

Postsocialist Bakhtin Burlesque:  
YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES  
performing ‘Cunnilingus in North Korea’

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The creation of a World of words

In the beginning, there were two words. Digital or discrete values, black and white, zeros and ones. And these words turned into flesh. Alternatively, as the Bible has it, there was Darkness. Until our Hero, God, said: “Let there be Light”. Then there was a binary world with a Hero (God) and an Author—perhaps a demiurge—who found it a good place for creating the beginning of the World—of net.art. Thus, during the early 1990s, the so-called *heroic period* of net.art came about.<sup>1</sup>

This beginning of the present narrative mimicks the layout of Mikhail Bakhtin’s essay “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity”,<sup>2</sup> which runs parallel with my aim. To encompass the full potential of Bakhtinian dialogism, it purports to cover nothing less than the entire world of words. I will be content with less however, and settle for an introduction and outline of the main characters in the (metaphorical) Universe of net.art and the rules they laid down for themselves. It should be noted that each and every time a breach against the rules in one specific part of this World also meant something special, and that breaking them seemed to be an intentional act.

Further, I will go on to make an analysis of the piece *Cunnilingus in North Korea*.<sup>3</sup>

So, at the beginning of time, net.art was made by a few artists around the globe, such as Heath Bunting, Vuk Cosic, Olia Lialina, Alexei Shulgin, sub-REAL, among others. Net.art was politically radical, anarchist and oppositional, and best of all—it was made to be *used* (in distinction to being *looked at*) from a home computer. First, for technical reasons, all net.art had to be made for fast and simple download. This privileged a certain strictness of design. If you had a 56K (kilo-bit) modem; you could be considered lucky.<sup>4</sup>

Having passed the stage of technological demands, the alphanumeric black-and-white pieces turned into a style and an aesthetic expression on its own that came to signify activism, strict norms and anti-capitalist regimes and a generally ascetic attitude. One thing these artists had in common was

that they avoided using the Flash tool, since it made the producer (they preferred to avoid using the professional title “artist”) dependent on a market brand—the firm Adobe. This decision limited expressions to digital, discrete, flat compositions. This preference brought them very close to the punk ethos of DIY (do it yourself). But it still worked best within the strict boundaries of the net.art-world, where arguments over *firstness* broke out regularly.

The work of Jodi.org (the duo Joan Heemskerk and Dirk Paesmans) and the 0100101110101101.org (pseudonym for Eva and Franco Mattes) probably made some newbie computer users think that their machines were crashed, as well as showing what they went for with the “.org”, which should be interpreted as a statement against the commercial “.com”. But not YHCHI.com. They ridiculed the interactivity of net.art, by comparing it with channel browsing. And their way of avoiding heavy pictures was omitting them altogether. They wanted streaming artworks in order to compete with TV, in terms of how fun it could be.

Now, they have obviously confronted all these “rules” for net.art head on—if not with their eschatological witty-dirty; “nether” as the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) calls it.<sup>5</sup> By crossing every literary border, Bakhtin would say, the piece gains its meanings through dialogism—in terms of genre, topics, subject perspective, etcetera. YHCHI.com, or YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES, is the *nom-de-plume* of a duo that saw the light of day back in 1999, when Korean Young-Hae Chang and US-born Marc Voge started the company in Seoul. This commercial, dirty (in the sense that money and art should not be mentioned in the same sentence), aspect of their work is best understood as part of their series of value reversals; since it is not accepted to speak about “art” as just any other commodity. Yet they do it.

### Enter Mikhail Bakhtin and the Burlesque

Here I am going to analyze one of their works of Net art—as they refer to their own products.<sup>6</sup> Most of these consist of videos produced as Flash-animations, united by their typeface, *Monaco*. The cultural producer behind this multiple-artwork(s) is, as I already said, YHCHI. The team often use a mix of a music and strictly alphanumeric signs, with figure-0s and letter-Os that look the same, with an oblique line within the “Ø”. They also present themselves rather provocatively in an irreverent tone of folksy “laughter culture” that Bakhtin would have recognized.

