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Making and Unmaking of the Symbolic World:

Staging Death Scenes in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *M. Butterfly*

In Seminar XX, Lacan provides a schema of the formula of sexuation to explain what he means by “the impossibility of the sexual relationships” (Fig. 1). Under the formula of sexuation, the terms man and woman are regulated by the Symbolic in a set of relations rather than derived based on their biological features. In Fig.1, the bottom formula should be read as “all speaking beings are subject to the phallus,” under the logic of the masculine structure, whereas on the bottom right on women’s part, the formula should be read as “not-all speaking subjects are subject to the phallus,” under the logic of the feminine structure.

Kenneth Reinhard translates Lacan’s formulas of sexuation into the application of the theology of sovereignty by the emphasis on “choice”¹—between “all” subject subjected to the phallus with one exception, and “not-all” subject subjected to the phallus with no exception. In other word, men staying in the masculine structure take the “choice not to choose” and accept that there is an exception out of the symbolic language, the primal father; women, on the other hand, take the “choice to choose” and follow the feminine structure. Hence, the category of men and that of woman are all regulated within the symbolic language and revolve around the signifier phallus. And the impossibility of the sexual relationship of Lacan’s sexuation lies in the very fact as “the corollary” of the abyss of the real that separates

¹ In discussing the theology of sovereignty, Kenneth Reinhard uses Lacan’s formula of sexuation as a radical rethinking of Carl Schmitt’s political theology. In “Toward a Political Theology of the Neighbor,” Reinhard analyzes the open set of “not-all” and the finite of “all” to discuss the exception of the sovereign in the political theology.

them and that divides each from itself.” (Reinhard 50) So, the abyss, or the gap between men and woman, signifies the existence of the real that lies outside signification.

Men		Women	
I B $\overline{E} X$	II $\overline{\Phi} X$	III D $\overline{E} X$	IV $\overline{\Phi} X$
A $\overline{V} X$	$\overline{\Phi} X$	C $\overline{V} X$	$\overline{\Phi} X$
A. all speaking beings are subject to the phallus.		C. not-all speaking being is subject to the phallus.	
B. there is at least one speaking being that is not subject to the phallic function.		D. there is no speaking being that is not subject to the phallic function.	

(Fig. 1)

Back to the question of “choice not to choose” and “choice to choose”, the subject chooses not to choose (all subjects, *tout*) and stays in the finite continuum of the masculine structure, accepting the fact that there is at least one exception staying outside the symbolic world to maintain the closure of the law. The subject chooses to choose (not-all subjects, *part tout*), rendering themselves as infinite, refusing the possibility of exception. These two categories revolve around the real, without any possible way to be a complete one.

Also, Žižek talks about the existence of the fantasmatic spectre in the gap between the symbolic reality and the fantasy,² a gap in some way similar to the abyss between the impossibility of the sexual relationship in the formulas of sexualisation. Žižek makes clear the gap in the antagonism of the fantasy and social reality, showing how the gap in-between the fantasmatic spectre comes into existence.

With the issues at stake here, I am going to give a close analysis of the abyss between the impossibility of the sexual relationship by taking two films into considerations, *Jesus*

² Žižek, “Between Symbolic Fiction and Fantasmatic Spectre: Toward Lacanian Theory of Ideology,”

Christ Superstar and *M. Butterfly*, for both of the films are structured around the gap between the real and the symbolic as a reflection of the impossibility of the sexual relationship.

I. *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973)

Directed by Norman Jewison, and adapted from the rock opera of the same name by John Webber, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973) depicts the final six days before Christ's Crucifixion. It is easy to single out the exaggerating conflicts between Jesus and Judas in this rock and roll style musical film. Stephenson Humphries-Brooks, in his comment on the film, examines the love triangle between Christ, Judas and Mary—" *Jesus Christ Superstar* returns to the love triangle of Judas, Jesus and Magdalene. Jesus, however, becomes for the first time an American hero complete with the temptation and doubt" (Humphries-Brooks 56).

In his interpretation of the film, Jesus Christ is a human, who is capable of doubt, fatigue, and also undergoing alienation. In the end of the film, he is determined to die and thus in complicity with Judas to embrace the will of an unknowable God. Or we can say that Jesus makes his "choice not to choose" to lie but follows God's will, who is an exception out of the law. Hence we could conclude that both Jesus and Judas will be saved by Jesus's decision to die, for they accept God's universe as masculine subjects to ensure the closure of the law.

