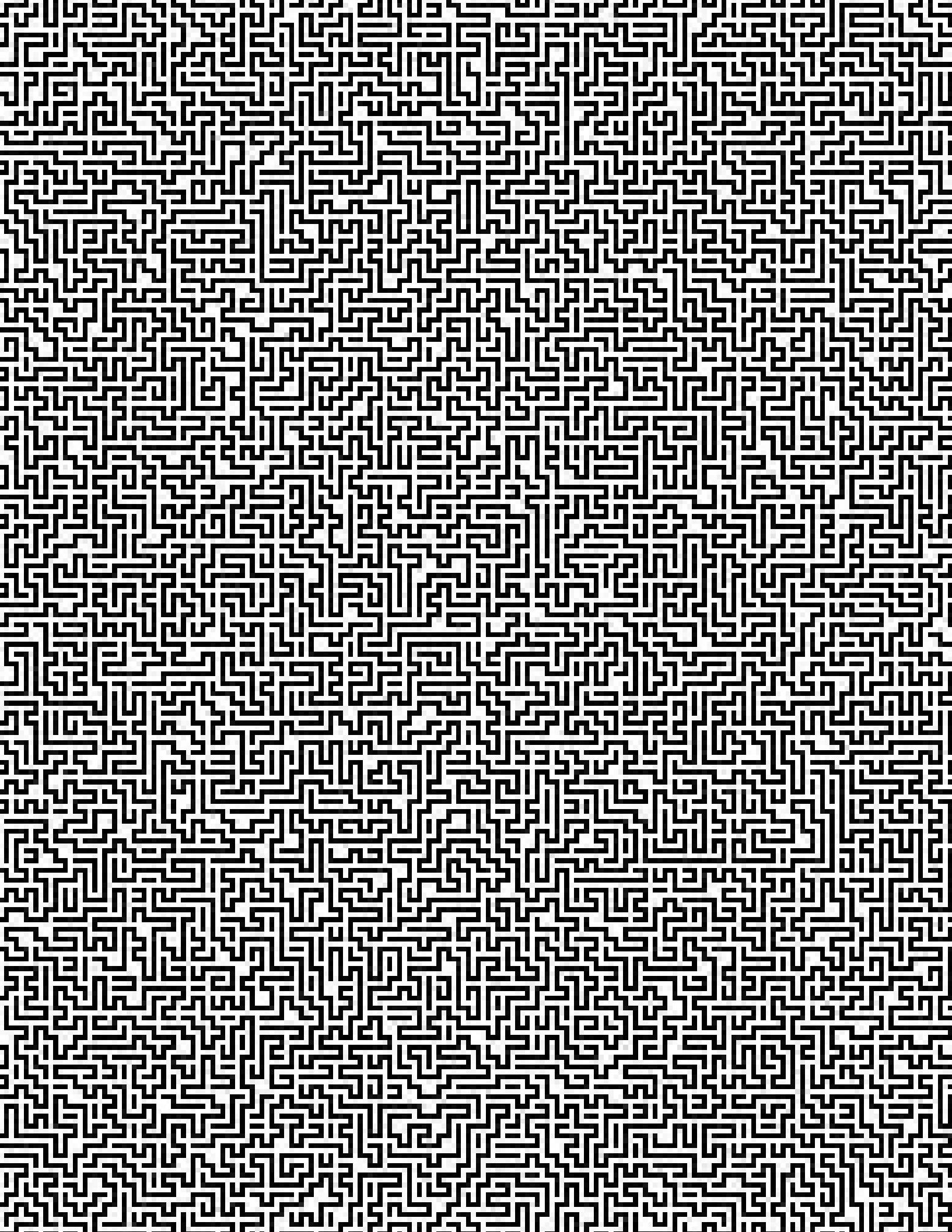


PINECONE

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0 **The sea**

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0 **The waterfall**

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1 – 2 pages of fiction, non-fiction, erotica, or incoherent ranting.

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Cover Scott Hove

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Shakespeare: Pynchon: Joyce→

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Bind Watchtower







Bill Murray

Interview

Shakespeare: Pynchon: Joyce→



Okay, so is Shakespeare really THE greatest? I personally can't feel justified saying so, what I've read of his was amazing but I haven't read enough of him or enough literature in general to say with confidence.

