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Qinna Shen

Bryn Mawr College, qshen@brynmawr.edu

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The Ambiguity of Revolution: Wu-wei, Pathology, and Criminality in Alfred Döblin's *Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun. Chinesischer Roman*

Qinna Shen
Miami University

By creating the contradiction between Wang Lun's idealistic belief in Wu-wei (non-resistance) and the political reality that necessitates rebellion against Manchu rule, Alfred Döblin's hero makes three dramatic leaps: He converts to Wu-wei, only to first abandon and then return to it in the midst of the rebellion. Döblin emphasizes both the social and mystical foundations of revolution, yet his presentation of the Wu-wei movement as a pathological and criminal phenomenon reflects his ambiguity towards revolution. This Chinese novel prefigures Döblin's Weimar political writing and *November 1918*, and constitutes the genesis of his theory of ambiguous revolution.

Alfred Döblin wrote the nearly 500-page novel *Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun. Chinesischer Roman* between July 1912 and May 1913 while working as a physician the entire time.¹ The result of this extraordinary productivity is an amazing, yet puzzling, work that perplexes and even exasperates readers.² This essay charts the intersections between narrative, revolution, and modernity's obsession with pathology and criminality—together these factors comprise a milestone novel that has been underexplored.³ Based on an historical rebellion in 1774, the novel follows the Taoist Wu-wei sect's rebellion under the leadership of Wang Lun against Manchu rule. The resistance that Wang Lun puts up against the ruling dynasty is apparently at odds with the credo of the sect—in Mandarin, Wu-wei literally means “non-action” (Nicht-Handeln), or in Döblin's term, “non-resistance” (Nichtwiderstreben). This intriguing contradiction is crucial in understanding the symbolic three leaps Wang Lun makes: Wang converts to Wu-wei, only to first abandon and then return to it in the midst of the rebellion.

With the novel *Wang-lun*, Döblin sets out to depict “eine Volksmasse in einer revolutionären Bewegung zur Abwälzung seiner Not,” which conveys his advocacy for the downtrodden (*Schriften zu Leben und Werk*, 183). There is no doubt that Döblin deems Wang's revolt as an oppressed people's response to tyranny: “Wieder wurden die Anklagen gegen den Kaiser, die Mandarine, die Soldaten auf die Versammlung losgelassen. Die Wahrhaft Schwachen seien Vertreter, Kinder des Volkes; entstammten einer Bewegung, die nur in einer Zeit der Unterdrückung möglich sei; das Unglück sei ihr Schicksal” (409). Prompted by a newspaper notice about the Chinese gold panners' misery

and rebellion in Siberia (Muschg 481), Döblin dramatizes Wang Lun's failed rebellion to show the subjugation of the masses: "[Die Welt] rollt dennoch über [Wang Lun] und seine Freunde. Es ist bewiesen, in diesem Fall, sie ist stärker. Sonst ist nichts bewiesen."⁴

Döblin's lack of optimism in the power of the proletariat reflects the fact that his socialist sympathies had waned by the time he wrote *Wang-lun*. Döblin's political position is described by critics as noncommittal and anarchist (Koepke, "Döblin's Political Writings during the Weimar Republic," 184; Kleinschmidt 402). However, Döblin has always remained an advocate for the poor (Tewarson 26; Kleinschmidt 403). It is clear that Wang Lun's rebellion and its destruction elicited great empathy from the anti-authoritarian Döblin, who notes that the rebellion is crushed by state violence:

Die Ohnmacht des Menschen vor dem Schicksal. Chines[ischer] Boxeraufstand, die Welt ist da, die Taoist[ischen] Wahrhaft Schwachen wollen sich vom Staat zurückziehen, das bedeutet Aushöhlung, der Staat wehrt sich, sie werden zerschmettert. Das Vorwort stellt d[ie] Frage. Das Ende gibt keine Antwort, wiederholt die Frage. (*Schriften zu Leben und Werk*, 222)

The author subscribes to his historical sources that present Wang Lun's rebellion as a nationalist war of independence or as a revolt caused by religious persecution.⁵

At the same time Döblin employs a pervasive psycho-pathological description of masses and individuals, including the two sect leaders Wang Lun and Ma No, the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, and Panchen Lama. Within the narrative the Wu-wei sect is populated by lunatic, hysterical, and neurotic members, much as if they were patients from Döblin's psychiatric wards. Döblin's expertise in psychiatry endowed him with informed, precise descriptions with which to label the 'pathological' sectarians. In the years leading up to the writing of *Wang-lun*, he completed a medical degree in psychiatry in 1905 and worked in insane asylums and mental hospitals as a psychiatrist. While the general impact of Döblin's psychiatry background on his literary production has been discussed, for instance, by Wolfgang Schäffner and Veronika Fuechtner,⁶ in the case of *Wang-lun*, the pathological aspect remains largely ignored.⁷

In addition to psychologically troubled individuals, other participants in the Wu-wei revolution are unflatteringly described as the dregs of society: runaways, criminals, beggars, idlers, footpads, ruffians, opium smokers, gamblers, etc. Döblin is unequivocal in describing some of the participants' criminal pasts, pointing to dubious elements: "Damals traten ohne weiteres ausgebrochene Verbrecher in den Bund, um sich zu verkriechen" (122). For the majority, referred to as "Raubtiernmenschen" (87), the initial Wu-wei plan will be "eine Generalabsolution," which implies a previous criminal record (85). Wang makes clear that the main function of the Taoist sect is to keep these men in check and channel their violence towards toppling the alien dynasty: "Wer sich zerstreue, verkäme, meinte

Wang. Auch er hielt es für gut, dass die Brüder zusammenhielten; sie wären sonst in Kürze wieder Mörder, Seeräuber, Frauenschänder, Einbrecher. Es sei nicht genug, Wegelagerer zu sein, sondern man müsse wissen, auf welchem Wege man zu lagern habe" (95). In the midst of battles against the Emperor, Wang opens up prisons and admits criminals to his league as long as they are willing to fight the Manchus (474). This poses a sensitive question, namely, whether the revolution is a legitimate sublimation of criminality or is simply a new way of embodying the pathology modernity fears in the lower classes.

There is an apparent contradiction between Döblin's intent in this novel to convey his professed solidarity with the socially underprivileged, represented by the Wu-wei followers, and his actual presentation of the Wu-wei movement as a pathological and criminal phenomenon. Repulsive descriptions of the sect members (complete with mouths drooling saliva) make one suspect the legitimacy of conflating revolution with pathology and criminality. Violence, irresistible sexuality, and an array of human vices attributed to the Wu-wei movement serve to alienate readers from the sectarians. Animalistic depictions of the Wu-wei followers further overshadow the author's desire to positively depict this movement of the oppressed.⁸

