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An Adlerian Analysis of the Problematic Mother-Daughter Relationship in Eileen Chang's *The Golden Cangue* and Elfriede Jelinek's *Die Klavierspielerin*

Xiaohu JIANG

Society shapes family, which is its basic unit and serves as a token of a society's political, cultural, and economic features. Therefore, the diverse forms and mechanisms of families across centuries and continents have attracted scholars from sociology, anthropology, psychology, and literary studies. The relationship between parents and offspring, which is an integral component of a family, represents the dynamics of both family and society. The pains and conflict caused by social transitions are vividly reflected in the hostility between parents and their children. Elisabeth Frenzel has summarized how the father-son relationship, a popular motif in world literature, was used for disparate purposes across the centuries, sometimes for the legitimate inheritance of power and sometimes to address topics like absolutism and democracy. Given the traditionally vulnerable position of women, the relationship between mother and daughter has roused strong interest in academia (see Neisser; Franck; Debold et al.). Feminist scholars, attracted to the topic of gender roles for mothers and daughters, have applied different psychoanalytic theories and made inspiring attempts to show how females' (un)consciousness of their roles and positions in society have been formed and shaped. For instance, in her seminal book *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, Juliet Mitchell integrated the theories of Freud and Lacan with the capitalistic views of Karl Marx and Louis Althusser. Applying Freud's notion of "family romance," Marianne Hirsch analyzed mother-daughter plots written under the "Euro-American patriarchal context" to show how the femininity of

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mothers and daughters was constructed (8). Nancy Chodorow investigated motherhood from the perspectives of psychoanalysis and sociology in her influential book *The Reproduction of Mothering*. Helga Kraft and Elke Liebs presented postmodernism-oriented research on the mother-daughter relationship and the fluctuating role of *Weiblichkeit* in German literature across several centuries, from Gottfried von Straßburg to Dagmar Chidolue.

This comparative research takes a different approach, using Alfred Adler's theories of individual psychology to investigate the problematic mother-daughter relationships depicted in Eileen Chang's novella *The Golden Cangue* (GC) and Elfriede Jelinek's *Die Klavierspielerin* (K).¹ Using Adler's humanistic and holistic perspective, this paper elucidates how social situations shape women's motivation, ambition, perceptions of gender, and beliefs around money and marriage. Moreover, it explains why daughters are unable to form deep personal connections with fellow human beings and why their compensation efforts to overcome their feelings of inferiority fail.

Adler's Explanation of Inferiority and Mothers' Roles

Most famous for his concept of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* (community feeling or social interest), Adler stressed the vital role of the individual in interacting with his or her surroundings.² The advantage of applying Adler's theory in this research is that his theory draws attention to the dynamic relationships between individuals within a family and, more importantly, between individuals (e.g., family members) and society. Unlike Freud, who concentrated on the triangular relationship of father, mother, and children and the aftermath of previous traumas,³ Adler emphasized the role of the individual's social interests in enhancing his or her development, creativity, and ability to overcome difficulties in life.

Furthermore, for Adler, individuals are not passive victims of their surroundings but have active interaction with them. Adler's notions of inferiority and compensation are particularly relevant to this paper. Whereas Freud stressed that past trauma and repression (such as an experience from the infantile period) negatively impacts individuals in the future, Adler held that past trauma and feelings of inferiority could be overcome if individuals can handle the shock, ideally in a favorable external environment. These notions are useful in understanding why daughters in *The Golden Cangue* and *Die Klavierspielerin* fail in their fight against their mothers' control.

According to Adler, mothers are obliged to “give the child the complete possible experience of human fellowship, and then to widen it into a life-attitude towards others” (*Problems of Neurosis* 21). In other words, a mother plays a role in preparing her child for the three problems of life: society, occupation, and love (*Problems of Neurosis* 18). Children’s social feelings and social interest—that is, their ability to connect with other people and resolve the problems of life—are largely dependent upon their mothers, in that “it is in its mother that every child makes its first contact with a trustworthy fellow-man” (*Problems of Neurosis* 31). Problems will arise if the mother does not help her children on this score. However, for a comprehensive discussion of children’s development, it is necessary to bear in mind that mothers are also subject to the influence of external contexts. A mother’s social life will eventually influence how she nurtures her children. Thus, when it comes to investigating mother-daughter relationships, equal attention must be paid to the mother’s experiences within society.

