she not only sees the country as the “land of sight”, but also enters the mind of the colonizers, and sees Hong Kong through their eyes. She is simultaneously the “insider” and the “outsider”. On one hand, she has seen beyond the projection and the performance, while on the other, she is also deeply emotionally engaged with both sides of her “dual-otherness”. “Home” and “diaspora” have been the two key words for colonial and post-colonial writing, and for Chang’s characters, there have never been a tranquil, reliable and undamaged “home” physically or psychologically.

The contrapuntal reading in Bolaño’s narrative is most noticeable in the two geographic poles where his stories take place. In his novel we can find cities such as Barcelona, Paris, Rome that are modern cultural centers filled with publishing houses and literary elites as the major setting. At other times, we see territories such as the fictional city Santa Teresa at the Mexican border and the Chile of Pinochet’s era places haunted with murders, crimes, poverty, violence and fear, places where neo-liberal economic policies have been implemented, chosen as the main narrative site in his novel. What’s intriguing is that Bolaño has placed many failed authors in the so called civilized

land. Literary critics from the countries that are generally recognized as the “literal lands” cannot find true authors in their own lands, have to travel to the “less cultured” and “primitive” countries to seek the mysterious author whom they believe is a true master of literature. There’s also Bolaño’s subtle critique against the academic snobbishness and elitism of the scholars in countries that appear as literary centers. An example is in the *Woes of the True Policeman*. “They talked about poetry. To everyone’s surprise, and to the disgust of some (feigned surprise and disgust, of course), Amalfitano held Nicanor Parra in higher esteem than Octavio Paz. When they tried to get Amalfitano to tell the same kind of stories about his previous university (it was very small and I taught only one course, on Rodolfo Wilcock, he said, politely and abashedly), the result was disappointing. No one had read Rodolfo Wilcock, no one cared about him.” In these lines, the “alienation” and “isolation” of an outsider is heightened.

Since Bolaño’s characters are, for most of the time, constantly on the move, in self or social exile, they could bridge the two sides of the geographic dichotomy. Here the concept of “contrapuntal” reading is not specified to colonialism, but in its original generalizing meaning of the interpretation of a text by considering jointly the discourses that shape it, not only the dominant ones, but also those that resist it (Culture 66-67). In this case, while Bolaño simultaneously reflects and accommodates some aspects of globalization, such as displacement or the concept of a global village, he also resists some of them. For instance, his attitude towards the neo-liberal economy, and the opening of a fluid, interconnected global economy is manifested in his narrations of Santa Teresa, which represents Ciudad Juarez, famous for the maquiladoras, the population boom, and femicides brought on by the opening of markets enabled by the North American Free Trade agreement. In addition, most of the femicide victims were young women who worked in the maquiladoras. Before their deaths, they are typically employed at factories with names like “Nip

Mex, Key Corp and Interzone-Berny". The bodies of the murdered women are recounted in unrelenting, forensic detail, in contrast to the lack of interest of the press and police. "No one pays attention to these killings," Oscar Fate is told, "but the secret of the world is hidden in them." (Bolaño, 27) Santa Teresa is "the sad American mirror of wealth and poverty, and constant, useless metamorphosis." (Bolaño, 97) In some sense, these murders, the mapping made of murdered female bodies is a curse and a mirror for the world of globalization, transnational economy, and neo-liberalism. The other case is the story of Edwin Johns who had cut off his right hand for a haunting artwork of self-portrait, and who later spent his life in an asylum. In 2666, Morini is stunned by the answer that the mad artist gave for the reason why he had cut off his right hand. "For money", "Because he believed in investments, the flow of capital, one has to play the game to win. That kind of thing". (Bolaño, 108)

As in Chang's novels, diaspora, home, and exile are key elements in Bolaño's works. Though, unlike the typical Oriental/Occidental object-subject relationship in the case of Chang, the exiles in Bolaño's works are also epitomes of the "two-fold" or even "multi-fold" otherness. The driving force in this case, is a sort of post-nationalism, or non-nationalism, that dominates the post-modern era. Thus, in this sense, the spirit of "diaspora" and "homelessness" in the Bolaño's context is in succession with Chang's "otherness" and "alienation". In the sense of periodization, Chang's characters are exiles in a colonial and early post-colonial world, while Bolaño's characters are banished as nomads in a modern/post-modern era of globalization marked by neo-liberalism. In Bolaño's works, characters like Padilla, Monsieur Pain, Amalfitano, Rosa, Archiboldi, Liz Norton, Morini, Lola...are all marked with the commonality of an almost surreal homelessness. They move so broadly and frequently across regions, that it has reached a state of a blurring of time, space, and logic, in an uneven and composite fashion, against the bourgeois social reality.

A fascinating metaphor in *2666* concerning the theme of exile and nomads is the book *Testamento Geometrico* hanging on a clothesline in Amalfitano's backyard. The concept itself is a metaphor of the nomadic and the exiled, and the essential state of their being. "Duchamp instructed the couple by letter to hang a geometry book by strings on the balcony of their apartment so that the wind could go through the book, choose its own problems, turn and tear out the pages". (Bolaño) The homeless characters are like this model of geometry book, with a certain "randomness" and "chance" dominating their lives, molding and defining their life experiences along the way. Wind throws a problem in their way, and they either overcome it, allowing themselves to be defeated, or push it aside, swallow the problem down, absorbing it inside the body. Constantly facing indeterminacies in life and constantly on the move. This describes how Monsieur Pain deals with the mysterious Spaniards, Amalfitano deals with the charges of him "corrupting minors" at the university due to his sexuality, Rosa deals with her countless travels due to his father's choices of life, Lola deals with her obsession with the poet and her wanderlust, and Padilla deals with his diagnosis of AIDS. Their state of life reflects Duchamp's idea of bringing the idea of the happy and unhappy into ready-mades, and then the rain, the wind, the pages flying...Even without the cult of hanging a geometry book on a clothesline, the book itself is playing with the concepts of "isolated, homeless individuals", and a globalized village. The structure of the book mimics human relationships, as it consists of three books, "each independent, but functionally correlated by the sweep of the whole". How the book comes into Amalfitano's hands remains a mystery, yet the sites mentioned weaves the map for a nomad. The people in these site "Barcelona", "Santiago", "Galicia", "Laie", "Santa Teresa", these men and women, they are everyone at once, while being nobody at all; they could be at anywhere, except for going to a real "home". The God of beggars, the God who sleeps on the ground, in subway entrances, the God of

insomnias, the God of those who have always lost. This is part of disillusionment in a world dominated by both the vision of a global village, and the disconnection of people spiritually even though they are more connected geographically with the help technology.

[Genres]

The element of “exile” that dominates the works of Chang and Bolaño’s works is also a metaphor and a method for the novel itself. Two of the most important contemporary theories of the novel grounded in the idea of “homelessness” by George Lukacs and Mikhael Bakhtin could aid our understanding of Chang and Bolaño’s choice of genre, and the nature of the genres of their works. In contrasting ways, George Lukacs and Mikhael Bakhtin have used the image of exile as a crucial metaphor in their conceptions of the novelistic enterprise. And curiously, though from the works of Chang and Bolaño, it’s hard to ascribe their dealings with genre to any one of those conceptions of homelessness, they help develop the paradoxical tensions between the two branches of theory, from the Western perspective and the Eastern textual tradition. In general, Lukacs’s conception is a form of nostalgia, the index for the desired recovery of a mythical lost genre, the epic, while in Bakhtin it becomes an ethical and aesthetic drive in search of difference and estrangement.

According to Lukacs, “The old parallelism of the transcendental structure of the form-giving subject and the world of created forms has been destroyed, and the ultimate basis of artistic creation has become homeless. The novel form is, like no other, an expression of this transcendental homelessness (40-41)”. The modern novel becomes the fractured epic of “a world abandoned by god”. The renunciation of the category of totality and thus the epic ideal is nothing but the cowardly and redundant representation of a world marked by the strategic alliance of

modern subjectivism and capitalist individualism, the resignation to the fragment, the favored vehicle of capitalist domination.

Bakhtin, on the other hand, does not see in exile the ideal of return but rather the ethic/aesthetic need of compulsive estrangement that allows the writer system to rebel against the overpowering tendencies of power and authority: " In modern times, the flowering of the novel is always connected with a disintegration of stable verbal-ideological systems and with an intensification and internationalization of speech diversity that are counterpoised to the previously reigning stable systems". The novel's goal is the systematic displacement that denies the possibility of that "totality" being used for authoritarian purposes.

Eileen Chang has been renowned as the only modern writer who has inherited the bloodline of classical Chinese literature. She is able to construct her own unique Tang poems and Song verses with the vernacular expression, which is highly rare and considered as a transcendental gift from god. In parallel with the Greek tradition of epic poems, poetry in China is the priority in the hierarchy of genres since classical times. Striking, delicate and elaborate imageries that are as glorious as Hangzhou colored silk could elicit an almost physical response as soon as the combination of those Chinese characters catches the eye of a reader. Not only does the text have a lyrical quality, it is a visual image as well. That Tang poetry and Song verses could grasp the hearts of readers to such a great extent is due to its tradition of using precedents, so that two words might represent a great length of history, or a haunting, complex tale. The other tradition is that when using nouns, Chinese poets seldom use direct reference, but rather a visual representation characterized by abstract language. Delicacy and accuracy are also highly valued, so that a good poem must be like a demure, beautiful lady with appropriate make-up. The rhetoric should be placed exactly where they are needed, and be used with enough caution to create a holistic,

harmonious effect that makes readers forget that rhetoric is used. Succinctness, strict rhyme scheme and rhythm are necessities for a great poem.

Chang's language is the arrow that never misses its target, so that like classical poetry, her language is rich and exuberant, yet never redundant or excessive. Reading Chang's novels makes a reader forget and even question the genre of the text that he or she is engaging in. Is it truly a novel? Or just a beautiful poem with condensed ideas and striking intensity both in its aesthetics and philosophies? When viewed from this aspect, then Lukacs's theory of "homeless" with its emphasis on a certain nostalgia, a faded genre, and even "the double banishment: from a transcendental Heimat [homeland] and from ancient Greece, where the transcendental became immanent in social formations" could be applied. Chang's modern narratives are so inseparable from the tradition of Chinese classical poetry, and her genius gives further contrast to the lack of such talents in reviving the tradition of poetry in modern Chinese literary circles, echoing the lament of Lukacs's "The modern novel becomes the fractured epic of a world abandoned by god".

Yet Chang is also extremely fascinated with the novel genre of Ming and Qing dynasty, especially two novels on which she has done a tremendous amount of scholarly research as a literary historian and critic. The two novels are *Dreams of a Red Chamber*, and *Flower in a Sea of Sin*, both of which are episodic, loosely structured, and with seemingly infinite characters. Especially in the *Flower in a Sea of Sins*, most of the characters seem to have disappeared almost as soon as they had been introduced. Such novels, unlike the divine poetic tradition in China, are teeming with life, events that are sometimes too trivial to seem worthy of writing. Yet, this kind of "line-drawing" technique traditionally adopted in traditional Chinese drawings, could exactly capture the lives of human beings, and thus shed light on the nature of humanity. The poetics in Chinese literary tradition is high in the sky, offering its beauty to ethereal beings, while novels are

for common citizens and “jingshui” (the wells in the crowded markets where stories are tolled and gossips shared).

On the other hand, Chang’s works also agree with Bakhtin’s interpretations as she is also deeply influenced by various Western and Japanese avant-garde movements- modernism, surrealism, Dadaism, symbolism, expressionism, and psychoanalysis. This marks her as one of the New Sensationalists who could create a visual narrative reflecting the very subtlety of city life and love. Though it’s doubtful if Chang has the “ethic aesthetic need of compulsive estrangement that allows the writer system to rebel against the overpowering tendencies of power and authority”, it is apparent that she has that aesthetic impulse inside her. A great lover of modern abstract paintings and the poems of Decadent writers, she is rebellious enough to make the vow of writing better in English than Chinese in her early years. The cosmopolitan influences that she has absorbed have allowed her to form an almost indecipherable genre, teeming with poetics, but fundamentally prose, paradoxically adhering to the tradition of Chinese classical literacy while being inspired by western avant-garde art movements. Her works are surreal, leading us into a world of dreams and beyond dreams.

According to Media, the paradoxical tension between the two dichotomies of the state of avant-garde writing as represented respectively by Lucaks and Bakhtin is even more pronounced in Bolaño’s writings. Bolaño, as a young infra-realist poet, proposes a Utopian return, as does Lukacs, but no longer to an ideal plenitude of epic meaning. The lost home is now precisely the aesthetic estrangement of an avant-garde inseparable from political engagement. On the other hand, the ethic and aesthetic mandate of the writer becomes, as in Bakhtin, the systematic "de-centering" of the ideological world, including the avoidance of the reifying tendency of the avant-garde to become paralyzed into establishment. Thus the avant-garde mode is at once an object of nostalgia

and a method of resistance and displacement. The Bakhtinian drive to heterogeneity is not necessarily incompatible with the admired nostalgia for a past model but rather finds in it inspiration and justification as a way of remembrance and a tribute to both the compromised avant-garde artists of the 1960s and the victims in whose name they created. As a novelist, Bolaño will further develop the paradoxical tensions of that simultaneity among nostalgia, remembrance, and search of difference and displacement. Indeed, those tensions reveal themselves in another intriguing paradox present in many of his novels. (*Arts of Homelessness: Roberto Bolaño or the Commodification of Exile*). Such tension is most pronounced in his *Antwerp*, the prose-poem, with lines such as, “Everything looks worn. Not a recent phenomenon. From a long time back, everything wrecked. It’s too late, forget the gesture that never came. It was just a facade” as the opening of his book. The tone of mixed reminiscence, twisted desires, loss, displacement mystery...continues throughout the entire book, undulating and breathing its own memories, echoing the dual presence of the sentimentality of remembrance and difference, displacement...

This might explain why it is hard to find avant-gardes gestures in Bolaño’s writings. If they do appear, they are mostly in the form of parody, as in the visual poems included in *Los Detectives Salvajes* or his novel *Amberes*. Indeed, Bolaño's texts are almost compulsively anecdotal. There are no linguistic experimentations, no temporal displacements, no radical recontextualizations or schizophrenic interior monologues. The aesthetic radicalism of the infra-realist manifesto is nowhere to be seen. The subject of his writing is obsessively the avant-garde, but at the same time his aesthetic means make it readable for everyone just interested in good stories. "The author seems always placed on the other side of a mirror, taking notes" (Villoro 19). Everyone feels at home but also, curiously, homeless. Nostalgia and dislocation keep each other at bay, but they also change

masks, dislocation now being the subject and not so much the method of writing; nostalgia for good old stories, particularly detective stories, becoming the formal method.

In the case of the prose/verse relationship, Bolaño's design of storytelling might be even more enigmatic than Chang's. His attitude towards the hierarchy of genres could be reflected in the content of his writing, as a strong consistency in his works is the reverence and attention to poets and poems. *The Savage Detective*, *2666*, and *Woes of the True Policeman*, could all be interpreted as books writing about poets and their lives. In *2666*, lines such as "And what books do you read? I used to read everything, Professor, I read all the time. Now all I read is poetry. Poetry is the one thing that isn't contaminated, the one thing that isn't part of the game. I don't know if you follow me, Professor. Only poetry- and let me be clear, only some of it-is good for you; only poetry that isn't shit" is giving full credit to the superiority of poetry, yet there's still space to contemplate if it is actually the author's real intentions and belief. In *Monsieur Pain*, Pain could be read as a poet himself. But a traditional one. His mysterious stories thus revolve around the salvation of poetry. And in *Woes of the True Policeman*, the author begins with assigning sexuality to the two genres, with novels being heterosexual, and poetry fundamentally "Within the vast ocean of poetry he identified various currents: faggots, queers, sissies, freaks, butches, fairies, nymphs, and philenes." Though it's hard to define the true intentions of Bolaño in his seemingly offensive narratives of calling poetry "faggots", "sissies", it is undeniable that in the newly arising gender politics within the politics of identity, homosexuality is a more debatable, unorthodox and controversial sphere of discourse, which allows the characterization of poetry to be fulfilled with more stories, adventures and rebellion.

In his writings, the line between poetry and prose is very thin. The consensus is that Bolaño's prose is poetic and his poetry narratives prosaic, which is the same case with Eileen

Chang, who writes only “poems” as “poems”. Bolaño’s poetry is not a supplement but rather a complement to the author’s fiction. It is part of a single evolving totality, and yet it can be treated on its own, not so much on account of its intrinsic formal and thematic qualities, but because Bolaño the poet occupies a different cultural frame than Bolaño the novelist. As a poet, Bolaño stands as an interlocutor in a dialogue with other poets of his generation- and their precursors- that takes place in a different and more restricted cultural field than exchanges involving his identity as a writer of prose fiction. It is not an exaggeration to say that as a poet Bolaño acquires a different identity than he has as a novelist. As a poet, Bolaño adores Rimbaud, Ernesto Cardenal, Nicanor Parra, Enrique Lihn; while as a prose fiction writer, Bolaño would insert himself in a different genealogy with authors such as Borges, Cortazar and Kafka. In general, Bolaño believes that poetry and fiction are blood relatives, yet a fine degree of separation is preserved. “Poetry is Platonic, prose Aristotelian. “

What serves as the intersection between Chang and Bolaño’s novels are first, the multiple characters and storylines. In Bolaño’s works, literature professors, zealous revolutionists, soldiers, artists, poets, victims, and detectives dominate the pages; and in Chang’s narratives, students, revolutionists, prostitutes, mistresses, gentlemen, policemen, and soldiers occupy the center of attention. The characters come from different layers of social stratification and map a society in flux. Multiple storylines intersect and are then dispersed; various themes and concepts spring out and bite before fading away and being substituted by another idea. “This is not a novel. Or maybe it starts as a novel and ends as a novel, with a bunch of randomness in the middle that makes me question its novel-ness.” The way they compose are also similar in various aspects. There is the theory of Bolaño’s *The Woes of the True Policeman* being the warm-up, the sketch for his major 2666. “Since Bolaño frequently reused characters (slightly altered) from book to book, and never

wasted a word he wrote, I'm tempted to think that when he finally had 2666 pretty much where he wanted it, he wondered if he could make another novel out of the leftovers that we now have as Woes." In parallel to this theory, is the fact that Eileen Chang's *The Golden Cangue* (1950) is the sketch work of her major novel *Yuan Nv* (1988). Both authors are under the influence of Poe's philosophy of composition, especially its emphasis on the "unity of effect", stating that a work of fiction should be written only after the author has decided how it is to end and which emotional response, or "effect," he wishes to create, commonly known as the "unity of effect." Once this effect has been determined, the writer should decide all other matters pertaining to the composition of the work, including tone, theme, setting, characters, conflict and plot. The reason is that both authors are so capable of capturing what is "truly at stake", there's an urgency in their raw power of engaging readers with "what truly matters" that bursts through the enigmatic labyrinth that they have constructed with their rhetoric. Such bursts of strength that aim so accurately are hard to achieve without having pre-determined the effect one wishes to actualize. Though the lengths of their works vary, "brevity" and "intensity" are the two major traits shared by the authors.

