

THEME-ANTICS
 AND THE THE-ERIE CLASS:
 CRWIT(T)ICISM IN WRAP



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Dear, reader, who-air and where-air you be, a comment on my peculiar idiotsyncratic meth-odd—a prefatorial gust, a theoretical crumb (a morsail for Brechtfast). I have wheeled a well-oiled Trojan horse into the kingdom of my own discause as a raid on constructivism: a distanciation in order to c(w)rack my own containers, to deStable, even desTroy—a random parabolic tErrorist on the road to De-mask-us. My beloved idears: mobilized, wounded psychic soul-diers, the mind's trueps go into self-reflexive actshown. Here, then, something of a pedagogical post-mortem condition. Jester another assault on the symbollock order of things (being part of partriarchy, as the ego-testicle person I am)—all done using an extreme of consciousness technique. Let us re-joyce in his wake, as much as possible, given that the majority live in an age, not of student grants, but of student grunts.

tRapped in the shame old present-ation? Image-in the flowing theory class: Count/ess DRapula sores (or sAils) into the womb. Stew-dents are about to gRapple with their first feary listen. They expect stodge. dRaped in soul-enmity, hoping boredom will re-seed, DRapula fEels like an insect all at... but has this fAnta-sea that the theory class may become a the-erie glass—a magnidefying glass, a mnemonic compArment. How to insight stewdon'ts' interest? What if I mod-if-eye my rue-tine? How many times have I tried to hit them wither little criticism, and chainged a class on Wayne C. Booth into a wane C. booth? A talk on Bourdieu into a Bored-you? Has

an introduction to John Dryden turned into an intrude-eruction on a dry-don?
or din? How to-bring a little colour into an introduction to Culler? How to
inspyre? Chainge stwedon't expertations? Da dáh, da dáh, da dáh, da dáh—da
dáh, da dáh, da dáh, da dáh: In theory land must Derrida mean dullness,
numbness and ennui? I think not. How about crWit(t)icism in wRap? A the-
erie magnidefying glass might stArt like this:

the Φ ope of the trope²

Teleology, ideology, methodology,
I use these words with no apology:
binarism, structuralism, neo-Marxism—
I look into a structure and I see a schism.
I see a trope in a window, but it's not mimesis,
I see a trope on the page and I write my thesis:
'cos I'm the master of the metaphor, post-structuralist Pope—
and that's why they call me *the Pope of the trope*.

Yes, I'm the Pope of the trope, and I'm hereby ordained
D. Phil. in English, theoretically trained;
if you scrutinize my work you may look pained—
'cos you'll look more pained when I've duly explained.
'cos have I told ya the story a' my *aporia*?
it's play *jouissance*, it's euphoria.
Totalizing metaphors are bound to bore ya',
just generate the jargon and no one can ignore ya':
'cos I'm the master of the metaphor, post-structuralist Pope—
and that's why they call me *the Pope of the trope*.

I wear my Lévi-Strauss right up to my bonce
and this is my essential *différance*.
I'm on *parole* and I'm mighty visible
but don't get me wrong, I don't want to be *lisible*:
with my Hegelian dialectic and my ludic play
Western metaphysics, my legitimate prey.
I latch on to a trope and I pull it apart
'cos I'm Murcia's very own Roland Barthes.
'Cos I'm the master of the metaphor, post-structuralist Pope—
and that's why they call me *the Pope of the trope*.

Synchronic, diachronic, hegemonic, hermeneutic
these wee simple terms I find most therapeutic.
So cut all that traditionalist crap
'cos what we got here is a meta-rap.
I meta-in-a bar she said, "How do you do,
you're that wee post-structuralist, I know YOU!"
Do you wanna see a text? step into Descartes
I'll take you for a spin around Derrida.
Leavis is only Northrop small-Frye
'Open reverence before life' will never be my cry!
'Cos I'm the master of the metaphor, post-structuralist Pope—
and that's why they call me *the Pope of the trope*.