Starting from this point, I am going to discuss how Judas and Christ support each other, acting in two distinct spheres as symbolic fiction and fantasmatic spectre, as illustrated by Žižek in his discussion of Lacan's theory of ideology, to strive for a harmonious social structure. By asking why Jesus has to die, I am going to go through the discussion of Judas' role in the film, as a spectre, a counterpart to Christ, to see why Judas has chosen to betray Jesus by God.—" Christ! / I know you can't hear me / But I only did what you wanted me to /Christ!" (Judas' Death Lyrics)

i. “Why Should I Die?”: Christ’s death as a symptom

In the Christian Theology, Christ dies, making atonement for the human sin. However, Žižek has his original interpretation for the death of Christ and for Christ’s relationship with God. In “A Meditation on Michelangelo’s Christ on the Cross,” Žižek notices the defiant gestures of Christ’s hand on Michelangelo’s drawing *Christ on the Cross*, which show Christ’s defiance. With the radical statement “God is an atheist,” Žižek keeps excavating the question: “What is the meaning of the death of Christ?”³ Žižek proposes a rather radical version of reading Christ’s death on the crucifixion to see what really dies on the cross. That is, Christ, as an atheist God Himself, not as a representative of God, dies on the Cross. And he does not attempt to find a deeper meaning for his believers in such a context but leaves it to their own to “make wagers” on themselves; in other words, Žižek’s reading of Christ’s crucifixion implies that if Christ’s followers want to extract meaning from Christ dying on the Cross, they will get disappointed, for there is no God that dies on the Cross and thus no guarantee of a true, deeper meaning for the people to know.

In a sense, it seems that Christ, in complicity with God or himself as God, stages his own death for his believers to see so as to found a community of believers. This is also what the last scene of *Passion of the Christ* presents us. However, what if we read Christ’s death from another perspective, for his conspiracy with Judas, causing the split of the Jews to go back to harmony again, with Judas occupying the gap between fantasy and social reality. Then another question worth our notice is, “how do we interpret Judas’ suicide, or even sacrifice in this sense?” Can we derive another deeper meaning from Judas’ hanging himself? With these questions in mind, I turn to analyze the encounters between Judas and Jesus and

³ Slavoj Žižek, “A Meditation on Michelangelo’s Christ on the Cross,” p.171

thus re-read the scene of Christ's Crucifixion in the modern world of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

ii. Judas as a fantasmatic spectre

At the very beginning of the play, Judas jumps out of the bus, away from the crowd as an outcast, and starts his monologue:

Judas

My mind is clear now.

At least, all too well.

I can see where we all soon will be.

If you strip the myth away from the man,

You will see where we all soon will be.

First, with Judas as the narrator, this serves a kind of prologue to the whole play. From the gaze of Judas, we see that Christ, clothed in the myth of humanity, lives in a world of everyday life, always surrounded, encompassed by the crowd, without seeing what is missing in himself and in the world. There is a kind of charisma, *je ne sais quoi*, emanating from Jesus.

Judas, as one of the apostles, should be in the same social group as Jesus, a group different from Caiaphas. However, Judas, once descending from the bus, shifts his role from one of the group to be the one excluded from the group, lingering on the border between two social groups, one of Jesus' society and the other of Caiaphas' and later of Pilates' or Herods'. From Judas' introductory speech of Jesus, we see clearly that the symbolic order, sustaining God, is disintegrating. Judas also points out Jesus' unsuccessful easy admittance into the realm of God.

In a sense, Judas's being alone from other people is presented here as the *remainder* that cannot be subsumed into the wholeness of Christ's followers. In other words, there is a fundamental antagonism embodied by Jesus and Judas here, occupying the place on the verge

of breaking down both in and out of the social reality. Through his speech and conflicts with Jesus, we understand the reality facing Jesus.

Judas

Jesus. You've started to believe
The thing they say of you
You really do believe
This talk of God is true.
And all the good you've done will soon be swept
You've begun to matter more than the thing you say

From the lines quoted above, we can see the silhouette of a worried Judas, concerned about Jesus' escape out of his own confine, for he has started to believe what the crowd says of him. Or, Judas here presents his role as another face of Jesus, revealing his inner doubt of whether the talk of God is true or not.

