



Vivian Maier, 1953

Dear Paul Auster,

When asked to introduce Robert Bresson's film Pickpocket at the Action Christine movie theatre, filmmaker Agnès Varda looked at the audience and said she wasn't interested in telling us why she considered Bresson as a major artist that shaped her own career. She added: "I won't tell you why I love Bresson. I will to you how I love him."

It all sums up our intention. We won't tell you why Moon Palace changed us all but how we love it; through drawings, paintings, songs, poems and endless questionings.

Thank you for triggering such neverending dialogues, and possible new stories to come.

Iris Andrier - Lola Bertignac - Neige Carré de Malberg - Louna Cohen - Ninon Aignet - Tristan Parent - Louise Pauchet - Pauline Pfimlin - Scarlett Pollard - Georges Quinn - Yseult Sardin - Siouxsie Tong Cuong - Paul Vautrin and Lorraine Widloecher.



Georgia O'KEEFE, New York City with Moon.



NEW YORK CITY

The first few chapters of Moon Palace take place in the mid 60s in New York. This made me think of the aesthetic in Woody Allen movies, Manhattan more specifically.

A certain artistic social class seems to be depicted in both Moon Palace and Manhattan as well as complicated relationships. The fact that you also get to know each character individually and what they are deeply thinking is very much similar.

We were wondering whether Woody Allen movies could have been an inspiration to the setting you depicted in Moon Palace.

New York's atmosphere and warmth is also translated through the musicality of the first chapters. The rhythm seems to be quite rhapsodic, being smooth yet lively just like jazz.

By mentioning Spike Jones, a grandiose Clarinet player, and the fact that Uncle Victor plays the instrument himself, the reader can hear through words the most wonderful clarinet solo.

Internally, the "stream-of-consciousness" of each character seems quite chaotic and is described as a "pandemonium of rhapsodic thoughts".

These two worlds: external and internal could be associated to Gershwin's **RHAPSODY in BLUE**.



WOODY ALLEN
DANE COOK
MICHAEL VASSICHO
MAGGIE HEARSTON
MERYL STREEP
ANNE BIRCH

MANHATTAN

MANHATTAN GEORGE CLOONEY JACK NICHOLS CHARLIZE THERON
WOODY ALLEN MARSHALL BRICKMAN WOODY ALLEN
CHARLIZE THERON SCOTT GRAYSON GEORGE CLOONEY

Were you fond of Gershwin or Jazz in general? =



"We find ourselves only by looking
to what we're not"
-Moon Palace

In 1970, Robert Smithson, an American sculptor, presented his Spiral Jetty on Great Salt Lake, Utah. Indeed, it may be perceived as surprising to link this sculpture, or land art to the novel Moon Palace, however I find it captures the essence and spirit we are offered when entering the world of Marco S. Fogg! The thoughts and glow of consciousness we are invited to discover through the protagonist's perspective allows us to get lost in a spiral of thoughts, a wave of reflections.

I love History so when I saw you reference the Chinese Civil War and make it relevant to an important character like Kitty Wu, I was surprised that a book inspired by European literature about American identity would connect with the Chinese Civil War.

- What inspired you to include the Chinese Civil War in the back story of Kitty Wu and make it relevant to the emotional history of Haro?
- What do you think of the Kuomintang?
- Did you study Chinese history? If so what is your favorite era?



Mao

IS THE DUALITY
BETWEEN THE
TWO STRONGMEN
OF THE ERA A
REFERENCE TO THE
DUALITY BETWEEN
THE MOON AND
THE SUN?

"The sky cannot
have two suns".



