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The Relevance of Shakespeare: Teaching Shakespeare Cross Time and Culture

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Abstract:

What does Shakespeare mean to readers and audience that are chronologically and linguistic-culturally far apart from his time and culture? In particular, what does Shakespeare mean to Chinese readers, audience and students? The paper reviews the process of introduction and popularization of Shakespeare in Chinese curriculums, and discusses the significances as well as possible "cultural misreadings" of Shakespeare in a given context. The paper points out some of the obstacles in approaching the "real" Shakespeare in classes taught in Chinese, using a Chinese version of the bard, no matter how highly appreciated the textbook version is. Moreover, the paper argues that sometimes superficial affinities between Chinese and western cultural traditions could also lead to misreadings of various kinds. Therefore, cultural awareness is highly desirable when Shakespeare — his language, his story and his drama — is taught in a bi-or cross-cultural context.

Key words:

Shakespeare; culture; cross-cultural

Shakespeare has long been part of the foreign language and literature curriculum in Chinese schools. As early as the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, missionary schools in China began teaching stories of Shakespeare based upon Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare*. In the 1920s and 1930s, plays of Shakespeare were taught mainly in English courses in middle schools and colleges, which significantly helped popularize this great dramatist and nourished China's first generation Shakespearean critics and performers, who in turn became the first generation of teachers of Shakespeare in major universities of the country. Among the then 37 Shakespearean plays, comedies such as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*, great tragedies such as *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* readily found their way into the curriculum.¹

The introduction and popularization of Shakespeare through classrooms and curriculums brought about a flourishing period of Shakespeare on stage and in study.

Due to language barriers, the systematic teaching of Shakespeare in China did not begin on a general level until the late seventies when the first completed works of Shakespeare in Chinese translation was published in 1978.^[1] This 11-volume edition included the thirty-seven plays together with all the long poems and the one hundred and fifty-four sonnets. It is the first time this great dramatist-poet was introduced, in

[1] It was published by the People's Literature Publishing House. The major translator Zhu Shenghao was responsible for about thirty plays.

a comprehensive way, to Chinese readers and students. It also marked the beginning of the duel in the country's teaching of Shakespeare; while in Chinese departments, Shakespeare is taught, discussed and staged in Chinese, in English departments, he is taught, discussed and staged in English.

The significance of the inclusion of Shakespeare into both Chinese and English curriculums is clearly illustrated by the fact that Shakespeare has now become the most popular dramatist of the world among Chinese students and readers, a fact that even attracts envies from scholars of Chinese classic drama, complaining that there are perhaps more people in China today who know Shakespeare than those who know Guan Hanqing.^[2] Presently, a comprehensive system of Shakespeare teaching has been established. For the more than two million Chinese senior high students, the major part of Act Four, Scene One of *The Merchant of Venice* (in Chinese translation) is included in the textbook for the reading course. In universities and colleges, Shakespeare is taught both in Chinese and English, at both undergraduate and graduate levels, where Shakespeare is either an individual course, compulsory or elective, or a major part of a general one on drama, the ranges of the plays taught extending beyond the traditional comedies and tragedies and well into the histories and romances. In addition, Shakespeare is included in the curriculums for various forms of continual education, such as TV and broadcast, spare-time and correspondence universities and night schools. All these make China a distinctive force in the global practice in Shakespeare teaching.

It would be misleading to assume that the convergence of East and West in Shakespeare course is a simple matter of teaching Shakespeare alongside with his literary counterpart(s) in China. Rather, the convergence occurs in a subtle way, in that when Shakespeare is read, he is read against a culture of some fundamental differences from the one he was born to and wrote in. Moreover, language and education system are the two other factors that strongly shape the way Shakespeare is taught and interpreted in a given culture, in China in this case. While it is true that a rich tradition of theatrical activity in China will more often than not exert its influence on the way people interpret — hence teach and study — Shakespeare, it is also true that the language gap, at once a barrier and a benefit, defines in a significant way how people approach this dramatist. On top of that, the policy and methodology in education, by prescribing the way Shakespeare should be taught and highlighting the part of Shakespeare that is to be taught or given much more attention to, contributes much to the local and regional varieties in the teaching of Shakespeare as a whole.