[Aesthetics]

The aesthetics of Eileen Chang is closely intertwined with her gender politics. Discourses about the possibility of female languages have conveyed problematic issues among literary critics and they have somehow been revolving around the argument of Jacques Lacan's Symbolic order. Lacan explains that, at the Symbolic order, we can have language to begin the process of signification, and these enable us to form the subject "I" through interactions to others. Human beings come to have language and the accompanying cultures at this Oedipal order. Those activities cannot be performed in the pre-Oedipal imaginary order, which is the

stage for identification, narcissism and self. Derrida noticeably attacks Lacan about this idea, stating that Lacan's notion of the Symbolic is nothing but inherited Freudian phallocentrism. It should be reminded that the phallus as the "primary signifier" determines the social order of signifiers in the conception of the Symbolic order. For instance, the concept of the "lettered men" in ancient terms has been evolved to the human condition of speech belonging to the realm of "action", which is performed in the public space in the enjoyment of freedom. Eileen Chang is avant-garde in her new way of female writing that dismantles the traditional way of thinking and presents a new outlook on female authorship. New Woman, commodities, exotic civilization and aesthetics were the purveyors of sensuality and brought a revolution to Chinese lives and society. This triangular relationship of eroticism, modernity and narrative formed the base of the political and cultural condition in which the modern Chinese subject germinated. Through her intentional infraction and subtle irony, she created a text brimming with obscure, uncanny layers of meaning. Her rhetoric is, therefore, familiar as well as defamiliarized and becomes the locus.

In some sense, she has killed women in her novels in parallel with the hundreds of women killed in Bolaño's 2666. The difference is that though the women in Eileen Chang's novels have not physically demised, they are in a state worse than death due to the social reality, and a disillusionment towards love. In contrast to Bolaño's tender treatment of these female victims by rendering the details of their death with the accuracies of an autopsy, Chang kills those women elegantly yet coldly with her pen as the knife. Qiuqiao, Weilong, Manzhen, Manlu...they haunt readers with their ruthlessly beautiful death, with the strong contrast of the ownership of a beautiful face, and lack of control over their own fate. Poe's aesthetic belief that "the death... of a beautiful woman" is "unquestionably the most poetical topic in the world" dominant both Bolaño and Chang's narratives.

“Spleen” is also a key concept for both Chang and Bolaño’s writings. There is always the beauty of the grotesque, the desolate, and the decadent in their narratives. “Her golden earrings have pinned her against the door, like a vibrant yet dead specimen of butterfly”; “A piece of emerald lies on her black face-net, resembling a huge green spider”; “This woman is an absolute horror, so sick, so godless.” The decadent beauty in the works of the two authors, as Wolfgang Kayser states, has its drives in the anxiety innate within existence, and the understanding of “a mysterious force in man, which modern philosophy does not take into consideration; nevertheless, without this nameless force, without this primordial bent, a host of human actions would remain unexplained, inexplicable. They possess the fascination of the abyss”. The chill towards the dark side of humanity, and the confusion and fear it raised, in Chang’s case could be explained by Roland Barthes’s idea of agony being beyond an individual experience, but a succession and accumulation of all the pains within human history, including continuous wars, slavery, robbery, conquering, sadism and various other forms of violence. These pains remain in the collective psychology of humanity. Thus the historicity and collectivity of pain allows it to be beyond the individual. It is a collective unconscious, a primitive memory, a coding, and writing about it would be the releasing of libido. For Bolaño, under Borge’s influence, the mind itself is terrifying, with its elaborations and labyrinths, “We went back through an endless succession of doors.”

Dreams and mirrors play key roles in Chang and Bolaño’s writings. Mirror, could be related to the mirroring stage of “Reel, Symbolique, Imaginaire”. It reflects the normal, and abnormal, reflexivity in “masochism”, the non-existence of pure aggression, the structure of pleasure-in-pain, and internalization and introjection. Dreams manifest latent content. In both authors’ works, the language of dreams and seemingly irrelevant events are included; the desires

in the subconscious take the form of volatile imageries and creep into the dream-like lines of the authors, drawing parallel lines with the material reality. Bolaño writes stories within stories, and Chang often sets the ending of an event at the beginning of her narration, reflecting the aesthetics of “flipping over” the content or time. At the beginning of her narratives, Chang would often write about the moon of thirty years ago or the smoke from the incense as the storyteller finishes her narration. The imageries that have occurred in the start of her novel would always reappear at the ending, forming a Zen circle, and complete the “punctum” of those literary images. Bolaño’s narrations often develop into surreal dreams as he directly writes about dreams constantly, with the typical example of Norton, Espinoza, and Pelletier’s dreams in their hotel in Santa Teresa. Bolaño himself seems to be a psychoanalyst in his writing process, with the metacognition of relating details that would elicit dreams with the scenes of a dream itself.

In the comparative reading of trans-national, and trans-temporal authors, genres, aesthetics and political readings are merely points of departure. To gain further insight, the new geographic of identity combined with close reading would be a nice approach to fully see something called literature, where only “the best that is thought and known”. In the age of digital media and the avant-garde approach of combining STEM with literature, a brave new world is ahead of us to explore the vast unexplored space of the juxtaposition of two highly distinct authors, and be struck with the discoveries.

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Additional Writing Samples

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Kino-Eye and City Symphony: A Comparative Study

The films *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* by Walter Ruttmann, and Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* are known for their similarities. In fact, there is an anecdote that when Vertov toured Europe, he was satirized by German critics that his work is just a more "fanatical extension of the theory and practice of Ruttmann" (Letter from Berlin). Yet Vertov suggested---rather peevishly, that Ruttmann copied him rather than the reverse. Put that dispute aside, the two films share commonalities in that both are non-narrative, non-fictional, non-staged "city-film" documentaries that each capture the movement and energies of Berlin and the Soviet Union. Walter Ruttmann's goal is to capture the illusive physical energy of Berlin's "urban organism" for people to experience through the medium of film. While Vertov is releasing the power of the camera eye, to let it enter life and thus hunt for the lively energy of a "life caught unawares." The pieces captured by the camera are then edited through montage. Temporality is a crucial concept for both directors as they organize the pieces. A hodgepodge of a large variety of locations: factories, schools, households, militaries, restaurants... and the Querschnitt of people of all backgrounds and classes are exhibited in both films. Both films are considered avant-garde in their times. As they defy the traditional norms of films based on literature and a set plot.

More insights of each films and the director's concepts come from not just the shared commonalities, but from their nuances. Indeed, multiple essential differences also differentiate the two iconic films. And the result of a comparative study of the two films has led me back to the most major trait that brings the two films together: their revolutionary nature. The different visual symbols, the different emphasis on aesthetics or political statements, the different means of interacting of temporality are all variant attempts reaching for the same goal: Releasing the full potential of film as an individual medium, realizing film's innate powers fully.

A major difference between the two films would be the narration, the plot. Though it may seem unrelated to talk about plot for this type of documentary films, even this genre of film could have a general "storyline" about its subject matter that could be extracted. As both films have used the similar method of first collecting the raw material, the video footages from the cities, and then editing them to achieve the effects that the directors wish; what determines this narration and plot the most would be the editing process. In the case of *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, the plot would be a typical "a day in the city" plot, but for *Man with the Movie Camera*, the narrative is more nuanced and structured in a more complicated manner. In Walter Ruttmann's *How I Made My Berlin Film*, he has talked about how "During the editing, it became evident how difficult it was to visualize the symphonic curve I envisioned. Many of the most beautiful shots had to go, since I did not want to produce a picture book but rather something like the structure of a complex machine which can only come to full swing if every tiny piece fits into the next one with the utmost precision." (Ruttmann, 208). Apparently, what Ruttmann has envisioned is an aesthetics not only at its surface, but also deep in its ideas, concepts and philosophies. To go back to his *Painting with Time* text, he is attempting to produce a movie that is actually a live painting that unfolds and grows along temporal developments. In this process, the amorphous "time"

could be conceptually recorded with the minute changes in the growth of the artwork. The relationship between *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* and temporality is that the film grows out of time, extracting pieces of time and then reconstructing them in a way that parallels the rhythm of time. Though time itself is eternal is consistent, human beings perceive its rhythm differently in each era. Another way to express “rhythm of time” would be “tempo of the era”. In the film, time is divided into five parts: Dawn, around 8am, morning, noon, night. And in each act, the individual shots are being weaved together so that a regular, accurate, symphonic system is created. The length and speed of each shot is readjusted and montaged that one would have a clear idea of what’s happening in each act. Along the axis of time, a Querschnitt (a cross, a section) of all classes, the samples of people of different gender, age, backgrounds, jobs etc are shown doing exactly the same thing that people should be doing at around that point of time according to social norms. For instance, during lunch hour, a gentleman dines at a fancy restaurant, workers eat together at the dining hall, fancy foods are being prepared by chefs, the poor have to find food from the garbage, even the animals are having lunch: The lion tears meat from a bone, the horses are being fed... During work hours, a large variety of machines start simultaneously, female workers start spinning and weaving, steam engines start to puff smoke, the telephone operators start answering calls, the office workers start typing rapidly.....During nighttime, at different parts of the city some people entertain themselves at the pub with drinks, others go to the theatre for opera and plays, the Tiller girls prepare themselves at the backstage with thick makeup before starting their dancing, at the circus, there are acrobatics, magicians, animal performances...yet nighttime workers are not entertaining themselves at that time of day, some are working very hard at construction sites, some coal miners are at an tunnel....As these points of time are gathered together into a line, a time line, the cross sections of images collectively form the “mobile painting” that paints time. One could easily and clearly understand what is going on since the

intellectual montage has delicately connected pieces with the same narrative content together, thus ultimately forming a complete, symphonic “plot”.

But in the case of *Man with a Movie Camera*, Vertov has applied the opposite, using a negation of narrative and disruptive-associative montage. “On the diegetic level, The Man with the Movie Camera defies the narrative as a means of drawing the viewer’s attention to its meaning. Yet certain events are presented in a sequential order which fosters the expectation of linear development. However, each time such a narrative core becomes apparent, it is immediately thwarted.” (Petric, Constructivism in Film) Indeed, when one watches the film, one might initially believe that the plot is a day in the city, simply following the timeline. Yet the plot always jumps unexpectedly. For instance, in the scene of the woman waking up and putting on her bra, one would assume that the narrative would be about people preparing for the day, or the next shot would be the woman going outside. Yet the narratives about the woman, and about preparing for the day ends abruptly, replaced sharply by a shot of a man near the railroad, laughing, and then again replaced by the shutters opening and closing rapidly. Unexpectedly, the woman returns again, but not her entire body, just her eyes shutting and closing to the speed of the lens. This would be one example of the disruptive-associative montage repeatedly used in the film. The definition of this kind of montage is that “ A sequence establishes its initial topic and develops its full potential through an appropriate editing pace until a seemingly incongruous shot (announcing a new topic) is intercut, foreshadowing another theme that, although disconcerting at first glance, serves as a dialectical commentary on the previously recorded event. But this apparent complication is only momentary: the instant the inserted “disruptive” shot is perceived, it begins to function retroactively, providing more information about the surrounding shots rather than itself. The “disruptive” shots are repeated until their content begin to dominate the screen.” (Petric, Constructivism in Film) . Besides, Vertov’s film is being shot in three

different cities, Moscow Kiev and Odessa, while *Berlin: Symphony of a Great city* is just focused on this one city. So *Man with a Movie Camera* is spatially covering a wider spectrum, and wider perspectives, thus creating a greater hodgepodge of abundant information. Those techniques and production processes would thus explain the different sensations that *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* and *Man with a Movie Camera* respectively creates. The *Man with the Camera* is less about the symphony and order. For even in *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* there are cases of chaos, the overall effect is a harmonious symphony. But for Vertov's film, what stands out the most is an unorganized, untrimmed raw power of really jumping into the jumble of life! Just like the camera that has come alive and starts moving around, the entire film is the creation of a Kino-eye that " Within the chaos of movements, running past , away, running into and colliding, letting itself be drawn or repelled by movement, probing, as it goes, the path of its own movement, it experiments, distending time, dissecting movement , absorbing time within itself, swallowing years, thus schematizing processes of long duration inaccessible to the normal eye — the eye, all by itself, enters life. " (Vertov) In this way, the chaos and the exuberant information in Vertov's film offers a raw, fresh power of living and moving that the previous static, staged films could not achieve. " Come out into life!" The film seems to be calling us."

Another difference between the two films would be that in *Man with a Movie Camera*, the camera is depicted as a living being, a creature that sees and moves on its own will rather, coming alive from the state of an inanimate object; while in Walter Ruttmann's film, the camera itself is not the field of emphasis, so it doesn't actually appear in the film as a visible actor. But Ruttmann's film has something else that's special: his geometric form animations.

More specifically, the Kino-Eye in Vertov's film exists more than a guiding film ideology or a metaphor that is hidden out of sight in the actual production, but a major

character that is visible and highlighted for multiple times throughout the film. For instance, at the very beginning of the film, there is a highly surreal scene of a cameraman operating a movie camera set on tripod standing not on the ground, but on top of another gigantic camera! It is as if the gigantic camera itself is another planet, another kingdom that is the foundation that supports human activities. The immense scale of that magical camera is far larger than the human body, signifying Vertov's belief that the camera has greater powers than the imperfect human perceptions. The camera is again highlighted in the shot of the cameraman holding the tripod heading to the car, apparently about to begin his day of capturing the scenes. Then the lens is being focused, as it zooms in and out, the shutters of a window opens and closes in montage, then the opening and closing of a woman's eyes joins the rhythm of the shutter and camera lens. The sequence ends with the close-up shot of the camera lens shutting off and spinning open. All of the other montage pieces follow the major speed and pattern of the movement of the lens, resembling a line of poetry "I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead; I lift my lids and all is born again." (Plath) This visual analogy links the camera lens to the eye, and is repeated later when an actual human eye appears to have entered the lens, the Kino-eye that proves to be only more capable than the human eye is now officially introduced. The processes of film recording and producing are explicit in the movie when shots of the cameraman recording a family on horse cart are introduced, and later when there is another shot inside the darkroom where films are being produced, and there is a interplay of the stagnant photos in each segment of the roll of the film, and the flashback of the still images come into life as when they were first filmed. A highly meta moment in the film comes at the shot of a human eye which flickers in and out of sight when dozens of visual pieces of the city flash and collage extremely quickly. This seems to be suggesting how the Kino-eye is guiding how the human eye to perceive visual information in a revolutionary new way. To quote Vertov's own words, "I make the viewer see the manner

best suited to my presentation of this or that visual phenomenon. The eye suits to the will of the camera and is directed by it to those successive points of action, most succinctly and vividly, bring the film phrase to the height or depth of resolution. So, not from an audience/spectator perspective, which is a series of scattered perceptions, different for each spectator. But a system of successive movements recording each movement in order, a forceful transfer of the viewer's eye to the successive details that must be seen." (Annette Michelson.) The camera appears yet again in the scene where it is located at the right hand corner of the street, far larger in scale than in real life, dominating and surveilling the entire city from a panoramic viewpoint. The climax is the surreal scene of the tripod moving magically on its own, walking around and then joined by a camera that jumps out of a box. The camera sets itself on the tripod and the two start their journey of recording what's around them, and as the handle spins itself at an incredible speed, the camera "see" at all angles accordingly. I read this scene as a visual translation Vertov's imagined statement of the camera that has been emancipated, "Now and forever, I free myself from human immobility, I am in constant motion, I draw near, then away from objects, I crawl under, I climb onto them. I move apace with the muzzle of a galloping horse, I plunge full speed into a crowd, I outstrip running soldiers, I fall on my back, I ascend with an airplane, I plunge and soar together with plunging and soaring bodies. Now I, a camera, fling myself along their resultant maneuvering in the chaos of movement, recording movement, starting with movements composed of the most complex combinations. Freed from the rule of sixteen-seventeen frames per second, free of the limits of time and space, I put together any given points in the universe, no matter where I've recorded them." Besides that, in the film there is also a small secondary production theme which depicts the film's development through the street to the lab, editing room and eventually onto the screen, that is montaged at the beginning, end and some middle parts of the film. Apparently, Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* is meta in that it is highly

conscious of the importance of camera, and also the large picture of the significance of technology, science and industrialization for society. Vertov is highly indignant that the camera is reduced to a state of pitiable slavery, of subordination to the imperfections and shortsightedness of the human eye.” The “pitiable slavery” would refer to the fact that often times, filmmakers would use the camera as a tool to copy what the human eye perceives. For instance, in a more traditional film, the room settings, the performances of the actors/actresses would be recorded in the same manner and the sequence that the human audience typically perceive with their eyes. However, the human eye is imperfect compared to the movie camera that can keep on being improved as long as technology develops. Besides, the positions of the viewer’s bodies set boundaries which are nonexistent for the camera which has its own movement in time and space. Thus “The ‘Kino-eye’ can see so much more chaos of visual phenomenon that fills space. The Kino-eye lives and moves in time and space; it gathers and records impressions in a manner wholly different from that of the human eye. Thus we affirm the Kino-eye, discovering within the chaos of movement the result of the kino-eye’s own movement; we affirm the Kino-eye with its one dimensions of time and space, growing in strength and potential to the point of self-affirmation.” (Vertov)

While in Ruttmann’s *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, the camera never appears on the actual screen, it is the tool for Ruttmann to capture his prey--- the dynamic energies of the urban organism. Even though in his film, the camera also plays the crucial role of collecting important visual pieces of the urban organism that are far beyond the human sight. Ruttmann hasn’t placed such a direct manifestation in his film. The reason behind this, is highly related to the context in which the two films are produced. Neither of the two films are isolated pieces that came out of a whim, but are the results of each artist’s long-term experiments with art and film. In Walter Ruttmann’s case, he was fascinated with painting with time, the concept that has arisen due to the high velocity of our era, “the previously unknown velocity

in the transmission of intellectual information” (Ruttmann, 201) According to Ruttmann, “the object of our observation is no longer the static coexistence of individual points, but temporal developments and the constantly transforming physiognomy of a curve.” Thus the old art forms, such as paintings which are symbolized through a “pregnant moment”, could not fully represent the genuine life. What is crucial is the temporal development, rather than a fix point. That’s why the medium of film is so crucial in this era. With film, dynamic, varied relationships, a process rather than a dot, the message of unique sensations, active continuous memorizations of the stimulated eye are all brought together, releasing their powers collectively. In this way, a unique orchestration of time, and rhythm could be achieved. His aesthetic ideologies for the Berlin film are thus centered around “composing moving images with abstract means”, “consistent line of movement”, “visualize the symphonic curve I envisioned”, following his tradition of experimenting with movement, temporality and visual forms as in his previous animations *Lichtspiel: Opus* series. “This is an example of the infinite possibilities for using light and darkness, stillness and movement, straight and curved forms, delicate and massive shapes and their countless gradations and combinations.” (Ruttmann, 201) These combinations are also edited into the Berlin film.