Wang-lun is the first German work to focus on the masses (Tewarson 50), which echoes the *Zeitgeist* of widespread upheavals in world politics that so interested modernity. However, the novel does not turn to contemporary events as its subject, but to a rebellion that took place in 1774 China. Döblin thus displaces his aesthetic, religious, and political considerations to a remote historical time and geographical location in the hope that the distance between author and subject, and the alienating effect associated with it, would promote objectivity and yield insight.⁹ In Yuan Tan's words, the novel is at once "Entzauberung" and "Verzauberung" of Chinese society. Indeed, Berlin serves as the reference point for Döblin's so-called "Chinese novel": "[O]b ich von China, Indien und Grönland sprach, ich habe immer von Berlin gesprochen" (*Schriften zu Leben und Werk*, 183)¹⁰ Tan draws a parallel between the fictional Chinese world and Döblin's real world: "Die Wahrhaft Schwachen sind in der Tat nichts anderes als Döblins arme Patienten und die in Not und Elend lebenden deutschen Arbeiter, die er persönlich kannte" (101). For Wolfgang Schäffner, China readily conjures up imagery of masses that can only be found in a Western metropolis:

Doch die Transposition der medientechnischen Realität der Großstadt ins China des späten 18. Jahrhunderts gelingt vor allem deshalb, weil die Menschenmassen, die im Westen erst mit den Großstädten auftauchen, die chinesische Kultur schon lange prägen, und die Großstadtrealität mit den kriegerischen Wirren vertauscht wird; schließlich konvergieren Menschenmassen und Großstadt im paradigmatischen Schock-Szenario des Krieges. (295)

Aside from his fascination with Taoism, Döblin seems to show apathy towards China: "... was ging mich, der nicht einmal Europa kennt, China an, von Lao-

tse abgesehen" (*Schriften zu Leben und Werk*, 29; Schuster 85). This remark does not suggest Döblin's Eurocentric views, but is instead consistent with his "depersonale Poetik" (Kleinschmidt 383–400). As a result, Döblin's China is a phantasmagoria despite the fact that he saturates the novel with numerous details about eighteenth-century Chinese society. The personages and events are products of his imaginative reconstruction of the rebellion, characteristic of Döblin's "Fabulationsexperimente" (Schäffner 89) and his "Kryptomnesie" at literary creation (Schäffner 101). The historical Wang Lun rebellion incorporates Döblin's own ultimately ambiguous conclusions about revolution, pathology, and criminality.

Indeed, it is Döblin who makes Wang Lun the leader of the so-called Wu-wei sect, whereas it is debatable whether the historical Wang's sect is called Wu-wei (see de Groot and Naquin). However, by highlighting the Taoist aspect of Wang's religion, Döblin creates the contradiction between Wang's well-meaning but idealistic beliefs and the political reality that provokes his revolutionary sentiments, and hence the three leaps. He emphasizes both the social and mystical foundations of revolution, while making a polemical case about pathology and criminality by identifying their socio-political origin in oppression. Yet, at the same time, he seems to discredit the idea of revolution by associating it with pathology and criminality, delegitimizing the rebel leaders, and questioning the masses' motivation, consciousness, and determination. In so doing, Döblin expresses his ambiguity towards revolution.

This Chinese novel prefigures Döblin's Weimar political writings, and *November 1918*. Analyzing *November 1918*, which Döblin began in 1937 and completed in 1943, Helmut Kiesel writes,

Remarks in letters and essays from the time of the revolution, which lasted through the winter of 1918–19, indicated that Döblin sympathized with the revolution in principle and considered not only the democratization of Germany but also a change in property relationships to be necessary. At the same time, he had doubts about the spiritual foundations of the revolution and was disappointed by the paucity of revolutionary will among the masses and by the incapability of the leading men surrounding Liebknecht and Luxemburg. ("Döblin's *November 1918*," 217)

In *November 1918*, Döblin critically analyzes the failed German revolution and is irate over the incompetence of the revolutionary leaders: "Für die deutsche Revolution von 1918/19 hatte Döblin danach, sobald sich sein Blick von den Opfern abwandte, fast nur noch Zorn und Hohn übrig: aus Enttäuschung über die 'Unfähigkeit' der revolutionären Führer, eine einmalige geschichtliche Situation zu nutzen" (Kiesel, *Literarische Trauerarbeit*, 56).

Kiesel also points to Döblin's 1917 essay "Es ist Zeit," where Döblin agrees to the necessity of a revolutionary fervor in Germany, praises the October Revo-

lution in Russia, but at the meantime dismisses the 1789 French Revolution as "grotesquely agitated" ("fratzenhaft aufgeregt," 55). Written in 1912–13 before the First World War, *Wang-lun* was conceived shortly after Sun-Yat-sen's 1911 revolution, which ended the last feudal dynasty in China and established the first Republic of China in 1912. The immediate inspiration for a Chinese novel came from the news about the Chinese gold washers' rebellion in Siberia. Given this, Döblin was to some degree contemplating the fate of the Wilhelminian Reich when reflecting on China and the Czarist Russia.

While most existing criticisms view the protagonist Wang Lun as positive and tragic, this essay contends that Wang is depicted as both villainous and heroic, normal and deviant in a psychiatric sense. For Wang, his fraught relationship with Wu-wei, as well as the conflict between religion and politics, explains the necessity for his three dramatic leaps. During each of these leaps, he is never far away from violence. From the start, Döblin presents Wang as a hulky, hot-tempered, and violence-prone "Strolch" or rogue: "Sein prahlerisches Wesen, seine *Hitzigkeit* zusammen mit seiner *Riesenstärke* rissen ihn überall zu *Gewalttaten* hin" (27; all italic emphases are mine). The murder of Su-ko becomes the traumatic scene that haunts Wang forever.¹¹ It is also repeatedly cited by Wang to justify his own violence against the authorities. Wang avenges Su-ko's murder by throttling the responsible officer with "freudigen, *delirierenden* Händen und Armen" (45). His flight leads him to encounter a group of vagabonds on Nank'ou Mountain. In order to spend the chilly winter under a roof, the group of vagabonds takes over a village, plundering and killing ruthlessly. Döblin refers to them as "die Wegelagerer und Verbrecher" (e.g. 56), "die Lumpen" (e.g. 59), "die rohen Gesellen" (59), "die rasenden Tiere" (80), or "Raubtiermenschen" (87). Wang becomes the leader of a murderous band that establishes its first foothold by robbing, burning, and murdering.

At times, Döblin suggests that the vagabonds are victimized by a supreme determining force referred to as "Fate" and "Heaven," not by the merely socio-economic factor one would expect: "Soviel Leiden bringe schon das Schicksal allein, soviel Leiden; warum sie der Himmel hasse, wer wisse das?" (60). They feel that they are ostracized and trampled upon: "Es gab kaum fünf unter ihnen, die sich nicht verjagt und getreten vorkamen und den Eindruck hatten, ein unfreies, gezwungenes Leben zu führen" (60). However, more often Döblin envisions the group as perpetrators rather than as victims. This is how the worst members are described, indicating a link between compulsion (*Trieb*) and crime:

Am schlimmsten waren die *Hitzköpfe*, die *Rachsüchtigen*, die *Zügellosen* dran. Sie hatten sich, meistens jung, wegen eines Ehrgeizes, einer Verliebtheit, einer Eifersucht, zu einem verhängnisvollen Schritt reißen lassen, standen außerhalb ihrer Familie, Sippenchaft, Heimat, in deren Rahmen *ihrer Triebe* wie *ihre Verbrechen* sinnvoll wurden . . . machten *ihrer Grausamkeit* Luft, wo sie konnten. . . . (61)

Döblin describes Wang as one of the “unruhige Geister” numerous in China (61). Not only is Wang violent, but he is also psychologically unstable:

Der *Zickzack* in [Wang] kam nur gelegentlich zum Vorschein; in Possenstreichen, die andere vor den Kopf stießen, in stundenlanger grundloser Gleichgültigkeit, in vorübergehender *Böswilligkeit*, *Widerspenstigkeit*. Die älteren Vagabunden wussten, dass etwas Heiliges dahinter steckte, wenn er Späße machte; dass dies nicht anders war, als ob er *sich in einem Krampf wälzte*. (65)

The fact that Döblin writes at length about Wang's crimes and quirks casts Wang in a negative light, despite the fact that the author sympathizes with these revolutionaries.