Eileen CHANG and *The Golden Cangue*

Eileen CHANG (1920–1995) was the English name of ZHANG Ailing (張愛玲). CHANG was born in Shanghai in a declining aristocratic family that was marked by feudalistic decadence. Her father, ZHANG Zhiyi (張志沂, 1896–1953), indulged in opium and the services of prostitutes, a typically dissolute lifestyle for rich male heirs in a transitional age of modern China around World War II. Eileen CHANG’s grandfather was ZHANG Peiguan (張佩綸, 1848–1903), a famous general, and her grandmother was LI Ju’ou (李菊耦, 1866–1912), the second daughter of LI Hongzhang (李鴻章, 1823–1901), who followed the Western model and established China’s first navy, the Beiyang Fleet, in 1888. In 1915, ZHANG Zhiyi married HUANG Suqiong (黃素瓊, 1896–1957), whose grandfather, HUANG Yisheng (黃翼升, 1818–1894), was a navy general under LI Hongzhang.

In 1924, HUANG Suqiong could no longer bear her husband, who was obsessed with opium and prostitutes, and went to Britain with ZHANG Maoyuan (張茂淵, 1901–1991), the younger sister of ZHANG Zhiyi. In 1928, convinced by her husband’s promise of abandoning opium and concubines, HUANG Suqiong returned to China in the hope of saving her marriage and educating her daughter and son. After regaining his health, ZHANG Zhiyi forgot his promise. Finally, the couple divorced in 1930. Eileen CHANG was

beaten and abused by her father and his new wife. After escaping from her father's maltreatment in 1938, Eileen CHANG was supported by her mother and her aunt ZHANG Maoyuan. Soon, her mother left China again.

Throughout Eileen CHANG's life, her mother frequently traveled overseas and was more concerned with her own liberty and emancipation from the feudalistic constraints on the female. Eileen CHANG's abusive father and the often-absent mother affected her perception of family. Because of her mother's absence, Eileen CHANG had no protection from her father's maltreatment. Her father was reluctant to call a doctor to cure her when she had a very serious bout of gastroenteritis while under her father's *de facto* imprisonment.⁴ It was Eileen CHANG's view that she was obligated to pay her mother back for the tuition fees she paid on her behalf.⁵ Eileen CHANG had the sensation that she was not only a financial burden for her mother, who after the divorce relied mainly on selling her personal property like antiques, but also an obstacle hindering her mother's pursuit of freedom. She was also eager to earn money for her own independence. Moreover, her mother expressed regret that she had given birth to Eileen CHANG. As Eileen CHANG assumed, it was out of her mother's disappointment with the daughter's inability to live and behave decently like a lady. This further widened the distance between the mother and the daughter. These experiences left traces on Eileen CHANG's literary writing, in which selfish, calculated, and absent parents are intermittently seen, and the family is usually a place of conflict, hatred, and scheme.

Eileen CHANG's education was a combination of Chinese classical literature and Western books. Her father insisted that his children must learn at home as the rich offspring had done in ancient China; for her part, her mother emphasized a Western lifestyle and Western education for her children. This strong antagonism between Eileen CHANG's parents was, in essence, a microcosm of the conflict between China's feudalistic tradition and Western civilization.

Eileen CHANG learned English at an American church school in Shanghai in 1931. In 1939, she was awarded a British scholarship to study at the University of London. However, because of the outbreak of World War II, she had no alternative but to attend the University of Hong Kong. Her studies in Hong Kong were interrupted once again, however—this time by war. This time, it was the Attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.⁶ From December 25, 1941, to August 15, 1945, Hong Kong was under the control of

Japan. In the summer of 1942, Eileen CHANG returned to Shanghai. At this juncture, her literary career officially started.

The original Chinese edition of *Jinsuo Ji* (《金鎖記》) was written and published in 1943. Later, Eileen CHANG expanded and rewrote it several times in Chinese. In 1981 her own English translation of this novella, titled *The Golden Cangue*, appeared in the anthology *Modern Chinese Stories and Novellas: 1919–1949* published by Columbia University Press. In a 2010 article, Jessica T. Y. Li, investigating why Eileen CHANG rewrote and translated this novella, concluded that it was largely attributable to Eileen CHANG's perceptions of the female body and subjectivity, which changed after she emigrated to America in 1955.

From the first publication in Shanghai, this novella won acclaim from several critics. In 1944, FU Lei (傅雷, 1908–1966), famous for his Chinese translations of French literature, commented positively on the merits of *The Golden Cangue*, in particular her excellent skills in exposing the psychological depth of figures without directly anatomizing their mental turmoil but by reference to their external behaviour and the objective natural symbols, the moon in particular. C. T. Hsia (夏志清, 1921–2013) played a decisive role in reviving the popularity of Eileen CHANG in modern China. In his seminal book *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* (written in English and originally published by the Yale University Press in 1961), Hsia praised the *The Golden Cangue* lavishly, calling it “the greatest novelette in the history of Chinese literature” in that it witnessed its author’s “skillful appropriation of the elements of both the native and the Western tradition” (398). One of its main literary merits was the “delineation of the subtle clashes” between the mother and the daughter; the depiction supplied “the most astonishing evidence of her dramatic power” (402). The tragedies of both the mother and the daughter cannot be easily explained, but two significant factors affecting the traditional Chinese household with complex interpersonal relationships were the seizure of power and money and the evil passion of the mother who marries a rich but sick husband at the cost of her youth and love (406–7). The significance of this plot will be elaborated in following sections.