I feel like the majority of these "critics" who claim he's the greatest are English monoglots who feel satisfied knowing the greatest author of all time wrote in their language, thus reinforcing the English world hegemony. Are there many critics/authors of other languages who view Shakespeare as the greatest?

Shakespeare criticism is by and large an index of things not worth saying about Shakespeare.

He has a massive vocabulary, a command of differing high and low styles, and most importantly there's no biography we have that could "explain" his work away. In other words, he's still a mystery in a way that Dante (who did meet Beatrice and wrote from that inspiration) or Joyce (who did meet Nora and immortalized the day she first gave him a handjob) are not. Because we figure, oh Dante or Joyce did it for a girl they loved and lost or didn't lose, or whatever.

Hence, the authorship debate. Freud thought the plays were written by the Earl of Oxford. Walt Whitman and Mark Twain believed the Bacon theory. Helen FUCKING KELLER believed the plays were written by Francis Bacon. (See the book by Shapiro, "Contested Will", if you doubt me.)

You want to know my theory?

One English writer gets to be the most famous writer of all time. His name? Shakespeare (or so they say).

Meanwhile, 400+ years earlier, the only Englishman ever to be elected Pope gets elected as Pope. He promptly uses his powers to give Ireland to the King of England, which says a lot about the Papacy and about Irish Catholics. What was his name?

Well, Pope Adrian IV. The only English Pope. Look it up. His real name was Breakspeare.

Obviously Shakespeare was some kind of pen name. Obviously there is a conspiracy. I just find it hilarious that it's only within the past 10 years or so that people have started to suggest (based on the "Shake-shafe" found in a Catholic recusant household during Shakespeare's lost years) that Shakespeare might have been Catholic. DUH. Joyce noticed this, Antony Burgess noticed this, they both knew about Shakespeare / Breakspeare. They just had better things to write than more fapping over

the supposedly greatest writer of all time. That pope was 400 years earlier than Shakespeare.

How the fuck are you connecting that to the illegitimate child of Elizabeth I and the Duc D'Alençon?

Yeah, yeah. And yet.. the same Pope was connected to John of Salisbury, whose work Politicraticus gives the motto (by way of Petronius) to the Globe Theatre.

I'm not making this up. I don't have a theory. I just read more widely and think in different ways from Professional Shakespearean Scholars.

I'm not connecting that to the illegitimate child of Elizabeth I and the Duc D'Alençon. I'm just listing facts that nobody ever bothers to adduce when they talk about Shakespeare. Read the life of Claudius in Suetonius' 12 Caesars. Remember nobody in Denmark is named Claudius in any source material given for Hamlet. Now ask yourself... why does Polonius hide behind an arras in the same way that Claudius Caesar did after Caligula's assassination? It's a visual pun that nobody in 400 years of so-called "scholarship" has pointed out.

It takes somebody like me. Bill fucking Murray.

I doubt you read more widely than most Shakespeare scholars. Shakespearean?

Doubt away. Do you think they've read all of Polydore Vergil's official history of England in Latin? If they have, why haven't they mentioned that you can find every historical character mentioned in Will's plays in this one volume, from Amleth (Hamlet) to Maccabaeus (Macbeth)? Why? Because they have tenure and get lazy and don't read shit, except what other scholars publish. Go read Polydore Vergil yourself if you doubt me, buttmunch.

Shakespearean? What, you've never read the fucking Waste Land? Line 128. It's called a fucking allusion.

There's a metric fuckton of evidence for Shakespeare being the author and against all the other "candidates".

Yeah yeah. Oxford died before the Tempest was written, Bacon clearly didn't write them. What if Christopher Marlowe didn't really die? What if some other body were buried and Marlowe's death was faked? It happens in Cymbeline (Cloten's headless corpse) and in Measure for Measure (Barnardine).

Marlowe is the only person with the talent to

have written Shakespeare's plays. But if it was Marlowe, it would be related to some kind of conspiracy / cover-up. And we know Marlowe was involved in conspiracies, cover-ups, and espionage. How can you so easily rule Marlowe out? Seriously.

And that's how you cross the line from a valid line of questioning to insanity.

Well my thesis advisor at Miskatonic U, Professor Charles X Kinbote, really thinks I'm on to something.

What if Marlowe is still alive?