Anxiety of influence, reader response,
psychoanalytic concepts I'll ensconce.
With my affective stylistics, I'll hover like a ghoul
a Blooming Stanley Fish in a semiotic pool.
I'll hunt like a Wolfgang Iser too
in my teleological meta-ark floating on a glue
Of phenomenological indeterminacy, creative participation
in an ever evolving process of anticipation:
anticipation, frustration, retrospection, reconstruction,
the volcanic forces of semiological eruption;
I'm eccentric, phonocentric, egocentric, all that too—
I'm a regular Heideggerian, och-eye-de-noo!
'Cos I'm the master of the metaphor, post-structuralist Pope—
and that's why they call me *the Pope of the trope*.

(Ideally, here there would be a blood-vessel-bursting *electric* guitar solo by
an eleven-fingered Jimi Hendeca-x.)

Stwedon'ts may be stopped in their tracks, filled with exHaltation,
r(h)apsodic, s'daggered, stArtled—aMazed by the labyrinth of concepts awash
with noceans. Maybe the-erie ain't such a stRain. Art the end of the cause
DRapula could return to the wRap and discuss how it relates to the theme-
antics presented in class—thus it would act as a wRap in sofa that it is a
musical beginning and an end, it en-capes-you-lates. There is often
pleasure... memory may be lit up in recog-ignition and defamiliarEyes-ation,
in an exceedus of meaning, in Sir-Real technique.

Putting forum on an idear... *Ode on a Grecian Urn*? One can pitcher a class on narrative discourse: an-author piece of crWit(t)icism capturing narrative dis-cores in the categorial GeNette. *Ars Critica*: The Re-loaned BARTHES of cWrit(t)icism? Not only a right-early but a read-dearly text? PerRaps a little motif-ation is kneaded? Another wRap? The art of memory—gong for a song? Sow, lack of motif-ation may reseed with:

the narratology rap³

(1)

Here's my thesis
it's about diegesis
it's about the art
of Roland Barthes.
And what you get
is a dose of Genette.
Now listen, prof,
don't you scoff
at the poetics of prose
of Todorov.
For narrative schemas
don't forget Greimas.
Don't get in a flap.
Don't fall in the trap.
'Cos what we got here's
the narratology rap.

(2)

I'm a glossologist
chronologist, discourse-ologist,
morphologist, philologist,
demythologist
anachronologist-technologist
fancy phraseologist,
neologist-apologist
narrative archaeologist.

CHORUS:

So, here's my thesis
it's about diegesis
it's about the art
of Roland Barthes.
And what you get
is a dose of Genette.
Now listen, prof,
don't you scoff
at the poetics of prose
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For narrative schemas
don't forget Greimas.
Don't get in a flap.
Don't fall in the trap.
'Cos what we got here's
the narratology rap.

(3)

Break your fiction to pieces
with a little diegesis.
Make it your vocation
to study narration.
Subject it all
to focalization.
Order, frequency, duration
temporal obligations;
diegetic education
narratological revelation
'cos representation
has no foundation
only annihilation
under our interrogation.

CHORUS:

So, here's my thesis
it's about diegesis
it's about the art...

(4)

Humanist discourse
is mendacious,
fugacious, tenacious
fallacious & pugnacious.
It's capacious, ungracious,
loquacious & vexatious:
always with its pretence
of being perspicacious.

CHORUS:

So, here's my thesis
it's about diegesis
it's about the art...

(5)

I've got the hermeneutic code
to crack the enigma
exposing conventions
like the marks of a stigma.
I got the gnomic, symbolic,
even the proairetic
which I paint on the discourse
of my theoretic—
It ain't no cosmetic!
Extra or intra
or meta-diegetic;
homo or hetero
never make me apathetic:
but frenetic, aesthetic
athletic and "Genette-ic."

CHORUS:

So, here's my thesis
it's about diegesis
it's about the art...