The literary tradition of a nation influences the introduction and teaching of a foreign writer, consciously but more often unconsciously adding something to it and/or altering something of it. This is especially so when the nation in question has a rich tradition of her own. As a result, the translation and teaching of the writer in question is never textual, but inter-textual in nature, with readers often reading their own culture into the text or vice versa, which is especially true of China, a nation whose

[2] A great dramatist of the Yuan Dynasty (1271 – 1368) whose plays are considered the classic of Chinese drama.

dramatic tradition dates back to almost eight centuries ago. The physical form of traditional Chinese theatre proper and what such a building entails theatrically bear striking similarities to those of the Elizabethan theater, despite the fact that the traditional Chinese drama was written to be sung while that of Shakespeare to be spoken. Theatrically, they both have an almost barren stage protruding into the spectators, with few properties to indicate the exact location where the events are taking place or to give the spectators an illusion of reality. No curtains were used to mark the transitions between acts and scenes. Although the barren stage in both cases is somewhat compensated by the equally rich costumes the players wore, the majority of the spectators went there to “hear” rather than to “watch” the performance on stage. For Shakespeare’s audience, the poetry and eloquence of the dramatic speeches were among the major, if not THE, expectations with which the audience went to the theatre, and for those of the traditional Chinese drama, it was the beautifully composed poems or verse-series that were their chief purpose of going to the theater. When it comes to the scope of subject matter, both Shakespeare and the traditional Chinese dramatists cover a wide spectrum of topics, ranging from history, social and individual tragedies, satire, laughter-inducing comic situations to legendary tales. The resemblance goes even to the microscopic level, where, for instance, we find that Shakespeare often rhymes the ending couplets in a scene or an act, and in Chinese tradition, the entrance or exit of a character, as well as the beginning and ending of an act, is often indicated by rhymed verses.

This cross-cultural affinity facilitates the acceptance and interpretation of Shakespeare, since students may find so many apparent and striking similarities between this foreign dramatist and those of their own culture. And it also creates the illusion in which the interpretation and critical effort appear less difficult since one can start from something they are relatively familiar with. Moreover, studying Shakespeare with a rich tradition of drama in one’s own cultural and literary background helps broaden the students’ horizon of knowledge, not only expanding their concept of the possible varieties of drama, but revealing as well something universal through the heterogeneous, with the recognition that there are after all something general or universal in drama that makes those that are so far apart seem so close.

Seemingly paradoxically, however, such a rich background undermines at the same time the “correct” interpretation of Shakespeare, yielding in some cases a totally different version, a cultural variety. Temptations to approach Shakespeare via ways that are, consciously or unconsciously, traditional are hard to resist. In so doing, the students tend to overlook the cultural, religious, social, and ideological backgrounds against which Shakespearean plays were written and have since been interpreted. While they are excited to have found something “quite similar” between Shakespeare and Chinese classic drama, they are at the same time assimilating a foreign playwright into the culture and literature of their own, thus overlooking the many elements that identify Shakespeare as Shakespeare. Variety gives way to affinity. As a result, interpretation often becomes an oversimplified and superfluous one. For instance, the students may approach, say, *Romeo and Juliet* with the tragedy of *A Tale of the West*

Chamber^[3] in their subconscious, or relate Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* to a ready sample of miser in traditional Chinese drama.