Chiang
Kai-shek

Anna May Wong



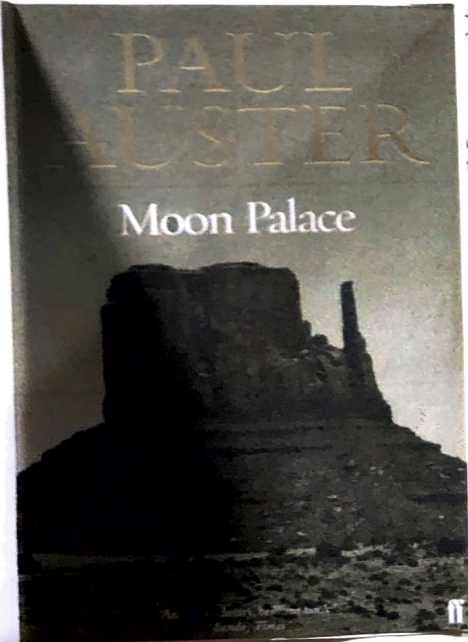
Portrait of Anna May Wong, by Van Vetchen, 1932
Kitty Wu actually describes herself as "the Dragon Lady", and I then immediately thought about Anna May Wong, the actress that inspired it, and then set a major archetype regarding Asian-American women. The very sexual nature of Kitty Wu's descriptions in the chapter plays in the stereotype, but at the same time, she's also a very sentiment-driven character.

How will we study American culture through this book?

Why the name "Moon Palace"? What does it mean?

How does Auster actually achieve to write "while walking"? Does he write full sentences or is he just taking notes strolling?

Didn't he lose interest in writing at some point because of the fact that he is a slow writer and it took him 7 years to write one book?



How will we study American culture through this book?

Why the name "Moon Palace"? What does it mean?

How does Auster actually achieve to write "while walking"? Does he write full sentences or is he just taking notes strolling?

"I always thought I did to much of that, I'm trying to be more realistic now, more down to earth!"

The moon might be ruling Marco. Having a such connection, would almost put him into some kind of TRANCE. An even deeper experience than when authors describe one's stream of consciousness.

AT LAST,
WHO OR WHAT
IS THE
PALACE?

Is the moon his conforing place for him where IMAGINATION finally has the main role?

PLATO'S CAVE :

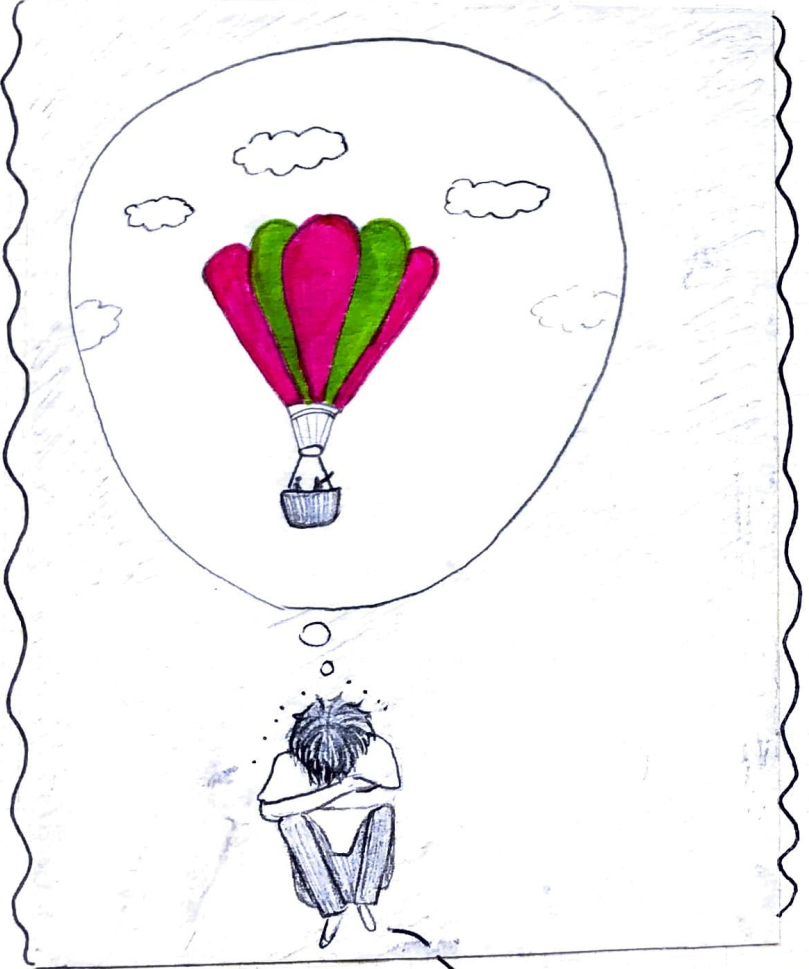
Is he leaving the moon as leaving the cave to reach earth or the sun?