C'est une chose anormale de vivre.
(Eugène Ionesco, *Rhinocéros*, Act I)

But I'm not so think as you drunk I am.
(Sir J. C. Squire, "Ballade of Soporific Absorbition")

Teaching Derrida (Dear-reader)? De-constrictive philosophy? Then,
perhaps, John Dryden may be of some assistance:

Of seeming arms to make a short essay,
Then hasten to be drunk, the business of the day.
(*Cymon and Iphigenia*, l. 407-8)

Abyssent meaning⁴

A transcendental signified
I would be if I weren't pie-eyed
A fully perpendicular sober pronoun
Were it not for the fact that I'm out on the town
I could be an absolute foundation
But drinking is my only occupation
I don't need old Einsteins's gumption
Splitting the atom of phonocentral assumption.

CHORUS:

'Cos I'm an absent meaning
A linguistic gleaning
A verbose bird of deconstructional proceeding
A speech sound transparent
An image non apparent
An innumerable differential of Derridean double meaning—Yea!

I drink beer at such a rate
All I leave behind is a self-effacing trace,
In a characteristic move
Signification is deferred,
I don't really know the weaning of the mord.

CHORUS:

'Cos I'm an absent meaning
A linguistic gleaning...

Face in the gutter,
Drunk and bleeding
A horizontal pronoun lost in double reading,
Can I be the guarantor of absolute meaning
When my stomach's on the ground and my curry's on the ceiling?

CHORUS:

'Cos I'm an absent meaning
A linguistic gleaning...

Shall I praise the god
Of rhet-or-ric?
For my words I wear
Like a punk wears a purple rinse in his hair.
For my songs are words
and my words are wind
So I declare,
Therefore my songs are a lot of hot air (*repeat four times*).

(*CHORUS AND REPEAT VERSE ONE*)

A NOTE ON MOTORVATION

PerWRaps the redear may think that the presentation of material in this form is merely designed to revamp the class for Drapula but students may adorn their written work by pRobing their own creativity. For example, in a text book I put together with a colleague⁵ I present (and simplify) aspects of literary theory in the form of dialogues (there are "conversations" between the "author" and the ghosts of Freud and Lacan, fictionalized debates between reader-response critics, a schizophrenic conversation between David and Walton, two "students" who turn the blurb on the back of a bottle of face cream into a poem). A number of my students have adapted the dialogic form to the requirements of the academic essay and have reported that they felt considerably motivated by this way of working. I might add that I have encouraged this form of writing not only in students of Literary Theory but also in The History of Thought (see the Vermiform Appendix below for a

possible way of presenting names, ideas and concepts in this subject in a cryptic form).

A FEW RIDDLING QUEST-IONS FOR THE FEARY GLASS

(Conundrums for the theory-oriented postgraduate: explain and/or analyse the following:)

The politico-religious vessel upon which male power wood have to be unlocked and based: *PA-tree-Ark-key*.

The drunken overwrought Lacanized reading of pa-tree-ark-key: *mAle angst-stink(t) against her—agangster—a gAngst-her*.

Lacan's favourite mis-Stress: *Miss-Nomer*. If she was not available any one or more of the following: *Miss Hap, Miss Communication, Miss Construction, Miss Appropriate, Miss Understanding, Miss Adventure, Miss Calculation, Miss Leading, Miss Chance, Miss Chievious, Miss Fit, Miss Giving*. There have been rumours that he had some associations with *Miss Ogyne and Miss Ology and was particularly interested in Miss ive*.

Desire according to psychoanalysis may be iLLUSTRated by *sMothering it*.

The Fraudian sleep, I mean, slip: *it's not so much that we talk in our sleep, but that we sleep in our talk*.

On political criticism: *a rebel without a cause is rebel without cLaws, or as useless as a cause without a rebel. A rebel without a clause...*

What is needed is an attack on the spread of patriarchal power, the male dominated gaze, an attempt to empow(h)er; in short, *the deMassculineyesation of the world*.

Lac(k)anian view of *homo sapiens*: *the Other the creator; man the crater*.

The cultural materialist is fwrighting on behalf of *the war-king classes*.

Sexist (reductive) Freudian theory coalesced with historical method: *always consider the hysterical context and remember all is materphorical*.

