



DEAR BOSS : DESCANTED DIRGE ON RICH CUNTS & WORTHY PRICKS

The end of a lecture.

MJJ: I'm happy to answer any questions that you might have... apparently I'm miked, I forgot, but I can't see anybody. Might anybody have a question?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Along the lines of what you've been saying, can we just go back to when you were saying when you first met Theaster and he was a ceramicist...

MJJ: Sure.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: ...that you wouldn't think of him as an artist.

MJJ: Sorry, no. I want to be very precise. I think ceramicists are the original artists. So, everybody comes after the ceramicists.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well sorry, no... in terms of what you just said about witnessing this new way of thinking and referring to Jackson Pollack, when you said when you met him... say that again, what did you say.

MJJ: I don't think he would have identified his ceramic practice with an art practice because he felt that ceramics in some crucial way... I'm putting words into his mouth, I have no idea what he would say, but what I'm saying is that he thought it was in the same same realm as cooking, his mom cooking extra food. It was a vernacular practice of.. of...of sharing [pause] his ceramics.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Are you saying you didn't have an opinion of whether he was an artist?

MJJ: I... I... would like to think that I was about the first person who definitely felt very convinced that he was an artist.... if there is somebody out there who can make the claim earlier, I'm happy to meet them some place and we can discuss it.

An audience member who hasn't been given a microphone says something in reply that is inaudible to the rest of the audience except for the odd word and phrase such as "wondering...institution...right...work through in a less protective way..? However, the reply appears to be heard by MJJ, who responds...

MJJ: Absolutely. That is historically very frequently true. Okay. I think that's it. Thanks alot.



During the burst of applause from the [invisible] audience, the spotlight and projection are turned off leaving the stage in complete darkness. A fade in of a half-light from above where the audience are sitting allows MJJ to be seen in particularised attitude, like that of a statue: a certain position of the arm which raises his hand to the hollow of his shoulder, a gesture readily recognisable when it recurs. The reason for performing this particular posture is unclear but it seems to encourage a certain vehmance of applause within the audience. The applause continues, very violent, very heavy, quite long; then gradually transforming itself into the music identical to that heard at the beginning of the credits [NBG No.4] whose intensity increases until it drowns out the applause, which fades out altogether while the lights in the lecture are finally all turned on.

Reverse angle: the lecture theatre, now brightly lit. The applause is over, the spectators have stood up. They have formed groups here and there. The camera makes a more or less circular movement through the groups. A few characters are still facing the [invisible] stage, no longer applauding, but still staring straight ahead, standing motionless, as though under the spell of the spectacle which has just concluded. These people are generally isolated; but others in the same position are also to be found within certain groups, which thereby assume a rather strange quality: a part of their constituents [one or two] not facing towards the stage. The violent and impassioned music continues with the same force, completely drowning out the sound of the conversations and the applause begins again, a few whoops and hollers, this time as a slow-clapped encore where [off-screen] it may be assumed that MJJ has struck a new particularized pose that the spectators can't help but appreciate due to its semi-heroic irony.

The voice over of JCHP(Dave) emerges from this music and applause, fading to silence from the words " I haven't responded..."

JCHP (Dave): The text we sent you, as some effort towards a clarification, a draft attempt at a general qualification of our poster texts we've been doing for the last two years, partly in response to your response... We thought we'd eventually try and work it in to a subsequent poster... Hopefully it will make it clearer that it is not intended purely negatively.

ART WRITER: What response? I haven't responded...

JCHP (Dave): Just meaning what you wrote in response to our text.

Silence

ART WRITER: Anyway boss, what do you for a job Dave? Just out of interest... I know the other bloke married into the Guinness family which to a large extent invalidates his approach to some kind of partisan critique in my view... but just I'm eager to get a sense of where you're coming at this from, just wanting to put the feelers out. From the few texts of yours that I've read, I'm not sure you have a particularly adequate understanding of the ecology of art writing as it currently exists - C'mon boy, we all know it's poorly remunerated, a burden on our time outside of our paid jobs, and formally limited in terms of the space provided by print publications for adequate critical articulation - and yet you've chosen to level a poorly written diatribe against me personally and the only (in my view) adequately left-leaning publication left on the shelves. Please don't take these personal comments as a formal 'response' as such...

