

Hocus Fracas: Attitude in Process

Jack Kimball, Pantaloons, July 2006

The Hocus Fracas School recognizes 75 percent of us women don't know how to use gadgets.

Shootouts in leaflets. To within wound. At least 75 percent of us hang back for more in the studio.

For all those naysayers, the loner views his stray victim, the waif, perhaps not as an ally, but as an element that he doesn't want to -- he doesn't want to miss an opportunity.

The rock lyric, theeeen, roots for something. Pull up your plugs, let's get crazy. My head or yours?

This is only attitude and I'm not adopting it for any more than the baseline it is.

I started with a secret advalorem, Fo Chu, my Goth video vignette artist who's otherwise indistinguishable from other scientists. I recommend your blending in with nonpoets off and on. Not Fo though; he's seething in women's dreams, which are always tempting but flamey, a human hose of illuminated octane, radiant short-sleeve, and white thong. My heart is smoking. This is what life on the salsa-and-elephants circuit is like. Poems, paintings, I govern

people so they sit down and select Fo and me.

Don't snort here. Don't buy Harry Potter books. Don't think of elephants and binding. Don't give up giving. We don't, so don't link to us. Sex position don't watch it, don't listen, don't back down, don't desecrate democracy or the plot summaries, Yeti don't talk, Putin don't panic, don't regulate, don't shoot Rubyinside, don't bomb or make us mad, don't forget! Don't tell mama cabaret and Wal-Mart. Don't take that job changing loan fraud to anoint the sick. Come feed and soil those snares through drummers impregnating kill don't capture with civilization. The sky squeaks with common sense aiding me driven into their pockets, growing new words in Afghan body parts. Bell's Law. Travel tip: don't make "I'm a terrorist!" your ringtone.

In essence every rock lyric has it right. *Lasting obstruction is a sure bet your process and process reception are not going your way, rather the way of lovers and colleagues, or of sworn animae and a conflicted self.*

Process blockage prompts tactical reanalysis. (The moral arguments get gnarly.) Each lepton of vantage you enjoy cedes something or someone opposable blocking the view, requiring accommodation to or redefining frosh fraternity, a new nano status quo. Coin tossers regard this as perpetual, cyclical, rendering fluid obstructions as occasions of conflict, which means "not to love" (according to Cary Baynes). But conflict is not merely evil if it sharpens ethical and esthetic focus on love, self-regard, and collegiality, as well as the potential utility of enemies. In another formulation, to find your process vantage and stay there is at best schtick a la war poetry, a la confessional poetry that's purgatory annulled.

Vantage is an eel, once contained by *advantage*. Maybe vice versa. A waif or stray can't think of achieving advantage without perches (with a view) to look into and through her material for linkage with social and historical production. As the world spins apart, John Wieners writes Boston into his bohemia (*Nerves*); during a mid-career Horatian stage Kenneth Koch Romanizes his playbook in the New York School ("Fate," "The Problem of Anxiety"). So the waif pins the eel but never forgets it will slip away. No *what if*.

Every seat is allegorically filled by fans anticipating The Curse of the Black Pearl -- every seat but the one just in front of *you*, contrarian. As the megaplex darkens, a 6 x 4 gobbles it up. Here are your process choices. 1) Be stubborn and sit your ground. (A mainstream solution if you ask me.) 2) Negotiate with the obstacle -- swap seats, threaten to shoot his cap off -- but surely you aren't relishing this, the process, even if you get your way. (This option proceeds from the mistaken notion that people are reasonable and will listen to your needs.) 3) Relinquish your seat and stand peevisly at the back of the cinema for a new vantage. (Passive aggressive, rather common.) And here's what we loner avants will do. Leave immediately. We wasted \$9, we got the "crowd" feel, we smell the trivia now, and we write. (For data points, we return later. It's only \$9.)

Nothing without anger, muttered sotto voce, is an operative axiom behind the Hocus Fracas School. To let yourself whisper through fracas calls for aplomb, an achievement requiring practice and a vantage with overview. Poets, as if we didn't know, are rung up as waifs and strays, but a few lucky ones are orphaned to an alien ethnicity, completely busted, out of place way up by the headboard, in the wrong *skin*. (Welcome, rookies!) Yet each with her own

comedic intersection untangles the snarls of alien presence. If they nearly die for the gravy, they'll show you the wound, text imitating proverbial fury.

And after the shootout, back to the studio, lentils and prayer.