

THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL



The Bold and the Beautiful

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I declare that this is my own unaided work and all appropriate references have been made. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Cultural Communication and Media in the Faculty of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

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Contents

Introduction	4
Beginnings	14
Chapter 1: The Oracle of Irony	22
Beginnings	39
Chapter 2: Road Tripping with the Enemy	47
Beginnings	68
Chapter 3: The Matrix Reloaded	74
Beginnings	88
Chapter 4: My Style is More Loaded than a Tommy Gun	92
The Evolution of the Ironic Hipster	105
Chapter 4 (Continued): My Style is More Loaded than a Tommy Gun	120
Beginnings	143
Sybilla	161
The Way of the Hipster	207
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Pop Culture Picture Reference Appendix	263
Bibliography	295

Introduction

This research seeks to investigate the world of the ‘Hipster’, also known as the ‘Ironic Hipster’, a so-called countercultural icon and existential conundrum of the postmodern era. The Ironic Hipster is a contemporary subculture steeped in the symptoms of postmodernity. Their life-style has been analysed in conjunction with the theoretical views of a number of postmodern and subcultural theorists in an effort to deconstruct this existential subculture and subsequently ‘hang’ it from a less obfuscating theoretical frame.

During the preliminary stage of this research practical investigation of a qualitative nature was largely limited to linking practical observation with theoretical clarity. I wrote the first draft of this thesis according to academic convention. Interview transcripts were neatly laid out to serve as a parallel to the academic discourse. On completion I realised that not only had I hidden far within the boundary line of academic convention but the style of traditional discourse had entirely contradicted the theory. Being a Hipster/Ironic Hipster myself it seemed hypocritical to use this style in the exploration of a postmodern subculture which is inherently bent on exposing and ironizing any form of hegemonic convention or structure.

Thus, I began again and took into account McLuhan’s formula, “the medium is the message,”¹ and altered my methodology to one that is autobiographical. At the time I did not have any knowledge that such a branch existed within the social sciences. This lack of knowledge serves to prove that for some researchers there is an innate tendency, a collective consciousness, to communicate research within this dimension. “This change, which feels like the subsonic warnings of an earthquake, first emerged as the crises of representation in ethnographic writing, a seeping of doubts about objectivity and neutrality into anthropology, sociology and related fields. These doubts are anchored in poststructuralist linguistics and postmodern literary theories and philosophy whose core ideas depend on the insight that a one-to-one correspondence between an object and its representation in a text is impossible;

¹ McLuhan cited in Baudrillard, 1999, p.8.

moreover, a one-to-one correspondence between a text and its interpretation also is impossible.”²

Only with further research into the idea of fiction and theory was I delightfully surprised to find a vast repertoire of substantiated theory and research. This was quite a relief because I didn't have the inclination or the maturity of understanding to prove my style as theoretically acceptable. This autobiographical method is known as Autoethnography, and not surprisingly it has been heavily criticized by those in favour of traditional scientific approaches who believe that the researcher's presence and identity must be completely extinguished for the legitimacy of the theory to prevail. “Concerns about the situatedness of the knower, the context of discovery, and the relation of the knower to the subjects of inquiry are demons at the door of positivist science. The production of [what has always been considered to be] ‘legitimate’ knowledge begins by slamming the door shut.”³

Autoethnography lies completely perpendicular to this positivist claim as it “is an emerging qualitative research method that allows the author to write in a highly personalized style, drawing on his or her experience to extend understanding about a societal phenomenon. Autoethnography is grounded in postmodern philosophy and is linked to a growing debate about reflexivity and voice in social research.”⁴

I achieved my first degree in performance and drama studies and this background has heavily influenced my personal dependence and justification for the practice of Autoethnography: Based on “Shakespeare's claim, ‘All the world's a stage / And all the men and women merely players,’ is a frequent allusion for theorists who claim that life is dramatically realized and best understood through theatrical language.”⁵ Thus, when one seeks to academically explore a theatrical play or artistic piece, it always reveals a particular social or cultural climate. There are innumerable publications where a researcher has pinpointed and unpacked a complex historical movement or ideology through critiquing an artistic novel or play dated to that time.

² Banks, S.P and Banks, A, 2000, p. 233-234.

³ McCorkel and Myers, 2003, p. 200.

⁴ Wall, 2006, p. 1.

⁵ Bell, 2008, p. 85.

“Dramatistic theory enables three claims about the constitutive, epistemic, and critical work of performance. First, language and symbol systems are collective resources for people that constitute group life: ‘Language and ritual do more than reflect the experience of group life; they create it. To be a member of a community is to share in a name, a history, a mutual consciousness’ (Gusfield 1989, 30). Second, as epistemology, the conventions of drama (scenes, acts, actors, motives, conflict) ‘are our ways of seeing and knowing, which every day we put into practice’ (Williams 1958/1983, 18). Through the ‘dramatization of consciousness itself,’ Raymond Williams maintains, ‘we organize reality.’ Third, dramatistic theory provides tools and vocabulary for participating in social and political life that is constantly changing and changeable. Peter Berger (1963, 139) writes, ‘If social reality is dramatically created, it must also be dramatically malleable.’ Molding the world is always a critical endeavour.”⁶

Following this logic and holding onto the notion that “The Personal is Political,”⁷ if a creative piece is written and theorized by the same author it serves as a deeper and more profound exploration into the subject because there is no distance or division between the two. Separating the creative person from the researching person does not necessarily enrich the knowledge making process because much of the meaning is lost in the process. The researching person does not understand the nuance and sub-textual complexity like the creating person and therefore the resulting critique relies heavily on broader social structures and general understanding. However, when the researcher and creator are one and the same there is “a kind of heightened awareness or educated perception- a particular kind of attention to nuance and details, to multiple dimensions or aspects- that comes from intimate familiarity with the phenomenon being examined. The connoisseur’s eye, as a metaphor for all the senses, is in a state of enlightenment.”⁸

Having previously written this thesis according to convention and being intimately familiar with the subject matter, I knew that it had completely missed the point. It felt like I had reported on the subculture by watching it through a telescope as opposed to

⁶ Bell, 2008, p. 86.

⁷ Hanisch, 1969, p. 204-205.

⁸ Duncan, 2004, p. 4.

reporting from on the ground, in it, and through it. So I began re-writing this thesis as a personal narrative and held fast to the idea that “postmodern ethnographers seek instead to promote an understanding through recognition, identification, personal experience, emotion, insight, and communicative formats which engage the reader on plains other than the rational one alone. They seek to *evoke* the postmodern culture, moment, and consciousness rather than to *describe* it.”⁹

In attempting to reflect and make known the subtleties in conjunction with the broader social and cultural positioning of the Ironic Hipster through personal narrative, I was faced with my next big challenge. It is easy to talk about combining fiction and theory but it is a great deal more difficult in practice. I struggled to find a formula, a way or style which would honour my creative eye but not at the sacrifice of my critical eye. “Autoethnographic accounts can suffer from several shortcomings resulting in an unscholarly representation of the research experience. These shortcomings include over reliance on the potential of personal writing style to evoke direct emotional responses in readers but offer no deeper levels of reflection or analytic scholarship.”¹⁰

At first I thought I might write the entire thesis creatively and then include an explanatory theoretical appendix at the end of each chapter. However, this idea felt like an avoidance because it would still be a separation of fiction from theory. I wanted these two parts to be interwoven and dependant on each other. Jameson (1991) speaks about postmodernism performing the break of separate dialectical fields. Where previously two opposing concepts could be separate from one another, postmodernism sees these two spheres collapsing into one another. I explore this idea more fully in the body of this thesis because it is crucial in understanding the cultural positioning of the Hipster. However, Jameson’s theory also influenced how I chose to combine fiction and theory. If these dialectical spheres have collapsed then *fiction* and *theory*, two opposing concepts, have theoretically been deconstructed and immersed into one another.

Following this premise I have combined the two notions. Throughout this thesis the protagonist (being the autobiographical self) encounters various characters who, amid

⁹ Gottschalk, eds; Banks, S.P and Banks, A, 1998, p. 214.

¹⁰ Duncan, 2004, p. 11.

the fiction of the scene, speak to her about different theoretical concepts relating to the Ironic Hipster's way of being. In fictional dialogue they often speak pure theory to her as if it were their own character's voice. Where this occurs I have referenced accordingly but I chose to use footnotes to show the reference so as not to disrupt the fluidity and guise of fiction. So for example, in Chapter One entitled 'The Oracle of Irony', there is a conversation with the oracle about the Ironic Hipsters' excessive use of Irony where the oracle explains this occurrence by using Linda Hutcheon's theory in her book *Irony's Edge* (1994), as if they were her own words.

Another stylistic tool that I incorporated for the sake of the theory is the use of a through-line film script entitled 'Beginnings'. After completing this thesis I realised that due to the restrictions of fiction I had somewhat sacrificed a pointed theoretical flow. The bulk of this thesis is highly fictional and occurs in an imaginary city or space that allows the Hipsters' contemporary condition to be overtly described and fantastically metaphorical. Although this allows for a great deal to be unexplained or sub-textual, as a theorist I needed to include even more of the critical. Thus, this through-line, also written creatively, occurs in a different space and time to the bulk of the thesis. 'Beginnings' occurs in *real-time* whereas the flow of chapters occurs in an *imaginary time*. So essentially there are two stories occurring simultaneously however, they are intrinsically linked.

For this purpose I printed 'Beginnings' on different colour paper so that the reader can visually differentiate its sporadic occurrences from the bulk of the flow of chapters. It is set at a café table where three Ironic Hipster characters discuss a multitude of topics both frivolously and poignantly. One of the characters, Sybil, who one can assume is the lead character in the flow of chapters' story, is bent on discussing the Hipster state of being with her two friends. She represents part of the journey that I experienced when attempting to define my Ironic Hipster identity through knowledge and theory. A great deal of the subcultural theory emerges out of the 'Beginnings' through-line where Sybil reads from a theoretical book.

So too does 'Beginnings' pre-empt a particular theoretical thought which is carried through conceptually by each chapter that follows on from a portion of the 'Beginnings' section. In both stories, which eventually link up into one story, there is

much reliance on communicating through dialogue. During the researching stage I conducted a number of interviews and participant observations as part of my qualitative research. Although it hasn't been overtly shown in the body of this thesis, a great deal of my transcripts have been written in to the dialogue and immersed into the fiction.

“Not unlike more familiar approaches to qualitative research, common products of autoethnographic research can include ‘short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose’.”¹¹ Due to the subject matter of the Ironic Hipster who is fatally postmodern and the method of Autoethnography as a postmodern tool, the narrative of this thesis is stylistically fragmented. “Paying attention to narrative structure, I have purposefully organized the ethnography as a ‘journey’ through sites, interactions, moments and events which, to me at least, articulate a postmodern logic.”¹² This was not so much a conscious critical choice as it was a natural creative progression. In honouring myself as an insider within the subculture as well as a creative writer I allowed the story to “write itself” stylistically. Once again, reflecting on my dramatic background I knew that often an artist writes from a place of sincerity without really knowing the full depth of social commentary within the creation. In most cases a critical eye will explore the creation and pinpoint its cultural relevance. Thus, I only fully realised the critical importance of the fragmented style in retrospect.

Jameson speaks of our reality being defined in a past reality whereby “we are condemned to seek History by way of our pop images and simulacra of that history, which itself remains forever out of reach.”¹³ This is evident in the Ironic Hipster who not only seeks history but defines their present self through contemporary pop images and simulacra of that history. The Ironic Hipster is a highly individualised subculture because each member pieces together different and often contradictory simulacra images to cast ridicule on the concept of a fixed identity within consumer society. The Hipster is in a postmodern state of being and their very nature is comprised of the symptoms of the postmodern. This is further explained in this thesis but the

¹¹ Ellis and Bochner 2000, p. 739. Cited in Wall, 2006, p. 5.

¹² Gottschalk, eds; Banks, S.P and Banks, A, 1998, p. 233.

¹³ Jameson, 1991, p. 25.

autoethnographic importance is that it is impossible for a Hipster narrative to be linear. So too, the fragmented styles that I chose to use would differ exponentially from another Hipster's choice. On a whole the story is somewhat linear with an identifiable through-line voice. However, some chapters are stylistically dissimilar even though they still progress the overall narrative. For example, Chapter Six is a theatre play entitled 'Sybilla' and, in keeping with the Ironic Hipsters' symptom of nostalgia, Chapter Five, 'The Way of the Hipster' is written in a story book format identifiable to people, Hipsters, who grew up in the 1980's. Also, Chapter Seven is in a 'Choose Your Own Adventure' format which is also identifiable to a person who grew up in the 1980's.

This idea goes deeper than just the format or style. The very characters that the protagonist encounters are pop culture icons. This is because the Ironic Hipster also carries the further explored symptom of perpetual referencing to the media and an innate sense of self awareness. In part, a great deal of their existence is made up of a series of references to the media. The Ironic Hipsters' weapon is that of the image or sign which are mass society's source of identity, but the Hipsters' source of play. For example, in Chapter One, 'The Oracle of Irony', the oracle is Sally Spectra, a character played by Darlene Connelly in the soap opera 'The Bold and the Beautiful'. This choice not only articulates the Hipsters' complete immersion in the media but also their irony within it. In Chapter Two, 'Road Tripping with the Enemy', Skeletor the villain from the popular 1980's cartoon series 'He-Man and the Masters of the Universe' is one of the characters. This choice also carries layered meaning, including that of the Hipsters' affinity for nostalgia and their often perceived two-dimensionality. This symptom of referencing is evident throughout this thesis and I have further stylistically conveyed the Hipster condition of living through movies and television by formatting bulk sections of dialogue, throughout the story, in the accepted screenplay format.

Not only are characters a reference but the fiction itself carries a vast amount of references which are often used to enrich a metaphor or other figures of speech. This intertextuality is intrinsic to the Hipsters' state of being and is indeed part of their subcultural vernacular. Thus, if an insider were to read this thesis the overload of referencing would seem natural and understandable. Even if the insider didn't know

the particular reference they would understand it on a base level. However, for the purpose of an outsider and theoretical clarity I have used a [*] symbol above most of the references. Thus, when one sees this, [*], it is an indication to turn to the ‘Pop Culture Picture Reference Appendix’ located at the end of the thesis in order to obtain more clarity and contextualise the reference through the imagination with the image provided.

I have also included various illustrations. Overall these emphasize the Hipsters’ world of the play of image and sign. Chapters’ Five, Six and Seven each have their own illustrated cover and back page rendering these chapters as books within the book. For example the illustrated cover of Chapter Five, is an adaptation from an original ‘read-along’ story book cover from the 1980’s. These three chapters have also been printed on different textured paper which results in each chapter being authentic to its particular genre. These books within the book and the other interspersed illustrations further emphasize the Hipsters’ predilection for visual nostalgia, the joy obtained through ironically recontextualizing media images and their affiliation for tactile memorabilia.

I am aware that this mass of styles, references and formats might seem like a mental overload; however, this is thematically one of the core points that I am attempting to make about the Hipster condition: “it seems clear- to me at least- that at the end of the twentieth century and in a growing number of societies, everyday life, politics, sense of self, hopes, fears, and desires are constantly being *mediated* by simulations of actual or fictional situations occurring in invisible sites but REALized through the telecommunication on screens.”¹⁴ The Ironic Hipster is conscious of this contemporary crisis and in an attempt to rebel they escalate their interaction with the media to the point of the hyper real and the spectacle. Their inability to separate themselves or detach from mediated society is further investigated in this thesis but it is important to understand that the media is “a large share of the raw material individuals utilize as they go about producing meanings and interpreting their lives. Such media texts constitute significant frameworks through or against which

¹⁴ Gottschalk, eds; Banks, S.P and Banks, A, 1998, p. 215.

individuals (ethnographers included) perceive the ‘real,’ and assess others and their/our selves.”¹⁵

As such I am fully convinced that this thesis communicates and displays the meaning and condition of the Ironic Hipster subculture more so than a traditional academic thesis would. The term *Autoethnography*, “was originally coined by Hayano (1979) to refer to anthropological studies by individuals of their own culture. The exact definition of the term is elusive, and there are many other genres, too numerous to list, that fall under its umbrella (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). Behar (2000) has described emerging genres, such as autoethnography, as efforts ‘to map an intermediate space we can’t quite define yet, a borderland between passion and intellect, analysis and subjectivity, ethnography and autobiography, art and life’.”¹⁶ Therefore, each autoethnography is vastly different from the next according to the subject matter and individual sensibilities. Due to the personal nature of this form it was very much an intimately connected journey for me and because of this the various crises were internally experienced which resulted in a sincere resolution. One does not often encounter this with traditional theory because the subject matter is kept at arm’s length through objectivity. Thus the outcome is more of an explanatory perspective as if witnessed through binoculars, which lacks concrete resolution or a path to find a new sense of equilibrium. However, with autoethnography, the journey of this story is a mirror of what I personally experienced and overcame.

To end, before the beginning, “Pablo Picasso said that we all know art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize the truth. The creator of fiction must know how to convince others of the truthfulness of his or her lies.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Gottschalk, eds; Banks, S.P and Banks, A, 1998, p. 216.

¹⁶ Smith, 2005, p. 4.

¹⁷ Banks, S.P and Banks, A, 2000, p. 17

“BEGINNINGS”

A Screenplay

FADE IN:

INT/EXT. MORROCAN CAFÉ - MORNING

A young woman, mid-twenties, SYBIL, sits at a small round mosaic table in the corner of a Moroccan themed café. The table is nestled between two booth seats that are lavished with decadent cushions. Next to her is a black vinyl backpack bursting with books and papers.

She has dark hair and dark eyes. Her hair is long and in a 1920's up-style and she wears red lipstick. She also wears a 1950's circle skirt. It is made of maroon suit fabric with thin neon pink pinstripes. Bright pink tulle forms a layer underneath the skirt. We can see the sleeves of a tight fitting plain black t-shirt over which she wears a waistcoat. The front of the waistcoat is decadent upholstery fabric and the back is maroon satin. Popping out of the waistcoat is bright pink Edwardian ruffle. Pinned on the waistcoat is a gaudy television shaped broach. On her right arm is a black leather, gladiator style armband. She wears bright pink legwarmers that start mid calf and hang loosely over her black and white Adidas sneakers.

She pours mint tea out of a brass pot into an amber glass etched with gold swirls. She takes a sip and looks around at the other patrons. Along the curb a Ford Bantam bakkie¹⁸ pulls up and BELLA, a young woman, mid-twenties, messily gets out, simultaneously forgetting that her seat belt is on, grabbing her belongings and locking the door.

Bella has 'Amelie*' styled sandy blonde hair which is tied into two little pigtails with bright yellow 1980's style bobble hair bands. She wears black lace leggings and a short punk style skirt. The fabric is tartan red, yellow and black. Around her waist hangs a black studded belt. She wears a light wool buttoned up mustard cardigan. Above the top button we see the black lace from her shoe-string camisole that she wears underneath. Around her neck is a classical string of pearls to match her dainty pearl earrings. She has a worn leather sling bag. On her feet are yellow roller skates.

At the same time JOSH, a young man, mid-twenties, arrives at the café on a sector nine¹⁹. He swerves to avoid colliding with the unaware Bella. He stops, flicks up his board and greets her by shaking his head at her confusion and giving her a hug. Josh has brown curly hair. It is perfectly messy like an Italian football player. He wears black skinny jeans with a black studded belt. On his feet are chunky black, red and gold Adidas sneakers. He wears a fitted white suit shirt tucked into his jeans with a thin 'swing style' red tie. He wears a black hip-hop style baseball cap with the word 'Hustler' embroidered in gold. Around his neck are two gold 'bling' chains. On one hangs a gold pendant in the shape of a 'J'. On another, the word 'Dawg'. He wears a suit style tweed jacket.

¹⁸ South African word for a small truck.

¹⁹ A type of skateboard.

Josh and Bella approach Sybil at the corner table and take a seat. The three greet each other. There is a sense of familiarity between them as they have known each other for some years.

SYBIL

(Self-aware in a Moroccan accent)

Welcome welcome, make yourselves at home.

JOSH

The suburban girl who wishes she hailed from a place less ordinary, a place where they drink tea out of amber glasses and negotiate the price of textiles on street corners.

BELLA

I wanna be Scandinavian, like from Iceland or something.

JOSH

You just wanna be Bjork* and live in a lighthouse.

SYBIL

You'd have to loose the roller-skates, what with the stairwell and everything.

BELLA

Whatever guys, I don't wanna live in a lighthouse, I just wanna have one for days when I feel all Virginia Woolf* and stuff.

SYBIL

Tea?

JOSH

Cool.

(Noticing Sybil's backpack)

So what's all the literature?

BELLA

(Condescending)

Sybil's tryna find herself.

SYBIL

I can't believe you just reduced my self exploration to that phrase.

BELLA

I'm just joking.

SYBIL

Don't you guys wanna know why we're like this? Why we dress like this and talk like this and-

JOSH

(Raising his amber glass to eye level and looking through it)
-I wonder if the 'Bell Jar' would read the same if 'ol Plath* had been looking through amber eyes?

BELLA

(Mimicking the way the character Elaine says 'Stella' in the Seinfeld* episode 'The Pen')
Sylvia! Sylvia!

SYBIL

(To Bella)
You know for somebody that detests mindless woman in their kitten heels, you really do avoid a real conversation as much as they do.

BELLA

Are you scolding me?

SYBIL

No.

JOSH

Yes.

BELLA

Okay fine. Let's unpack our existence. Just know that when you open it up all you're gonna find is a broken TV giving off white noise.

We're,

(Clears her throat and puts on a ponsy voice)

Ironic Hipsters...let's leave it at that.

SYBIL

You're being like your mother.

BELLA

Whatever that's hectic.

JOSH

She's right.

SYBIL

I just wanna know why the hell we're like this.

(Pulling a thin paperback out of her backpack)

There's hardly anything written about us but I found this-

JOSH

-That's because peeps²⁰ gave up before they started. I don't even know what we are. We're definitely a subculture. It's too complicated.

BELLA

Ooo, let's rather go to hell! Let's go to 'Club Vidamatta' tonight!

SYBIL

You see. You see what you just did there?

JOSH

'Vidamatta' with its pseudo Cuban vibe and mindless patrons?

BELLA

Yes. Come on guys we had so much fun last time.

(Laughing)

Sybil remember when that guy was flirting with you and you told him that he should walk away because you were too existential for him and he thought you were talking about a country!!

SYBIL

I don't know if I'm in the mood to make fun of the little people tonight.

²⁰ Slang term for the word 'people'.

SYBIL

Sure.

(Paging through a paperback riddled with neon Post-Its)
Check it out, it says;

Ironic Hipsters are both concerned with but at the same time take part in consumer society. The difference however, is that the Ironic Hipster is entirely aware of popular culture and dislikes it, but their irony is seen when they take part in mass culture, if only momentarily, in order to cast ridicule on it.

JOSH

(Pulling a self aware gangster hand sign)
Word! And that's exactly what we're gonna be doing tonight. We all know that 'Vidamatta's' absurd-

BELLA

-It represents everything that we're against.

JOSH

Yeah. It's like free tickets to the best show ever!

BELLA

Exactly! And besides, if the paperback says it's fine then-

SYBIL

-It doesn't say it's fine, it just says that it is-

BELLA

-But if we're aware of the pretence of the place then it's cool.

JOSH

Yeah, we're not being suckered by it.

SYBIL

I guess so...but my irony's running very thin.

JOSH
Thinner than Nicole Richie*?

FADE OUT.

Chapter 1

The Oracle of Irony

After deliberating whether Josh was dressed smart enough because he chose slops as opposed to those pointy nose picking smart shoes that most guys his age are wearing, they let him into the club. I was stopped short by a protein-induced forearm.

Apparently they prefer the girls to wear high heels. I tried to explain the meaning of my outfit and how without my Adidas sneakers the juxtaposition would be too meek to the point of redundant. I think protein boy thought I was speaking French. He drooled and grew more defensive. So I simplified my argument and pointed out the nearest pair of stilettos explaining that my phat ass Adidas sneakers were worth more than three pairs of those stilettos. Protein boy didn't seem to pick up the economic debate either. I gave up and said I would go home and get some heels. Protein boy was happy to be rid of me. Bella and Josh continued through the club of obscenity and I manoeuvred around the outside of the building. At the back end I looked up and there was Bella hanging by the railing. Josh shielded her with his back while she slipped off her heels and sent them flailing through the air toward me.

Back in the presence of protein boy with my feet squeezed into heels two sizes too small I gave him a head cant and a girlie smile. He flicked his log of a neck and let me through. I teetered through the herd trying to negotiate tipping glasses, girls that walked with arms linked in horizontal rows and broken glass. Finally I reached Bella and Josh and I breathed. Bella and I exchanged shoes again and the three of us nodded in agreement at how absurd the shoe interlude was. Josh and Bella, perhaps noticing an aggression creeping up in me, said that they would go to the bar because I'd been through enough.

They left.

Why was I even here? Oh yes, I was being ironic. There's a fine line between irony and melancholy. I looked around the pulsating room. It was like a peacock farm. Everybody was flaring their feathers trying to attract a mate. The guys had their chests protruding forward like they'd inflated it with a bicycle pump. And too much hair gel. Little tufts of cockatiel spikes stuck out in all directions which matched superbly with

their pointy shoes. The girls had the feathers of too much skin, too much make-up and too much interest in the guys' conversation. Groups of people were talking to each other but they weren't looking at one another. It was like a silent treaty of pretence. They were going with the motion of conversation but each person's eyes were scanning the room, hungrily seeking another superficial companion.

I was also scanning the room, hungrily seeking out isolated moments of absurdity.

- Two girls closed in on a guy as they laughed obscenely at his joke.
- A group of girls peered over their shoulders as they followed the discreet directions of the ring leader to look at a guy across the room.
- A guy bought a girl a drink and waved off a large handful of change.
- A girl asked her friend to check her make-up.
- A girl pulled at her under-wire bra and propped up her breasts.
- A guy gave a girl a little paddy whack on the ass, she smiled back flirtatiously.
- A guy rearranged his crotch while another surreptitiously corrected his cockatiel tufts in a mirror.

I was in a state of cynical complacency picturing how funny it would be if I had a Hessian sack of feed. I would walk up to each group and leave a scoop of grain between them. Let them peck away at it. Peck and flare, peck and flare. Then Gwen Stefani's* song 'Hollaback Girl' kicked in on the dance floor. I jostled to the terrace overlooking the pit of chronically inexpressive dancers. Some girl in a low cut top, a skirt the size of a sweat towel and classless heels threw her arms in the air and proclaimed,

"This is my Sonng!"

Then she proceeded to 'dance'. The usual unconscious self consciousness; step to the side and tap with the other foot, step to the side and tap with the other foot, now seductively raise the arms and do a slight pelvic sway, flick the hair and use those eyes to entice. In fact, every girl on the dance floor was doing the exact same moves except in a different order.

I was sure that they were part of a cult and the night before they had a mass slumber party. After politely consuming low calorie delicacies and lightly buttered popcorn the Regina George* of the group would have hustled them to their feet, ordered a change into their gym gear and put on the Jane Fonda* instruction video entitled, 'Whorish dancing for the unthinking,' and the tag line, 'Scared of being an individual, just want to have a good time and the ability to lure any man? This video is for you!'

There were two of them dancing in a spherical cage elevated in the centre of the depravity. I've never grasped the idea of arbitrary raised platforms in clubs. In theory it's a stage but the show was disappointingly mediocre. Six feet above the rest I expected more conviction in their performance but apparently they'd also hired the video.

Animals.

One would also find animals in cages. I remembered visiting the zoo and being locked in a perpetual gaze as I watched Max the in-house Gorilla's desperate attempts at avoiding the crowds. At first he sat with his head drooped. His shoulders a picture of despair. A solemn and excessively melancholic repose. With furrowed brows and a measured pace his head would rise and as it reached the pinnacle of his relentless existence it would sink to the other side. His irises seemed deeply set, like he was holding himself a step back from the surface of things. Slowly he eased up his weight and trudged to the farthest end of the enclosure where he reassumed his repose with his back to the audience. The hordes with their cameras and greasy sandwiches shuffled to the other side and continued to point and prod at Max's unpleasurable condition. In the same manner he moved again, and so did the crowd along with their inability to register his overtly disturbed body language. This absurd charade carried on indefinitely. It was a farce for the damned and not once did Max step out of character. He wasn't going to give them the satisfaction of seeing his primal self. They wanted a show but he was giving them a showdown. Even if he wanted to, his performance would seem melodramatic in this simulated wilderness.

Maybe that's why the two caged women were inadequate. How could they show their true selves in a place like this? After years of conditioning they'd given in. Did they ever know? For the most part I've relinquished my disdain and aggressive criticism for the people that those two girls represented. Glossy magazines come to life. Thinking they've experienced a divine moment of honesty because they told their friend that she doesn't look her best with her hair scraped back. Instead of anger I use irony. I think irony means that I don't give up entirely.

We all exist. And we all choose. Surely the spherical cage was like the system we live in and those two girls could be interchanged with any human being. Some are indoctrinated with apathy, knighted with a constructed identity, classed according to their possessions and fooled to believe that they are unique. Then there are others. They are my comrades. Those that rile against the steel like Ted Hughes's poem, 'The Jaguar':

The Jaguar

The apes yawn and adore their fleas in the sun.
The parrots shriek as if they were on fire, or strut
Like cheap tarts to attract the stroller with the nut.
Fatigued with indolence, tiger and lion

Lie still as the sun. The boa-constrictor's coil
Is a fossil. Cage after cage seems empty, or
Stinks of sleepers from the breathing straw.
It might be painted on a nursery wall.

But who runs like the rest past these arrives
At a cage where the crowd stands, stares, mesmerized,
As a child at a dream, at a jaguar hurrying enraged
Through prison darkness after the drills of his eyes

On a short fierce fuse. Not in boredom-
The eye satisfied to be blind in fire,
By the bang of blood in the brain deaf the ear-
He spins from the bars, but there's no cage to him

More than to the visionary his cell:
His stride is wilderness of freedom:
The world rolls under the long thrust of his heel.
Over the cage floor the horizons come.²¹

I manoeuvred my way to Josh and Bella who had finally got the barman's attention without the use of feathers and flare. I told them that the jaguar was going to pay a quick visit and they could find me on the dance floor. I prowled into the cage and began to move and sway like an M.TV* disco goddess. The two girls/parrots managed to make some room while doing the pseudo lesbian dance where they stood back to back and mildly gyrated each other with orgasmic eyes and a porn star gape. My feet stomped to the bass, my torso elaborated the treble and the lyrics were in my arms. They were clearly out of their depth. They retreated like a couple of hyenas who had been scolded by the rhythm. I grabbed hold of the bars and rattled them as my knees dipped into a demonstrative Beyonce Knowles* style back roll. I flung myself in every direction imitating pop movements but with an alternative candour. I played up to every imaginative camera and when I suspended a movement between the beat with my eyes fixed on the audience lens, they were clearly enjoying the show. The guys were whistling and the girls had their arms in the air doing the typical "I'm giving you props", thing. I increased the ferocity of my pace and slammed my feet harder against the steel, sparks shooting out from the base of my sneakers. Still they cheered! Feeding off my energy and adding vivacity to their own cliché.

Bella and Josh were buckled over in hysterics, the only two that appeared to be catching my irony. So I increased the spectacle and laced my dancing with Michael

²¹ Hughes, 1972, p. 11.

Jackson* ‘Thriller’ moves. Still all smiling like a bunch of deranged Cheshire cats. Amid this absurdity I didn’t notice that the base of my sneakers were melting, I was too busy mouthing the lyrics, “Let me hear you say this shit is bananas,”²² and directly to the audience with outstretched accusatory arms pointing at a different person on every beat, “B-A-N-A-N-A-S!” The cage was shuddering. Bolts and screws were spurting out in a stop sequence against the strobe. My sweat was blurring my vision. The cage began to levitate but I was caught up in my inability to communicate my irony. Why were they loving me? Sure I was a glam pop spectacular but how could they not see my revolutionary edge?! A contemporary Joan of Arc* wielding a sword against conformity! On the last beat I spun around like Michael Jackson with my feet pursed together. This was the last abrasive move and the steel cage ignited as the metallic sphere burst through the roof in a flurry of ironic mayhem!

I was flying through the air, suspended within the cage as it spiraled around me. It occurred in slow motion with epic proportions, my steady breathing propelling its mass. Silence. Only shards of neon flashes that whisked past with an electronic whiz interrupted the isolation of my breath. My body had assumed the position of sitting on a lounging chair. The steel bars began to disintegrate and I extended my hand through anti gravity to connect with the ethereal flakes of glitter that hovered as if on a universal mobile.

Suddenly, a voice cut short my dream sequence, “I suppose you want to know why no one got it.”

“What?” I diverted my attention to the left and immediately recognized the office.

Imitation light oak walls and desk with some scattered fake plants. Fabric off-cuts draped over couches and chairs and hat stands, with a loosely pinned evening dress on a mannequin in the corner. Mounted on the wall the familiar turquoise and pink logo to match the bean-bag I found myself sitting on.

She sat behind the desk like an all knowing oracle. Dressed in gaudy couture a halo of glorious back light illuminated her fiery permed hair.

²² Lyric for ‘Hollaback Girl’ by Gwen Stefani and Pharrell Williams, 2004, <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/gwenstefani/hollabackgirl.html>

ME

Sally Spectra?!*

SALLY SPECTRA

Surprise!

I looked around but we weren't on the set of 'The Bold and the Beautiful'. I had seen this place a thousand times before. The only difference was that Sally Spectra had four arms. In part she looked like the Hindu goddess Durga* but her expression was more forced than serene. Her dress was just as kitsch and instead of perching on a tiger she was majestically positioned on a baroque inspired furry tiger print throne. Her bare foot was folded up over her knee and her toe nails were French manicured. Four arms orbited her being and separated the dusk coloured light into flickering beams. In each hand she clenched a different item; a golf club, a framed picture, a story book with a cassette tape, and this one made me particularly nervous, a sword.

SALLY SPECTRA

You were under the misguided impression that irony is infallible.

ME

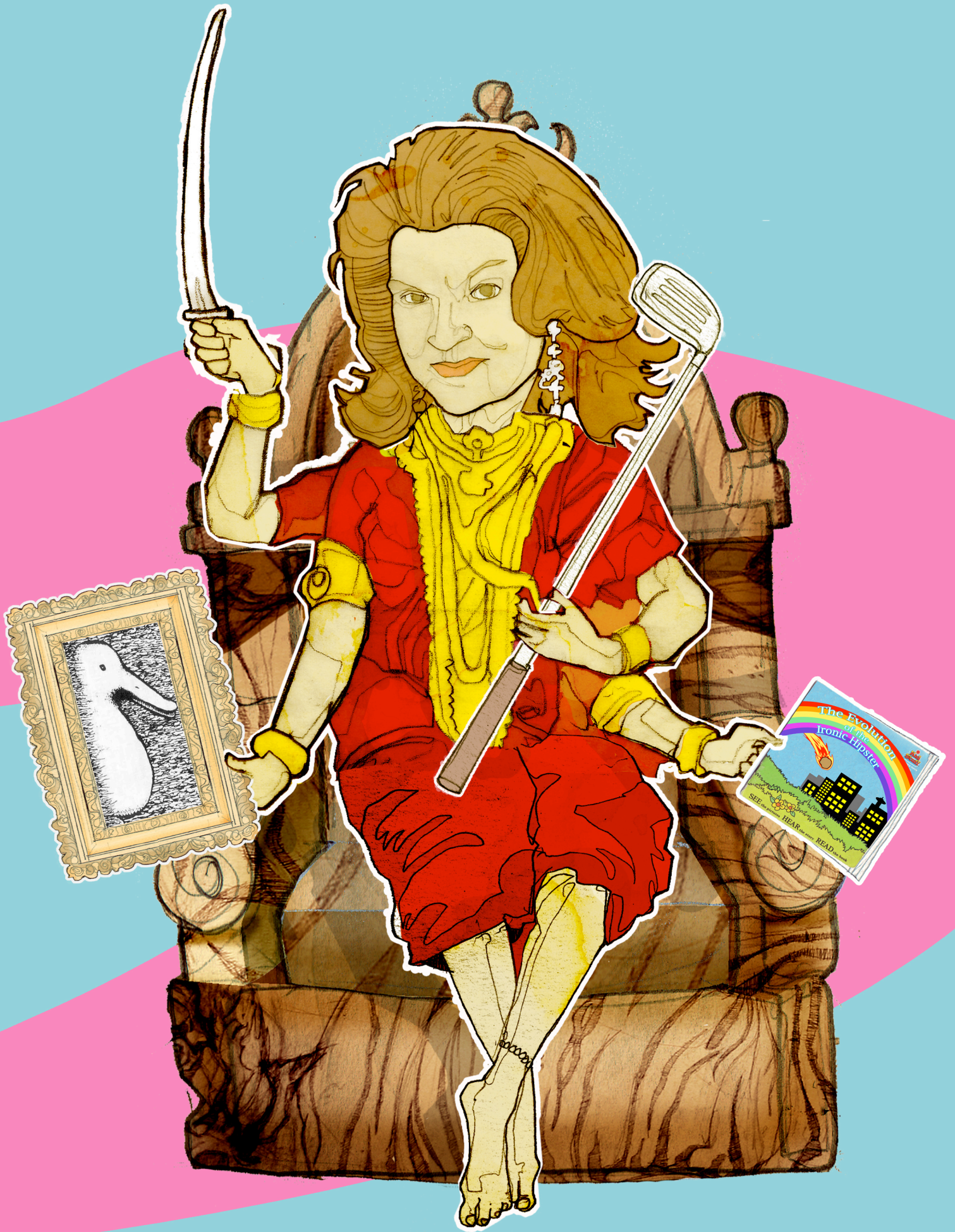
I thought I was making it obvious but they interpreted it all wrong.

SALLY SPECTRA

'The major players in the ironic game are indeed the interpreter and the Ironist.'²³ You failed to make irony even though that was your intention because your audience, 'the interpreters'²⁴, are the ones that decide whether something is ironic or not.

²³ Hutcheon, 1994, p. 11.

²⁴ Term used by Hutcheon, 1994.



The Evolution
of the
Ironic Hipster

SEE the future. HEAR the news. READ the news.

ME

So 'there is no guarantee that the interpreter will "get" the irony in the same way as it was intended.'²⁵

SALLY SPECTRA

Exactly, it would seem you took your audience for granted.

Confused, I tried to wrench myself out of the bean-bag which was determined on devouring me. It took twenty awkward seconds of heaving and pulling with the crackle of synthetic leather and polystyrene before I was up.

ME

Look, Sally, I can call you that? Irony is basically saying or doing one thing and meaning something else. So, what we have is a broken telephone wire situation.