I'm pretty sure he's not. But I can't tell whether he was actually a sodomite or just posing as one. Until I can figure that out, I daren't try to put together the pieces of this Master Mystery, as my good friend Harry Houdini would call it.

And if you don't want to ask me about Joyce, James Joyce, (Author of MRS. YES, the ultimate work of Irish Espionage) then ask me about Harry Houdini.

Ah, well the authorship question was sort of a failed side-joke. I'm not sure I understand the Breakspeare connection.

I like what you have to say about the lack of biography, I pray to God that when Pynchon dies any information of his life will be spared and not sold out by some loosely-related acquaintance or family member. I prefer the mystery.

Spelling was nonstandardized. Marlowe's name is variously given as Marley, Merlin, and so on, in all documents related to his life. Meanwhile Shakespeare would appear to have been using the name "Shakeshaft" earlier in his career, before he headed to London. Maybe it's just a pen-name. Maybe he was the illegitimate child of Elizabeth I and the Duc D'Alençon. Maybe I'm Bill Murray. But no-one will ever believe me.

I pray to God that before

Pynchon dies somebody will point out that the secret answer to The Crying of Lot 49 is "Torquato Tasso". Thurn & Taxis? Torquato Tasso? The image of the badger on his back? Get it?

Torquato Tasso was a famous literary artist who went mad and got locked away. In other words, Oedipa's experience of paranoia is a form of artistic madness. That's it. It's a puzzle book, just like Pale Fire expects you to work out the puzzle that the crown jewels are hidden in Kobaltana. This, incidentally, is why my good friend Tommy basically disowned Lot 49 in the preface to Slow Learner.

Again, the fact that no academic has noticed this about Pynchon—even men as bright as Edward Mendelson or Tony Tanner—shows more about the limitations of the academic mindset than anything else.

I like what you're saying, but what?

Shall I lay it out in lemmata? (That being the proper Greek plural.)

1. The "Taxis" in Thurn & Taxis is ascribed as being derived from the Italian word "Tasso" meaning "badger." Here's the passage...

"Soon he had added to his iconography the muted post horn and a dead badger with its four feet in the air (some said that the name Taxis came from the Italian tasso, badger, referring to hats of badger fur the early Bergamascan couriers wore). He began a sub rosa campaign of obstruction, terror and depredation along the Thurn and Taxis mail routes. Oedipa spent the next several days in and out of libraries and earnest discussions with Emory Bortz and Genghis Cohen". (If you don't believe me.)

2. Look up the Latin verb "torqueo, torquere". It means: to twist, turn, screw. "Torquato" is a Latin past-participle.

Torquato Tasso = Turned Badger.

3. Of course "Thurn" is the

German word for "tower", like the tower in Remedios Varo's painting.

4. Of course there is a famous poem about Torquato Tasso (besides Goethe's) by Shelley (Julian & Maddalo) which describes Tasso as a madman locked away in a tower.

5. Shall I go on?

But why did he dismiss such a clever and efficient novella?

I don't dismiss it. I think it's a lovely work of art, and I've read it many times. I like it better than Pynchon does, probably.

However, I think it's interesting that literary critics are not capable of thinking like a professional writer, and professional writers are usually too jealous to inquire too closely into other people's success, etc.

Whereas I'm interested in learning how you write something like Crying of Lot 49, and yet still have nobody notice something obvious like this, even when there are books published by Pynchon specialists with titles like "A Companion to The Crying of Lot 49" or "Even More Footnotes To The Crying of Lot 49".

Well, fuck me.

Okay. Why don't you write a letter to Mr Pynchon, care of his lovely wife:

The Melanie Jackson Agency,
250 West 57th Street, Suite 1119,
New York, NY 10019

And ask this:

Dear Mr Pinecone, In your novel INHERENT VICE you mention that Doc Sportello gets a hard-on every time Ida Lupino's name is mentioned. I want to know if Doc Sportello got a hard-on while watching the film Ida directed, THE TROUBLE WITH ANGELS, starring Hayley Mills, with Rosalind Russell as the Mother Superior of a Nunnery. This film has always confused me, because Rosalind Russell earlier played Gypsy Rose Lee's mother

in GYPSY, and Ida Lupino cast Gypsy Rose Lee opposite Roz Russell in The Trouble With Angels. Incidentally, I noted from those liner notes you wrote for that Lotion album that you are a bit of a Love Boat fan, Mr Pinecone. Do you think there's a connection between Hayley Mills's work in Ida Lupino's film and her work in the all-important episode of The Love Boat? After reading INHERENT VICE, I now realize Maritime Law would apply to that episode of The Love Boat, and I'm interested, Mr Pinecone, if that's what you meant. Sincerely, Oakley Hall

Why call him Pinecone?

