

City University of Hong Kong

SM2105 Narrative Strategies & Aesthetics of Time-based Media

Final Project: Advanced Pictogram

Yu Hua

World Like Mist (1988)

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World Like Mist is talking about seven families in strange and elusive relationships and stories. The author using a callous and unconcerned mindset to a narrative story. All characters don't have a distinctive temper, the author is really calm to tell death and violence. The atmosphere of the story is moist, gloomy, and indifferent, enhancing the reader's curiosity to look forward to the unpredictable plot. The title *World Like Mist* has described as destiny, defining some things that are unstable and unpredictable, hinted characters' ending between death or life. No matter how they struggle, they can't escape their fate.

All characters have no name, but the number is an identity. At the beginning of the story, 7 is a sick man, his wife and son are worried about his state of illness. 4 is a sixteen years old girl who has sleep-talking, she is troubled about that sleep-talking is disrupting to others. 3 is a sixties years old woman. She sleeps with her grandchildren at nineteen years old, 7 feels uncomfortable when they sleep every night. A blind man always sitting on the street, listening to all sounds surrounded by him. Although he lost vision, he grasps much information. The woman in grey is worried about her daughter hasn't pregnancy, her grey cloth has sold by the driver.

The driver tells his dream to mother, but she cannot decode his dream. He believes that the woman will harm his life but it just a superstition told to the fortune-teller. The driver's mother is also a midwife, she has been required to help deliver the child. However, actually she misleads by a ghost to go to the grave where doesn't have any people. 6 is a man who has seven daughters, but he sells the six daughters for 3,000 dollars. He always planned how to sell the last daughter at the ideal price and ignore her sensation. Fortune-teller is a special character because he has a connection between others. He is an old man who believes that his longevity is the reason for his five sons have died very early, sons' mortality will extend his lifespan. Moreover, when other characters have hesitation, they will find fortune-teller for finding out a solution, but they still don't know he will frame on them.

In the world of the story, people are perplexed by illness, death, immoral, poor, and selfish, there has not happiness and hope in their life. In my opinion, they are being tortured by fate. Fortune-teller directly control other characters' minds and decisions. Even though he did lots of bad things such as rape 4 and framed others, characters don't realize his intention and accept his suggestion. Characters are only obeying and execute fortune-teller's orders but without self-consciousness. For instance, the fortune-teller said that once 7 gives his son to him, 7 will recover. 7 gives up his son for avoiding death, showing his cruelty and selfishness. I believe that the story is a miniature of the real world, the author

would like to satirize someone who is superstition and ignorance. They blindly trust the god can help them but never willing to believe their mind and desire, just like a puppet controlled by the fortune-teller.

On the other hand, the author uses an unusual writing skill to tell life and death. Dead become another way of existence. For example, the driver dies but he always presents in his mother's dream. He committed suicide and chases 2 on the street who make fun of him. Although everyone has omen before they died, they have not much struggle or fear. I am empathy the blinder, he has a sorrowful childhood and listened to crying sounds in every month. He as an "observer" who can understand other characters' moods from voice and footsteps, however, he drowns accidentally. 4 is also a victim, because of the father's superstition, she has violated by the fortune teller and go mad.

All things have happened in the hopeless, gray, wet, and hazy scene, characters have been digitizing, everyone cannot escape death. The story is full of negative energy, cruelty, and mystery, no matter who is disappeared, their life seems like mist atomizes in the air silently.

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Legend

This pictogram is using an animation as a form to present the plot of the story. The whole story is surrounded by gray, wet, and hazy atmosphere, therefore the pictogram is demonstrated low saturation such as grey and white color. There also has a mist to enhance the mood. Besides, I quote a part of the original article as a background for enhancing a sense of oppression. Some anonymous characters are not mentioned such as middle school girls and three men carrying basket laden with fruit. Because they have not much crucial effect on the spindle of the story. Thus, there only have nine persons in white silhouette, they have an icon to assign the identity.

The huge man which has a darker silhouette is fortune-teller. Compare to other characters, his size of his body is much bigger, this is a metaphor showing that he is a powerful person in story. Also, his hands are holding a controller of puppet, intimating he controls other characters' fate. There have five cocks behind him which increased his power. Six characters are fixed and controlled by string, they are gradually disappeared according to their time of death. There have three characters can move in frame by frame, because they are the survivor only.

In the next part, there have black background with some words (illness, death, immoral, poor, selfish superstition, and ignorance). The description presents my impression and criticism of the characters. My personal thought can lead the reader to think and enhance the restless mood. In the ending, using in the first person, I create a dialogue for each character. The dialogue is showing their ambition or what they worried about.

The meaning of the title "Unseen Life" is telling that characters feel confused about their life, they would rather than gain suggestion to fortune-teller but no making a decision to themselves. Characters are over-relying on fortune-teller, resulting in being controlled by him. In their world, there have no hope, future, and life. What is waiting for them is died and being erosion by the ugly of humanity.

On the other hand, there have two peach trees on top and bottom. Only peaches are colored objects in the pictogram. The reason for this arrangement is that, even though there have many people died or they encounter unfortunate fate, the peach tree still grows up healthy and beautiful. Presenting absurd

and strange circumstances and created a contrast with characters. The peach tree and characters seem to live at the same time and space, but they have totally different destiny. The tree symbolizes life and characters symbolize death. The author mentions the tree in the beginning and the ending of the story, so I believe that the tree is an indispensable part and I draw it in the pictogram.

<https://youtu.be/XZN5Xe58B4Y>