SALLY SPECTRA

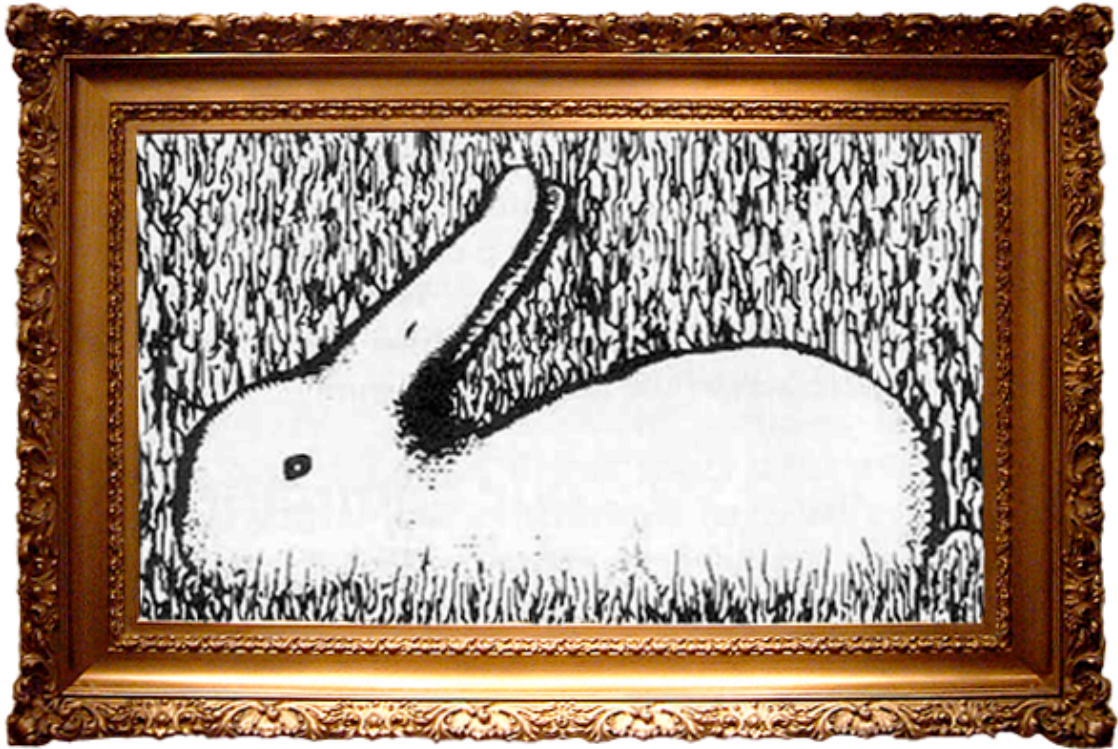
A childish metaphor but yes.

One of her arms came to rest on the table and she skid a framed picture²⁶ across the surface.

²⁵ Hutcheon, 1994, p. 11.

²⁶ Picture from, http://www.makku.com/img/rabbit_duck_3.jpg

Frame from, <http://www.hampshireantiques.com/painting/images/mooseframe.jpg>



SALLY SPECTRA

What do you see?

ME

Well it's a rabbit...or a duck...either or.

SALLY SPECTRA

Physically we can only see one at a time. I would like to propose that when it comes to making ironic meaning it is as if we can see both the duck and the rabbit simultaneously. Think 'of ironic meaning as relational, as the result of the bringing- even rubbing- together of the said and the unsaid, each of which takes on meaning only in relation to the other. Admittedly, this (like most) is not a relation of equals: the power of the unsaid to challenge the said is the defining semantic condition of irony.'²⁷

²⁷ Hutcheon, 1994, p. 59.

ME

So when I was in the cage, I intended to be the duck but all they could see was the rabbit.

SALLY SPECTRA

Know this! ‘Those whom you oppose might attribute no irony and simply take you at your word.’²⁸ Even your two friends, Bella and Josh, they caught your irony this time but in the future they ‘might also attribute no irony and mistake you for advocating what you are in fact criticizing. They may simply see you as a hypocrite or as compromised by your complicity with a discourse and values they thought you opposed.’²⁹

ME

Like the time I went to a strip joint. I thought it would be funny. It was... sort of, but every time I dropped the Mafioso (I’m smoking a cigar and totally at ease with my surroundings) act, I only felt anxious. I was being ironic though. Bella was so pissed off with me. She said that my irony had officially slapped me in the face.

SALLY SPECTRA

Do you agree with strip clubs?

ME

No. I feel the same way about strip clubs as I do about Paris Hilton*.

SALLY SPECTRA

Then you shouldn’t have taken part in something so far removed from your values. Some would say that ‘irony by its nature seems to have the power to corrupt the ironist...the “habit of irony” is even seen as a

²⁸ Hutcheon, 1994, p. 16.

²⁹ Hutcheon, 1994, p. 16.

“corrosive and paralyzing disease of the spirit”.³⁰ Don’t give irony the power to subvert your own beliefs.

ME

So then...my irony is basically a private joke, a way of communicating with my close friends. What’s the point really?! It’s merely an indulgent experience where we can show off how clever and counter-cultural we are. It’s a mere ‘communal achievement’³¹ of ‘joining, of finding and communing with kindred spirits.’³² What a bunch of idiots! Down with irony! This whole time I thought I was a revolutionary but I’m just a pretentious-

SALLY SPECTRA

Stop!! As with irony there’s more than meets the eye. Do not believe that your irony which is intrinsically weaved into your way of being, happened by mistake. Irony ‘depends upon social and situational context for its very coming into being.’³³ Your excessive use of irony cannot be separated from your social surrounds. You live in a specific kind of era that demands irony from the counter-culture...If I were to strike this sword at you what would you do?

ME

I’d move.

SALLY SPECTRA

Exactly. As society changes so too does subculture. Your irony is a product of your postmodern circumstance.

ME

Even so, it doesn’t change the fact that it seems to be a useless skill.

³⁰ Muecke, 1969, p. 242-243, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 44.

³¹ Booth, 1974, p. 13, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 93.

³² Booth, 1974, p. 28, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 93.

³³ Lewis, 1989, p. 35-36. Walker, 1988a, p. 25. Barreca, 1988, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 26.

SALLY SPECTRA

“Irony has been seen as ‘serious play,’ as both ‘a rhetorical strategy and a political method,’”³⁴ that deconstructs and decenters patriarchal discourses. ‘Operating almost as a form of guerrilla warfare, irony is said to work to change how people interpret.’³⁵ “The operating premise here is that ‘single vision produces worse illusions than double vision’.”³⁶ Your irony is satire that undermines dominant authority.

ME

But essentially my irony cripples me. I’m a hypocrite because I play for both teams. Like the soap opera you used to be in, ‘The Bold and the Beautiful’. I know that it’s a terribly scripted, melodramatic, perpetual show that promotes nothing intellectual or morally up right but I still watch it! Sure there’s no sincerity in the act and it’s more like a comedy show riot, the point is, I still watch it. I’m another viewer for the network...regardless of my intentions. I’m a fence-sitter. I’m offered two choices and I choose both.

SALLY SPECTRA

‘Which is but another way of saying that you choose neither.’³⁷ ‘Irony, thus, is always polemical,’³⁸ ‘belonging to the armoury of controversy, and not fitted to any entirely peaceable occasion.’³⁹ Your irony is your ‘weapon of contempt,’⁴⁰ more powerful than the blade because of its indirection. You and your friends decided to go to ‘Vidamatta’ for a night of irony. You were as thrilled about this prospect as you would be about frequenting a venue that you attend from a place of sincerity because it agrees with your sensibilities.

³⁴ Haraway, 1990, p. 191, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 31-32.

³⁵ Hutcheon, 1994, p. 32.

³⁶ Haraway, 1990, p. 196, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 32.

³⁷ Chevalier, 1932, p. 79, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 51.

³⁸ Hutcheon, 1994, p. 40.

³⁹ Thirwall, 1833, p. 483, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 40.

⁴⁰ Booth, 1974, p. 43, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 41.

ME

Okay, yes.

SALLY SPECTRA

If you did everything in earnest, you would hardly cross paths with the masses. Irony ‘allows you to participate in the humorous process without alienating the members of the majority.’⁴¹ You are able to engage but simultaneously your irony stands as a distancing mechanism. You are both observer and participant. ‘It is a mode of intellectual detachment,’⁴² ‘that engages the intellect rather than the emotions,’⁴³ and aggravates ‘because it denies us our certainties by unmasking the world as an ambiguity.’⁴⁴

ME

But why?

Behind the steel door on the right hand side the ascending sound of clanging and heavy footsteps became apparent. For a split second Sally’s orbiting glow intensified as her irises dilated. Regal and in control she didn’t flinch. The only give away were her lips. Twitching and shifting so slightly but amplified against her statuesque self. An abrupt thud as she unclenched the golf club and pounded out her words at a ferocious pace.

SALLY SPECTRA

If anything remember this! ‘The golf IRON can also be a branding device, one that hurts, that marks, that is a means of inflicting power. To resolve these two IRONs into a third, however, you need only think of irony in the symbolic light of the non-domestic and somewhat less violent golf club known as the IRON: it has an oblique head (the

⁴¹ Walker, 1988a, p. 123, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 50.

⁴² Schoentjies, 1993, p. 153-186, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 14.

⁴³ Walker, 1990, p. 24, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 14.

⁴⁴ Kundera, 1986, p. 134, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 15.

greater its number the greater its obliqueness); it is subtle (compared to the alternatives); it works to distance objects. But, it can also miss.⁴⁵

ME

Okay okay, the golf club.

I was struggling to focus. Clearly I was in danger. The disjointed steps had increased to a weighted stride. I still had so many questions. Sally edged me toward the door on the opposite end.

SALLY SPECTRA

Go now!

ME

What's going on!? I still have so much to ask you. How did this happen!?

A figure exploded through the door! Literally through it, like a cartoon character. I couldn't make out his face but he was wearing a fancy suit. Screaming like a lunatic he executed a series of forward rolls and back tucks. Finally he came to rest in a kung-fu poise with a machete in either hand. A fearsome glare, frothing at the mouth...I'd never seen him like this before. Ridge Forrester*...unhinged. With athletic restraint his arm motioned forward as his machete sliced the air and came to rest pointing directly at me. His eye perfectly in line with the blade as if he was looking through a sniper rifle. Simultaneously it glistened and his eye twitched.

⁴⁵ Hutcheon, 1994, p. 36.

RIDGE FORRESTER

Tonight. You die!

ME

Come on Ridge, this is unnecessary. I have nothing against you. How about we talk this through?

SALLY SPECTRA

She's right. Don't be a hater. Let it go, you can't get them all.

RIDGE FORRESTER

There's nothing to talk about! 'The lesson is clear. Employing irony, speaking tongue and cheek, talking wryly or self-mockingly-these smartass intellectual practices give our whole profession a bad name.'⁴⁶

ME

Well how else am I supposed to cope with your terrible acting? You can't possibly take yourself seriously?!

RIDGE FORRESTER

I take myself very very seriously! 'Knock it off, and knock it off now. Nobody understands your little ironies but you and theory-mongering friends...So just wipe that smirk off your face.'⁴⁷

He extended his blade and launched toward me with a defiant war cry. Death inches away, and all I could think about was how cool it would be to die at the hands of Ridge Forrester. My gravestone would read 'Here lies a soldier, martyred for irony.' I'd have cupcakes at the service and Barry Manilow* would sing 'Copacabana' jiving

⁴⁶ Berube and Graff, 1993, p. 3, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 7.

⁴⁷ Berube and Graff, 1993, p. 3, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 7.

like a ninety year old humanoid. As I was imagining the congregation doing a choreographed dance in unison Sally lunged forward and shielded me with her sword. Their blades clanged together as the battle ensued. Ridge powered up and his suit tore as his body expanded. It reminded me of The Hulk* but his skin turned a murky yellow. Sally pivoted on the tip of her big toe. Moving so fast she became a blur and when she stopped abruptly her hair stood upright and brushed against the ceiling. Her lips had inflated. She looked like a platypus and as she pulled and twitched her mouth her lips bitch-slapped Ridge in a Techkon⁴⁸ style sequence. While Ridge was trying to gather himself one of her arms shook me in to action while another shoved a story book and cassette tape into my hands. Staving him off with blinding glitter that she dispersed from her hair she yelled at me over her shoulder:

SALLY SPECTRA

Read this when the time is right. You'll have to search far and wide for a cassette walkman...they've been discontinued. Now get out of here!
Through that door! I'll hold him off! Go!

I shoved the book and tape into my backpack as I heaved myself through the door. Where was I? I heard Sally's warrior scream and the piercing of flesh and organs. I could only hope it was Ridge Forrester who met his end...

⁴⁸ A Playstation combat game.

“BEGINNINGS”

Continued

FADE IN:

INT/EXT MORROCAN CAFÉ-MORNING

JOSH

(Digging through his backpack)
So what does your little book say about
(Elaborately revealing a scuffed Skeletor* figurine)
this!

SYBIL

That's amazing!

BELLA

I want it.

JOSH

I found it at a flea market.
(Puts on a cartoon villain voice)
Soon my collection will be complete!
(Laughs like a villain)

BELLA

Hand it over.

JOSH

I'm willing to do a trade.

BELLA

Name it.

JOSH

I'll only give you Skeletor for your entire My Little Pony* collection.

BELLA

What!?

SYBIL

(To Josh)

Have you been smoking crack out of a bottle neck?

JOSH

(Indifferent)

That's my price.

SYBIL

When did you become the Idi Amin* of nostalgia memorabilia?

BELLA

Well I spit on it. Keep your precious Skeletor.

JOSH

(Wedging the figurine in a standing position between two glasses)

Fine. So what does it say?

SYBIL

What?

JOSH

(He motions toward the book)

SYBIL

Oh,

(Paging through)

Well, it doesn't say anything specifically about our nostalgia obsession but it's probably part of our,

(Puts on a posy voice)

unified homology. Wait here it is:

(Reading from the book)

This term was originally employed by Levi-Strauss and it encompasses a subculture's representational fit between the values and lifestyles of a group. These objects "chosen were, either intrinsically or in their adapted forms homologous with the focal concerns, activities, group

structure and collective self-image of the subculture. They were 'objects in which (the subcultural members) could see their central values held and reflected'." ⁴⁹

BELLA

Like punks and Mohawks?

SYBIL

Yeah:

(Reading from the book)

"For instance, it was the homology between an alternative value system ('Tune in, turn on, drop out'), Hallucinogenic drugs and acid rock which made the hippy culture cohere as a 'whole way of life' for individual hippies"⁵⁰

JOSH

So what's our homology?

BELLA

Amelie, penguins, Sponge Bob Square Pants*, Kurt Vonnegut*-

SYBIL

(Laughing)

-Lamas, old people, Tarantino*, Frida Khalo*, Juno*-

JOSH

-Feeling European, Hunter S. Thompson*, Snoop Dogg, I heart Huckabees*-

BELLA

-Bingo! And the way they call out numbers like 'legs eleven'-

SYBIL

-Disdain for Kevin Costner*-

⁴⁹ Hall et al , 1976, cited in Hebdige, 1979, p. 114.

⁵⁰ (Hebdige, cited in Gelder and Thornton, 1997, p. 137.

JOSH

-Vintage-

SYBIL

-Girls of the Playboy Mansion*-

BELLA

-Tyra Banks*-

SYBIL

(Gesturing for everyone to stop)

The point is-

BELLA

-I was just getting in to that.

SYBIL

We don't really have a unified homology which is weird. Look at our apartment, it's covered with iconography. And the iconography in my room is different from yours.

JOSH

Well we can't have the same, except for a few crossovers 'cos that would be lame.

SYBIL

Exactly. It says here:

(Reading from the book)

Ironic Hipsters do take part in this society of seduction and imagery, but their difference is located in their choices. They choose to identify with, and be surrounded by, an iconography that pertains to their existential conundrum-

BELLA

-Conundrum, great word-

SYBIL

(Still reading from the book)

-Postmodern iconography and anything that represents a postmodern existence is the Ironic Hipsters' *homology*. This means that the orthodox theory does apply but not in the same sense, "for it is exactly this homogenous conception of subculture that postmodern subculturalists reject as stereotypical and (by extension) inauthentic."⁵¹ The Ironic Hipsters' choices are sporadic, unpredictable and steeped with irony according to each individual.

JOSH

So my affiliation to pop culture and your affiliation are different-

BELLA

-Because we're so obsessed with being original-

JOSH

-But the point is we all affiliate in our own weird way?

SYBIL

Yeah.

(Reading from the book)

Thus, there are no fixed and identifiable objects that can be pinpointed as being homologous to the Ironic Hipster but rather it is highly personalized and the homology would be the process and symptoms of existing as a postmodern being.

BELLA

I dig that. It makes us way more individual than punks or any other subculture.

JOSH

But am I still an Ironic Hipster if...

(He starts singing)

'I like big butts and I cannot lie, you other brothers can't deny-

Bella and Sybil join in and the three of them sing the lyrics like they're in an over the top rap video.

⁵¹ Muggleton, 2000, p. 78.

JOSH/BELLA/SYBIL

‘- that when a girl walks in with an itty bitty waist and round thing in your face, you get sprung-’⁵²

ELI, the waiter walks up. A young man, mid-twenties, with an afro. He’s dressed in grey suit pants, a fitted T-shirt with a stencilled print of a plug in a socket with the switch turned ‘off’. He wears a red bow tie and red, white and black original bowling shoes. His arrival cuts short their song and they drop it without embarrassment or awkwardness.

ELI

More tea?

JOSH

I’d like to try that ginger and white chocolate tea.

BELLA

And cupcakes! Lots of cupcakes!

ELI

So like forty cupcakes then?

JOSH

Nice bow tie.

ELI

Thanks bro.

BELLA

No, like three will do.

ELI

(Noticing the figurine on the table)
Skeletor, sweet.

⁵² Lyric for ‘Baby Got Back’ by Sir Mix-a-Lot, 1992,
<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/sirmixalot/babygotback.html>

JOSH

Thanks bro.

ELI

I got Panthor* the other day.

JOSH

Cool.

ELI

So how many cupcakes was that?

BELLA

Um, three, yeah.

Eli writes in his notebook and leaves.

SYBIL

Oooo, Eli got a sidekick, that's way cooler.

JOSH

Did you see that? I'm so over that guy tryna one up me. Did you see his bow tie? 'Thanks bro', that's what he said. Unbelievable! Like three days ago I told him that I was gonna bring back the bowtie, then he just claims it like that.

BELLA

Eli's so dreamy.

JOSH

And a fraud.

BELLA

I wasn't too obvious was I?

SYBIL

Aside from the drooling and abnormal pitch, nooooo.

BELLA

I'm so pathetic in front of him.

JOSH

We're not tipping him.

BELLA

I'll tip him.

SYBIL

Next time just tell him you're gonna bring back something lame like the yin-yan sign-

BELLA

-Eli's the only one who could make that work.

JOSH

Shut up about Eli! I bet he doesn't even have Panthor. He's probably on 'ebay' right now tryna back up his lie.

SYBIL

Liar liar pants on fire.

BELLA

(Ripping off herself)

Cupcakes! Lots of cupcakes! I can't believe I said that.

SYBIL

I can't believe you don't get this heated about things that actually matter.

JOSH

(Holding his figurine)

Skeletor's way better.

FADE OUT

Chapter 2

Road Tripping with the Enemy

On the other side of the door I hit a road like a drum and base beat. Tarmac stretched out like 1980's re-runs on either side of me. Should I walk left or right? Either way I'd be treading the infinite line between the tarmac and the sky. My feet started to burn, reaffirming my reality. I'd forgotten that my sneakers had melted. I hopped around, digging through my backpack trying to find a jacket to stand on. I could feel calyces forming so I changed my tactic from hopping to pivoting on my heels. I felt like a circus performer mincing around like that, it didn't matter though, heels are tough like they've been forged out of stone and leather. Screaming into the depths of my backpack I heard an engine surge and looked straight up in to the bonnet of a mustard Ford Mustang.

"Crap," was all I could muster before the bang.

I hurtled over the roof of the car and glimpsed a purple silhouette behind the wheel. The sound of the crunch as my body contorted with the metal is all I can remember.

Then there were waves of awakening, stumbling in and out of consciousness.

At first the sensation of my wounds kicked me in to being. The pain was so acute as if the rest of my body had evaporated. My right shin was throbbing with a loud hailer...I didn't care to look. My face was etched with a displeased expression. I was strewn in the back seat of a car and I remember giving kudos to the red leather interior before I faded out again.

A squelchy voice.

Recognizable quality of sound...that laugh...that laugh.

A muscular arm changing gears as abruptly as a racecar driver. It's a distilled purple arm, a tone deeper from the colour old ladies dye their hair. Long black nails. I thought I might be in transit with a Goth heading towards an underground metal party. Black patent leather, powdered white faces, red lips and people doing hippie dancing without the ribbons and sense of community.

That laugh...

The dashboard was upholstered with neon green leopard print and the central shrine was both the coolest and most disturbing collection of bric-a-brac I'd ever seen. In the centre was a Darth Vader* figurine with a light saber. Obviously there'd been a massacre because there were little Care Bear* and Gummi Bear* figurines stuck down horizontally. The owner had gone so far as to decapitate some of their cute little heads and suspend them with fishing gut from the roof to make static the fatal blow.

A disco ball jiggling from the rearview mirror. He prodded a Texan cigarette into the mouth of a gaping monkey skull attached over the car lighter.

'My Girl Lollipop'⁵³ sounded my arrival back into reality. He answered his cell phone as I tried to discreetly peel the fabric of my skirt from my skin which had joined when the blood dried, "Yeah I'm coming, I'm coming. I had a run in with another one, I'll be there in five minutes."

What did that mean?

"Don't worry! Her journey ends here, I got the story book this time." He patted my book and cassette tape on the passenger seat and leaned back to look at me. I closed my eyes and made my limbs languid, "No, I didn't have any rope but she's out cold, I hit her pretty hard. I'll take care of it afterwards. He's still in the trunk, I'll put him with the rest of 'em later."

Who's in the trunk? I'd thought that thumping was my head.

⁵³ Song by 'Bad Manners', http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bad_Manners

The rectangular section of sky visible through the back window slowly became sprinkled with concrete buildings and neon lights. At first sporadic and then a slither of sky had the same novelty as a moon rising. I had the feeling there was a bad moon rising. He pulled up outside a dilapidated building and when he turned off the engine I realized how loud and consistent its roar had been.

I played dead again as I heard him gather papers and curse under his breath. A moment of silence and I knew he was looking at me. He prodded my side. Then he picked up both my arms and put on a high pitched voice and pretended to make me speak as he animated my gestures, "Hi! I'm Betty Lou and I'm sooooo hip and clever." He pulled out my index finger and wagged it, "No no no, you don't understand because I'm an idiot." With that he slapped my face with my right hand, "Yes I am!" Then he started to slap with both hands. "I'm such a big baby. I'm an idiot. Boo hoo! I can't change the world." Then there was that laugh again. That laugh. I fought the desire to open my eyes. I just wanted to see his face. Still laughing he slammed the door and his footsteps faded out.

Why did he hate me so much? I slinked up and peered out of the window to see a heavy metal door in the distance slam shut, "Asshole." I used some old tissues and saliva to wipe the dried blood and stuffed my cassette and story book back into my backpack. "Asshole!" I found a vibing pair of Charleston style two-tones on the floor in the backseat. They were perfect, I might even venture to say that they topped my look with more panache than my Adidas sneakers. Before leaving I altered his dashboard scene by smearing red lipstick all over the now horizontal Darth Vader, reattaching the floating heads and placing the Care Bears and Gummi Bears victoriously upright. Then I drew bright red Betty Boop* lips on the monkey skull and used a bent piece of scrap metal to engrave 'ASSHOLE' across the bonnet of his car. It glowed in neon pink because of the car's undercoat. Neon pink, "Obviously."

A muffled voice yelled out, "Would you stop that! I can't bare the sound of metal on metal, it's like chalk on a board...it's making me feel crazy."

I sidled up to the trunk and whispered through the keyhole, "I know what you mean. I get that with cotton wool on teeth."

"But that doesn't make any sense. How often do you find cotton wool on your teeth?"

"It's just the thought of it really."

"Oh. Sure. Um, could you please get me out of here?"

I ran round to the driver's side. If this guy had a neon pink undercoat surely he's the kind of guy who'd leave his keys in the ignition. Unfortunately not. So I wedged the piece of metal in the trunk and tried to lever it open. Still nothing.

I tried to reason with the hostage, "It's not working. Where are they taking you?"

"I don't know. But the others will be there. I knew he'd come for me. We've been disappearing for weeks. I told him I didn't want any trouble. I've retired. I'm a hairdresser now, I do really great asymmetrical cuts."

"What should I do? That guy wants to kill me."

"What an asshole!"

"I know!"

"Did you see where he went? He's scheduled to have a meeting to discuss their progress. If you can listen in they'll reveal the location."

"I don't know, I'm really hungry."

"Are you for real?"

"Yes. No. Okay fine. I'll check it out."

I found a granola bar in my bag and ate it while contemplating the building I was supposed to infiltrate. Everything was sealed tight. The only two windows had burglar bars and they were boarded up. Maybe there was a back entrance. Ooh raisins. I like raisins, especially in granola bars. They're also good for livening up bran cereals or in yoghurt but not if it's the kind of yoghurt with bits of fruit in it because the different textures are disconcerting.

“Are you still standing there?”

“Yes. No.”

I thought I'd run with the scene so I switched into stealth mode. The shadows became my friends. I stealthed around the corner and bent back some fencing to crawl through a gap. A shard of wire caught the satin on the back of my waistcoat and ripped a line through it. Crap! The only item that wasn't wrecked by the car accident, and I had it specially made from decadent upholstery fabric when everyone else was wearing pinstripes.

Barely audible voices stole my attention. They were coming from a shoebox of a window exaggerated by a beam of yellow light cutting through the alleyway. I snuck into the space between the window sill and the ominous glow. I could make out two voices, they were arguing. Both sounded familiar but neither were the voice from the car:

“If we don't kill them this could go on forever! Finally we have the upper hand. We must seize this opportunity and capture Dunwyn Castle!”⁵⁴

“Would you stop with the castle! This is the cold hard city!”

“It's a metaphor!”

⁵⁴ Dunwyn Castle is home to the towns people in the series 'Gummi Bears'. In the series Duke Ighorn is always conspiring to overtake the castle.

Dunwyn Castle? I knew that name. That's where Princess Calla* and Cavin* live in Gummi Bears. I felt like I was in a horror movie at the part where the victim knows the killer is right behind her and she takes thirty seconds to look over her shoulder and register his presence even though she knew he was there all along. That's how long I took to look over the face brick window sill. Even before my eyes shifted their gaze from textured brick into the depths of the room, I knew, I knew.

Duke Igthorn*. Still holding court in his blue jump suit and trying desperately to extend his metaphor as he paced up and down at the head of the table. A single globe struggled to illuminate the room:

DUKE IGTORN

I'm tired of these post cold war, post any war, post apocalyptic post post post generation X post twenty somethings spending hours on the likes of 'youtube' watching all of us being defeated over and over again. This nostalgic farce! We all represent the loss of hope. And every time those dastardly Gummi Bears got the better of me it was like hope slapping me in the face! Slapping all of us in the face! It was supposed to end. We were supposed to retire to Cuba and spend the rest of our days smoking Cigars and playing dominos. If these 'adults' lived out their youth in their heads like nostalgia is supposed to happen...we'd all be free. You, Gargamel*, would be free! Picture yourself wearing that crushed white linen suit of yours. A nice open shirt, a glowing tan and a beautiful Latino woman doing the samba with you. But no! We're all stuck in this perpetual 80's rehash when we should be smoking hash and kicking back!

The room erupted in a defiant cheer. These 80's cartoon villains became jockesque as they chest barged each other and threw around high fives without the sense of irony. Megatron* gave Mumm-Ra* the old man to man ass slap. The only figure that remained still, enveloped by the shadows and smoking a cigarette...the man with the purple arm. It could only be the 80's most notorious villain...Skeletor...asshole.

Igthorn gestured flamboyantly for him to take the speaking fore as he nudged Toadie* to set up the over head projector and various blueprint paraphernalia. The shadows clung to him as he stepped into the feeble light. The stately Igthorn began his introduction like a suburban mother who can only suppress her insecurities by politely boasting about her well rounded, well achieved, well accoladed son who just keeps getting better and better:

DUKE IGTHRON

And now, the most notorious villain out of all the 80's cartoons. He's spent the last seven years studying nostalgia and I'm happy to announce is now a doctor in the subject. I give you...Dr Skeletor.

DR SKELETOR

Thank you Duke Igthorn. Before I begin, a slight correction. I am not a doctor of nostalgia, that would be a lie. Nostalgia is a very broad concept but rather I wrote my doctoral thesis on '*Nostalgia: No longer simply a yearning to return home*'⁵⁵.

Igthorn slunk into his chair, embarrassed by the mistake. A choir of notebooks, pencil cases and pens chanted. Shredder* was particularly organized as he conscientiously penned the title biting down on his tongue. Duchess Raven Waves* watched him longingly as he underlined the title with a ruler and an orange Koki pen. He'd neatly layed out eight different colour pens. She whispered a request to borrow the pink Koki but Shredder grunted and nestled his stationery with his elbow as he turned his back on her. Skeletor chuckled and remarked on how much he liked the way in which Megatron had covered his notebook. Megatron quite pleased with the kudos displayed the cover for all to see. Various 80's cartoon hero and heroine cut-outs with meticulously placed weaponry and painted on blood splatter. Nicely finished off with adhesive contact paper. Igthorn's chin protruded and his eyes narrowed in a huffy of jealousy. Their eyes met and Igthorn tried to lean Skeletor's gaze down to his stationary. He had set up an ink pot and a calligraphy pen and was writing on sheets

⁵⁵ Hutcheon, 1998, p. 3.

of sepia parchment. Ighorn was under the impression that he was writing scripture. Skeletor didn't register the optical request. Instead he drew his sword for the purposes of a presentation pointer. Toadie settled on a bar stool next to the over-head projector as Skeletor took in a dramatic (listen up everyone because I'm about to begin) breath;

SKELETOR

'Nostalgia, the media tells us, has become an obsession of both mass culture and high art.'⁵⁶ This is why we can't leave the walls of this apocalyptic city, this prison. Nostalgia has changed into something different; just like Megatron can transform, so has nostalgia. The word itself has 'its Greek roots- *nostos*, meaning "to return home" and *algos*, meaning "pain".'⁵⁷ A 19 year old Swiss student came up with the word in 1688 for his medical dissertation. 'It was a way to talk about a literally lethal kind of severe homesickness (of Swiss mercenaries far from their mountainous home).'⁵⁸ These crazy kids would actually die. Death by nostalgia. They'd stop eating and fall into depression until they slipped into death's weary arms. Death's weary arms, I made that up. Write it down, I want people to know how literary I am. Physically and emotionally they longed for home just like Gargamel longs for homegrown. Call it a 'disorder of the imagination.'⁵⁹

Slowly the word lost its medical meaning and by the twentieth century nostalgia became a general concept. It 'became less a *physical* than a *psychological* condition; in other words it became psychically internalized. It also went from being a *curable* medical illness to an *incurable* (indeed unassuageable) condition of the spirit or psyche.'⁶⁰ 'What made that transition possible was a shift in site from the spatial to the temporal. Nostalgia was no longer simply a yearning to return

⁵⁶ Hutcheon, 1998, p. 2.

⁵⁷ Hutcheon, 1998, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Hutcheon, 1998, p. 2.

⁵⁹ Starobinski, 1966, p. 90, cited in Hutcheon, 1998, p. 3.

⁶⁰ McCann, 1941, p. 38, cited in Hutcheon, 1998, p. 3.

home.’⁶¹ ‘As early as 1798, Immanuel Kant had noted that people who did return home were usually disappointed because, in fact, they did not want to return to a *place*, but to a *time*, a time of youth.’⁶² ‘Time, unlike space, cannot be returned to-ever; time is irreversible. And nostalgia becomes the reaction to that sad fact.’⁶³ And nobody knows that better than me. I had a girlfriend once, a French woman, a real hotty. She used to braid her hair and massage my upper back...it’s where I carry all my stress. I mean she wasn’t a trained masseuse but she had some skill. And, the point is, we were comfortable together. I’d fart in front of her and it was nothing because we were...comfortable. I got a scholarship to do my PhD in Poland of all places and we tried the long distance thing but that didn’t work. So after two years I went back to Paris and it was...well...dead. We couldn’t reignite our passion for one another. Our time was over. We’d reminisce but we could never get it back...Dammit!...so you see the similarity? ‘As one critic has succinctly put this change: “Odysseus longs for home; Proust is in search of lost time”⁶⁴.’ ‘Nostalgia, in fact, may depend precisely on the *irrecoverable* nature of the past for its emotional impact and appeal. It is the very pastness of the past, its inaccessibility, that likely accounts for a large part of nostalgia’s power.’⁶⁵

Toadie and I got blazed on an isolated beach a few days ago. He spoke very introspectively about his longing to be back on the set of Gummi Bears. I’m sure he doesn’t realize it but what he said really struck me. He said that he yearns for that period in his life. The camaraderie he had with the other ogres*. Even off the set they’d do coffee and go clubbing together. And of course the secret romance he had with Sunni Gummi*. Stealing kisses in her trailer and exchanging flirtatious

⁶¹ Hutcheon, 1998, p. 3.

⁶² Kant, 1798, cited in Hutcheon, 1998, p. 3.

⁶³ Flammarion, 1974, cited in Hutcheon, 1998, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Phillips, 1985, p. 65, cited in Hutcheon, 1998, p. 3.

⁶⁵ Hutcheon, 1998, p. 3.

glances across the set of Gummi Glen.⁶⁶ And this is when it became exquisitely profound. He said that even though he longs for that time, if he's honest with himself...Sunni Gummi was a bitch! The reason that she demanded that they keep their love affair secret wasn't to heighten the romance but because she was embarrassed. And the other ogres never respected him because he got the lead role. He'd often over hear them speaking about how unfair it was that Toadie was the lead ogre just because of his size and feminine voice when some of them had graduated from Julliard as trained actors! So you see, nostalgia is a romanticized version of the past. Our memories are wily bastards because they edit out the ordinary or unsavoury moments and leave us with a deceptively flawed idealized version. 'It operates through what Mikhail Bakhtin called an historical inversion: the ideal that is *not* being lived now is projected into the past.'⁶⁷ 'It is memorialized as past, crystallized into precious moments selected by memory, but also by forgetting, and by desire's distortions and reorganizations.'⁶⁸ 'Simultaneously distancing and proximating, nostalgia exiles us from the present as it brings the imagined past near.'⁶⁹ In our minds we structure the past as something pure and harmonious which makes us desire it because we structure the present as disordered and complicated.

Now this is where our problem comes in. Before the age of advanced technology and wireless internet, nostalgia was a completely personal experience. Tastes, smells, sights, sounds and textures were all different and specific to the individual. But now, all those Ironic Hipsters accessing their favourite 80's cartoons on 'youtube' are subduing their nostalgic addiction. It 'no longer has to rely on individual memory or desire: it can be fed forever by quick access to an infinitely recyclable past.'⁷⁰ Every kid born in the 80's who had a

⁶⁶ This is the forest area where the Gummi Bears live in the Disney series.

⁶⁷ Bakhtin, 1881, p. 147, cited in Hutcheon, 1998, p. 3.

⁶⁸ Phillips, 1987, cited in Hutcheon, 1998, p. 3.

⁶⁹ Hutcheon, 1998, p. 3.

⁷⁰ Hutcheon, 1998, p. 4.

television watched the likes of us getting defeated every day. This happened all around the world, it was global. From the U.S.A to South Africa children sat wide eyed with their afternoon treats locked into their hypnotic television screens. So although nostalgia is a personal thing, for Ironic Hipsters, 80's pop culture is the common global thread and, ' "The more memory we store on data banks, the more the past is sucked into the orbit of the present, ready to be called up on the screen," making the past simultaneous with the present in a new way.'⁷¹

So you see, these kids don't take us seriously! At least in their imaginations we were glorious villains to be reckoned with. But when they actually watch an episode they snicker ironically to themselves because let's face it, the dialogue is poor, the ideology is more obvious than Duke Ighorn's desperate desire for my approval, and our costumes belong in a madegr! 'In the postmodern, in other words, (and here is the source of the tension) nostalgia itself gets both called up, exploited, *and* ironized.'⁷² This is a complicated (and postmodernly paradoxical) move that is both an ironizing of nostalgia itself, of the very urge to look backward for authenticity, and, at the same moment, a sometimes shameless invoking of the visceral power that attends the fulfilment of that urge.'⁷³ Before postmodernism, when society was modernist, nostalgia was paralyzing. While people were yearning for a better time, a better politician, better family values and an all round better world, they were almost casting any present active involvement in stone. The past seemed so hopeful, the present so dismally hopeless that the thought of trying to change anything seemed impossible. Back then, nostalgia, in Tim Reiss's strong terms was, 'functionally crippling.'⁷⁴ When nostalgia was cruising on the highway from modernity to postmodernity, it decided to give irony a ride. The sad fact is that irony never got out of the car, they realized how much

⁷¹ Huyssen, 1995, p. 253, cited in Hutcheon, 1998, p. 4.

⁷² Winter, 1995, p. 151, cited in Hutcheon, 1998, p. 7.

⁷³ Bennett, cited in Hutcheon, 1998, p. 7.

⁷⁴ Reiss, 1983, p. 193, cited in Hutcheon, 1998, p. 7.

they have in common and now they're road tripping together! These Ironic Hipsters 'are aware of the risks and lures of nostalgia, and seek to expose those through irony.'⁷⁵

Nostalgia doesn't have an illusionary hold on these people! 'From a postmodern point of view, the knowingness of this kind of irony may be not so much a defence against the power of nostalgia as the way in which nostalgia is made palatable today: invoked but, at the same time, undercut, put into perspective, seen for exactly what it is- a comment on the present as much as on the past.'⁷⁶ So they watch us and have a laugh. If that's where it ended I'd bite the bone and let it be. But this is only step one in a possible revolution! The more they log on and watch their favourite 80's episodes, the more they realize the futility of it all. It's not as magical as they remember. It's quite ridiculous! The more they shine a light on the past and expose it to be just as anarchic, complicated, constructed and difficult as the present the more they invoke 'the distance necessary for reflective thought about the present as well as the past.'⁷⁷

Soon enough we'll hear the quake of a mass global realization that they access or experience nostalgia through the media! And not only that, the same media as millions of people around the world! Something as personal and private as nostalgia is tied up with, married to, interlocked with pop culture! That would seriously piss me off! At least we have actual real experience. My heady days in France, Mumm-Ra's time with the Hell's Angels*. Eventually these Ironic Hipsters are gonna see that not only nostalgia but a large part of their lived reality is a brought, branded and consumerable experience and their relentless irony won't suffice!