It's an allusion to René Descartes theories concerning the pineal gland, which Mr Pynchon's friend Harold Bloom may confirm relates to Francis Crick's stated thesis that a biological basis for the human soul might very well be found one day.

Also, if Hawthorne spelled it "Pyncheon" why not misspell his name? It might convince him to read such mishegas. If he's not reading it right now...

Nobody believed me when I told them about that time I played Foosball with Pol Pot, although you can google it.

All Is True.

(To give the correct title of Shakespeare's or Marlowe's or somebody's last history play.)

So Oedipa's paranoia is really just madness and Inverarity wasn't fucking with her? This way there's no ambiguity?

You do realize that, among professional philatelists, an "inverse rarity" describes a type of highly desirable mis-printed stamp, right?

For the record, I don't think Oedipa's mad. I think she's just on to something, she knows she's on to something, and she can't believe nobody else notices or cares. The question is: Is there a larger conspiracy that does notice or care, or is she really an artist

manqué who is suddenly realizing that there is a sort of order to the world and nobody has noticed it?

I can explain this better if you ask me about Joyce. James Joyce.

What do you mean by your buddy Pynchon?

How about if I just say this... if a man got a nickel every time Harold Bloom spoke the words "my good friend Tommy Pynchon" that man would be a millionaire by now.

Go on about Joyce.

Oh, all I was going to say was... well, have you ever thought what it must be like to be James Joyce? Living as a poor Catholic in a country that is occupied by wealthy Protestants from an island next door? We live 100 years later now, and Protestant and Catholic are mostly just All Theists to the intellectual class, or to people who read Joyce. Yet imagine being Joyce. Imagine you hear that a Bureaucrat who works for the British Government shuffling papers to keep the Irish in their place—and if you're a Bureaucrat working for the British Civil Service in Dublin Castle, chances are you're a Protestant—has just published his first novel. And you're James Joyce and you read it and you see that this novel is full of clichés about the Wild Untamed Irish Natives of the West Coast of Ireland, and is just badly-written horseshit from beginning to end.

And you ask around to find out about the author of this book and you find out he is a Bureaucrat whose only previous published work is a manual for British Bureaucrats called "The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland". And suddenly he thinks he can write a novel...

And so you (James Joyce) pick up the Bureaucrat's novel, because it is set in the Wilds of Western Ireland, and it's entitled "The Snake's Pass" even though any fecking Irish Catholic knows there are no snakes in Ireland, St Patrick chased them out, so this

Bureaucrat is clearly a complete incompetent.

And you read the book and you realize the heroine is named "Norah Joyce". Because she is. (Although James Joyce hadn't met Nora Barnacle yet when this badly-written novel was published.)

And then seven years later the Bureaucrat becomes world-famous for publishing a novel you probably have heard of, although it's not much better written than The Snake's Pass. It's called Dracula.

What would James Joyce do?

Well, I'll tell you one thing. There's only one reference to Bram Stoker or Dracula in all of Finnegans Wake. (And you can trust me on this, I've read the whole damn thing, so you wouldn't have to.) Page 145 in the Viking edition:

"Let's root out Brimstoker and give him the thrall of our lives. It's Dracula's nightout"

And yet... Finnegans Wake is about a man who comes back from the dead. Tim Finnegan is undead, you might say. So is Dracula.

But do you think there's any chance that James Joyce HAD read The Snake's Pass by Bram Stoker the way I described it, and saw the cliché Irish stereotype heroine written by a Protestant Bureaucrat Servant of the British Vampire named Norah Joyce, and thought of that when Nora Barnacle gave him a handjob on Bloomsday?

It's possible. Although nobody in the thriving Joyce industry has ever mentioned it.

Bram's brother Thornley Stoker even pops up as a character in Ulysses. So who knows?

But there, I've given you a reason to take an interest in Finnegans Wake. It might be (as Gogarty suggested) the most colossal leg-pull in literary history. Or it might

just be the Catholic's response to the Protestant Dracula. After all, Dracula literally drinks blood.