# LØNG LIVE

# NØRTH KØREAN

# CUNNILINGUS!

YHCHI enacts pieces of dramatized texts that I find interesting in view of the topic I will discuss here: *political humor*. In the end, I hope to have shown that what Bakhtin referred to as an analysis of grotesque realism offers an apt understanding of the frightening nuclear power and failing communist state of North Korea—and, of course, the so-called “comfort women” that Japan kept during the Second World War. But at the very least, the Dear Leader succeeded in keeping the North Korean citizens sexually satisfied—a national priority, privileging communist women over their bourgeois counterparts in the South.<sup>7</sup>

Political oppression is probably the most effective way to provoke any people to seek comical release. Humor and laughter have always been popular tools for dealing with threatening rulers by symbolically dethroning them. Mikhail Bakhtin analyzed this phenomenon as “grotesque” or “carnavalesque realism.”<sup>8</sup> During Carnival, society returned to behavior associated with harvesting time in ancient Rome (Saturnalian feasts), and in Christian Latin terms bid meat (*carne*) farewell (*vale*) in time for Lent. This behavior implied the reversal of the official status of rulers and ruled: everything in the established hierarchies should be turned upside down. This socially sanctioned counter-order, where values were inversed, lasted for the duration of the festival according to a strict protocol. Then everything went back to normal. There is some overlapping between the Carnival in Bakhtin’s sense, and the *carnavalesque discourse*.<sup>9</sup> This is, for example, the discourse of *grotesque realism*. As Muhammad A. Badarneh (2011) observes, political jokes “contain an element of *dialogism*” [Italics in original], which means not only that

we interact with others' use of language, but we also express our own meanings through using linguistic turns that are "ideologically saturated".<sup>10</sup>

But also in present days, according to Badarneh, "the juxtaposition of the serious and the comic" retains an important symbolic meaning, allowing the people to have a good laugh behind the backs of their oppressors.<sup>11</sup> Under these conditions, jokes become authentic folk humor.<sup>12</sup> It is perhaps forbidden in the mass media, but it manages nevertheless to find its way into the public space without names or origins—it is just everywhere. Political jokes are of a less universal kind, according to Mulkay.<sup>13</sup> This means that they might not be shared by all, and it might even be a bit risqué to drop a joke in the public space. But in fact, opinion-wise, art worlds are tiny. And the genre of "Net art" is so narrow in its political and general outlook as to be predictable. (However, I believe it can safely be said that for obvious reasons no North Korean citizen will ever come to see the piece that I will analyze below.)

But on a more serious note, *Cunnilingus in North Korea* can also be understood as a recognition of all the Korean women who were forced to become prostitutes, or, to use Japanese euphemism *ianfu* (慰安婦), from *ian + fu/bu* adult female "who provided sexual services to 'comfort and entertain' (ian/wian) the warrior."<sup>14</sup>

Imagine a work of art called *Cunnilingus in North Korea* that shows no images of such activities—only verbal ones.<sup>15</sup> That which is withheld from sight can certainly be more enticing than overt pornographic imagery. So, what is the point? It is exactly to rub this image in, with pseudo-scientific and mock-theoretical language, playing the Bakhtinian game of grotesque realism in literature—and in action. In the 1930s and 40s, the Korean women did not have much choice when the Japanese forces came. It took a long time before they dared tell the world. But seen as if through a soft lens, *Cunnilingus in North Korea* could offer some comfort in a reversal of how they were mistreated, humiliated and raped. This time, even though there is no certain evidence, we can imagine them getting to enjoy a good, kind, and loving partner.

## Cunnilingus in North Korea

The piece begins with a classical moving picture convention, counting down from 10 to 0. A drum sets off, its fast jazz-like beat filled in by the tones of a flute.<sup>16</sup> During the intro, in white letters on black strips, just like subtitles, the viewer sees the following words appearing on the screen:

THE FØLLØWING IS A TEXT THAT NØRTH KØREA'S DEAR LEADER KIM  
JØNG-IL ASKED YØUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES TØ PRESENT.

Why indeed should these two humble autonomous artists be trusted with a presentation by the leader of North Korea? In Bakhtin, high and low combine to form the most formidable *carnivalistic mésalliances*.<sup>17</sup> However, the text continues:

THANK YØU FOR INVITING ME TØ TALK TØ YØU ABOUT SEX AND  
GENDER IN NØRTH KØREA. DIALECTICAL SEX AND GENDER IS NØT  
JUST ØNE ØF MY INTELLECTUAL PASSIØNS. IT IS A TØP PRIORITY  
FØR THE ENTIRE NATIØN: SEX AND GENDER.