⁷⁵ Hutcheon, 1998, p. 8.

⁷⁶ Hutcheon, 1998, p. 8.

⁷⁷ Hutcheon, 1998, p. 8.

But it's not too late! At present Intel tells me that they're only talking about our 80's cartoons and usually in a Seinfeldesque manner. We all represent the loss of hope. And I don't give a rats ass that in every episode we loose because in the real world we've won. For now. Their irony may be reflective but they're also being ironically existential. Their laughter is tarnished with a nervous hopelessness. It's only natural that an inversion will take place. The more hopeless the past seems the more hope will squeeze a light through the cracks of the present until it bursts through the wall of apathy and they start using their pop culture know-how to actually change things! And then we will have lost! In our episodes and more importantly...in the real world!

A mess of panic exploded! Ighorn's hand jittered and his careful calligraphy scroll jolted onto the table. Mumm-Ra jumped onto the table and screeched the word, "What!" over and over as he pulled dramatically at the gauze wrapped around his face. Gargamel fainted and Shredder cuddled Megatron who couldn't hold back the tears. Duchess Raven Waves went catatonic and Professor Coldheart* sprinted around the room howling and pounding the walls at sporadic intervals. Toadie passed out on the overhead projector and began drooling on the light box casting a menacing silhouette of a black puddle on the back wall. The steadfast Skeletor shook his head in disapproval. He bounded onto the table and beheaded the lonesome globe from its dangling cord,

"Quiiiiiietttt!"

Immediately the panic subsided and Toadie turned the overhead to project a square of white light on the room. Everyone embarrassingly registered their behaviour like they'd had an immediate come down in the middle of an ecstasy party.

Skeletor handed out multi coloured lollipops to everyone and whispered nurturing words while dabbing sniffing tears with a checker handkerchief:

SKELETOR

This will not get the better of us. Don't you see... we have the upper hand! We've already captured most of the instigators. Papa Smurf*...

Toadie scurried to the flip chart to show the mug shots of the corresponding 80's heroes and heroines:

SKELETOR

You caught Papa Smurf Gargamel. And it's never easy locating them. Papa Smurf had altered his red pants into a loincloth, shaved his head and was subsistence farming in the middle of nowhere. Gargamel ingeniously captured him while he was riding his bicycle back into the city to deliver a lecture on the history and practice of Mahatma Gandhi*.

Duke Ighorn discovered that the Gummi Bears had formed a kite surfing team and he got most of them on a windy day in October.

Duchess Raven waves went so far as to peroxide her hair blonde so that she could infiltrate and capture Lady Lovely Locks* at the strip club she was working at.

Optimus Prime* was running a cash only car mechanics business down town. Clever Megatron laced Optimus Prime's greasy overalls with chronic sleeping powder...and took him down like that.

The Care Bears were plucked off one by one. As some of you know they all got into real estate selling suburban dreams in lock down complexes.

The My Little Ponies were easily lured when their drinking water was spiked with acid. Light machines were used to project an illusive

rainbow directly over a hole. You should have seen the footage. Hilarious! Multi coloured ponies tripping out and galloping towards a virtual rainbow. They were really taken by surprise, I'm proud...I'm proud of all of you.

I'm also happy to announce that I finally got He-Man*! Very difficult to track. He's become a hairstylist who does house calls. He was trying to put a spin on how people used to come over to your house to cut the lawn and now he was coming over to cut hair...regardless, I made a call requesting a treatment and blow dry, he pushed for an asymmetrical cut, I said no, he came over and bam! He's in the trunk of my car. And we can go taunt him about his gender preference later.

So you see, we're nearly there. Once we have all of them we'll lock them in a small room, watch them go crazy, turn on one another and throttle each other to death. Obviously we'll be taking bets to make it more lucrative. We've already got The Joker*, The Penguin*, Magneto* and some other 'big shots' on board. These super villains think we're a big joke but jokes on them! They'll be paying for our direct flights to Cuba. One-way baby! And then we'll be living the dream! We'll be free! When those Ironic Hipsters hear about this their hopes of a better world will be dashed! As much as they laugh about their childhood heroes and heroines they still need them to reflect on the present and their innocent youth. They'll all get regular jobs and live out their days rearing good, ignorant citizens in the suburbs!

Skeletor prompted the (let's all do our evil laughs for an overtly long time) scene. I couldn't believe that He-Man became a hairstylist but the more I thought about it I guess it was obvious. He always had a well-manicured bob cut, and bobs are difficult to maintain. I wish I'd known when I was talking to him through the keyhole. I've been wanting to invest in a straightening iron and I know that the Ghd* is the best but there has to be something that's just as good and cheaper.

Then the weight of my task at hand sunk on me like John Travolta's* career post 'Look Who's Talking'* and pre 'Pulp Fiction'*. The nature of the world was in my hands and I was thinking about a Ghd. I realized that I was locked into apathy like daytime TV. I dabble with revolution like a straw poking a double-thick milkshake. Skeletor had spelled out his evil plan and I couldn't shake the urge to explore the city, maybe get a cappuccino at a quaint café or find an untouched second-hand shop. What the hell was wrong with me?! But Skeletor was right. Eighties nostalgia is like a slap in the face. I could be a revolutionary, a cool one, like Tyler Durden*. He certainly has a great sense of style. Maybe I don't need a straightening iron. My hair's growing out and if I condition more than I shampoo and let it dry in a bun, I get a really great curl...almost like ringlets.

Their laughing tapered off like a bad pair of jeans. Skeletor switched to okay let's wrap it up and get serious again mode;

SKELETOR

We only have three more to capture and I will personally be rounding them up.

Rainbow Brite*.

Gruffi Gummi*.

And Braveheart Lion*.

These were the only three who stayed true to what they represented.

They were keeping it real, as they say. They were the three possible instigators who'd be responsible in keeping things sane when we've got them all in lockdown and if that were to happen, all bets are off.

But a year ago I set some things in motion and the report back is more than I could have hoped for. Toadie if you will?

Toadie unveiled a network of private investigator style photographs, maps, notes and blueprints. It was the most elaborate spider diagram I'd ever seen. Skeletor navigated the collage like Tom Cruise in Minority Report*:

SKELETOR

Rainbow Brite:

A sprightly character with all the faith in the world. When the final season of 'Rainbow Brite' came to an end she took to the stage as a poet. She's gigged at every club in town and with spoken word she's been keeping the dream alive.

He pointed to a still shot of Rainbow Brite behind the microphone. Wide eyed with her hands in mid gesture to punctuate a word. Her hair swept up in a bun behind an ethnic headscarf. Her costume was the same style but she'd traded in the multi coloured polyester for natural textiles.

SKELETOR

Critics adore her conviction with such reviews as:

'Rainbow Brite still sees the shining light!'

'Rainbow Brite weaves words like a Rubik's Cube* and solves the disorder of colour in our imaginations',

'Her spoken word convicts the heart and awakens the soul',

'Rainbow Brite is the Allen Ginsberg* of our time'.

So I asked myself, what does a young, intelligent and independent girl need? What will lure and dismantle her simultaneously? It's simple really. I saw many a woman fall for the same reason... a pompous lecturer for a boyfriend! But he couldn't lecture just anything. He had to specialize in philosophy and more specifically, Friedrich Nietzsche*. And we found our guy in Red Butler*, one of the Color Kids* in 'Rainbow Brite'. A familiar face for her and an old time crush. With a superbly orchestrated infiltration she fell in love. Interspersed with long walks on the beach and late night laundry sessions Red Butler spoke intimately about his views. Slowly he nudged Rainbow Brite out of the light until she mingled with half her face in the shadows. Let's just say he put things into perspective for her. Eventually her poetry became laced with cynicism and although

the critics still love her because lets face it, the girl can write, she won't be meddling with our plans!

Now onto Gruffi Gummi:

He became a household name and kids loved watching him begrudgingly do the right thing. He often never wanted to get involved in rescuing Dunwyn Castle but he did. Episode after episode hope would yank him out of complacency and he'd actively plunder Duke Ighorn's plans. Since the show Gruffi Gummi single-handedly started up a hip flea market. He rejected any mass produced goods and global brand names in favour of local products and designers. His hope was to slowly alleviate poverty and educate consumers on the importance of supporting local businesses.

So I called in a favour and Gruffi Gummi found himself with a Fulbright Scholarship to study the similarity between Pac-Man* and Capitalism and how Karl Marx* and many others were simply pieces of fruit along the way. I also paid off the lecturer to use the word 'castle' as a synonym for capitalism. Eventually Gruffi Gummi realized that he had been duped! Every time he left the cosy commune of Gummi Glen to save the castle and do the right thing, in actual fact, he was perpetuating the system. He then paralleled the past with the present and saw that every time one of his local stall holders created something new and original, or at least an original rehash of the past, unrecognizable infiltrators would purchase or photograph the new design, sell it to a major corporation and then he'd see it in stores across the city being savagely devoured by the masses. Needless to say Gruffi Gummi became very pissed off!

Skeletor pointed to a pixelated photograph of Gruffi Gummi somewhere in the mountains. Wearing torn khaki pants and his hair knotted into one long dread lock. A

bonfire cast a pornographic glow on his etched six-pack. Elevated in mid air, his arms pounded the sky. The smeared grease all over his face accentuated his bulging eyes and primal snarl. With books suspended in mid air and adding passion to the fire, he looked like a marine gone crazy.

SKELETOR

Gruffi Gummi spent an emotional two weeks in the mountains, howling to the moon, eating roots and swinging from trees. I watched his breaking point through a telescope with my own eyes. After burning every leftwing theoretical book he owns, he picked up the last of them, 'Das Kapital'*, it was time for dessert. With theatrical concentration he spent six hours ripping out each page and cursing the heavens before he launched it into the flames. It was more than poetic...the loss of promise always is.

Finally, Braveheart Lion:

He was the creator and head writer of 'Care Bears' and because of his cameos he became somewhat of a cult character. He also wrote the hit single 'Where's the Love' by the boy band Hanson*. And this sums up my plight with the furry man. His love for people stretches beyond the horizon of our minds. The word 'abundance' comes to mind. Braveheart Lion was living off his royalties and spending his days counseling worried and anguished people...for free! He's not even a trained psychologist, infact; he publicly rebuked the idea of psychoanalysis in favour of intuitive conversations from the heart. Regardless of peoples' backgrounds he'd welcome them into his home, offer them tea and cupcakes and spend as much time as they needed chatting. And this is how I lost Panthor. I regret the day I sent him in to do a recon. God only knows what happened in there but seven hours later he came out those doors a changed panther. I knew something was up when he offered me a cupcake...he knows I hate cupcakes! It

all happened so fast. He resigned, packed his bags and the last time I saw him he was climbing into a taxi wearing a panama hat.

And this is why I was forced to take extreme measures with Braveheart Lion by recreating a scene from ‘A Clockwork Orange’* in the basement of my apartment. I spiked his cupcake sprinkles with horse tranquillizers and the last thing he remembered was falling asleep on a large, deep red velvet cushion. Three days later he awoke to this!

Skeletor exposed a picture as disheartening as an extreme poverty on the African plains shot. It was Braveheart Lion clothed in mental asylum white pajamas and strapped into a steel retractable chair. His eyes had been forced open with mechanical tweezer fingers and his face was drenched with mucous and tears. Stacked in front of him hundreds of TV monitors were spewing images of hatred and pain:

SKELETOR

For months we drugged him and showed him everything from genocide to rape. He cried like a lion cub. Eighty-two days later he awoke, at home on the very same cushion bemused and bewildered. He tried to shrug it off as one hell of a dream but the experiment had changed him. We bugged his apartment and found that his advice to people was delightfully sadistic:

‘To tell you the truth, I really don’t give a crap!’

‘Break yourself fool! But seriously, break yourself because everything else is broken.’

‘Well why don’t you cry about it...saddle bags!’⁷⁸

So! As you all can see, it’s pretty much in the bag. On that note, why don’t you all go home and pack your bags because from hereon

⁷⁸ Line from the movie ‘Ace Ventura: Pet Detective’, 1994, http://sfy.ru/sfy.html?script=ace_ventura

out...it's all Cuba! I'm gonna get started and round up the last three in a couple of hours. But first I'm gonna take in a hip theatre show at the Apocalyptic Theatre...it makes me feel high brow. Then I'll take down Rainbow Brite first, Intel tells me she's doing Slam Poetry at 4pm at the Poetry Venue.

DUKE IGTORN

And just what do you intend on doing with the unconscious Ironic Hipster in the back of your car?

SKELETOR

Oh yes. I'd forgotten. I really don't have time to convince her to live out the rest of her days in the Hipster Commune. I'm tired of that speech and there's just too much to do. I could put her in lockdown with the rest of them. She hasn't read the story book so we could rely on her being ineffectual. No...that's not sitting well with me. Instead, I think I'll bludgeon her to death with a coconut. Yes, that would be easier for everyone. Right! I'll see you all at 11pm for the lockdown.

“BEGINNINGS”

Continued

FADE IN:

INT/EXT MORROCAN CAFÉ-MORNING

BELLA

(To Sybil)

I didn't exactly see you getting heated about fast food culture when we purposefully gorged ourselves on pizza and hamburgers while watching 'Super Size Me'*

SYBIL

That's different.

BELLA

No it's not.

JOSH

Mmmm, pizza.

SYBIL

We were being self aware.

BELLA

Even so, we're so freaking self aware that we never get anything done.

JOSH

That's because it's all been done, if we don't eat meat no less cow's gonna get the chop.

SYBIL

And steak is good.

JOSH

Steak is good.

SYBIL
(Reading from the book)

Unlike subcultures of the modernist paradigm that seemed to resist a particular dominant ideology or circumstance as a unified whole, the Ironic Hipster seems to be passively political. They understand inconsistencies and failings within society but they tend to ignore it because they feel powerless. Perhaps activism has become hegemonic in itself as it has been occurring since the birth of capitalism but has failed to halt the exponential growth of the capitalist machine. 'Our postmodern hypothesis would, in fact, state that subcultures would be apolitical cultural forms rather than gestures of resistance.'⁷⁹

Therefore the Ironic Hipster like bourgeois hegemony, are not only failing to challenge the set of norms but they are also reinforcing its premises. The only difference is that the ironic hipster is aware of this where as mass society sees no other way of being. 'Yet for this very reason they tend to exhibit resistance to all forms of collective and holistic belief systems, irrespective of the particular political content of those beliefs, for these are viewed as ways of imposing authority, conformity and uniformity.'⁸⁰ Therefore even ideas that are left of centre are not excluded from the Ironic Hipster's ridicule. They may possibly agree with the content but at the same time they are disagreeing by being ironic with the subject matter.

JOSH

Holy crap. Preach it sister!

BELLA

That's exactly what we do.

SYBIL
(Continues reading from the book)

Whether the ideology is conservative or alternative one cannot gauge the Ironic Hipster's response other than the inclusion of irony in some form. Their main concern is rather expressing the self. They are highly individualistic and they scorn any system of meaning that attempts to define them because 'the sensibilities of contemporary subculturalists have an "elective affinity" with the two central 1960's countercultural values of license and liberation. License can be understood here as the *freedom* to express oneself. Liberation is the *freedom from* those social and cultural constraints that inhibit and prohibit self-expression.'⁸¹

⁷⁹ Muggleton, 2000, p. 148.

⁸⁰ Muggleton, 2000, p. 150.

⁸¹ Muggleton, 2000, p. 159.

(Stops reading)
How freaking crazy is that!?

JOSH
That's exactly what we do.

BELLA
Weird.

JOSH
But it's not so much crazy, it's inevitable.

SYBIL
Inevitable

BELLA
Inevitable

SYBIL
Inevitable. That word's starting to sound weird now.

JOSH
It *is* all hegemonic, it's all so, like, obvious.

BELLA
Who isn't going green right now? And spurred on by what, TV! The most mindless people in the world are going green. It's a fad, like the yo-yo.

SYBIL
And never mind the actual problem like global monopolies, excessive production-

JOSH
-Child freakin labour-

SYBIL

-And the obliteration of local economies.

BELLA

That's the real problem. But people buy a material grocery bag and think they've done their bit for the world.

JOSH

I don't know hey.

SYBIL

I just can't believe we're a subculture that doesn't actually do anything.

BELLA

Yes we do! We don't buy in! We don't buy into hype, we don't buy into what the system says we should be buying into-

JOSH

Because we know that it's not really real.

BELLA

Like the other day I get to work in my bakkie, and this guy that I work with sees me pull up and he's like, "Is this *your* car?" And I'm like, "Yeah." And then a look of absolute confusion 'cos he can't get his head around how a girl can drive a bakkie. And then he says, "How come you drive this car?" And I say, "'Cos I dig it." And then he starts snickering and he says, "But haven't you seen the advert for this car? It's like a bunch of old farmers driving it!" And I'm like, "Yeah so?" And he's like, "Aren't you embarrassed?" And I'm like, "No. 'Cos that's an advert and I'm a real person." He just didn't get it, he thought that *I* was the idiot.

SYBIL

That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. It's sad. So many people are exactly what the media tells them to be. Sometimes I feel like people aren't real, you know, like all I can see is the signs that they're made up of.

BELLA

Like they're just a mixture of things you've seen on TV. But not cool things, like they're actually made up of signs and references that make

them what they really desire to be, like a yuppie or an outdoors person or whatever.

SYBIL

Yeah, and they really put it out there, their entire body is the blueprint. I mean how many times a day can you look at a person, pick up their signs and basically piece together their whole existence?

JOSH

Most of the time. It's a maze to look at someone and try get to the good stuff.

SYBIL

Exactly, like to actually get to the truth of a person.

(Paging through the book)

It says something about this.

(Reading from the book)

'Deep down everything is already there, in this evil reversal-the impossibility for all systems to be founded on truth, to break open the secret and reveal whatever it may be. *The discourse of truth is quite simply impossible*. It eludes itself. Everything eludes itself, everything scoffs at its own truth, seduction renders everything elusive.'⁸²

Undoubtedly this insight is an unconscious and inherent for the Ironic Hipster in daily undertakings. They seem overwhelmed by the signs of superficial existence. They are crippled by their inability to locate the truth because all they can see is the strategy of the individual.

JOSH

Imagine we could actually 'Slap the Sense' into people.

SYBIL

We should start a company.

BELLA

Yeah! That guy from work would be in my top five for a sense slapping.

⁸² Baudrillard, 1988, p. 73.

SYBIL

I'd slap Kevin Costner.

JOSH

I'd slap Eli.

FADE OUT.

Chapter 3

The Matrix Rehashed

Back at the keyhole I imitated Skeletor's voice, "I'm giving you three choices He-Man...a mullet, an undercut or a Mohawk!"

He-Man started writhing in the trunk and screaming deliriously, "Noooooooooooo!"

Clearly terrible timing for tomfoolery, "I'm kidding! Calm down, it's me."

"What the hell is wrong with you!?"

"Sorry. I was actually asking myself that very question a few pages ago."

"I freakin hate those styles!"

"But if you had to choose, which one would it be?"

"Probably the Mohawk. I was actually thinking about doing it three years ago but I didn't have the balls."

"Good choice. The mullet's too obvious...So, they didn't say where they were taking you. All I know is that you're gonna be locked up with other 80's heroes and heroines until you eventually kill each other."

"But that's crazy. I would never hurt anybody. It might actually be kinda fun. Like a slumber party!"

"Except there'll be no popcorn and candy and after a couple of days your flannel pyjamas will be stained with your own urine and faeces."

He-Man started to hyperventilate again, "That's disgusting! Aaaaah!"

“For the love of God control yourself He-Man! I’m not gonna let this happen. I’m gonna follow Skeletor and I will find you. I promise. One last thing...in your professional opinion...is there a product that’s cheaper than and just as good as the Ghd?”

Before I could get an answer I heard the clanging of bolt locks and chains from the steel door, “They’re coming! Crap. Okay, be cool, crap, I’ve gotta go.”

I hid behind an instillation of garbage cans and crept backwards towards a main road. The villains strutted down the sidewalk like the gang in ‘Reservoir Dogs’. Ighorn slung his leg over an old school bike with Toadie moaning under his breath about riding in the sidecar. Gargamel flicked a cigarette and said, “Let’s blow this joint,” before revving off on a Ducate. I was out of sight by the time Skeletor noticed how I’d pimped his ride.

“Get out of my way!” I’d backed up into the front row of a street show. People were sitting on the tarmac with little baskets, cool-drinks and continental spreads. A mass of faces were standing in a (concert style, there’s no room to even dance) clump. Some were on their tippy toes and others had scaled up street poles for gallery seats. Oddly, everyone was staring at a big hole in the middle of the city. It was more like a crater that had been cordoned off with chevron tape and a row of disco soldiers with big guns. I asked a cute kid wearing a Gap tracksuit and drinking a milkshake what everybody was watching. His eyes twinkled sadistically like one of Chucky’s* offspring, he shushed me and pointed to the sky.

Multi-coloured! But not a rainbow. Geometric shapes like labels on a can that were separated by slithers of sky. They were adverts that bent with the arc of the atmospheric dome. Each one was more complex and image induced than M.TV. It was like they were alive. Not only did font and logo scroll across the isolated canvases but they’d mutate and leap onto the streets with more perspective than 3D. The Nike swoosh spun around and morphed like play dough into fantastical images. Then the logo fell out of the digital canvas and just before it hit the ground it became a 3D hologram of Michael Jordan* who landed on the cement like a character out of

'The Matrix*'. He looked up and said, "When I fall," and kicked his right leg forward which mutated into a separate spherical frame circling a pair of Nike sneakers that floated through the crowd like a playground bubble before it burst into nothing.

A businessman shouting orders on a cell phone walked straight through the hologram image without flinching. Michael Jordan winked, bent his knees and jumped into the sky like Superman*. In mid air he executed a somersault and dove back into the frame which fluidly compounded his image back into the swoosh.

They were everywhere. I couldn't tell the difference between the real people and the endorsers. I edged to the back of the crowd, I couldn't breathe. Like coaxing off a pair of skinny jeans I popped out of the back row and was spritzed straight in the eyes by Paris Hilton. Instinctively I tried to swipe the perfume bottle out of her hand but my fingers moved through digital translucency. Through burning eyes she pranced towards me, her blonde tresses enveloped me and she spoke, "Smells good doesn't it? Like butterflies." I screamed and she contracted into a swarm of glistening butterflies that swooped back into the overhead frame. Still blinking furiously to rejuvenate my retina I stumbled to the feet of Martha Stewart*, "Apple pie?" I was too afraid to run through her. What if I didn't come out the other side, bound in the body of Martha freaking Stuart for the rest of my life!

A Starbucks coffee cup dropped out of the sky and hovered in front of me. Every which way I walked it was still there, like a carrot leading a donkey. I let it take the reins and it led me to the entrance of the nearest Starbucks at which point it poofed into the air like a disappearing genie leaving a tinge of coffee aroma.

I turned to run and nearly connected with a silver Porsche zooming past. Like most sport cars it left a purring sound in its wake but the sound was trailed with a chrome ghost like lion head that was connected to the logo on the bumper by streaks of silver. Its metallic mane swayed as it roared intrusively and diffused back into the silver streaks which shrunk back into the logo. I collapsed onto the cement and dug my fingers into the cracks trying to claw myself to safety. There was nowhere to go, the streets were filled with commuters who were completely unaffected. My heart surged out of my chest and my stomach sank to my kneecaps. My perspective quavered like

I'd downed a bottle of Hose Guervo and my throat looped itself with the action of gulping like a snake chucking back the mouse of reality.

I started to blubber like a mental patient looking for home. Through a mirage of fantasy a figure was approaching me. Johnny Depp*, barefoot and clothed in cheesecloth. He was more soothing than the other holograms. A soft breeze caressed him. So still, the chaos pivoted around him like it was in tune to his step. If the city were vultures circling a kill, he was the lion still feeding. Our eyes connected. In his gaze dwelled the yin and yang of strength and gentleness. His irises subdued my panic. His presence was euphoric, divinely sublime. He crouched at my side. With a knowing smile he removed one of his headphones and put it into the cavity of my right ear. Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata'.

His tender hands took hold of my temple and he massaged the sweat on my forehead up into my hairline:

JOHNNY DEPP

Close your eyes. Control your breathing. You've seen this before. This is the city where 'through the media of television, advertising, video and home computers postmodernism pervades both high and popular culture, instilling itself into the fabric of everyday life. By so doing it transgresses the "modern" boundaries that once demarcated culture and society, image and reality, original and reproduction, art and everyday life.'⁸³

It is 'the ritual of transparency. Sexual liberation, omnipresent pornography, free expression- if all this were true it would be unbearable. If all this were true we would really be living in obscenity, in the naked truth, in the insane pretension of all things to express their

⁸³ Muggleton, 2000, P. 35.

truth.’⁸⁴ Open your eyes. ‘We are no longer in the drama of alienation, we are in the ecstasy of communication.’⁸⁵

‘Putting an end to millions of years of man’s mingling with water, mud, vegetation and dust, we are currently burying the soil, the base on which we stand, in an enormous shroud of asphalt and concrete, much as we bury mutual human closeness in a shroud of information and communication.’⁸⁶

‘Unlike intellectuals, who are obsessed with meaning, the masses long since sensed that the only empire-the only power-is that of signs.’⁸⁷

He pointed out two high fashion businessmen across the street. They were talking but it played out like a mime because of their distance and the noise. My hyperventilating was beginning to subside. I looked down for a moment and he gently turned my chin back toward the two men.

JOHNNY DEPP

Watch.

They were still talking, only differentiated by their position and the slightly different hues of their suits. They took a moment to compare cell phones then they commented on the sky. They laughed about something and simultaneously checked their watches. Then a silent agreement that it was time to move on. They nodded farewell and just when I thought they were going to cross each other and carry on with their day, one of the men walked directly through the other! One of them was a hologram image of the other. His digital skin engulfed the real man and for a moment they were one. The real and the hologram stood unified in the same space on the same block of concrete. The

⁸⁴ Baudrillard, 1988, P. 34.

⁸⁵ Baudrillard, 1983, P. 67.

⁸⁶ Baudrillard, 2000, P. 78.

⁸⁷ Baudrillard, 2000, P. 31.

real man exited out the other side and when I realized that if I hadn't seen the exchange I would never have known the real from the hologram I began to panic again.

JOHNNY DEPP

None of this is real, it is hyper real. In this city we are, 'Doomed to our own image, our own destiny, our own "look", and having become our own object of care, desire and suffering, we have grown indifferent to everything else.'⁸⁸ See how fluid it is.

He extended his hand into my eye line and waved it around like he was conducting the chaos. He pointed out moments that seemed to be moving in unison with the Moonlight Sonata in my ears. People everywhere were subtly transforming into newer versions of themselves. It seemed subtle when taking in the whole picture at a glance but their 'new self updates' became amplified as Depp isolated them with his poetic arm and narrated them Film Noir style:

JOHNNY DEPP

A teenage boy walking, seeking to purchase something, anything that will bring relief from the alienation of his pubescent frustration. There is nothing aimless about the way he is walking, hunting for just the right item, the one that will signify the perfect meaning, the one that will make him whole again. He stops at a window, his eyes manically scanning the alternative merchandise. What will define him? His eyes lock on a skull scarf and black skinny jeans. He picks up the pace but still projects nonchalance as he enters the store.

⁸⁸ Baudrillard, 1996, P. 131.

A moment...

He exits victorious! Garbed in pseudo alternative attire, today he has instantaneously become what he was made for, a play-play revolutionary. Tomorrow he will become something else. The citizens of contemporary society are no longer grouped hierarchically in terms of obsolete mechanisms like race, gender or class but rather by their assets. 'Free to be oneself' in fact means: free to project one's desires onto produced goods. "Free to enjoy life" means: free to regress and be irrational, and thus adapt a certain social organization of production. [This is] the ultimate in morality, since the consumer is simultaneously reconciled with himself and with the group. He becomes the perfect social being.'⁸⁹

The boy seemed elated. He walked in wearing unassuming jeans and a T-shirt and he exited as something out of the pages of Rolling Stone*. His nervous naivety had also been replaced with an air of arrogance and experience. Even the holograms readjusted to his new self. On the way in he was being hounded by the kids from High School Musical* and now he was cruising with the alternative holograms.

Depp diverted my attention to a new case study.

JOHNNY DEPP

A woman trades in her Volkswagen for a BMW. Finally she is part of the new aristocracy. She's been working arduously for a decade to reach this point, this moment.

⁸⁹ Baudrillard, 1988, p. 13.

Lower middle-class holograms immediately dispersed from her presence as she took the keys to her new life, her new self. The holograms that had rejected her a moment ago began to huddle around her displaying their high-end merchandise. Like the dork rejected for years at school her BMW was like a makeover to popularity. She beamed with her new esteem.

As she unlocked her new car the BMW logo hovering in the sky fell out of its frame and landed on the tar, five metres from her as a three-dimensional replica of the car she had just purchased. Alongside the hologram car a hologram woman, an exact replica of the real woman, was also unlocking the front door. A farcical simultaneity ensued. In the same manner, the real and the hologram, sunk into the driver's seat, popped on Channel sunglasses, checked their reflections in the rear-view mirror, started up the engine, backed out of the car lot and drove off down the street. When the real woman and BMW reached a distance of twenty metres the hologram version which was driving alongside, compounded back into itself and flew back into the BMW logo.

JOHNNY DEPP

This is the 'absence of things from themselves, the fact that they do not take place though they appear to do so, the fact that everything withdraws behind its own appearance and is, therefore, never identical with itself, is the material illusion of the world.'⁹⁰

Our society is frantic in terms of images and signs, if one chooses to buy a BMW instead of a Volkswagen, it is to fulfil the desire to emulate the status embedded by consumption of the product. The person who purchases one item over another is buying into one set of signifiers as opposed to another. 'There is no longer any transcendence or depth, but only the immanent surface of operations unfolding, the smooth and functional surface of communication. In the image of television, the most beautiful prototypical object of this new era, the

⁹⁰ Baudrillard, 1996, p. 2.

surrounding universe and our very bodies are becoming monitoring screens.⁹¹

There are only a few, I cannot say if they are blessed or cursed, who see the mechanics of this place. It's transparent isn't it?

I was about to answer his rhetorical question when the city's symphony of sounds was obliterated by a thunderous roar. Like a tornado infused with a thousand jet engines. Aside from the diffusion of sound the city scene unfolding before me didn't change. Even though nobody seemed perturbed, tears began to stream down my face because of the sheer velocity of sound that was approaching. I felt like I was on the frontline of disaster.

I reluctantly followed Depp's gaze to the sky. Through the partially opaque advertisements a fiery meteorite was approaching!

I screamed.

ME

Run! Run! It's the Apocalypse!

I shook the shoulders of a passer-by trying to prompt some sort of panic but he brushed me off like a fly. Depp took hold of my hand and said,

JOHNNY DEPP

Relax. It's just the daily apocalypse. They've got it under control. Think of it as a catastrophic news event from somewhere on the other side of the world. In this place world news is consumed as if it were a

⁹¹ Baudrillard, 1988, p. 12.

product. This apocalypse is all part of the consumerism show! This is it! Revel in its spectacle!

The meteorite rumbled toward the earth heading straight for the city. Its full form hardly blurred by the mass of atmospheric advertisements. It heightened the imagery in each advert casting a glow of red and orange flames over all the canvases. When Michael Jordan jumped out of his canvas it looked like he was trying to escape hell fire. Martha Stuart was still offering apple pie but her eyes were shining red and her hologram body had been overcast with the reflection of flames so that it looked like she was hosting a dinner party in Hades. Paris Hilton's tresses were also overshadowed and they seemed like licks of flame and fire.

The meteorite burst through the layer of digital adverts. Digital feedback for a split second and then they closed the gap. It was a moment away from impact. And in that moment its roar had become like a looming silence. It skimmed over the tip of a skyscraper and hurtled toward the crowd at the bottom of the street. Some people turned to watch the display with an eerie indifference although most people remained unaffected. A woman argued with a policeman over the parking meter. Another two women sitting at a café swapped lattes.

I ran into the middle of the street and watched it head toward the crowd gathered around the big hole. Still munching popcorn and drinking sodas they responded with, "Ooooooo's." Similar to the kinda "Ooooooo's" voiced at a fireworks display.

A Billabong advert contracted and spat out its logo toward the meteor like a canon ball. As it reached the front side of the rock it morphed out into a surfer doing a cut back on a surfboard. The hologram surfer was riding the apocalypse. A breath from impact he dropped off the fiery wave pulling a thumbs up and then the rock disappeared into the belly of the crowd. It boomed with glorious impact! The pavement vibrated from the force and I thought my body might dissolve from the fearsome extravagance. Down the street the crowd cheered and clapped! They rippled with a Mexican wave of approval for the apocalyptic spectacle.

Then, as quickly as the meteorite came the crowd dispersed discarding their ticket stubs. I ran to the edge of the crater. Johnny followed me with a measured pace. At the edge I peered over and saw the rock, nestled at the bottom of the hole, still smouldering. Three fire engines were parked on the opposite end. They were spraying water onto the galactic mass. Aside from the chevron tape being charred, the apocalypse had been completely contained. No spill over, no carnage? It was an apocalypse neatly wrapped with a bow.

Johnny put his arm over my shoulder and passed me his hip flask. I slugged down a mouthful of whiskey hoping that its burn would fire up some kind of comprehension. We just stood for a little while...overlooking the crater. Johnny brushed against the char on the chevron tape and spent his entire explanation trying to rub out the black mark on his white cheesecloth sleeve.

JOHNNY DEPP

‘TV, radio, the press and advertising comprise a heterogeneous mass of signs and messages where all orders are equivalent.’⁹²

My silence prompted further explanation.

JOHNNY DEPP

Okay. ‘Here is a selection taken at random from radio:

- an ad for Remington razors,
- a summary of social unrest over the past fortnight,
- an ad for Dunlop SP-Sport tyres,
- a debate on the death penalty,
- an ad for Lip watches,

⁹² Baudrillard, 1990, p. 87.

-a report on the war in Biafra,
-and an ad for new blue Crio laundry detergent.’⁹³

Because of this continual jumping from images of products or objects to stories in the world ‘the accent apparently falls on information. But it also falls, paradoxically, on neutrality and impartiality.’⁹⁴

‘In this careful blend of discourse on “world affairs” and discourse on “consumption” to the exclusive emotional advantage of the latter, advertising tends to function as backdrop, as a reassuring litany of interwoven signs, into which the vicissitudes of the world are inscribed as a diversion. These latter, neutralized by cutting, immediately fall victim to consumption themselves. The newscast is not the hodgepodge it seems: its systematic alternation dictates a single form of reception, that of consumption. It is not just because the valedictory tone of advertising suggests that story of the world is fundamentally unimportant, and that the only things worthy of consideration are consumer goods. This is secondary. Its real efficacy is more subtle: it prescribes through the systematic succession of messages an *equivalence* between story and news item, between event and spectacle, between news and advertising *at the level of the sign*. This is where the true effect of consumption lies, and not in the express discourse of advertising. It consists, thanks to the technical supports, the technical media of TV and radio, of cutting up events of the world into discontinuous, successive, and non-contradictory messages, into signs which can be juxtaposed and combined with other signs in the abstract realm of broadcasting. What we consume, then, is not a particular spectacle or image as such; it is the potential succession of all possible spectacles- and the certainty that this law of succession and division of programs will ensure that nothing will emerge from them which is not a spectacle or sign of one kind or another.’⁹⁵

⁹³ Baudrillard, 1990, p. 87.

⁹⁴ Baudrillard, 1990, p. 87.

⁹⁵ Baudrillard, 1990, p. 87-88.

ME

Apocalypse, shoes, apocalypse, car, apocalypse, food, apocalypse, job.

It's

all the same really. But why are there only a few of us who see this absurdity, this farce. Why are so many people in 'a social trance: vacant, withdrawn, lacking meaning in their own eyes. Abstracted, irresponsible, enervated. All they have left is 'the optic nerve, but all the others have been disabled. It is in this sense that information has something of dissection about it: it isolates a perceptual circuit, but disconnects the active functions. All that is left is the mental screen of indifference, which matches the technical indifference of the images.'⁹⁶ Sometimes I feel myself being sucked into this indifference. I'm self aware about the indifference but I don't know what else to do. Why does hardly anybody see this?

JOHNNY DEPP

'And you are compelled to think, like Ishi amid the crowds of San Francisco, that all the dead are present alongside the living, since there couldn't possibly be so many living people there at once: God could not watch over so many existences. Ten dead people for every living one seems a good proportion. As in the primal forest, for example, where there is one living tree to every ten dead ones. That's how it is, and it's no good getting too worked up about it. The conclusion is that, in this state of urban overpopulation, nine out of ten human beings are virtual corpses (even if outward appearances are deceptive); in other words, they are beings cut off from one another. Only a few thousand perhaps, in the best cases, maintain a secret bond, and form a living symbolic chain, the only significant sequence in this immense, incapacitated human genome.'⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Baudrillard 1996, p. 143.

⁹⁷ Baudrillard, 2000, p. 10.

Most people don't even see the spectacle of this place, for them it is reality. You can thank God that you see beyond the surface. Unlike them the sign cannot control you because you see its mechanics. The sign defines them, the sign is who they are, they cannot even imagine beyond it. Take heart. Because once you see the mechanics of the sign, you can control the sign.

“BEGINNINGS”

Continued

FADE IN:

INT/EXT MORROCAN CAFÉ-MORNING

BELLA

(To Josh)
I'd slap your mom.

JOSH

Aaah, did I offend your little Eli?

BELLA

Whatever.
(Getting up)
I'm gonna go ask Eli where he gets all his clothes.

JOSH

So you're bent on destroying me then?

SYBIL

What?

BELLA

Why?

JOSH

If you ask Eli he's gonna think that I sent you to get to the bottom of the bowtie case.

BELLA

(Sybil's laughing)
Let it go Josh. I'm not gonna mention the freakin bowtie!

JOSH

That's all I'm saying.

SYBIL

(To Bella as she leaves)

Go get 'em Nancy Drew.*

JOSH

(To Sybil)

Like she wouldn't do the same thing.

SYBIL

(Sympathetic)

I know I know. It kinda feels like he stole your identity right?

JOSH

Yeah! Exactly. I was gonna do this whole debonair thing with the bowtie. The bowtie was just a symbol of something that I'm gonna do.

SYBIL

I know what you mean. I'd get as heated but it's ridiculous right? Like the bowtie or me doing this whole circle skirt thing, it means as much to us as a BMW means to a yuppie or bling to a rapper dude...you know?