Elfriede Jelinek and *Die Klavierspielerin*

Born in 1946, Elfriede Jelinek was the first Austrian writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, which occurred in 2004. Her mother, Olga Ilona Jelinek

(née Buchner, 1904–2000), came from a declining rich family. Growing up in her grandparents' villa, Ilona maintained her sense of higher station and ambition of restoring the family's fame. Due to this mindset, she treated Elfriede Jelinek very strictly. Growing up under a powerful and ambitious mother and a quiet and reclusive father, Friedrich Jelinek (1900–1969), who came from a working-class family, young Elfriede Jelinek, embarking on the career path designed by her mother, received her musical education in Vienna, the city of music and the cradle of music geniuses, where music is considered a means to achieve wealth, fame, and distinction.⁷ Ilona wished to improve her economic and social status as a petty bourgeois through her daughter becoming a world-renowned musician.⁸ However, this led to a strained mother-daughter relationship. After graduating from the Vienna Conservatory, Elfriede Jelinek went to the University of Vienna to study art history but had to abandon it because of an anxiety disorder that resulted in significant isolation. She received treatment at a mental hospital and started to write literary texts as a therapy for her psychological disorder. In 1983, she published her most controversial work, *Die Klavierspielerin*, which was “ein autobiographisch tingierter Roman um eine problematische Mutter-Tochter-Beziehung” (Kriegleder 531). Besides *Die Klavierspielerin*, Elfriede Jelinek gained international esteem as a novelist based on works such as *Die Ausgesperrten* (1980) and *Lust* (1989). The 2001 film adapted from it, directed by the Austrian director Michael Haneke and starring Isabelle Huppert in the title role, further enhanced Elfriede Jelinek's international fame. However, even after the Nobel Prize in 2004, Elfriede Jelinek's texts are generally more admired than read due to their complicated syntactic structures and artistic symbols.

Throughout her writing career, Elfriede Jelinek discussed sexual, political, and feminist issues, which have drawn researchers' attention (see Pontzen; Jäger). Matthias Luserke pointed out that together with *Die Klavierspielerin*, Elfriede Jelinek's works radically attacked the patriarchal control over the female through sexuality and language. The sadomasochism and voyeurism in *Die Klavierspielerin* are usually interpreted as the heroine's attempts at identification and resistance (see Mahler-Bungers; Maltzan; Hoffmann).

Like Elfriede Jelinek's own mother, the mother of Erika Kohut, the protagonist of *Die Klavierspielerin*, imposes absolutist control over her daughter's daily life and forces her daughter to play piano, in the hopes of ascending in social rank. As Wynfrid Kriegleder has pointed out:

Die Geschichte der Erika Kohut ist jedoch weniger das individualpsychologische Porträt einer gescheiterten Künstlerin als vielmehr die Auseinandersetzung mit den sprachlich vorgegebenen gesellschaftlichen Unterdrückungsmechanismen, denen die Protagonistin nur die Selbstzerstörung entgegensetzen kann. (531)

Similarly, Barbara Kosta has stressed that “Jelinek looks at the cultural figuring and the socially inscribed structures that perpetuate a relationship of domination and subservience” (219). Kosta concludes that neither the mother nor the daughter can be cured or salvaged unless the family structure created by the Western culture is conceived anew. Given Elfriede Jelinek’s significant concern about society, this paper will elucidate specifically the social context that influences the perceptions of both mother and daughter.

Controlling Mothers

Ch’i-ch’iao (七巧) in *The Golden Cangue* and Mrs. Kohut in *Die Klavierspielerin* control their daughters’ lives from a place of selfish, egoistic desire. What fundamental reasons are there for their cruel and insane manipulation of their daughters? This paper tries to answer this question using Adler’s theory as a foundation. Adler maintained that “[a] mother is related with her children, with her husband, and with the whole social life around her” (*What Life Should Mean to You* 125). In other words, the mother is shaped by her experiences within society. This paper analyzes Ch’i-ch’iao and Mrs. Kohut in the context of their specific social backgrounds. Their backstories illuminate why their relationships with their daughters are problematic.

First, neither Ch’i-ch’iao nor Mrs. Kohut has previously had positive dealings or relationships with men. This explains the women’s constant hostility toward men and why they forbid their daughters from becoming intimate with men. Ch’i-ch’iao was born to a poor family that ran a sesame oil shop. Throughout her youth, she was vigorous, witty, bold, and vulgar, and she loved flirting with the energetic young men in her neighborhood. Later on, however, she was forced into an arranged marriage with the second son of the rich and respectable Jiang (姜) family. Her husband had tuberculosis and osteomalacia. The practice of marriage arrangement was, and still is, seldom based on a woman’s happiness. Instead, it is designed with mutually beneficial (or “win-win”) results in mind, the most common being economic and

social gains. The female body and sexuality are commercialized for the exchange of materialistic profits. With this backstory, one can understand how Ch'i-ch'iao's perceptions of the female body, passion, marriage, and money became distorted. This marriage induces pain and little pleasure in her life.