Indeed, a *top priority* for the *entire nation*. So, this piece performs the same operation as Mikhail Bakhtin, who distils *popular laughter* through his analysis of works by the sixteenth-century author François Rabelais: it purports to be the Dear Leader, Kim Jong-Il, speaking about his “intellectual passion” in the rigorous distinction between “sex and gender”. This proposition is mockingly made in perfectly contemporary academic language: “dialectical sex and gender” is hardly a phrase that resembles anything that would have been available to him.

... IT GØES WITHØUT SAYING  
THAT SEXISM IS LINKED TØ CAPITALISM.  
IT ALSØ GØES WITHØUT SAYING THAT  
SEXUAL EQUALITY IS INHERENT IN  
MARXISM. WHAT IS UNCLEAR IS  
WHETHER BY DEFINITIØN ALL CØMMUNIST  
NATIØNS HAVE SEXUAL EQUALITY.  
THE ANSWER,  
I'M SØRRY TØ SAY,  
IS NØ

As the words of the piece go on, one recognizes the voice of Nina Simone (or, to use her given name: Eunice Kathleen Waymon, the black American woman famous for performing civil rights songs) synching to the beat with rhythmically pulsating words, marking time with the music.<sup>18</sup> So accompanied by Nina Simone’s seductive voice, the lyrics she performs are as follows:

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. All right, yeah.

This first line is sung to the accompaniment of the words below appearing on the screen:

NØ. NØ, NØ, NØ, NØ.

Did someone mention dialectic? Well, here we have a straightforward case of dialectical aesthetics, a “yeah” mirrored back as a “no”. And the black and white letters too, of course.

BUT HERE IN NØRTH KØREA,  
WE HAVE SUCCEDED IN  
CREATING SEXUAL EQUALITY

[...]

A CØNSTANT DIALECTIC HAS  
REVEALED TØ THE MASSES, IN  
THE MØST PRACTICAL AND  
INTELLECTUAL FASHIØN, THAT  
THE MØST IMPØRTANT MANIFES-  
TATIØN ØF DIALECTICAL SEX  
AND GENDER IS SEX ITSELF.

PURE,  
UNADULTERED,  
UNINHIBITED,  
UTTERLY FREE SEX.

To be on the safe side, this last line is repeated three times. Then Ms Simone’s voice again, on time with the piece: “yeah”.

YEAH.  
I REALIZE THAT  
SØUTH KØREANS  
BLUSH AT THE  
MERE THØUGHT  
ØF FREE SEX.

At this point, beginning with the word “blush”, the screen progressively turns red.

...  
YØU ARE, IN  
FACT, SLAVES  
TO BØURGEØIS  
SEXUAL  
INHIBITIØN.  
...

By contrast, South Korea is a capitalist society, for sure. However, it does not matter, since as the Dear Leader muses,

MY INSTINCT IS TØ SAY  
CØMMUNIST SEXUAL FREEDØM,  
BUT, QUITE FRANKLY, SEX  
TRANSCENDS, THRØUGH  
DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM,  
THE FRØNTIERS ØF ALL NATIONØS,  
CØMMUNIST ØR CAPITALIST.

...  
HERE THEN  
ARE THE REAL  
ISSUES IN  
SEXUAL FREEDØM:  
ALL RIGHT.

Here Ms Simone sings “all right”, in synch.

ØRGASM,  
ØR RATHER,  
ITS RELATIVE  
ABSENCE IN THE  
BØURGEØIS FEMALE;  
FEMALE  
MULTIPLE ØRGASM  
THRØUGH ØRAL SEX -  
THAT IS,  
CUNNILINGUS  
[...]  
GIVE IT TØ HER  
IN AN EFFECTIVE  
PRØLØNGED  
AND LØVING MANNER;

Here *See-Line Woman* seriously begins:

See-line woman  
She drink coffee  
She drink tea  
And then go home  
See-line woman

See-line woman  
Dressed in green  
Wears silk stockings  
With golden seams  
See-line woman

At the word “green”, the screen, as you have probably already guessed, turns green.

FEMALE MULIPLE  
ØRGASM WITH  
SEX TØYS  
  
SUCH AS VIBRATØRS, AND  
THE BØURGEØIS FEMALE’S  
UNNATURAL INHIBITIØNS

Beginning with “such”, the lines of this last screen are underlined with yellow.