Another confrontation of Judas and Jesus occurs when Mary is anointing Jesus' hair and feet.

Judas

Woman your fine ointment
Should have been saved for the poor.
Why has it been wasted?
We could have raised maybe 300 pieces of more.
They matter more
Than your feet and hair.

With Judas' challenge, Jesus simply retorts that "There will be poor / always pathetically struggling/ Look at the good things you've got." There seems to be a paradox here between Judas and Jesus, for we spy a righteous discomfort with the extravagance Jesus enjoys.

It is interesting for us to discern another perspective among Jesus, Judas and Mary

from what Humphries-Brooks observes as a love triangle. If we adopt Lacan's formulas of sexuation to see Judas' position, can we say that Judas is at the limbo state now, for he is under the sway of both the masculine and feminine structures? Deep in his heart, will he take Mary's place and accept that *jouissance* from the Other instead of accepting Jesus as *at least* the exception of the law?

Back to Judas's role as a fantasmatic spectre, we see Judas as a figure occupying the gap between reality and fantasy. There are many manipulations of distortions of the reality into the fantasy world. We see many things distorted from the perspective of the reality. When Judas, away from the crowd as usual, isolated in an open space, alone, he thinks of the moment of performing his duty to come. We can see the backdrop, portraying the inner world of Judas by the emergence of the modern tanks in 4th BC, with their harsh, grating sound. Again, the scenes of the distortion of the reality occur when Judas realizes he has been used by God to fulfill his plan in the world. We see jet fighters flying over the head of Judas.

In fact, the climax of Judas' fantasmatic spectre takes place after Judas hangs himself, and returns to the stage, as an angel incarnation. Near the closure of the play, before Jesus's Crucifixion, Judas, transforming into an angel this time, descends from heaven with a Cross light bar behind him and does a performance with Christ.

Here the moment occurs complete with abundant fantasmatic images of the distorted reality. Jesus, now as a spectator of the show Judas prepares for him, enjoys Judas' comment on him and his performance with him.

Judas

You'd have managed better

If you'd had it planned

Now why'd you choose such a backward time

And such a strange land?

If you'd come today

You could have reached the whole nation
Israel in 4 BC had no mass communication
.....
Tell me what you think
About your friends at the top
Now who'd you think besides yourself
Was the pick of the crop?
Buddha was he where it's at?
Is he where you are?
Could Muhammad move a mountain
Or was that just PR?

It is weird to see Judas as an angel from the modern time, going back to ask Jesus' opinion of his own story, and even paying compliments to Jesus Buddha and Muhammad. (In fact, it is also here where Judas clearly tells us that Jesus Christ is God, for being a God, he is among the ranks of Buddha and Muhammad.) Isn't it easy for the spectator to identify Judas with Christ at this moment, since they both dress themselves in white?

When I mention a dual play between Judas and Jesus, I mean that Jesus seems to be right at the process of alienation/separation, plunging into the world of signification, for his divided self, his double, emerges simultaneously through the special effects of the film. (We can see two faces in Jesus, a freeze frame in the film.) The encounter of Judas and Jesus here serves as a turning point of the whole play, or we can say the button-tie, reaching the climax of the film. Isn't it the scene where Jesus is undergoing the process of separation, which according to Lacan refers to the separation between the I and the object that enter the symbolic world? The outcast Judas, the exception, is now transformed and gets ready to be re-incorporated into Christ's world. Or, Christ, undergoing the splitting of the subject, is ready to gain his symbolic identity, as the son of God, and to take his responsibility on his

way to be crucified. That is, Jesus as a barred subject, preparing to be inscribed with meaning for his identity as the son of the God and to die on the Cross.