The fact that Ch'i-ch'iao has given birth to two children implies that she has had sex with her husband. However, her sexual passion goes unsatisfied due to her husband's deteriorating health. She wants a man with an energetic body and subsequently develops a crush on Chi-tse (季澤), her husband's younger brother, who is already married. Chi-tse is "[a] robust youth, tending toward plumpness, . . . [had] chubby bright red cheeks, glistening dark eyebrows, and moist black eyes" (GC 182). However, Ch'i-ch'iao knows only too well that Chi-tse is a libertine who squanders money on prostitutes. Thus, when her husband passes away and she inherits the property, she sees through his displays of tenderness, as he desires not her but her money. Whenever he is forced to choose between love and money, Ch'i-ch'iao always chooses the latter. Throughout her life, she often feels insecure. She concludes that all men's attentions and affections are nothing but a ploy to get at her money. This conclusion is obviously based on personal experience, given that her arranged marriage has resembled little more than a business deal for rank and property. Because her own marriage has been miserable and devastating, she does not hesitate to destroy her son's marriage and her daughter's engagement.

To keep the only remaining man her life, her son Ch'ang-pai (長白), at her side, she encourages him to smoke opium.⁹ She inquires about the details of his marital sex life and conveys them to all their relatives and servants, causing deep humiliation to his innocent wife. The wife's health fails, and she finally passes away from "an insane world, a husband not like a husband, a mother-in-law not like a mother-in-law" (GC 216). The most pitiable victim of Ch'i-ch'iao is her daughter Ch'ang-an (長安). Ch'i-ch'iao lectures Ch'ang-an at length about how "men are all rotten without exception" and only seek a woman's money (GC 207). Later, she destroys the relationship between Ch'ang-an and T'ung Shih-fang (童世舫), as we shall see in the following section.

Similarly, in *Die Klavierspielerin*, Mrs. Kohut's husband is unhealthy, both physically and psychologically, and is hospitalized in a remote sanitarium in lower Austria (K 110). As a result he is absent from family life. Mrs. Kohut's ambitions of wealth and fame cannot be realized by marriage. Her erotic desi-

res are not satisfied either. Ironically, Mrs. Kohut isolates her daughter from the outside world, and from men in particular, because she believes that men are useless in providing economic and social security, as her own experience has shown her. As the narrator tells us,

Sie [Erika] wird vor Einflüssen bewahrt und Versuchungen nicht ausgesetzt. . . . Mutter und Oma, die Frauenbrigade, steht Gewehr bei Fuß, um sie vor dem männlichen Jäger, der draußen lauert, abzuschildern und den Jäger notfalls handgreiflich zu verwarnen. . . . Dem Jungtier sollen nicht Liebe, nicht Lust etwas anhaben können.
(K 40)

However, Mrs. Kohut and her mother can't help but admire Erika's attractive male cousin when he spends his summer holiday with them in the countryside (K 46–50). This young man, with his "prahlerischer Lebendigkeit und sportlicher Kenntnisse," brings life into their house (K 46). Because Mrs. Kohut has replaced her husband in the patriarchal role of the family, she is under the illusion that she can order and control everyone around her. However, he refuses to succumb to her manipulation, which annoys Mrs. Kohut (K 52).

Having unsuccessfully used her body and sexuality for economic and social gain, Mrs. Kohut changes her strategy and manipulates Erika's life to realize her dream of rising to a higher station. In the end, Erika becomes a victim of Mrs. Kohut's ambition and mania for control, a topic discussed in detail in the next section.

Ch'i-ch'iao and Mrs. Kohut sacrifice their bodies in the hope of gratifying their sexual, economic, and social desires. Their husbands, however, do not fully meet their expectations. They feel disappointed, resentful, and angry about the loss of their erotic capital, a topic to be further discussed in the following section. Over time, these compounded negative feelings distort their interpersonal skills and their relationships with their daughters.

Second, social systems inevitably shape the perceptions of Ch'i-ch'iao and Mrs. Kohut. Ruth Wodak and Muriel Schulz emphasize that the family is not "an autonomous social sub-system" and that social conditions would influence "the division and definition of roles within the family" (12). Moreover, according to Adler, "[e]ach one is in mental, emotional and nutritive dependence upon his immediate environment on the earth and in the cosmos" (*Problems of Neurosis* 36). These statements underline that individuals are products of social forces. All family members are susceptible to social and

cultural influences. However, in *The Golden Cangue* and *Die Klavierspielerin*, external forces are detrimental to women. More precisely, women are materialized and commercialized.