Such as Candide in Voltaire...
The path of a little philosopher...

Or is the final answer, having a balance between SUN, EARTH and MOON...

"You are a dreamer boy, he said, your mind is on the moon and from the looks of things it's never going to be any where else?"

Chapter 2: one favorite quotation



« David Niven and Cantinflas were gazing out from the carriage of their balloon, floating over the lush french countryside, and I was down in the darkness with a bunch of drunks, sobbing out my wretched life until I couldn't breathe anymore. »



There is a striking parallel between the two actors of Marco's favorite story and his situation at that moment being in the novel. Both actors are in the sky, heading towards the light, brightness and hope or even freedom, whereas Marco is in a closed space physically and mentally. Only darkness is surrounding him... he is trapped. This is a decisive point in the novel as we realize that the protagonist has hit rock bottom and if he doesn't act quickly he will end up like the social outcasts around him.

It is indeed sad to see how, in the past, Marco aspired to be just like the protagonist of « Around the World in 80 days » and is now further than ever to being like him and making his Uncle Victor proud...

- ? Without indiscretion, does the fact that you are able so well to talk about one's descent into hell reveal a tragic episode of your personal life?
- ? As you have mentioned Jules Verne several times, did the author impact you specifically in your daily life and more specifically, inspire you to write Moon Palace?

Kg.

Water Lily in Sunlight by John La Farge (1883)

Marco is comparable to this water lily that has almost finished its apprenticeship. to become an adult with a balanced mind. The white water lily contrasts with the dark green and black colours of the rest of the painting. Which surround the flower like the past surrounds Fogg, whether it is his own or that of others. This past may seem threatening, just as darkness is predominantly present in the painting, but at the same time, a light illuminates the water lily, just as knowledge illuminates Marco. It can be seen as an allegory for the beneficence of knowledge.



"Sabotaged"

With this word we see Marco's unstable behavior inherited from his mother. This type of inherited and dangerous behaviour can also be found in Zola's novels.

"To be loved like that makes all the difference. It does not lessen the terror of the fall, but it gives a new perspective on what that terror means."

Because I never thought that love could be a way to enhance terror, in fact, I always thought the opposite: love could be a way to forget our problems like blinders. This quote makes me remember why I like these things. I can reconsider the way I see and

Blow blow thou winter wind by John Everett Millais (1892)

There is the idea of struggle, of pain, of the individual against the adversity in the painting that are major themes in Moon Palace. Plus, there is the will to survive, the pain of not always being understood or not being oneself.



"For the time being, we move off in opposite directions. But sooner or later we'll meet again, I'm sure of it."

Do you believe in destiny?



Moonlight on the Coast at (1842)

A way of seeing the last lines

IS Marco's story
some kind of reiteration
of something you
already lived
yourself?

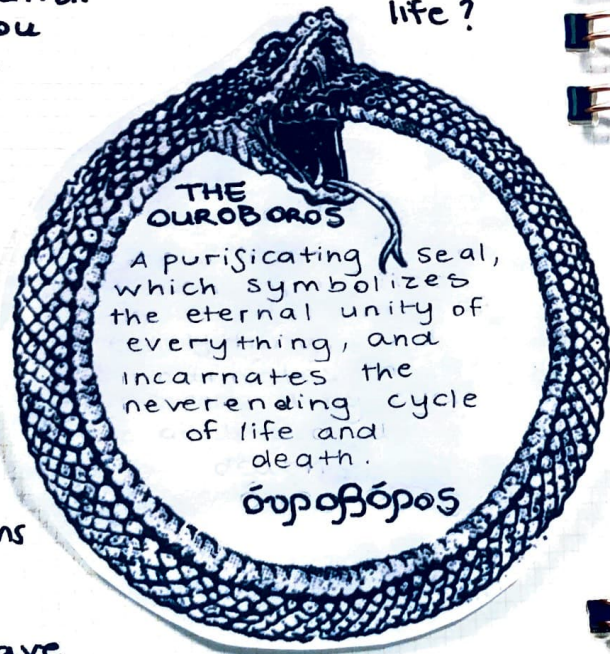
Do you believe
death to be the
end to everything
?