A step even further for their encounter, taking Žižek's logic in interpreting Lacan's Real—"This Real (the part of reality that remains non-symbolized) returns in the guise of spectral apparitions," we see the fantasmatic space Judas occupies, for his distance from Jesus, and see how real he is in against Jesus. In this way, can we justify Judas' betrayal to Jesus as "a transgression that consolidates what it transgresses"⁴? In other words, without Judas, the Law won't come into being and reveal itself through the crucifixion of Jesus. Thus, we find the answer to Judas' remorse words, "Christ / I know you can't hear me / But I only did what you wanted me to Christ!"

iii. "If I Die, What Will Be My Reward?"—"the real thing' in the symbolic world

The outbreak of 'real' violence is conditioned by a symbolic deadlock. 'Real' violence is a kind of acting out that emerges when the symbolic fiction that guarantees the life of a community is in danger. (Žižek 235)⁵

Following the concept that "a transgression" consolidates "what it transgresses,"

I try to figure out the answer Jesus' question—"If I die, what will be my reward?" It seems to refer to a world of harmony, with the establishment of the Symbolic Law and all this is achieved through the violence done on Jesus, through the death of Jesus Christ. Then, exactly in what way is it done in this film?

"Who is this broken man? Cluttering up my hallway?"—Pilates's words indicate the fact that he is very sure of the position that Christ holds. Jesus is presented as "the broken man"; in a sense, we can say the broken man in fragmentation or in splitting is ready to be inscribed by the Law. When asked what crime Jesus has committed, the crowd can't answer

⁴ Slavoj Žižek, "Between Symbolic Fiction and Fantasmatic Spectre." P. 233.

⁵ Slavoj Žižek's, "Between Symbolic Fiction and Fantasmatic Spectre," *Interrogating the Real*.

but shout for Jesus's crucifixion.

At the surface meaning, Jesus has to die because he is against the consistent, prevalent structure of the Law. However, the deeper meaning for Jesus' doom, in Žižek's translation, is nonexistent: he is simply a man that accepts the existence of exceptions to ensure the boundary of the law, to accept God as "the Other of the Other." The latter represents the Roman authority, or the Jewish priests, while the first is the omnipotent God, the Father.

With the crowd shouting, "We need him crucified. It's all you have to do." Pilates offers an excuse for Jesus to be out of his dilemma, by pretending Jesus is mad: "Look at you Jesus Christ / I'll agree he is mad / Ought to be locked up." In a sense, the feminized Pilates symbolizes the efforts to put Jesus under the category of the feminine structure. However, Jesus refuses, for he is clear that there is power behind Pilates, the power behind the existent structures that needs his crucifixion to consolidate its existence.

Pilates at a distance from Jesus make it clear the line that separates the symbolic and law; Pilates's confrontation with Jesus also clearly tells us the antagonistic positions he and Jesus are holding, namely the two worlds, two laws and two systems they represent—"What's this truth? / Is truth unchanging Laws / We both have truths / Are mine the same as yours?" Confused as Pilates is, he seems to realize that two different levels of laws exist between him and Jesus. With Jesus' determination to die for "the Other of the Other," Pilates has no choice but to help consummate Jesus' death. "Die, if you want to. / You innocent puppet."

Back to the charisma of Jesus, *je ne sais quoi*, a little bit. It's interesting to notice here that during the three years of Jesus' inspiration by his Father, a large number of followers surrounded Jesus, simply because of his quality of *je ne sais quoi*. Another crowd of people, or perhaps most of whom belong to the same group, shouted for Jesus' death, "Crucify him. Crucify him. / We need him crucified. / It's all you have to do." However, it is all the same quality, *je ne sais quoi*, whose property cannot clearly be defined for it entails that Jesus has

to die. At this moment, Jesus is in-between the gap of not being there, but fully visible there also—occupying a place under the category of “the conceptual Jew.”⁶ What really bothers the crowd here is the unfathomable element that is structured in fantasies. Or we can say that it is the gap between the fantasy and social reality, between the non-existent figure of the “conceptual Jew” and the reality that the crowd and Caiaphas find him threatening to the existent law.

Then how do we explain the conflicts, or the social differences between Jesus Christ and the shouting crowd? I think Lacan’s ‘formulas of sexuation’ fits in at this point. For the formulae of sexuation, the masculine logic of Law, permits the Law with exceptions, while the feminine logic of Law allows no exceptions. The scene of Jesus’ flogging and that of crucifixion both lead to the conclusion that there is no exceptions but the Law, the Name of the Father. The concept of the feminine logic of Law is shown clearly by the collective *jouissance* of the Other, through the excited crowd witnessing Jesus’ flogging—all are included in the order of the Law, with no exception. This is also Žižek’s application of Lévi-Strauss’ ‘zero-point.’ That is, there is no social difference or conflicts but the neutral ground, ‘the zero-point’ for people to recognize themselves. Then, back to the question, --Why should Jesus die? If Jesus dies, what will be his reward?--for there is no social antagonism, or class struggles, but the neutral-ground, zero-point for people to take part in. Therefore, Jesus has to die, and the reward goes to the harmony the world enjoys, for there is no exception, no Jesus, or the shouting crowd but the *only one exception* of the hegemonic Law hidden behind them.