JOSH

You're right. Which is weird. 'Cos we rip off people for constructing an identity through images and signs but we do the same thing. It's just that our signs are all over the place.

SYBIL

(Paging through the book and reading from it)

'And above all, we use products to *construct our identities*. To see our relationship to products – our acts of consumption – in terms of identity construction is of absolute importance to understand. The way we dress – the shoes and skirt and shoes we wear; the way we have our hair done; the type of car we drive; the type of home we live in; the type of interior design we choose; the type of films we watch, whether we watch soap operas or serious European films; the sort of cell-phone we have, or whether we even have a cell-phone or not – all of these contribute to defining who we are, or rather, who we want to be. In this

crucial respect, commodities within a consumer culture play a profound cultural role to help us construct our very identities.⁹⁸

‘Consumption should not be seen as an activity which is simply induced, or produced, in modern consumers by the advertising industry and commercial interests upon a passive audience. Consumption has become an active process involving the symbolic construction of a sense of both collective and individual identities. This sense of identity should no longer be seen as given to people by membership of a specific economic class, or social status group, or directly by ethnicity or gender. Identities have to be actively constructed by more and more people for themselves. In his process of active identity construction, consumption has come to play a central role. Baudrillard suggests that consumers do not purchase items of clothing, food, body decoration, furniture or a style of entertainment, for instance, in order to express an already existing sense of who they are. Rather, people create a sense of who they are through what they consume.’⁹⁹

In this respect so too does the Ironic Hipster construct an identity through signs and symbols. The problem however, is where mass society projects symbols that usually cohere to a particular stereotype or role, the Ironic Hipster projects a pastiche of signs. Their style is constructed out of a mess of eras and genres which brings Jameson’s postmodern symptom of schizophrenia to the fore. The schizophrenic fails to exist on a linear basis, it is rather ‘an experience of isolated, disconnected, discontinuous material signifiers which fail to link up into a coherent sequence. The schizophrenic thus does not know personal identity in our sense, since our feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the “I” and the “me” over time.’¹⁰⁰

Thus the Ironic Hipster who projects everything that is postmodern may struggle to feel a core sense of self. Their sensibilities and their very selves are steeped in a ‘world transformed into sheer images of itself and for “pseudo-events” and “spectacles”’.¹⁰¹

(Sybil stops reading)

How screwed up is that?!

JOSH

That is screwed.

⁹⁸ Wade, 2006, p. 5-6.

⁹⁹ Bocoock, cited in Wade, 2006, p. 6.

¹⁰⁰ Jameson, 1992, p. 30.

¹⁰¹ Jameson, 1991, p. 7.

SYBIL

And it's true. I mean sometimes I feel like a photographic image where the shutter has been left open, you know? Like, where the image is all blurred and outta focus.

JOSH

The problem is we scoff at everything! To the point where we scoff at our very selves. Like as soon as we could possibly cast a personal identity in stone we ridicule it and don't take it seriously.

SYBIL

Which freaks me out! Surely we can be both?

Bella returns to the table giggling.

BELLA

Okay, you guys are gonna love this.

(Looking at Sybil)

Um, what's the vibe?

SYBIL

We're schizophrenics, that's all.

BELLA

Cool. Okay so Eli tells me about this secret store and it's like second-hand heaven!

JOSH

(Despondent)

Cool.

BELLA

What the hell happened to you guys?

FADE OUT.

Chapter 4

My Style is more Loaded than a Tommy Gun

I'd relaxed into the urban landslide. My fear and confusion seemed laughable in retrospect. It was like I'd simultaneously resolved puberty and my early twenties 'Bell Jar' crises. I'd been burped by the hand of God and I liked it. It was the scene in the first Matrix where Morpheus* takes Neo* through a simulated city. I'd stopped fumbling with my surroundings. I was like Morpheus effortlessly gliding through the cityscape and subconsciously predicting peoples/holograms' pathways. I'd move, or not move, accordingly and every time it was the most efficient route. Everyone else was finger painting and I was sculpting the statue of David. Call it arrogant but I understood their existence with more clarity than they did. If my vision were to slip into another more epic dimension I'd be wearing a white hooded cloak and carrying a lantern amid translucent cloaks and brand name overload. Johnny had given me his ipod and I'd sound-tracked my end of movie resolution with 'Lifting the Veil from the Braille' by 'The Dissociatives'. Weaving through the spectacle I'd liken my walking style to a pacey stroll, a pep in my step, walking on sunshine, cloud nine meets the concrete. Blissfully aware and content with my being. Pure being. Perfect.

People/holograms began to notice me. With passing glances and slight smiles they were connecting with me. Maybe they could see my lantern. Some would jive a little way with me and branch off back into their ritual. Every time it happened I felt like a mother coaxing her child to take a few steps. With an open smile and nods of reassurance we'd lock into a unified purpose and then, then they'd fall. Back into the maelstrom.

The shift was almost unnoticeable but something changed in their expression. It was like the weather. Sunny, then unexpectedly overcast. Overcast with doubt. An ominous wave of realization as they exchanged words, gestures and looks concerning me. It played out like a mime because of the whistling song in my ears but I knew it wasn't hopeful. Smiles altered to grimaces as they pointed. And their grimaces became fanged screams. They began to close in. I didn't know whether to panic

because their manner was so obscure. A guy checking the time on his watch didn't even look up. His head still down he pivoted and carried on in my direction. A woman scrimmaging through her handbag did the same thing. They seemed so nonchalant but at the same time disturbed like 'Munch's' 'The Scream'*. The closer they got the more primal and sadistic they became. Their eyes widened. I even patted down my chest in case I'd somehow been strapped with explosives. Their fear was more perceptible than my Simulacra* awakening. Naturally the fear became defensive and threatening. I panicked and spun around looking for an exit point. They were on all sides. Cars came to an abrupt halt in the middle of the street and shop clerks abandoned their posts.

Fumbling to turn off the ipod, I mistakenly changed the track to Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'. I chuckled nervously at the absurdity and brilliance of the soundtrack for my present situation. They saw it as an act of defiance and as the beat kicked in...so did they.

They all knew the moves, the twists, contractions and head isolations. It was beautiful. Mechanically precise. I searched for one person out of time but nothing. Spectacular! It was like they'd learnt the 'Thriller' dance alongside mathematics and history at school. I scanned the crowd for the lead. Who was playing Michael Jackson in all this? Sure it was menacing and I was in danger but what a vibe! I started to bop with the rhythm and as the chorus thumped out and the famous side step with clawed hands resounded so did I. I was the lead in the street show of the century...I was Michael Jackson! The last time I danced that hard was in the spherical cage.

Whooooooo! Clap.

Shoulder isolation, step to the side.

Shoulders up down, head, clap!

'I could have danced all night'¹⁰² if it weren't for the creeping sensation that the more I danced the more my soul leaked out of my feet as a dark tide kept taking two steps forward and no steps back over my whole being. If this was like the music video and I

¹⁰² Song from the musical 'My Fair Lady' written by Frederick Loewe and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner: 1956: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Could_Have_Danced_All_Night

was Michael Jackson inevitably I'd become one of them. A Pop zombie. Shaking the groove was like a heroin addict going cold funky. I'd slip out and stagger two steps but the beat would lasso me back into the boogie. I had to shake it. Pushing the stop button on the ipod was like Bruce Willis* clawing his way to the detonator switch in the movie 'Armageddon' except the distance was in my mind.

Silence.

And then violent screams as the mob started gunning for me. I ran. I ran faster than my comprehension of running as I traversed the city like an urban cheetah. A fashionista woman caught up and was cruising parallel to me. She was wearing delicate black stilettos. Seething and drooling like a mannequin zombie she fired her Louis Vuitton* handbag which morphed into branded hands that tackled me to the ground. She pinned me down in a grappling position and reached looming into her bag. The others caught up and crowded around pushing and shoving to see. Their eyes infused with hysteria. I thought for sure that I'd met my end and I didn't like it very much. I'd outwitted the skull faced Skeletor and fallen prey to a bunch of high street yuppies. Not cool. She snarled and her eyes glistened excitedly as she grabbed hold of the weapon in the jaws of her bag. This blonde French bunned zombie bitch in a superbly fitted Dolce&Gabbana power suit was going to kill me. At least I'd examined my life while living, Socrates¹⁰³ would be proud.

I closed my eyes in resignation and tried to have a montage flashback of my life, preferably with an 8mm overtone. Nothing at first but then bright white flashes burned through the darkness. With forceful concentration I tried to discern some sort of imagery but with noted observation these things usually transpire when one is relaxed. So I kicked back with a box of popcorn and a Slush Puppie* in my mind's eye. The show was delayed but the flashing persisted with the echo of blowing bulbs. I took a peek. With old school cameras the encroaching masses were actually photographing my displeasure. Those sick bastards! Some of them were filming! Reality television had gone too far. I turned away as her hand ascended out of her bag. The yelling diminished into a faint buzz against the acute audibility of a knife sliding

¹⁰³ Socrates wrote, 'An unexamined life is not worth living.'

out of a sheath. She gripped me tighter between her thighs and her presence bent toward me. I flinched at the point of impact.

It didn't hurt. Quite ticklish actually? I glanced down at my torso and she was traversing the lines of my waistcoat with a pale pink measuring tape. A flamboyant assistant salivated beside her. She'd bark out a measurement and he'd swiftly scribble in a notebook. With a grappling power move she hurled me onto my stomach and negotiated the seams along the back. My face pressed into the grit for an instant, she flung me back over and proceeded to finger the texture of the fabric.

FRENCH BUNNED ZOMBIE BITCH

Satin on the back! What's this? Some sort of upholstery. The same quality used for curtaining or furniture. The design. Very decadent, very French boudoir.

She unclipped the make shift oversized safety pin with a hanging medallion holding the waistcoat in place.

FRENCH BUNNED ZOMBIE BITCH

Phyllis! Get a close-up of this. So simple yet so nouveau elite. Tie pins!
Broaches!

Phyllis gritted his pencil between his teeth and photographed my invention like it was a crime scene. She flung open my waistcoat and started to caress my undershirt. It almost felt like she was seducing me in some sort of acid induced Mills & Boon* scenario. Giggling like a school-girl as her finger tips moved over the repetitive neon green pineapple design.

FRENCH BUNNED ZOMBIE BITCH

Yes! Yes! Fruit! It's all about fruit! Pineapples! Strawberries! Melons!
Grapes! So fresh! So inspiring.

Then she caught site of my silver locket. Rectangular shaped with a small etching of a stamp on the top right hand corner, and on the other side, the lines of a closed envelope.

FRENCH BUNNED ZOMBIE BITCH

Brilliant! It's like a letter. Locketts came back in to fashion but nothing like this.

Her tendrils groped at the lock to unhinge it. Phyllis tried to help but she shoved him aside. Eventually perspiring with frustration she ordered me:

FRENCH BUNNED ZOMBIE BITCH

Open this!

ME

No. It's personal. I had it specially made and what's inside is for me and only me.

In unison the crowd 'Aaaahed' at my boldness. She-devil tucked one of her stray hairs in place.

FRENCH BUNNED ZOMBIE BITCH

It's for you and only you! I...I...think that's...amazing! A touch of the personal. Specific to the individual. We all have secrets!

Everyone pretentiously applauded her new age rebellion. She commanded that I stand up, and sashayed around me with an open hand gently touching my skirt like it was a field of wheat. Excessively dramatic. Imbibing the god of textiles. I expected her to break into Navaho dancing.

FRENCH BUNNED ZOMBIE BITCH

Fifties style circle skirt. One hundred percent wool. A fine pinstripe usually used for suits. A gallant twist and intermingling of the domestic, the nurturer with the corporate career woman...how splendid, how divine... and two-tones in the original style. Very Zoot Suit*, very chic, very Annie Hall*.

She bent me over, pulled out the tape and measured the dimensions of my backpack.

FRENCH BUNNED ZOMBIE BITCH

This is very interesting. Fifties style diner vinyl contrasted with a smear of animal fur. New meets old. Culture meets technology. Third world meets first world. The juxtaposition of our time!

She took a Shakespearean bow. The crowd clapped, gave shout outs and shook each other like people who've just found out that the war is over. Some stood in quiet moments of retrospect, others hugged, laughed deliriously, cried, sighed and thanked God.

Baffled.

Like school children called back in by the bell they picked up their belongings, straightened up their appearances and with (well that's that) nods walked off and carried on with their day. Clutching her Vuitton She-Devil strode off on her cell phone saying, "You're going to love this..." They cleared out faster than a movie

audience minus the stragglers who stick around to catch the name of the costume designer in the credits.

I felt used. I was glazed over in a haze of perplexity. Emotionless, my dead pan existence mirrored by Bill Murray's* expression. Leaning against the adjacent wall and dressed in quintessential Hunter S. Thompson style, he stubbed out a cigarette and slung his shotgun over his shoulder.

BILL MURRAY

High Street officially had its way with you. How does it feel?

ME

Awesome...What's the gun for?

BILL MURRAY

Sometimes Cruella* can't get her head around a stylistic choice and she gets a bit dirty.

ME

So that wasn't dirty?

BILL MURRAY

Marshmallows and unicorns compared to the guy in a one-piece neon spandex jumpsuit.

ME

Can I have a smoke?

BILL MURRAY

Here.

ME

So now what?

BILL MURRAY

Now you come inside and through inquisitive conversation on your side, I teach you a little something about yourself.

ME

Fine. Make it quick, I'm getting tired of this.

He rolled off the wall into the doorway of a pawnshop and beckoned me in like a British butler. A weathered cross-stitched tapestry hung askew on the door. Surrounded by pink and blue pixelated flowers and windmills it read, 'ET phone home'¹⁰⁴. There was retro junk everywhere. To the right piles of chrome coloured soda dispensers and lampshades of every era dangling above. Ahead a massive wall unit sagging with first edition TV's and radios who'd given up trying to transcend time and space. They looked so mopey, I got the same feeling I had as a child when an animal died in a movie.

Alongside a gilt framed painting. The brush strokes and colouring was like a Renaissance painting but the imagery was Manga style. It said it all:

A beautiful android girl sitting cross-legged in a barren landscape with a swing era microphone plugged into a fifties radio. Her face resting all squelched in the palm of her hand. The same melancholic repose as Max the gorilla. Her other hand drooped hopelessly gripping the mike. I moved closer to read the brass emblem: 'Oil on Canvas. By Apokolipstik. Title: Live from No Where.'

To the left dozens of rails tightly packed with vintage clothing. On any other day it would electrify my sensibility. I've mastered the fine art of sifting through second hand timepieces. At first I'd ravenously buy every item with the slightest potential

¹⁰⁴ Line from the movie, E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, 1982, directed by Steven Spielberg, written by Melissa Mathison, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E.T._the_Extra-Terrestrial

only to find that most of them were misfits. Whether it was the cut or something unsavoury about the design they lived out the rest of their days at the top of my cupboard with mothballs and an old fish tank. It took years of fine-tuning but I can easily say that I'm the heavy weight champion of the severely selective and highly lucrative art of secondhand shopping. Today however, seeing that much candy was like white noise. The only itching I had was at the back of my throat.

I began to mindlessly page through the old books and comics on the central dark wood table. I'd checked out so I couldn't react accordingly but at the back of my mind somewhere between the confusion and anger I really liked what Bill had done with the place. Neatly wrapped anarchy. Oregon floorboards peered through an eclectic array of sporadically placed carpets and mats. Persian, reed, woven plastic, kelims. He'd constructed different levels and platforms for his living area. He yanked at a pulley system and a timber bar descended from the ceiling equip with the finest antique appliances. Bill put on a salsa record and started jiving like an exotic island (I smoke hash no worries in the world) cabana bartender. A cigarette perched between his teeth as he juggled alternating fruit and spices. With Latino panache he'd pop them from around his neck into the blender. Whenever he executed a particularly hard one like over his shoulder from behind his back, he'd give the blender the ol' boogie-woogie index fingers.

He slopped the intensely green liquid into a frosted beer glass and handed it to me.

BILL MURRAY

It tastes like shit but it's good for you.

I tried to swish it around but it was like thick sludgy jelly.

ME

Can I just have a Coke?

BILL MURRAY

I don't keep or drink that tyrannical black shit.

ME

It's not Idi Amin Bill! It's just a Coke.

BILL MURRAY

Look I don't have the time or the inclination to educate you in the ways of socio-economics, major corporations and third world plight.

ME

Screw you for patronizing me Bill, William. I've read 'NoLogo*' and yet, it's still just-a-Coke. And that's a bit hypocritical, Dick, seeing as there's a big shelf of every Coke bottle ever released over there.

BILL MURRAY

That is retro memorabilia! In case you haven't noticed I'm somewhat of a collector.

ME

Look, Dick-

BILL MURRAY

-My name is Bill.

ME

Bill. I just didn't take you for a Hippie*, that's all.

BILL MURRAY

I am no fucking Hippie!

ME

Chill out man.

BILL MURRAY

Now who's the Hippie?

ME

Come on! Do you see me in tye-dye tripping outta my mind? I'd sooner give anybody the middle finger over a peace sign and I hate daisies!

BILL MURRAY

Me too! Why daisies? Out of every botanical choice in the world they picked the daisy.

ME

Why not the Frangipani?

BILL MURRAY

How much better is saying the word Frangipani. Frangipani.

ME

Frangipani. Frangipani.

BILL MURRAY

Frangipani.

ME

I'm sorry.

BILL MURRAY

It's cool. If you handed me a herbal smoothie I would have assumed the same thing...If we're honest we all have a little bit of Hippie in us.

ME

Sure.

BILL MURRAY

But not enough to be classified as a Hippie.

ME

Definitely. Not even close. I have a herb garden.

BILL MURRAY

Oh yeah?

ME

Yeah.

I turned away and sipped the concoction. Bill wiped down the counter. I started to bop to the salsa. Nothing extravagant, just a little hip action. It tasted like algae but I disguised my contempt. Bill dragged another level out from underneath an eye-line platform. It effortlessly gave way to a sequence of platforms that become a minimalist staircase. He did the self-aware butler thing again and I concurred with lavish British gestures while pretending my smoothie was a cup of tea as I pranced up the stairs. Nibbling at my melon rind like it was a scone I gave elitist guffaws of approval at the cosy sitting room nestled at the top. Bill muttered colonial euphemisms as he comically introduced the furniture.

BILL MURRAY

Aah. The working man's recliner. Hello old boy. Quite splendid after a long day of shackling the natives. Nudge nudge. Deepest darkest, know what I mean.

ME

Yes yes. Wink wink.

BILL MURRAY

Oh how rude. I haven't introduced you to the winged back. A fabulous piece really. Perfect with a G&T.

ME

Gudday maam. Oh. She doesn't speak very much. What's the matter love, cat got your tongue?

BILL MURRAY

A few toots too many. Tit tit tut tut...and the modern coffee table. We had it shipped in all the way from the Americas, complete with coffee table literature.

ME

Blimey.

BILL MURRAY

What is it?

ME

No nothing...I just couldn't think of another British word.

Bill smiled and dropped the accent and the scene. I sunk into the winged back. Bill took the recliner. He was edging for it all along, I think it's his favourite chair. After a retrospective silence with both of us staring fixedly at nothing really, Bill unzipped his neon Moon bag*. Without conviction his hand landed on the arm of my chair barely holding a walkman. Decidedly unaffected I looked down at the scuffed Panasonic nostalgia. Our physicality was like two people in a heat wave. The opposite of fervour. Bill was still looking ahead as if a head turn in my direction would be too parching.

BILL MURRAY

It's time.



RECORDS & TAPES

DBR 245

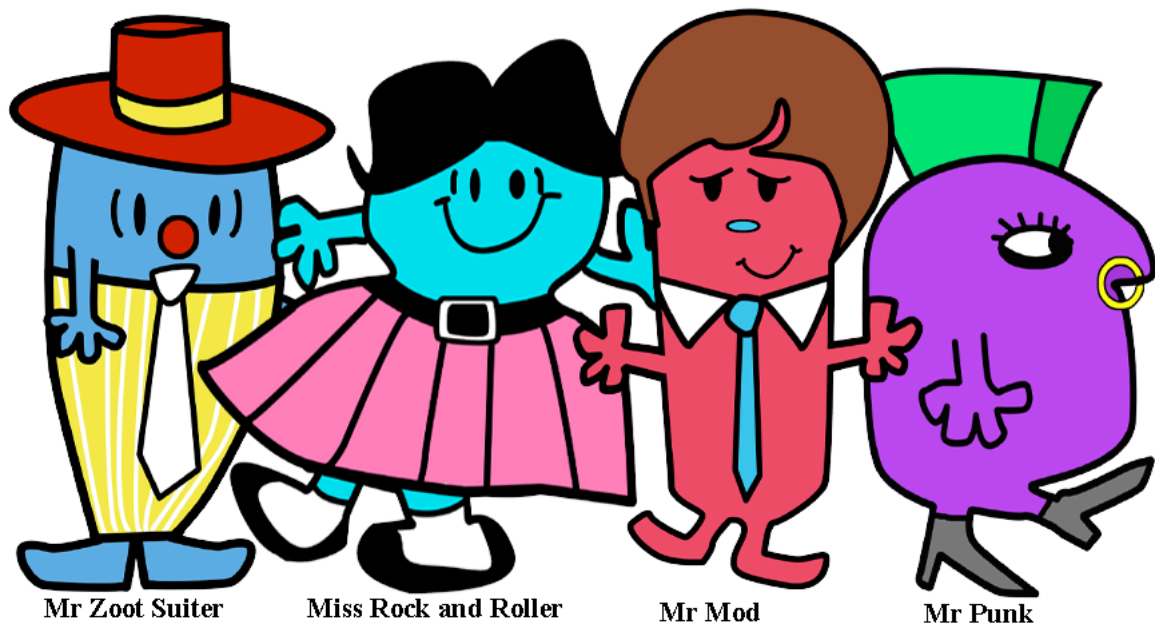
The Evolution of the Ironic Hipster



SEE the pictures HEAR the story READ the book

‘This is your “Evolution of the Ironic Hipster” read-along book.* Every time you hear this chime...it means it’s time to turn the page in your storybook. Now, if you’re ready, we’ll start the story of “The Evolution of the Ironic Hipster.” Don’t forget to turn the page every time you hear the chime.’¹⁰⁵

Let’s begin now. The word ‘hip’ and ‘hip’ people have existed throughout the land and the twentieth century. Why there were the Zoot Suiters in the 40’s, the American Rock and Rollers* in the 50’s, the Mods* in the 60’s, the Punks* in the 70’s and 80’s and many many more.



It is important to take a closer look at why these ‘hip’ subcultures existed so that we can understand today’s Ironic Hipster and show you just how special you are.

The word ‘hipster’ first popped up among the hip, mostly black jazz and swing performers in the 1940’s and 1950’s. The word is native to West

¹⁰⁵ Hasbro Bradley Inc, 1985, p. 1.

Africa and belongs to the Wolof language. Let's take a closer look, 'Hipikat means a sage or intelligent fellow, one who is in the know, and the same all-round alertness is supposed to characterize his descendants, the hepcat, the hip cat, the hipster.'¹⁰⁶ The meaning of this African word still filters through every subculture that has been deemed 'hip' because there are certain characteristics that all 'hip' subcultures share. And sharing is caring;

1. They are intellectual youths who have always been able to tell the difference between 'the commercial' and 'the authentic', not like the naughty common consumer.
2. They are consciously distinguished from other social groupings by their participants.
3. There is an acute awareness of style and interests especially their difference of style and interests.
4. They all contain a deliberate break from the silly majority who 'passively accept commercially provided styles and meanings.'¹⁰⁷

Although these are the common factors there is a difference between the Ironic Hipster and previous kinds of 'hip'. It is a major difference so listen carefully.

¹⁰⁶ Campbell, 1999, p. 36.

¹⁰⁷ Riesman, 1950, p. 361.

The Ironic Hipster does not have hate in their heart for consumerism or the dominant culture. ‘In the past, this young, intellectual (and oft-times rebellious) class was the one to dismiss mass-produced objects as “corrosive”; these subcultures shared a scorn for commercialism and a love for “the authentic”: music, poetry or any sort of art produced independently and not for the sake of money.’¹⁰⁸

Why is this you may ask? Is there something wrong with the Ironic Hipster? Why no, of course not! The Ironic Hipster exists because of specific socio-economic surroundings. All subcultures, including the Ironic Hipster, definitely don’t happen by mistake. Many factors have to be taken in to consideration. Don’t worry, let’s explore an example and we’ll understand much better:

Let’s start by taking a look at the flaneur. At the time of his existence, he was not called hip or subcultural because he lived in Paris in the nineteenth century and these words were not part of the vocabulary. However, the flaneur is one of the first forms of ‘hip’.

Every morning he would wake up and while drinking a quaint cup of coffee he would gaze out of his window and with a big yawn he’d ponder his society. At this time, capitalism was a little baby. It was in its first stages of development in many cities in Western Europe. For the first time in history, most of the population lived in urban rather than rural areas, and many countries were becoming industrial nations, including France.

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.everything2.com/node/1401320>

It was the beginning of arcades and shops being built out of glass and iron. For the very first time the streets were ‘lined with small businesses and shops of all kinds, with every corner zoned for restaurants and terraced sidewalk cafes.’¹⁰⁹ We’re very used to this today but back then it was a big shock! A completely new social experience! All the people were rushing in and out of the shops, buying all sorts of products. The streets were crowded as everyone began to live fast pace modern lives.

Amid all this commotion the flaneur preferred to take leisurely walks and ‘observe the wares on display.’¹¹⁰ He was much more interested in watching and being entertained by the spectacle of this new modernity rather than taking part in it. After having his breakfast, he would get dressed in very fancy clothes. He would put on a suit, a frock coat, pick up his cane and with a cigar in hand he was ready for his day.



¹⁰⁹ Berman, 1985, p. 151: cited in Tester, 1994, p. 161.

¹¹⁰ Smart: cited in Tester, 1994, p. 161.

He spent most of his time strolling along the boulevards where all the shops were. He tried to blend in but he dressed and thought very differently from ‘the women, children, shopkeepers, lawyers, sword swallows and dog walkers who surrounded him.’¹¹¹

He was a gentleman of leisure and although he never took part in the new city life by buying magazines or chatting away in the corner café, he delighted in observing everyone who did. He may not be part of the crowd but he is most happy when he is in it. ‘It is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite.’¹¹²

The flaneur understood the absurdity of the city because it had ‘metamorphosed into an exotic unknown, to be explored as one would a foreign land.’¹¹³ Some flaneurs were poets or similar to journalists. They were like detectives of the modern metropolis, ‘collecting and recording the urban images, social interactions and social typifications, is someone clearly at home in the metropolis and capable of combining observation, watchfulness and preserving his incognito.’¹¹⁴ ‘The flaneur must listen carefully to sounds, stories, scraps of quotations as well as search for clues amongst the “dead data” of the metropolis-just like the detective.’¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Ferguson: cited in Tester, 1994, p.31.

¹¹² Baudelaire, 1964, p. 9: cited in Tester, 1994, p. 161.

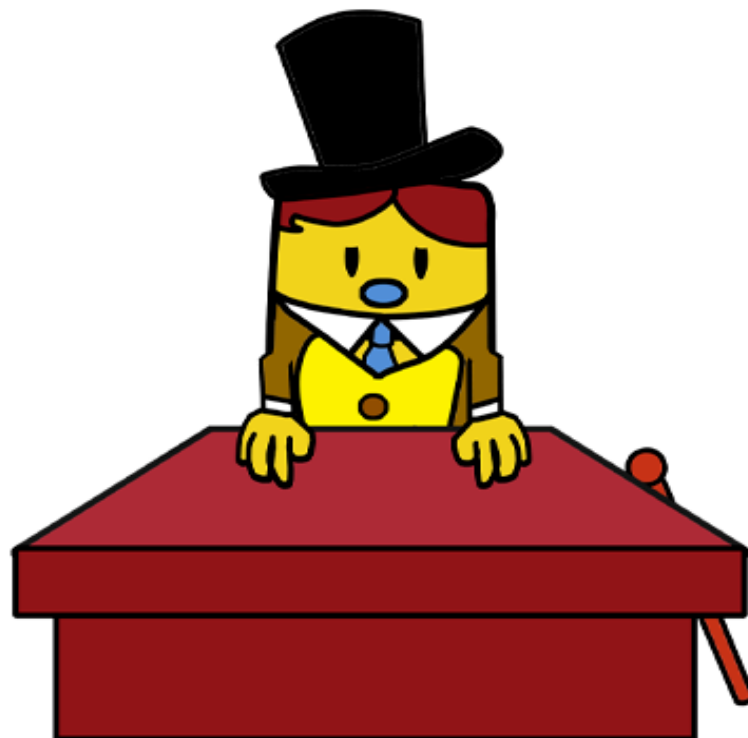
¹¹³ Benjamin: cited in Tester, 1994, p. 47.

¹¹⁴ Benjamin: cited in Tester, 1994, p.92.

¹¹⁵ Frisby: cited in Tester, 1994, p. 93.

The flaneur was preoccupied with ‘apprehending and reading the complex signifiers in the labyrinth of modernity.’¹¹⁶ This was a very subcultural thing to do because the flaneur was purposefully not partaking in burgeoning Capitalism. He lived within it but he stood outside of it because he interpreted it subversively. Even though he romanticized the city he also represented a profound insight into the consequences of modernity because, ‘like a fancy commodity, the flaneur is all form. The persona of the flaneur is like a tortoise-like shell of artful indolence behind which the flaneur’s agency and intentionality is hidden.’¹¹⁷

After a long day of ‘seeing without being caught looking,’¹¹⁸ the flaneur would come home and settle down at his desk to write about what he had seen that day.



¹¹⁶ *ibid*: cited in Tester, 1994, p. 93.

¹¹⁷ Shields: cited in Tester, 1994, p. 65- 66.

¹¹⁸ Bauman: cited in Tester, 1994, p. 141.

He'd think about the subtle moments he'd seen that day. What most people only saw out the corner of their eye, the flaneur saw in its entirety. And then it would all fall in to place and he'd write a little something about himself:

‘The painter of modernity is looking for that quality which you must allow me to call ‘modernity’; for I know no better word to express the idea that I have in mind. He makes it his business to extract from fashion whatever element it may contain of poetry within history, to distil the eternal from the transitory.’¹¹⁹

Now, if we think about the flaneur, we need to ask ourselves a question. Would he have existed if it weren't for the capitalist society? Why of course not! ‘Unquestionably, the flaneur enters society along with capitalism.’¹²⁰ We wouldn't be able to read about him today if he hadn't written about his experience. And without the shops and the busy streets he would have had nothing new to write about.

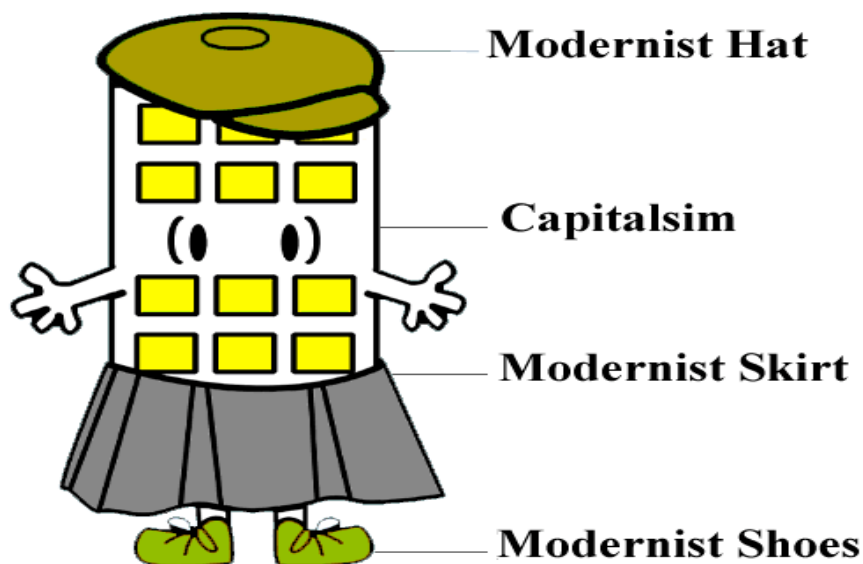
‘It is not by chance that the flaneur first appears in narratives of early nineteenth-century Paris, a post-revolutionary city that invites as it requires new urban practices. Flanerie is just such a practice, a response to particular cultural and social conditions that allowed conception of the city simultaneously in terms of its parts and as a whole.’¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Baudelaire: cited in Tester, 1994, p. 49.

¹²⁰ Mazlish: cited in Tester, 1994, p.46.

¹²¹ Parkhurst: cited in Tester, 1994, p. 39.

If we understand that the flaneur was a result of Capitalism in its early stages then we need to understand that the Ironic Hipster is a result of Capitalism in its later stages. At present, Capitalism is in its ‘third machine age’ and postmodernism is the ‘cultural façade of capitalism’,¹²² in this stage. Postmodernism is a very complicated term and for now all we need to know is that it defines what kind of culture we live in. As Capitalism progresses, so too does culture. **Think of Capitalism as a building with arms and legs and culture as its clothes. For most of the twentieth century Capitalism wore modernist clothes.**

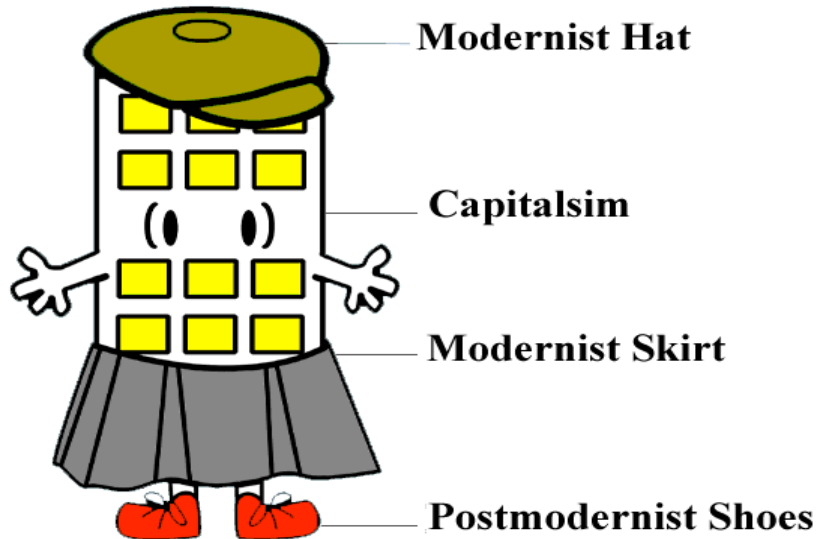


But, during the 1950's and 1960's there was a massive growth in media and advertising and the system began to progress. Because of this culture also changed and crossed over from a modernist culture to a postmodernist culture.¹²³

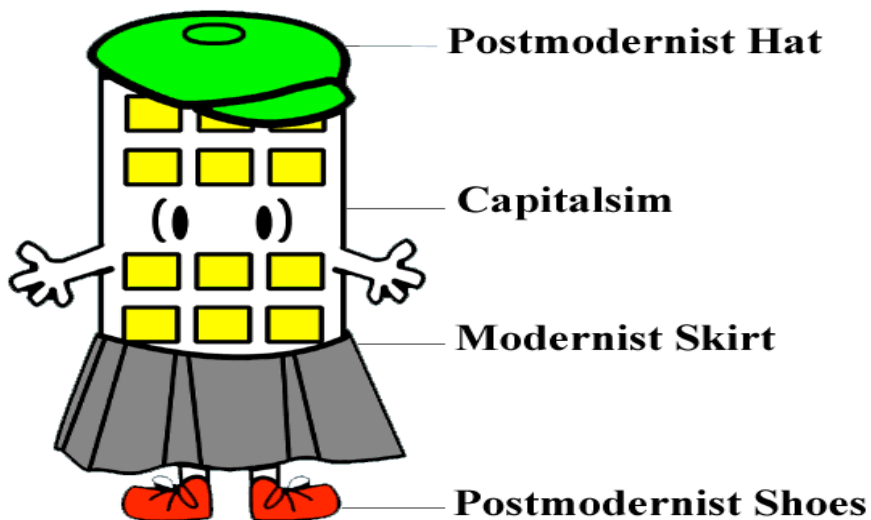
¹²² Jameson, 1991, p. 36.

¹²³ Jameson, 1991.

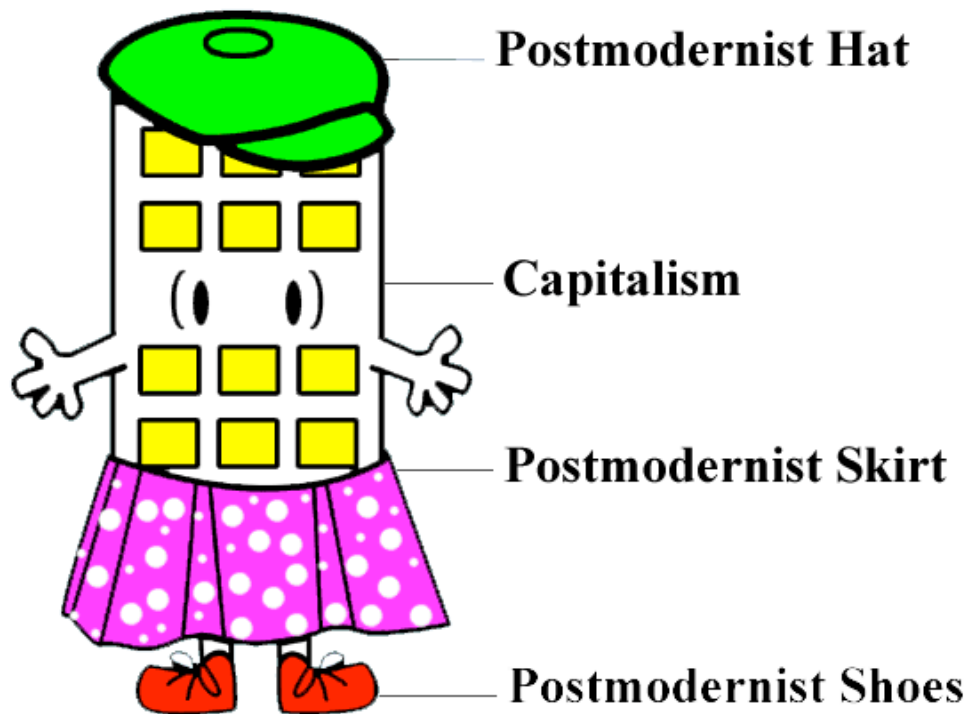
This was a slow process. At first Capitalism kept on its modernist skirt and put on the shoes of postmodernity.