Ch'i-ch'iao grew up in a feudal society in which women were required to bind their feet in tight bandages. Consequently, their feet would stop growing at around 10 centimeters. Wiesner-Hanks categorized the ancient Chinese practice of foot binding as one of the extreme customs and norms that restricted women's mobility and as a form of gender inequality (103). The earliest date of foot binding in China is unknown, but it is widely agreed that the practice became popular during the Bei Song (北宋, Northern Song) dynasty (960–1127). After having their feet bound, women found it difficult to walk and work. Therefore, foot binding was increasingly criticized as a cruel and inhuman means of depriving women of their liberty. By the end of the Qing Dynasty (1616–1912), it was the consensus of Chinese society that foot-binding was a backward practice. When mainland China became the Republic of China (1912–1949) and later the People's Republic of China (from 1949 to present), this practice was officially forbidden.

When Ch'i-ch'iao's daughter Ch'ang-an is thirteen years old, this practice is already considered inhuman and uncondusive to attracting a marriage partner. However, Ch'i-ch'iao, herself a victim of feudalism, forces Ch'ang-an to bind her feet, which everyone finds ridiculous and cruel, including the older servants and the older ladies from traditional families. One year later, Ch'i-ch'iao loses her interest in binding her daughter's feet, but the damage has already been done. This plotline implies that Ch'i-ch'iao stubbornly isolates herself from society because it is undergoing dramatic change. She is uncertain and fearful of the new cultural mindset and lifestyle.

The social setting of Jelinek's *Die Klavierspielerin* shows that people strive to use all possible capital to enhance their lives. The term *capital* denotes tangible commodities through to intangible properties. In addition to economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital, some of the key concepts of Bourdieu, Catherine Hakim has added erotic capital, which generally refers to the body. Eventually, capital includes every and any means possible to improve one's life. Not only is the female body materialized and commercialized, so too is art. As a typical member of the petty bourgeoisie, Mrs. Kohut believes that her daughter will become a world-renowned pianist and thus raise the family's economic and social status. "Für Erika wählt die Mutter früh einen in irgendeiner Form künstlerischen Beruf, damit sich aus der mühevoll errunge-

nen Feinheit Geld herauspressen läßt, während die Durchschnittsmenschen bewundernd um die Künstlerin herumstehen, applaudieren" (K 29). Driven by ambition, Mrs. Kohut is determined to control Erika until the day she dies: "Solange die Mutter noch lebt und Erikas Zukunft webt, kommt für das Kind nur eins in Frage: die absolute Weltspitze" (K 30). Mrs. Kohut believes that the suppression of sexual desire, or *libido* in the terminology of Freud, is a precondition to the development of civilization and must be transferred. Thus, her daughter's libido should be transformed through dedication to music.

According to Adler, mothers have the duty to give their children "[c]ourage, an optimistic attitude, common sense, and the feeling of being at home," which are indispensable qualities for children to "face advantages and disadvantages with equal firmness" (*Problems of Neurosis* 48–49). However, mothers in *The Golden Cangue* and *Die Klavierspielerin* are victims of their respective social systems. Instead of struggling against those systems that materialize and commercialize them, they act as accomplices by using the same means to manipulate their daughters and destroy their lives. The following section discusses the negative impacts of extreme maternal interference on their daughters' lives.

Destroyed Daughters

As Adler explained, the mother is the child's "first bridge to social life" (*What Life Should Mean to You* 120); further, "the art of motherhood is to give the child freedom and opportunity for success by its own efforts, so that it can establish its style of life and seek for its superiority in increasingly useful ways." The functions of motherhood are to help the child become independent and for the child to understand his or her surrounding environment. This enables the child to "develop social feeling, independence, and courage" and to learn how to interact and cooperate with other human beings (*Problems of Neurosis* 32). However, neither Ch'i-ch'iao nor Mrs. Kohut bestows freedom on their daughter. Nor do they attempt to connect their daughters to society. Although the daughters occasionally fight their mothers' irrational interventions, they never prevail.

On two occasions, Ch'ang-an has a chance to secure a completely different life. The first is via education. Ch'i-ch'iao sends Ch'ang-an to a middle school for girls, not because she sincerely wants her daughter to receive modern education but in order to compete with the sons and daughters of the Jiang family. As it is a boarding school, Ch'ang-an lives apart from her family

and her mother's detrimental control. After less than half a year, "her complexion turned ruddy and her wrists and ankles grew thicker" (GC 209). This physical improvement implies that the daughter's mental state and life as a whole are better when her mother is not around. However, after Ch'i-ch'iao rudely scolds the headmaster at school, Ch'ang-an feels so ashamed that she drops out. With that decision, she gives up the chance to escape from her mother's perpetual surveillance and control. Living with her mother again, Ch'ang-an "learned to make trouble, play little tricks, and interfere with the running of the house. She often fell out with her mother, but she looked and sounded more and more like her" (GC 211).