If we read Jesus’ death and the crucifixion as the scene staged by Jesus and the other participating to go back to the unity of the society, then, another death scene staged by Gallimard in *M. Butterfly* arouses my speculations here. Why does Gallimard have to die? For what reason? Is he playing the same game as Jesus and Judas do?

II. *M. Butterfly*

That opera *Madame Butterfly* is based on the stereotype of the ideal oriental woman who falls in love with an unworthy Westerner and asks for nothing in return. Adapted from the opera, David Henry Huang transformed the story into a love manipulation of Song, a Chinese spy, over Gallimard, a French diplomat in China in the 1960s.

And what is the secret of Song's successful performance? It is the phantom from the fantasy of *Madame Butterfly* that enables Song to fully play his / her role as *M. Butterfly*. (The letter M endows itself with ambiguous signification, with the implications of both Monsieur and Madame in French.) And there is little chance to fail since few people will really doubt the truth of the heritage of such cultural fantasy. The fantasmatic space Song manipulates in the Real to fill the lack of Gallimard in the Symbolic is my point here; then I will shift the focus to the necessity and the inevitability of Gallimard's death facing his own void.

i. Song Ling-ling, *the objet a*

These three dimensions of the Real result from the three modes by which one can distance oneself from 'ordinary' reality: one submits this reality to anamorphic distortion; one introduce an object that has no place in it; and one subtracts very empty place that these objects were filling.

(Žižek, "The Real of Sexual Difference" 313)

In asking Comrade Chin the question, "Why, in the Peking Opera, are women's roles played by men? Song gives us a tricky answer—"Because only a man knows how a woman is supposed to act" (*M. Butterfly* 63). Being a biological male, Song has a clear idea in what a man really desires in a woman. It is interesting to notice that Song circles around the core of Gallimard's desire, being the *objet a*, the desire to be desired by the Other by filling up the

hole of Gallimard's desire. As Gallimard confesses to the spectators, "I have a vision / Of the Orient / That, deep within its almond eyes / there are still women / Women willing to sacrifice themselves for the love of a man / Even a man whose love is completely without worth." (*M. Butterfly* 92) Aren't the tricks Song uses to manipulate Gallimard's fantasy what Žižek calls "the triad of the Real"? That is, Song first distances *her* from *him*, and then distorts himself from his biological reality into the position of the *objet a*, occupying the place of Gallimard's lack. Finally, Song finally offers herself a new name—M. Butterfly.

In manipulating the fundamentally social antagonism in the Real, here is how Song makes things go in the direction s/he wants them. At their first encounter, Song appears in public as an opera singer before Gallimard. Originally s/he seems to be a daring female that would retort Gallimard's words. However, as s/he starts to strip her own outer self, *she* hides *her* aggressive individuality and equips *herself* with modest and passive qualities—those are the key elements to her success in seducing Gallimard, for her successful embodiment of Gallimard's fantasy out of the confine of the Real. Consequently, Song is no longer a subject with the lack herself, but plays the role of the *objet a*, the cause of the other's desire—"the submissive Oriental woman" who gains his/ her *jouissance* from the Other, Gallimard, or the Peking Authorities.

Naturally equipped with biological masculinities, Song surely knows what a man really wants—the power to decide women's positions and to dominate them. Song successfully positions *herself* in the place of the perfect ideal woman most men want to possess. *She* listens to whatever Gallimard says—submissive—without challenging his male authority. *She* lacks the very aggressive threatening qualities that Helga, Gallimard's wife, possesses.

Moreover, Song even creates an object out of *the objet a*, a baby boy to render Gallimard an "entire family." All the deceitful skills Song has adopted are to dissimulate the Real from the Symbolic and thus work on the place of void

There are other examples of Gallimard living in his vision / fantasy, unaware of the real he dwells in. One of them illustrating this point is a scene in the film, when he has his first extra- extramarital affair. When he sees his lover being completely naked, astonished, Gallimard just tells her that she is exactly the same way as he thinks she could be with her clothes on. This scene just reminds us of his ignorance of a real world outside the symbolic he and Song position themselves, for he never sees Song naked in person.