The pathological portrayal of the other group leader, Ma No, as sado-masochistic, obsessed, and selfish provides more evidence of this idea. Wang is a beggar at the hut of Ma No, who has fled from the Buddhist temple on P'ut'o-shan. Ma's former abbot despised him for his inadequacies, and Döblin describes his despair and one of his delirious dreams, during which “wallte es in ihm *wahnsinnig*” (53). Ma is torn between his desire for the transcendental realm and its inaccessibility: “Ma liebte *ohnmächtig* die Buddhas. Zu einer Zeit *schrie* er ihnen seine ehrgeizigen Wünsche, und was sie ihm nicht erfüllt hatten, in die riesigen Schalltrichter ihrer Ohren und stellte sich *bläkend* vor sie. Zu anderer Zeit überwältigte ihn die Hoffnungslosigkeit, *ohne Sinn streckte er sich auf dem blanken Steinboden*” (51). Döblin portrays Wang as having a more intuitive, inexplicable relationship with the transcendental, which causes Ma's sense of inferiority and ensuing pathetic imitation of Wang. Ma becomes aware “dass er Wang unterlegen sei und nicht litt” (55). But this masochistic feeling of inferiority lasts only minutes, “Dann wehrte er sich, *knirschte* alles bedächtig *herunter*, *legte sich vorn über seinen Leib* und zersprengte das Gefühl” (55). In the following days, he cannot face Wang, “schämte sich vor ihm, und *sich selbst stach und biss er*” (55). Ma's masochism is accompanied by an abject closeness to Wang: “Näherte sich leidend Wang” (55). After Wang proclaims his Wu-wei beliefs, Ma's attraction to Wang comes to the fore: “Ma-noh hielt den großen Wang an den Schultern umschlungen; er flüsterte *heiß*: ‘Und ich will mit dir wandern’” (82). The masochism and homoeroticism of Ma have no intrinsic value for either the Wu-wei belief or the imminent revolution, but rather indicate the inadequacies of such figures as eventual revolutionary leaders. Homoerotic, masochistic, and narcissistic tendencies, which are common features in Döblin's works, reflect the psychiatric discourses of sexual deviation that started in the mid-nineteenth century (Schäffner 175).

Ma is a Buddhist monk, while Wang is a self-taught convert to Wu-wei: “Die Welt erobern wollen durch Handeln, misslingt. Die Welt ist von geistiger Art, man soll nicht an ihr rühren. Wer handelt, verliert sie; wer festhält, verliert sie” (49). When the Manchu soldiers capture four of their men, Chu, who is on

the Emperor's wanted list, urges the band to join the nationalist White Lotus movement (which Döblin changes slightly to “White Water Lily”). The Buddhist White Lotus movement had existed since the Han Dynasty (ca. 185 BC) and, beginning in the late sixteenth century, had taken hold in the urban and rural areas of North China. It became a magnet for rebels, and thus a target for government persecution. During the last empire ruled by the Manchu, the movement took on a nationalist character, aimed at toppling the oppressive alien government and reinstating the indigenous Ming dynasty.¹²

Chu points out the reasons for their misery: “sie waren Ausgestoßene, Opfer” of the foreign Manchu rule, which he compares to natural disasters (80). Upon hearing Chu's patriotic speech, “Die Vagabunden, von Grimm ausgehöhlt, *schluchzten* ihren Ballast vor sich. Die Arme wurden in einem *Wirbel* herumgerissen” (80). This tendency to weep unites the depiction of individuals and the masses. After Wang shares his story with the men, “Wang hatte die Haltung eines kranken Kindes angenommen vor Ma-noh, und in einem *Stöhnen*, *Keuchen* und *Schluchzen* arbeitete seine Brust. *Das Wasser stürzte ihm aus Auge und Nase*. . . . Er lehnte gegen Ma-noh in einer Art *Betäubung*” (74). Sarcasm is also evident in characterizing the masses: “sie waren Ausgestoßene, Opfer; sie hatten einen Feind und waren *glücklich* in ihrem schäumenden Hass” (80). The word “glücklich” is anomalous in this context, suggesting Döblin's view of the Chinese masses as masochistic, which aligns with the Orientalist notion of Eastern ethnicities as expecting mistreatment.

In contrast to Chu's militant stance, Wang insists that the followers resign themselves to fate and remain Wu-wei:

Man hat nicht gut an uns getan: das ist das Schicksal. Man wird nicht gut an uns tun: das ist das Schicksal. Ich habe es auf allen Wegen, auf den Äckern, Straßen, Bergen, von den alten Leuten gehört, dass nur eins hilft gegen das Schicksal: *nicht widerstreben*. . . . Ein Alter hat von ihnen gesagt: man kann sie töten, man kann sie am Leben lassen, ihr Schicksal wird von außen bestimmt. Ich muss den Tod über mich ergehen lassen und das Leben über mich ergehen lassen und beides unwichtig nehmen, nicht zögern, nicht hasten. Und es wäre gut, wenn ihr wie ich tötet. Denn alles andere ist ja aussichtslos. (81–82)

Wang's words evince a sense of powerlessness and resignation contrary to modernity's pairing of revolutionary activity with a pathogen circulating within society. In this instance Döblin is actually quoting the philosopher Lieh-tzu from his “Es ist alles eitel,”¹³ where he discusses the omnipotence of fate, the impotence of the oppressed individual, transience, and the great sufferings of life (Weyembergh-Boussart 98). In the “Zueignung,” Döblin dedicates the novel to this Chinese Taoist philosopher, whose *Wahre Buch vom quellenden Urgrund* appeared in 1911 in Germany (Muschg 487). Wang's non-resistance speech inaugurates the founding of “die Wahrhaft Schwachen” or the “Truly Powerless.” As he later demonstrates the three leaps by symbolically jumping over a little brook, the first

leap is to the Nank'ou Mountain, where he has found Wu-wei.