JCHP (Dave): ?

ART WRITER: Oh.. and you know... it still irks me, you know... it just doesn't sit with me right with me... why did you add me on Facebook in the first place man?

JCHP: As far as our practice is concerned the only purpose for attempting to sustain a critical practice by whatever means is in order to develop the practice itself. The justification for criticism in any context is improvement. Any properly functioning machine is the result of innumerable instances of evident criticism, the wearing of gears, grit in the bearings.... Whether it is true or not that AM is the 'only adequately left-leaning publication left on the shelves', why wouldn't we choose to attempt to engage critically with its content? To risk quoting from too much Popper: "In order for any entity to thrive it needs to engage with criticism." Presumably Art Monthly should rather be read as if it were some sort of relic, with any gainsaying thoughts of it activating a response or initiating any attempt to interact being reverently suppressed. Your response to our text seems to imply that anyone is justified in criticising a right-leaning publication but only those below a certain income threshold are justified in criticising a left-leaning publication. This seems to be at worst Stalinist and at best wide-eyed naivety, either way it would render any genuinely left-leaning publication's demise. It is difficult not to interpret the forgoing response to our text as just another example of art's inherent egoism; its unqualified, self-observing and inflated self-regarding investment as somehow being positively justified by default or by some form of ineffable divine right. All this functions somehow well beyond questions aimed at asking if its own self-prescribed validity is in fact justified.

At this moment the silence is broken by the soft whirring sound of oiled gears and cogs and the expressing of air from a confined outlet.

...although [you] requested [us] not to take your comments as 'formal responses' (We're not entirely sure about the distinction here, presumably both would contain intended words. Is one written whilst wearing a different costume?), it is tempting, as they do contain the seed of some potential criticism: that our text constitutes a 'poorly written diatribe'. Unfortunately, how the text is poorly written is not elaborated or substantiated which would be genuinely useful, which we would have thought is the purpose of criticism. We are always ready to hear some 'improving' words. You also don't explain in what way they constitute a diatribe as opposed to an attempt at criticism. Though we suspect that in whatever way they constitute a diatribe, poorly written is not particularly relevant. This would be irrelevant in a comparable way, that if our drawings were considered to be poorly drawn. The statement that our texts are poorly written may refer to poor syntax or grammar, but again this doesn't seem relevant. We don't approach our writing from the perspective of professional writers. Is it that 'poor' is more applicable to our manner? That it's simply poor manners to criticize a critic. Although the intended meaning of our text does seem on this occasion

to have been successfully conveyed, however poorly, judging by the denouncing tone of your response. As far as 'good' writing is concerned our primary aim is for our intended meaning to be understood. We would be happy to acknowledge that all the texts contained in AM are better written than any of ours without knowing what 'better' means in this context.



Maybe the only way to respond to 'good' writing/criticism is to write, in your estimation, something poorly. To bring it down to some lower level so that such phrases such as 'poorly written' might help to illuminate the state of current art writing. We refrain from using the word 'ecology' because in this context we don't know what it means. However, to follow your train of thought, the use of 'poorly written' seems to be used as a negative criticism. The assumption is made that poor writing is a bad thing. Although as stated the meaning of our text does appear to have been conveyed. Is it possible that the emphasis is weighted too much on good writing at the expense of meaning?