Which—if you believe as Catholics do in the doctrine of Transubstantiation—is exactly why Protestants are afraid of Catholics in the first place.

Yet I've never seen any of this mentioned in Joyce criticism, because Joyce critics are mostly interested in holding on to their teaching jobs rather than trying to think: What would it be like to be James Joyce?

Thanks friend; not so much for the inspiring thoughts, but for their inspired expression. You make me want to be what I oft pretend I am.

Thank you, friend. I think we're all basically pretending. Or maybe I should say: Don't mock pretending. I'm just here because I like getting people to think about literature in new and different ways, largely because I think about nothing but literature, and I don't even have anybody to share this kind of stuff with. I never sought to be an academic because I realized I would always be thinking about literature the way that either students (who love it) or writers (who maybe love it or maybe hate it but certainly don't feel like they have a choice) will think about it.

The authorship debate doesn't necessarily negate a discussion of whomever wrote the plays and poems attributed to Shakespeare. If they were all by one writer, then it is fair to say that that man is the greatest writer in the history of the English language. Some might contest Milton, others Joyce, or any number of other writers, but the volume and brilliance of Shakespeare's work is undeniable, as is his expertise with language—and not to be forgotten—the sheer entertainment of his plays.

True. But what if they were written by more than one writer? What would that do to our heroic ideas of authorship and

lone genius?

Or put it this way: Sir William Empson, who was a very well-read and intelligent man, and a good poet, so I won't knock him for being a critic, at the end of his life declared that he had read Marvell's satirical poems "Advice to a Painter" and decided that it was clearly the work of 6 different people. Most professional Marvell scholars thought Empson was just off his trolley (as they say in the UK), and he probably was.

But seriously... what if? We act like geniuses act in isolation, that they owe nothing to other people... and then suddenly somebody discovers that John Milton plagiarized one of the best phrases in Lycidas from a lousy poem called "Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt".

The phrase, incidentally, describes a writer's desire for fame... "that last infirmity of noble minds".

Did you ever think maybe Joyce realized that people were so obsessed with Shakespeare that they were not prepared to acknowledge another great writer, and so to make them pay attention, he just gave his book the title of the character who has the longest, most boring single speech in Shakespeare's work: Ulysses?

Ulysses, whose father, incidentally, had the same name as Ophelia's brother, Laertes. Nobody mentions this in the National Library chapter of Joyce's novel. It's probably irrelevant. But what if it isn't?

Although try sitting through "The Merry Wives of Windsor" someday. Bonus dormitat Homerus... ☺



WATCH YOUR STEP

脚下留心



by 笑聲 AKA Xi Ning



 @realDonaldTrump

電玩城 (VIDEO CITY)

Tonight the arcade is closed.

We see Yoshimi in the street outside. Please remember that she is not in here before continuing. The city stretches up into the heavens around her, slamming into some distant skybox. The surfaces are reflective, neon, throwing hundreds of distorted Yoshimis, varying shades of red and green and yellow and pink, all melting over the walls of the buildings. There is an arch above her, a neon rainbow, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet:

電玩城 (VIDEO CITY).

An announcement.

Please remember that tonight the arcade is closed.

Yoshimi peers in through the glass, the rows of silent cabinets blinking, bathed in shadow, neon, silent. Even dreams need time alone. Ghosts pass her by in Mandarin, Cantonese. Snatches of Japanese and English. A screen above displays a calm blue ocean. Perhaps it is computer generated. From time to time the video stutters and starts again, the gentle shifting of the water resetting itself. Skipping frames.

Tonight the arcade is closed

We can stand and peer in all we want.

Feel free to wait for it to open again. Management apologizes for the inconvenience.

You, the customer, are the highest priority.

Video City strives to provide an excellent level of customer care in all areas. If you believe your needs are not being met, please consult a member of staff. And, automatically, remember the nature of things.



She is dressed exactly how she's always been afraid to, and that lends her an aura. A solidity. If she didn't, she wouldn't be spending her time here, of all places, clothed and looking serious. There are lots of places to be in Video City:

HoloFunction Virtual Life Partner Centres.

Sunny Days BodyShopping Mall.

Heavenly Skin and its various streetside offices.

Please be mindful of the nature of your desires.