Soon after the foundation of the Truly Powerless, Wang abandons the practice of non-resistance and sets out to seek recognition and brotherhood from the nationalist White Water Lily, and promises to bring with him "ein ständig wachsendes Heer, auf das Verlass sei" (96). Earlier Wang had advised the beggars not to protest oppression, but to live as outcasts and embrace their fate.¹⁴ Now, however, he befriends the nationalist White Water Lily, thereby not only resisting fate but aiming to change it. The White Water Lily members are initially reluctant to associate themselves with the Wu-wei vagrants (99). Desperate, Wang turns violent and batters one of the White Water Lily members so that he collapses and vomits (101). While on the journey to join the White Water Lily, Wang has reverted to his former violent self, which he justifies by saying: "Je mehr er litt, um so mehr drängte es ihn heraus aus der Rolle des friedlichen Wahrhaft Schwachen, der seiner Seele ein reines Kleid bereiten will. Es befestigte sich in ihm die Haltung des Verteidigers seiner Brüder. Er musste kämpfen für die Ausgestoßenen seines Landes" (166). Wang suggests that Wu-wei pacifism is only valid within his sect. Outside that circle, different rules apply: "Was außerhalb des Bereichs meiner Brüder geschieht, unterliegt anderen, eigenen Gesetzen" (170). Wang's equivocal relationship with Wu-wei determines his similarly fraught relationship with what seems to be its opposite: rebellion. As the novel shows, he vacillates between submission and violence, incapable of reconciling his ideal of non-resistance, his proclivity towards violence, and a reality that calls for self-defense and vengeance. Yuan Tan argues that Wang's action is not self-contradictory, but rather consistent with Lao-tzu's emphasis on an individual's selfless social obligation: "Also auch hat ein Berufener gesagt: 'Wer den Schmutz des Reiches auf sich nimmt, der ist der Herr bei den Erdopfern. Wer das Unglück des Reiches auf sich nimmt, der ist der König der Welt'" (Tan 102). Hence, it is Wang's sense of responsibility that compels him to exterminate Ma's group (Tan 105). However, Tan's reference to Lao-tzu's saying can only temporarily (if at all) reconcile the apparent contradictions in Wang's actions. Tan bases his analysis on the early part of the novel, while Wang's subsequent irresponsible and outrageous actions preclude a defensive view of Wang, as this essay later demonstrates.

When Wang goes to seek the alliance with the White Water Lily, a group of men follow Ma and separate themselves from the rest of the Wu-wei movement. In Wang's absence, Ma finds his companions repulsive and the teaching of non-resistance nonsense: "*Strolche, Diebe und Mörder* waren seine Gesellschaft; es hieß wandern, wandern. . . . Was sollte er unter *den Wegelagerern*? Wang war gar nicht da. Es hieß wandern, nicht widerstreben, wahrhaft: nicht widerstreben. *Das Wort hat keinen Sinn ohne Wang*" (118–19). For Ma, it is less the teaching of Taoism than his homoerotic longing for Wang that makes Wang's belief his own: "... er hätschelte eine schlimme Sehnsucht nach der tiefen, harten Stimme Wangs" (119). It is at this point that he first begins to love Wang.¹⁵ On the one

hand, Ma despises his companions who are, in his opinion, the scum of society. On the other hand, he disguises his disgust for these ruffians and fakes solidarity with them.¹⁶ He abandons the three tenets of poverty, chastity, and serenity (122), especially chastity.¹⁷ In reaction to Ma's announcement of leaving the group for a woman, "Ein Schluchzen und Brüllen von der furchtbaren Art des Weinens älterer Menschen klang eruptiv aus der dunklen Masse" (143), and again a few lines down: "*Das entsetzliche Weinen* krampfte aus der schwarzen Masse" (143). A young man waves his hands, screaming in ecstasy that only prayer can help them, then he suffers an epileptic attack.¹⁸ The crowd reacts to Ma's plan to leave with groaning, sobbing, howling, dribbling saliva, trembling, twitching, and rolling about.¹⁹ The verb "zucken," a physical indicator of mental malady, appears frequently in the novel.²⁰

Ma stays and establishes a spiritual kingdom with the name "Insel der Gebrochenen Melone," which has its hallmark in "holy prostitution." Ma's relinquishment of chastity incites mass rape and sexual orgy (147–52). The name "Broken Melon" initially refers to women's loss of virginity. The libidinal self-indulgence of Ma and his band could attest to Döblin's concept of "the supremacy of the instinctual, especially sexual, over the spiritual nature of man," which Heidi Thomann Tewarson observes in Döblin's works that preceded *Wang-lun* (27). Sexual rampages, the narrative implies, are a deviant aberration, indicating undefined or ill-conceived goals and contradiction between the idealist Wu-wei and the human condition. This episode evokes Orientalist ideas of Eastern sexual decadence and suggests a different way of linking rebellion to pathology. Yet, this trait is an essential feature of Döblin's early works as well; Döblin does not necessarily enact Orientalist stereotyping in his Chinese novel.

Sexual liberty incurs condemnation from the Confucian state. To avoid massacre by imperial troops, Wang urges Ma to disband, a proposal that Ma declines so as to accept annihilation as the fate of his band. Wang consequently liquidates Ma's men by poisoning their drinking water. Wang's principle of abstaining from murder is cast aside with this violent act. His cold-blooded criminal conspiracy to murder hundreds of his own brothers shows brutality more than tragic heroism. The first leap is complete: Wang is utterly disillusioned with Wu-wei: "Es wird alles schlecht. Ich muss weiter springen" (480).

In the second leap, Wang escapes south, marries, and lives incognito until five sectarians seek him out. His return is a declaration of war against Emperor Ch'ien Lung, especially after the Emperor issues an edict to eradicate the sect.²¹ Now Wang differentiates between the Emperor and fate: "Der Kaiser, sag ich, ist ein Einbrecher. . . . Er ist ein Henker und kein Schicksal" (415). After embracing Wu-wei in the first leap, Wang explicitly discards it as pointless suicide in the second leap. He leads his Wu-wei sect into battles with the imperial army and anticipates death at the hand of the state.²² Wang interprets his armed revolt as justified self-defense.²³ However, the rebel leader is depicted as self-contradictory, hypocritical, and incompetent. Wang is initially disgusted by Ma's lax dealings

with women.²⁴ However, he immediately proves to be no different when two seductive women, who help him with his injured knee, compete for his affection: “[Wang] begütigte sie, *liebteste* ihre glühenden Gesichter, die sich noch immer verbittert voneinander abwandten” (174). By the time Wang is fighting the imperial army, he has long abandoned his vow of chastity: “Wie sehr er in die Eigentümlichkeiten des Kriegslebens versank, zeigte auch seine Ungeniertheiten im Verkehr mit den Weibern der eroberten Städte. Wang nahm sich, was ihm gefiel, während er strenge Zucht über die Wahrhaft Schwachen übte” (471). He has a lover whom he summons on a whim into the tent or house, even in the middle of a war council, having her sit there across from him (422–23).

The uprising progresses well in the beginning. Had it not been for Wang's neurotic, sadomasochistic, and self-destructive urges, the narrative suggests, the rebellion would have come to fruition. However, Wang shows himself to be inaccessible, unthinking, and irresponsible:

Wie überhaupt bei ihm eine gewisse *Lässigkeit und Schwerfälligkeit*, die freilich nur der Näherstehende bemerkte, deutlich hervortrat und einige Gildenführer irre machte. Sie konnten nichts damit anfangen, dass Wang sich manchmal mit einer trüben gelangweilten Miene von den Übungen der Truppen entfernte, den Befehl einem der signierten Offiziere abgab und sich selbst, die Wasserpfeife rauchend, nervös mit anderen in ein Zelt zurückzog. Er erzählte seinen Freunden schmachend in ewigen Wiederholungen von Ma-noh (422)

The fighting becomes a sort of game for Wang: “einige behaupteten sogar, dass [Wang] mitten in den Kämpfen den Ernst verliere, Soldaten der Feinde die Mützen abrisse, sie auf seinen Gelben Springer [his sword] stecke, mit den Angreifern wie eine Katze spiele, unbekümmert um den Stand des Gefechtes” (471). Nonetheless, he is ruthless against his own people: “In wärendender Schlacht erschlug Wang Ängstliche” (420). After the defeat of several insurrections in Peking, he beheads those who have demoralized the army: “Wang *tobte* gegen seine Truppen. Eine nicht kleine Zahl seiner Anhänger ließ er unterwegs enthaupten, weil sie erwiesenermaßen Panik verbreiteten. Die ganze Hitze seiner Wut war gerichtet auf die geschlagenen Truppen” (439).