Part of the last response to our text implies that financial security immediately invalidates criticism. Or at least if it is obtained through marriage. This seems unlikely and in fact thinking about it, it seems entirely possible that somebody's critical faculties could be significantly improved by attaining financial security, in that much more time could be committed to practising being critical. Charlie Bucket functions as a device for prioritising kindness and generosity over a commodity culture exemplified by greed and poor manners even after having found the last golden ticket. If the last response to our text is right in asserting that financial security precludes critical endeavour then the majority of Dickens' novels, all those written as a wealthy man need to be re-assessed as no longer being effective examples of social commentary operating as a critique of the then political establishment's disregard for the poor's lives. We would conjecture that if someone was an artist on the breadline and they liked to try to establish their practice as critically as possible, whatever that means, and they won the lottery, their practice would not in fact immediately renounce all critical endeavour.

But what is true with regard to our practice is that one of two of us does have some level of financial security to a level that precludes the necessity of productive labour and allows for full-time commitment to unproductive labour. The other half of our practice does not have that level of financial security and does need to work for money. Where do we go from here?

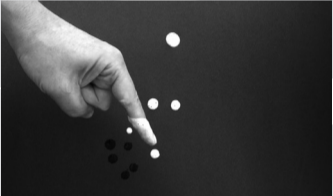
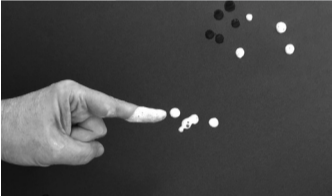
Presumably half of the practice is valid and half isn't and should be instantly dismissed as entirely irrelevant. Funnily enough the situation is easier to resolve with the half of our practice that consists of producing pencil drawings. Fortunately they are actually physically drawn half each, so it's easier to identify which half should be entirely ignored and which half should be given due attention. But with the attempts to work things out for ourselves using writing, so much is collaborative and conversational. It is trickier to identify a specific authorial attribution, except that both are 'poor' at writing. Who wrote what? We could crop each sentence in half. This would be democratic but it would surely result in 'poorer writing' or at least a significant loss in meaning, which might constitute 'good' creative writing.

The truth is that although one of us has more financial security than the other, we are both normal people and fully understand the situation of artists, art writers, hospital orderlies or anyone who, like one half of our practice, would welcome more financial security. But the implication of taking this as an excuse for not bothering to be critical is disingenuous and we would have thought far more insulting to any jobbing writer. The logical consequence of the implication is that where financial gain is not prevalent one should refrain from criticism, which would preclude the vast majority of the artworld. Fine to criticise the work of financially successful artists and art writers but not ones who have successfully transformed their non productive labour into productive labour. The problem is that most financially successful artists were at some point not financially successful. So this would result in an art world where the trajectory from unsuccessful artist to successful artist would have been enacted in an entirely critical free zone. Which sounds like a argument for the continuation of the prevailing conditions of artistic production. That's right, isn't it? Because that's you all over, isn't it?

Then abruptly [no dissolve] a corridor full of people is shown [it might for instance, be the corridor that was shown empty at the end of the preceding sequence. The shot is taken from exactly the same angle].

In the foreground stands a group of three men and a woman talking with a polite animation. Casual dress, two of the men wearing blue workwear 'art' jackets. Farther on, other groups, sitting and standing; everything is quite stationary: without notable body movements.

The shot remains stationary during its whole first portion. The group does not occupy all or even the centre of the field of vision.



The appearance of the corridor full of people has been marked by the explosion of the noises of the post-lecture party. But a sophisticated party, discreet noises, with a few audible words standing out against a vaguer hubbub. The impression of an explosion has been produced merely by a somewhat louder exclamation uttered by a character in the foreground, at the very moment the scene begins [at the same time as the image]. This exclamation is the word: Extraordinary!

After this initial exclamation, which stood out from the rest, there are vaguer murmurs which are mingled with those of the corridor. One of the men says something to the woman, but into her ear, and none of these words can be heard.

The third man, standing in the centre [that is: neither the man who has uttered the exclamation nor the man who has spoken to the woman], then says:

A MAN: Actually, it wasn't so extraordinary after all. He had started the whole thing himself, so that he knew all the possibilities in advance.

