

Methods of Investigating

Written Response

Siqi Hu

Reading 1: Georges Perec's *The Street*

Perec's process in *The Street* embodies a very exhaustive approach to observation. Initially, my observation was limited to the areas that caught my attention and the most obvious and intuitive themes, such as the interaction between humans and animals, the morphology of tree growth, and the direction of waterfall water flow. After reading the author's practical exercises, I began to, like the author, "make an effort to exhaust the subject". Over time, my focus gradually narrowed and focused on a more specific and profound. In the same regard, I am working to make my project draw from different sensory forms, outside of the visual. I started collecting and visualizing natural sounds, and then, like the author, I "forced myself to see more flat". I tried to present my first-hand data in unusual forms, such as finding a frequency, color scheme, or rhythm to create an analog data drawing project. In sum, my investigation draws from the text's process by adopting an observant and methodical exploration. This helps improve the exhaustiveness of my investigation, particularly by focusing on different senses as opposed to being merely limited to the visual sense.

Reading 2: Documentary, *The Gleaners and I*

The theme in this documentary is contemporary gleaning in today's society. Accordingly, the documentary focuses on those that repurpose and salvage discarded pieces. It highlights the marginalized as well as their resourcefulness. The documentary illustrates the wastefulness of society and the efforts of some to create value from what has been discarded by others. One of the views that captivated me about this film was that Varda realized that she was also a picker. "I'm not poor, I have enough to eat", she said, but she pointed out "another kind of gleaning, which is artistic gleaning. You pick ideas, you pick images, you pick emotions from other people, and then you make it into a film." In my investigation, I have also been focusing in how to choose ideas, images, and emotions. I have been exploring artistic gleaning. The garden area that is the subject of this investigation is not small, and it takes a sense of gleaning to identify the narrow from the broad. At the same time, it is not easy to identify the most promising in-depth development among various research methods in the early stage. Varda chose digital video camera, and by doing so, she transformed a film about waste into a reflection on the art of digital documentaries. This smart use of media has influenced my choice to draw original sketches on transparency paper. I capture different themes of the same observation object, such as the motion trajectory of koi in a pond, ripple size, and the orientation of frequent gatherings, and draw them on different transparency papers to overlap and organize the information data. This brings more exploration directions and possibilities to my research.

References

Perec, G. (1974). The Street. In *Species of Spaces* (pp. 50-55). Penguin.

Varda, A. (Director). (2000). *The Gleaners and I* [Motion Picture].