The Wu-wei soldiers appear as a mad throng, referred to as “die tollkühnsten Soldaten” (420), “die gebäumte tolle Menge” (465), or “den tollkühnen Rebellen” (482). In comparison to the White Water Lily soldiers, “nur dass [die Wahrhaft Schwachen] stolzer waren, in den Schlachten *Berserkerstücke verrichteten*, in den Lagern *zum Sport* gefährliche Zwei- und Vierkämpfe ausfochten, eine drohende Zuversichtlichkeit zur Schau trugen” (444). They become a blind, maniacal force of destruction: “. . . dass Wang-luns Anhänger *in einer blinden Zerstörungswut* die Stadt Sou-chong . . . ansteckten” (470) or “Die Rebellen in einer *rasenden* Betrieb-samkeit zündeten alle umliegenden Dörfer in Brand” (470). Seeing his people “in einem endlosen, hoffnungslosen Morden,” Wang thinks of “die Sanftheit des

Nichtwiderstrebens” (444), and makes his third dramatic leap: he returns to Wu-wei. Though he previously thought Wu-wei was suicidal and forced his untrained men and women to become soldiers, forfeiting thousands of innocent lives, he now whimsically reaffirms Wu-wei: “Das Wu-wei ist gut. Das kann mir niemand entreißen. Ich habe solche Angst um mich . . . dass ich den Weg verfehle. . . . Ich will leben, so lang ich darf unsere gute Lehre verteidigen” (475–79). This third leap occurs when Wang reclaims Wu-wei, but ironically, the only way to attain this is through *violence*, which must bring about death of the Wu-wei followers. Wang's last leap, which seems to affirm Wu-wei and violence and combine the two preceding leaps, attempts to establish Wu-wei as a spiritual, idealistic, and utopian goal, inaccessible in reality and only attainable in a mystical way.

Knowing death is awaiting them, the sectarians sink into ecstasy and delirium.²⁵ They ritually hang themselves (483), tread over fields of glowing coals (487), and have no fear of death: “Die hundert Männer und Frauen, die unter Singen waffenlos auf den Markt gezogen waren, um sich niedermetzeln zu lassen, wurden umstellt” (491). These accounts of mass suicide approximate religious martyrdom and are the ultimate sign of the pathology and misguided revolution. Wang and Ma also possess such a Freudian death drive (“ihrem Drange zu sterben,” 420). Ma refuses Wang's demand that his followers disperse, choosing death instead. Wang later also chooses his own demise: “Für sie und mich ist das Wu-wei gestiftet, und ich will uns untergehen lassen” (475). In the end, he and his men ignite the house in which they are hiding and immolate themselves.

Besides scenes that depict visceral mass hysteria, numerous individuals exhibit psychological problems. One of the followers is a hypochondriac, robber, burglar, and murderer: he strangles all present when he breaks in at night, and is thus known as a “Seidenschnur” (62). He periodically suffers from derangement. During these fits, he climbs all over muddy paths, speaks pretentious, incomprehensible, and often obscene words, laughs uncontrollably, shows no need for sleep, attacks caravans and pilgrims, and behaves swinishly towards women and children (63). A woman named Liang-li suffers from the Elektra complex with her morbid attachment to her father (123–26). Another girl suffers from melancholia, harboring adventurous ideas and suicidal thoughts (173). Another young woman, raised by her grandfather to hate men of her age, develops a confusing sense of narcissism and self-hatred (424–25).

Written prior to the First World War and the German revolution in 1918, *Wang-lun* already contains the author's observation of revolutionary leaders and the misled masses that he would address explicitly during the Weimar years:

Döblin distinguished between the workers and their leaders or theoreticians. The workers have the right instincts, but they are easily misled. . . . In addition, Döblin claims in *Wissen und Verändern* that the theoreticians of the working class movement are wrong. On the one hand, they are too much influenced by bourgeois thinking, and on the other, are given to too many

utopian dreams. (Koepke, "Döblin's Political Writings during the Weimar Republic," 189–90)

The Wu-wei rebellion shows strikingly similar weaknesses and contradictions as the actual German revolution that took place at the end of the First World War: "den Widerspruch zwischen sozialistischer Aufmachung . . . und der keineswegs sozialistischen Gesinnung der revoltierenden und weniger an einer sozialen Umwälzung als am Frieden interessierten Soldaten" (Kiesel, *Literarische Trauerarbeit*, 356).

Wang's uprising is bound to fail for military reasons (state violence), but also because of flaws in ideology and character. The movement is torn between obligations to both the non-violent Wu-wei theory and to social justice and patriotism, which, the novel implies, call for violence and pragmatism. Wang's attempt to effectively change history is thwarted by his own human foibles. In fact, Wang's three leaps are not as clear-cut as they seem; they represent Wang's constant split between violence and non-violence.²⁶ The religious philosopher Lao-tzu sees this contradiction evident in the very concept of Wu-wei, which does not just preach passivity: "Das Tao ist ewig ohne Tun und doch ohne Nichttun."²⁷ Lao-tzu's explanation of Wu-wei calls for the weak to overcome the strong, just as soft and yielding water ultimately carves through stone: "Das Allerweichste auf Erden / überholt das Allerhärteste auf Erden. . . . Daran erkennt man den Wert des Nicht-Handelns."²⁸ Bertolt Brecht, who first encountered Taoism through reading Döblin's *Wang-lun*, writes about this dialectic relation between weakness and strength in his famous poem "Legende von der Entstehung des Buches Taoteking auf dem Weg des Laotse in die Emigration": "Dass das weiche Wasser in Bewegung / Mit der Zeit den mächtigen Stein besiegt. / Du verstehst, das Harte unterliegt" (quoted from Detering 11). Heinrich Detering cautions against misunderstanding Wu-wei as mere resignation or passivity: "Darum wäre es ganz irreführend, im taoistischen Nicht-Handeln nur stoische Resignation oder quietistische Passivität wahrzunehmen. Eher lässt es sich als eine eigentümlich konsequente Weise des Kampfes verstehen." Wu-wei should instead be construed as "der einzig erfolgversprechende 'Weg zum Sieg'" (Detering 17). Hence, the perception that Taoism opposes political engagement is faulty. Lao-tzu's solidarity with the oppressed was the initial motivation for his draft of *Tao-Tè-Ching* (Detering 14 and 81). The teleological triumph of the weak over the strong renders Taoism compatible with Marxism. Indeed, Marx uses a similar water metaphor in the preface to *Kapital* (Detering 73). Nonetheless, Marxism and Taoism remain antithetical and unreconciled, due to employing the opposite means to the same end: "Denn nichts verbindet Brecht mit Lehre und Leben Lenins so dauerhaft wie den Begriff des 'Kampfes', und nichts steht der Lehre und Praxis Laotsees so diametral entgegen wie ebendie Vorstellung von Widerstand und Kampf, überhaupt vom tätigen Eingreifen in die Geschichte" (Detering 67).