Well, Yoshimi has to be. She has a flower in her hair. Some crimson makeup, tentative and uneasy, around her eyes. Otherwise there's little about her that would indicate anything. She's underneath the arch now. Under the rainbow. On the other side is a plaza.

Escalators web the shimmering glass floors, taking other shadows away, to the flashing,

looming shapes of other pleasures, skyscrapers and malls, concourses and alleyways, streets and roads and automatic doors. All of this behind a mist, which grows so thick at certain heights that all Yoshimi can see are the faint outlines of neon signage above. She stands on the edge of an abyss, at the point where Video City starts.

Extending away from this rainbow, in all directions, is what? Static falls from above, vague whiteness against the bruising of night.

Yoshimi waits underneath the rainbow, arms folded, eyes scanning the plaza. Shadows, endless streams, pass her by, laminar. There may be an event somewhere, an unveiling taking place. The city grows and expands, reaching. But always silently, no communication.

The shadows change, the city points. But and if we were to listen to the chatter we would understand there is no contact. A shadow meshes into another. Is she more?

Music plays over the speakers. Endless lift music. There are screens in the plaza. She's told, in several different languages, how great she is: NO ONE CAN STOP A FREIGHT TRAIN.

"A freight train," she mumbles, disappointed. The slogans on the screens change to cartoons, to stock footage, to oceans, to public service announcements. Please be considerate towards fellow customers. No one litters or starts fights or breaks anything. Nothing. Except tonight the arcade is closed.

Text scrolling across LED displays.

Benches in the plaza. Palm trees planted in the dirt, gently breathing. Artistic license.

Be mindful of all things.

Now, if you don't mind, the management will take us back. ☺



by Tom Caul



 @ElMantoTerrestre

Bind Watchtower

1968, Tỉnh Tây Ninh, Vietnam

"All right ladies and gents, we've got another hit for you here at the most scenic firebase this side of the Mekong. Here's Bob Dylan telling us all about our job—this is *All Along The Watchtower*."

Guitar and harmonica unfolded across the canvas tents of Firebase Delta, the impact craters still smoking from the night before, wind whipping a ripped tent where a medic tended the remains of a private. Raymond Spillane sat in the other half of the tent, a Marlboro unlit between his lips. He stared at the torn fabric, the brown dried blood around the holes.

In his head, the endless popping of flesh and visions of flaming silhouettes falling prostrate on the ground. He, John the Evangelist, seeing stars falling to earth, men in mountains, the great beast from the ocean—the bloody tide of sin rising to reap the fields. Bugs surrounded his head as they fled the heat. A sergeant screamed at him, and he felt the weight of his rifle. Gun fire still cracked from the south. He turned and sprinted toward it. A line of troops lay prone behind a wall of sand bags, firing shots into the woods. On the far end, a maelstrom of red tracers vanished into the treeline, into green viscera. Fear twitched his trigger finger. Whistles arced from out of the trees. Chorus of "Incoming". His face hit the mud. Twisting, he looked into the eyes of a corpse. Blood and cream leaked from the man's face. An officer, eyes lit, towered over the corpse—was he drooling? Raymond turned back into the mud.

"Private. Wake up."

Raymond lurched awake in the shredded tent.

"Drink." The medic handed him a canteen, hands caked in a hectic red. The canteen was cold. Unscrewing the cap, he tilted it to let it pour over his mud-caked face. Filth rinsing off to reveal a single cut.



A soldier was leafing through a copy of *Stars and Stripes*. "What are you reading?" he asked Spillane.

"Quiet American, Graham Greene."

"Isn't that some commie trash?"

"Greene's a Catho—"

"Don't matter." He scratched his crotch.

"Yeah?"

"When I look out there," He gestured at the trees. "All I see is what to hide behind." He sat up and placed the paper on his cot.

"You ever not been a soldier?" asked Spillane.

In 1968 Spillane sat on that cot. His head a confused mess of images and words, a white noise of screaming. He looked out the torn tent at the flag. He thought of Kennedy, of LBJ, of Westmoreland, and of the decisions they presented him. The coke bottles lining the streets of South Vietnam, the sugar, the metal shavings scraped into the empties by VC. He thought of markets, of cars, bikes, trucks, planes, tanks, rifles, cloth, grain, uselessness, death, the drool dripping. ☺