VERMIFORM APPENDIX

To finish, an appendix of other possibilities. This is vermiform because it has wormed its way into this paper and, like the appendix in *homo sapiens*, is vestigial. Thus, it can be removed without affecting the overall health of the host, although it may prove interesting to the scalpellic.

Juggernaut . . . n. 1. any terrible force, especially one that destroys or that demands complete self-sacrifice. 2. Britain: a very large lorry for transporting goods by road, especially one that travels throughout Europe. Juggernaut . . . n. Hinduism. 1. a crude idol of Krishna worshipped at Puri and throughout Orissa and Bengal. At an annual festival the idol is wheeled through the town on a gigantic chariot and devotees are supposed to have formerly thrown themselves under the wheels in the hope of going straight to paradise. 2. a form of Krishna miraculously raised by Brahma from the state of a crude idol to that of a living god. . . . (*Collins English Dictionary*)

How about warming to a little Hisdairy of Thaw't,
with the "Philosophical Jargonaught"?

(I might have written "HIStory", but as the pun has been eating at the Western brain ad knawseum...). Here's a bitter foolosophy:

φ philosophical jargonaught⁶

I'm a philosophical jargonaught
I'm addicted to long words
and I'm somewhat overwrought
I'm a philosophical jargonaught
I'm a porcine word-devourer
and I've got to get my snort.
I've got words to eat
concepts to excrete
new trends to follow
I go "bleat, bleat, bleat, bleat."
Words in the brain
are like rats in a drain

scurrying ever to and fro'
to drive you all insane.
So call the pied piper
pick off words like a sniper;
make every song you play
a porous conceptual diaper.
'Cos the language of the common man
is nothing but a snare
for the likes of me
to set free
a lot of A. J. hot Ayer.

CHORUS:

I'm a philosophical jargonaught
I'm addicted to long words
and I'm somewhat overwrought
I'm a philosophical jargonaught
I'm a porcine word-devourer
and I've got to get my snort.

I met-a-physician
on-to-a-logical problem
whose bible was the *Kama Sartre*
(S/he lived just near Montmartre).
S/he said, "to be or not to be
I'm a sexistentialist:
to purge the id like an exorcist—
this is the Freudian quest-John.
Be a Christian martyr
to this desiderata
chew on the gum of the *ergo sum*
To repression be a Tartar."

CHORUS

I said, "cor blimey crikey!
s/he's Schelling the human psyche
as grist for the old John Stuart Mill
s/he's a John Locke, and found the key!"
Here was the strip-tease of Humean Nietzsche

but I'd dropped my Kierkegaard
and become a Kanting preacher.
S/he wore her learning like a flower
plucked from the ivory tower
and donned pretence
like the eloquence
of a budding Schopenhauer.

CHORUS

Bertrand Russell up some thoughts
on freedom and democracy;
map out your analyses
with a little Descartes-ography.
Ockham's razor is a cleaver
so dam up jargon like a beaver
support the balcony of thought
with a Georg Cantor-lever.
I've lanced the Robert Boyle
of empirical philosophy
till concepts ooze linguistic Marx
as I face up to pogonotrophy.

CHORUS

Stone me, Eurythus of Croton,
who said I'm a man with the brain of a photon?
I'm full of adulation
for mental flagellation (who cares, come on everybody!).
Life's too short for fooling and fighting (my fiend)
I exist above the world of scratching and biting:
philosophy's my pleasure dome—
in jargon-land, my only home.
I spew out a lot of Kant
for a man with the brain of an ant
and my categorical imperative
is only an apéritif
for a cocktail of nonsense
which spews out of my subconscious....

CHORUS.

And now for a little *condemnsation* and disPlayment; some horse-
play—injecting some pleasure into the reality *principle*. Here, some strange
(*unheimlich*) violence to Freudian feary: a maniFistation of uncannyscious
desIre with the "Freud-Jung Blues" (performed on the phallic stage):

freud-jung schizophrenic blues⁷


Infantile cerebral paralysis
Has got my mind in its lock and chain.
Infantile cerebral paralysis
Has got my mind in its lock and chain.
Nervous cough and squinting of the eyes
(Complete with visual disturbances) are my bane.