Just like in Vertov’s film there is the recurring symbol of the surreal, superior “Kino-eye”, in Ruttmann’s film there is also the similar same symbol, the visual trope that is not that consistent with the film’s entire realistic, documentary style. And in Ruttmann’s case, the recurring visual metaphors are the repeated abstract shapes that move and transform. The film starts with a shot of the ocean, which then fades away as moving parallel lines and round shapes looking like the sun overlap over it. The parallel stripes and the sun-like round shape keep exchange and spinning more and more quickly, to the point that they blur and are superimposed by new stripes that move exactly like the machine at the train station. Thus the abstract shapes are finally substituted by the real arms of the machine, leading to the

beginning of the film. Other similar symbols repeat themselves throughout the film, such as the spiral animations that move faster and faster, diving into the center of an infinity.

The other difference between the two films would be that though both films have touched on topics of class differences, capitalistic productions etc, Vertov is more expressive of his own political stand, building his political ideologies with his edits of the film clips. While watching *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, one would be able to clearly decipher the director's political intentions, as the aesthetics is more of a focus than politics for Ruttmann in this film. Both films are using the process of camera capturing city scenes plus later editing of montage. The flexibility and freedom offered by montage allows one to give a certain motif for the film—political, aesthetics, economics...In Vertov's case, his film *Man With a Movie Camera* can be read as his manifestos for Stanlistic policies. According to Graham Roberts, "The Man with the Movie Camera is the product of the state of crisis which led to the abandonment of the NEP and the reassertion of more clearly Bolshevik policies. Vert endorsed the policies of strengthening "Soicialism in one country" and the need to do so through a rapid transformation of the economy. That is why labour, the production of steel and coal, and the increased productive capacity of machines is so extensively explored." (Roberts, 14) Besides the depiction of labor, the contrasts and juxtapositions in the film also reveals Vertov's praise of honest labor, which is the contrast of the higher class that only enjoy the services. An example for this would be in the middle of the film where this series of montages are shown: First is the close-up of a woman lying on a bed at the beauty parlor and someone else is putting make-up on her eyes, the immediate shot is a divorcing woman who hides her face behind her purse while her husband laughs by her side. The film immediately switches back to the rich woman enjoying her make-up, as she smiles. A cut, and the scene flashes to a working woman applying mortar onto the wall. The film switches back to the lady whose eye has been applied made-up. Then immediately, the working woman turns to

the camera before returning to her work. The high contrast between the joy of enjoying other's services and the sorrows of a harsh life, the toils of hard labor is quite intentional for this film. Since Vertov's montages are in most cases, disruptive-associative, it is quite reflective when such a consistent montage of the rich lady's leisure is put in contrast in other less fortunate women's sufferings. Other than this kind of class contrast, there is also an abundant display of labor in the film. An example would be the depiction of a woman's hands working on the cigarette packet machine at maddening speed. Then there is the other shot of another worker's hands operating on a switchboard at furious pace. Interestingly, the length of each montage is shortened and shortened till they become a frenzied blur. The scene is suggesting that workers have to follow the speed of the machine, to a point that the line between them and the machine is blurred, and they become almost a part of the machine. The fact that some higher class people are enjoying the services with others while others have to work like this is suggesting the director's attitude towards class distinction, that it should be eliminated. Other shots such as a girl shooting at symbolic enemies such as Fascism, The Lenin Club, and lingering shots on a sign that says "First five-year plan" are all highly political contents.

In contrast, in Ruttmann's film, these kinds of political contents are much fewer. Though there are montages of different classes mixed together, such as the dining scene with poorer people eating as a community with simple food, paupers with no food, and rich diners with fancy dishes. The main emphasis is still on depicting the luxurious food and rich diners, and even though there are shots of the poor, these shots are extremely short and the poor seem to be perfectly fine with what they have. There are no intentional contrasts between the enjoyment of the rich versus the sufferings of the poor, but rather just a natural Querschnitt. In fact, the entire film is in a positive, joyful tone, ending in a display of fireworks, celebrating the energies prosperous city organism. Even though there are depictions of the

seedy and shady aspects of the city, they are shown in subtle, indistinct ways, rarely appearing. While in Vertov's case, the Man with the Movie Camera is dealing directly with the negative aspects of the city, sending a message that these are the vices of remaining Capitalism with his montages.

The most essential question concerning would be, where would the compare and contrast of the two films lead us? A conclusion drawn though this study is oxymoronic: The differences between the two films show the most major commonality that they share: They are both the results of the director's avant-garde self-expression towards their avant-garde understanding of film, the new understandings that are revolutionary, and completely in contrast to the current conditions of traditional narrative, fictional, staged films. The differences all show the director's own creative inventions and concepts of film, though these ideas may be slightly different, the general idea is clear: To reform! The different visual tropes, the different emphasis on aesthetics or political statements, the different means of playing with time are just branches in varied forms of the same revolution.

In the text 215 "*Candid*" *Cinematography: 'Kino-Eye' in the Rathaus-Lichtspiele*, the author talks about how this type of film will "eliminate from film the final remnants of "literature", the translations of verbal drama and other logical -dialogic ideas into the world of moving images." (215) This comment is referring to the fact that before this avant-garde film movement, film is a side support for literature, like a twin for theatre. Thus, the full power and possibilities of film are yet unreleased. As film is unique with its moving images. Film, in and of itself, is an incredibly powerful medium, not in need of any other media. And films represented by Vertov and Ruttmann are pushing the frontier of the cinema, releasing more possibilities and potentials of the moving images.

Ruttmann and Vertov are distinct from avant-garde absolute film artists who use film as a means and end to themselves. Though Ruttmann is more about aesthetics than Vertov,

his concept is very clear in his text, “The Absolute Fashion: Film as an End in Itself; Beware of the Art pour L’art Position”. In this text, he adamantly declares that “Let us not place art before all else. For film is (thank God!) not only an artistic but also, above all, a human and social affair! Art is no longer abstraction, but a kind of statement! The important thing is only the fact of the human statement.” (208) Walter Ruttmann, who has previously worked a lot with the absolute film with for instance, his *Lichtspiel Opus* series, is clearly aware of the limitations of this kind of absolute film that is an end and goal in itself, thus he breaks the limitations of the art’s for art’s sake concept, and instead works with the Berlin film that is clearly delivering a human statement about city life, human activities, society, technology, nature...In Vertov’s case, it is really clear that he has the social and political purpose when producing his film. So both works are the combinations of art and human statements.

What is general condition for avant-garde films in the era when those avant-garde producers first experimented with their concepts? In the text by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, *The Artist Belongs to the Industry! A Conversation with Professor L. Moholy-Nagy, Dessau-Berlin*, there are many enlightening points. First, “The fact that only a few directors among the hundreds understand the possibility of such a line of inquiry costs the industry millions.” So it seems that those avant-garde ideas are not isolated from film’s commercial values, and if they are exploited fully, they could be highly profitable to the film industry. “Indeed, their experimental works, their statements show that we should have long ago established an international cooperative for the avant-garde of all countries to work through this theory of elements, which is still solely lacking.” There is the internationality of film itself that reveal and appeal to the broader human condition. And the fuller exploitations of the potential of film when avant-garde film artists work together is in accord with film’s international nature, and the mutual help, critiques and gathering of strength among them would bring immense changes to the future of film. But for now, contemporary avant-garde films are marginalized,

which might be caused by people's overestimation of the theories of moving images, theories of elements, theories about the innate potentials of film in and of itself. This kind of film fails to have great commercial value. Or because these kind of avant-garde artists have not united internationally as they should have, and they have not returned to the industry where they belong, but have instead chosen to stay isolated. But their legacies are clear and valuable, films like *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* and *Man with a Movie Camera* are pioneers in "building a system in which millions of people reconstruct their fragments." (Roberts). and they open up possibilities, which is the only determinate thing in this world of indeterminacies.

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Parody, Poetic Voice, Cultural Appropriation: A Reading of 100 Chinese Silences

The anthology *100 Chinese silences* is one-of-a-kind in being an avant-garde collection of poems that are rewrites of works by prestigious western poets like Billy Collins, Marianne Moore, Gary Snyder who appropriate elements of Chinese culture as exotic signs or imageries in their poems, often misinterpreting and randomly adopting the culture as if it's a blank and free piece of screen or a docile piece of clay. Literary appropriation, wherein a writer uses material and a language that does not derive from his own background or culture, is already a convoluted issue with more than one side to it. Even a "successful" appropriative work may raise negative issues concerning ethical, psychological or political problems. However, on the writer's side, the one who appropriates material from other cultures or other individuals is, in many ways, simply acting out the writer's functions. The "re-appropriation" that Yu creates is even more complicated since this kind of directional movement doesn't just go two ways, but is moving more multidirectionally than the central-margin dichotomy. Aside from the content, the form of parody, quotations and rewriting of 100 Chinese Silences not only echoes Zurita's *Purgatory* and *Newspaper Blackout*, but also alludes to the fundamental questions concerning the genre of parody, literary quotation and imitation, transtextuality and intertextuality, the poetic voice and the act of writing, as well as the worship of established poets and literature. Rather than

analyzing poems individually, this essay will focus on the anthology as a whole, under the navigation of Timothy Yu's interviews in which he discusses his creative process and contemplations.

In his interview Yu talks about how he justifies using parody to rewrite the poems that made him "amused" and "mad" by realizing that he has gained a more profound understanding about American poetry and also these poets' personal styles by getting inside their voices, for instance Billy Collins's idiosyncratic gently witty poetry that is intelligent but not too intelligent; funny but not too funny. Rather than being solely satirical or critical, Yu's works show a deep understanding how these poets work through his imitations. This is enlightening for the understanding of the genre of parody, which was used as a weapon in cultural wars of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and later with its concepts widened by Russian Formalism and postmodernism. Parody is a mixture of imitation, playfulness and critique. "It is parasitic of its objects and cannot be described formally. It is a meta-literary genre and thus a form of literary criticism. The preliminary definition of parody is "an imitative reference of one literary genre to another, often with an implied critique of the object text". (Dane, 8) The parodies made by a less famous poet Asian poet for the sake of challenging and poking fun at established, prestigious western poets are like a reflection of literary evolution itself, which is a form of literary self-reflection and parody. Parody is a force both subversive and constructive, and Timothy Yu's parodies are constructive in pushing the frontiers, as well as adding elements of diversity and self-reflection to the "American lyric". His rewritings of the Western poets' works are also complementary to these original poems. "One has to have certain knowledge of the pre-text and to use it to perceive the alterations of the parodied text in the parody. As in parody, the relation between the text and pre-text is of functional necessity for the text and

therefore has to be noticed by the reader.” (Dane, 11) Yu’s poems have also in some ways, promoted and encouraged the readings and interpretations of the target of his parodies. In Bakhtin, parody itself is a manifestation of what he calls “polyglossia” or “heteroglossia”, the conflict of multiple languages in a single text. In the contemporary context, we are supposed to speak a “democratized language” that would melt these conflicts, yet the status quo of an imperfect democracy in political life leads to the democratized language becoming a linguistic idealism.

Another aspect of Yu’s writings is “imitation”, which would immediately raise questions concerning poetic originality, the unique, creative poetic voice of an individual and the act of writing and intertextuality in literature. Poetic originality is an elusive notion in the era of global postmodernism. An interesting phenomenon in the poetic avant-garde is that forms like collage, appropriation or “uncreative writing” have become prominent manifestations. “Intertextuality thus becomes a useful term because it foregrounds notions of relationally, interconnectedness and interdependence in modern cultural life, where artistic objects are often inevitably assembled from pre-existing art.” (Graham) As Yu points out, “The language of mimicry and hybridity frames our understanding of writing from postcolonial spaces, and more broadly helps us grasp the relationship of any minoritized or marginalized writing with regard to the dominant mode.” (Yu) The “uncreativity” of Yu’s works seems to be ironic in that Asians are often stereotyped as meek imitators, uncreative, passive students learning the modern lifestyle from westerners and producing modernist art along norms set up by westerners. However, in Yu’s case, imitation is not only manifestation of the conventional “poetry apprenticeship”, but also the demonstration of a very lucid awareness of the relationship of powers between “dominant” and “secondary”, “original” and “copy”. Such an awareness differentiates Yu’s works from mindless copying as

the imitation becomes an act of protest and performativity. As for “finding the poetic voice”, Yu has commented in his interview on how he has been really uncomfortable with the whole “finding your voice thing” because he always felt like he has never found it. “Here is the paradox: the only time I ever felt I had a voice in my own poetic life is when I was imitating people. And I don’t think it is an accident that the 100 Chinese Silences have been the thing that people have most strongly responded to because I wasn’t worried about whether or not it sounded like me. When I was trying to sound like myself I sounded stilted and artificial but when I tried to sound like somebody else I sounded more like myself.” (Yu) The same problem has been raised in Kleon’s introduction to his *Newspaper Blackout*, where he discussed how after graduating from creative writing workshops he was lost and not able to find the “identity of writing”. Only when he distances himself from the previous literature scholar identity and entered the “performative”, child-like, “using- ready-made objects act of blacking out newspapers did he find his voice again. Duchamp has also said, “My intention was to get away from myself. Call it a little game between ‘I’ and ‘me’.” This is the point of departure for the discussion about the act of creative writing. In *Stranger at the door*, Gunnars has argued that “ Our bodies, culture, and personal histories go into Inside the temple of writing, we have further ritualized what we think of as literature. We have a dislocated relationship to non-literature, but a much more ceremonialized relationship to so-called literary writing.” (Gunnars, 86) The ritual would involve putting on masks, acting out with an alternate ego or even personas when writing verses. Aside from the psychology of creative writing, finding one’s own poetic voice may be an invalid notion in that “In the tale, in the telling, we are all of one blood.” (Guin, 43) Creative writing itself is a collaborative writing framed by socio-political contexts. Even lyrical poetry is social in nature, and that in the solitude is the universal human experience

voiced. There is also the nature of poetry itself that Tate argues, “poetry speaks against an essential backdrop of silence. It is almost reluctant to speak at all, knowing that it can never fully name what is at the heart of its intention. There is a prayerful, haunted silence between words, between phrases, between images, ideas, and lines” (Tate, 106)

The voice of Yu in the *100 Chinese Silences* is also more complex than the typical matter of finding one’s poetic voice, his voice is also the cultural voice that has been considered a minority voice, secondary voice in the massive collection of voices in contemporary America. In Yu’s interview, he has insisted that he is not trying to say that “we have been silenced and now we are speaking”, since that is a very common gesture for poets of color to make, “these voices have not been heard and now we are speaking.” (Yu) He absolutely acknowledges the importance of these kind of voices, yet the contemporary issue is that what if “when you are heard you are kind of unheard.” The “Asian stuff” is all over the place in American popular culture and literature, yet for Asians they are very odd, detached in their inauthenticity and hybridity. Asians are there and simultaneously “not there”, and so are their voices. The alternative to simply “making our voices be heard”, is to use the odd westernized “Chinese voices” already there and make statements through the exploitations. “At the heart of the problem of appropriation in writing, it is the relationship between speaker and listener, writer and reader, which is central. The person who tells a story becomes the person who owns it, regardless of accuracy, veracity, or appropriateness. The question of the writer’s responsibility in relation to the ownership of stories is also a question of ethics.” (Gunnars,64). An interesting feeling that a reader may have when reading Yu, is that his poetry sets off in two directions and are for two sets of readers, when trying to “interpret” the oriental culture to the dominant culture, he is exploring the sense of dislocation. Especially when Yu substitutes the Chinese signs and clichés

into American ones, American readers may experience the sense of “dislocations” or “inauthenticity” though the signs are things they are also familiar with. The nuance between “authentic and native” cultural elements and their various dopplegängers are reversed back for readers of the dominant culture to experience. The otherness is cleverly duplicated and transformed in the reverse direction for a genuine empathetic experience. On the other side of the discourse, the western poets who are parodied for may justify themselves in that they are only fulfilling the writer’s functions and the artist’s tasks. “Trying to limit the imaginary universe of another is, to many writers, just as much a crime as it is for others to be appropriated.” (Gunnars,49) Indeed, great arts are achieved across boundaries but only through equal cultural exchanges. A lot of the poems in *100 Chinese Silences* are about the idea that talking about Asia or pretending to be Asian is really reflecting on being a white American, “A way of contrasting what you are like with stereotypes about what Asians are like. While no actual Chinese people ever enter the poems.” (Yu) Some established poets that Yu have satirized against, are genuinely racist in their poems that mock the Chinese accents and the racial stereotypes of “Ching-Chong” with tiny slanted eyes. Some poets, like Billy Collins seem to be a lover of Chinese culture, “But because of the humor of the work, there is also a little bit of mockery or contempt for it even. He still rejects them, finds them alien, fearful or disgusting. So *100 Chinese Silences* is a response to the love/hate feeling for the other that runs through American poetry.” (Yu) It also raises the question of what our “national” literatures are made of, and where the boundaries of different cultures actually lie. It even leads to a more utopian question of what the world be like when there are no boundaries between different cultures and languages at all?