Wang Lun also tries to bring his people to see strength in their weakness:

"Wenn wir so schwach sind, sind wir doch stärker als alle anderen. Glaub mir, es wird uns keiner erschlagen; wir biegen jeden Stachel um. Und ich verlass euch nicht. Wer uns schlagen wird, wird seine Schwäche fühlen" (82). However, the two tenets of Wu-wei—being weak and powerless, but at the same time enabling the weak and powerless to overcome the strong—cannot be realized simultaneously in the novel. Wang's three leaps are caused by the immanent contradiction within Wu-wei, and his inability to correctly reconcile them. As Döblin makes clear, the followers of Wu-wei, including Wang, do not fully comprehend the concept of the profound Taoist religion.²⁹ Döblin designates the movement as Wu-wei, yet he does not portray a strong Wu-wei movement per se. In the novel, the movement gains followers for reasons unrelated to its philosophy, e.g., the magic power attributed to the "Zauberer" Wang (115)³⁰ and the personal vendettas of various sectarians.³¹ The novel is Döblin's attempt to comprehend the theoretical and empirical aspect of Taoism, conveying both admiration for the concept and skepticism about its realization.

The evasive concept of Wu-wei is beyond grasp of its followers. Yet, the novel accepts it as the enigmatic and overpowering guiding principle for the movement. When the group is galvanized into a nationalist rebellion against the alien dynasty, the movement seems to have temporarily set a clear goal.³² But the masses are untrained soldiers, thus ill-prepared for fighting. The leaders likewise reveal themselves to be flawed and cause countless deaths. In this way, Döblin expresses doubts over the combination of mysticism and revolution, and warns of the senseless sacrifice of human lives due to ill-guided principles and questionable leaders. In Döblin's diagnosis, the Wu-wei followers are sado-masochistic, unenlightened about their motivations and goals, and follow their leaders blindly. Their failures link Orientalist conceptions of the irrational East with early twentieth-century pre-socialist realist ideas that social conditions create and justify uprisings. Since Döblin's "Chinese novel" resumes as well as anticipates themes in his other works, one cannot light-heartedly label him an Orientalist. His skepticism towards the Wu-wei rebellion instead comes from his own ambivalent feelings towards revolutionary or communist tendencies, which were the major ideological trends at the time of penning the novel. The East here serves as a Brechtian device of distanciation that Döblin employs to work out his own positioning regarding Marxist thoughts.

Wang-lun is not the first novel where Döblin pathologizes his characters. Madness is a common dimension of all his early works prior to *Wang-lun* (Schäffner; Tewarson 31). In Döblin, the pathological is an intensified form of the normal psyche, and thus may be traced back to the normal and made comprehensible and artistically presentable (Tewarson 31–32). Döblin's work is polemical regarding madness: "If the reality of madness had been slandered (*Jugend Rosse* 72) up to now, then it was time to acknowledge it in all its manifestations, without apology" (Tewarson 32). Such an apology for madness makes Döblin's early works, including *Wang-lun*, part of what Michel Foucault calls avant-garde works of

madness that practice unreason. In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault critically reviews the historical development of societal reactions towards madness, mostly ostracizing, confining, or medicalizing the insane. Döblin's presentation of the Wu-wei movement as a pathological and criminal phenomenon is analogous to Foucault's connection between illness and marginality in modernity. Compared with Döblin's earlier works, *Wang-lun* continues to embody similar expressionistic aesthetic and literary practices in pathologizing characters. It goes on to reflect turn-of-the-century psychopathological and criminological debates.³³

If writing on the pathological is in some way revolutionary and normalizes pathology, how are we to rationalize pathology within revolution? Revolution and pathology can be *partly* reconciled when considering the social and political dimension of Döblin's medical work as observed by Veronika Fuechtner. Döblin opened his own practice in Berlin in 1908 to treat psychiatric patients from lower classes (Fuechtner, *Diss.*, 15), and he officially became a member of the socialist doctors' organization in 1926 (Fuechtner, *Diss.*, 27). Döblin saw the social, ethical, and political relevance of his medical work for the poor: "Ich fand meine Kranken in ihren ärmlichen Stuben liegen; sie brachten mir auch ihre Stuben in mein Sprechzimmer mit. Ich sah ihre Verhältnisse, ihr Milieu; es ging alles ins Soziale, Ethische und Politische über."³⁴ Although the *Wang-lun* novel is not part of Fuechtner's discussion, her explanation as to why the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute attracted Döblin sheds light on the synthesis of pathology and revolution in *Wang-lun* as well: "The Institute's emphasis on the connection between *social and mental misery* and its commitment to the treatment of a low-income clientele matched Döblin's intellectual and professional interests in the 1920s" (6, emphasis mine). Social misery can be the cause for mental misery, and vice versa. Social misery provokes revolution, while mental misery can trigger pathological symptoms. Thus, if we take Döblin's belief in the interrelatedness of social and mental misery into account, the pathological aspect of Wang Lun's revolution need no longer be considered as something objectionably sickening, but rather as potentially meaningful.

The *Wang-lun* novel presciently anticipates Döblin's diagnosis of the German revolution in 1918, especially the observation that "sich unter den 'Revolutionshelden' eine auffallend große Zahl von 'Psychopathen' gefunden habe," a claim based on his colleague Eugen Kahn's diagnostic findings that many revolutionary leaders are psychopaths.³⁵ Schaffner implies that the psychiatric label discredits the revolutionary leaders and facilitates governmental control of rebels: "Wenn jedoch spätestens 1918 Revolutionäre in Deutschland keine staatlichen Heilmittel mehr sind, sondern psychopathische Hemmnisse, deren Beseitigung den Staat von der Degenerationsgefahr heilt, dann ist dies ein Indiz für die Erstarkung eines Staatsorganismus, der Abweichung psychiatrisch verwaltet" (310). However, Döblin politicizes and moralizes psychopathology as an accusation levied against the society that itself causes social and psychological sufferings of the lower class. Kiesel observes that, in *November 1918*, Rosa Luxemburg's pathological grieving

over Hannes is "nicht als pathologisches, sondern als ethisches Phänomen zu verstehen"; the pathological behaviors should be viewed as "*konsequent ethische Reaktionen auf zutiefst unethische Zustände*" (412). The ethical construct of psychopathology ameliorates to some extent the grotesque ways in which Döblin portrays revolution.