Perhaps, the most frightening conflict of the Real and the Symbolic comes when Gallimard really sees through Song, witnessing his naked body in person. At the end of play, after Gallimard gets his trial for treason, Song appears in the courtroom as a man, totally out of Gallimard's recognition.

Trying to remind Gallimard of his love toward M. Butterfly, for the first time Song is willing to shed off his mask—M. Butterfly, rendering himself completely naked in front of Gallimard. However, out of Song's expectation, Gallimard, laughingly, decries against Song's act, telling him—"You, who knew every inch of my desires—how could you, of all people, have made such a mistake?" "You showed me your true self when all I loved was the lie. A perfect lie, which you let fall to the ground—and now, it's old and soiled." (*M. Butterfly* 89) For Gallimard, Song represents an illusion, or an alien thing in the Real. When the Real dares its way out to the symbolic world and fails, it will be expelled and excluded.

What Gallimard falls in love is a lie, an illusion not existing in the symbolic world. What he expects Song to do is his continual performance of the *jouissance* of the Other, for the Other to continually enjoy. However, once the Real is shown, Song's very lack of the lack is made clear through his public nakedness. There seems to be an inevitable breakdown of Gallimard's harmonious world.

ii. Why Gallimard should die

In a Lacanian relationship between the analyst and the analysand, the analyst is warned against revealing too much to the analysand, for fear that the analysis might be identified with the Other and gets the transference from the analysand,⁷ which will prevent the analysand from seeing his own fixation. Through the theory of speech, a patient is encouraged to talk in order for the analyst to see the deadlock in his or her symbolic relations, and thus to help relieve the patient of the symptoms, as the symbolic dimension is “the only dimension that cures.”

In Act One, scene one, Gallimard, presenting himself as the narrator and also the director for his story to go on, tells us his reality and informs us of the reason why he is in such a deadlock, the fixed situation in the symbolic dimension.

Gallimard: Butterfly, Butterfly...(He forces himself to turn away, as the image of Song fades out, and talks to us. (stage direction) The limits of my cell are as such: four-and-a-half meters by five. There’s one window again the far wall; a door, very strong, to protect me from autograph hounds. (*M. Butterfly* 1-2)

I would like to point out the double space that Gallimard occupies and the double fictions that he finds himself caught in-between—the dual play of both the analyst and the analysand by the same person, or we can say Gallimard switches between the role of *the subject-supposed-to-know* and *the subject-supposed-to believe*.⁸

Gallimard as an analyst, has to let his patient, Gallimard as an analysand, tell us why he becomes a celebrity, and why people would come to him to “be scratching at my door, begging to learn my secrets! For I, Rene Gallimard, you see, I have known, and been loved by the Perfect Woman.” (*M. Butterfly* 4) Through the speech, the analyst Gallimard tries to inform us the spectators and the readers of the symptoms of the patient Gallimard. As a

⁷ Bruce Fink, “Analytical Relationship”

⁸ While “*the subject supposed to believe*” is the constitute feature of the symbolic order, *the subject supposed to believe* stands for the fundamental background while *the subject supposed to know* plays the second phenomenon. (*How to Read Lacan* 29)

subject-supposed-to-know, Gallimard is the only one at the opening scene that knows the whole plot of the story he is going to tell us. It is through the working of the analysand via the analyst Gallimard that we readers / inspectors are invited to enter the stage with him.

However, I am going to see from another perspective, i.e. Gallimard as the *one-who-supposed-to-believe*, to discuss his failure in his own treatment via the performance of himself, both as the knowing subject and the believing subject.

Near the end of the play *M. Butterfly*, Gallimard stages a show in the prison for his spectators to understand his encounter with Song, a fantasmatic spectre from his fantasy, and also for him to understand how his fantasy world gets traversed into the reality.