...  
IT WØULD BE IMPØSSIBLE,  
IN THE CØNTEXT ØF THIS  
ADDRESS, TØ DISCUSS  
ALL THE FEMALE SEXUAL  
INHIBITIØNS THAT ARE  
MALE GENERATED  
  
AND ENDEMIC  
TØ CAPITALISM.  
SUFFICE TØ  
SAY THAT  
  
WE NØRTH  
KØREANS  
PITY YØU

See-line woman  
Dressed in red

By the word “red”, the screen mockingly refers to the Dear Leader’s pity for the “blushing” bourgeois South Korean citizens by turning red.

Make a man lose his head  
See-line woman

So, “NØRTH KØREA’S DEAR LEADER”, thanks for an invitation to lecture on the theme of female sexual pleasure in North Korea—equal to cunnilingus.

See-line woman  
Black dress on  
For a thousand dollars  
She wail and she moan  
See-line woman



Wiggle wiggle  
 Turn like a cat  
 Wink at a man  
 And he wink back  
 Now child  
 See-line woman

Empty his pockets  
 And wreck his days  
 Make him love her  
 And she'll fly away

See-line woman  
 Take it on out now  
 Empty his pockets  
 And she wreck his days  
 And she make him love her  
 Then she sure fly away  
 She got a black dress on  
 For a thousand dollars  
 She wail and she moan...

The beats also work as a measurement of sexual arousal, of a game with fertility that is played for the sheer pleasure of it. Burlesque laughter seeps in.

But the political joke gets even coarser on the scatological register. Thus, in speaking of the dialectics of sexual pleasure through oral sex, *Cunnilingus in North Korea* uses a highly unlikely gender-philosophical jargon. But there is no need to quote any psychoanalyst saying that sex (real, or in discourse) substitutes for power. Especially not with respect to a short and plump person such as the Dear Leader, who has access to nuclear arms. When we talk about power, we tend to express it as sex. Sex is power—and power is sexy.

South Koreans probably do not feel that way. We can only imagine what it must be like to live in South Korea under the constant threat of hostile actions from North Korea.<sup>19</sup> The Second World War that continued into the bitter struggle between the two Koreas has not officially ended—it is formally only a ceasefire. Since 2018, tourists have been allowed go there, but that does not erase the tragedy of all the people who have been shot and killed.<sup>20</sup>

By now, our “North Korea” in the universe of YHCHI.com has, however, become thoroughly genre-defined and properly sexualized. The current threat to strike the world with nuclear weapons is no news. The Dear Leader’s (may he live in eternity!) grandson certainly watches his tongue, so that he cannot be held to any promise to downscale his arsenal of nuclear

weapons on behalf of what he may or may not have said to the US president. On the contrary, he has made sure to starve his population to increase the reach of his nuclear missiles.

HERE IN THE  
NØRTH, WHERE  
LIFE CAN BE  
DIFFICULT,

WE SEE SEXUAL  
PLEASURE AS  
GETTING SØMETHING  
FØR NØTHING.

...

AND WE SEE PROLONGED  
SEXUAL PLEASURE  
AS GETTING A LØT  
AND GIVING A LØT,  
WITH ABSØLUTELY NØ  
CAPITALISTIC BARTERING.

...

IN NØRTH KØREA, ALL  
WØMEN KNØW THEY ARE  
THE EQUALS OF THEIR  
MALE PARTNERS.

AND, JUST AS  
IMPORTANT, THEIR  
MALE PARTNERS  
KNØW IT, TØØ.

What a beautiful piece of Hegelian master-slave dialectic!

...

MØST NØRTH  
KØREAN WØMEN  
ESPECIALLY  
ENJØY UP TØ  
AN HØUR ØR MØRE  
ØF CUNNILINGUS.

MØST NØRTH KØREAN MEN  
KNØW THIS, AND ENJØY  
GIVING PRØLØNGED  
CUNNILINGUS AS MUCH  
AS NØRTH KØREAN WØMEN  
ENJØY RECEIVING IT.

Another truth of teaching based on the sexual benefits of dialectic aesthesis.

CUNNILINGUS IS AN ART,  
AND NØRTH KØREAN MEN  
KNØW ALL THE TRICKS  
ØF THE TRADE.

THEY KNØW HØW TØ  
BLØW, LICK, NIBBLE,  
BITE AND SUCK  
WØMEN'S ERØGENØUS  
ZØNES, ARØUND AND  
INSIDE HER VAGINA.

CUNNILINGUS  
IS A DIALECTIC  
LIKE ANY ØTHER.

...