100 Chinese Silences is a crucial piece within the contemporary cartographies of American literature, since from the aspects of form and genre, it places traditional literary topics

of intertextuality, poetic voice, quotation and parody under the backdrop of the modern, globalized epoch, while its theme of cultural appropriations and re-appropriations and contemporary orientalism already breaks the silence of Asians/Asian Americans in the chorus of the American lyrics.

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Hausarbeit

Shakespeare Past and Present : The Tempest

Professor. Anne Enderwitz

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The Paradigm Shift in the Age of Post Mechanical Reproduction

Adaptation, Dislocation, Sexual and Digital Magic in Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books*

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I. Introduction

The various adaptations of Shakespeare's classic *the Tempest* across ages are collectively a well demonstration of the paradigm shifts in society throughout history. An adaptation is always created at a certain historical and cultural movement, thus simultaneously being a mirror reflecting the social issues, media development, cultural practices of that specific moment. In the case of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, adaptations and literary readings have clearly shifted their focuses across time, from colonial discourse, power, punishment and government, meta theories of the theatrical media, Aime Cesaire's *Une Tempete*, and eventually to the cinematic adaptations of the Tempest like the Film by Derek Jarman in 1979 and Peter Greenaway's avant-garde *Prospero's Books* in 1991, the paradigm has been shifted to the discourse of new visual literacy in context of intermedial iconicity, as well as a feminist and psychoanalytic meta-analysis of the digital media itself in the age of post mechanical reproduction. The goal of this essay will thus be centered around the question of if Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* is a mirror reflecting the post mechanical age, what exactly has been reflected? The first part of the essay will be a close reading of the film itself especially in relation to the concept of adaptation itself. More specifically, how has the core of Shakespeare's pre-text been preserved or modified? Regarding the content of *Prospero's Books*, the three levels of dislocation, analysis through feminist and psychoanalytic lens, the fluidity of roles and the significance of masks will be discussed. The second part of the essay will be a meta-analysis of digital technology, especially in regard to the so-called technology of compassion, the comparison between the

traditional literacy of books and the visual literacy of digital cinema, as well as the viewer's response to the media shift. Lastly, a short analysis of the concept of the "avant-garde" will be included. Walter Benjamin's conception of the Angel of History will be referenced as a theoretical framework.

II. A Summary of Peter Greenaway's film *Prospero's Books*

The film *Prospero's Books* was directed by Peter Greenaway in 1991, a British avant-garde adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The film is avant-garde in that it is narratively and cinematically innovative in its techniques, combining mime, dance, opera and animation. Edited in Japan, there is an extensive usage of digital image manipulation often overlaying multiple moving and still images with animation. What's most noticeable and defamiliarizing for the audience is the fact that the traditional linear narration has been destroyed in this film. Shakespeare's plot has been deconstructed and reconstructed along the outline of 24 volumes of books, supposed to be reminiscent of the lost books of Epicurus, such as *A Book of Water*; *A Book of Mirrors*, *A Harsh Book of Geometry*, *the Vesalius Anatomy of Birth*... A dialogue will be created when the viewers consciously realize their cognition of this new visual literacy and go back to the tradition of Shakespeare's *the Tempest* as a supporting semantic structure of understanding the plot.

III Adaptation and Dislocation

In Christina Ljungberg's text *Unbinding the Text Intermedial Iconicity in Prospero's Books*, adaptations were traditionally viewed as in 'subaltern' status of the pre-text, always having to respect the authority of the pre-text, with viewers fearing the situation of cinematic adaptations drowning the voice of the original text with its fancy visual and audio effects. However, a more recent theory concerning adaptations is to view the concept under the context of performativity. "The concept of the performative as developed by J.L. Austin, Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida and others is that dimension of discourse which generates new 'realities'. Performative statements are neither true nor false since the reality to which they refer to is only created by their being uttered." (Venuti 2007: 25-43). Such a performative interpretation is highly essential to the justification of the independent and more active status of adaptations. If literature can create a certain state of affairs, then why can't films create a new audio-visual verbal state of affairs? Following this logic, Peter Greenaway's film *Prospero's Books* is justifiable in its instances of discontinuity. Instead of aligning with and continuing with a certain genre or tradition, *Prospero's Books* has become a place of dislocation for different discourses.

A central question then would be how did Peter Greenaway preserve or modify the core of Shakespeare's *the Tempest*? His approach is basically to take apart the constituent elements of the pre-text, analyzing, and reordering them. Such a process is called the diagram process, with the reordering process revealing previously unknown relationships. (Pierce EP 2: 212-213). The essential trope in this adaptation is

dislocation, which basically echoes this diagram process, since the very definition of dislocation is a disruption of an established order.

According to Christina Ljung, there are three levels of dislocation in Peter Greenaway's film, the level of diegesis, the level of structure and the level of the theme. First of all, on the level of diegesis, the story of the Tempest mainly happens on the magical island, which is itself a source of cultural and geographical dislocation. The element of discovery and exploration is a recurring element throughout the play, for instance Miranda's joyous surprise at a "brave new world" with "such people in't" (5.1.183-4). Gonzalo's amazement at Ferdinand and Miranda's sudden experience etc. These joyous surprises echo the response of some European explorers' sentiment when encountering the exotic people, landscape, flora and fauna of the new world. Prospero is stuck in this predicament due to his excessive absorption in his books, and thus has his throne usurped and he himself banished. His dislocation from reality has led to his dislocation from his previous status and power. But is this really a predicament? Prospero's eventual knowledge of forgiveness and compassion is something he has not learnt from books. In some sense, his geographical dislocation has brought him closer to humanity and perhaps, the truth. Miranda's dislocation has led her to the total submission of her father's control. Caliban, the original native of the island, is dislocated from his home, and forced to be submissive to the "higher" culture, his dislocation is in fact, a colonial dislocation. The element of language for Caliban in the movie has been completely omitted, instead the dancer's movement becomes his visual language, demonstrating his intense lust, desire and hatred.

The structural dislocation is shown in the diversion from traditional cinematic conventions, in both the temporal and spatial dislocations. From the temporal sense, the dislocation is shown in the historical discontinuity with settings and props that were produced after Shakespeare's time, for instance the Piranesian bath house, and the prophetic borrowings of Prospero. From the spatial sense, the various montages have put plots set in vastly different environments in juxtaposition. For instance, the landscape of the breathtakingly beautiful maze when Ferdinand first encounters Miranda is a labyrinth constructed within a wild field of golden wheat, with the Greco-Roman classical style of temple constructed in the background. The scene is extremely surreal, especially in juxtaposition with the fancy Renaissance style of aristocratic costume that Ferdinand wears. The effect is as if two paintings have been montaged together. The dislocation is also the dislocation of traditional aesthetic motifs, deconstructing them and then collaging them together.

The biggest dislocation in the film in comparison with the original pre-text is the thematic dislocation. According to the quote by Ljungberg, "the Past corresponds to Prospero's long explanation of his history, the Present deals with Prospero's various real-time plotting and the Future concerns those plans Prospero makes to guarantee the success of his dynastic ambitions for his daughter' (Ljungberg 2011, 15). The medium that carries the function of weaving these narratives together is books in *Prospero's Books*. The books serve the role of story-tellers, aesthetic motifs, and also the thread that sews together deconstructed and disintegrated pieces of narratives. In the film, for instance in the *Book of Anatomy*, one sees the past of Prospero. The *Book of Anatomy*

carries the plot of Miranda's mom giving birth, montaged with a similarly gory scene of political uprising and massacre. The history of Prospero is thus explained by a book of anatomy that thematically is not directly connected. The book of love is the plot of Prospero's current plotting that deals with his plan of creating romance between Miranda and Ferdinand. The past, present and future of Prospero are thus connected with universal concepts and elements of love, architecture, insects, music...the thematic logic of the movie is thus interweaved with pre-established phenomenological concepts instead of aligning with the traditional linearity of the plot.

IV Feminist and Psychoanalytical Reading

According to the text by Donaldson Greenaway *Sexual and Electronic Magic in Prospero's Books*, female sexuality is seen as something dangerous and insanitary in *Prospero's Books*, being replaced by the proper, sanitized power of magic, technology and control with the male gender. In the film, Prospero plays the role of a male midwife with his magic, giving birth to a magical island and fantastic creatures like Ariel. Dangerous female sexuality is being depicted in exaggerated description of Sycorax the witch, the brutality of female birth-giving in the case of Miranda's mother. Eros is being ridiculed in the robotic mechanical movement of female dancers, pulling their long hair to a certain direction, mimicking the movement of Cupid thrusting an arrow into his breast. There was supposed to be a special character The Juggler in the script for the movie, a female character painted in orange body spray, and the only character that has spontaneous sexual desire, however she is omitted in the final production. Prospero

controls the sexuality on the island with his power and magic, showing no sexual desires himself even though he is surrounded by beautiful, naked female dancers. His writing activity can be seen as linked to a form of autoeroticism, and he shows feminine care and compassion through his forgiveness done with his magic. Even though these readings can be over-analysis through a certain feminist and psychoanalytic lens, they make sense under the context of contemporary society when these theories have been established and the lens already constructed. Undeniably, there is an abundance of sexual metaphors and allusions in the film shown directly through the vast number of nude bodies that show desire without pleasure, and the plot of the romance between Miranda and Ferdinand, whose romance was established through control. Prospero speaks through Ariel, who then whispers romantic lines into Miranda's ears. Love, sexuality and desire are no longer spontaneous in the film.

V. The Film as a Meta-Analysis of Technology

A striking scene in *Prospero's Films* is the defiling of books and destruction of books. The first scene appeared when Caliban was protesting against the civilized high culture, vomiting, placing magnets and waste on the books. This scene is reminiscent of what Roberto Bolano calls "the Barbaric Writers". "When I watched the Barbaric Writers defecate on my manuscript...We smear what drips from our self-inflicted wounds onto our verses, combining blood and ink into new poetic forms in which we rub our faces...and chastise any fool crass enough to declare himself a poet, an offense

punishable by confinement in a cage surrounded by Barbaric Writers who expectorate between the distinguished author's eyes, his hands tied behind his back to prevent him from cleaning his face. For poetry is hard work! It is hard to create such filthy, vile putrescence..." (Daniel Borzutzky, *On the Performance of Becoming Human*:2006. 36). The role of the traditional genre of books has shifted in various spectrums throughout the film. Overall, it is the main pre-condition of the existence of the entire film, the space where Prospero can be the controller and the protagonist. However, in later stages, this pre-condition has been not only defiled and also destroyed. In the scene with Caliban, books were being defiled, the modern has returned to the primitive. In the ending scene, all of the 24 books have been destroyed, except for the last one, the pre-text of Shakespeare's *the Tempest*, being saved by Ariel. A possible explanation is that the Prospero in the film plays a dual role, both the magician/writer, and the protagonist/character. In analogy with genre, film/director plays the role of the magician, creating the space for the fancies of the brain to be exhibited on show; while the traditional genre of books is shown as a character, whose fate remains unclear. This can also be read as a metaphor for the current condition of the medias, even though the digital revolution means there is the possibility of books being replaced, yet in reality, there will always be one book left, the pre-text. Once again, books have been re-mystified.

An interesting fact about this film is that the original focus on the relationship between Prospero-Caliban has been shifted to that between Prospero-Ariel. Ariel is like Prospero's camera, his surveillance camera, his means of projection and his

representational apparatus. The director, Peter Greenaway himself is conscious of meta-analysis of his work and his apparatus, the film camera. The fact that there are four stages of Ariel represented by four actors of different ages shows the transitional nature of media and technology. The traditional genre of books has been established as the essential stage for everything to take place, defiled, destroyed. They also have an independent vigor of life, always breaking free of the binds of traditionally organized book pages and sequences, existing as “free-floating” images. This refers to how the film is basically a collection of moving “free-floating” images with audio added. For each image in the film, there will always be a pre-existing image connected with it. The film director is doing a meta-analysis of the development of medias, the film history and also his own technique of painting superimposed paintings layered upon each other when making the film.

In fact, Peter Greenaway has described his own image-processing system in long detail (ibis: 28-33), and speculates that Prospero himself would have approved of its use in the “manufacture of magical volumes” because he ‘Would no doubt call upon the most contemporary state-of-the-art techniques that the legacy of the Gutenberg revolution could offer. The newest Gutenberg technology- and to talk of a comparable revolution may not be to exaggerate—is the digital, electronic Graphic Paintbox.” (bid.:28)

In fact this technique of Graphic Paintbox has allowed the aesthetic taste of the film to resemble that of the Renaissance art history. The actors and actresses’ body positions sometimes mimic famous classical oil paintings and statues, for instances

the dance resembles a post-modern version of the *Amor Vincit Omnia* and *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*. The Mise-en-scene of the film also mimics traditional painting, with strong light and shadow contrast of Chiaroscuro, the affected and often unnatural gestures mimicking the contrapposto in statues. The color, lighting and tonality of the film is also highly nostalgic, with the colors subdued with lower saturation, modified with pastel texture.

An interesting point in Peter. S. Donaldson's text is his point about the "compassion of technology", referring to human compassion being the limit and challenge of digital technology. "It might once have meant only that technology would be directed by compassion, or used for ends determined by compassion. As used by proponents of artificial intelligence and others, it can mean that the technology itself might be compassionate, that computer programs might be written that would emulate human compassion." (Donaldson 1990: 48) In Prospero's books, Ariel is a metaphor for the production of technology, and interestingly, he is the one that teaches the cold and heartless Prospero how to forgive and be compassionate at the end of the film. The cherubic Ariel has whispered to Prospero to have his affections "tendered". Since Ariel is a metaphor for the end product of technology, the digital magic, it is as if technology, the production of human beings, is teaching humans how to be compassionate, and how to be human. Even though normally speaking, "compassion" is a human quality that cannot be artificially produced, and it is regarded as the final achievement or necessary condition in the creation of artificial life.

The viewing experience of *Prospero's Books* is integral with the film itself. Rather than viewing a film with traditionally linear plots, the audience is suddenly placed into a purely aesthetic experimentation. In this sense, the audience is experiencing a certain dislocation from their familiar situation of encounter with the media of digital film. However, such a perceptual dislocation is important not only to this certain film, *Prospero's Books*, but also to the universal experience of film watching. When watching films, one subconsciously switches his or her literary cognition into the perceptive visual literacy.

VI. Conclusion

In Peter Greenaway's adaptation of Shakespeare's text, intermedial iconicity performatively, diagrammatically and metaphorically reflects the narrative structure, pretexts and contexts of this self-interrogating work, while feminist and psychoanalytic readings of the film lead to further analysis on the technology of compassion, the relationship between the artificial and humanity in the digital era. Further research on the film could be focused on a re-interrogation of the film in the contemporary era, the 21st century, and whether the film could still be regarded as avant-garde; the concept of the avant-garde shown in *Prospero's Books*, and the themes of destruction could be read in relation with Walter Benjamin's Angel of History.

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The Dangers and the Nature of Metaphors in *Il Postino*

The film *Il Postino* is a lyrical and artistic film narrating the story of how the postman Mario learnt poetry from Pablo Neruda who was then exiled to a tiny Italian island. With the power of poetry, Mario successfully wooed and married the local beauty Beatrice. He also learnt the spirit of a communist from Neruda. After Neruda's return to Chile, his influence on Mario remained, and the barely literate son of a poor fisherman has matured into a young man with his own poetic voice and the courage to stay loyal to communism for the interest of the people. The film is special in its prioritization and even problematization of language, especially the poetic language charged with metaphors. Both the pervasiveness and the danger of metaphors are important issues raised and dealt with in the film.