Then, as capitalism advanced a little more it put on the hat of postmodernity.



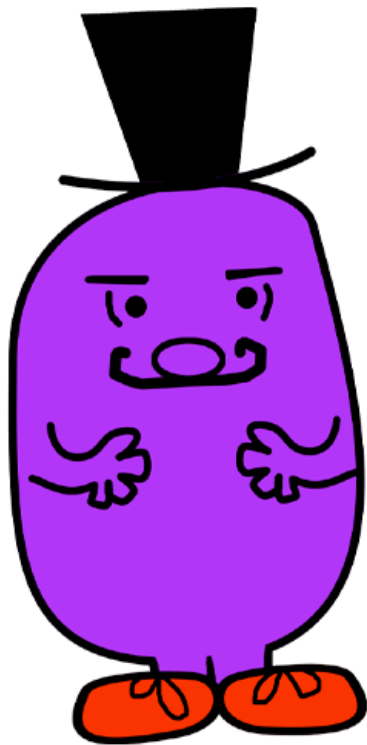
This continued to happen until eventually it threw in all its modernist clothes for the shiny new postmodernist clothes.



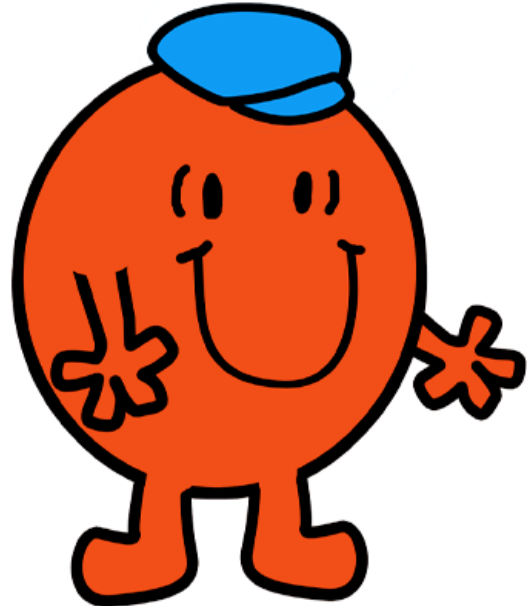
The flaneur did not last forever because Capitalism progressed and changed. So as his time ended a new subculture would emerge with their own specific style and way of resisting according to the nature of the Capitalism that they lived in. So, let's simplify the whole matter by saying that the **type of capitalism** determines the **type of culture** which in turn determines the **type of subculture**.

Most of the subcultures that we are familiar with happened during Modernism but Postmodernism has changed the nature of subculture. There are many differences between modernism and postmodernism but we need to explore one in particular to understand the nature of the Ironic Hipster.

When culture was in its modernist phase, society was able to clearly tell the difference between two opposing notions. Lets imagine two little characters, **Mr This*** and **Mr That**, and they are the opposite of each other.



Mr This



Mr That

Mr This and Mr That can represent a number of word pairs. Let's say that Mr This represents all the Capitalist or mass culture ideals and Mr That represents all the resisting ideals.

Mr This	vs	Mr That
Mr Economy	vs	Mr Culture
Mr Conventional	vs	Mr Subcultural
Mr Manufactured	vs	Mr Authentic
Mr Style as fashion	vs	Mr Style as resistance

The list is endless but what we need to know is that during modernism Mr This and Mr That were able to oppose each other because they existed in **separate dialectical fields**. To grasp this concept, let's imagine Mr This and Mr That as neighbours. They each have their own house, their own garden, their own driveway and there's a fence separating their properties. They were very unfriendly to each other and they often had arguments, usually started by Mr. That.

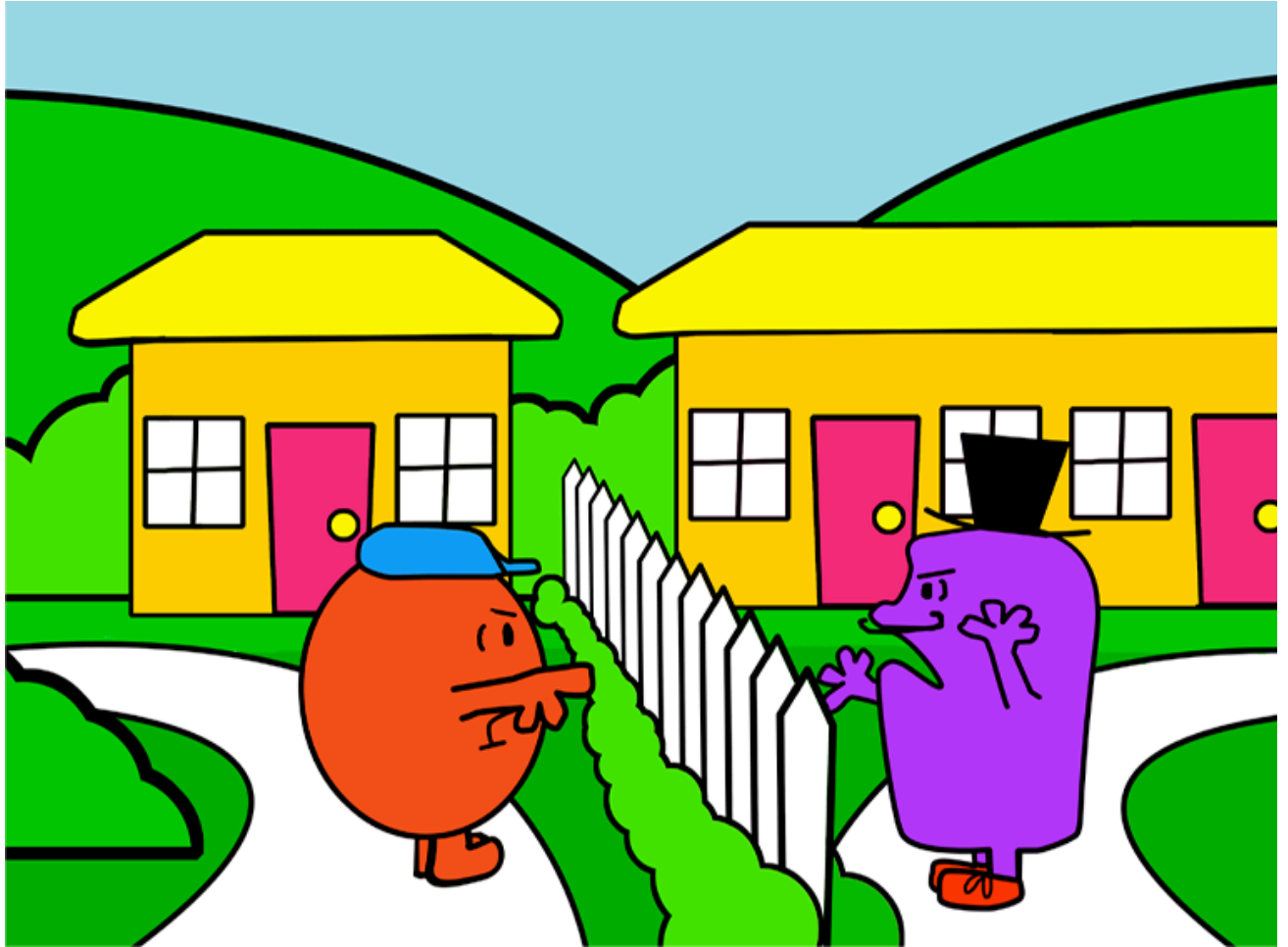
Mr This had a much bigger house than Mr That because he owned a used car company and made lots of money. Mr That was poet. He would spend most of his days sitting on his porch writing about all the beautiful things in the world. Everyday Mr This would test some of the cars in his driveway. He would rev the engines and smoke would billow into the sky and drift across to Mr That's house. Mr That would be gazing into the sky and writing about a flock of soaring birds and the smoke would burn his eyes and he'd start coughing.

Mr That stormed to the fence and shouted, "Stop revving those engines Mr This! You're making me cough and I can't concentrate on my poem!"

"This is my job Mr That, I'm sorry but there's nothing I can do," replied Mr This.

"Yes there is," scoffed Mr That, "you can stop polluting the sky and find another job."

“Don’t be silly Mr That! Do you expect me to write poems and live on hardly any money? That’s just not realistic.”



“Well at least I have a fence” thought Mr That, “that way I can separate myself from Mr This!”

“Thank goodness I have my own house and I don’t have to listen to Mr. That’s ranting all day long,” said Mr This.

This was the nature of subcultures within the modernist paradigm. They had something specific and tangible to resist. For example, the beat generation in the first half of the century were ‘anti-materialistic and stressed the importance of bettering one's inner self over and above material possessions.’¹²⁴ So they were like Mr Anti-materialist and they opposed dominant culture who was like Mr Materialist. The Hippies of the 60’s inherited a similar ideal and they ‘opposed political and social orthodoxy, choosing a gentle and nondoctrinaire ideology that favored peace, love and personal freedom.’¹²⁵ So they were like Mr. Personal Freedom who didn’t like or agree with his neighbour Mr. Social orthodoxy.



Mr Beatnik



Miss Hippie

This was the basic nature of subculture until the shift from Modernism to Postmodernism as the dominant culture.

¹²⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beat_generation

¹²⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippie>

Where Modernism relied on the difference between the two notions, culture from economy, or subcultural from conventional in order to interpret and validate their individuality, Postmodernism adopts a converse process whereby various cultural spheres lose their autonomy.

Back to our story to explain what cultural spheres losing their autonomy actually means.

Mr This and Mr That carried on like this for quite some time and the whole neighborhood knew about their dislike for one another. Mr Postmodernism would ride his bike past Mr This and Mr That every day and he would hear them arguing. So one night he decided to play a trick on them.

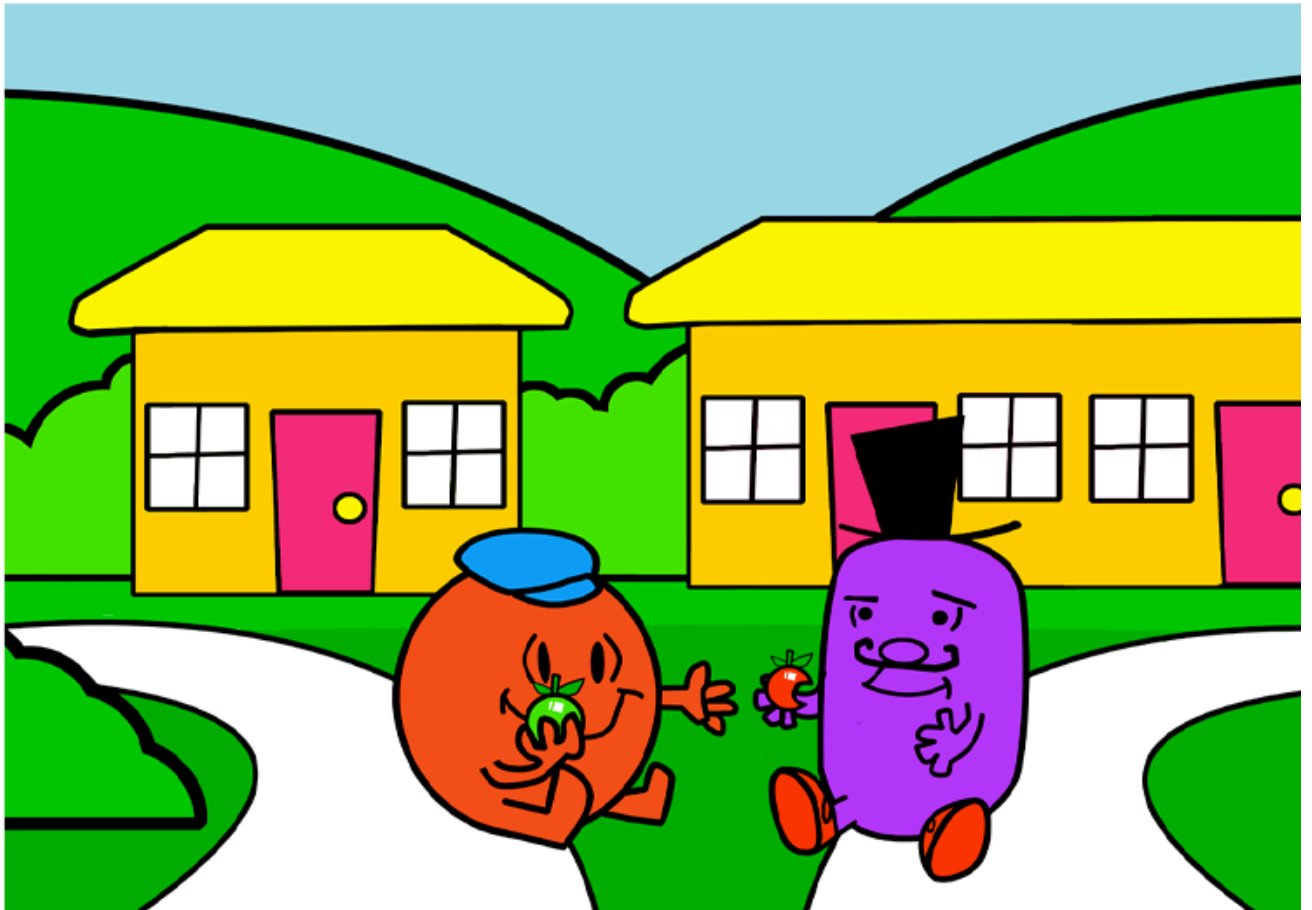
While they were sleeping he crept into the garden and quietly removed half the fence dividing their property. The next morning Mr This and Mr That didn't even notice as they both busied themselves with work. A week later, Mr Postmodernism came back and chuckled to himself as he uprooted the other half of the fence. Mr This and Mr That were so preoccupied with what they were doing that they still didn't realise.

One day Mr That came home from the shop and saw Mr This sitting on his lawn.

"That's strange," said Mr That, "I could've sworn there was a fence there."

"So I'm not dreaming," said Mr This, "I also thought that I was missing a fence."

For once they'd agreed on something and Mr That sat beside Mr This and offered him one of his juicy red apples.



They were friendly to each other and spoke about all sorts of things.

Once they'd finished their apples Mr That realised that he was talking to his worst enemy and he blurted, "I think you should go now!"

Mr This replied, "Well there's no need to be rude! Thank you for the apple. We should do this again seeing as we share the same lawn."

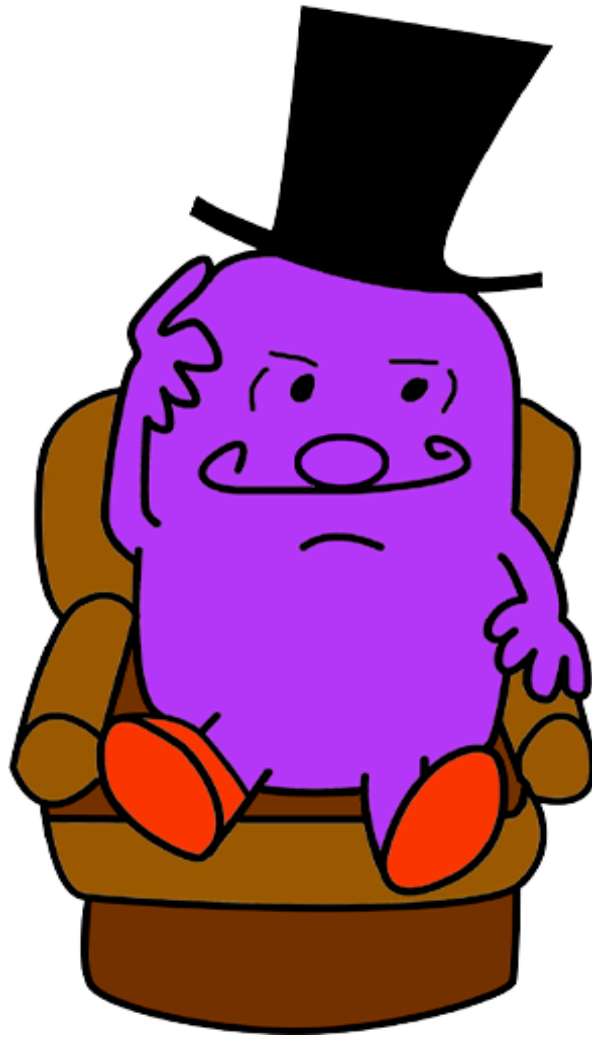
“Don’t think we’re friends just because I gave you an apple,” said Mr That as he walked back to his porch.

That night it was a full moon and Mr Postmodernism was up to his tricks again. He waited for the bedroom lights to go out before he began. He worked right through the night and it was dawn before he had finished joining Mr This and Mr That’s driveway! Once again they were in such a hurry that they didn’t even notice. When they arrived home from work that day Mr This parked outside Mr That’s house and Mr That parked outside Mr This’s house.

Mr That went inside to make himself a cup of tea. “This isn’t my kettle,” he pondered, “and where’s my mint tea?!”



Mr This wanted to relax in his favourite chair and as he sat down he thought, “This chair doesn’t feel familiar, where’s my rocking chair?”



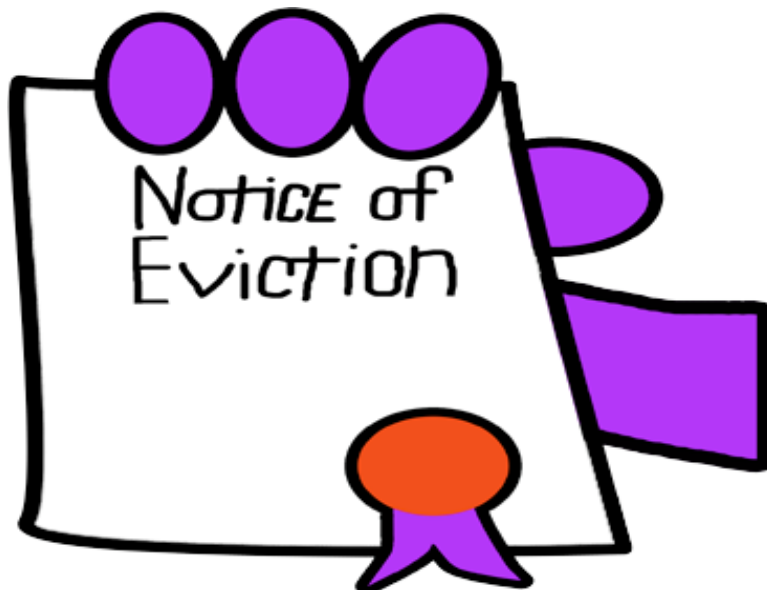
After they had figured out their silly mistake Mr This and Mr That laughed heartedly together as they went back to their homes.

From then on they often made the same mistake, sometimes up to three times a week! And every time they realised they would laugh and chat and get to know one another. Mr This was slowly becoming more familiar with Mr That's house and Mr That knew exactly where Mr This kept his plates and cups.

One sunny afternoon Mr Postman delivered a letter for Mr That. But because they share the same driveway and postbox it got muddled up and delivered to Mr This.

Mr This picked up the letter and thought, "That's funny, another letter for Mr That has ended up in my pile. Oh well, I'll take it with me when I go and visit him tonight."

Mr This placed the letter on his side table and he noticed something strange. On the back of the envelope there was a big red stamp that said, 'NOTICE OF EVICTION'.



“Oh no!” said Mr This, “Poor Mr That, he doesn’t have enough money to pay for his rent. I have to help him.”

Even though they still had arguments Mr That had grown on Mr This. He had taught him so much about poetry and art. They were friends and Mr This took it upon himself to keep it that way. That evening they were going to meet to play a board game. Mr This baked a delicious apple pie, Mr That’s favourite! He tucked the letter into his jacket pocket and knocked on Mr That’s door.

“Hello Mr This! Please come in. Oh! What a lovely apple pie!”

“Thank you Mr That,” smiled Mr This.

Mr This followed Mr That to the kitchen to make tea. While Mr That was boiling the kettle and getting the cups he was chattering away, “I know we’re becoming friends Mr This but I do feel the need to tell you that the smog that drifted into my house today was awful. I couldn’t write for three hours because of it.”

“What a shame Mr That,” said Mr This as he pulled the letter from his pocket.

“Another letter of mine. That poor Mr Postman. It must be confusing when we have the same postbox!”

“I’m afraid that this letter isn’t very good news,” said Mr This as he handed the envelope to Mr That.”

“A notice of eviction,” Mr That said quietly. “Well never mind, I’ll sort this out tomorrow, let’s get started on our game.”

Mr This looked Mr That directly in the eyes, “There’s no need to act so brave Mr That. I know you don’t like asking for help but we’re friends and I like living next door to you.”

“Don’t be silly Mr This, I’m always complaining about things,” replied Mr That.

“I know,” said Mr This, “but I’ve grown used to it and I actually quite like it. Even though I still rev those car engines it doesn’t mean that you haven’t taught me many things.”

“Thank you Mr This but I’m not going to take your money, I can take care of myself,” said Mr That as he sliced the apple pie.

“Well I’m not offering you money Mr That, I’m offering you a job.”

“Oh no thank you,” laughed Mr That, “I could never sell cars. I would just be irritating other poets.”

“Well I’m not asking you to sell cars Mr That,” smirked Mr This. “All I’m asking is for you to do what you do...write.”

“Oh Really?” said the surprised Mr That.

“I’ve seen you reading your poems for money down at the market place. They are so beautiful and all you walk away with is a handful of pennies,” said Mr This.

“It is tough,” replied Mr That, “but it’s something that I believe in.”

“I know,” said Mr This, “but you can’t even afford to pay your rent, you need to be wise about your writing skills.”

“So are you going to sell my poetry?” asked Mr That.

“No no no Mr That, I’m going to sell your bumper stickers,” said Mr This.

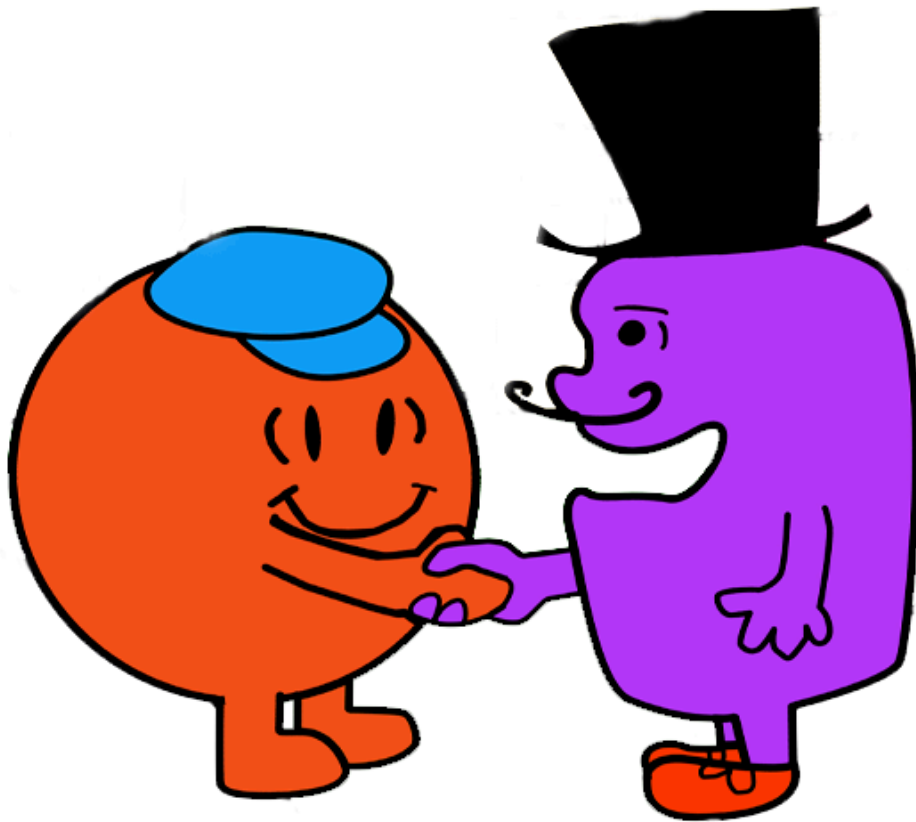
“Bumper stickers! But that’s not poetry?” scoffed Mr That.

“You can still write poetry Mr That but I assure you that bumper stickers will pay your bills,” said Mr This. “If you write some funny bumper stickers then I can sell them at my car shop and you won’t have to worry about money.”

“That does sound like a good plan,” said Mr That, “at least I will be able to make money from writing even if it’s not poetry.”

“Exactly!” said Mr This joyously.

Mr That shook Mr This's hand, "Okay Mr This, I'll do it. Now let's enjoy this apple pie while we play a game of Monopoly."



"Sounds great Mr That," replied Mr This.

The following day Mr That got to work. He sat on his porch and began to write a whole series of bumper stickers. While he was writing he glanced across the street and saw Mr This talking to Mr Postmodernism. Just before Mr Postmodernism rode off on his bike he could have sworn he saw Mr This hand him an envelope.

“I wonder what that was about,” he thought, “oh well, it’s probably none of my business.”

Just then Mr This walked up the driveway.

“Hello Mr This,” yelled Mr That as he waved.”

“Oh! Hello Mr That, I didn’t see you there. How’s the work going?”
replied Mr This.

“Oh just fine thank you,” said Mr That, “it’s so easy in comparison to writing a poem. I’ll get them to you by tomorrow.”

“Fantastic,” smiled Mr This.

That evening, when everything was quiet, Mr Postmodernism rode up on his bike. He heaved and sweated as he laid bricks and cement. This was his final trick to finish the job. Only when the sun was beginning to peep through the sky did he lay the last brick. Moments before Mr That came outside to drink his tea on the porch, Mr Postmodernism jumped on his bike and speedily pedaled away.

“What a wonderful day!” exclaimed Mr That, “And what wonderful tea!”

“Good morning Mr That,” said Mr This from behind him.

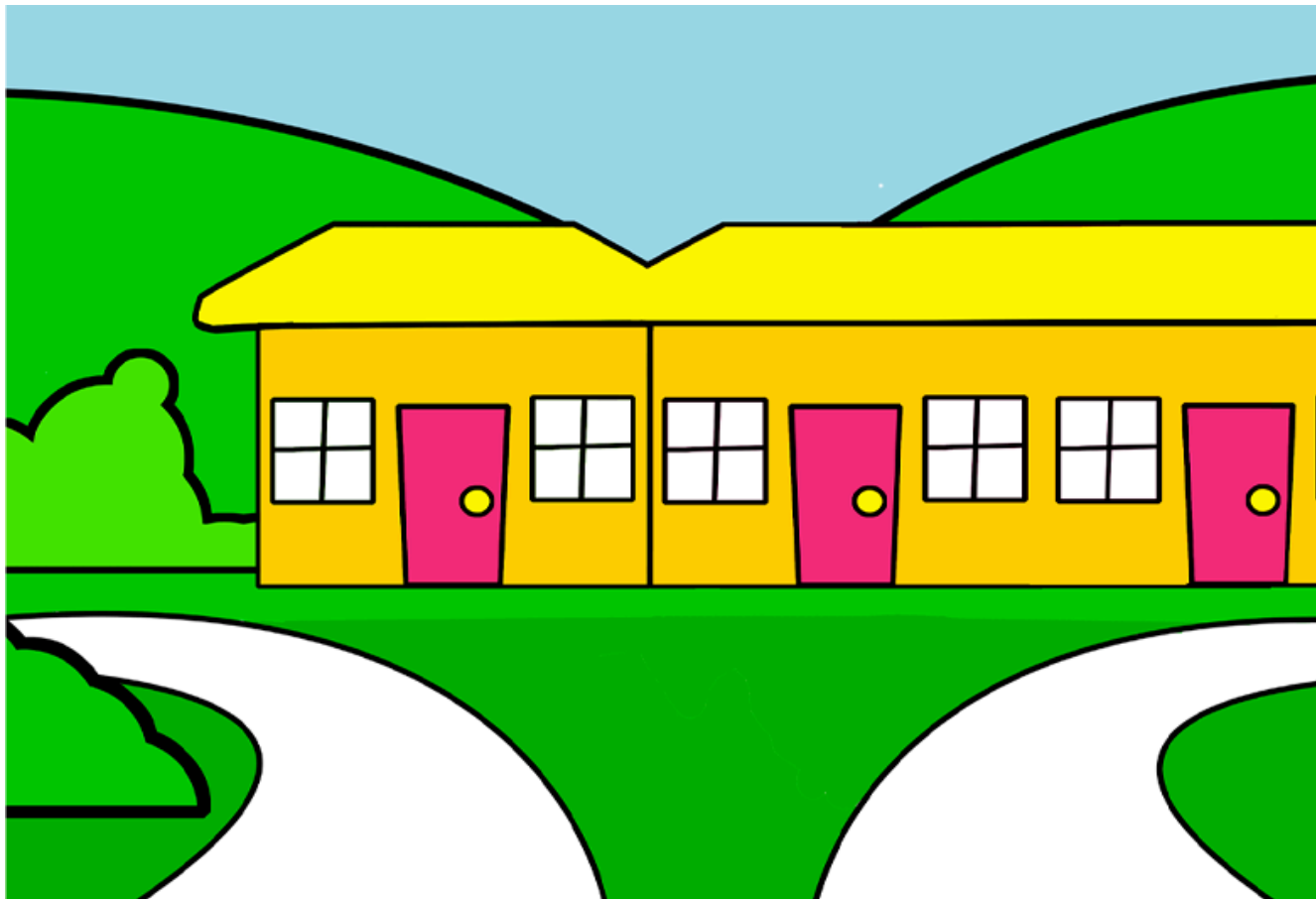
“You startled me Mr This. How did you come out of my front door?” Mr That pondered, “Are you a Magician!?”

Mr This laughed, “Don’t be silly Mr That. I came through your house.”

“But how?” asked Mr That.

“Follow me,” said Mr This as he led Mr That down the passage.

He showed Mr That a new room that connected their homes into one big house.

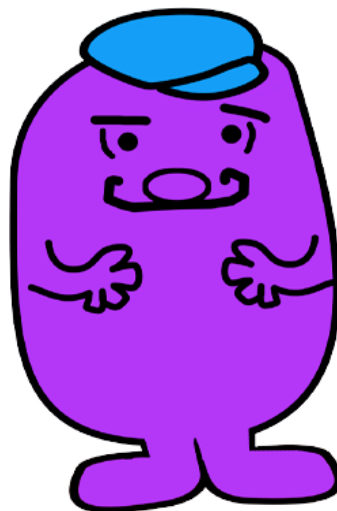


“How strange,” said Mr That.

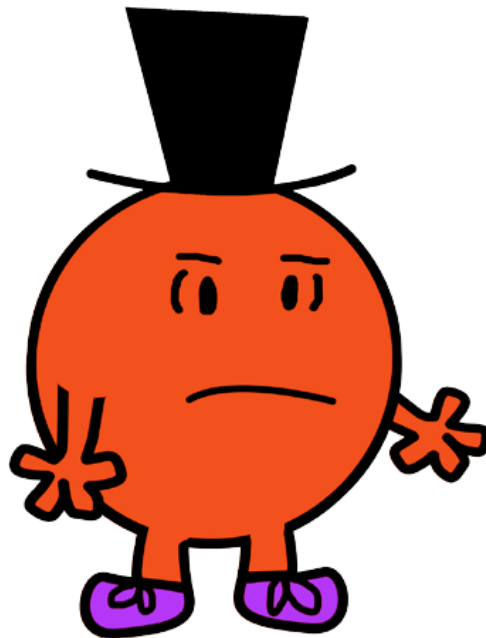
“I don’t know how it happened,” said Mr This, “but how lovely that we can be housemates!

Over time Mr This and Mr That become very comfortable living together. Mr This still sold cars and Mr That still made bumper stickers and tried to write poetry in his spare time. Eventually some of Mr This’s things ended up on Mr That’s side of the house and some of Mr That’s things ended up on Mr This’s side of the house. They didn’t see their house as two separate homes anymore. Even though they still disagreed on some matters they ended up agreeing to disagree because it’s hard to live in a house with someone if you’re constantly fighting.

The neighbourhood was so happy that Mr This and Mr That were finally friends but they became confused because they couldn’t tell the difference between Mr This and Mr That. They had grown so comfortable with each other that they would often borrow each other’s clothes. Sometimes Mr This would wear Mr That’s hat.



And sometimes Mr That would wear Mr This's hat.



Often the neighbours would call Mr This, Mr That, and Mr That, Mr This. They became so tired of muddling it up that they decided to call Mr This and Mr That the same name... **Mr This and That.**

And this children is where Ironic Hipsters find themselves. They exist in an age where capitalism is very different from its previous forms. It is one in which culture, 'cleaves almost too close to the skin of the economic to be stripped off and inspected in its own right.'¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Jameson: cited in Kumar, 1995, p. 116.

Previously subcultures deemed 'hip' could divorce themselves from consumerism because of the separate dialectical spheres within the cultural sphere. But Ironic Hipsters, a subcultural product of postmodernity, are trying to rebel within this phenomenon.

So you see, Ironic Hipsters are very special because they know their way around Capitalism, just like Mr That knows his way around Mr This's house. Often people cannot tell that they are anti the system because they delight in taking part in it even if they are being ironic. You might think that's just silly because how are Ironic Hipsters supposed to change the system if they've become ironically part of it?

Don't you worry, you'll soon find out more and realise why the Ironic Hipster is our last hope of a revolution.

The End

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Chapter 4

My Style is more Loaded than a Tommy Gun

Continued

The story ended and I sat dumbfounded, the static feedback amplified my buzzing comprehension. It's not that I didn't know it before but my understanding had been a more general sweeping idea. The tape clicked off and I still sat for a while pulling at a loose gold thread on the seam of the armchair. Bill hovered at the top of the staircase like a dad cautiously trying to enter his pubescent daughter's bedroom to apologise for something only she knew about, "Do you wanna watch some TV or something?"

I sighed, "It's cool Bill. This really sucks...you know?"

He sat on the table in front of me and did the eye to eye, concerned, let's talk about it thing.

BILL MURRAY

So sure, consumer society does suck. I also hate it but tell me what you like about it.

ME

Nothing. It's lame. It's so predictable and glossed over. Because that's, everything has this nice sheen to it and everything's so perfect and like...

BILL MURRAY

Mmm.

ME

Well packaged that...

BILL MURRAY

And simple.

ME

Yes, that it makes it really easy for me. It's so easy to feel like I'm ruling over it, you know?

BILL MURRAY

Yeah, 'cos it's so transparent.

ME

But at the same time I can loose myself in that transparency and have a good bunch of retail therapy. I like buying shit, I do, um-

BILL MURRAY

That's why we get away with so much because we present ourselves to society as these intellectual yet fun lovin' individuals.

ME

We can be silly.

BILL MURRAY

Sure! We get to do all of it. 'The superior individual is not the flaneur, immune to the enticements of the commercial and who loses himself in the crowd, but rather the capitalist who rules the crowd.'¹²⁷ We ridicule people who go to mainstream clubs and buy into brand names and then we can go to the same clubs-

ME

-To laugh our asses off at people.

¹²⁷ Ferguson, cited in Tester: 1994: 37

BILL MURRAY

Exactly!

ME

But at the same time I can really dig it. Like I can, I can buy a Gwen Stefani album and go, “Look what I brought wouldn’t this be a good laugh one day when I’m bored,” but at the same time I can go, “Oh shit!”

BILL MURRAY

Rocking out!

ME

I love Gwen Stefani’s bling.

BILL MURRAY

‘This shit is bananas! B-A-N-A-N-A-S.’¹²⁸

ME

I, I, I don’t know. But that’s the problem, I don’t know if I like things anymore or if I just like mocking them.

BILL MURRAY

I know.

ME

It’s hard...I don’t know. Like a group of us will go to ‘Vidamatta’, this mainstream club, and make fun of everyone, um, but at the same time we have just as much fun and dance to the same pop songs.

¹²⁸ Lyric for ‘Hollaback Girl’ by Gwen Stefani and Pharrell Williams, 2004, <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/gwenstefani/hollabackgirl.html>

BILL MURRAY

Yeah.

ME

How is it. What did you ask me?

BILL MURRAY

No that's pretty much-

ME

-Oh yeah. Oh, so I guess that's what I like about consumer society.

BILL MURRAY

There you go.

ME

So maybe I'm saying I like it because I can see its mechanics completely. And so I don't feel suckered by it. But at the same time I can step in and out of it whenever I choose.

BILL MURRAY

Exactly.

ME

Um-

BILL MURRAY

-It's like your 'Vidamatta' story. You can go there, still have a cool time but you're fully aware of what you're doing.

ME

And it's that like awareness that makes it okay, you know, like it doesn't matter what I do as long as I know I'm doing it and why.

A gust of dry wind as the front door opened and somebody shouted, “Bill!” Bill raised his eyebrows like a surprise had just arrived;

BILL MURRAY

Yeah! Quentin.

ME

Tarantino?

BILL MURRAY

Yeup.

ME

Word.

I scurried to the railing. Tarantino was drawing back excessively on a cigarette and examining the tapestry on the front door, “When are you gonna change this? I get it. We all get it. It would be so much funnier if you went with ‘Home Sweet Home’. This self aware shit is driving me fucking crazy.”

Bill leisurely descended the stair case, “Yeah well your repetitive shit is driving me crazy. Every time with the tapestry”.

They greeted each other with the high five meshed into a hand shake and a semi-hug like the cool kids at school. Bill gestured toward my presence on the elevated platform and Tarantino responded with a self aware I’m just the messenger milady bow, “What light from yonder window breaks? It is Bill’s disorderly shirt and thy hipstress knows there doth be nothing new under the fucking sun.”

I retorted, “Tarantino Tarantino, where for art thou Tarantino?”

“I’m right here. And you need to see this.” He pulled a VHS tape from his pocket and waved me down with it. Bill threw down two bohemian cushions in front of the old technology cabinet and Tarantino played silent eeny meeny miney mow selecting the mopey VCR circa 1985 model. He whispered encouraging words at it as he slotted the tape into the video player. Bill and I were discussing whether to snack on marshmallows or liquorices when Tarantino called for a group silence as he tilted his head toward the VCR’s rectangular mouth and gave the tape the final push. The mechanical conveyor belt ushered it in, clanked and swallowed it into place. From his expression you’d swear he was listening to a classical masterpiece, “I love that sound.”

Bill and I continued the debate until he forfeited both the plastic bags, “Fine. Who am I to worry about your cavities? You two have fun, I’m gonna look for something.”

Tarantino surrendered onto the terracotta cushion, nudged off his shoes and tucked into the Marshmallows. He discarded the white ones onto my lap saying something about white food products being illusive because white as a colour doesn’t exist so how’s a plain bowl of rice supposed to be filling. I did the (I’m about to watch a movie so wrap it up) nod. On the screen the white noise gave way to colour bars and then the count down. Tarantino, having picked up the secret message in my coded nod, quickly blurted, “You’re gonna love this.”