Indeed, "CUNNILINGUS IS A DIALECTIC LIKE ANY ØTHER".

AS NØRTH  
KØREA'S LEADER,  
I ACCEPT THE  
RESPØNSIBILITY FØR CERTAIN  
FAILURES IN  
ØUR CØUNTRY.

BUT I TAKE GREAT PLEASURE,  
TØDAY, IN PRESENTING  
THIS TRIUMPH ØF  
NØRTH KØREAN CUMMUNISM –  
SØRRY,  
CØMMUNISM,  
IN SPITE ØF  
MY PEØPLE'S  
CØNTINUING  
HARDSHIPS  
AND THEIR  
ØPPRESSIØN  
FRØM WITHØUT.

I CAN  
SAY WITH  
CØNFIDENCE  
THAT  
NØRTH KØREAN  
WØMEN ARE  
SEXUALLY

HAPPY WØMEN.  
  
AND NØRTH  
KØREAN MEN,  
THANKS  
TØ THEIR  
SUPERIØR  
KNØWLEDGE AND  
PRACTICE ØF  
CUNNILINGUS,  
ARE PRØUD  
TØ BRING  
NØRTH KØREAN  
WØMEN  
TØ CLIMAX, AFTER CLIMAX  
AFTER CLIMAX  
AFTER CLIMAX  
AFTER CLIMAX  
  
THANK YØU,  
FØR ALLØWING  
ME TØ TALK  
TØ YØU TØDAY  
ABOUT WHAT  
WE IN  
NØRTH KØREA  
CØNSIDER  
A PARAMØUNT  
ISSUE IN SEXUAL  
EQUALITY AND  
SØCIAL JUSTICE:  
FEMALE  
MULTIPLE ØRGASM  
THROUGH  
CUNNILINGUS.

## The Borders in the World

The YHCHI.com-film/text continues in this carnivalizing tone, mocking and dethroning the ruler; talking about his interest in the “bodily material nether”.<sup>21</sup> This interest takes me to another topic: foreign relations. Not, of course, that the Dear Leader is a stranger to women. I am certain that he is as experienced in this area as he is in, for example, golf.<sup>22</sup>

Post-Soviet international relations were characterized by a noticeable economic vacuum throughout the formerly communist world. All countries that had gotten used to a steady stream of Soviet economic support suddenly had

no one to turn to. Still, no country probably felt it as harshly as North Korea. On October 3, 2017, the correspondent Margita Boström of Swedish Radio's P1 *Utrikeskrönika* (a news program that runs on Swedish National Broadcast Channel 1) reported that Cambodia seemed to be the only country volunteering to help North Korea in its hour of dire crisis and economic restrictions.<sup>23</sup> Even worse for North Korea, these constraints included China, since that country disapproved of North Korean attitudes toward nuclear arms tests.

Today, in Cambodian Siem Reap, where the temple Angkor Wat is located, we also find the Angkor Panorama Museum, built by Pyongyang Mansudae Art Studio, a North Korean art manufactory that has been described as "probably the greatest art group in the world".<sup>24</sup> Admittedly, it is hard not to jump to conclusions here, but US President Donald Trump may not be the first to have used that superlative. However, he actually was the first US president to meet with a North Korean prime minister.<sup>25</sup> Anyway, this studio has created almost all the monumental bronze statues of the two earlier Dear Leaders, Kim Il-Sung (may he live in eternity!) and Kim Jong-Il, his son. Thus, it is part of the Kim clan's propaganda machinery. You may wonder about size: did anyone mention using monuments to compensate for shortcomings in other areas? Jokes apart, I am certain that it did not affect the Dear Leader's capacity.

North Korean restaurants in Cambodia and standing commissions for public monuments in welded bronze testify to the warm relationship that once existed between the two countries under dictators Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Prime Minister Kim Jong-Il. They are said to have met in 1961, in Belgrade, and instantly took a liking to each other. In the 1970s, when Prince Sihanouk was forced into exile, he got a private palace next to Prime Minister Kim's.<sup>26</sup>

The end of YHCHI.com's piece runs, over and over, again:

LØNG LIVE NØRTH KØREAN SEXUAL EQUALITY!  
LØNG LIVE NØRTH KØREAN CUNNILINGUS!  
LØNG LIVE NØRTH KØREAN CØMMUNISM!

However, shouldn't each of these lines end in a question mark, instead of an exclamation point?