The first key issue raised in the film is the danger of metaphors. The illiterate Donna Rosa has cursed "Words are the worst things ever", and Neruda himself has humorously dramatized in highly figurative language the seductive danger of metaphors after he was confronted by the widow's fury with adjectives, "With a metaphor hissing like a dagger...as sharp as a canine and lacerating as a hymen...The poetry will have left the mark of its seductive saliva on the virgin's nipples..." The first potential danger of metaphors raised in the film is its seductiveness, especially sexual seductiveness. Aristotle has argued that poets have the power to aesthetically exhibit an exceptional control over words, a mastery of metaphor, which promotes

and illuminates an exceptional sensibility that endears them to the opposite sex. From the opening of the film, such an emphasis of the power of poetic language to woo women has been repeatedly suggested. In the newsreel declaring the arrival of Neruda at the Italian station there is a particular shot of a female fan rushing to welcome him, accompanied by the reporter's analysis "Women go crazy for his poetry... Maybe because Neruda writes love poems which appeals to female sensibility." Aside from a heavy load of love letters sent by female fans, Neruda's romanticized love life with Matilde explicitly confirms the point. The poet is elevated to a "love god" figure with his magic of poetry. One of the major story lines --- Mario's romantic pursuit of the beauty Beatrice confirms an evolutionary interpretation of language. Evolutionary theorists have promoted the notion that sexual selection has been the driving force behind the expansion of the human mind and human. Specifically, Leonard Shlain in *Sex, Time and Power* argues that "language evolved primarily because men and women had to negotiate sex. . . . Wordplay greatly enhanced the richness of interaction between the sexes. It transmuted raw desire into artistry, creating poetry, literature, love songs, purple love letters. The sweet murmurings passing back and forth between lovers oblivious to the rest of the world represent a special language, quite distinct from speech's quotidian functions." Language in general, "evolved in the context of courtship as a kind of cognitive foreplay," since "language use became a fitness signal—a marker of health and intelligence." (Randall, 350) These theories offer insight of why language could possess such seductive allure, as Donna Rosa threatened in the film, "When a man starts to touch you with words, he's not far off with his hands." Poets are not exclusive to seduce with language, as Neruda made the point that illiterate fisherman fall in love too, "They are able to talk to the girls they love... to make them fall in love too, and marry them..."

Metaphors are also “dangerous” in their political seductiveness. In the film, Neruda uses his poetic language to represent the people underground, people in suffering. He writes the poem for the mistreated and his work sold underground like “hot cakes”. For Neruda’s oppressive political enemies, the poet’s language would be toxic, plague-like propaganda that’s dangerous for their regime. In a pragmatic sense, Neruda’s metaphors have caused him great trouble, sending him to exile. However, the heroic poet is willing to sacrifice for his cause. Even for non-poetic political propaganda with no traces of metaphors, such as the deceptive words about the water program by the rich merchant Di Cosimo who depends on his propaganda to win the votes, such quotidian political language can also be seductive and dangerous. Political changes are based on the collective strong wills of individuals and language manipulation could easily shape, distort, destroy or create these wills.

Illustrated in the film, the danger of metaphors also lies in a more metaphysical and fundamental sense. The issue is first touched when Mario heard Neruda pronounce the concept “Metaphors”. He immediately understood what they are as Neruda gives an example of the “sky weeps”. Then Mario asked Neruda why it has such a complex name as “metaphor”. Neruda answered, “Man has nothing to do with the simplicity and complexity of things.” This line immediately marks a distinction between the “thing in itself” (the pure truth, without consequences, would be) and language of the human system. What human beings could determine are the complexity or simplicity of words, but never the essence of things. For a word such as “metaphor”, the name itself would be dangerous. According to Nietzsche, who stated in the *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, “Every concept originates through our equating what is unequal. It is this way with all of us concerning language; we believe that we know something about the things themselves when we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers; and

yet we possess nothing but metaphors for things—metaphors which correspond in no way to the original entities.” (Nietzsche) If basic words themselves are dangerous in that they reveal only illusive, deceptive, self-conscious and thus highly biased human-assigned relationships between the things, that are distant from the direct treatment of the things, then words like the concept “metaphor” would be even more distant from the truth, since such a an abstract concept is “nevertheless merely the residue of a metaphor, and that the illusion which is involved in the artistic transference of a nerve stimulus into images is, if not the mother, then the grandmother of every single concept.” (Nietzsche) To put it in this way, the name “metaphors” are even more dangerous and further from truth than the already fallacious thing called “metaphors.” This theory could be applied to Neruda’s line when Mario asks him to explain a sentence from his poem, and Neruda replied “I can’t tell you in words different from the ones I have used. When you explain it, Poetry becomes banal.” The words that he has already used, the words in the poem, are words of a primary experience, a unique and wholly individualized original experience, while the explanations are removed from the birth of this original experience. The vocabularies for critiques and poetry explanations would be dissolving images into concepts, leading readers away from the freshness of primitive experience, to an artificially constructed world of hierarchical ideas and abstractions.

Nietzsche denies the truth of language by seeing a word as “the image of a nerve stimulus in sound”, words are never adequate expressions of the truth confirmed by the fact that there are so many different languages set side by side, and most importantly, “the correct perception—which would mean the adequate expression of an object in the subject—is a contradictory impossibility. For between two absolutely different spheres, as between subject and object, there is no causality, no correctness, and no expression.” (Nietzsche) But even in his pessimistic

discourse, there is still the hope of “aesthetic relation”, which gives importance and meaning to metaphors, and to poetry. The only truth accessible to human depending on language, would be “A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms – in short, a sum of human relations...” “I am tired of being a man”, this line of poetry would be a truth for all human beings, whether literate or illiterate. What matters in poetry is not necessarily the objective truth, but the overwhelming beauty that is pervasive in nature, and is also the light of life for human. The fundamental and meta question concerning language is asked by Mario, “You mean then that... the whole world is a metaphor for something else?” For those who live by language, the question is so crucial and mesmerizing, as the series of questions from Allen Thiher demonstrates, “The empirical impossibility of deciding if language limits my world or articulates it, if language is a form of revelation of being or a simple recording instrument, if language is world?” If the answer to Mario’s question is true, then the world would indeed be a metaphor for something else. That something else is the most fundamental and direct truth of this world consisting in the essence of things, the world that the human system based on language could not fully express nor understand.

Another highlight in the movie is the constant usage of metaphors, by everybody and certainly not just by Neruda the poet. Even though only Neruda is the only one in the film who receives mails because everyone else there is illiterate, people’s daily language is charged with metaphors and similes. When Mario’s boss warned him about the quantity of mails, he said “Pedaling with the bag is like carrying an elephant on your back.” When Mario heard Neruda’s poem about the sea, he created his poetic metaphor, “It made me feel like a boat tossing around these words.” When he talked about his love for Beatrice, “I don’t want remedy. I want to stay sick.” Dona Rosa is especially interesting as a figure who hates metaphor but unconsciously use

figurative language all the time, “He has heated her up like an oven...” “his mouth full of spells...” The film thus makes a point that the drive toward the formation of metaphors is a fundamental human drive, and that metaphor is all-pervasive in everyday life. In the film, illiterate people use metaphors even though they are not clearly conscious of the meaning of such concepts. But using metaphors certainly doesn’t equal to creating poetry, and though everybody has the potential to be poets, the fact remains that only a few are commonly-acknowledged “good poets”. Suggested in the film, a key to creating poetry is to read and interpret this “book of the world”, and not just seeing it. Such an interpretative and contemplative attitude brings intense feelings and the sense of beauty. In the film, when Mario inquires Neruda about how to be a poet, Neruda gives the answer of walking by the sea. “Better than any explanation, it is the experience of feelings that poetry can reveal to a nature open enough to understand it.”

According to Neruda, poetic inspirations come spontaneously, but not out of pure imagination. An example would be his refusal to write a poem about Beatrice for Mario since he hasn’t even seen her before, there are zero interactions, connections, events and not to say feelings between the poet and the subject matter, so no real poetry could be created, but only a deceptive collage of used clichés. “It’s unfair of you to shower me with similes and metaphors.” Neruda said this when Mario quoted his metaphors after reading his anthology. The unfairness is because Mario is merely throwing around random metaphors not of his own creation. Out of context, these metaphors are meaningless, unable to accurately convey an experience. Mario finds own his poetic voice when he realizes that Neruda and the mysterious Chile are not the source for beauty and poetry, the source lies in his experience of the world. Before the full mature of his poetic voice, he has already unconsciously formed poetic associations such as associating the pinball that Beatrice has put into her mouth into with the full moon, thus he drew circles on his

notebook. His romantic “sound poetry” of the tape recording of the everything beautiful and miraculous of the island fully confirms the growth of his instinct, as well as his mastery and even experiments with mediums of expression.

In the film *Il Postino*, the abstract concept of “metaphors” and its relevant discourses are beautifully weaved into the major storylines. The visual effect of the film’s mise-en-scene has contributed greatly to the natural merging of concepts and narratives, analysis and poetry. As the blue waves tinted with silvery green roll back and forth, crashing on the rocks, Neruda’s words pour out so spontaneously along the sound of the rhythmic waves, “Here on the island the sea and so much sea overflowing, relentless, it says yes, then no, then no, no, no...my name is sea, it repeats while slamming against rocks but unable to convince rocks, then with seven green tongues of seven green dogs, of seven green tigers...” The effect of the poetry is in full glory when the metaphor and the subject matter meet. Film is an art medium that realizes it, rendering metaphors to be beautiful, glorious, seductive, dangerous, powerful and life-changing.

1. 葬花吟 Daiyu's Flower Burial (Zang Hua Yin)

花谢花飞花满天，红消香断有谁怜？
游丝软系飘春榭¹，落絮轻沾扑绣帘。
闺中女儿惜春暮，愁绪满怀无释处。
手把花锄出绣帘，忍踏落花来复去。
柳丝榆荚自芳菲，不管桃飘与李飞；
桃李明年能再发，明年闺中知有谁？
三月香巢已垒成，梁间燕子太无情！
明年花发虽可啄，却不道人去梁空巢也倾。
一年三百六十日，风刀霜剑严相逼；
明媚鲜妍能几时，一朝漂泊难寻觅。
花开易见落难寻，阶前愁杀葬花人，
独倚花锄泪暗洒，洒上空枝见血痕。
杜鹃无语正黄昏，荷锄归去掩重门；
青灯照壁人初睡，冷雨敲窗被未温。
怪奴底事倍伤神？半为怜春半恼春。
怜春忽至恼忽去，至又无言去未闻。
昨宵庭外悲歌发，知是花魂与鸟魂？
花魂鸟魂总难留，鸟自无言花自羞；
愿依此日生双翼，随花飞到天尽头。
天尽头，何处有香丘²？
未若锦囊收艳骨，一抔净土掩风流³。
质本洁来还洁去，强于污淖陷渠沟。
尔今死去侬收葬，未卜侬身何日丧？
侬今葬花人笑痴，他年葬侬知是谁？
试看春残花渐落，便是红颜老死时；
一朝春尽红颜老，花落人亡两不知！^[1]

Daiyu's Flower Burial (Zang Hua Yin)

Flowers drop and drift in the air
Sweet scarlets fade and none cares
Ribbons float softly around the spring bower

Willow fluffs hug gently the silk banner

Maiden in chamber pities the aging of spring
Sorrow piles up with nowhere to fling
Hoe in hand she steps out of the wing-room
Not having the heart to tread on fallen bloom

Willow and elms are in their verdant days
Care not if peach and plum flowers drift away
The coming year when blossoms glow again
In the chamber her lovely figure might not remain

By March heartless swallows build their nests
Beneath the eaves with flowers compressed.
Next year they may peck new buds as before
But from the beam of an empty room the nests shall fall

Three hundred and three-score in a year
Constantly charged by wind sword and frost spear
How can the glorious beauties long stay intact
How to, once loosed, from the drifting fate draw back?

Fallen, the brightest blooms are out of sight
The Maiden, their burier, is heartbroken by their plight
Alone and leaning on the hoe, her secret tears sow
They bloom into flowers of blood on each bare bough

Dusk falls, the cuckoo on azaleas sings no more
The Maiden backs her hoe and locks the doors
Sleep enfolds her as emerald lamp lights the walls
Chill is her quilt, cold rain pelts the casement and falls

What causes my two-fold heartaches?
In spring, half's love and half's hate
Glad that it came, grieved it so soon was spent.
Unheralded it came, noiselessly it went

Last night in the yard drifted a song forlorn--
Perhaps it was the souls of flowers or birds as they mourn
But neither bird nor flowers would long linger
For bird's lacking speech and timid is the flower

Then I long to grow wings and fly
After the drifting flowers till the end of the sky:
And yet at earth's uttermost bound
Is there a fragrant burial mound?

But better the rouge petals in silk to lay
And for their outer attire use untouched clay,
In purity they come and in purity they go
Better than in foul ditch or mire to decompose

Flowers, I come to bury you when you die,
But none has divined the day of my demise.
Men laugh at the folly of the flower's funeral,
But who will attend to my own burial?

See, when spring wanes and petals decay
'Tis the season when the charms of rogue fade
The day that spring ends and youth has fled
Who will pity the flowers and the maid now dead

2.林冲夜奔 Fleeing By Night Of Lin Chong

【新水令】按龙泉血泪洒征袍，恨天涯一身流落。专心投水浒，回首望天朝。急走忙逃，顾不得忠和孝。

【To the tune of *Xinshuiling*】

Tis the sword of Hydros that tense th' fingers lay
And on th' coat armor o'er-sized with gore and tears yet tender
O, vengeance! Cast nighted colour to shroud my solitude
Like burned-out star gone awry westward
O, heart! Of thy will hither to the outlawed Marsh
I hath very oft let the court in my pupils locked
Nay, no wit allow'd for honesty and filial piety
Ay, to flee!
what is't but to be nothing else but flee!

【驻马听】良夜迢迢 良夜迢迢 投宿休将他门户敲。遥瞻残月，暗度重关，奔走荒郊，俺的身轻不惮路迢迢，心忙又恐怕人惊觉。吓得俺魄散魂消，红尘中误了俺五陵年少

【To the tune of *Zhumating*】

Tis now the very profoundest stretch of the gracious night
Twilight, unbelov'd of men, sunk Lethe-ward from yon obscurest plain
Sit still, my soul! Thou naught abide-
Crescent grows naught 'ith Eremite's watching-eternal lids apart
I am no villain, yet I hath walk'd the darkness
Glens after glens, ouposts following outposts
Untouch'd by human prescence
Light is my figure, fears naught the distance

Heavy is my spirit, contracted in a brow of woe
Solid senses would melt, thaw and resolve itself
Into the quintessence of dust
Fie on't! ah fie! Th' time is out of joint
Blessing season bygone me. O cursed spite!
Blown youth blasted with calumnious strokes.

(白)想俺林冲，在那八十万军中，作了禁军教头，征那土蕃的时节呵

【Aside】

Fortune doth beguile. To have seen what I have seen, see what I see! Master of the 800 thousand
guarding Throne - a noble bearing is here o'erthrown!

【折桂令】实指望封侯也那万里班超，到如今生逼做叛国红巾，做了背主黄巢。恰似那
脱苍鹰，离笼狡兔，摘网腾蛟。救国难诛正?掌刑罚难得皋陶。似这鬓发焦灼，行李萧
条。此一去博得个斗转天会，高俅!管叫你海沸山摇。

【To the tune of Zheguiling】

Pity! The very substance of the ambitious is merely a dream
Whereas a dream itself is but a shadow!
Of shadow's shadow 'tis my faith-
That ever I was born to set 'th chaotic right! To cleanse our times!
Foul deeds will rise.
Confines, wards, nets and dungeons
Contain naught th' hawk, th' hare, th' dragon!
Gao qiu - bloody, bawdy villain -
treacherous, remorseless, kindless!
Wrath wilt hath the mountains quake and
Cast thee hither to ocean of
Sulphurous and tormenting flames!

3. 牡丹亭 The Peony Pavilion (Mu Dan Ting)

〔绕池游〕〔旦上〕梦回莺啭，乱煞年光遍。人立小庭深院。〔贴〕炷尽沉烟，抛残绣线，恁今
春关情似去年?〔乌夜啼〕“〔旦〕晓来望断梅关，宿妆残。〔贴〕你侧着宜春髻子恰凭阑。
〔旦〕翦不断，理还乱，闷无端。〔贴〕已分付催花莺燕借春看。”〔旦〕春香，可曾叫人扫除花
径?〔贴〕分付了。〔旦〕取镜台衣服来。〔贴取镜台衣服上〕“云髻罢梳还对镜，罗衣欲换更添
香。”镜台衣服在此。

【To the tune of Rao Di You】

Liniang Du:

Dreams uncoil with the swirling melodies of the oriole
Spring luster alluring the heart envelopes the earth whole

A lonesome figure stands, locked by courtyards in folds

Chun Xiang:

The aloes wood incense is burnt to ashes
The embroidery silk threads are cast aside
Why is the rite of spring infinitely more
tender and stirring than last year?

【 To the tune of Wu Ye Ti 】

Liniang Du:

Gazing wistfully towards the Plum Blossom Pass
at the fresh hours of early morning
Rouges and powers of yesterday still
blush my cheeks as they cling

Chun Xiang:

Your lean figure leans across the balustrade
Your chignon tilts in beauty comparable to spring

Liniang Du:

Ennui
Cut, it won't break,
Ruled, it will make
a mess and wake
an unspeakable feeling in the heart.

Chun Xiang:

I have asked the orioles and swallows
urging the blossoms with their chirping
to lend spring to us for our viewing

Liniang Du:

Chun Xiang, has the footpath strewn with blooms been swept clean?

Chun Xiang:

Yes, the order has been given to the servants.

Liniang Du:

Now bring me the mirror and the dress, Chun Xiang.

Chun Xiang (Renters with the Items):

combs her cloud of hair

And chooses new scent and a change of silk raiment

“Cloud-like coiffure coiled to perfection
Still she adjusts her hair in the mirror
The silk raiment is about to be changed
Yet she adds more flower incense to it “

Here is the mirror and the dress, miss.