Ch'ang-an's timidity is caused by her feelings of inferiority, and her sense of impotence. Adler elucidated three reasons for inferiority: defective organs, being spoiled, and being hated (*What Life Should Mean to You* 33–34). In other words, the reasons can be physical or psychic in nature. This feeling can be compensated for, however, by gaining superiority in other areas of one's life and thus covering up one's sense of incompetence. As Adler wrote, "under favourable external circumstances, or as a result of compensation, the feeling of inferiority of the organ may be hidden or even overcome" (*Study of Organ Inferiority* 26). For instance, a disabled student will feel less inferior if he or she receives adequate support from classmates and teachers and if the school campus is equipped with necessary facilities (favorable external circumstances). Such a student will also feel more confident if he or she excels at something, such as art (superiority in other areas of life). It is difficult for Ch'ang-an to feel superior in any area of her life because of her limited education. Exacerbating the situation is her mother's constant malicious interference.

Ch'ang-an does not receive care or respect at home. According to Adler, the hated child tends "to escape and to get at a safe distance from others." Some of the usual symptoms include "[c]ruelty, slyness, and cowardliness" (*What Life Should Mean to You* 36). This feeling of inferiority and its corresponding symptoms are roused again when she falls in love for the first time; however, any chance of a successful resolution to that relationship is (of course) ruined by her mother.

At the age of almost thirty, Ch'ang-an is presented with another chance to escape her mother's interference and potentially chart a new life direction. This comes via her relationship with T'ung Shih-fang. Although he was educated in Germany, Shih-fang prefers the tranquility and innocence of tra-

ditional Chinese women. He is drawn to Ch'ang-an's timidity and quietness. In essence, he is fascinated by Chinese tradition, which is something he left behind several years before. Ch'ang-an firmly decides to transform herself. She smiles quietly, tones down her aggressiveness, and tries to quit smoking opium. However, Ch'i-ch'iao cannot bear seeing her daughter happy. Again, she interferes, this time by telling Shih-fang that Ch'i-ch'iao, the "quiet and demure well-born Chinese girl," is, in effect, "an opium smoker" and that her brother has a concubine at home (GC 232). Shih-fang feels disillusioned, not only with his relationship with Ch'ang-an but with the whole of Chinese tradition.

In the end, thanks to her mother's treachery, Ch'ang-an gives up on her dreams of marriage and a better life. Unlike her mother, who had used her body in exchange for money, Ch'ang-an goes to another extreme. Upon her mother's death, Ch'ang-an inherits part of her property. As the omniscient third-person narrator tells, Ch'ang-an is seen with a man on the street who buys her gifts with money that is presumably Ch'ang-an's. The daughter Ch'ang-an gives up her hope of receiving genuine love from men, so she decides to buy it instead. This gesture is in effect a self-illusion that a man loves her and buys her present. Ch'ang-an uses her inheritance to build up this illusion. Thus, unlike her mother, whose body and desire were purchased with money, the daughter uses money to buy a man's body to fulfill her own sexual desires. Superficially, the situations are reversed. Their essence remains the same, however, in that the human body and emotions are treated as commodities.

Considering context, Ch'ang-an grew up in a transitional age when Chinese tradition clashed with the modern lifestyle streaming in from the Western world; it is Shih-fang who represents that world. However, the new modern way of thinking is not strong enough to combat the backward traditions of the previous generations. Even though Ch'i-ch'iao is a victim of feudalism, her paranoia is deeply embedded in her, causing her to take revenge on the social system by annihilating her own offspring. Therefore, although signs of a potential better life do exist for Ch'ang-an, her mother steps in to ruin them. Her mother represents both an evil mind and the lingering negative effects of feudalism.

Similar to Ch'ang-an, Erika is also a victim of her mother. "Die Mutter hat Erika schließlich zu dem gemacht, was sie jetzt ist" (K 17). Because of her mother's rules and disciplinary methods, Erika's body becomes "ein einziger großer Kühlschrank, in dem sich die Kunst gut hält" (K 26). Their symbiotic

mother-daughter relationship hinders Erika's search for *herself*. According to the Austrian-American psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut, "[t]he *self*, the core of our personality, has various constituents which we acquire in the interplay with those persons in our earliest childhood environment whom we experience as self-objects" (414; emphasis in original). Unfortunately, Mrs. Kohut is not an empathic caregiver and therefore not a good role model for Erika to identify with.