## Conclusion

I started basically with sketching up a miniature aesthetic world of words. Even if you don't agree with me (or for that matter, my analysis), some things

are more certain than others. For one, if you think that the people who are mentioned in this text have any faint resemblance to those existing (or who have existed), in the real world, you are absolutely right. In that sense, what seems like fiction is, alas, true.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mikhail Bakhtin, “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,” in *Art and Answerability. Early Philosophical Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 4–257.

<sup>2</sup> M. M. Bakhtin, *Problema avtora, Voprosy filosofii* (1977:7), pp. 149–160.

<sup>3</sup> In 2000, I saw the first version of this work, a video film-animation, that has not been shown since 2003. Recent versions are all text-based.

<sup>4</sup> But who remembers that today, when there are cable connections that allow downloads whose speed can be measured in units of TB (tera-bit)?

See also YOO Hyun-Joo. (2005), Intercultural medium literature digital. Interview with YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES, 4. Connection to concrete poem. *Dichtung Digital*, #2, <[www.dichtung-digital.de/2005/2/Yoo/index-engl.htm](http://www.dichtung-digital.de/2005/2/Yoo/index-engl.htm)>, accessed 4 Oct 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iwolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> YOO Hyun-Joo. (2005), Intercultural medium literature digital. Interview with YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES, 1. General Notes. *Dichtung Digital*, #2, <[www.dichtung-digital.de/2005/2/Yoo/index-engl.htm](http://www.dichtung-digital.de/2005/2/Yoo/index-engl.htm)>, accessed 4 Oct 2017. So, the duo stays aloof from messing with the privilege of being “first”, preferring to be “cool”—as if watching how children fight from a distance.

<sup>7</sup> Of course, this piece of Net art that I will analyze was made before the ascent to power of Kim Jong-Un (b. 1983)—the grandson of the Dear Leader of North Korea Kim Il-Sung. The latter was born on 15 April 1912 in Mangyŏngdae, as Kim Seongju. As I already said, he became the Dear Leader (or dictator, if you insist) from 1948 until his death. Formally, he was the prime minister of North Korea until 1972 and since then its president (may he live in eternity!). I do not know if these conditions apply for his grandson, the son of Kim Jong-Il, born 16 Feb 1941 in Vyatskoe near Khabarovsk in Siberia (or, perhaps, he was born in 1942, near the mountain Paektu in what was then Japanese Korea). The latter succeeded his father as North Korea’s leader/dictator from his father’s death on 8 July 1994 in Pyongyang, until his own death on 17 December 2011, when he in his turn was succeeded by his own son.

<sup>8</sup> Bakhtin (1984). There are many researchers who hold the opinion that political jokes are a reaction to those in power in any particular society. However, opinions diverge as to whether this is a successful strategy. Some, like Charles Schutz, *Political Humor* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1977) and Avner Ziv, *Personality and Sense of Humor* (New York: Springer, 1984) say it helps people without any other means to fight back. Others, like Hans Speier, “Wit and politics: An essay on laughter and power”, *American Journal of Sociology* (103 (1998):1352–1401) suggest it serves to paint a caricature of power rather than dethroning it. Michael Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour* (London: Sage, 2005) says that it actually works to uphold the *status quo*, and Christie Davies, “Humour and protest: Jokes under Communism”, *International Review of Social History* (52 (2007), 291–305), proposes that this kind of political humor does not make any difference.

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad A. Badarneh, “Carnavalesque politics: A Bakhtinian case study of contemporary Arab political humor”, *Humor*, 24:3 (2011), 308.

<sup>10</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), *The Dialogical Imagination*. (Austin: University of Texas Press), 272.

<sup>11</sup> Badarneh (2011), 305.

<sup>12</sup> Badarneh (2011), 306.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Mulkey, *On Humour: Its Nature and its Place in Modern Society* (London: Polity Press, 1988), 85–86.

<sup>14</sup> Sara Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan*. (University of Chicago Press, 2009), 69. See also Erin Blakemore, “The Brutal History of Japan’s ‘Comfort Women’”: Between 1932 and 1945, Japan forced women from Korea, China and other occupied countries to become military prostitutes”, *History*, 20 Feb, 2018 <https://www.history.com/news/comfort-women-japan-military-brothels-korea>, accessed 15 Jan 2019. Kazuko Watanabe, “Trafficking in Women’s Bodies, Then and Now: The Issue of Military ‘Comfort Women’”, *Women’s Studies Quarterly*. 27, 1–2 (1999), 19–30: It has been estimated that at least 80 percent of the “comfort women” were Korean. They were given to men in lower ranks of the army and navy, while Japanese and European women went to the officers. Korea and China were mainly Confucian countries where premarital sex was strongly disapproved of; thus they could be assumed to not have been exposed to venereal diseases.