Linguistic variety also yields different versions of Shakespeare that serve as the text for students. In China, the most popular version is the prose translation of the 11-volume *Complete Works of Shakespeare* published in 1978. While the prose version is accessible to most Chinese readers, and serves as a ready source from which performance text is adapted, it at the same time presents some problems that affect the way Shakespeare is interpreted and approached, especially where the cultural and literary deposits lie the thickest. In *King Lear*, the word “nature” and its derivatives “natural” and “unnatural” have special significance, with particular denotations and connotations on different occasions. When Lear accuses his daughter Cordelia or Gloucester does his son Edgar of being “unnatural”, the word carries a double meaning of “against human nature” and “against Nature” at the same time. In the like situation, a common Chinese equivalent is “bu-xiao”, meaning “unfilial”, the forsaking of the duty, respect and obedience properly owed by a son or daughter to his/her parents. Since “xiao” (filiality) is one of the four basic moral requirements^[4] for a person in traditional Chinese culture, and that superficially, Cordelia does seem to be disrespectful, disobedient and neglectful of her duty toward her father, this translation easily assimilates “unnatural”, a word rich with Western cultural, religious, philosophical overtones, into “xiao”, one that carries distinctive oriental, especially Chinese cultural, religious, philosophical overtones. The interpretation runs a risk of missing much of the significance of these accusations, not to mention the high frequency of occurrence of the word “nature” throughout the play, reducing the significance of the word to a simple matter of relationship between family members.

The selection of a proper text version also influences the way Shakespeare is taught and interpreted. Although the 11-volume Shakespeare by Zhu Shenghao has been highly praised for having replicated much of the original power and beauty, it is still “another Shakespeare”, in that the title of “dramatic poet”, which has since suited Shakespeare so properly in English, can never be applied to the Chinese Shakespeare. Except on a few occasions where we do have the verse form in translation, Chinese readers and students of the prose Shakespeare would never realize that the bard wrote more in verse than in prose, or that the difference in styles does signify something beyond the form of language itself. They could not know, for instance, that in most cases, verses are meant for elegant and noble characters while prose is for those lower on social stations.

They could not know, either, that Shakespeare’s iambic pentameter undergoes a process of development from the early stage when a line usually ends with a complete sense group to the later one when the idea often continues until the next line or even in several lines. They will miss such details as the rhymed ending couplet(s) which,

[3] One of the most popular traditional Chinese drama, a melodrama full of ups and downs in the love affair of a couple of young people.

[4] The other three are “zhong” (faithfulness to the sovereignty), “jie” (chastity of a female) and “yi” (fraternity between males).

at that time, served as an indicator of the division of scenes and acts, signaling the change of locations and the group of characters entering or exiting the stage, thus preparing the audience for what they are going to hear next. Had the translator, himself a poet, not occasionally made endeavors in verse translation, the students would have been unable to notice the “imbedded” sonnets, which are sometimes shared by more than one character, as in the case of Act I, Scene 5, lines 93 – 106 of *Romeo and Juliet*, though more frequently found in the prologue chorus. As a result, the prose Shakespeare differs in several significant ways from the verse-prose one, hence the difference or incongruity between the interpretations of students who study Shakespeare in Chinese and those in the English “original”.^[5]

When language is concerned, English majors are usually at an advantageous position because they will seldom miss the enjoyment of the many puns and plays-on-words and words connoting rich imageries. All these appear at a reduced scale or even disappear in Chinese versions of Shakespeare. A ready example is the word “light” in “away from light steals home my heavy son”.^[6] “Light” here both refers to the broad daylight from which Romeo retreats into his private chamber, and the light-hearted flirting of him with his former love, the “light” here being used in contrast to “heavy”. And the reader is further attempted to consider the word “son” as a pun on “sun”, signifying a sun hiding away from the sky and into the back of clouds, an association supported by the similar case in *Hamlet* when Hamlet complains that he is “too much in the sun”.

Educational policy and practice constitute another source from which the cross-culturalness of Shakespeare occurs. This cross-culturalness brings both advantages and disadvantages to Chinese students. Interestingly enough, the advantage for students of Chinese to study Shakespeare is at once a disadvantage. On the one hand, they are able to cover a relatively wider range of Shakespeare’s plays in a relatively shorter time because of the texts and classroom education conducted in their native language, on the other hand, however, they are likely to miss much of the subtlety and beauty and power of the language. For English majors, it is just the opposite. Although they are likely to find themselves at loss when they first read Shakespeare, as the language seems to be so unlike the English they are learning, from which many students shy away, they soon begin to enjoy and appreciate the language of the plays. They move on slowly but steadily, slowly because the 2-hour-per-week semester course usually covers no more than six or seven plays, and in some cases, they need to devote four weeks to a single play, such as *Hamlet* or *King Lear*, sometimes even a whole semester; but steadily because they concentrate on every word and image, which reveal to them something they would never be able to realize or grasp in fast reading. As a result, different versions of Shakespeare arise in different practices of education.