1. The Sound of Water

The moon ascending

from my eye

Suddenly descends into

Your palm

You then fold it into a little boat

allowing it to float freely

till the end of the sound of water

We lie spreadeagled on the grass

Two sheaves of wet hair

surge to the corners of our foreheads

I finally realize

that what you are tightly clutching is

merely a rusty key

You ask me: Is our lying position

that star atlas fished up from the well?

The nose is the Big Dipper

Then Sirius should be the mole at the corner of your lips

Now you straighten up out of the blue

finger pointing to the lamp in the distance

“ That is my childhood”

Anyway, I can no longer hear anything clearly

Beneath your skin

there is an evening tide roaring

Let us now quickly row the boat out of our bodies

So that the sound of water

will remain at the end

水声

由我眼中

升起的那一枚月亮

突然降落在你的

掌心

你就把它摺成一只小船

任其漂向

水声的尽头

我们横卧在草地上

一把湿发

涌向我们的额角

我终于发现

你紧紧抓住的只是一只
生了锈的钥匙
你问：草地上的卧姿
是不是从井中捞起的那幅星图？

鼻子是北斗
天狼该是你唇边的那颗黑痣了
这是，你遽然坐了起来
手指着远处的一盏灯说：
那就是我的童年
总之，我是什么也听不清了
你的肌肤下
有晚潮澎湃
我们赶快把船划出体外吧
好让水声
留在尽头

2.Water and Fire

I wrote a quatrain about water
and drank three lines in one gulp
The line left out
has frozen into an icicle inside you

I wrote a quintet about fire
and used two lines to brew hot tea
saved two lines till winter for their heat
The line left out
is for you on a power-cut night to read me

水与火

写了四行关于水的诗
我一口气喝掉三行
另外一行
在你的体内结成了冰柱

写了五行关于火的诗
两行烧茶
两行留到冬天取暖
剩下的一行
送给你在停电的晚上读我

3. Jinlong Temple

The tolling of the evening bell
is the little path for visitors to go downhill
Ferns with their goat teeth

nibble all the way down

along the white rocky steps

If snow descends at this place...

But now only

a startled grey cicada taking flight

lights one by one

the lanterns throughout the mountain

金龙禅寺

晚钟

是游客下山的小路

羊齿植物

沿着白色的石阶

一路嚼了下去

如果此处降雪

而只见

一只惊起的灰蝉

把山中的灯火

一盏盏地

点燃

4. A Night Visit to Pumen Temple

If I say how icy the skin of moonlight is in the mountains

Presumably no one would believe me

There is a cluster of emerald green bamboos

Within the cluster of bamboos there is a freshly dug grave

I stand there waiting for a long time

A camellia

reaches out a hand from the mist

The mountain birds

are vaguely flying past the hill tops

as if they are imageries on fire

now flying out of an anthology of Tang dynasty poetry

It's lasting appeal

could never be found in the neon lights of the cities

You don't believe that the skin of moonlight is icy in the mountains?

Just listen, a young monk fetching water from the rivers

is sneezing all along the way

夜登普门寺

说山中月光的皮肤如何冰凉

想必无人相信

小径旁一丛青竹
竹林中一座新坟
我站在那里久久守候
一株山茶
从雾中伸出手来
山鸟
隐隐从峰顶掠过
如着火的意象
从一册唐诗中飞出
它的韵味
决不可能在
城市的灯火里寻到
不相信山中月光的皮肤是冰冷的？
你听，一个跳水的小和尚
一路喷嚏而去

5. A Bird Passing By

The Erhu tune from Li's cigarette stall
has stretched the alley by our house
into a strand of long wet hair

The door of the courtyard is wide open

Following my thoughts

The jasmine tea leaves are descending

to the bottom of the cup

On the tea table

ashes in the tray are nothing more than

paleness and coldness

nothing more than spring passing and fall coming

Can you give a name

to every single one of

my thousand sleeping positions?

The evening newspaper covers my face

In my sleeping eyes

there is a

bird

passing

有鸟飞过

香烟摊老李的二胡

把我们家的巷子

拉成一绺长长的湿发

院子的门开着
香片随着心事 向
杯底沉落
茶几上
烟灰无非是既白且冷
无非是春去秋来

你能不能为我
在藤椅中的千种盹姿
各起一个名字？

晚报扔在脸上
睡眼中
有
鸟
飞
过

6. Morning Visit to the Secret Courtyard

In the secret courtyard
an ancient ash tree

is completely lacking in leaves

A group of sparrows chirping

Never has a stone statue

pulled up his coat collar in the chilling wind

This one has not either

He must have been an uncorrupted officer before

Since last time's warfare

nobody has strutted past here

the frost then

would not have been as pale as now

Behind the cornices is

the closure

Behind the closure

is the fragrance of lotus seed syrup inside the bedroom

The door is half-closed, on the pile of snow

there is a line of tiny footprints

another court maiden

must have sneaked out of the courtyard last night

晨游秘苑

侧院里

一株古槐

可说完全没有了叶子

群雀啾啾

从未见一座石像

在寒风中拉起大衣的领子

这座也没有

想必当年是一位清官

上次战役后

那就再无人昂然从此经过

那时的霜

想必不如今晨的白

飞檐的背后是

围墙

围墙的背后是

寝宫内熬银耳莲子汤的香味

7. Now I Drink Rice Wine

In the era like a sword

I used to drink sorghum liquor

Long hair billowing, exuberant words splattering, how wild and romantic

Sometimes I'd drink freely by the lamp

drinking in solitude at the pinnacle of time

My snacks would often be whole plates filled with

Li Bai stir fry Baudelaire

Drunk, there would be at least four moons in the sky

For a long time I would not dare face the wall

Facing the wall, I desire to tear my own shadow off of it

Youthful drinker!

For the sake of writing one little poem

You warm the liquor

You remain speechless by the window

You wait painstakingly for the fallen blooms

When flowers do fall your sorrow makes you spit blood

But now, I drink rice wine

Outside the threshold raindrops sound like the cadence of a dejected poet reciting
poems

In my drunken eyes, the rice wine teems with the watery colors of the Southern
shore

Sometimes I could not help writing with my fingers

a table full of names of the Mountains and the Rivers

After second thought, I eventually wipe them off with my sleeves
If only all of them could be wiped off, yet....
Even though the reflection of the arrow in the cup is not the figure of a snake
My fear is that the warm surge of feelings after I empty my cup
would become a warning about tomorrow for you and me
Fear is only fear, what kind of upheavals could it really bring?
Whether in the flagon or in the stomach,
it could at most bloom only into a tiny ripple
What you say makes sense
After all, the earthquake in Tangshan,
is so far away from the rice wine in hand and the Southern shore in the rice wine
Hands gather more and more strength around the cup
“cra-ack”, the wine cup shatters
blood runs all over the palms
Body temperature
suddenly drops with the chilling of the wine

饮我以花雕

剑一般的年代
曾饮我以高粱大曲
长发披肩口沫横飞亦不负风流之姿
时则豪饮于灯下

独酌于时间的巅峰
下酒物多为整盘整盘的
李白炒波德莱尔
醉后天上的月亮至少四个
久久不敢面壁
一面壁便想把自己的影子撕下来
少年的饮者啊
为写一首小诗而煮酒
而临窗无言而苦等一树的落花
花落时又愁得吐血
而今，则饮我以花雕
槛外雨声如一落拓江湖寒士的吟哦
醉眼中，花雕仍不乏江南水色
有时总忍不住以手指
在桌上写满山河的名字
想想，最后还是用衣袖拭去
真能全部拭去也还罢了，而...
杯弓纵非蛇影
怕只怕喝下去后那种暖暖的涌动
竟成你我明日的警讯
心悸归心悸，这究能引起哪种风波？
不论在壶中或腹中

最多漾成一朵小小的涟漪
你们说的也是
地震在唐山，距离
手中的花雕，花雕中的江南
毕竟嫌远了些
双手愈握愈紧
啪的一声，酒杯炸裂
血流满掌
体温
随酒温骤然下降

8. Running Naked

Born at the end of the wee hours
The haphazardness of a chill
at midnight
He was categorized as
an irregular verb
and pondered incessantly
why the sun insists along
the routes of blood circulation
Outside the window
Aside from wind and snow

only the paper kite of an eagle

thinner than thinnest

clings to a dead tree

A Partridge's songs

carve deeper than deepest

further than knives

While at the square

The bronze statue is forever silent

he says he doesn't know why

He is the man

who has a chrysalis

hidden in his chest

He fingered for it inside his throat

hoping for a brilliant butterfly

to flutter out

of the vomit

Hat left for the father

Clothes left for the mother

Shoes left for the children

Pillow left for the wife

Tie left for the friends

Umbrella left for the neighbors

(He yawned)

Bed left for the termites

Books left for the roaches

Photos left for the walls

Letters left for the stove

Poems left for the storms

Wine jugs left for the moon

(He lowered himself down)

Limbs returned to the forest

Bones returned to the soil

Hair returned to the blades of grass

Fat returned to the flames

Blood returned to the rivers and lakes

Eyes returned to the sky

(He suddenly raised his head)

Joy returned to the birds

Anger returned to the fists

Grief returned to the wounds

Depression returned to the mirror

Resentment returned to the bombs

Disillusionment returned to the history

(Ready for the sprint——)

He starts to blend into the streets

He starts to mingle in the dust

He starts to fade into the snow

He starts to march along the trees

He starts to fuse into the iron

He starts to rub into the flora's sweetness

Thus he transcends into

——the nakedness

that is long and short, hard and soft

cloud and mist, invisible and tangible

being and non-being, reality and imagination

Naked as the mountain as the pines

Naked as the water as the fish

Naked as the wind as the smoke

Naked as the stars as the night

Naked as the mist as the immortal

Naked as the face as the tears

He is running naked ——

towards the flooding tolling of the bell

裸奔

自成形于午夜

午夜一阵寒颤后的偶然

他便归类为一种

不规则动词，且苦思

太阳为何坚持循血的方向运行

窗外除了风雪

只剩下挂在枯树上那只一瘦

再瘦的纸鸢

鹧鸪声声，它的穿透力

胜过所有的刀子

而广场上

那尊铜像为何从不发声

他说他不甚了了

他就是这男子

胸中藏着一只蛹的男子

他把手指伸进喉咙里去掏

多么希望有一只彩蝶

从呕吐中

扑翅而出

——之二

帽子留给父亲

衣裳留给母亲

鞋子留给儿女

枕头留给妻子

领带留给友朋

雨伞留给邻居

（他打了一个哈欠）

床铺留给白蚁

书籍留给蟑螂

照片留给墙壁

信件留给炉火

诗稿留给风雨

酒壶留给月亮

（他缓缓蹲下身子）

手脚还给森林

骨骼还给泥土

毛发还给草叶

脂肪还给火焰

血水还给河川

眼睛还给天空

（他猛然抬起头来）

欢欣还给雀鸟

愠怒还给拳头

悲痛还给伤口

抑郁还给镜子

仇恨还给炸弹

茫然还给历史

（准备冲刺——）

他开始溶入街衢

他开始混入灰尘

他开始化入风雪

他开始步入树木

他开始熔入钢铁

他开始揉入花香

遂提升为

可长可短可则可柔

或云或雾亦隐亦显

似有似无抑虚抑实

之

赤裸

山一般裸着松一般

水一般裸着鱼一般

风一般裸着烟一般

星一般裸着夜一般

雾一般裸着仙一般

脸一般裸着泪一般

——之三

他狂奔

向一片汹涌而来的钟声……

9. Tooth picking

At noon

People all over the world are picking their teeth

with spotless toothpicks

Serenely

Picking their

spotlessly-white teeth

In Ethiopia a flock of vultures

From a pile of corpses

Take off

crouching neatly in rows

on the transparent parched trees

They are tooth-picking as well

But with thin spotlessly-white

human ribs

剔牙

中午

全世界的人都在剔牙

以洁白的牙签

安详地在

剔他们

洁白的牙齿

依索匹亚的一群兀鹰

从一堆尸体中

飞起

排排蹲在

疏朗的枯树上

也在剔牙

以一根根瘦小的

肋骨

1.Nur eine Rose als Stütze

Ich richte mir ein Zimmer ein in der Luft
unter den Akrobaten und Vögeln:
mein Bett auf dem Trapez des Gefühls
wie ein Nest im Wind
auf der äußersten Spitze des Zweigs.

Ich kaufe mir eine Decke aus der zartesten Wolle
der sanftgescheitelten Schafe die
im Mondlicht
wie schimmernde Wolken
über die feste Erde ziehen.

Ich schließe die Augen und hülle mich ein
in das Vlies der verlässlichen Tiere.
Ich will den Sand unter den kleinen Hufen spüren
und das Klicken des Riegels hören,
der die Stalltür am Abend schließt.

Aber ich liege in Vogelfedern, hoch ins Leere gewiegt.
Mir schwindelt. Ich schlafe nicht ein.
Meine Hand
greift nach einem Halt und findet

nur eine Rose als Stütze.

Only a Rose as Support

I arrange myself a room in the air
among the acrobats and the birds:
my bed is on the trapeze of feelings
like a nest in the wind
on the outermost tip of a twig.

I buy myself a blanket of the tenderest wool
from the sheep with softly parted hair that
in the moonlight
stretch across the firm earth
like shimmering clouds.

I close my eyes and wrap myself
in the fleece of the trustworthy animal.
I wish to feel the sand under the little hooves
and hear a “click” of the bolt.
as the barn door closes at night.

But I lie in feathers, rocked high in emptiness
I am dizzy. I do not fall asleep.

My hand

grab for a hold but find

only a rose as support.

2. Bitte

Wir werden eingetaucht

und mit den Wassern der Sintflut gewaschen

Wir werden durchnässt

bis auf die Herzhaut

Der Wunsch nach der Landschaft

diesseits der Tränengrenze

taugt nicht

der Wunsch den Blütenfrühling zu halten

der Wunsch verschont zu bleiben

taugt nicht

Es taugt die Bitte

dass bei Sonnenaufgang die Taube

den Zweig vom Ölbaum bringe

dass die Frucht so bunt wie die Blume sei

dass noch die Blätter der Rose am Boden

eine leuchtende Krone bilden

und dass wir aus der Flut

dass wir aus der Löwengrube und dem feurigen Ofen

immer versehrter und immer heiler

stets von neuem

zu uns selbst

entlassen werden.

3. Please

We are deluged

and washed by the waters of the Flood

We are soaked through

to the skin of our hearts

The longing for the landscape

on this side of the border of tears

is of no use

the longing for the blooming spring to linger

the longing to remain unscathed

is of no use

What is of use is “please”
that by sunrise the dove
will bring the olive branch
that the fruit will be as colorful as the blooms
that even the rose petals on the ground
will form a bright crown

and that we, out of the Flood
out of the lion’s dens and the fiery furnaces
will be released
forever renewing ourselves
we are more and more damaged and
more and more healed.

4. Bitte an einen Delphin

Für Christine Busta

Jede Nacht
mein Kissen umarmend wie einen sanften Delphin
schwimme ich weiter fort.

Sanfter Delphin
in diesem Meer von Herzklopfen,

trage mich,

wenn es hell wird,

an einen gütigen Strand.

Fern der Küste von morgen.

Plea to a Dolphin

For Christine Busta

Every Night

hugging my pillow that's like a gentle dolphin

I swim forward.

Gentle dolphin

in the sea of palpitations,

carry me,

till it gets light,

on the beach of grace.

Far from the coast of morrow.

5. Haus ohne Fenster

Der Schmerz sargt uns ein

in einem Haus ohne Fenster.

Die Sonne, die die Blumen öffnet,

zeigt seine Kanten

nur deutlicher.

Es ist ein Würfel aus Schweigen in der Nacht.

Der Trost,

der keine Fenster findet und keine Türen

und hinein will,

trägt erbittert das Reisig zusammen.

Er will ein Wunder erzwingen

und zündet es an,

das Haus aus Schmerz.

House without Windows

Pain coffins us

in a house without windows.

The sun, that opens the blooms,

shows its rim

only more lucidly.

It is a cube of silence in the night.

Solace,

wants to come inside

but finds no windows and no doors.

Bitterly gathering kindling

He wants to force a miracle open

and to burn,

the house of pain.

6. Sisyphus

Variationen auf einen Imperativ von Mallarmé

Die großen blauen Löcher

die die Vögel machen die argen<

die schwarzen Risse der Nachrichten frühmorgens ›

stopfe sie mit unermüdlicher Hand<

Kämme die Berge

lösche

wische weg

die Kreuzfahrerheere

fahrend zu unheiligen Gräbern

die Löcher die die Kreuzfahrer machen die argen

stopfe sie

mit unermüdlicher Hand

Und Münder die rufen

mit unermüdlichem Atem
aufgestellt in allen Ländern
und riesige Herzen neue Totems
reibe sie mit Meersand ab
die siebenfältige Herzhaut die arge

Impfe
mit den Tränen der Gefolterten
uns Überlebende
uns Nachgeborene

Die Wege sind krank
Tritte der Kreuzfahrer unermüdliche
müssen geglättet werden
mit den Handflächen unermüdlichen
stopfe
die großen blauen Löcher
die die Flugzeuge machen die argen
und die schwarzen Risse
halte
die Ränder der Wunden zusammen
stopfe die Haut des Planeten
er reißt

in unserm Jahrhundert
stopfe
mit unermüdlicher
mit nie ermüdender Hand
rufe
mit nie ermüdendem Atem
die nie ermüdenden Hände

Bergaufwärts gerollt
die Steine
werden Quelle und Brot

Sisyphus

Variations on an Imperative by Mallarmé

“The huge blue holes
are the misdoings of the bird”
the black cracks of news
early in the morning
“fill them with untiring hands”

Comb the mountains
purge
wipe out

the troops of Crusaders
are on their way to the unhallowed graves
— —holes made by their misdoings
fill them
with untiring hands

And mouths that cry out
with untiring breathes
situated in all lands
and gigantic hearts
that set up new totems
rub them with sea sand
the sevenfold heart skins are sinful ones

Injected
with the tears of the tortured
us survivors
us later-borns

The paths are sick.
The footsteps of the untiring crusaders
must be smoothed out
with untiring palms

fill

the huge blue holes

that are the misdoings of the aeroplanes

fill

the black cracks

hold

the edges of the wounds together

fill

the skin of the planet

that rips

in our century

fill

with untiring

with a never tiring hand

call

with never tiring breath

for the never tiring hands

Rolled uphill

the stones

become springs and bread

7. Herbstaugen

Presse dich eng
an den Boden.