Justin Timberlake*’s adolescent voice started wining out meaningless lyrics in unison with Snoop Dogg rapping some arbitrary words that rhyme.

I blurted, “‘Signs!’ This music video is hilarious!”

Tarantino retorted with a wait for it hand signal that indicated the moment as the fast cars came on screen, “There it is! The ubiquitous fast ass cars.”

We started laughing through our noses like two stoners. Every time Snoop Dogg was on screen Tarantino would shout out phrases like, “Preach it Snoop,” or, “Word!”

By the time two hoes on a double bed started grinding each other as Snoop and JT threw bags of money over them like confetti, we were laughing so hard that we couldn't speak. Every time we looked at each other we'd fall about hysterically. It was the kind of laughing where I thought I might die. Holding my ribcage in place I tried to get up and press the pause button on the VCR but my knees buckled which made us hose even more.

Amid the frenzy Tarantino managed to say, "Wow Snoop Dogg and JT! Thanks for communicating oppression of women to us and absolute commodification of the female form! Um, I'm gonna look at that as much as possible 'cos I think that's funny ass!"

Again, fits of laughter, I couldn't breathe, "Stop...it's killing me."

Tarantino persisted, "Bring al y'al hoes! Bring 'em on in 'ere!"

Rolling around on the floor I shouted, "Hoes and bitches!" We'd moved on to silent laughing with occasional grunts. I focused intently on sucking in enough air to say, "This is awesome! There's the hoes, and then there's the hoes that they make box and then they make money off them. So you got bitches you bang, and bitches you exploit!"

We shrieked and the tears started streaming. Tarantino tried to give me a high five but our laughing dominated our physicality so we missed.

The music video petered out with 'Ohhh's' and 'Yeah's' as we tried to compose ourselves. Spread out horizontally on the floor we both clutched our hearts and allowed the last few chuckles to squeeze out. Just as we sighed into the after laugh euphoria Bill stepped into view bouncing like Justin Timberlake and mimicking his voice;

“Are you telling me this is a sign?

She’s looking in my eyes, now I see no other guys.

Are you telling me this is a sign? (Ohhh!!!)¹²⁹”

Collapsing back into hysterics, Tarantino was in the foetal position, I buried my face into the depths of the velvet cushion and Bill held himself upright on the cabinet. It felt like my entrails were going to burst through my belly button. Eventually ‘take two’ on the (laughing, sighing, laughing, aaahing, silence, taking deep breaths) fade out. We all had a private moment of introspective retrospect through big smiles. Tarantino slowly stood up. Breaking the simple movement into sections like an eighty-five year old man. He bent down and gave me a chin chuck, “Here’s lookin’ at you kid.” With intermittent giggles, he waved a silent goodbye to Bill, picked up his keys and left.

Bill put down a Moroccan tray of organic foods nestled in different era bowls and sat cross-legged next to me. Still shaking my head from the music video extravaganza:

ME

Organic hey?

BILL MURRAY

Don’t start with me.

ME

No, I’m all about organic...word.

With a toothpick I skewered a strawberry with a slice of kiwi and mango. Bill went for apple and carrot and his other hand dusted off a cardboard folder. It was a paper doll booklet!* Nostalgia tickled me into remembrance. I used to have my own 1980’s

¹²⁹ Lyric from the song, Signs, Snoop Dogg ,feat Justin Timberlake and Charlie Wilson, 2005, <http://www.smartlyrics.com/Song522174-Snoop-Dogg-f-Justin-Timberlake-Signs-lyrics.aspx>

paper doll. My synapses humming in search of lost time. And then a dreamy memory of my little hands showing my mom my mistake through red eyes. I'd cut off the tabs attached to the clothing that bend around the doll. She brought me another one and sat patiently encouraging my scissors around the corners. Bill smirked like he could feel the warmth of my recollection:

ME

Are we gonna talk about what she-devil and the masses did to me?

BILL MURRAY

Yeah. It's important that you understand this.

The book crackled back into being as he turned the page.

BILL MURRAY

You choose to garb yourself in clothing from different eras that permeates fashions from the past and the present. Right?

ME

Sure.

BILL MURRAY

Your style brings *pastiche*, a postmodern symptom, to the foreground. This is where disconnected images form a unified whole but the clash of colour and era renders the subject as inharmonious. Your style surpasses the avant-garde and reflects your world which is dominated by magazines and mass advertising. It is 'the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most

literal sense, perhaps the supreme formal feature of all the postmodernisms.¹³⁰

Depth has been replaced by multiple surfaces both metaphorically and physically rendering the subject as intertextual. This postmodern symptom is brought to life or made apparent by the way you dress because modernist styles become codes for your postmodernism, just like tradition offered codes for the modernists. Jameson states that the pastiche symptom has resulted in a society where there is no norm. Where the ruling classes once represented stylistic and ideological norms, progressive capitalist countries now only exhibit a range of styles and discursive possibilities neither one carrying the weight of being the accepted norm.

ME

But then that's saying that I'm no different from anyone else because consumer society suffers from the same symptom.

BILL MURRAY

No no no. You see the masses follow the media's lead. So when the latest fashion magazine tells them that this summer is all about ruffle or eighties gym wear or whatever, they mindlessly buy the fashion from a chain store. So there is pastiche involved because the mainstream market also lives in a postmodern world but the difference is that it has no edge, no satire. So Jameson's cynicism applies to the masses but not the hipster because the hipster is capable of pastiche and parody simultaneously. Your pastiche is not vacuous because of its nature. If style was like a video game, the mainstream is Atari* and you're Xbox*.

¹³⁰ Jameson, 1991, p.9.

They dabble with pastiche because the market likes to exploit one rehash at a time and never too excessively. They'll hint at eighties with a belt or off the shoulder sweater and it isn't blatant because all the fashion outlets are punting the exact same look and everybody else is wearing it. These 'conventional people are characterized not by independence of mind, but by acceptance without much thought of what others say is socially acceptable.'¹³¹ Your mix of eras however, is unpredictable, overt, self-aware and obtrusive which leaves you in an unidentifiable space. You cannot be grasped or understood at a glance because your style is composed of innumerable unconventional codes that juxtapose each other.

ME

Okay. So my choice of clothing is how I defy the stylistic mask thing and engage in parody's ulterior motive. Sure... But what am I parodying?

BILL MURRAY

It is the parody of postmodernism. Through your style you reduce yourself to a physical exemplifier of this postmodern symptom where, 'the body has been reduced to a division of surfaces, a proliferation of multiple objects wherein its finitude, its desirable representation, its seduction are lost. It is a metastatic body, a fractal body which can no longer hope for resurrection.'¹³²

ME

But sometimes I do buy a clothing item from a chain store, but it's like the music video, like the mainstream I'm watching it, but with a completely different agenda.

BILL MURRAY

You're being ironic.

¹³¹ Muggleton, 2000, p.63.

¹³² Baudrillard, 1988, p. 44.

ME

Yeah. And I fuse the mainstream item with my style in such an original way that other hipsters get it, you know, we get each other. But mixing styles is not a new concept...look at the Punks.

BILL MURRAY

Sure. 'From the mid-1970's punk girls salvaged shockingly lurid lurex minis of the sort worn in Italian "jet-set" films of the mid-1960's. They reinstated the skinny-rib jumper and plastic earrings (worn by Pauline of Penetration and Fay Fife of the Rezillos) as well as any number of "shift" dresses into the fashion mainstream. They also reclaimed tarty fishnet stockings, black plastic mini-skirts and, of course, ski pants.'¹³³

They were doing the pastiche thing but at the same time their rehashed items were fixed symbols that became unified with their subculture. So when the infectious process of commercialization, commodification and diffusion took place and their style emerged in mainstream fashion, it was over. At the onset, the Punk movement was disruptive and the conservatives were in a state of panic. But then big daddy media machine appropriated their style to the point where soccer moms were wearing punk inspired fashion. So their pastiche had a short lived parody because it was transformed into a mainstream convention. As the conservatives sighed with relief, punks' revolutionary edge sighed out of underground existence and onto the shelf of consumer society.

ME

It's kinda funny 'cos I scour through second hand stores to find original items and then big brands will copy the pattern and manufacture the exact same thing. I can tell the difference though. The replica reeks of cannibalism. The fabric has a contemporary sheen, the whole item glows with this newness.

¹³³ McRobbie, 1994, p. 147.

BILL MURRAY

I know what you mean. 'By recycling discarded pieces of clothing new wearers are not only beating the system by finding and defining high fashion cheaply, they are also making good use of the social surplus. An ecological ideal thus resides alongside the desire for artifice, decoration and ambiguous, double-edged femininity.'¹³⁴

ME

I hadn't thought of it like that. But my friends and I get that all the time. We'll decide to rehash a style combination that nobody has even thought of and a few months later everyone's wearing it!

BILL MURRAY

That's what she-devil was doing. What you're wearing is a completely original combination of eras. It creates what Hebdige terms as *noise* as opposed to *sound*. You're disrupting the orderly sequence with semiotic disorder. It's something she hadn't seen before which makes her nervous. That's why she attacked you. She thinks that anything original is a personal insult, like you're declaring a fashion war, which is why she appropriated your style. It's her job to make sure that conformity reigns and rules. So first thing tomorrow your outfit's gonna be on the shelves.

ME

Bitch. It's cool though, I knew it wouldn't last. I'll just come up with a new combination, it really isn't difficult. I usually change the vibe from day to day anyway.

BILL MURRAY

Now that is where you differ from the punk subculture and other subcultures. Your pastiche is not fixed in time. When the mainstream

¹³⁴ McRobbie, 1994, p. 150.

catches up to you, all you do is take a side step and fluidly rehash another original style and combination. It's a game. And it's hard to determine who's the cat and who's the mouse.

Bill gently turned the page and revealed an array of clothing items available to the barely clad male and female paper dolls. It was like a snapshot of the entire history of twenty-first century fashion.

BILL MURRAY

You don't have an easily recognizable uniform because you're constantly 'Style Surfing'¹³⁵ Hipsters are able 'to move quickly and freely from one style to another as they wish; indeed, this high degree of sartorial mobility is the source of playfulness and pleasure. They do not have to worry about contradictions between their selected subcultural identities, for there are no rules, there is no authenticity, no ideological commitment, merely a stylistic game to be played.'¹³⁶

I keep saying 'original' but the whole pastiche thing is completely unoriginal.

But that's just it. 'Following Baudrillard's logic subcultural styles have become simulacra, copies with no originals. By inscribing visual signs upon their bodies, subculturalists revel in this simulation culture, refusing meaning in the name of the spectacle, becoming, in turn, mere models themselves and "imploding" into the media. In this move from production to reproduction, subcultural simulacra become *hyperreal* as reality is eclipsed.'¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Polhemus, 1996, cited in Muggleton, 2000, p. 47.

¹³⁶ Muggleton, 2000, p. 47.

¹³⁷ Muggleton, 2000, p. 46.

ME

That's what Johnny Depp was talking about. The simulacrum is so apparent to me that the only thing I can do is supercede it. I have to be more simulacra than the simulacrum because it's the only means I have of pointing it out or shining a light on it. It gets tiring. I can't drop out because every kind of "drop out" subculture has been mediated, conventionalized and deemed unthreatening.

It's like the story book says, the boundaries have collapsed. If you stand outside the system and shout and rant at it, it'll film you, broadcast it and publish it in magazines to the point where you generate the same meaning as a pair of Diesel jeans.

That's what happened to the Emo* scene. They have a fixed style that's since been measured and completely absorbed into the mainstream. They just don't see it. I know a lot of them think people like me are arrogant and I try not to be but it's like the band 'Say Anything's' song 'Admit It!!!';

'ADMIT IT! Despite your pseudo-bohemian appearance and vaguely leftist doctrine of beliefs, you know nothing ABOUT art or sex that you couldn't read in any trendy New York underground fashion magazine...Proto-typical non-conformist. You are a vacuous soldier of the thrift store Gestapo. You adhere to a set of standards and tastes that appear to be determined by an unseen panel of hipster judges- BULLSHIT-giving your thumbs up and thumbs down to incoming and outgoing trends and styles of music and art. Go analog baby, you're so post-modern. You're diving face forward into an antiquated past, it's disgusting! It's offensive! Don't stick your nose up at me!

Yeah, what do you have to say for yourself?

Woah, Woah, Woah!

Yeah, what do you have to say for yourself?

Woah, Woah, Woah!

You spend your time sitting in circles with your friends, pontificating to each other, forever competing for that one moment of self aggrandizing glory in which you hog the intellectual spotlight, holding dominion over the entire SHALLOW...POINTLESS...conversation. Oh we're not worthy.

When you walk by a group of quote-unquote normal people you chuckle to yourself, patting yourself on the back as you scoff. It's the same superiority complex shared by the high school jocks who made your life a living hell, makes you a slave to the competitive capitalist dogma you spend every moment of your waking life BITCHING about!',¹³⁸

The funny thing is I really dig this song...he's right. I am 'diving face forward into an antiquated past', it is 'disgusting' and 'offensive'. But knowing what I know what the hell else am I supposed to do? I'm glad it's disgusting and offensive! At least we're actually shaking up the system a bit. Being any other way would be ineffectual, a pseudo subculture.

The story book said that subculture is linked to the society it lives in. It has to be in order to be relevant. Sure we're different from our predecessors, but modernism is very different from postmodernism. If I was Emo it would be exactly the same as being Punk or Hippie which doesn't make subcultural sense for right now, today.

I was never bullied by 'high school jocks' but I am somewhat of a 'slave to the competitive capitalist dogma' that I'm often 'BITCHING

¹³⁸ Lyrics for the song, Admit it!!!, by, Say Anything,
<http://www.plyrics.com/lyrics/sayanything/admitit.html>

about'. But that's the disintegration of the boundaries thing again. Because if I'm Mr. That and I live with Mr This and write bumper stickers for him to make a living and follow my artistic pursuits when I have time to write poetry then I am a slave to the system which I hypothetically bitch about in my poetry. It's quite complicated but that's the way things are, so at least I'm being honest. Emo will die as quickly as it was born but my kind will live as long as postmodernism prevails.

BILL MURRAY

Emo might not die but it has been mainstreamified which is like the living dead. The media likes having them around. Youngsters aspire to be like them so it's a nice controlled way for people to believe that they're being alternative. It's like a make believe subculture. They have all the right elements, even their own bricolage.

ME

Bricolage? It sounds like a type of tapestry.

BILL MURRAY

It's basically when something is used out of the context it was designed for. When the word *bricolage* is used in conjunction with subculture it speaks of the commodities that are used and incorporated by a particular subculture in order to separate itself from more orthodox looks, 'and it is through the distinctive rituals of consumption, through style, that the subculture at once reveals its "secret" identity and communicates its forbidden meanings.'¹³⁹ So if an Emo person, or a Punk person or Hippie person walked into the room right now you'd be able to identify what subculture they belong to because of their style.

¹³⁹ Hebdige, 1979, p.103.

ME

True but that leaves me with a problem.

I indicated to the endless choice of clothing and accessories in the booklet to emphasize my thought pattern:

ME

On any given day I can pick any one of these and use them in an infinite number of combinations. On one day I might do a 1950's/Elvis/Edwardian look and the next a say 1920's/Punk/Zoot Suit thing. It's not static...does that still count as bricolage?

BILL MURRAY

Definitely. Because you don't have a standard uniform it is in fact the most progressive form of bricolage. Every subculture, no matter how revolutionary has been eaten up and spat out into the simulacrum by capitalism. All of them! You just have to look at Che Guevara* T-shirts. 'Once removed from their private contexts by the small entrepreneurs and big fashion interests who produce them on a mass scale, they become codified, made comprehensible, rendered at once public property and profitable merchandise.'¹⁴⁰ To be a relevant subcultural being in postmodern society you have to keep moving. Your unpredictable and sporadic mix of eras is the only option left to be a true subcultural bricoleur.

ME

But outsiders can still recognize me as a Hipster or Ironic Hipster or whatever you wanna call it.

¹⁴⁰ Hebdige, 1979, p. 96.

BILL MURRAY

Obviously. Your style isn't exactly orthodox. It's jarring. An outsider will recognize you as a Hipster, not because of a standard uniform but because of your quirky mix of styles and eras.

ME

And when anyone tries to cast my look in stone I'll throw it out...keep walking, you know?

BILL MURRAY

Yeup.

ME

It's also really cool because if you look at a group of Hipsters, pastiche is the only thing we have in common, otherwise we all mix and match according to our own particular affiliations with various eras. We belong to a group but we're totally individual because of personal sensibilities, humor and perception of absurdity within consumer society. 'The logical consequence of this postmodern predilection to mix, match and plunder is to create greater scope for the construction of "individually unique looks".'¹⁴¹

BILL MURRAY

'This is a within-group distinction where subculturalists are quite aware of the socially shared dimension to their individuality- the individual look *within* the group. It is the diversity of this group that enables it to accommodate a range of looks and tastes, allowing each member to maintain a sense of simultaneous similarity and difference.'¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Kaiser, 1990, cited in Muggleton, 2000, p. 77.

¹⁴² Muggleton, 2000, p. 67.

ME

It's like we're too aware of being categorized and what that means. I googled ('hipster' / 'ironic hipster') the other day and I found a book by Robert Langdon called 'The Hipster Handbook'. It was all about the twelve hipster styles and what you have to wear and say to be a hipster, which contradicts the whole subculture. If that guy or Google tells me that hipsters wear horn-rimmed glasses or trucker caps or whatever then thanks very much but I won't be wearing those items. If I did that I'd be a wanna be hipster because the whole point is avoiding being categorized.

BILL MURRAY

Well if a person purchased a product because it marketed itself as granting that person with the status of 'Ironic Hipster', then that person would be a quasi or pseudo hipster, they wouldn't be the real thing and 'the distinction between the originals and the hangers-on is always a significant one in subculture.'¹⁴³

ME

I get it. It's just that, well like with the Punks and Hippies and all the other subcultures, their style speaks about what they're like internally you know?

BILL MURRAY

Sure.

ME

And that's the problem. Like I don't know if I say a single really true thing. So my style is referential, always changing, you know, very postmodern and that's how I feel internally. Like for example, a little while my friends and I were on the roof of this block of flats and we

¹⁴³ Hebdige, 1979, p. 122.

see this gnome sitting outside the front door of this one flat. So we go and start looking through the window and no doubt the people who live there are hipsters.

BILL MURRAY

The iconography?

ME

Yeah! From the light up sign in the kitchen that says 'love' to the Pumas on the floor, the half eaten food, the old fashioned milk bottles, their bathroom door had a poster with all the different types of cows on it-

BILL MURRAY

-I get it.

ME

Cool, I could go on forever. So we decided to take the gnome and play a nice game with these strangers. We were like we know we're hipsters, we know you're hipsters so let's play a hipster game referencing an all time hipster favourite movie Amelie. So we took the gnome and walked around town and took photos of it in different places. Like on the fire engine in the park, in the garden of the nursery, at the koi pond, with the petrol attendant.

BILL MURRAY

That's funny.

ME

Yeah. And then we'd write ridiculous phrases at the bottom of each photo. On the fire engine one we wrote 'Saving Lives Taking Knocks'

and on the koi one 'It's been Zen'. And then we systematically delivered them in secret. And when we went back and looked through the window, they were putting them up on their fridge, just like in the movie!

BILL MURRAY

Cool.

ME

I know, it was exciting and funny and everything but the point is we were actually living in a reference. Like, I just wanna feel real. You know? I just don't know how to separate this postmodern thing from being real.

BILL MURRAY

I know what you mean. It's a hard lesson. Don't worry about it toots. In time it will be revealed to you.

Outside a cab pulled up and hooted. I looked at Bill and he said, "It's time to get to the Apocalyptic Theatre." I reluctantly packed up my bag. Before zipping it up Bill handed me the Paper Doll booklet, "Keep it." He slung a grey trench coat over my shoulders and told me that I should wear it and cover up my pastiche so that Skeletor wouldn't notice me tracking him. I skewered one last strawberry, gave Bill a hug and headed out.

I arrived at the theatre just in time. I tried not to cause a scene while I shuffled past peoples' knees to my seat. My eyes scanned the room looking for Skeletor. As the house lights began to fade I spotted him eight rows ahead wearing a tuxedo. The lights went out and the curtain opened.

“BEGINNINGS”

Continued

FADE IN:

INT/EXT MORROCAN CAFÉ-MORNING

SYBIL

(To Bella)

Would you think of yourself as postmodern?

BELLA

Sure, I'm Pomo but I'd never actually admit that. It's just one step too far. But sure, we reference all the time, we're intertextual, fragmented all that postmodern stuff. So I think we should go to that store when Josh finishes his tea.

SYBIL

(Reading from the book)

The Ironic Hipster is a postmodern subcultural text. They are heavily nostalgic and exist in a space of irony. Their style amplifies the postmodern symptoms of fragmentation and pastiche. Their very selves and nature of communication is entrenched in the symptoms of referencing, intertextuality, self awareness, schizophrenia and depthlessness. Their very bodies in the words of Baudrillard have become 'monitoring screens.'¹⁴⁴

Ironic Hipsters live in a place of flux and contradiction and 'the fragmentation of the postmodern subject is assumed to be a consequence of its multiple identifications across different social sites and consumption practices. This "decentering" of the subject, the challenge to the notion of the unified self, can also be found as central in post-structuralist schools of thought that conceptualize the self as differentially positioned or "articulated" by multiple and contradictory discourses.'¹⁴⁵

Although mass society also exists in postmodernity they flirt with its symptoms like one splashing water with just a hand where as the Ironic Hipster dives in. They are entrenched in

¹⁴⁴ Baudrillard, 1988, p. 12.

¹⁴⁵ Hall, 1989, cited in Muggleton, 2000, p. 95.

consumerism but simultaneously trying to rebel. They are trying to resist the system within the system which leaves them with no option other than to be an amplified hyper real version of the system itself.

The only weapon of resistance that remains is that of the image or the sign which the Ironic Hipster uses haphazardly to render themselves in a contradictory and unidentifiable space. 'The revolution will be symbolic or will not be at all.'¹⁴⁶

'For reality is an illusion, and all thought must seek first of all to unmask it. To do that, it must itself advance behind a mask and constitute itself as a decoy, without regard for its own truth. It must pride itself on not being an instrument of analysis, not being a critical tool. For it is the world which must analyse itself. It is the world itself which must reveal itself not as truth, but as illusion. The derealization of the world will be the work of the world itself.'¹⁴⁷

This is what the Ironic Hipster is unconsciously doing. They have retreated behind the mask of this late capitalist postmodern society where they have become fatally postmodern in an attempt to make known the illusion of consumerist society.

Because of this the Ironic Hipster does often exist 'without regard for their own truth'. So although they stand in a complex space of resistance they have paid the price of self sabotage and disregard for their own truth.

Sybil stops reading and the three of them sit in silence for a while.

BELLA

I knew this was a bad idea.

JOSH

I feel sick.

SYBIL

None of this is real.

¹⁴⁶ Saussure cited in Baudrillard, 1988, p. 78.

¹⁴⁷ Baudrillard, 1996, p. 99.

JOSH

But we know that.

SYBIL

But that's not the point.

BELLA

I think it is the point. I mean, we are resisting, sure that comes at a cost but so do all resistances.

SYBIL

Not this kinda cost.

JOSH

Look, it's cool. I'm glad we know and we'll work it out.

SYBIL

How?

JOSH

I don't know.

BELLA

We need to get outta here. I paid the bill, it's on me. Let's go shopping. Huh? A bit of retail therapy.

JOSH

This is who we are.

They get their things together and Bella gives a flirtatious wave to Eli and the three of them leave the café.

BELLA

Exactly.

SYBIL

It's just-

BELLA

-Forget about it Sybil.

JOSH

It's not as bad as you think it is.

SYBIL

You're right, Screw this! I need to get my shenanigans back.

FADE OUT

THE END



Sibylla

Sybilla

A Play

THE SET

A raised platform divides the stage horizontally in half. The platform does not stretch over the full surface of the stage but only from the back wall to the middle of the stage. The back wall, on the top platform, is without texture and painted white for the purpose of a projector. Stage left is a white door without a handle. It can only open from backstage behind the screen. The audience must not be able to see that there is a door. The first part of this play and many scenes to come must be previously shot on camera and the action is projected across the whole wall on the top platform. In all the scenarios make every effort to film the action so that it is in sensical proportion to a theatre audience and stage. Thus, even though the characters are on film it must appear as if they are present in real time on stage.

There are no props on the top platform. In the centre of the platform towards the front a circular hole the size of a sewer hole has been cut out. It has a lid. Below the sewer hole is a rusted steel ladder with three rungs that leads to the bottom half of the stage.

This half of the stage looks like an underground sewer. The walls and floor are a peeling grey concrete. Various rusting pipes line the walls and a large drain pipe runs horizontally along the ceiling of the sewer which is the bottom of the top platform. On this pipe, center stage is a graffitied quote, it reads:

‘Inevitably the system will only change if we are a seed within it- Marx’

This quote has been covered by a sheet of cardboard that is textured like the rusted pipe. Thus it has been disguised and is not visible. The sheet must be fitted so that it can be easily removed and replaced

Midstage left is a minimalist steel hospital bed with grey linen. On the wall above the bed hang two framed pictures. One is Andy Warhol’s ‘Birth of Venus’ and the other is the face of Botticelli’s ‘Birth of Venus’. Thus the two pictures are the same size and depict the same image but in a different style. Stage left of the bed the wall tilts 45

degrees outwards toward the audience. On this wall there is a graffitied quote it reads:

‘The revolution will be symbolic or will not be at all- Saussure’

This quote has been covered by a sheet of cardboard that is textured like the wall. Thus it has been disguised and is not visible. The sheet must be fitted so that it can be easily removed and replaced. Below this is a small steel shelf which can only hold one large glass jar. The jar is empty and it has a lid.

The 45 degree wall becomes perpendicular to the audience. Along this wall, downstage left is a steel wash basin with a working tap. Above the basin are minimalist steel shelves stacked with unmarked cans, unmarked cereal, unmarked tea, unmarked milk and unmarked soap. Below the basin, a steel garbage bin.

Downstage centre is a minimalist steel table with one chair. The table is angled. In front of the chair, set on the table is; a tin plate, a tin cup, a steel knife, fork and spoon, a can opener, unmarked tobacco, rolling paper and matches.

Midstage, stage right of the bed are steel shelves which reach vertically from the floor to the ceiling and horizontally from stage right of the bed to stage left of the ladder. The top two shelves are stacked with dull coloured classical bound books that share the same dimensions. The audience cannot see their titles. The bottom shelf is stacked with large glass jars, like the one next to the bed, however these jars contain various bits of clothes and pop culture iconography. They are sealed with a lid.

Behind the ladder there are neatly stacked and sealed cardboard boxes with haphazardly placed ‘fragile’ stickers. Midstage right are more steel shelves. It runs from stage right of the ladder to the stage right wall. It ends where the wall tilts at a 45 degree angle outwards toward the audience. All three shelves are stacked with the sealed glass jars containing bits of clothing and pop culture iconography. It is very important that the number of jars, excluding the empty jar along side the bed, are equal to the number of books on the shelf and the number of boxes stacked behind the ladder.

Stage right, on the tilted wall is another graffitied quote, it reads:

‘Let us be Stoics: if the world is fatal, let us be more fatal than it. If it is indifferent, let us be more indifferent. We must conquer the world and seduce it through an indifference that is at least equal to the world’s. – Baudrillard’

This is also hidden with a sheet textured like the wall. It is easy to remove and easy to replace.

The stage right wall becomes perpendicular to the audience. Along this wall, downstage right is a steel table with an old school make shift radio station. It has an old microphone and a basic switch board connected to an old school ‘On Air’ light that sits above the table on the wall.

A taught string runs at an angle from the top of the ladder to a screw nailed in on the stage right tilted wall. If the tilted wall is divided into quarters, the screw sits at the end of the first quarter starting from the part that is closest to the back of the stage. On this line old rusted pegs hold a grey tunic, a grey hooded cardigan and a grey towel.

Overall this sewer bedroom is grey, dilapidated, minimalist, rusted and clean.

CHARACTERS

Sybil: *All the characters are always on the projected screen. Sybil is the only actress who becomes a live body on stage a little way into the play. So essentially it is her one woman show.*

She is in her mid-twenties and has dark hair and dark eyes. Her hair is long and styled in a 1920's up-style and she wears red lipstick. She wears a 1950's circle skirt. It is made of maroon suit fabric with thin neon pink pinstripes. We can just see the bright pink tulle that forms a layer under the skirt. We can see the sleeves of a tight fitting plain black t-shirt. Over which she wears a waistcoat. The front of the waistcoat is decadent upholstery fabric and the back is maroon satin. Popping out of the waistcoat is bright pink Edwardian ruffle. Pinned on the waistcoat is a gaudy television shaped broach. On her right arm is a black leather, gladiator style armband. She wears bright pink legwarmers that start mid calf and hang loosely over her swing style two-tone shoes.

Sybil carries the very message of this play. She consciously seeks truth and is willing to sacrifice her very self to gain it. She is disheartened with the world and her perpetually ineffectual existence. She loves the movies. Every time she watches one she likes to imagine herself living the life of the character that tickled her the most. She is learned, she is witty, she is self-referential and she is self-aware. She is an Ironic Hipster.

Bella: *Mid-twenties, she has 'Amelie' styled sandy blonde hair which is tied into two little pigtails with bright yellow 1980's style bobble hair bands. She wears black lace leggings and a short punk style skirt. The fabric is tartan red, yellow and black. Around her waist hangs a black studded belt. She wears a light wool mustard buttoned up cardigan. Above the top button we see the black lace from her shoe-string camisole that she wears underneath. Around her neck is a classical string of pearls to match her dainty pearl earrings. She has a plain black vinyl backpack with red piping. On her feet are yellow roller skates.*

Bella is Sybil's close friend. Sometimes they call each other best friends or BFF's but always with a sense of irony. Like Sybil, Bella is all too aware of the system she exists in. She is an Ironic Hipster who doesn't like to spend any time musing over why she is like she is. She is seemingly frivolous and free but her close friends know that she holds most things quite tightly. When Bella is feeling blue she likes to bake cupcakes and brownies. She is such a perfectionist that she will sometimes discard three batches if they don't taste just right.

Josh: *Mid-twenties, he has brown curly hair. It is perfectly messy like an Italian football player. He wears black skinny jeans with a black studded belt. On his feet are chunky black, red and gold Adidas sneakers. He wears a fitted white suit shirt tucked into his jeans with a thin 'swing style' red tie. He wears a black hip-hop style baseball cap with the word 'Hustler' embroidered in gold. Around his neck are three gold 'bling' chains. On one hangs a gold pendant in the shape of a 'J'. On another, the word 'Dawg'. He wears a suit style, tweed jacket.*

Josh is also Sybil's close friend. Unlike Bella, he is more open to Sybil's musings and quest for truth. He is an Ironic Hipster with a wry sense of humour. He spends a lot of his spare time reading about ancient wars. He also enjoys martial arts because it makes him feel less emasculated.

ACT ONE

The play begins and the bottom platform is in complete darkness. On the top platform the screen fades in and tracks Sibyl, Bella and Josh who are walking along a city pavement. The camera may move in for close-ups and other such shots but must always fall back to the tracking shot which is perpendicular to the live audience.

Bella: You're right, Kevin Costner is the new Chuck Norris. Seriously. Why do they keep hiring him?

Sibyl: Maybe he's got a little black book like Heidi Fleiss but it's all about who's...
(She searches for a punch line.) I got nothing. That's what I've been telling you, hiring Kevin Costner equals failure. Look at 'Waterworld', biggest loss ever!

Bella: It's crazy.

Sibyl: Every time Kevin Costner acts in a movie a fairy dies.

Bella: *(Laughing)* Yeah...Hey, if a tree falls down in a forest and nobody's there to hear it...does Kevin Costner still make a bad movie?

Sibyl: *(Smirking)* Every time Kevin Costner looks in the mirror Hollywood gets seven years bad luck. *(Bella and Sibyl laugh)*

Josh: *(Taking out one headphone)* What are you guys laughing about?

Bella: Kevin Costner.

Josh: Oh. *(Handing his headphones to Sibyl)* You have to hear this band.

Sibyl: Naaa

Josh: Come on man.

Sibyl: Is it classical?

Josh: Well I don't know about classical but it's classic.

Sibyl: Naaa.

Josh: Come on!

Sibyl: I'm not interested.

Josh: Why? *(Sibyl looks at Bella for help)*

Bella: Later Josh. You know Sibyl's into classical at the moment-

Sibyl: *(To herself)* I wouldn't call it a momentary thing.

Bella: - We'll discuss it later-

Sibyl: *(To herself)* There is no later.

Bella: -We've gotta find this store.

Josh: Fine. I was just trying to soundtrack the journey.

Bella: *(Looking around)* Where the hell is this joint?

Sibyl: And that Josh is the problem.

Josh: What's the problem?

Bella: It's like platform 9 and three quarters.

Sibyl: Nothing.

Josh: We agreed there would be no Harry Potter references. Don't bring that wizardry here.

Bella: These are extenuating circumstances. Find a better one. Come on. What's more perfect than Platform nine and three quarters for our present situation?

Josh: Okay, if that's how you wanna play it...Neverland! It's like trying to find Neverland.

Sibyl: It's flawed.

Josh: It's beautiful.

Bella: Sybil's right because Neverland is arguably not actually real. It's a metaphor for a place in our minds.

Sibyl: *(To herself)* That's not what I'm talking about.

Josh: Lame.

Bella: Your mom's lame...And if we're trying to find Neverland, then who the hell is Peter Pan?

Josh: *(Pointing at a homeless man)* That guy.

Sibyl: *(unenthusiastically)* I'll be Peter Pan.

Josh: So what you're saying is that Hogwarts is real? 'Cos that my friend is flizawed! *(Self aware rap gesture on the word 'flizawed')*

Bella: Of course it's real!

Sibyl: None of this is real.

Josh: What!? You can't claim that. Okay fine. If Harry Potter is real then, I am Snoop Dogg.

Bella: No you're not! You're a white boy from the suburbs.

Josh: Fine!

Bella: But you still have to get a grill when we find this place.

Josh: *(Self aware)* No doubt!

Sibyl: *(unenthusiastically)* Break yourself fool.

Bella: I'm gonna get...um...a whole lot of scrunchies!

Josh: What's that?

Sibyl: Camp eighties hair bands.

Josh: Cool.

Sibyl: You don't even know if they'll have those.

Bella: Faith Sybil...faith. And besides, Eli says this place has everything imaginable.

Josh: Eli's a fool.

Sibyl: You're just jealous because he brought back the bow tie before you did.

Bella: Exactly.

Josh: Oh no no no. That guy's a fraud. I told him that the bow tie was my next mission and he brushed it off as like, whatever, and then went ahead and did it.

Bella: Prove it.

Josh: If the bow-tie was a rap song, he'd be a biter.

Bella: Prove it!

Josh: Well I can't, the conversation happened between space and time.

Bella: Sure.

Josh: If this was 'I (heart) Huckabees', I'm Jason Schwartzman and he's Jude Law.

Sibyl: But this isn't 'I (heart) Huckabees'.

Josh: Well of course it's not.

Bella: *(In a self aware cheer leader voice)* Mark Wahlberg in that movie is possibly, no absolutely, my perfect guy.

Sibyl: *(An unenthusiastic cheer leader voice)* Tyler Durden's mine.

Bella: That's because you're a nihilist.

Sibyl: Don't put that evil on me. Just because I tend to my herb garden without shoes on-

Josh: -That's what I wanted to tell you, your coriander, it's expired, dead.

Sibyl: Dammit! Coriander, it's too temperamental.

Josh: Like a woman. *(Sibyl is lost in a fixed gaze throughout the following exchange.)*

Bella: Like my car.

Josh: Like Barry Manilow.

Bella: Like Naomi Campbell.

Josh: Like neon motel lights.

Bella: Good one. Like a genius savant. I bet Beethoven was exactly like coriander.

Josh: Maybe if we listened close enough to coriander it's playing the 'Moonlight Sonata'.

Bella: Instead of headphones Sibyl would have two pots of coriander. *(Josh and Bella laugh and look at the glazed Sibyl for a reaction.)*

Josh: Sibyl?

Sibyl: *(Snapping out of it.)* Yes.

Bella: Are you okay?

Sibyl: I'm fine.

Josh: Here it is! *(Pointing to a well hidden and dilapidated façade nestled between pristine buildings.)* I hope the shop clerk's Captain Hook.

Bella: *(Bella and Josh are entering the store and Sibyl takes a moment to face the camera and look around.)* If that happened I'd call you Snoop Dogg till –

Sibyl and Bella: *(Bella is finishing her sentence as she goes through the door but Sibyl is saying the same phrase for her own purposes.)* - the end of times.

Bella and Josh walk into the store and off screen. Sibyl is still standing with her back to the store and the same hobo from earlier wheels his trolley up to her. He hands Sibyl a clipboard and a pen and in silence indicates where she should sign. She gives it back to him and they share a still moment looking at each other with a mutual knowingness. He lifts up a heavy cardboard box with 'fragile' stickers pasted all over it and places it at Sibyl's feet, nods and walks off. She tears off the seal and opens the box. She lifts out a grey tunic and grey sneakers. Beneath, the box is stacked with hundreds of copies of the same book, this play, 'Sibylla'. She tucks the clothing under her arm, drags the box just into the entrance of the shop. Still standing in the doorway she picks up one of the books and begins to page through it with unsurprised disbelief, like she knew it all along. On the bottom level the lights begin to fade in very slowly.

Josh: *(Calls from inside the store)* Sibyl!

Sibyl: *(Reading from the book says simultaneously)* Sibyl. *(She looks up and then down at the book)* Crap. *(Realizing the word 'crap' was scripted as well)*
Crap!
(She says 'Crap' two more times and is stuck between saying it and reading it. She slams the book closed and looks at it like it's an Ouija board. She turns wide-eyed and tentatively walks into the store still clutching the book with restrained fear.)

Bella: Sibyl?

Josh: What the problem is?

Bella: You look like you've seen the ghost of Anna Nicole Smith.

Josh: Ooo. I thought you we're going for Christmas Past. *(Noticing the book)*
What's that?

Sibyl: *(Takes a breath and swallows. Bella and Josh look at each other confused.)*
It's just, I'm tryna find the words, the right words, words that aren't *(She opens to the finger marked page in the book and realizes that her fumbling is also scripted. Bella and Josh try to sneak a peek. She slams it closed in resignation and delivers her words without emphasis or tone.)* That hobo, Peter Pan, gave me this box and this book and now I just...

Josh: You sound like a crazy person.