<sup>15</sup> The piece itself can be found at <[www.yhchang.com/CUNNILINGUS\\_IN\\_NORTH\\_KOREA.html](http://www.yhchang.com/CUNNILINGUS_IN_NORTH_KOREA.html)>, and it is 6:19 minutes long. I strongly recommend the reader to look up the nearest computer and visit this website, because it is such an enjoyable and perfectly composed piece.

<sup>16</sup> *See-line Woman*, Remix, original by George Bass. From *Nina Simone*, Verve DZ 2217. Nina Simone (vocal), Rudy Stevenson (flute), Lisle Atkinson (bass), Bobby Hamilton (drums). Recorded probably 1964 in New York. <[www.yhchang.com/CREDITS\\_V.html](http://www.yhchang.com/CREDITS_V.html)>, accessed 19 January 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Bakhtin (1984), 123

<sup>18</sup> YOO Hyun-Joo, (2005). Intercultural medium literature digital. Interview with YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES, 1. General Notes. *Dichtung Digital*, #2, <[www.dichtung-digital.de/2005/2/Yoo/index-engl.htm](http://www.dichtung-digital.de/2005/2/Yoo/index-engl.htm)>, accessed 2 Oct 2017. The words, actually, are entirely random relative to the semantic meaning of the piece in Bakhtin’s sense; it is more about the rhythm and pulse.

<sup>19</sup> There are many works on the website of the YHCHI.com on this subject, either mocking North Korea or showing its many strange faces.

<sup>20</sup> CNN, Visit Korean DMZ, <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/visit-korean-dmz/index.html?gallery=11> (posted 3 May 2018) accessed 31 Jan 2019.

Wikipedia, List of border incidents involving North and South Korea, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_border\\_incidents\\_involving\\_North\\_and\\_South\\_Korea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_border_incidents_involving_North_and_South_Korea), accessed 31 Jan 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Bakhtin (1984), 123.

<sup>22</sup> “When the Dear Leader played his first (and only) round of golf at the country’s sole club, the tricky 7,700-yard track at Pyongyang, it took him just 34 strokes to complete the 18 holes. And being a living deity, he did it with no less than five holes-in-ones on his way round, obviously.” Tim Southwell, “The day Kim Jong IL became the world’s best golfer, *GolfPunk*, <http://www.golfpunkhq.com/golf-bedlam/article/the-day-kim-jong-il-became-worlds-best-golfer> (published 24 May 2018) accessed 24 January 2019. This may sound funny, but before laughing, see also this: “Unfamiliar with that scorekeeping shorthand, the North Korean state news agency covering the outing had read the five 1s on Kim’s card as holes-in-one.” Josh Sens, “Behind Kim Jong Il’s Famous Round of Golf”, *Golf.com*, <https://www.golf.com/golf-plus/behind-kim-jong-ils-famous-round-golf> (posted 1 June 2016) accessed 24 January 2019.



<sup>23</sup> Margita Boström, Kambodjas vänskap med Nordkorea. *Utrikeskrönika*, Sveriges Radio P1, <https://sverigesradio.se/sida/avsnitt/970071?programid=4773> (posted 3 October 2017) accessed 24 January 2019.

<sup>24</sup> North Korean Art Gallery, [https://www.dprk-art.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=54&lang=en](https://www.dprk-art.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=54&lang=en), (without posting date, but no later than May 2007) accessed 31 January 2019.

See also Elsayed, Nadya. Behind Mansudae: Art from the Biggest Studio in North Korea. *VICE*, [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/7b7vj9/behind-mansudae-the-most-prominent-art-institution-in-north-korea](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/7b7vj9/behind-mansudae-the-most-prominent-art-institution-in-north-korea) (posted 29 Oct 2013) accessed 31 January 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Donald Trump assumed power on 20 January 2017 and is known, among other things, for his extensive use of tweeting as a technological platform – it allows messages of only 280 characters – for reaching his audiences.

<sup>26</sup> In any other case, this would have been enough to raise suspicions concerning the two leaders' sexual preferences. But of course this is an inappropriate and far-flung idea.