Would you consider
to have been
influenced by
eastern or south
american interpretations
of TIME?

Did you have
to prepare a layout
before writing Moon Palace?
or did it come more
naturally?

Will
Marco's story
happen again?

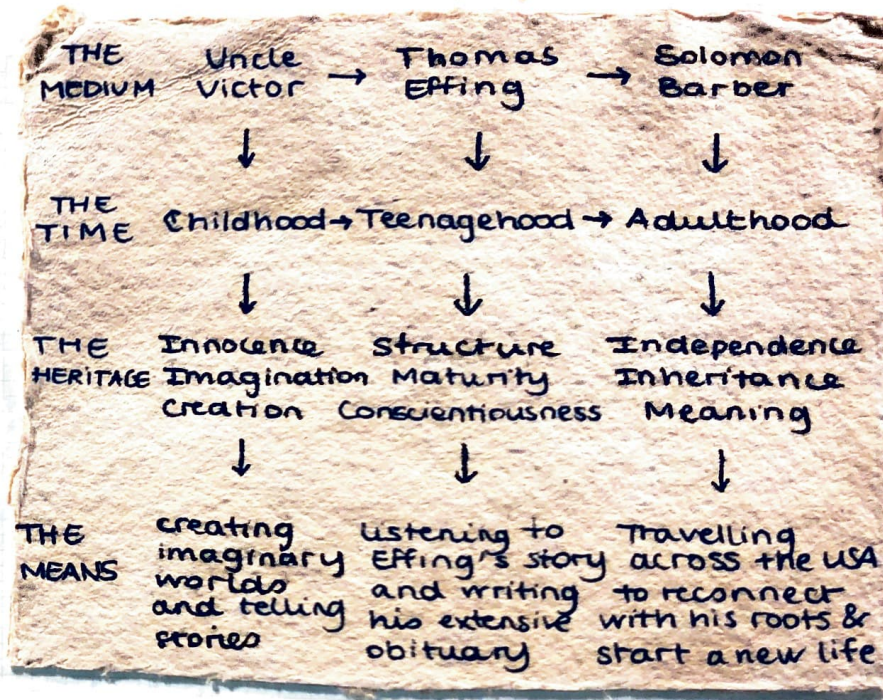
Do you think
Marco's fathers helped
him change? or could
he have done it
without them in his
life?



THE OUROBOROS

A purificating seal,
which symbolizes
the eternal unity of
everything, and
incarnates the
neverending cycle
of life and
death.

ὄφιοβόρος



EACH FATHER FIGURE DIES
AFTER COMPLETING THEIR DUTY-
-HELP MARCO GROW UP. THEY ARE
STEPS TO HIS CYCLE OF LIFE...



EFFING

This painting, Head VI by Francis Bacon, reminds me a lot of Effing in its lack of humanity. Without any face, eyes or anything reminiscent of the soul, slowly disappearing into thin air as Effing did at the end of chapter five.

Moreover, I cannot sustain looking at this picture as much as I could not sustain Effing's attitude when I first met him in the book.



Not much artworks conveyed me such powerful feelings, so I really wanted to thank you for writing such an amazing character.

"A series of lost chances" page 243

I saw the whole paragraph including this quote as a perfect representation of the lives of the characters you created and therefore wanted to know if you gave even more importance to this passage than you usually do when working.