Educational policies and practices also affect the purpose for which Shakespeare is taught and texts from which Shakespeare is taught. For students in Chinese

[5] The reason I use quotation marks for the word “original” is that we perhaps can never be sure which one is “the original” version by Shakespeare, and very possibly there has never been such a version.

[6] *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, Scene i, line 137.

department, Shakespeare serves as a window to the source and development of western literature, especially dramatic art. The task for the course is to introduce to Chinese students the stories, the themes and plots, the ideas and lessons, the characters and artistic and theatrical values of the plays. The critical effort is usually directed to an analysis of the characters, such as Hamlet, or explanations of the plot, such as Hamlet's hesitation and revenge, from a certain point of view. It is in most cases part of a more general course on western literature or drama, taught together with, say, the Chinese versions of Sophocles, Racine, Ibsen, Shaw and O'Neill. In department of English, however, Shakespeare is taught for a dual purpose, for language as well as for literature. He is not only considered as a man of letters, but also a master of the English language from whom the students learn the beauty, and the transition and development of language. He is also a source to which later generation literary work can be directly or indirectly traced. The dual concentration on both language and literature results in a quite different version of Shakespeare and a quite different approach to him in department of English from that of Chinese, that is, more attention is given to language, the verse, the poetry, the images in the texts, hence a closer, more detailed in-depth study into the texts.

The students' perception and concept of Shakespeare is largely defined by what they learn from the textbooks and their teachers. It is on the teachers that the immediate responsibility of selecting texts falls. They determine the kind and/or part of the plays to be included. Sometimes, the selection will affect the interpretation in a significant way. For the second grade high school seniors, the part of *The Merchant of Venice* included in their Chinese reading textbook is the major part of Act IV, Scene i from the entrance of Shylock to his defeat. This selection itself, among others, reflects to some extent the selector's interpretation of the play, and of Shylock in particular. This in turn prescribes and determines, if not limits, the way Shylock is to be interpreted, regardless of whatever he says or does in the rest part of the play. We cannot say that this practice leads up to an entirely "mistaken" interpretation of the character, for after all the apparent ruthlessness is a part of his character, but it certainly castrates other parts of Shylock which are equally important if we want to have a complete picture of this character. In courses of Shakespeare for English majors, however, this is somewhat avoided, where equal attention is directed to the part of Shylock as a Jew partly justified for the prejudice and discrimination he suffers from, and partly criticized for what he intends to do to Antonio.

The way teachers present Shakespeare also influences the way students respond to and interpret Shakespeare. During the fifties and sixties, Shakespeare was taught from a relatively monolithic point of view, which reflected somewhat the influence of the scholars of the former Soviet Union and the then prevalent political and ideological force. Students were asked to approach and appreciate Shakespeare from the only "correct" way, while access to other interpretations was barred. In recent decades, however, the situation began to change. The increasing cultural and academic exchanges between China and the outside world help create new inter-texts of Shakespeare for Chinese students through their teachers or by themselves. The immediate result is the widening of the scope both in the kind of texts included in

curriculum and the angles from which Shakespeare is examined and taught. At present, more and more histories and other “minor” plays are included into discussion, and Shakespeare is approached from a wider range of perspectives. One of the Shakespeare courses I have taught, for instance, was titled “Shakespeare in Perspectives”. The 18-week course covers eight plays, and in addition to a general introduction of the background information about the individual play, each is examined and discussed from a particular perspective or with a particular concentration, consciously incorporating the many schools and theories of contemporary literary criticism into the discussion. The course tends to be more individual and academic, in the sense that it is the result of the teacher/scholar’s independent research. This adds greatly to the cross-culturalness and variety of inter-texts of Shakespeare in China.