At first glance, the mix of revolution, Wu-wei, pathology, and criminality seems to echo the Orientalist discourse of the East as paradoxical and incomprehensible. This suspicion can be alleviated if we view *Wang-lun* as one of Döblin's *oeuvre*, and note the common themes of pathology, violence, and criminality shared by his other works. Within the novel, pathology and criminality are partly manifestations of how an unjust society has debased humanity, reducing its less fortunate elements to pathologization and criminalization. However, it is clear that these two traits render the rebel leaders dubious, irresponsible, and unqualified, and show the degree to which the masses are not ready for revolution. Wu-wei, the philosophical and theoretical underpinning of the revolution, sabotages its own objective. The multifaceted uprising, paradoxically driven by a mysterious and anti-revolutionary religion, and further handicapped by incompetent and suicidal leaders, brings about its own doom. The interference of pathology in revolution seems to come from the author's life experience as a psychiatrist. Yet, pathologizing and criminalizing revolution embodies the author's ambivalence vis-à-vis revolution and socialism, major political themes at that time. Ambivalence proves to be characteristic of Döblin's works in general, a trait that already started with his divided opinion of his father's escape to America; like his father, he himself suffered from his mother's anti-art and business-oriented mentality (Kiesel, *Literarische Trauerarbeit*, 31). In *Literarische Trauerarbeit*, Kiesel observes that ambivalence can be considered as "konstitutive Disposition von Döblins Psyche und Intellekt" (31):

Döblins Bewusstsein zeigt sich als Krisenbewusstsein par excellence: unfähig, sich festzulegen und sich einer Richtung voll und ganz zu verschreiben, sucht und prüft es rastlos neue Optionen, irrlichtert es zwischen den ideologischen Fronten und bringt die einzelnen Positionen in ihren positiven wie negativen Seiten zum Funkeln. Beispielhaft dafür ist Döblins zwischen Bejahung und Kritik oder Ablehnung stets schwankende Haltung gegenüber dem naturwissenschaftlichen Geist seiner Zeit, gegenüber der Psychoanalyse, gegenüber dem Marxismus, gegenüber allen (und von wem auch immer propagierten) Revolutionsideen und gegenüber dem Zionismus, um nur einige Gebiete zu benennen, in denen Döblins Entscheidungsnoté besonders deutlich zutage treten. (Kiesel 40–41)

In this manner, Döblin's ambiguous stance towards revolution, already crystallized in *Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun*, constitutes the genesis of his theory of ambiguous revolution.

¹ Alfred Döblin, *Schriften zu Leben und Werk*, 530. Kommentar 5.

² See e.g. Wulf Koepke's *The Critical Reception of Alfred Döblin's Major Novels*.

³ The novel's avant-garde narrative technique won its reputation as "den ersten modernen deutschen Roman" (Walter Falk) and the Fontane Prize in 1916. Most secondary criticism of the novel has been conducted in Germany. There are a few publications by Chinese scholars, for example, Fang-hsiung Dscheng, Yuan Tan, Zhonghua Luo, Wei Wang, and Weijian Liu.

⁴ Döblin, *Autobiographische Schriften* (1977), 441f. Quoted from *Alfred Döblin 1878–1978*. 130.

⁵ See Yuan Tan 86–93, or Sander's "Anmerkungen" starting on p. 568. The three major historical sources for Döblin are: J. H. Plath's *Geschichte der Mandschurey* (1830), Carl Gützlaff's *Geschichte des chinesischen Reichs* (1863), and J. J. M. de Groot's *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China* (1904).

⁶ See Fuechtner's dissertation and a published article included in *A Companion to the Works of Alfred Döblin*; see also Kort 42; Tewarson 32–50.

⁷ Yuan Tan's excellent chapter on *Wang-lun* does, however briefly, comment on the hallucinatory world depicted in this novel (138–142). David Dollenmayer's contribution to the *Companion to the Works of Alfred Döblin* (2004) does not touch on pathology. In her published dissertation, Zheng Fee undertakes a detailed textual analysis of the novel and discusses the pathological traits of Ma No and the masses, yet she does not problematize pathology in the context of revolution. Fee points out that Klaus Müller-Salget is the only prior scholar to have commented on Ma No's pathological character and the homoerotic relationship between Wang and Ma (Fee 43). In reality, Roland Links has also remarked on the bearing of Döblin's encounters with patients on this novel (37). However, like Walter Muschg—the editor of the novel's first edition, Links ascribes the unsavory images of the sect followers to Döblin's aesthetic protest against bourgeois art (Muschg 491; Links 48). Denigrating the image of the Chinese masses fits Döblin's aesthetic principle of depicting the ugly, the disgusting, and the horrific (Muschg 491).

⁸ Döblin uses verbs such as "bläken" (51), "beschnüffeln" (55), "fauchen" (388), "bellern" (411), or sentences such as: 1) "Wenn [Wang] lachte, so ratterte und kolkste es brusttief wie das Wiehern aus einem Pferd" (411); 2) "Wie eine klirrende Schar Bestien waren Wang-luns Soldaten eingebrochen: bissig unter der Vergewaltigung ihrer Seelen; jetzt wirklich rachedurstig" (410); 3) "[Wangs] blutdurchwirbelten Klauen wucherten die Bank los, auf der er gesessen hatte, zerknickten und zerschleuderten sie" (416); 4) "Diese Wahrschaft Schwachen schlugen sich entmenscht; das Bestialische ihres Aussehens, ihrer Katzen-, Tigermalereien flößte Entsetzen ein" (421); 5) "wie ein Bronzestier" (437); 6) "entlarvte die tausend verzerrten Tiergesichter" (465); 7) Wang/Döblin compares the new influx of revolutionaries to rats: "Wang-lun schwang entzückt die Hände: 'Sie kommen wie die Ratten aus ihren Löchern heraus'..." (420–21); 8) "Der Gefangene [robber] erzählte witzige Geschichten von den singenden Brüdern und gar den aber-dummen Schwestern, die die unglaublichsten Tiere seien" (473); 9) "Ein verhungertes Bursche [Wang's robber-brother] mit Klauen und Armen, wie ein Affe, zahloses Maul, dürre Waden; er konnte klettern wie er lügen konnte. Sein Bruder, sein Bruder!" (472–73); 10) The sectarians are cannibalistic: "Die Männer ahmten das Kreischen der Weiber nach, die Weiber schrien, kochten und aßen die Lebern von Brüdern und Feinden, um sich Mut zu erhalten" (421).

⁹ Anke Detken examines the uses of masks and forms of alienation in Döblin's Chinese novel, which has exerted considerable influence on Brecht's theory of the epic theater.

¹⁰ Döblin, *Schriften zu Leben und Werk*, 183.

¹¹ Döblin's writing on trauma is not influenced by Freud, since he became acquainted with Freud's writing only in 1919. Freud was not the first to write on the unconscious. See Links 48f.

¹² See Sander 572; Tan 89; Godwin xiv–xvii; De Groot 162–75; Naquin 38.

¹³ "Meister Yang sprach: ... Wenn man schon einmal im Leben steht, so muss man es unwichtig nehmen und über sich ergehen lassen, seine Wünsche beobachten und so den Tod erwarten. Kommt dann der Tod heran, so muss man ihn auch unwichtig nehmen und über sich ergehen lassen, beobachten, was erfolgt, und sich so der Auflösung überlassen. Beides muss man unwichtig nehmen, beides über sich ergehen lassen; was braucht man es des Zögerns oder der Hast in dieser Spanne Zeit?" (Lieh-tzu, *Book VII*, Chapter 10), quoted from Sander 590.

¹⁴ "Er führe [die Wahrhaft Schwachen]; er hätte ihnen geraten, nichts zu tun gegen Bedrückung, sondern als Ausgestoßene zu leben ohne Widerstand gegen den Weltlauf" (95).

¹⁵ "... und Wang zum erstenmal liebte" (120).

¹⁶ "Ma mischte sich schamlos unter sie. Er schmeichelte ihnen, simulierte, damit die Strolche nichts merkten" (120) and "mit einer peinlichen gezwungenen Lüsterheit bewegte er sich unter ihnen" (121).