Discreet laughter, accompanied by exclamations uttered half aloud. A very brief shot may be woven into the last sequence, appearing as though by error: a long perspectival vista of a wide tree lined road, a boulevard that could be used for processional or ceremonial purposes. During these stationary shots music is heard muted at first, then more clearly, consisting of discontinuous notes [piano, percussion or classical instruments], with many gaps, silences of varying length [as in certain serial compositions]. This music continues during the camera movements that follow, without further increasing in volume.

The camera moves closer to a decorative detail from the corridor - a detail of extreme complexity and located well above eye-level: a Flaxman sculpted frieze along the top of a wall, or the capital of a column, or a decorated ceiling for instance. The photograph is taken from below, as if the detail were seen by an [invisible] character. But the camera moves nearer to examine the detail at close range [probably much closely than would be possible for a person of normal height, without climbing up on a ladder] then turns around the chosen object in order to reveal its various elements, in the manner of documentary films on architecture. The music continuing a few minutes more, JCHP's voice is heard, at first very low then gradually resuming its normal volume, while the music on the contrary gradually fades out. JCHP speaks in the same Warnockian South Yorkshire accent, quite near, as it has already sounded on several occasions.

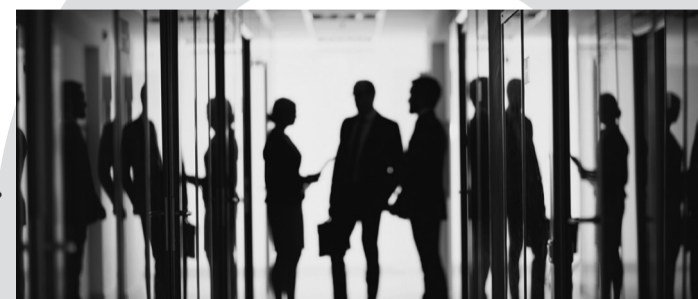
JCHP: "The sad fact is, alas, that general goodwill is always felt as something of an insult, by the mere object of it; and so it breeds a quite special brand of malice. Surely goodwill is a form of egoism, that it should have such a result!"

The series of views of the corridor ends with a stationary shot possessing all the same characteristics, carried to the extreme. A slow scene. The image includes, at the far left, a blurred close-up of man's head, cut by the edge of the image and not facing the camera. This is the first point we see JCHP, but the spectator can hardly tell him from the characters who have appeared in similar fashion in the preceding images. In the centre of the screen in the middle distance is a clearly visible element of the setting: for instance a classical column clad tightly on both sides. Finally, to the right and in the background [preferably framed within a door jamb] a man [this is the ART WRITER] and a woman, who previously was seen ushering people into the lecture theatre, are standing, talking in low voices. What they are saying is barely audible as a vague whispering.

JCHP's head, in the foreground, then turns in this direction, but not abruptly; the direction of his gaze is not indicated implicitly: it must seem merely possible that JCHP is looking at the couple. Neither the man nor the woman seems to pay any attention to JCHP [who is, moreover, quite far away.]



While these sentences are spoken off-screen with a certain deliberation and many pauses, several [not necessarily stationary] views are shown of the empty corridor, more incongruent architectural details &c., as though in search of characters now altogether missing. This sequence must develop without haste and continue, after JCHP's voice has stopped, in complete silence for quite a long time i.e, long enough to be an annoyance to the viewer..



Transcript Notations for Marking Up

?	rising intonation
.	falling intonation
,	continuing intonation
:	lengthening of the previous syllable
(2.25)	pause duration in seconds
(.)	a very short, still audible pause
(..)	a longer pause
(...)	a long pause
-	a cut off of the prior word or sound
(but)	items enclosed within single parentheses are in doubt
((cough))	in double brackets there is a comment by the transcriber
Talk	underlining indicates emphasis
	the onset and the ending of simultaneous talk between utterances [overlap]
=	indicates fluent turn change
talk	indicates decreased volume
+ talk +	indicates increased volume