Under the stringent and inhuman control of Mrs. Kohut, Erika spends her childhood practicing the piano; she is isolated from the outside world—and from men in particular. At the beginning of the novel, Erika purchases a beautiful modern dress, which infuriates Mrs. Kohut, for whom lovely clothing and men represent external distractions that will lead Erika astray. In her mind, Erika needs to focus solely on the piano because that skill may lead eventually improve the family's economic and social conditions. Mrs. Kohut cuts up Erika's new dress, an action more insidiously aimed at destroying Erika's desire to develop her own style, independent personality, and sovereignty over her own body and life.

Mrs. Kohut knows nothing about music or art. For her, music is but a pragmatic tool for her personal ambition. In the eyes of both Mrs. Kohut and Erika's students, "ist Musik der Aufstieg aus den Tiefen der Arbeiterschaft in die Höhen künstlerischer Sauberkeit" (K 35). Obviously, their attitude is broadly shared across society. Since childhood, Erika has been a prisoner to her mother's ambition. She is not considered a human being with her own soul and desires; rather, she is a tool for climbing the social ladder.

Parents give children "their first idea of marriage and the partnership of the sexes" (Adler, *What Life Should Mean to You* 133). Erika's perception of gender and marriage is based on her parent's modeling, whereby the mother holds the dominant and patriarchal role conventionally taken by the father. Erika's subjective interpretation of her surroundings is partly attributable to her long-accustomed captivity under maternal absolutism. This also explains the nature of her public and private selves and the peculiar ways she chooses to release her sexual repression; On the one hand, Erika leads an open life in which she is a strict and harsh piano teacher; on the other hand, in her secret life she satisfies her erotic desires through extreme means.

According to Freud's notions of sexuality, Erika is a sexual pervert. Freud maintained that sexual desire is not predetermined but shaped. From puberty onwards, a person must strive to free him- or herself of parental constraints

in order to grow up into an adult and become a member of society. Marion Bönninghausen has written that Erika's personality, as demonstrated by her sadistic behaviors toward her conservatory students and her masochistic sexual fantasies, was a product of maternal oppression (2016: 162). Erika's erotic desire, constrained since she was an adolescent, finds expression through unconventional sex. Even when Erika is in her late thirties, which is when the story begins, she still sleeps in the same bed as her mother. To satisfy her long-repressed yearnings, she watches female strippers perform, becomes a voyeur who hides in dark forests to watch couples have sex, and uses razors to cut her legs.

Eventually, she becomes a younger version of her mother and deals with interpersonal relationships through oppression and control. To her, love and intimacy can only be felt through extreme practices like physical violence and sadomasochism. Adler explained that masochistic fantasies derived from "the desire to exclude a realistic sexual objective with its possibilities of defeat and humiliations" and that the aim of forming a real masochistic relationship was "to establish a great distance from normal behavior and natural conditions" (*Problems of Neurosis* 144). Beneath her masochism, she experiences an acute fear of failing to form and maintain a normal relationship with Walter, an engineering student. Another example of Erika's extreme behavior is when she hysterically climbs on top of her mother and kisses her (*K* 277). Well aware that sex is excruciatingly taboo for her mother, Erika knows that her actions will horrify her mother. This act shows Erika's desperate need to rebel against her mother's repression.

Compared with Ch'ang-an in *The Golden Cangue*, who has a brief engagement with the sincere Shih-fang, Erika can be seen as less lucky in that Walter's intentions are solely to use Erika for seduction practice. To draw Erika's attention, Walter proactively discusses music with her; music functions as a tool for him, just as it does for Mrs. Kohut. Nevertheless, they use it for different purposes. For Walter, music serves to improve his flirting skills, which outweighs its artistic value. In the terminology of Freud, Erika is Walter's sexual object but his sexual aim is not love. From the outset, Walter wants to consume her body and heart and then discard her. She is but a preparatory exercise to seducing other younger women in the future (*K* 78). "Er wird tun was sie sagt und wünscht, daraus für spätere ernsthaftere Lieben zu profitieren" (*K* 77). Obviously, Erika is never cherished as a human

being with a soul. Her sole value lies in her body, which is a tool for others' ambitions, both at home and in society.

Reasons behind Daughters' Tragedies

Adler acknowledged that environment plays an important role in shaping an individual's personality; however, he also stressed the vital function of the creative self. He believed that this creative aspect could alleviate an individual's feelings of inferiority and serve as a source of motivation. As Adler stated:

No experience is a cause of success or failure. We do not suffer from the shock of our experience—the so-called trauma—but we make out of them just what suits our purposes. We are self-determined by the meaning we give to our experiences. . . . Meanings are not determined by situations, but we determine ourselves by the meanings we give to situations. (*What Life Should Mean to You* 14)

On this basis, "Adler rejected the very foundation of Freud's psychoanalysis—repressed memories of traumatic experiences" (Hergenhahn and Henley 523). For Adler, individuals are able to positively deal with traumas, rather than being destroyed passively by them. Therefore, despite the detrimental influences of their mothers and absent fathers, both Ch'ang-an and Erika could have shaken off their traumatic memories and lead a different life. Why didn't they do so? What restricted them? This paper argues that the social and familial constraints facing the daughters were too severe. Moreover, they weren't mentally strong enough to combat their mothers. Furthermore, the social backdrop did not support them enough to make the bolder moves required to find freedom beyond their mothers. Neither the internal nor external conditions were favorable for Ch'ang-an and Erika.