Bella: Shut up Josh. *(She takes Sibyl by the hand and leads her to a chair. Sibyl sits, then stands, then sits then stands, then looks in the book sees her movement is scripted, gives up and sits down again.)* What's going on?

Sibyl: It's nothing. I'm fine. I just need to sit here for a while.

Bella: *(Passing a glance with Josh.)* But you're-

Sibyl: -Fine. Seriously. Let's not make a big deal out of this. Tell me, tell me what you're gonna bring back from the dregs of the twentieth century.

Bella: *(Unsurely complies and reluctantly holds up a pair of bell bottoms.)* Well, I am all over these.

Josh: Unfortunately.

Bella: Josh thinks that if I wear bell bottoms I might as well declare that I'm a hippie-

Josh: -With a loud hailer.

Bella: With a loud hailer.

Josh: And who wants to be a hippie?

Bella: Whatever. If I wear these with my whole punk Betty Crocker vibe it'll work.

Josh: Nothing you put with those pants is gonna salvage their blatant meaning.
Sibyl, come on, you have to agree?

Sibyl: *(Not wanting to speak and almost swallowing her words as she does.)* I don't know. I didn't think it was possible to salvage skinny jeans from the hands of Emo and look at you.

Bella: Thank you. I'm getting them. They'll work. Oh they will. *(She does the evil villain fist shake.)* If it's the last thing I do.

Sibyl: *(Does a forced fake laugh.)*

Josh: That was fake.

Sibyl: *(Sighs)* I'm trying.

The shop clerk walks up.

Clerk: Soooo, you gonna take those?

Josh: No.

Bella: Yes! *(The four of them share a static moment, looking at each other until their eyes wonder to Sibyl.)*

Sibyl: *(Defensively)* Don't look at me. *(She quickly looks in the book and points at the shop clerk.)* It's your cue.

Clerk: *(Snapping out of confusion)* Oh! Do you wanna try them on?

They look at Sibyl again. She consults the book and points to Bella. They are all very self-aware as they deliver their lines like an infomercial. Now and then they look at Sibyl for reassurance, almost like she's the stage manager holding the script.

Bella: No need. I do the ol' forearm trick. *(She displays her forearm and Josh steps in as somewhat of her infomercial co-host as he indicates the length of her arm with a forced smile. Bella starts to deliver her lines like she's the hostess of the infomercial.)*

To some, this is just a forearm but did you know that it is also your own personal yard stick! *(Josh nods enthusiastically and the clerk does the 'tell me more about it' inquisitive face.)*

Yes folks! Your own yard stick! When you don't have the time or the inclination to try on a pair of pants use this little trick and rest assured that when you leave the store you won't be returning for an exchange.

Bella summons Josh who steps forward deliberately, nodding and smiling to the pretend audience. He takes hold of the pants and follows Bella's instructions.

Bella: It's so simple. Place your elbow against the waistline just on the inside of the pants. Then, let the length of the waistline run along the edges of your forearm until the palm of your hand rests up against the other end. If it fits snugly, it's a perfect fit. Yes ladies and gentlemen, a perfect fit!

Clerk: *(Running with the absurdity.)* Bravo! I had no idea. I've wasted so much time in and out of change rooms. The forearm yard stick has changed my life! I finally have more time to do the important things in life. I love the forearm yardstick!

An unsettled silence like when the camera lingers on a newsreader who's finished the report. They look to Sibyl for direction. She stands up and reads from the book like she's directing a movie.

Sibyl: Okay. Now you all shake off the little humorous scene that just took place in your own quirky kind of way. *(They follow her instructions in an overt manner.)* Josh you laugh in a fatalist sort of way. *(He does)* You two share a smirk because you could both discuss the theory or the social commentary of what just happened but there's no need because you both get it. *(Bella and the clerk respond accordingly.)* Bella your smirk is laced with slight flirtation because that's what you do when you meet a new like minded guy.

Bella: Sibyl, that's embarrassing.

Sibyl: *(Pointing to the book)* Well it's here so you have to.

Bella: Well if I refuse then that book is wrong.

Sibyl: That line that you just said, 'Well if I refuse then that book is wrong', is in here too. So-

Bella: -Fine! *(In a self aware manner she complies with Sibyl's earlier command.)*

Sibyl: Good. Now Josh, you ask the clerk whether there are any cummerbunds. *(When they follow Sibyl's line instructions it is also self aware, in a primary school teacher 'overly speaking the words' manner)*

Josh: Do you have any cummerbunds?

Sibyl: Good good. Now clerk, you respond with a 'gee let me think' expression. *(He does)* Now move to the box near the counter and begin rummaging to find one. *(He does)* Bella, you rip Josh off about trying to one up Eli.

Bella: *(Responds all the while looking at Sibyl who reassures her that her lines are correct)* You can't be serious! Eli gets bow ties so you're going for the cummerbund!? That's ridiculous. Why don't you get a full tux and call it a day.

Sibyl: *(There's a pause. Then she looks in the book and realises)* Oh! It's me. Sorry.
(She does the 'tsk tsk tsk' finger) Josh Josh Josh. Let it go. Just get a bow tie.
You were gonna do it first so just do it. *(Pause)* Josh. You respond with a plea
for support.

Josh: *(He also glances at Sibyl here and there for assurance)* Whatever! If Bella's
getting bell bottoms I'm getting a cummerbund. And you both know that I
can't get the bow tie now. You wouldn't do it either. Screw Eli! It's not fair;
girls have a much wider choice. You can delve into our cupboards but if we go
into yours it's all kinds of wrong. So just support me, alright, support. I need
you guys on this.

Sibyl: *(Points to Bella and is about to instruct her but Bella preempts and continues
with her lines in her natural voice. Sibyl is surprised and proud that she knows
her lines.)*

Bella: Fine. But then not a word about the bell bottoms.

*Sibyl points to Josh but he also continues in his natural manner. From this point on,
all Sibyl does is point at each person like a conductor. The other three have
abandoned her guidance so they don't notice because they are running with the
symphony. Sometimes she points as a person speaks and sometimes just before. Like a
conductor her gestures mimic their tone. Her conducting must build to a furious
melancholy, until a soon to be mentioned breaking point.*

Josh: I'm cool with that.

Bella: And if you want me to give you the Hollywood clicks and say that the
cummerbund looks hot, radical, showbiz and all that crap then I expect the
same from you.

Josh: Deal. Let's shake hands like generals in a war. *(They do)*

Clerk: I think, yes...I got one! *(He pulls out a cummerbund)*

Bella: Oooo, it's very debonair, very James frikken Bond.

Josh: No doubt home girl! And it's red. Sweet. James Bond meets Ring master.

Bella: You should only drink Martinis when you wear that.

Josh: That's a good idea. *(a la Sean Connery)* Gotta spin it though. Gotta let people know that I know you know?

Clerk: *(Pulls out a tiny 'Monopoly style' ornament of a television set)* Use this instead of an olive.

Josh: Nice detail man.

Bella: I want that.

Josh: Get outta here, it's mine!

Bella: Oooo, how cool would a television set bhindi be?

Clerk: Yeah man.

Bella: I'll never find that. I suppose I'll have to make one myself.

Clerk: *(To Josh)* Just don't swallow it.

Bella: I really don't have the inclination.

Josh: That'd be funny. Imagine I swallowed it and actually became TV.

At this point tears are streaming down Sibyl's face. She gives up conducting and stares blankly at the scene for a moment before walking into the change room.

Bella: *(Laughing)* Imagine you could buy little TV pills that made you a particular character for like seven hours or whatever. Like Edward Scissor hands or, Janice Dickenson, or Emma Thompson in 'Wit'.

Josh: *(Laughing)* Yeah, or Mr. Pink.

Clerk: I'll take the John Travolta in 'Phenomenon'.

Josh: You can be Trinity.

Bella: From 'The Matrix'?

Josh: *(nods)*

Bella: I'd go for Switch, she's more underground and then I get to say that line, *(She mimics Switch's voice in 'The Matrix')* Not like this...not like this.

Clerk: Or Donnie Darko.

Josh: That'd be a bad trip.

Clerk: You're right. No, I'd have a party and put a whole bunch of 'em in a bag so nobody knows what they'll be.

Bella: Ooo, it would suck if you ended up as Nick from 'Tropical Heat'.

Josh: I got one...Marvin the Martian.

Sibyl comes out of the change room wearing the grey tunic and sneakers with her other clothes tucked under her arm. She walks towards them heading for the door.

Bella: Yes but can the TV pills transcend reality? I don't think so.

Clerk: Maybe only in a few years when they're updated. *(They notice Sibyl)*

Bella: There you are. *(Noticing her outfit)* Geez Sibyl, you're gonna have to explain the irony in the holocaust look.

Josh: Hey Sibyl if you could take a TV pill and be any character for like seven hours, who would you be?

Sibyl: *(She moves through them and reaches the door.)* Me.
(She drags the box with her and leaves. The others look at each other perplexed)

Sibyl opens a real door that is exactly in line with the projected door and emerges from the shop, as a live body on stage, dragging the box with her. Her body is in proportion with the screen. At this point the lights have nearly faded in completely on the bottom level. She drags the box into the middle of the street and lifts off the sewer lid. The others come out side, through the projected door and still on screen they watch her in bewilderment. Their on screen bodies must be in proportion to her on stage body.

Bella: Sibyl! Sibyl! Listen to me. This isn't funny anymore!

Josh: What the hell is going on!?! Sibyl!

Sibyl drops the box through the hole onto the lower level.

Clerk: *(Nonchalantly smoking a cigarette)* She's dropping out man.

Josh: What?

Clerk: It's like a come down but...

Sibyl climbs into the hole and onto the rungs of the ladder. She starts descending and Bella and Josh rush up to her on screen. She is thus on stage in reality and communicating with on screen characters.

Josh: Please don't do this Sibyl. Please! Come with me. I'll take you home.

Sibyl: I am home.

Bella: I, I...I don't understand. I don't understand why you're doing this.

Sibyl: *(Calmly)* Knock knock?

Bella: What!?

Sibyl: *(Still calm)* Knock knock?

Josh: Who's there?

Sibyl: Kevin Costner.

Bella: Kevin Costner who?

Sibyl: Exactly.

Sibyl climbs down the ladder and descends into the sewer sealing the lid behind her. At this point the bottom half is completely lit. Above Bella and Josh, on screen, are trying to open the lid but they can't. The sound fades out into Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. Their actions remain like a silent movie charade. They do demonstrative gestures, nearly get hit by a car, pace up and down much like Charlie Chaplin. This action on the top platform speeds up slightly while Sibyl on the bottom level continues with a measured pace. She places the clothing under her arm into the stage left empty glass jar. She seals it tightly and puts back on the small stage left shelf. She moves to the steel wash basin and deliberately 'like Lady Macbeth' washes pop culture off her hands and face. She unclips her hair, brushes it out with her fingers and ties it in a ponytail. She peruses her new surroundings. Then she sits very still in contemplation on the steel chair as the above action carries on at a fast past. She rolls a tobacco cigarette. This carries on until dusk when Bella and Josh give up and leave by

nightfall. From the point that Sibyl sits down this should take no longer than 3 minutes. The top platform is still in darkness but it is still visible like a night time street scene. The camera remains still and in sensical proportion to the audience. Now and then a car drives past or people walk across the frame. She moves to the bed, lights the cigarette with unmarked matches and contemplates the two pictures hanging above. She then moves to the old school radio station set up, presses the 'on air' button and plays an introduction by the 'The cinematic Orchestra's' album 'Man with The Movie Camera's' first two short tracks, 'The Projectionist' and 'Melody'. She picks up the microphone and as the second track ends she speaks.

Sibyl: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. This is your host...ess, Sibyl and I'm live from nowhere. Nowhere in particular.

I'm tired. I'm tiring. Tired of myself, my skin, my words, so tired of my words. I keep thinking if only I could eat my words maybe they'd fill me with courage, courage to do something instead of always waiting to do something. It's like I'm always in training, a samurai without a sword, a Spartan looking for a cause, I want to be valiant but I can't find the right fight. My muscles are itching to be used but I keep strapping them, telling them to wait...it's coming, but it's not coming. I am a lost soldier prepped for war. I find myself longing for a time that I only see in books or on the history channel. A time when paintings weep forth bodies and muscles bent and elevated with passion. Where the light radiates a glow, that indescribable glow steeped in honour, where the heavens and earth meet in gold and glory. A time where death was like a toddler who got in the way of things. A toddler who needed to be put to sleep with a lullaby. A time when the cause was as plain as day and night, light and dark, good and evil. But now I can't distil the truth from the lies. Every possible cause sits on a corner. And the corner is where the lights bends, refracts, distracts, detracts. They mingle with half their face in the shadows, they've compromised light and dark and become forms without colour existing in the pages of other people's lives.

So I spend my days telling tales of old kingdoms and yearning for that time. I am forever sharpening my sword and mounting it back in the cabinet. Every

day I leave it at home behind the glass and I walk the streets pretending to be a civilian. There are many others like me. We all pretend together. When we pass one another we acknowledge the dormant sword. Two gentlemen in a secret society might acknowledge with a nod...we've surpassed the nod.

We live in nuance. We speak in code. Our language is laced with cynicism and irony. We are ourselves and we float above ourselves. We have our own armour. We are always changing our armour. Our armour speaks the history of the world. Our armour speaks of a world turned in on itself. We are fractured. We are cool. We hate the system. We love the system. We laugh at the mainstream. We take part in the mainstream. Our eyes are always open. Our eyes are always closed. We seek the truth. We take part in lies. We know everything about you. We know nothing about you. We want change. We don't know how to change. We are forever waiting. *(Pause)* I'm tired of waiting.

If I can't use my sword then I want no part in this. Today. Today I threw in the towel, tapped out, sheepishly waved the white flag...I can't think of anymore clichés but that's a good thing right? In time I hope that this grey, this concrete forcefully removes any cliché, the said said said. Maybe I'll sweat it out. Maybe I'll think it out. Or maybe it will kiss me softly on the forehead while I sleep and quietly...leave.

I will miss the rain. Like the all too said it happens often, but it makes new... I blame the rain. Just when the city begins to flake, grime peeking through the walls and streets, just when I feel I could snap it like a stale piece of toast, the rain pours down like a quenching fire burning the waste and mopping the dirt. The city's janitor. He needs no detergent. The chemically induced odour, citrus lemon or spring fresh would be too...obvious. Too temporary. Not even the Willy Wonka of scents could recreate the smell of 'rain was here'. He leaves us with a scent that needs more than the nostrils, demands more than the nostrils. The nostrils are merely the starting point...It smells like nostalgia and a very big love. As my lungs swell to comprehend its flavour, just before bursting they realize it cannot be grasped; this should make any person crazy

but the scent of rain forces the lungs to sigh out into the orbits of our eyes. Everything is tweaked. Even a pile of rubble glistens with the supernatural varnish. It is only on mornings like these that the OCD, latex gloved, germ phobic citizen might let their hand brush across a wall or linger on a street pole. Maybe for a moment or for some a few hours it is on earth as it is in heaven.

The...the sound of rain is the promise of this big love, this big feeling. The city's therapy gently soothing every man, woman and child tucked safely behind four walls. Nestling in a blanket with the chorus of rain outside is the closest I've come to innocence and falling into sleep with this sound is like...falling into the hands of God.

I blame the rain. Too much hope makes people ineffectual. We stave off any personal renaissance as we pop open our umbrellas and mark out a circular perimeter. We let it renew everything but our selves. My only regret is not having walked in the rain enough. Like everyone else I'd scurry to the door, shake off my umbrella and flick off any unwanted drops. I wish I'd known that each drop was divine. Perhaps if we let the rain pound out its symphony on our bodies, we too would be made new.

On screen, on the top platform it is still night and a mid-thirties corporate/domestic woman approaches the sewer lid with trepidation. Her work outfit is slightly messy and her French bun is falling out.

Woman: *(Reluctantly calls down the sewer while looking around to make sure nobody sees her. She starts with hushed whispers.)* Hellooooo. Hello? I know you're there. Sybil? Sybil!

Sybil: *(Pushes the 'off air' button and moves under the drain pipe)* You're late.

Woman: *(Sibyl picks up a copy of 'Sibylla' and turns to the appropriate page)*
Yes sorry, I know. But you're quite hard to find and I, I had this thing at work. And Lara-

Sybil: Your daughter.

Woman: -My daughter was in a frenzy.

Sybil: Well that's puberty.

Woman: Well that's puberty. Anyway so, I...*(sighs)*

Sybil slides a copy of 'Sibylla' through the grid to the woman.

Woman: This is harder than I thought it would be, I, um,

Sybil: Just read your lines, it's easier.

Woman: Oh come on. Can't I at least pretend this is-

Sybil: Real?

Woman: -Real. *(Sighs and formally looks down at the page, she quickly looks away and contains her horror with suburban restraint)*
I feel like a cardboard cut-out of myself. And my husband and my children, they're cut-outs too! I have this garden and um, I like to garden it, it takes my mind off things but like I'll, I'll look at my house from the outside and I feel like I can you know like just push it over. But then I keep forgetting that these things aren't cardboard, you know, and I'll pick up the kettle and it's much heavier than I think it'll be, it's like I have to activate my muscles to do things. *(Sighs)* Even when I hug my children, it's a horrible thing to say but I, I have to like motivate or activate the hug, it's weak, it's cardboard it's it's..tra...tran *(She looks in the book.)* transitory...transitory? Trr, tra, translucent.

Sybil: You're not a terrible person.

Woman: I'm a terrible person! *(She sits cross-legged and begins to cry then picks up the book and reads her lines calmly through the tears. Now and then she looks up for dramatic effect)* My son has this mat in his room. It's a bird's eye view of a town and its got little houses and shops and they're all connected with little roads and square patches of lawn. Today he, he asked me where we live, on the mat. So I picked a little house that looks like ours and I said, 'This is our house'. Then he asked where mommy works. So then I pointed to a little skyscraper down the road and I said, 'Here. This is where mommy works'. And then he wanted to know where I buy the groceries and where his school is and where he plays soccer and where daddy works and where Lara plays piano, until I'd mapped out our entire life for him. *(Sighs into a restrained sob.)*

Sybil: *(Waits for the woman to calm down)* What do you want me to do?

Woman: I don't know...I've tried so many things. For a while we'd go camping every weekend, the big outdoors. We decided to watch less TV. I even started cooking organic. I remember, a few months ago, I was cooking these um, potato wedges and I, I was turning them over with a spatula and one flicked up and landed behind the stove.

Sybil: And you couldn't get to it.

Woman: And I couldn't get to it. The stove's too heavy and it's connected to the wall and it would just be far too much hassle for a potato wedge... But I know it's there, you know? I can't smell it, but it's decomposing. It's always there, everything I do, it's that damn potato wedge. *(She wipes off the last of her tears and puts on a brave face.)* It looks like it's going to rain. *(She closes the book and slides it back through the grid)* You better take this-

Sybil: You're already dead.

Woman: -It'll be the death of me.

The woman gets up, dusts off her clothing and primly walks off screen shaking off her encounter. Sybil puts the books back on the pile and climbs into bed. The lights fade out to the sound of rain.

ACT TWO

As dawn comes up on the screen on the top platform, the lights fade in on the bottom platform. Sybil's bed is made and she is sitting cross-legged on it with her back to the audience contemplating the two pictures. She gets up abruptly and moves to the radio station. She picks up the microphone and presses the 'on air' button, the intro music plays and she speaks while preparing breakfast; a bowl of unmarked cereal and a cup of unmarked tea.

Sibyl: This is Sibyl, live from nowhere, and I've been thinking. It rained last night. I've always wondered where the janitor puts the waste, the broken dreams. He sweeps them under the carpet of the city, and that's where I live, under the carpet. It's strange the things that are swept under the carpet. They're the same things that hide with the skeletons in the closet. I wish these broken dreams weren't metaphorical. I wish you could hear the cracking of bones as you glide over your Persian rug. Each break would voodoo the unlocking of your mind...the awakening of your heart. I heard the clanking of your secrets groan through these pipes last night. These rusted hinges could barely hold them on their journey to the underbelly. Even the water couldn't muffle the truths they were protesting as they rumbled through my quarters, the truths you so skilfully ignore.

In my dream I saw these secrets, these skeletons revealing themselves to each other. They whispered and marched through the sewers, hacking at the pipes with axes until all the secrets burst forth and undulated to the surface. All the keepers of the unsaid, the misconception where stationed at exit points. They'd blocked all the drain pipes with cars, rubble, TV sets, anything they could find. But they were like cardboard boxes to the skeletons which exploded through like a volcano courageously proclaiming themselves, their secrets. Nothing could hold them. The streets ruptured and the torrent of secrets filled every corner of the city. Citizens ran around frantically trying to bag them, silence their dirty laundry. Every person was stuck between chasing down their own secret and listening to the dirt on others. If anyone grabbed hold of a skeletal hand trying to force it into a garbage bag, the rest of the

skeletons would join in chanting out that skeleton's secret in particular. The chorus of the unsaid would make the citizen give up and retreat into the corners. They were unstoppable. The skull and cross bones of truth. All people were forced to listen as their secrets echoed into every ear.

Eventually the carpet became the sky. The secrets tore through every façade, from buildings to people until everything was made plain and even the most defiant counterfeit believers could see.

When the secrets were satisfied they didn't recede back into the sewers. They lived with us, among us, next door to us...constant reminders of truth. Anyone who tried to defy the truth by pulling the wool over others' eyes, or pulling the wool over their own eyes was haunted by the skeletons which would persist until that person forfeited their game of reality for actual reality. They became the guardians of the real.

Sibyl presses the 'off air' button and begins to softly cry. Bella and Josh appear onscreen on the top platform.

Bella: *(Gently)* Sybil, it's us. I'm sorry, we're sorry that we didn't pick up the signs.

Josh: We're not saying that you're a drug addict or anything, not those kinda signs, but we both knew you were slipping into yourself, you know and-

Bella: -We just thought it would go away.

Sibyl moves under the drain still crying softly.

Josh: We were cowards.

Bella: Afraid of the truth.

Sibyl: *(To herself)* Isn't everyone.

Josh: We love you. We don't really understand what's going on but-

Bella: -You can come out now and talk to us. We're not leaving, well, we might have to leave sometimes but we'll be here-

Josh: -Most of the time.

The screen speeds up and shows Bella and Josh in and out, night and day for what seems like weeks. At one point they chevron off the area and sit above the drain with deck chairs. Eventually, policemen tell them to leave. Sometimes only one can be there. Sometimes they speak to each other, sometimes they speak down the pipe and sometimes they fall asleep on the lid. This happens in silence to 'Work it' by 'The Cinematic Orchestra' from the album 'Man With the Movie Camera'. Sibyl continues with actions in real time. Overwhelmed with her undertaking she collapses in tears. Her eyes dry as she stares blankly. She washes her dishes, paces and peruses the sealed jars and shelved books. She opens a can of unmarked beans and eats them with a spoon while contemplating the pictures again. The music ends and on the top platform, on screen which slows to real time, it is late afternoon and we see Josh and Bella sitting on the drainpipe having lunch. Sibyl moves under the drain.

Sibyl: Aren't you guys tired of over-seeing the game? *(Bella and Josh, excited by Sibyl's first words quickly put their ears to the drain.)*
Playing the game? Being part of the few that know this is a game?

Bella: Um...

Josh: But Sibyl, isn't that the point? At least we know this is a game. Imagine we didn't know. We'd be-

Bella: -Like everybody else.

Josh: Yeah.

Sibyl: Then our whole lives are a farce! I don't want to live in the charades of our lives anymore.

Bella: *(Laughing)* The charades of our lives! That's funny.

Sybil: *(Abrupt and cynical)* Yes, look at how I put a quirky spin on the cheesy soap opera 'The Days of Our Lives'. I'm so funny...really. I live in a perpetual reference to something else but at least I'm funny.

Bella: Come on Sibyl. It's that kinda comedy that makes bad soap opera and everything else bearable. If we couldn't laugh at these things then...I don't know,

Josh: We'd die.

Bella: Yes, we'd die from lack of irony.

Sibyl: But don't you see that we're already dead? Irony is just prolonging the fatal blow. It's like we're being poisoned to death. What's the point in being able to see the truth in things when we can't do anything about it? We spend our lives pointing out people who buy into an identity, a set of rules, a convention, we ironise it, we laugh but nothing changes it.

Josh: Well we don't have to do that anymore Sibyl. We can hang out without making fun of things that pretend to be real.

Sybil: That would be impossible. We're like Neo, we've taken the red pill, we can't un-open our eyes. I can't be up there and pretend to not see these things because then I would become a pretender, pretending to be real.

Bella: Well you can't stay down there forever!?

Sybil: I don't see any other option. *(Sighs)* It's lonely... but it's honest. I feel like my words are weighted down here. Like I mean what I say. Every syllable echoes

back at me, reminding me. Up there I feel like every thing I say floats away, my words evaporate before they reach my lips. There's just too many smoke screens and type characters and back drops. I don't want to live in a movie anymore.

Josh: But Sibyl you know this is a movie...other people think this is actually real. When we use references and play up a scenario we know we're doing it.

Bella: It's in doing it that we're saying 'Hey! Look at the world we live in...look at what people have become.'

Josh: We're a walking satire. Our referencing and irony is the only way we know how to shine a light-

Bella: -To point a finger.

Sibyl: But if we're a walking satire, always playing up the scene then we're constantly in a movie...and movies aren't real.

Josh: *(To himself)* Yeah.

Bella and Josh are quiet for a while taking in what Sybil has said. Sibyl assumes that they've forgotten their lines and slides a book through the grid. Bella pounces and forces it back down.

Bella: Get that thing away from me! Take it back!

Sibyl complies but Josh grabs hold of the book.

Josh: Wait. Give it here.

Bella: What are you doing? We agreed to keep our hands off that thing.

Josh: *(Opening to the page.)* Relax Bella.

Sibyl: At least he's being honest with himself.

Bella: Dropping out! You call that honest?!

Josh: (*Amazed*) It really is all here...everything you just said, everything I'm saying.

Bella: Thanks a lot Sibyl! (*Josh says this line simultaneously. Bella glares at him and Sibyl sighs. Bella carries on speaking and Josh says everything she says simultaneously, and on some words he preempts her with the help of the book*)
Josh, give it back to Sybil. It's not yours. This isn't your war! Stop that!
(*Pause*) Okay fine, so you're gonna say everything I'm saying, ooo, big frikken surprise! Everything's been said, nothing's original, you guys are sooo deep. Look at you with your undergrad degree in postmodernism. Who cares!
This is just how it is! Stop it...st...

Sibyl: (*To herself*) Josh isn't in Kansas anymore.

Josh: (*Reads the line out loud and starts laughing.*) Josh isn't in Kansas anymore!

Bella: What?

Josh: (*Sibyl is smirking.*) No, that was Sibyl's line. You didn't hear it though,
(*Pointing to the book.*) 'cos she said it to herself! (*He laughs*)

Bella: This isn't funny! Stop doing this Sibyl!

Sibyl: (*Josh still laughing and starting to become a bit delirious as reality closes in on him. Sibyl flicks to the appropriate page in the book.*) I'm not doing anything.

Bella: (*To Josh*) Josh...Josh! (*Josh is kneeling in a fixed gaze of contemplation and realisation.*)

Josh: *(Ignoring Bella's plea)* Sibyl...Sibyl maybe it's both? Real and unreal married, together, mixed up, like a big ol' pie! *(Bella looks on wide eyed, behind them the hobo wheels up his trolley.)*

Sibyl: Behind you Josh. *(Josh gets up and walks to his fate without resignation. The hobo hands him a clipboard to sign and passes over a box with fragile stickers plastered on it. Bella looks on in disbelief. Knowing what Josh will endure, tears stream down Sibyl's face.)*

Bella: Look what you've done.

Sibyl: I'm sorry.

Josh: *(Josh walks up carrying his box. He slides the book 'Sibylla' back down the grid.)*

I've got my own now. *(He wipes a tear from Bella's cheek and consoles her.)*

You know I'm all about the underground. *(To Sibyl)* Maybe we can talk to each other through the walls?

Sibyl: They're too thick.

Josh: Well then I guess I'll see you on the flipside. *(He walks off frame carrying his box, Bella runs after him.)*

Bella: Josh...you don't have to do this.

Sibyl hangs her head in sorrow. She wells up with anger and starts to shout and tear at the 'Sibylla' books, throwing them against the walls. She grabs the microphone and continues with her rage on air. She doesn't even wait for the introduction music to play out before she screams.

Sibyl: This is Sibyl live from nowhere! If you've ever lost directions and said 'I'm in the middle of nowhere' you're a liar! Keep it real. I'm in the middle of nowhere! These sayings mean nothing in your world! You parasites! You

vultures circle the real and scavenge on the dead! You're dead. You are shells of the living! How can you not see?! You make me sick. Your shadows have more depth than you. Your lives play out like a board game. Everything about you is determined by the gatekeepers. The way you dress, the way you think...your emotions! You live in cages and you think that you're free. You believe that you're free!

And here I am. Caged on your behalf I wrestle with your existence spending endless nights writhing in my dreams for you. If only I could slap the sense into you! Beat it into you! I want you to be free. When you become free...I become free. I am free but I can't get out of here. How do I get out of here!?!... Others have been here. I see shards of their struggle through these jars, these books. Their resolution haunts me. How did they leave?!

She throws a handful of books at the stage right wall and realises that a piece of the wall is peeling. She stares for a moment and then moves to the wall and starts picking at the pealed corner. She pulls at it and a sheet of concrete textured paper comes off revealing a graffitied quote by Jean Baudrillard:

'Let us be Stoics: if the world is fatal, let us be more fatal than it. If it is indifferent, let us be more indifferent. We must conquer the world and seduce it through an indifference that is at least equal to the world's. – Baudrillard'

She then frantically scans the walls with her hands looking for more hidden quotes. She pulls off another sheet, stage left, alongside her bed. Graffitied it reads:

'The revolution will be symbolic or will not be at all- Saussure'.

She finds another sheet that is textured like the rusted pipe it is on. This sheet is mid stage on the drainpipe that runs horizontally through her quarters. Graffitied it reads:

'Inevitably the system will only change if we are a seed within it. Marx'

On the top platform, onscreen it has sped up to nightfall and slow down to real time. Sibyl stands, re-reading the quotes and almost deliriously trying to make sense of them. On the top platform, off screen we hear a cipher approaching. A group of hip hop artists walk onto frame beat boxing and bantering with each other. They stop above to the drainpipe. Each member starts beat boxing in their own style creating a rhythm. Sibyl hears this and moves under the drain to listen. She rolls a cigarette. After a little while they move on and off screen.

Sibyl lights the cigarette. She has calmed into an inquisitive state. She picks up the microphone, presses the 'on air' button and lets the introduction music play.

Sibyl: I spoke of the soldiers, my comrades, and our secret codes. These codes are just that, more fatal, more absurd, more hyper real, more of that which exists. It's not different...it's just more of. We are that word...postmodern. That word aggravates me. And that's just it, everyone is postmodern but we are fatally postmodern. We're like ordinary people on overdrive, ordinary people embossed. In everything we do we exaggerate the so called real and become living testaments who breathe in this world and exhale the only possibility of defiance...the hyper real.

It's like we're the only resistance left at the bottom of the cookie jar. The gatekeepers' insatiable hand can't quite reach it. The tips of their fingers barely scrape our surface as they try and force their chubby forearm but the jar's mouth won't give, it can't give. The gatekeepers persist, taking turns. When one taps out he licks and savours the flavour of resistance on the tips of his fingers. This makes him angry. He pulls at his wirey hair desperate to consume, desperate to digest...if only he could reach. They spend hours gathered around the jar, staring at it through the glass and musing over its meaning. They bring in the experts who suckle their fingers and jot down notes, words, equations anything that might solve the question of the flavor. They can't quite get it right because it mingles with the aroma of every other cookie that once lived in the jar. Every notion, every resistance, every style, every thing that has ever been.

The more they try the more the cookie laughs back and shouts, 'Turn it over, turn the jar over!' But they can't. It would mean the change the cookie has been waiting for. If they turned the jar, the gate keepers would surely have the cookie but it would also be their end. So they persist, consuming the surface of the cookie, what it looks like...our style. But the cookie doesn't mind, it is stoic...remember?

The gatekeepers search across the globe for an ally with a slender arm. They find one who is able to just break off a crumb, as his arm squeezes out the mouth of the jar he savagely savours the crumb as the other gatekeepers salivate his experience. He takes his time, swirling it into every crevice of his mouth. It is barely a morsel when he swallows and begins his report back. Notes, briefcases, the tapping of computer keys and power point presentations echo down the corridors and into the media...the gatekeepers' circuit.

They bring in more slender arms which keep chipping away at the cookie. As they break off more and more pieces they can't shake the feeling that it tastes a lot like an exposure of the lie they are paid to perpetuate. The gatekeepers gather in confusion. The more of the cookie they stream through the circuit the more the ordinary people seem to become like the cookie. They wrestle with this contradiction. In the past sending a resistance down the circuit or packaging it on a shelf assured the gagging of its ideals. But this cookie is different. What are its ideals? The scent of every cookie that has been in the jar keeps this last one changing, moving. Every day it gives them the tang of a new set of contradictory flavours. Time has taught the gatekeepers not to congratulate each other when they get a handle on the flavour...the symbols. Because it will change, this cookie's symbols are in flux. They wonder if it is a resistance for how can something be in opposition without its iron cast ideals and styles. How can something that is fluid, something that tastes so familiar possibly bring about any significant change??

On some days slender arm scuffles to reach and the cookie breaks off a piece of itself and hands it to him. Perplexed the gatekeepers accept the offer mystified by the cookie's cooperation. Whose side are they on? As they carve

at the cookie's existence it beams back at them and giggles with retorts like, 'That tickles.' The gatekeepers love the cookie. The gatekeepers hate the cookie. Sometimes a gatekeeper will furiously shake the jar and shout, 'Stop smiling at me! We are the cat and you are the mouse! Stop smiling!' But the cookie delights when they shake the jar, it's like a theme park rollercoaster.

When the lights go out the gatekeepers covertly listen in to the cookies' conversation in a hopeless attempt to expose its essence, the secret that it hides. But every night it's the same self referential shenanigans. The cookie skirts them as much as it skirts its own essence. But that's the nature of the cookie. Its secret is the dormant sword. There is no need to talk about it; there is only time to pass. There is only the charades of their lives...Eventually the gatekeepers stamp the covert documents with 'NO FORSEEABLE THREAT' and 'PROCEED WITH CAUTION'.

Soon enough only an eighth of the cookie remains as the circuit vibrates with its perpetual existence. Some of the gatekeepers come in early (*Sarcastically*) just to hang out with the cookie...shoot the breeze.

The cookie complies with witticism and tomfoolery. They like that the gatekeepers vehemently believe that they are the cat and the cookie the mouse. It's easier that way...easier to ambush.

She begins to clean up her mess. Picking up the books and packing them back in the box.

You see, the cookie knows it is the world's pied piper. Everyone is unknowingly following its tune because it's the kind of tune that any person can tap their foot to. The kind of tune that gets stuck in your head, the kind that you sing in the shower. Its global melody gently ushers the scales off your eyes. So slow you don't even know it's happening...because the pied piper is stoic...remember? You could be washing the dishes or driving your car when another transparent scale falls from your eyes. You won't even realise but something...an illusive

something, something ephemeral will feel...just off. Like you got up on the wrong side of the bed or took another route to work. A sensation, an ever so slight tweaking of your mind, deviously apparent...like the scent of rain. In time your consciousness catches up with the sensation and it becomes normal. *(She places the textured sheet back over the Marx quote.)* This is when the pied piper's inviting tune that rings out through the gatekeepers' circuit entices you to skip a few more steps into your subtle awakening.

As you dance and skip the pied piper leads you through the desert of the real. His tune is like a museum curator who points out all the absurdities and mistruths along the way. Sometimes you grow tired and stop to set up camp. The pied piper could continue without rest but he cannot do this without you. So he patiently sleeps under the canvas and waits for you to catch your breath, pick up your belongings and carry on. *(She places the textured sheet back over the Baudrillard quote.)*

At present we are still walking through the desert but there will come a time when we reach the promised land. It is a city of truth that always glistens with supernatural varnish and the scent of rain. A city without umbrellas. A city made plain like the one I saw in my dream. The only difference is that we become like the secret skeletons, we all become the guardians of the real. This city lies just beyond the edge of a mountainous cliff nestled in a valley. The only way to reach it...is to fly. This will only happen when the last scale falls from your eyes. It is then that the pied piper will cease to play his tune alone for you will know it very well. It will shift from a solo performance to the chorus of humanity. His feet will effortlessly take leave from the ground as he becomes one with the sky. He stays close to the mountainous edge for he cannot go to the promised land without you.

As he soars, glides and somersaults through the air you will well up with hope and courage. Your soul, longing to taste of his true freedom, will surge toward the sky trying to escape the prison of your flesh. The doubting of your flesh will battle the hope of your soul. The pied piper will extend a hand...he will show you how. Slowly you will feel the balls of your feet brush against

gravity one last time. Your soul will pierce the flesh and you will fly. You will fly! Just like before the sensation will catch up to your consciousness and then you will join the pied piper and show the others how to fly. Only when every person, even the gatekeepers, take leave from the ground, heavenly angels will join in your chorus as you descend on the city of truth as pioneers of a new renaissance.

This is when the jar will buckle under the pressure of the last intrusive arm. Years of squeezing muscles and grappling arms has unknowingly carved away at the strength of the jar. First its brim will start to chip and then hairline cracks symbolizing the renaissance to come. Not even the gatekeepers can stop it. The jar can no longer do what it was made to do. It contracts for a moment and as we all take flight, it screams its last breath and expands, shattering into a thousand pieces! Finally the misconception is over...a new age has begun.

The revolution is being televised. *(She places the textured sheet back over the Saussure quote.)* Everyday I hear the pied pipers' tune through the circuit and everyday the volume of the tune is increasing. So subtle. So stoic. The revolution is being televised...you just don't know that it's a revolution.

She has packed away the last of the books. She presses the 'off air' button, sits on the foot of her bed facing the audience, closes her eyes and sighs with a calm relief of resolution. She has a fixed and revelatory gaze.

(To herself) I am a pied piper. My existence is so stoic that it deceived me into believing that I am ineffectual. *(Sighs contentedly.)* Resolution is sweet...tomorrow I will leave this place.

She gets into bed and the lights fade out. It is a quite night onscreen.

ACT THREE

As dawn creeps through on the screen the lights fade in. Sibyl's bed is made and she stands below the drain pipe clutching the book.