Die Erde
riecht noch nach Sommer,
und der Körper
riecht noch nach Liebe.

Aber das Gras
ist schon gelb über dir.
Der Wind ist kalt
und voll Distelsamen.

Und der Traum, der dir nachstellt,
schattenfüßig,
dein Traum
hat Herbstaugen.

Autumn Eyes

Press your body closely
to the ground.

The earth

still smells of summer,
and the body
still smells of love.

But the grass enveloping you
are already yellow.

The wind is cold,
and filled with thistle seeds.

And the dream, that preys you
with shadow feet...
the haunting dream,
has autumn eyes.

8. Köln

Die versunkene Stadt
für mich
allein
versunken.

Ich schwimme
in diesen Straßen.
Andere gehn.

Die alten Häuser
haben neue große Türen
aus Glas.

Die Toten und ich
wir schwimmen
durch die neuen Türen
unserer alten Häuser.

Köln

The sunken city
sunk
for me
alone.

I swim
in these streets.
Others walk.

The old houses
have new doors,
large and made of
glass.

The dead and I
We swim
through the new doors
of our old houses.

9. Unaufhaltsam

Das eigene Wort,wer holt es zurück,
das lebendige
eben noch unausgesprochene
Wort?

Wo das Wort vorbeifliegt
verdorren die Gräser,
werden die Blätter gelb,
fällt Schnee.

Ein Vogel käme dir wieder.

Nicht dein Wort,
das eben noch ungesagte,
in deinen Mund.

Du schickst andere Worte
hinterdrein,

Worte mit bunten, weichen Federn.

Das Wort ist schneller,

das schwarze Wort.

Es kommt immer an,
er hört nicht auf,
anzukommen.

Besser ein Messer als ein Wort.

Ein Messer kann stumpf sein.

Ein Messer trifft oft
am Herzen vorbei.

Nicht das Wort.

Am Ende ist das Wort,
immer
am Ende
das Wort.

Unstoppable

Who can retrieve your own word?

The living

word

still unspoken

just a moment ago.

Where the word passes
grass wither
leaves turn yellow
snow falls,
A bird may come back to you.
Not your word,
that a moment ago was still unspoken.
You send out other words
to catch it,
words with colorful, soft feathers.
Yet the word is quicker,
the black word.
It always arrives,
one never stops its arrival.

Better a knife than the word.
A knife may be dull.
A knife may miss the heart.
But not the word.

In the end, it is the word,
In the end
it

always

is the word.

10. Linguistik

Du mußt mit dem Obstbaum reden.

Erfinde eine neue Sprache,
die Kirschblütensprache,
Apfelblütenworte,
rosa und weiße Worte,
die der Wind
lautlos
davonträgt.

Vertraue dich dem Obstbaum an
wenn dir ein Unrecht geschieht.
Lerne zu schweigen
in der rosa
und weißen Sprache.

Linguistics

You must talk with the fruit trees

Invent a new language,
the cherry blossom language,
the apple tree language,
pink and white words,
that the wind

silently

carries.

Confide yourself to the fruit trees

when you are wronged.

Learn to remain silent

in the pink

and white language.

11. Der Baum blüht trotzdem

Der Baum blüht trotzdem

Immer haben die Bäume

auch zur Hinrichtung geblüht

Kirschblüten und

Schmetterlinge

treibt der Wind

auch dem Verurteilten ins

Bett

Sie gehen weiter

Blütenhalter

ohne den Kopf zu wenden

die hellen Reihen

Mancher sagt ein Wort zu dir
oder du glaubst, daß er spricht
im Vorbeigehn
Weil es so still ist

The Tree Blooms Nevertheless

The tree blooms nevertheless,
Even along the way to the execution.
The trees always bloom.

The wind drives
cherry blossoms and
butterflies
even to the bed
of the convicted.

They keep going forward
The blossom holders
standing in glorious rows
do not turn their heads.

Some say a word to you,
or so you believe,
that the passing tree does
speaks to you.
Since all around it is silent as it can be.

12. Mein Geschlecht zittert

Mein Geschlecht zittert
wie ein Vögelchen
unter dem Griff deines Blicks.

Deine Hände eine zärtliche Brise
auf meinem Leib.
Alle meine Wachen fliehn.

Du öffnest die letzte Tür.
Ich bin so erschrocken
vor Glück
daß aller Schlaf dünn wird
wie ein zerschlissenes Tuch.

My Sex Quivers

My sex quivers,
like a little bird
within the grip of your gaze.

Your hand is a gentle breeze

on my body.

All my guards flee.

You open the last door.

I am so scared

with happiness

that all slumbers are thinned

into well-worn cloth.

Wings of Desire and Desire for Wings ----
At Berlin Lichterfeld-West Station

I was watching Wings of Desire
at Berlin Lichterfeld-West Station
When a feather drifted from the sky
That's when I believed in angels.
"Als das Kind Kind war,
war es die Zeit der folgenden Fragen:
Warum bin ich ich und warum nicht du?
Warum bin ich hier und warum nicht dort?
Wann begann die Zeit und wo endet der Raum?"
(When the child was a child,
It was the time for these questions:
Why am I me, and why not you?
Why am I here, and why not there?
When did time begin,
and where does space end?)

The Angel of history saw
"A Frenchman flew over the city in a hot-air balloon 200 years ago."
If only he could borrow his wings
And yet he can not even close them.

He hears the people today
on the U-Bahn, S-Bahn,
in the stations.
White petals,
wet on the black bough,
sewed onto Persian carpets
are now solidified into white marbles on the station floor.
Time is blurred into red and yellow trains.
The pile of debris growing skyward.
The Raison d'être.
The dreams of house in a house.
The sound of water as dignity is tossed around German words
Like the little boat that brings "Ich" here.

The Angel, the born linguist has learnt semantics
By touching the hands and hearts of passengers .

His Notes:

Yearning Sehnsucht حنين آرزو **hasret**

Leaving the beloved hurts more than amputation
The wish to connect the blood vessels together to anchor you here.

Unfamiliar ungewohnt یگانہ غریب علی **alışılmamış**

Leaving the homeland doesn't mean throwing away an old shirt
It's turning into a cicada that has just shedded,
origami skins fold into seven paper moons
Time to test the universality of the human condition.

Discrimination Diskriminierung تمیز ضی تبع **ayırt etme**

Leaving the old crowd means the performance of becoming human.
"I am human. and I think nothing human is alien to me."

The Angel gets off at Licheterfeld-West Station
Here sits the Vietnamese flower seller with Dahlia cheeks and Hyacinth hair.
She used to be a poet in her country.
"The foreigner is having a hard time."
"Without much chance of writing epic poetry."
"Without much chance of anything."
"Why do I end up selling flowers?"
"Germans love buying cut flowers and have them in vases."
"Aren't we just cut-up flowers?"
I mean all of us."

I waited for my photos at the famous Fotofix photobooth
But it turned out to be another person's face.
Uncanny but not unprecedented.
This photo is needed for a passport
That reads "The country where everything is permitted/ Le pays ou tout est permis".

If only, when I lift my eyes, I am the world,
If only you and I, here and there makes no difference
I lifted my eyes and nothing happens except for the feather falling in slow-motion.
Wings of Desire, Desire for Wings
WE desire for wings! Yet what if THEY use sky-writing to mark the borders?
Humans are less free than commodities, capitals that move globally
And definitely less free than this dove taking off into Der Himmel uber Berlin

Whom I thought was an angel.

Yuqing (Eva) Cao

Professor Elke Siegel

GERST 4100

31.10. 2019

Aufsatz 3: Die Dreigroschenoper

1. Frauenfiguren in die Dreigroschenoper

Es ist schwierig, die Frauenfiguren in die Dreigroschenoper zu verallgemeinern, weil sie so unterschiedliche Eigenschaften haben. Polly, *die* große FrauenFigur, zeigt starke Individualität und gleichzeitig große Verletzlichkeit. Ihre Stärke und Macht zeigt sich in ihrer unschütterlichen Suche nach ihrer „wahren Liebe“. Statt dem Konzept ihrer Eltern zuzustimmen, die dagegen sind, dass sie heiraten will, singt sie das *Barbara-Lied* (S.38). Dieses Lied ist im Grunde ein Lied von "Ja" und "Nein". Indem sie zu dem Mann mit Geld und guten Manieren und zu dem Mann mit drei Schiffen im Hafen „Nein“ sagt, während sie zu demjenigen, der kein Geld hat und der nicht nett ist, „Ja“ sagt, lehnt Polly alle traditionellen sozialen Normen ab der Ehe und der Standards eines guten Mannes. Die Art der Hochzeit, die von den Eltern und oft zu finanziellen Zwecken diktiert wird, ist nicht mehr als legalisierte Prostitution. Die Essenz ist die gleiche - den Körper für Gewinn zu verkaufen. Wenn Polly das Lied von Barbara singt, mag das zunächst irrational erscheinen, aber es zeigt tatsächlich, dass sie ein tapferes Mädchen ist, eine leidenschaftliche Seele, die nicht bereit ist, ihre Seele einfach gegen Geld einzutauschen. Sie beeindruckt mich auch, als sie das Lied der „Seerauber Jenny“

singt (S.30) und die Gruppe der Kriminellen nach Macheaths vorübergehendem Abwesenheit anführte.

In gewisser Weise ähnelt sie Macheath, als sie die „Seerauber Jenny“ singt, sie hat den gleichen Charisma und Ehrgeiz. Obwohl Frauen traditionell nicht ehrgeizig sein sollten oder ihnen befohlen wurden, ihre Ambitionen nicht zu zeigen, kümmert sich Polly nicht um diese Regeln oder Konventionen. Die Tatsache, dass das Lied von einem armen Mädchen gesungen wird, das in der Taverne arbeitet, verdeutlicht die Geschlechterpolitik und die Grenzen, die Frauen in der von Männern dominierten Gesellschaft einnehmen können. Die Norm wird nur gebrochen, wenn Polly die Rolle der Anführerin der Bande übernimmt, nachdem Macheath weg ist und ihre bedrohliche Aura der Dominanz und Kontrolle zeigt.

Anscheinend repräsentiert sie mit ihrer niedrigen sozialen Klasse die Art von Macht, die gegen die "Elite", die "Kultivierten" und die "Zivilisierten" gerichtet ist. Sie hat keine solchen scheinheiligen Manieren oder Eleganzen, sondern besitzt eine wilde Energie, eine aufrichtige Lebenskraft. Sie ist hart und roh.

Ein ähnliches Merkmal zeigt sich in der Figur von Jenny und den anderen Prostituierten. Sie werden als *femme fatales* dargestellt, die Macheath um des Geldes willen verraten haben. Dies macht sie jedoch nicht zu etwas „Bösem“. Macheath war keiner von ihnen treu. Selbst in Bezug auf die Loyalität sind sie also ziemlich gleich. Die „Zuhälterballade“ ist gleichzeitig sehr sinnlich, mit starken Emotionen und tragisch. Armut ist eine Krankheit. Wenn es keine Armut gäbe, wer würde dann aktiv Hurerei treiben, Verbrechen begehen, ihre Liebhaber verkaufen und Babys verlieren?

Die weiblichen Figuren in dem Stück haben alle auf verschiedenen Ebenen Verletzungen und Traumata erfahren. Doch Brecht nutzt den Entfremdungseffekt genutzt, um uns von diesem Gefühl von Schmerz und Verzweiflung fernzuhalten. Ich denke, ein Schlüsselement ist Brechts Sprache und Humor. Die Sprache der Lyrik entspricht der Art und Weise, wie diese Figuren klingen würden, aber die Vulgarität und der Humor wirken wie die Unbeschwertheit, die die Härte ausgleicht, so dass sich das Publikum in sie hineinversetzt, aber nicht in dem Maße, dass seine Rationalität beeinträchtigt wird.

Die Frauen können als stark, revolutionär, mutig und zäh angesehen werden. aber auch als vulgär, schlau, "skrupellos", manchmal eifersüchtig und komisch. Sie sind das Produkt der sozialen Schichtung, die den gesellschaftlichen Rahmen durchbrechen will. Sie sind weder romantisiert noch unterminiert, sondern bleiben aufrichtig menschlich. Manchmal denke ich, dass Brecht sich selbst projiziert und sich sogar mit diesen Frauencharakteren in Verbindung gebracht hat. Wenn Brecht eine Frau wäre, wäre er vielleicht jemand wie Polly.

2. Ähnlichkeit zwischen Peachum und Macheath

Die große Ähnlichkeit zwischen Peachum und Macheath besteht darin, dass sie beide Außenseiter der Gesellschaft sind, Außenseiter, die große Macht besitzen und großes Charisma zeigen. Sie sind die „Alphas“ in den zwei Gruppen. Obwohl sie nicht legal sind, versuchen sie, die Ressourcen in der Gesellschaft neu zu verteilen, um sie gleicher zu machen. Sie erinnern mich an den zeitgenössischen Roman *Die Fetten*

Jahre sind Vorbei, in dem die Anti-Kapitalismus-Aktivisten die Oberschicht „erziehen“, indem sie in ihre Häuser einbrechen, Möbel bewegen und Notizen mit der Aufschrift „Die Fetten Jahre sind Vorbei“ oder „Sie haben zu viel Geld“ zurücklassen. Die Verbrecher werden zu denen, die sie nicht sind, weil sie sich dafür entscheiden, unmoralisch zu sein. Aber weil sie nicht mit der Moral einer ungerechten Gesellschaft einverstanden sind. Was Macheath und Peachum gemeinsam haben, ist auch ihre klare Einsicht in die Mentalität der Menschen, in verschiedene soziale Schichten. Diese Einsichten verleihen ihnen Ausstrahlung und Manipulationskraft. Sie sind „mind-blow“ Meister.

Der Unterschied zwischen Peachum und Macheath besteht darin, dass ersterer scheinheiliger ist und sich hinter der Zitadelle einer Bettlerfirma versteckt. Er gibt vor, ein ehrlicher Kleinunternehmer zu sein. Eigentlich ist er aber auch ein Betrüger. Intelligent nutzt er die Mentalität der Menschen in Bezug auf Empathie und nutzt sie, um Profit zu erzielen. Macheath ist auch sehr schlau, er ist nie wie ein Haifisch, der Zähne zeigt, er versteckt seine Messer, trägt weiße Handschuhe und scheint von hoher Klasse und unschuldig zu sein.

Ihr Mitgefühl für andere ist sehr begrenzt. Sie kümmern sich auch nicht so sehr um Polly, Jenny, und ihre Grausamkeit macht sie erfolgreich in ihren Verbrechen.

3. Die Hochzeit

Die Hochzeitsszene kann aus verschiedenen Perspektiven interpretiert werden. Erstens ist es eine Situation, in der Polly, das einzige Mädchen in einer Gruppe wilder

Männer, ziemlich interessant ist. Polly wird so zum leichten Ziel für Flirts und erotische Witze. Doch Macheath beschützte sie heftig und kritisierte diejenigen, die diese unangebrachten Witze machen. Das erinnert mich ein bisschen an die Kraftdynamik in einer rein männlichen Gruppe, in der es immer einen männlichen Alpha gibt. Hier wäre Macheath das Alpha, und er möchte nicht, dass Polly das Seerauber Jenny-Lied singt, und in der Öffentlichkeit auftritt. Er ist überfürsorglich hinsichtlich dessen, was ihm gehört.

Anscheinend ist dies eine seltsame Hochzeit ohne andere Gäste, ohne den Segen der Eltern. Polly wusste zunächst nichts über Macheaths Beruf, aber die Hochzeit zeigte es ihr und sie akzeptierte es schnell.

Die anderen Männer in der Hochzeit sind sehr treu und im Allgemeinen sehr nette Menschen mit guten Herzen. Obwohl sie Menschen während ihres Diebstahls verletzen, ist das nicht gewollt.

Die Hochzeitsszene ist sehr wichtig, da sie der einzige „glückliche“ Moment im gesamten Stück ist, der auch den „tragischen“ Untergang von Macheath kennzeichnet. Ohne die Hochzeit wäre Macheath mit Mr. Preachum kein solcher Feind geworden, und er wäre nicht leicht gefangen genommen und an den Galgen geschickt worden. Für Macheath ist die Hochzeit eine glückliche Falle von die Schicksal.

Auf der anderen Seite ist die Hochzeit auch die Szene, in der die marginalisierten Charaktere aktiv, willens und sogar verzweifelt hofften, sich einzufügen, um die Zeremonie mit Würde wie die normalen Menschen zu beenden. Macheath wollte vor allem Luxusgüter der Oberklasse stehlen. Dies ist ein Spiegel seiner Wünsche,

tatsächlich reich zu sein und diese Gegenstände zu besitzen. Ironischerweise konnten sie nur durch Diebstahl erlangt werden.

Die Rolle der Hochzeitsszene umfasst auch die detailliertere Beschreibung der Charaktere. Das Publikum ist nun mit den Motiven und Methoden von Macheaths Verbrechen und der Organisation seiner Verbrechensbande besser vertraut. Es dient als Hintergrund für später, wenn Macheath seine Bande leicht verlässt.