In attempting to apply Adler's notion of compensation, it is obvious that the external circumstances surrounding Ch'ang-an only enforce her sense of inferiority. And she cannot compensate through achievement in other fields of life because at the time, career opportunities for women were so limited; feudalistic remnants held Chinese women back.

Erika's environment restricts her too. She lives in Vienna, where music is as valued as a tool for social climbing as it is for its artistic merits. Erika's attempts at finding compensation through music fall short of the expectations her and her mother have. She was to have been an outstanding pianist,

but to her mother's disappointment, she ends up as an average piano teacher. Music cannot boost her confidence enough to overcome her sense of inferiority. That she was forced into playing by her mother certainly didn't help matters either. For Erika, her doomed relationship with Walter, who represents society's materialization of the female body with art, drives her back to the cold shackles of her mother's love.

Conclusion

This paper compares the problematic mother-daughter relationships depicted in *The Golden Cangue* and *Die Klavierspielerin* using Adler's theory of individual psychology as a framework. Whereas *The Golden Cangue* focuses on the psychological turmoil of the mother, *Die Klavierspielerin* investigates mother-daughter conflict from the perspective of the daughter's distorted mindset. However, the troubles that haunt the mothers and the daughters are similar. One of those problems arises from the mothers' distorted mentality toward men, money, and marriage, which derives from their own disappointing experiences. Gender roles and inequality, which are intrinsic to the social context, shape the mothers' outlooks. Their maternal influence over their daughters is enormous because through their mothers, they observe and evaluate other human beings. Whether the daughters can successfully participate and merge into society is by and large dependent upon the mother's modeling role and attitude toward the surrounding environment. However, Ch'ang-an and Erika both fail on this score due to their mothers' extreme manipulation and interference as well as society's cruel ways of materializing and commercializing its female members.

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Notes

1. The English translation of *Die Klavierspielerin*, by Joachim Neugroschel, was published in 1999 as *The Piano Teacher*.
2. For a concise explanation of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, see Griffith and Powers 11. For a brief account of Adler's connection and disagreement with Freud, as well as the major points of his theory, see Kardas 385–91; Shiraev 269–73. Heinz L. Ansbacher and Rowena R. Ansbacher contributed a systematic and synthesized introduction to Adler's theories in 1964.
3. Deleuze and Guattari criticized this Freudian triangle in their book *Anti-Oedipus* (first French edition published 1972).
4. Eileen CHANG recalled this experience in her essay entitled "Si Yu" (《私語》, July 1944). Andrew F. Jones translated it as "Whispers" (147–61).
5. See the second section entitled "Money" of Eileen CHANG's essay "Tong Yan Wu Ji" (《童言無忌》, May 1944). For the English translation of this essay, see Andrew J. Jones, "From the Mouth of Babies" (1–14).
6. Eileen CHANG used this attack as the decisive factor in her novella *Qing Cheng Zhi Lian* (《傾城之戀》, Love in a fallen city, 1943). The background of this story is mainly Hong Kong. The fall of Hong Kong functions as a vital external force for the marriage between the hero, a rich libertine, and the heroine who has divorced her husband because of domestic violence and longs for marrying a rich man so as to liberate herself from her family.
7. Uta Degner's introduction (2–8) is a good reference for Elfriede Jelinek's family background and artistic context. For a detailed biography of Jelinek, see Mayer and Koberg. On Jelinek's literary features, see Janz; Lücke. For a succinct analysis of *Die Klavierspielerin*, see Tacke.
8. According to the brief definition in the website of DWDS (Das Wortauskunftssystem zur deutschen Sprache in Geschichte und Gegenwart), *Kleinbürger*, members of *Kleinbürgertum*, refers to "Angehöriger der Mittelschicht zwischen Proletariat und Bourgeoisie." Pierre Bourdieu analyzed the tastes of the *petite bourgeoisie* in his book *Distinction* (first French edition published 1979). Heinz Schilling wrote that "Familie, Lokalismus and Eigentum sind Leitkategorien der kleinbürgerlichen Kultur" (31). In *Die Klavierspielerin*, Mrs. Kohut and Erika try to save money in order to purchase their own apartment in a better area of Vienna instead of renting the shabby one in which they live.
9. "All these years he had been the only man in her life. Only with him there was no danger of his being after her money—it was his anyway. But being her son, he amounted to less than half a man. And even the half she could not keep, now that he was married" (GC 213–14).

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