Gallimard:

(He sets himself center stage, in a seppuku position) The love of a Butterfly can withstand many things—unfaithfulness, loss, even abandonment. But how can it face the one sin that implies all others? The devastating knowledge that, underneath it all, the object of her love was nothing more, nothing less than... a man. *(He sets the tip of the knife against his body.)* (*M. Butterfly* 92)

Before killing himself, Gallimard the one-subject-supposed-to-know insists on staying in the fiction as one-subject-supposed-to-believe—a strong believer in his own Real world, though isolated in a prison, at a distance far away from his oriental fantasy *M. Butterfly*. Once the analyst makes clear his whole symptoms with his symbolic relations, via the story-telling of Gallimard, instead of escaping from the fixation of his deadlock, Gallimard, the supposed-to-believe subject, has to die for his failure to enter the symbolic world. Thus, as the film shows us, Gallimard, dressed in kimono and wearing the costume as his *M. Butterfly*, goes back to the Real, which is not allowed in the Symbolic, for its inconsistency with the reality.

Gallimard:

It is 19___. And I have found her at last. In a prison on the outskirts of Paris. My name is Rene Gallimard—also known as Madame Butterfly. (*M. Butterfly* 92-93)

In fact, after seeing the trauma kernel, the naked Song, Gallimard realizes his love is the ideal woman in the Real, from this moment on, Gallimard changes his position as a barred subject into the *objet a*. Thus, Gallimard wears the make-up and changes his costumes himself as his perfect ideal Butterfly, his imaginary image.

Acting out his imaginary Butterfly, who is willing to sacrifice her life for an unworthy man for the *jouissance* of the Other, Gallimard has to kill himself. There are two versions of death for Gallimard. In the film version, Gallimard cuts his throat open. But in the play by David Henry Hwang, he adopts the seppuku ritual—a form of Japanese ritual suicide by disembowelment. The cutting open of one's inner body presents us only the nothingness inside the core of the Symbolic. With the last words of Gallimard, "the object of her love was nothing more, nothing less than...a man," Gallimard has to die, for he can't withstand the object of his love is nothing less than "a man" but the void, the lack.

We hear Song's murmurs at Gallimard's dead body: "Butterfly? Butterfly?" (93) --corresponding to Gallimard's appellation at the first scene "Butterfly, Butterfly..."(1) For Song, Butterfly is something in the reality, embodied by his real existence, while for Gallimard, Butterfly is expelled from the reality, existing only in the Real.

III. Conclusion: Traversing the fantasy?

Certainly, this private universe was alienating to the extent that it separated you from others—or from the world, where it was invested as a protective enclosure, an imaginary protector, a defense system. But it also reaped the symbolic benefits of alienation, which is that the Other exists. (Baudrillard)

Taking the death scenes in the two films together, with the analysis of the impossibility of sexual relationship, we can see the death scenes staged by Christ and Gallimard all imply the possibility and impossibility of the making and unmaking of the symbolic world: There is an existence of the gap between the symbolic and the real, or the gap between the masculine structure and the feminine structure.

Jesus has to die because he has to accept the exception existing outside the symbolic, in God's incarnation, to guarantee the boundary of the world. Gallimard has to die because there is no escape for him outside the symbolic world. That is, he has to die for no exception outside the law to guarantee the symbolic world.

Back to the last scene of Gallimard's death in a prison in *M. Butterfly*, Gallimard has to die in the cell first, for the cell being the place full of symbolic meanings. A prison is the place that the Big Other allocates for those remainders, those residues out of the social domain. In a sense, once refusing even the existence of the Big Other, Gallimard retreats back to the world of the real, and finds his place there. Therefore, he has to die, for he refuses the existence of the Symbolic, that is, to unmake the Symbolic Law he is in. Then, what about Jesus' doubts for his coming death, "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?" Why does Jesus have to die? Can we give the answer to the question as "to make the Symbolic world come into being."

I would like to close my discussion on the following quoted passage:

Children's endless whys are not, to Lacan's mind, the sign of insatiable curiosity as to how things work but rather of a concern with where they fit in, what rank they hold, what importance they have to their parents. They are concerned to secure (themselves) *a place*, to try to be the object of their parents' desire—to occupy that between-the-lines "space" where desire shows its face, words being used in the attempt to express desire

and yet ever failing to do so adequately.⁹

Both Gallimard's questioning of Song (for why Song should have ever made such a mistake) and Christ's questioning of his Father (for why God has forsaken him) can get their satisfying answer here. That is, they both have to make sure themselves as the place-holder, occupying the space as *the object a*, for their being away from or back to the Symbolic World.

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