Sometimes, the relevance of Shakespeare extends over cultural, dramatic, literary and linguistic arenas into something quite contemporary, and even political. Just as *Hamlet* was read into particular historical moments as the symbol of hesitation in front of a revolution, *Richard II* was performed to stand for the victim of a political and military coup followed by the invasion of an independent member nation, the issue of law and justice in *Measure for Measure* would sound all too familiar to Chinese students to whom the inefficiency and inequality of the legal system and abuse and corrupt of power are no rare happenings in their daily life. Almost without any arbitrary work, *Measure for Measure* is rewritten and staged as part of the campaign against the corrupted power, the legal corruption and the misuse of justice. And the apparent relevance of Shakespeare, on one hand, bears yet another witness to what Ben Jonson said about the bard’s fame of timelessness, and on the other hand, argues forcefully for Shakespeare’s role in liberal arts education today.

It is always difficult, and perhaps a worthless attempt, too, to try to separate the disadvantages of teaching Shakespeare in a cross-cultural environment from its advantages, because they are co-existent. While the cultural varieties may seem to deviate from the “authentic” Shakespeare, they add more to the universality of the playwright, expanding the range of people’s perception of the world drama and broadening their intellectual and emotional horizons. The various hidden cultural texts both affect the way Shakespeare is interpreted in an “authentic way” and add insight into the nature and development of drama not only of a particular region or nation, but that of the world.

Notes

1. Meng Xianqiang, *Shakespeare in China: A Brief History* (Changchun: The Northeast Normal University Press, 1994) 289 – 311.

Chaotic Integration in Thomas Pynchon's "The Secret Integration"

ZHANG Qiong

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Abstract:

Thomas Pynchon's early short story "The Secret Integration" (1964) was born in an age when structuralism gave way to post-structuralism, a critical trend that tries to subvert many of the conventional things in literary creation. So the features of deconstruction could be revealed in this fiction. Under the veil of a realistic story, some subversive elements are actively interacting with each other in this seemingly steady system of the story world. Hidden below the facial structure of "The Secret Integration", there are entropy's metaphorical implications, sense of chaos, roles of otherness, and other subversive elements intermixed. Exploring the story in the perspective of deconstruction, we would realize that this early writing embodies the features of Pynchon's many post-modern works. It foresees, to some extent, Pynchon's later creation full of endless quests, open-endings, and identity crisis in the world contaminated by industry and science.

Key words:

"The Secret Integration"; Thomas Pynchon; deconstruction

The publication of Thomas Pynchon's "The Secret Integration" in the 1960s coincided with the gradual giving way of structuralism to post-structuralism, a critical stance and approach that has since found its power in subverting many of the once taken-for-granted things such as language structure, logocentrism, and convention. Thus, it reacts against the failing empire of signs, and is tinged with the color of slippage and the lexical uncertainty. Following this trend of deconstruction, another name for this post-structuralistic approach, a blend of "euphoria and disillusionment, liberation and dissipation, carnival and catastrophe" full of negatives and absences appeared in the literary works of the time, then known as "the new writings" and later referred to as "post-modern works". These authors started to deliberately oppose the systematic and structural world of literary creation, and "The Secret Integration", with its apparent resistance to conventional and rational interpretation, stands out as a good case for study, as the narrative pattern of the story demonstrates a full working-out of the implications of structuralism, challenging the readers' patience and formation of a new view on the world.

In fact, Pynchon's post-structural-ness could be seen as early as in his virgin work *V*, which received extraordinary praise upon publication in 1963. The story already displays to a certain extent Pynchon's post-modern uncertainty and considerations, including the denial of an author's privilege, and the drastic alteration of the tradition of literary creation, especially when the steady language structure as meaning-containing and having a system is concerned. "The Secret Integration", his second

work, appeared one year later in "Saturday Evening Post" of December 19, 1964, in which the detachment of Saussurian signifiers from that signifieds went further. As a result, when the reader attempts to apply the traditional approach in his/her reading —reading from start to finish — and trying to see the narrative in terms of sequence of events or the scenes of the story, he/she would end feeling less safety. Levi-Strauss's paradigm approach and his structure codes^[1] that embrace the most profound mysteries of human experience do not seem to apply easily to the interpretation of such a story.