Die Hochzeit zeigt auch die emotionale Beziehung zwischen den Charakteren. Wenn Macheath wirklich dieser herzlose, unmoralische Liebhaber ist, warum sollte er Polly dann eine Hochzeit geben?

Sie müssen wirklich zutiefst verliebt gewesen sein.

4. „Dreigroschen-Finale“

Das erste Finale findet nach Pollys Hochzeit statt: Erstes Dreigroschen-Finale zur Unsicherheit des menschlichen Zustands von Polly, Peachum und Frau Peachum. Dieses Lied weist sowohl sarkastisch als auch traurig auf die Diskrepanz zwischen der idealistischen und der oft schlechten Realität hin. Wer möchte nicht das flüchtige Glück der eigenen Existenz genießen, am weltlichen Vergnügen teilhaben und es das Grundrecht der Existenz nennen? Wer keine guten Sitten und kein elegantes Leben haben möchte? Aber der Zustand einiger Leute bedeutet einfach, dass dies unmöglich ist. Die Armen der Welt und der Mann sind schlecht. Ohne die Grundrechte, menschlich zu sein, werden die menschlichen Beziehungen so zerbrechlich, wie zwischen den Brüdern, dem Ehemann und der Ehefrau, dem Sohn und den Eltern. Dies ist ein

außerordentlich zynisches Lied, das eine brutale Ehrlichkeit besitzt. Das Lied sagt auch im Grunde, dass das Paradies und der „Gott“ auf Erden nicht existieren. Mit anderen Worten, ohne die grundlegende Existenzsicherung kann man keinen Zugang zum Paradies auf Erden erhalten. Man kann während des flüchtigen Lebens kein Glück genießen, und kostbarere Dinge wie die wahre Liebe sind besonders zerbrechlich. Dies spiegelt Maslows Pyramide von Happiness und die Marx-Theorie von Basis und Überbau wider. Wenn sie nicht arm wären, wären Peachum und Macheath keine Kriminellen und es gäbe keinen Krieg zwischen ihnen.

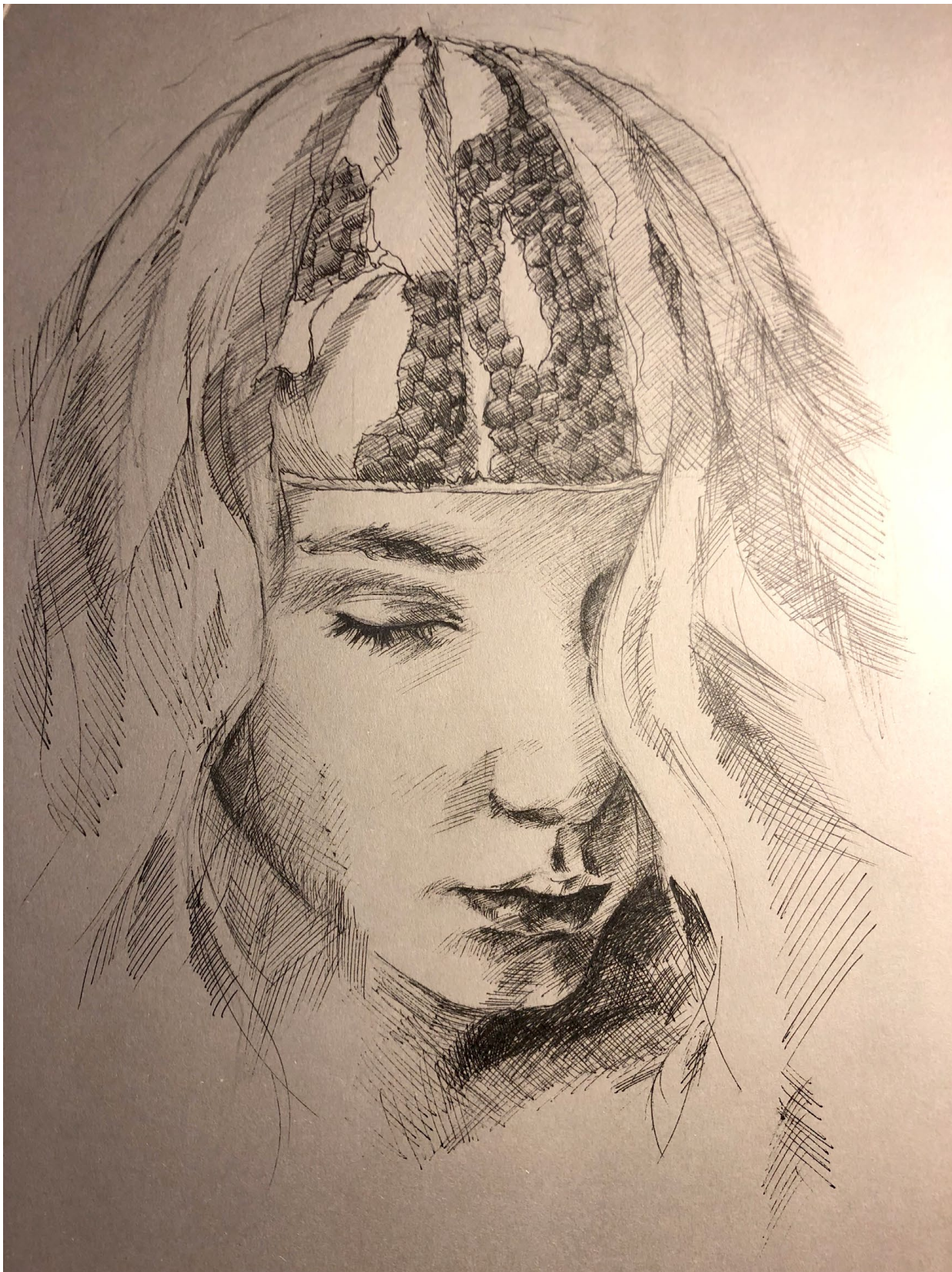
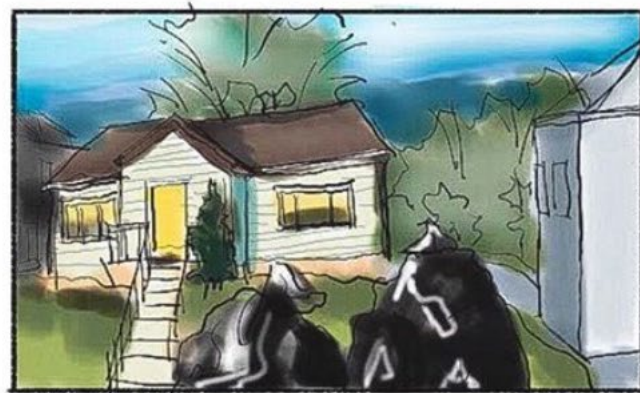
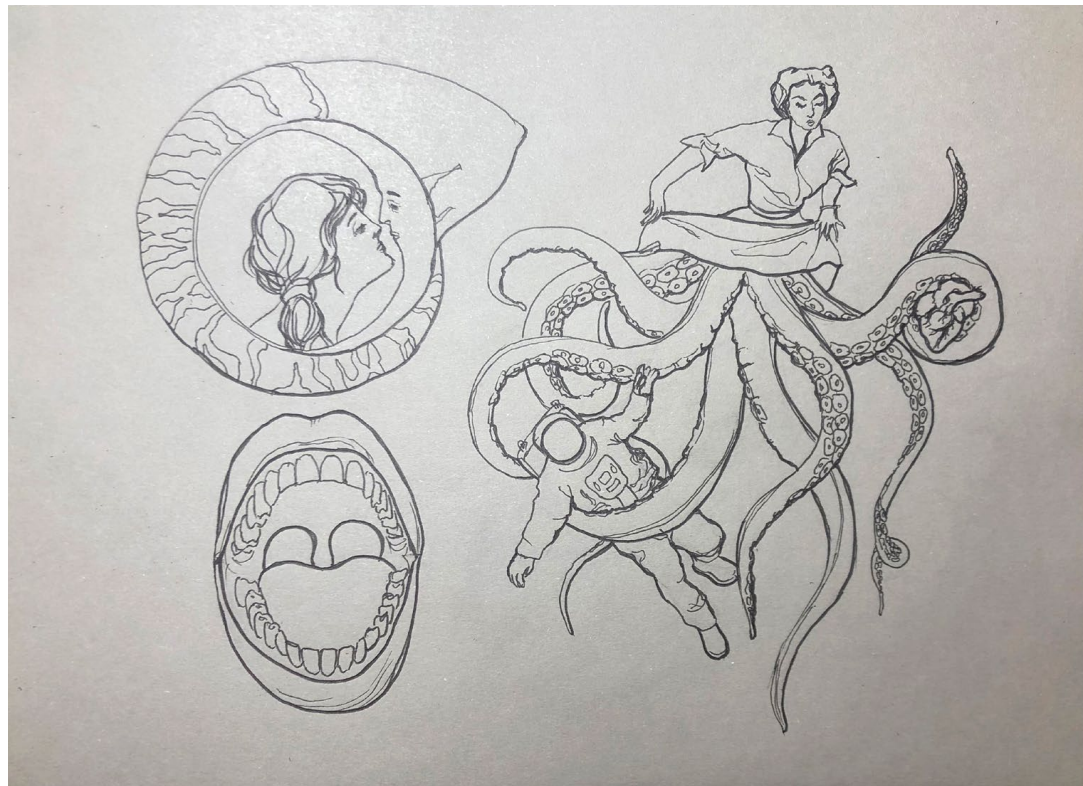
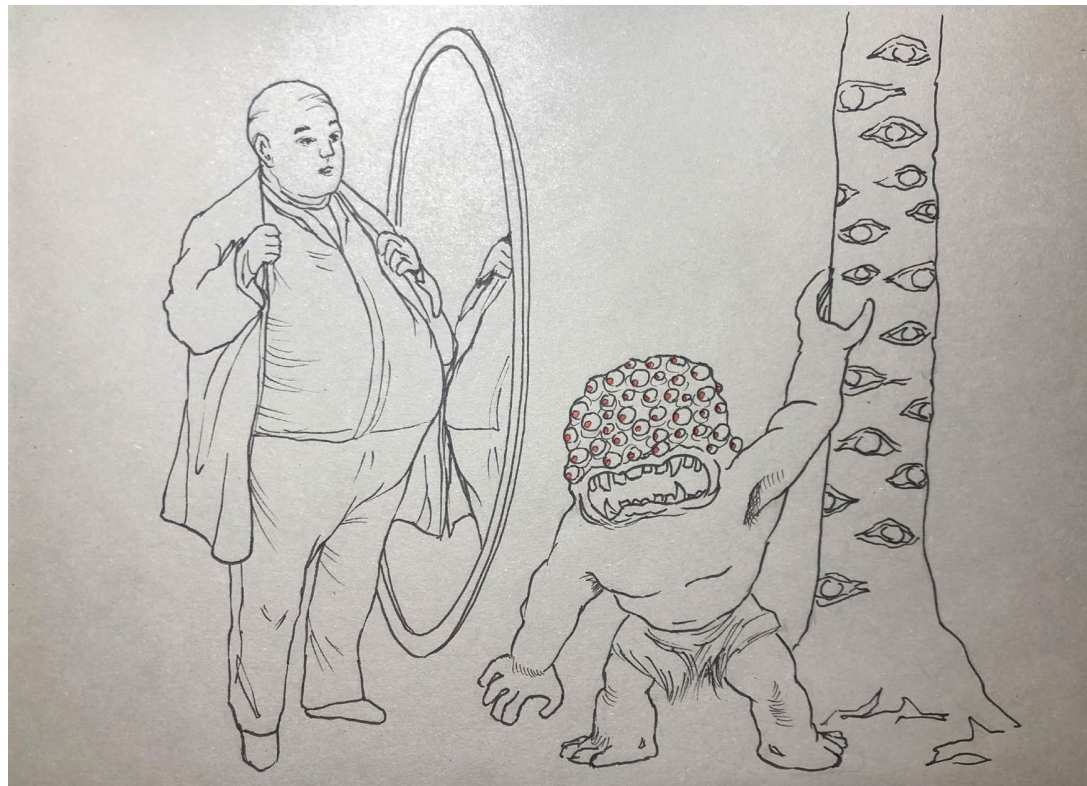
Das zweite Finale findet direkt nach der Flucht von Macheath statt. „Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral“ ist die Seele dieses Liedes. „Den Menschen peinigt, auszieht, anfällt, abwürgt und frisst, Nur dadurch lebt der Mensch, dass er so gründlich Vergessen kann, dass er ein Mensch doch ist.“ (S 67) Moral ist der Satz von Regeln und sozialen Normen, die dem System manchmal helfen. Das ist der Grund, warum die Gesellschaft voller Feiglinge ist, während Kriminelle eigentlich gute Männer sind, aber mit einer anderen Moral. Ihre Moral stimmt möglicherweise nicht mit den Gesetzen der Gesellschaft überein, aber sie sind ein weiterer Satz von Moral, der auf Liebe und menschlichen Beziehungen basiert.

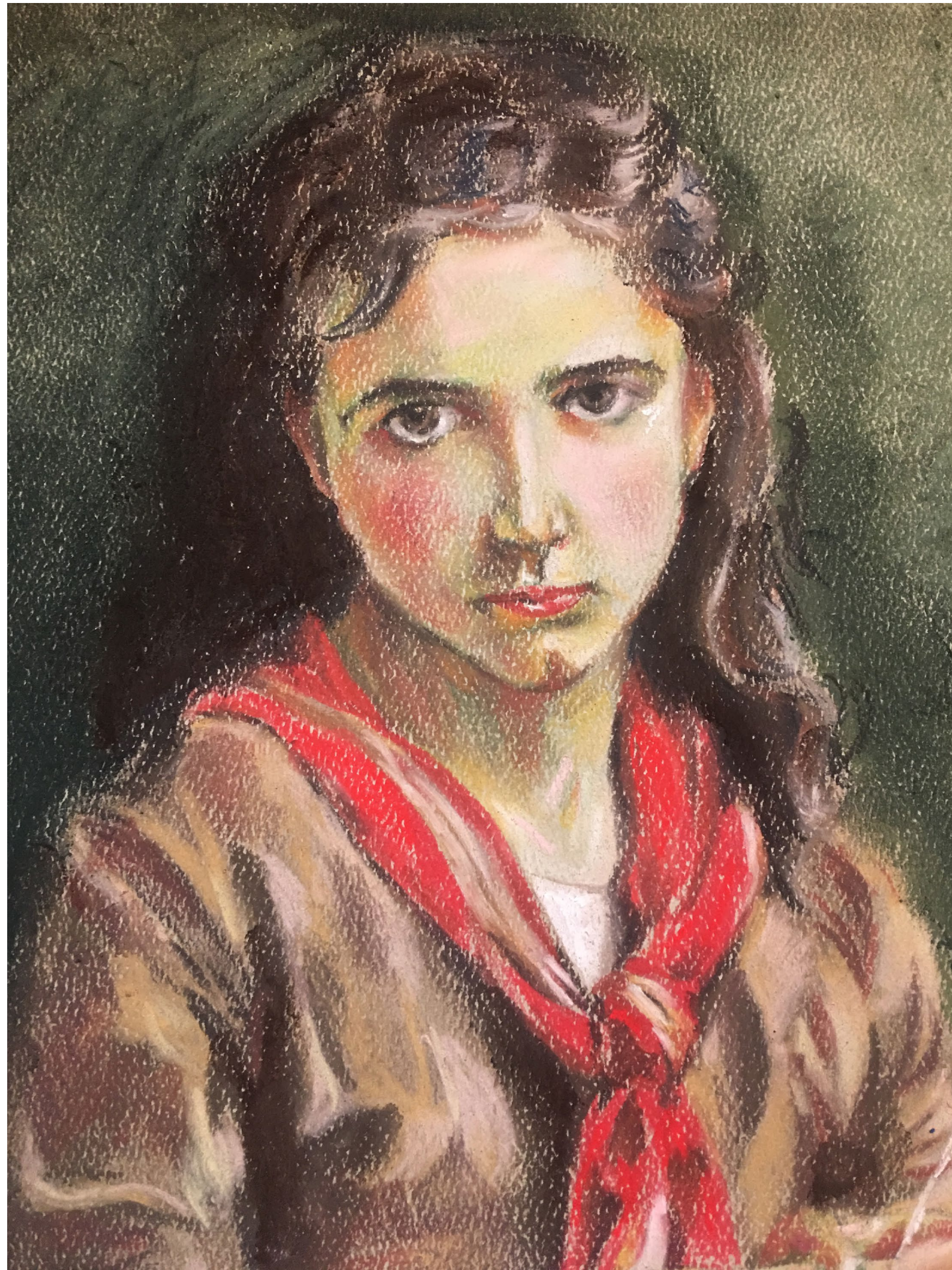
Das dritte Finale fand nach der Begnadigung von Macheath aufgrund der Krönung statt. „So leicht und friedlich wäre unser Leben, wenn die reitenden Boten des Königs immer kämen.“ Brecht sagt, dass so etwas in der Realität nicht leicht vorkommt. Für die Fiktion rettet der Autor Macheath, aber in Wirklichkeit ist das nicht der Fall. Im wirklichen Leben ist das Schicksal der Armen bitter, Retter auf dem Pferderücken

passieren nur selten. Dabei durch bricht Brecht die vierte Mauer.

Die Beziehung den dritten Finalen ist, das dritte Finale Hoffnung und Versöhnung für die ersten beiden Finales zu geben scheint, die eine sehr pessimistische und zynische und ehrliche Darstellung der Umstände der Armen und des ungerechten Systems sind. Das dritte Finale gibt aber auch zu, dass es zu idealistisch ist.

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