¹⁷ "Die Keuschheitslehre ist ein Wahnsinn, keine kostbare Regel, eine Barbarei. Die Brüder und Schwestern haben mir zugestimmt" (161).

¹⁸ "Er grimassierte fort, warf die Arme wie Mühlräder umeinander, wälzte sich schäumend auf den Brettern, von denen er bei einer Streckung herunterpoltert. (144).

¹⁹ "Das dumpfe Weinen in der Masse vertiefte sich zum Stöhnen, zum hilflosen, stoßweisen Ächzen. ... Der Speichel tropfte ihnen über die Unterkiefer, sie schnüffelten, sie stimmten ohne es zu merken in das Gröhlen zur Rechten und Linken ein. ... Aber beim Aufrichten befahl ihre Unterarme, Knie und Nacken ein Zittern. Ein Schütteln, Schleudern der Glieder, Starre, Rückwärtsbeugung der Nacken, ihr Lächeln wurde stärker. Schon zuckte es wohligh über die Schenkel, die Bauchwand, in den Flanken, warf sie herum." (145)

²⁰ A dance of a young eunuch and a courtesan during the Celebration of Perfection of Sakyamuni is described in length. Döblin uses words like "ruckweise," "gebannt," "immer wilder," "zuckend," "in glücklicher Raserei," "das Rucken," "zuckte," "gereizt," and "Zuckung" to describe the dance (135).

²¹ The Manchurian Emperor Ch'ien Lung invites Panchen Lama to Peking for consultation on the unrest. The Panchen Lama advises the Emperor to spare the rebels, but he dies of smallpox during his visit. Ch'ien Lung gives in to his son's hard-line politics and issues an edict to eradicate the heretical movement.

²² "Ich hab mich geirrt auf den Nan-Kubergen; das Schicksal schlägt nach uns, mit dem Huf, wo wir uns sehen lassen. Ein Wahrhaft Schwacher kann nur Selbstmörder sein. ... Es sollen alle zu Grunde und auf einmal hingeschlagen werden, und ich mit ihnen auf einem Haufen" (416).

²³ "Sie, die wahrhaft schwach gegen das gute Schicksal waren, seien gezwungen worden zu kämpfen" (486).

²⁴ When he sees Ma's followers with girls in the streets, he "hetzte die Mädchen fort" (156). When he enters Ma's dwelling, "wollte er mit einer Handbewegung die junge

Frau aus dem Raum weisen, die neben dem ehemaligen Pu-topriester auf der Matte hockte" (155).

²⁵ "Sie tanzten nackt auf den Straßen, jauchzten mit markerschütternden Stimmen. Sie wüssten den wahren und guten Weg und den tanzten sie. Geheimnisvoll schlichen sie sich über die Plätze, sanken mit geschlossenen Augen über den Boden und röchelten im Delirium. Manche von diesen Männern brachten sich Wunden an den Armen und Lippen bei mit spitzen Steinen wie Fopriester; fassten, mit weißen Augäpfeln wandelnd, träumende Frauen bei den Händen an, und unmittelbar an Entrückungen, in Entrückungen erfolgte die Brunst der Umarmungen, die niemand verachtete." (483)

²⁶ The number three is biblically significant, but it is also a number that is formulaic in folklore. It indicates plurality, and in the case of Wang, the pendular swinging back and forth between Wu-wei and violence.

²⁷ Wilh[elm] Grube, *Geschichte der chinesischen Litteratur II*, Leipzig 1902, 146. Quoted from Sander 570. Or "The Tao is always without (wu) activity (wei), and yet there is nothing (wu) which does not do or make (wei)." Quoted from de Groot 187.

²⁸ See Sander 590–91.

²⁹ "Geheimnisvoll fing Wang selber an, leise zu sprechen von den Spitzen der Welt und den drei Juwelen. Er verstummte bald, wandte den Kopf wie beirrt suchend zur Seite zu Ma-noh" (89). As Ch'en Yao-fen, the leader of the White Water Lily group, tries to inquire deeper into Wang's philosophy, the latter only has vague notions of Taoism: "[Wang] dachte . . . über das Tao, jenen starren unbiegsamen Weltlauf nach, der Anfang und Ende von Wangs nicht ganz klaren Gedanken war" (101). Wang's emissaries report his teaching to the crowd with an air of secrecy ("Heimlichkeit," 85; "Geheimes und Himmlisches," 88): "es schien sich um Geheimnisse zu handeln" (85). Von Klaus Müller-Salget also observes that the followers do not really understand the true meaning of this Taoist teaching; even Wang does not have clear ideas about Wu-wei (146–47). Fee points out that the three leaps, which indicate the incompatibility of *Handeln* and *Nicht-Handeln*, fail to grasp the original harmony of the Taoist concept of Wu-wei (Fee 129–35).

³⁰ "Von Wang-lun erzählte man, er sei nach dem Kun-lungebirge auf einem blauen Pferde geritten, um der Kaiserin des Westlichen Paradieses die Gründung ihres Bundes anzuzeigen. Er sei nach Schan-tung gewandert, um das Gold-wasser und die Perlen des ewigen Lebens zu holen" (105). A man brags about the Truly Powerless, making it mysteriously powerful: "Er sagte, es würde wohl bald zu Ende sein mit den Werwölfen, Nachtmahren, wenn erst viele recht tüchtig gegen sie vorgingen. . . für die Bündler sei alles nur eine Kleinigkeit, zweifellos Werwölfe seien eine Kleinigkeit" (117). Another woman thought she could learn powerful spells from the brothers which could help her seek personal vengeance in power struggles with her husband's second wife (116).

³¹ In enlisting soldiers, Ngoh capitalizes on his reputation as a "demon conqueror," playing this role so successfully that some in the crowd believe he should be tied up. Instead, all of a sudden, the crowd flocks to him as if awestruck, once again exemplifying the mystical pathogen of religion (399).

³² In Döblin, the rebellion receives mass support and had an alliance with the White Lotus sects, whereas the historical rebellion lacked both (Naquin 152).

³³ Döblin's diagnosis of pathological criminality reflects turn-of-the-century criminological discourses that debated the origins of crime. Especially influential was the positivist or scientific school of criminology spearheaded by Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909) and his prolific publications on the etiology of crime. Schöffner mentions Lombroso's

works quite a few times in his book. Due to the international fame that Lombroso claimed and his impact on criminal anthropology and modern psychiatry, we can assume Döblin's familiarity with Lombroso's work and the controversy surrounding his notion of the born criminal. Döblin's life resembles that of Lombroso, who was also a Jewish physician and psychiatrist. Lombroso was a member of the Italian Socialist Party, sympathized with the working class, and advocated social reforms to reduce poverty and crime. Lombroso's major work *Criminal Man* was translated into German from 1887–90. Rejecting the theory of the "born criminal," German proponents of the so-called modern school of criminal law favored psychological signs of pathology in the diagnosis of criminality (Gibson 1–36).

³⁴ Döblin, *Schriften zu Leben und Werk*, 95. See also Schuster 83.

³⁵ Eugen Kahn's article "Psychopathen als revolutionäre Führer" can be found in *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 52 (1919) 90ff. See Kiesel 347; Schöffner 7.

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