The story, set in a small town, follows the adventures of a group of young boys as they deal with their relations to the adults in the community. The boys find themselves caught between the stubborn racism of their parents' generation, and the civil rights era's open mindedness they have grown into. While the adults harass the first black family to move into town, the children welcome them, allowing the boy in the family to be initiated into their gang, a first step towards integration. Their gang's major function is to play practical jokes. Games play an important role in the story, appropriate for the young characters, and the gang plans an anti-institutional revolution — the political-minded youth are looking for major overhauls in a system that seems so wrong to them. Roles are reversed here; the children trying to teach the adults that the racist games they play are wrong. Play prevails in the end, when the black child turns out to be a figment of the children's imagination, and is let go to flee the small town of hatred. Pynchon develops the characters of this engaging story sensitively, realistically portraying the children's voices and actions, which seems very different from his other works, but actually affects his further writing.

However, under the veil of a realistic story, subversive elements are actively interacting with each other in the seemingly steady system of the story world. For in the short story, though Pynchon lays stress on the textual features as other traditional authors do, he concentrates on the rhetorical rather than following the structuralistic emphasis upon the grammatical. It is just in accordance with what Paul de Man says, "[T]he grammatical model of the question becomes rhetorical not when we have, on the one hand, a literal meaning and on the other hand a figural meaning, but when it is impossible to decide by grammatical or other linguistic devices which of the two meanings (that can be entirely incompatible) prevails."¹

The story appears to begin with a very conventional opening as "[O]utside it was raining, the first rain of October, end of haying season and of the fall's full brilliance, purity of light, a certain soundness to weather that had brought New Yorkers flooding up through the Berkshires not too many weekends ago to see the trees changing in that sun."² And, on that rainy day, the boy Tim was expecting a rendezvous with his friends. When traditional readers are entrapped into following the linear narrative, they will all of a sudden find that Tim is not the protagonist, nor the other boys. Besides, all the characters are trying to deviate from the main plot, and

[1] Levi-Strauss (1908 -) tries to reveal the universal structures of the social phenomena, their internal relations, the system operating behind them, and the general law governing the operation of this system. He is famous for his structural anthropological study dealing with literary materials.

give out the fragmented subplots related to the story. Nearly halfway through the story, readers realize that they probably cannot expect a plot of any sort, but give prompt reactions at every turn or deviation of the narration, and that they are not to expect any suspense throughout the entire story. Moreover, metaphorical meanings of the boys' rendezvous and their "Operation Spartacus"^[2] call up the readers' attention to the pursuit of some hidden meaning beyond the literal layer. However, "[S]ince metaphors are essentially 'groundless', mere substitutions of one set of signs for another, language tends to betray its own fictive and arbitrary nature at just those points where it is offering to be most intensively persuasive",³ readers feel chaos even in the facial structure of this story. Unexpectedly, the systematic way of narration leads to the process of the story's deconstructing itself before readers.

Even some seemingly traditional techniques produce the sense of chaos in "The Secret Integration". The involution of flashbacks, for example, adds significantly to the color of disorder and chaotic writing. In the story, Tim thought of seeing Grover at ten of the morning, then his wart on the finger occurred to him, which then triggered off his memory about the doctor's adult way of treating him and Grover's seeing through the doctor's trick in his prematurity. That's not the only example of flashback. The story of how the children wanted to persuade a black man Mr. McAfee to quit alcohol while being involved in the man's another story and fragment of memory is, in itself, a flashback that happened one year before the story first happened. Unable to follow a clear thread of the plot, readers feel confused and detached from the story world occasionally.