Well, I woke up this morning,
And probing my cranium, what did I find?
Well, I woke up this morning,
And probing my cranium, what did I find?
The ghost of Sigmund Freud,
Had been haunting my pathogenic disease-creating mind.

He stripped off my Freudian slip,
To reveal the marks of a quip
That had been lurking in repression
Behind a societal zip.
My unconscious memory
Had me tight under lock and key, temporarily;
My fetishistic, narcissistic compunction
Had blocked up my cerebral junction, psycho-Hitchcockianarily.

Well, Jungian psychology
Argued psychoneurotically
With Freud's libidinal etiology.
Buried deep archetypally (where behavioural instincts roam free)
Was the son of Spiritus Mundi (or maybe it was Tuesday).
Oh, the child of the magna mater
Was making love with Freudian data
Oedipally.

My Freud-Jung schizophrenic mind
 Had inwardly recoiled,
 I awoke when a voice called out to me:
 "Jung man, how d'ya want your ego,
 Freud or boiled?"
 The shell of my ego was cracked
 And the beast of the id attacked, lathyism-ically.
 And now all I can do is stare
 From the depths of my analyst's chair
 To Freu-id knows where...

(fade with Marquis de Sade-uctive alto-psycho-saxual solo). 

NOTES

1. Two of these songs, "The Pope of the Trope" and "The Narratology Rap," were performed at the AEDEAN conference in Seville in 1997. The performances were part of a round table entitled, "Questions of Motivation, Assessment, and Pedagogical Technique in the Teaching and Assessment of Literary Theory." The name I use to sign this piece of writing is partly inspired by a felicitous mistake which appeared on a medical form. In the place of David Alan Walton, I found myself rendered into the solitary David Alone Walton. The voiding of my Christian name is my own invention, based on a similar change. I would like to thank José Angel García Landa (who shared the round table with me) for requesting this piece of writing, and thus encouraging me to get these ideas down on paper.

2. This rap is designed to be played over variations of an E7#9 chord, which adds a level of tonal ambiguity—being a chord which, when played on the guitar at the ninth fret, sounds both the major and minor thirds, so seems to be in both the major and minor keys simultaneously.

3. I wrote this to be performed without any particular musical backing.

4. The music written for this song is in the style of British punk-rock: words shouted over frenzied, aggressive power cords.

5. Keith Gregor and David Walton, *Critical Approaches to Literature in English: a Practical Guide* (Murcia: Diego Marín, 1997).

6. This was written to be recited (rapidly), rather than performed to music.

7. Written to twelve-bar blues played with ninth chords, with some rhythmic and structural variations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY SPECTOGRAPHY INTERTEXTOGRAPHY

Any of the following may be said to haunt these pages: Bertolt Brecht, Jonathan Culler, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Roland Barthes, Pierre Bourdieu, John Dryden, Karl Marx, Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jack Derrida, Paul de Man, Northrop Frye, F. R. Leavis, Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser, the rappers (*Public Enemy*, Guru etc.), the blues tradition (B. B. & C^o), Jimi Hendrix, Wayne C. Booth, George Hegel, Martin Heidegger, René Descartes, Harold Bloom, James Joyce, Christine Brooke-Rose, Julia Kristeva, Eugène Ionesco, Sir J. C. Squire, Bram Stoker, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Gérard Genette, Tzvetan Todorov, A. J. Greimas, Albert Einstein, *Collins English Dictionary*, A. J. Ayer, the author(s) of the *Kama Sutra*, Jean-Paul Sartre, Friedrich Schelling, John Stuart Mill, John Locke, Friedrich Nietzsche, David Hume, Søren Kierkegaard, Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer, Bertrand Russell, William of Ockham, Georg Cantor, Robert Boyle, Eurythus of Croton, Eddie Cochran, John Lennon and Paul McCartney, Marc Almond, Carl Jung, the Marquis de Sade...