A few questions I had about your novel:

- Did you take any inspiration from your own life events to create Salomon's troubled childhood?
- Did you restrict yourself when thinking about Marcos' future after the events of your book, or do you have any idea of what will happen to him?

Vanished

This word encapsulates a part of the novel that fascinates me. It somewhat sums up how helpless humans are, when facing space and time. "All melted into thin air". Effing had to witness his eyesight vanishing, refers to his youth as vanished and described the immensity of the desert as a "vanishing-enforcer".

PLACE OF SUBLIMATION:

- The Desert -



MIND
BODY
CORPSE
SOUL

himself in his wandering path

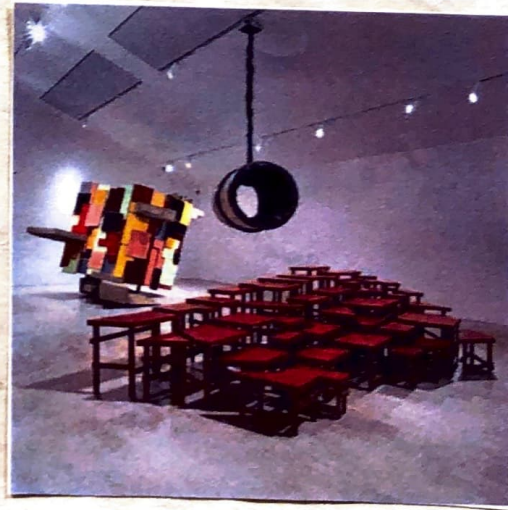
Fluctuations in bodies & minds:

a fascinating, transcending theme

↑ They're places apart, sanctuaries of pure thought. In that way, I can go on living on the moon for the rest of my life →

REBIRTH - PLATO'S CAVE

It appeared to me that this could very well represent the "embodiment" of Solomon



EFFING'S CAVE

An enormous boulder, floating above the crowd thanks to a pin wire, portrays this body/relationship he cannot escape: his links to physical reality and bloodline.

Then, I like to think that the red tiles could both be his students' chairs and tables or the cracked, dry ground of a metaphorical desert.

Babel, by Aldo Reinales (2001)

Tesla, his dreams, his inventions and his wire-less Babel Tower.

Vanishing as an Identity?

• From Julian Barber to Thomas Effing: the Art of disappearance

• Yet, a strong link remains: H.S goes from a lost individual to a person that finds

ABOUT LINKS, WIRES

• a rather overlaid sub-theme of the novel: how physical vessels and spiritual meet and fade...

INCARNATION

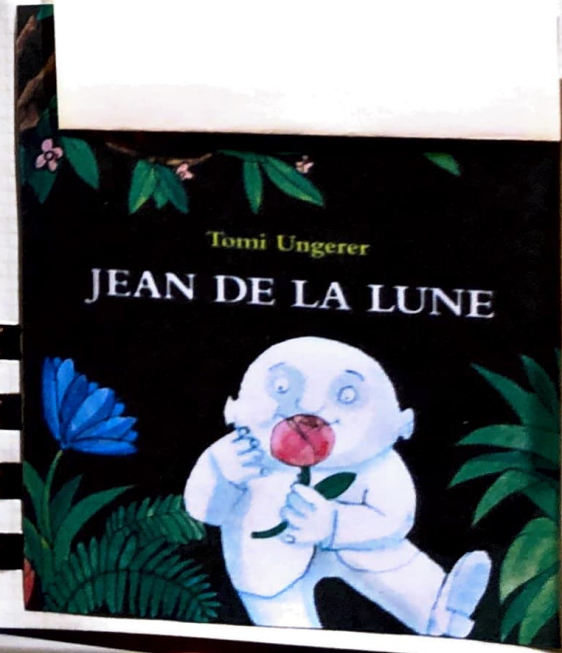


Socratic seminar
on Fatherhood in Moon Palace



At the Centre Pompidou to
discover O'Keeffe, thinking
of Thomas Effing and
Julian Barber's lost
paintings.





Auster