Much chaos also results when readers find themselves overwhelmed by a lot of terms as "sodium grenade", "liquid nitrogen", "suggestion therapy", "trigonometry", and so on, which makes the writing deviate from the pure literary world by leaving readers a sense of confusion and uneasiness. Pynchon applies scientific terms because he feels they offer the cultural stimulation lacking in literary world. Such a kind of diction style relates a lot to Pynchon's own educational background for he was a major in physics, and his many literary creations are somewhere between mystic fiction and science fiction, which lay less stress on real life. Perhaps Pynchon's personal life experience also has something to do here, as he once worked in Boeing Company in Seattle when he was out of commission. The difficulties readers experience reading his works are more or less attributable to this integration of literature and sci-tech discourses.

Interdisciplinary writing seems to be an interesting subject for Pynchon, and he even evolves his writings on the concept of "entropy"^[3] which plays a key role throughout the bulk of his writing. For example, the notion of entropy itself is reexamined and more deeply probed in both *V.* and *The Crying of Lot 49*. Pynchon's discussion of noise vs. signal in terms of communication theory and information

[2] The yearly dry run arranged by the boys in the story; Operation Spartacus is the code name.

[3] Entropy is the measure of disorganization for a closed system, which is valuable in that it is an adequate metaphor to apply to certain phenomena in the world such as the consumerist trend away from difference and toward sameness. Pynchon seems to feel quite strongly that entropy is a concept metaphorically applicable to many aspects of life. He has written a story named "Entropy" to elaborate his thematic idea.

transfer strongly carries through a number of his works, most importantly, *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Gravity's Rainbow*. In "The Secret Integration", Grover's room is filled with different voices received by his transceiver rigs and test equipment. "Not only the sky but these mountains, too, made incoming signals capricious. Grover's room, certain nights when Tim stayed over, filled as the hour grew late with disembodied voices, sometimes even from as far away as the sea."⁴ Different voices, utilized as the general metaphor throughout "entropy", constantly assert themselves as the recurring motifs — this post-industrial world is filled with fragmentary and chaotic signals.

Talking about figures of speech, De Man agrees that the language is "essentially figurative and not referential or expressive; there is no original unrhetorical language."⁵ And, he considers that the effects of language and rhetoric prevent a direct representation of the real. De Man applies these arguments to criticism itself by claiming that reading is always necessarily "misreading", because "tropes" inevitably intervene between critical and literary texts. Accordingly, Pynchon's diction, especially the key word "integration" points to plural and uncertain meanings in the story. And, another word "color", which is dented with ethnical prejudice in adult language, has been expressed by the boys in a touching way that makes its meanings slip into vagueness:

He did think of Carl as not only 'colored' himself, but somehow more deeply involved with *all* color. When Tim thought about Carl he always saw him against blazing reds and ochres of this early fall, only last month, when Carl had just come to Mingeorough and they were still getting to be friends, and he thought that Carl must somehow carry around with him a perpetual Berkshire autumn, a Wonderful World of Color. Even in the grayness of this afternoon and this district they had entered (which, it seemed, was deprived of its just measure of light because part of it belonged to the past), Carl brought a kind of illumination, a brightening, a compensation for whatever it was about the light that was missing.⁶

The language and imagination of children have subverted the moral and aesthetic value of the grownups.

In "The Secret Integration", there is yet another layer of chaos. In a certain sense, the story world is one of "others", which leaves the readers with the impression that this admittedly immature work by Pynchon has already been constituted intricately within that post-modernism. In the story, there are almost no adults, and the world seems to be centered and constructed on the consciousness of the children. Grover Snodd is a boy genius with flaws — too dumb, his friend Tim thinks, to cover up how smart he is. He and his pals live in Mingeborough, in the Berkshires, and are carefully preparing a children's revolt on the model of the slaves' uprising in the movie "Spartacus", which they have just seen. As the story proceeds, it becomes clear that the revolt won't take place, that the children's insecurity and discontent are not all they might have, and that mums and dads are more needed than resented. In the story, the black musician, an alcoholic, may be the only adult who has a real presence, but who is also an "other" away from the white and grown-up world.