Sibyl: *(Looking at a page in the book she shouts)* No! No! Why won't you let me go! You witnessed my resolution...it was magnificent. I know what to do. I understand. You have to let me go now! Please. What do you want from me? What must I do to get out of here! *(She frantically reads out loud from the book)* Sibyl contemplates the two pictures above her bed. *(She abruptly complies)*

Yes, yes! I'm contemplating, contemplating again! What. Two pictures! Same image. Different styles. What. What is it?! *(Reading from the book)* Sibyl frantically takes the pictures off the wall and desperately seeks for an answer.

She complies. Takes the pictures off the wall to the table where she scans the frames for a hidden answer. She takes them out of their frames, still searching for a clue. She holds each picture up to the light that streams in through the drain hole in hopes that it will illuminate a message. She finds nothing and begins to laugh and cry simultaneously.

Calm down Sibyl! Calm down, just look at them, yes, look, see what you see. *(She pegs both pictures next to each other on the line)* Look. See. Look Sibyl. See Sibyl. *(Pointing to the Andy Warhol version)* I know you...I know you. You're me, I'm you. You're fatal, you're a self aware two dimensional carbon copy of the truth, *(Pointing to the Botticelli version)* which is you! You're the truth but *(Back to the Warhol)* you skirt the truth. You play the game like me. You, you are so flat that you expose the depthlessness. So fatally pop that you make a spectacle of it. You play with signs and codes as if it were Lego. You are the pied piper. And, *(Back to Botticelli)* and you are the promise, of the new age, when we fly into the new renaissance, we, we will be like you...

She un pegs the Botticelli and as she holds it she becomes overwhelmed by its beauty.

You're so beautiful...so illuminated. I cannot say whether the light holds you or you hold the light. Even your features cast in shadow radiate more than a fluorescent bulb. Promises are luminescent and locked in the strands of your hair. Your neck could hold the coliseum...I can almost taste your skin. It's alive. Every square centimetre is a composition. There are a thousand stories in your face alone. Your cheekbone is more honest, more poetic, more...than my whole being. I can hear the violins in the orbits of your eyes. And your eyes...I cannot even speak of the truth in your eyes, they surpass words, even music. They are satiated with peace and joy but I feel like any moment now...they could cry. Please God let her speak! One word uttered from these poised lips would melt hardened steel and free a thousand slaves.

You are everything I long to be.

She realizes that the picture is made up of two layers. She peels them apart. One carries the image of Venus's face while the hair and background is transparent. The other is the hair and background and clear transparency where the face lies. From a distance she holds up the first layer in line with Warhol's version. She moves closer and pegs the Botticelli face over the Warhol to make one picture...Warhol's hair and background with Botticelli's face. She falls to her knees in realisation.

Sibyl: Josh was right...it is both!

(She opens her jar and takes out only her waistcoat and ruffle.. She seals it again and puts it with the others on the mid stage right shelf. She puts on the waistcoat and ruffle and puts her book next to the others on the shelf. She moves to under the drain pipe. On the top platform, on screen and on stage, it begins to rain.)

I am the pied piper and the guardian of the real

(She climbs the first rung)

...together.

(She climbs the second rung)

I must play the pied pipers tune,

(The third rung)

and guard the real by existing in the promised land

(She opens the lid)

even though I am in the desert.

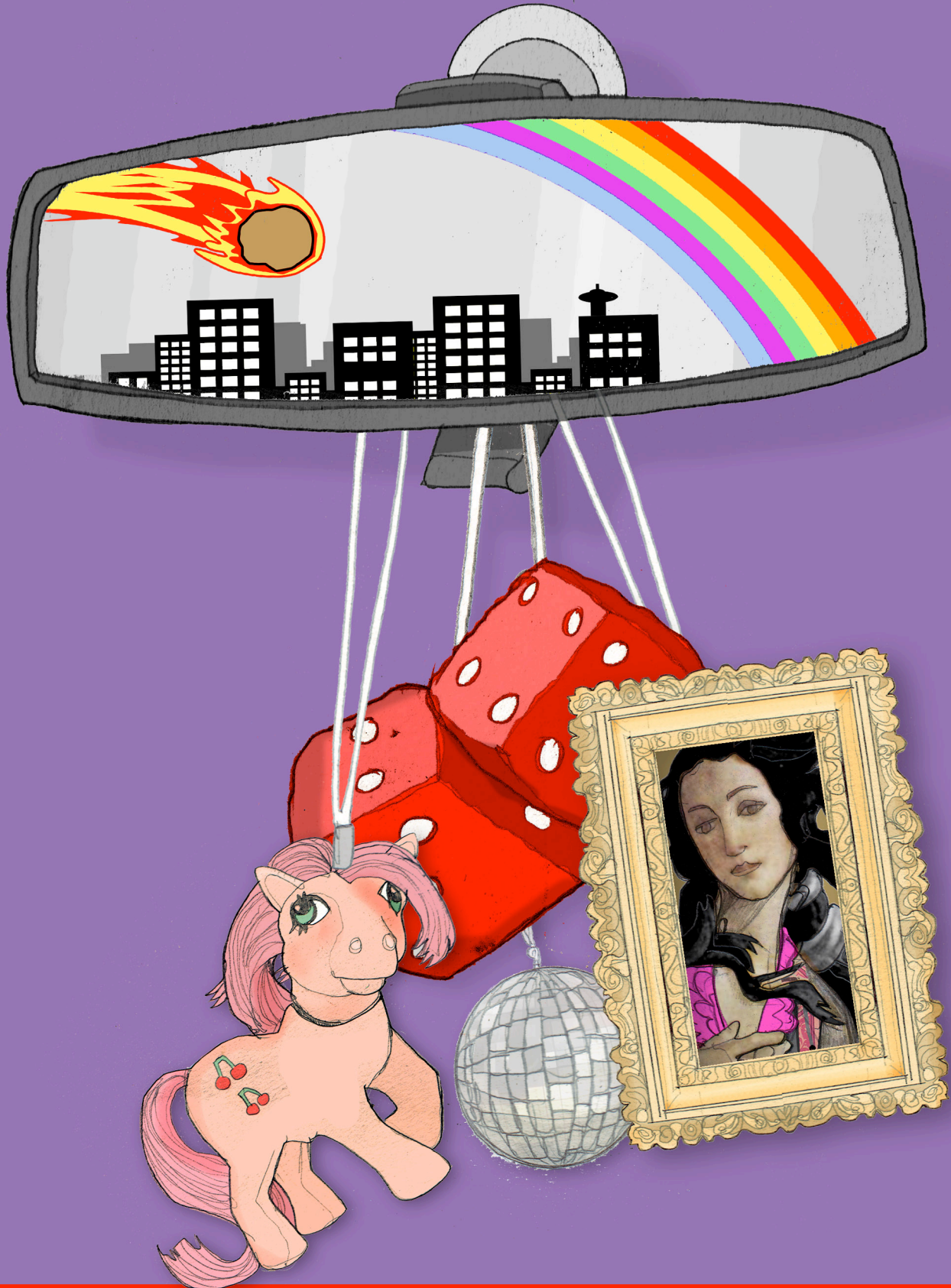
(She stands up on the top platform as a real body in proportion with the screen.) My body will usher in an age that I live out in my face.

'The Dissociatives' 'Lifting the Veil from the Braille' plays and she begins to walk in the rain. She walks stage right, in slow motion and the screen corresponds by tracking in slow motion as she walks. The screen only stops as she steps offstage. It fades to black along with the stage lights. One light lingers on the picture hanging below the platform on the line. The music still plays when Sibyl comes back on to the top platform to take her bow. The other characters also take a bow but they are in proportion to Sibyl on screen. She leaves the stage and the credits role on screen.

THE END



THE WAY OF THE HIPSTER



CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

HOW TO PLAY

This is an adventure story where you decide your own fate. Each paragraph is numbered in consecutive order. Begin at number one. After reading the paragraph you are offered two potential choices. Each choice correlates to a number so pick wisely and turn to the number of the path that you want to continue on. If you have chosen poorly you will die without completing your mission, your adventure will be over and you will have to start again. Good luck.

BACKGROUND

Your quest has already begun. Like most warriors it began with a conscious seeking of the self. Questioning your effectiveness has taken you to distant leagues both physically and personally. You have braved ponderous lands and mystical cities. In your search for truth you consulted the enchanting Oracle of Irony, Sally Spectra. She fearlessly defended you with her double-edged blade and you narrowly escaped the wrath of Ridge Forrester, a deadly assassin who swore an oath to the villainous Gatekeepers. His quest is to annihilate all the warriors of your Order. The Order of The Way of the Hipster.

As you fled the scene the brave Sally Spectra held off the blood thirsty Ridge Forrester. She gave you a golden key in the form of a Story Book and cassette tape. Your journey continued and you reflected on her words of power. These words honed a skill that you have been training for years...the skill of Irony.

You then found yourself in the hands of the notorious Skeletor...the Supreme Master of evil. He too has sworn to destroy The Way of the Hipster. Beaten and bloodied you silenced your mind and gathered strength and endurance. You escaped and overheard Skeletor's devious plan to rid the Hipster warriors of one of their most powerful weapons...the Art of Nostalgia. His gang of villains has used force and sorcery to capture your beloved Grandmasters who trained you in the ways of nostalgia. Their plan is to lock the Grandmasters in a confined caged without food or water until they lose their grasp of reality and deliriously kill off one another. If they achieve this, the villains will have stamped out the Art of Nostalgia and the hipster warriors will no

longer be able to use nostalgia to shine a light on the past and expose it to be just as anarchic, complicated, constructed and difficult as the present.

Nostalgia is a key philosophy in The Way of the Hipster. If Skeletor achieves its eradication The Way of the Hipster would become defenceless against The Way of the Gatekeepers. It is your quest to rescue the Grandmasters of Nostalgia, but before you departed on your mission it was vital that you completed your training.

This led you to an Apocalyptic City which is the gatekeepers' kingdom. You fearlessly walked within their territory in order to study and understand your enemy. Just as The Way of the Hipster has an art of combat so too does The Way of the Gatekeepers. You became overwhelmed with compassion for all the inhabitants of the Apocalyptic City. Your Master in the Art of Understanding Your Enemy had told you about the Gatekeepers power of misconception but you never expected to see what you saw. There were thousands of people enslaved without shackles. They were so deceived by the Gatekeepers' that they did not even know they were slaves. You were overcome by the power of the Gatekeepers' most deadly weapon...the Simulacrum. In your feverish confusion Johnny Depp, your Master in the Art of Understanding Your Enemy, appeared before you with words of wisdom.

As quickly as he appeared he was gone and you were left empowered by his words. You took to the streets and fluidly navigated the mechanical transparency of the Simulacrum. The slaves of the Apocalyptic City noticed that you were able to 'move through the city' as opposed to their existence where 'the city moves through them'. They were so bewitched that your freedom did not inspire them but rather it enraged them. Another high ranking villain sworn to the Gatekeepers known only as French Bunned Zombie Bitch, led the masses as they chased you through the concrete city. They out-numbered you and the French Bunned Zombie Bitch studied your armour to the point where she poked so many holes in it that it became ineffective.

Bill Murray, your Grandmaster in the Art of Physical and Mental Armour, found you in a broken and dishevelled state of being. He gave you a magic potion that reinvigorated your strength and endurance. Before guiding you in the Art of Armour he gave you a walkman and allowed you to study the key of The Story Book given to

you by the valiant Sally Spectra. You quietly and conscientiously listened to The Story Book. It was the golden key which unlocked a greater level of understanding of The Way of the Hipster. It taught you about historical warriors in your order and explained that as the Gatekeepers change their form of combat that you too were forced to change your weapons. Because of this you are the first warriors of your kind. The Way of the Gatekeeper has constrained The Way of the Hipster to use a style of combat where your weapons are in fact the very same weapons used by the Gatekeepers. The only difference is that your weapons have been sharpened with the Art of Irony and Hyper Realism.

After listening to the golden key you became discouraged with the idea that without the Gatekeepers, The Way of the Hipster would not exist. You could not forgive the betrayal of your biggest ally, your foster father and the Master of all the Grandmasters... The Supreme Master Postmodernism, who had been playing for both sides all along.

To help you forgive and understand why the Supreme Master Postmodernism must cavort with the enemy Gatekeepers in order to win the battle, Grandmaster Bill Murray sought out the help of the legendary Grandmaster Tarantino who guided you in the Art of Being Two Faced like The Supreme Master Postmodernism. You knew that your training was nearly complete because only Hipster warriors of the tenth order are allowed to consult Grandmaster Tarantino. He showed you that although it seems like the Supreme Master Postmodernism is betraying The Way of the Hipster, on closer inspection the Supreme Master has infiltrated The Way of the Gatekeepers in order for the Hipster warriors to dismantle the Gatekeepers from within their own Order. When you reached this level of understanding you were automatically charged with more strength and endurance.

You then departed on the first part of your mission following information that you overheard when you were captured by the Grand Villain Skeletor. He spoke of the last three Grandmasters of Nostalgia who he still needed to capture. These are the three most legendary Grandmasters who he needed to corrupt before putting into lockdown. When all the Grandmasters are caged, these three would be the ones who would keep the peace, hope, stability and order. Unfortunately, Skeletor has spent the last year

deviously distorting their hearts and minds. He used mystical sorcery to break their warrior spirits. They have been so deluded that they will offer no resolution or leadership when they are caged with the rest of the Grandmasters. If he succeeds in imprisoning these three legends, Grandmaster Rainbow Brite, Grandmaster Gruffi Gummi and Grandmaster Braveheart Lion, it will be too late.

Notorious for keeping up to date with The Way of the Hipster, the Grand Villain Skeletor spoke of watching a Hipster play at the Apocalyptic Theatre before rounding up the last three Grandmasters. More inconspicuous than a shadow you moved like the softest breeze and went unnoticed as you followed him into the theatre. You sat eight rows behind him and patiently waited for his departure.

With your eyes fixed on his every movement the play began and you were astonished to see that the lead character was Sybil, the Renowned Prophetess who is only consulted by the Supreme Grandmaster once a millennium. In the guise of a play she was sending you a message. She spoke of the difficulty in using the very same weapons as the Gatekeepers and how this can leave the Hipster Warrior disillusioned. She showed you that just because the battle is slow this does not mean that it is not effective. Then came her powerful warning where she explained that understanding the Gatekeepers weapons and making full use of them means that the Hipster Warrior's very style of combat deals in mistruths and misconceptions. Only a trained mind can separate the combat from the truth. Most Hipster Warriors are overtaken by their style of combat and they forget what they are fighting for. They exist in a ponderous state where they only operate in misconception. Sybil showed you that to be fully effective the Hipster Warrior must exist in a place of truth and sincerity even though your weapons are etched in the mistruth of the unsaid:

I am the pied piper and the guardian of the real...together.

I must play the pied piper's tune,
and guard the real by existing in the promised land
even though I am in the desert.

My body will usher in an age that I live out in my face.

This was the final revelation in your training. As the curtains drew on the play you experienced a new level of enlightenment and purpose. Not only did you receive another dose of strength and endurance but you were filled with three new powers. The power of Hope. The power of Faith. And the power of Love. With a focused and calm resolution you slipped through the crowds and followed the Grand Villain Skeletor. While he drank a glass of red wine at the bar you perused the production posters and consolidated the importance of your coming mission.

You are the only one who can save the Grandmasters of Nostalgia and ensure the continuation of The Way of the Hipster. Without the Art of Nostalgia, The Way of the Hipster will surely die. If this happened The Way of the Gatekeepers will take over the world and enslave every Hipster who are the only hope of freeing the minds and hearts of those who are enslaved to the Gatekeepers. You must harness extreme focus and determination. You will only succeed if you use all the elements of your training and especially your Inner Force Combat. Now is the time to prove yourself to the Grandmasters in The Way of the Hipster.

COMBAT SKILLS

Combat Weapon of Intertextuality

This is an acrobatic skill where you use references to the Gatekeepers media. Your opponent becomes confused as your references leap and tumble through their minds. As they try to place the reference they lose focus. Your referencing acts as a punch to the mind because they forget that they are in battle as they are forced to watch you like a movie. This weapon helps to delay your opponent if you need to use one of your other weapons or escape.

Combat Weapon of Schizophrenia

This combat weapon allows you to disguise yourself. By taking on the persona of a character you have seen in a movie or on television you are able to masterfully deceive your opponent.

Combat Weapon of Fragmentation

This is a devastating weapon. If you fragment during combat your opponent will see multiple images of you not knowing which one is the real you. In frustration they will lose their composure and furiously stab at all the images. This will give you a chance to skilfully use one of your other weapons.

Combat Weapon of Depthlessness

This is where you reduce your body to a mere surface. This is useful for immunity to poisons. If you ingest a virulent poison and use this weapon, the poison is unable to reach your heart because your body has been reduced to a two-dimensional surface. After a while the poison will seep out of your pores and you can return to your three-dimensional self. Because your body becomes like a sheet of paper, this combat weapon also allows you to move through small spaces.

Combat Weapon of Self Awareness

Requiring long and arduous training this weapon demands a great amount of strength so it cannot be used very often. This is where you use extreme focus and become so self aware that you actually leave your body and hover above your physical self. You can only do this for up to twenty seconds and it is useful for feigning death.

Combat Weapon of Irony

This is the most effective defensive combat. If you use this weapon skilfully you are able to ridicule your opponents and hopefully alter their position or use another weapon.

INNER FORCE COMBAT

Pure Truth

This is your most powerful weapon. In an unsuspected moment you abandon your weapons of misconception and speak Pure Truth which acts as an arrow straight into the heart of your opponent who will fall to the ground and lie stunned for up to two hours. It is most effective to speak truth with the Inner Force of Faith, Hope and Love. If you do this your opponent might abandon their oath to The Way of the Gatekeepers and join forces with you.

Inner Force of Faith

Without this your mission is meaningless. It is the very root or reason for embarking on this mission. The Inner Force of Faith is what rejuvenates your strength and endurance.

Inner Force of Hope

Without this you will give up after the first challenge. Inner Force of Hope gives you the mental strength to continue and believe in victory.

Inner Force of Love

This force is what separates you from your enemy. It is like a samurai sword that gently stabs and alters the heart of the enemy.

HIPSTER WARRIOR TOOLS

Armour

Your armour is comprised of garments from unrelated historical eras. If your enemy does not understand the juxtaposition then you are shielded. However, if your enemy

manages to figure out the referencing and meaning behind the pastiche, your armour becomes useless. It is very important to keep a change of armour in your vinyl backpack.

Moleskin Journal and Fountain Pen

This allows you to document any interesting observations and important facts along the way.

Walkie Talkies

If you find an accomplice along the way this tool enables you to keep in contact.

Yo-Yo

This tool is a weapon. If it connects with the opponent's forehead it causes immediate concussion.

Vegas Dice

These are used when you feel indecisive and require chance to determine your path.

Glitter

Throwing a handful of glitter can blast through any metal. You only have one handful.

Lock Picking Tool

This allows you to break into places and hotwire cars.

Map

This is a detailed map of the territory.

DVD

You have a portable DVD player and the DVD of Stanley Kubrick's 'A Clockwork Orange'.

A Rolled Parchment

This parchment contains information that will be useful when the time is right.

1

While Grandmaster Skeletor is hanging at the bar pontificating about the play's subtext, you decide to make your way to the parking lot. You leave through the back door. Outside the sun is setting behind the geometric advertisements. The orange glow makes the branding overload seem beautiful for a moment. You see Skeletor's car wedged between a Land Rover and a BMW. You notice that he has scraped out a messy rectangular section where the word 'Asshole' used to be. You hear a familiar thumping from the trunk of the car and realise that Grandmaster He-Man is still trapped inside. Before you are able to check on his condition you hear hordes of people exiting the theatre. With Skeletor close at hand you use your Combat Weapon of Depthlessness and slide between two narrow grids underneath the car.

You hear his high pitched cackle approaching. He takes his time chatting to the owner of the Land Rover about its mileage and fuel consumption. You feel the ground approaching as his body weighs down in the front seat of the car. You hold on tightly as he speeds off to capture Grandmaster Rainbow Brite. The journey is long. All you can hear is the roaring engine as you struggle to hold your body in Depthlessness. You nearly lose your grip as Skeletor abruptly turns the wheel and swerves into a parking space. His footsteps fade away and you release your body from Depthlessness and fall to the ground. You lie there for a few moments catching your breath and then roll out from underneath the car. You tap lightly on the trunk and whisper to He-Man, "It's me. I told you I'd be back." Grandmaster He-man is ridiculously excited to hear your voice, "Get me outta here!" You wonder whether you should pursue Skeletor or release He-Man:

You dig through your backpack and find the glitter metal blaster. You tell He-Man to, "Shift back," and you launch the handful at the metal lock
(turn to **13**)?

You tell He-Man that you don't have time and you follow Skeletor into the Poetry Venue (turn to **24**)?

2

Rainbow Brite stands without remorse. A luminous metaphor as the light barely envelopes half her being. The silence is like a telegram pronouncing bad news. A

telegram that needs to be ripped open. With still breathing she gazes beyond the confinement of the walls and she speaks:

She wrote a letter to her love and on the way she dropped it
Swapped it.
You see, she gave it to a fruitless man and said please keep this safe
So he put it in his pocket.

The letter is you
The letter is me
The letter is she

The scroll is her secrets
The paper is her skin
The texture is her character
And the message? Well the message is all she is
Who she is
Within.

From hand to hand to hand to hand to hand to hand to hand
To hand,
The letter became crinkled and bent.
Some would fold it.
Sometimes she would fold it,
The corners in half
In hopes of a better fit.
On one occasion a hand led the letter to a corner
It started to rain
And as she looked up in a moment of innocence, the hand disappeared.
It left the letter.

The letter is you, the letter is me, the letter is she
The letter is
Soaked in despair

You see, she wrote a letter to her love and on the way she dropped it,
Swapped it
And as the ink began to run
This time she put it in her own pocket.

She didn't leave the corner because the corner is where the light bends.
Many hands came past, stretched out
But no human hand would lift her from this
You see,
She knew hands too well.
So she clutched the letter, she would not let it go.

The letter is you, the letter is me, the letter is she.
She didn't leave the corner because the corner is where the light bends
Refracts
Detracts
Distracts
The corner is where the light bends, the corner is where she walks the infinite
Line between the tarmac and the sky.
Where light and dark meet
She sits in between.
No more hands
She keeps her face still so that only half will be illuminated.
A lonely line to walk but it has no choices
No regrets.
Eventually passers by could not see her because she mingles with half her face
In the shadows, she's compromised light and dark and became a form without
Colour
Existing in the pages of other peoples' lives.

She often thinks about being seen in her true form again,
How beautiful she would be.
But her letter has no destination, no address
All it says is 'To my Love'

Now dripped and blurred by rain and time.

She punctuates the end with a melancholic sigh and retreats a few steps. Your soul droops with compassion. You summon the Inner Force of Faith and internally rage against the prowling darkness illusively creeping in on you. Do you:

Use Inner Force Combat and speak Pure Truth (turn to **31**)?

Try and diffuse the situation with your Combat Weapon of Irony (turn to **26**)?

3

With your back against the wall you contact He-Man with your Walkie Talkie. He tells you that Skeletor is in the venue watching the poets and sipping a double espresso. You tell He-Man to keep a close eye on him and to let you know if anything changes. You jog down the corridor scanning for Rainbow Brite's dressing room. You find it and notice that she has crossed out the 'Br' in the word 'Brite' and replaced it with 'Sm'. You knock twice and gently open the door. Sitting in front of a cracked mirror and smoking a cigarette Rainbow Brite glares at you. Immediately you relay Skeletor's evil plan to her. You speak quickly and efficiently. You finish and turn to leave expecting her to follow but she doesn't flinch. She shrugs her shoulders and says, "So. I'm done with fighting peoples' wars for them. Show me where the cage is, this lockdown thing's gonna be fun." Taking in the existential atmosphere you realise the gravity of the task at hand and decide to:

Use your Combat Weapon of Intertextuality to try and convince her (turn to **22**)?

Use your Combat Weapon of Irony to try and convince her (turn to **14**)?

4

Rainbow Brite's face is drenched in tears. Her mascara has run its course. Every word you spoke washed over her. She falls to her knees in remembrance of her purpose. That time where she existed in, and fought for the light. A time that up until now had been buried under the earth of a hopeful past. The beauty of her transformation sends tears effortlessly cascading down your cheeks. You watch as her past lunges into the present. Shards of light perforate her chest and split through her black garments. As

she weeps the shards grow to rays and then a glorious light radiates through and illuminates every corner. You can barely see but you hear her soul scream out the last cup of remorse and twisted obscurity. The light bursts and recedes into her. She is lying on her back with her arms spread embracing Faith. Her now whitened dress and blonde hair shimmer with specks of gold. She sighs out into eternity and smiles back at you.

You take her hand and together you sneak outside. As you reach the parking lot you are met by Gargamel, Duke Ighorn and Duchess Raven Waves. Wielding baseball bats they start to close in on you. You tell Rainbow Brite to locate He-Man while you take care of them. She skips off and you ready yourself. Do you:

Use your Combat Weapon of Fragmentation (turn to **27**)?

Use your Combat Weapon of Self Awareness (turn to **16**)?

5

You are overcome with a fearless peace and you speak with a gentle and bold clarity, “I cannot say that I know the depth of your sorrow. But I can say that I know the depth of my own. If I could give you my peace in exchange for your despair...I would, because I know that love overcomes despair and with love I would overcome your despair again. I know that my words are weightless. I know that they sound like tinny echoes amid the bass of darkness. I cannot say love into you. I cannot say love and free you...but I can love you.”

You feel your soul expand with more capacity. The air tastes like rain. The wind elevates your body and extends your limbs. Your eyes soften as in a far off gaze through to the very soul of Braveheart Lion. You have never felt this much compassion. It emanates out of your heart sending a white glow into the depths of Braveheart Lion. He tries to side step it but it is everywhere and all around. Your overflow of compassion falls into big soaring tears. As each one wets the floor it oils and loosens the lock on his heart.

He cannot stand any longer. The love holds him up and lifts him horizontally into the air with his face embracing the heavens. He has stopped writhing and fighting. He has

been rehabilitated by love. His mouth is stuck in an awe inspired gape. He silently weeps with the occasional gasp taking in air and more love. The light caresses his chest gently mending and healing his broken heart. He roars and cries through his revelation and then he becomes quiet, closes his eyes and rests in Love's sweet embrace. The light lowers him and softly places him on the floor. Your feet touch the ground as you try to comprehend this overwhelming experience. Your Inner Force has never felt so powerful. Loving that much did not drain you but instead it sent your endurance and strength levels to an overflow of new heights. You feel like an untouchable warrior, even your stature and abilities have the tangible sense of having expanded and grown. Braveheart Lion's fur coat is golden and glowing. He rolls over to look at you through serene eyes and a gentle smile. You walk over to him and tickle his now mended heart. Scarlet, it protrudes from his chest. He hugs you and says, "Love Conquers All."¹⁴⁸

You use your Lock Picking Tool to hot wire Skeletor's car. If you have not rescued Gruffi Gummi, you tell Braveheart Lion to meet you at the Lockdown Location and you and He-Man follow the map and speed off to the Hipster Commune to rescue Gruffi Gummi (turn to **12**).

You use your Lock Picking Tool to hot wire Skeletor's car. If you have already rescued Gruffi Gummi, you, Braveheart Lion and He-Man follow the map to the Lockdown Location (turn to **17**).

6

Your body lies motionless with your legs on the chair and your torso on the parkade floor. As you suspend yourself in Self Awareness your invisible self watches Skeletor kneel down and press his talonous fingertips on your neck's pulse point. You focus and delve further into Self Awareness and your physical body turns blue. He chuckles to himself and contorts his neck to look upward directly at your hovering invisible self. In a high pitched squeal he shouts, "You amateur! Do you honestly believe your little Self Aware weapon can deceive me?! Fool!" You watch as Skeletor draws his sword. He looks down at your 'corpse' and then back up at your invisible self. Through a devious smirk he says, "Well, if you're dead then you won't feel a thing."

¹⁴⁸ Virgil, approx 70BC-19BC, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Conquers_All

He thrusts his sword through your chest. The sharp pain forces you out of Self Awareness and back into your body. Your eyes open and Skeletor is towering over you. He abruptly withdraws his sword through your burning flesh. As you shudder your last breath he whispers, “You deserve to die for even thinking you were a worthy match for me.” In a pool of your own blood your last emotion is anguish over failing your mission. You die.

7

You pick up the remote attached to your recliner and change the television stage to a scene from the movie ‘The Big Lebowski’ and you replace Jeff Bridges with Chuck Norris. It plays out for about ten seconds and then Gruffi Gummi changes the television stage to a scene from the movie ‘The Fast and the Furious’ and puts Anthony Hopkins in the role played by Vin Diesel.

You change it to ‘Girl Interrupted’ with Jessica Simpson in Winona Ryder’s role. He puts on ‘La Vie en rose’ as portrayed by Britney Spears. With each change you both giggle at the choices as it becomes a light-hearted game of one-up manship.

You put on: ‘Capote’ with Ron Moss.

Gruffi: ‘Garden State’ with Ron Moss.

You: ‘Borat’ with Al Pacino.

Gruffi: ‘Quills’ with Ryan Seacrest.

You: ‘Gladiator’ with Fabio.

Gruffi: ‘Bottoms Up’ with Meryl Streep.

You: ‘Batman Begins’ with Walter Matthau.

Gruffi: ‘Shine’ with Usher.

You: 'Lost in Translation' with Hilary Duff.

Gruffi: 'Juno' with Paris Hilton.

You: 'Edward Scissorhands' with David Hasselhoff.

Gruffi: 'The Aviator' with Richard Branson.

You: 'Nell' with Nathan Lane.

Gruffi: 'Forest Gump' with Sean Connery.

You: 'The Matrix' with Keanu Reeves.

Gruffi: 'Mean Girls' with Lindsay Lohan.

Ending with these two self aware choices sends the two of you into hysterics, buckling over and exchanging high fives. Gruffi Gummi slings his arm around you and says, "You ain't all that bad." Now that you've established somewhat of a relationship do you:

Use your Combat Weapon of Irony and have more fun (turn to **23**)?

Use the moment and speak Pure Truth (turn to **28**)?

8

He strides toward you snarling and growling. You quickly meditate on the Inner Force of Love seeking truth from the heart as opposed to the mind. His eyes are furious and even the walls seem to be bleeding. The windows are shut but a strong wind is flapping the curtains and his trench coat. Fearlessly you declare:

"Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror;

Then we shall see face to face.

Now I know in part;

Then I shall know fully,

Even as I am fully known.
And now these three remain:
Faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is love.”¹⁴⁹

Your words slow him down. They change the direction of the wind and he’s trying to walk against it, through it, like walking through mud. He is still determined to kill you. Apparently the words brushed against the sides of his heart and not through it. His eyes are wet with determination. He allows the wind to blow off his heavy trench coat. Still in a meditational calm you see that he is three feet from you with his claw propped for the thrust. Do you:

Use your Inner Force and speak more Pure Truth (turn to **5**)?

Use your Combat Weapon of Fragmentation to evade him (turn to **30**)?

9

You sit cross-legged at the foot of the door and search your mind for the most inspiring shards of truth. You hope that the quotes, coupled with the beauty and sincerity of a fountain pen scroll will scribble a cursive web and mend his broken heart. You begin by writing,

“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.”¹⁵⁰

You carefully tear off the sepia page along the dotted line and slide it under the door. You wait. You can hear paper crinkling and sarcastic grunts. He passes the page back to you, the quality and sleekness of the paper has been reduced to folds and crinkles. Below your quote at an awkward angle he has scrawled in a fading ball point pen,

“Most things break, including hearts. The lessons of life amount not to wisdom, but to scar tissue and callous.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Holy Bible, NIV, 1973, 1 Corinthians 13: 12-13, p. 971.

¹⁵⁰ Helen Keller, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

¹⁵¹ Wallace Stegner, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

You smooth out the page and write back to the broken empire,

“One word frees us
Of all the weight and pain in life,
That word is Love.”¹⁵²

He laughs patronizingly and replies,

“The hottest love has the coldest end.”¹⁵³

So you write,

“The greatest tragedy of life is not that men perish, but that they cease to
love.”¹⁵⁴

He retorts,

“Love never dies a natural death. It dies because we don't know how to
replenish its source. It dies of blindness and errors and betrayals. It dies of
illness and wounds; it dies of weariness, of withering, of tarnishing.”¹⁵⁵

The pace of the exchange has escalated to the speed of an online IM. As you write
back yet again your other hand uses a bottle top to stub out the cigarette burns he has
punched into the word ‘love’,

“Love is the master key that opens the gates of happiness.”¹⁵⁶

His anger grows as he heaves and throws his body against the door. You hear the
paper tearing as he rapidly writes back on small scraps,

¹⁵² Socrates, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

¹⁵³ Socrates, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

¹⁵⁴ W. Somerset Maugham, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

¹⁵⁵ Anais Nin, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

¹⁵⁶ Oliver Wendell, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

“The night has a thousand eyes, And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies, With the dying sun.
The mind has a thousand eyes, And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies, When love is done.”¹⁵⁷

You try to find room to reply between the lines of his broken doctor scroll but there’s no space left for a two way conversation. His messages are being slotted through the crack too fast,

“Where there is love, there is pain.”¹⁵⁸

“I was never one to patiently pick up broken fragments and glue them together again and tell myself that the mended whole was as good as new. What is broken is broken -- and I'd rather remember it as it was at its best than mend it and see the broken places as long as I lived.”¹⁵⁹

“When one is in love, one always begins by deceiving one's self, and one always ends by deceiving others. That is what the world calls a romance.”¹⁶⁰

“Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live.”¹⁶¹

“Ever has it been that love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation.”¹⁶²

Your inbox is filled with scraps of hopelessness. You hear him roar out! A roar that booms forth. Just when it might taper it is reinvigorated with more pain and anger. He is banging his fists against the door which seems to buckle and crack with every

¹⁵⁷ Francis W. Bourdillon, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

¹⁵⁸ Spanish Proverb, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

¹⁵⁹ Margaret Mitchell, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

¹⁶⁰ Oscar Wilde, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

¹⁶¹ Norman Cousins, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

¹⁶² Kahlil Gibran, <http://www.lovequotescollection.com>

punch. The hinges start to loosen and you nervously back away. The wood begins to flake and tear and the centre of the door caves in sending dust and broken dreams into the air. Turn to **21**.

10

Rainbow Brite returns with He-Man in tow. He-Man pulls playground faces at the three concussed villains and Rainbow Brite tells you that she is the next act and when she doesn't appear on stage Skeletor's going to know something is up. You must move quickly:

You use your Lock Picking Tool to hot wire Skeletor's car. You tell Rainbow Brite to meet you at the Lockdown Location and you and He-Man follow the map and speed off to rescue Braveheart Lion (turn to **25**) or Gruffi Gummi (turn to **12**)?

11

You move quickly because you can only hold this character for thirty seconds. With a hip-hop candour you scathe past the threesome. Gargamel eyes you as a potential intruder so you calmly start beat boxing and rhyming to yourself. He shrugs off his suspicion and you enter the backstage door. It closes behind you and you withdraw your Combat Weapon of Schizophrenia. Turn to **3**.

12

You are following the map to the Hipster Commune to rescue Gruffi Gummi. Not far from your destination you tell He-Man to stop playing George Michael songs and you wonder why all of his albums are on the ipod that Grandmaster Johnny Depp gave you. You drive through a tunnel which is illuminated by a mass of neon signs telling you to:

“Go back if you like any part of your reality”,

“Beyond this tunnel you do not exist”,

“You control your reality, turn around, this isn't a game”,

“Only continue if you are willing to loose yourself forever”,

“Go back! Watch TV or else you'll become it”.

You come out the other side into what looks like a cobble paved European village. You slow down and notice people like yourself, hipsters, relaxing in outdoor cafes, smoking Gauloises and gesturing flamboyantly. You park the car next to a sign that says:

“FRENCH SECTOR. This is where we wear berets and like to feel undeniably French. If you can’t speak the language, pretend you can and say the word ‘hideous’ a lot.”

You pass by the café scene and hear snippets like, “Daccord,” “Voila,” “Trois croissant si vu ple”. You realise that He-Man is lagging. You turn around and see him purchasing a pashmere and draping it around his neck. “He-Man!” you shout and he scurries to catch up to you. You decide to split up and look for Gruffi Gummi.

He-Man runs toward the DISCO INDUSTRIAL SECTOR and you turn the corner ahead and enter an outdoor virtual game. A handful of hipsters are spread on a tartan picnic blanket facing a massive cross section of a virtual three-storey building. Each hipster is connected to a control system. You identify one player’s virtual character who is surreptitiously stealing office stationery. Another character, operated by the computer sneaks up behind him and says, “What are you doing?” The hipster player responds in real time through a headset as his virtual character copies what he says with a two second delay, “Oh, I have a genius idea. I’m using these pencils to construct a three dimensional model of a little invention that has the potential to make this company millions.” The computer character responds, “Okay, well hurry up then,” and leaves. As the hipster player sighs and wipes his brow in real time so too does his virtual character.

Another hipster player’s virtual character is secretly checking Chinese manufacturing files. Another is in the basement telling the low end workers how to form a trade union. You ask one of the player’s whose virtual character is having a toilet break, “What the hell kinda game is this?”

He answers, “It’s called ‘Taking Down the Corporation’.”

“How long have you been playing.”

“I joined this game about a month ago. But I lasted a whole year in the game before.”

“How do you die?”

“When you become more corporate whore than corporate rebel.”

“Oh. Do you know where I can find Gruffi Gummi?”

“Sure. He’s probably in the REFERENCE CONVERTOR SECTOR.”

“Where is that?”

“Go down this alley, pass the SEINFELD SELF PROJECTION SECTOR and it’s on your right,” he points to the game, “I can’t talk anymore. My boss left the bathroom and I have about two minutes to bottle the liquid soap for the homeless shelter.”

You run down the alley which is paved in luminous dance floor squares. You pass the SEINFELD SELF PROJECTION SECTOR and see about a dozen exact replicas of the coffee booth that the characters in the series ‘Seinfeld’ frequent. About eight booths are in use. With four to a booth in accordance with the series, hipsters are eating tuna sandwiches and drinking coffee with one or all of the characters from the series. Where there’s three hipsters, there’s one character and where there’s one hipster there’s three characters. The booths are angled so that each group of hipsters cannot see another group experiencing the same simulation.

You come up to the REFERENCE CONVERTOR SECTOR and you see Gruffi Gummi slunk back on a recliner in front of a massive, hollowed-out television set. It’s about the same size as an intimate theatre space and the hollowed-out space is the virtual stage. Gruffi Gummi is watching a scene from the movie ‘Donnie Darko’ but Jake Gyllenhaal has been replaced by the British actor John Cleese. You compose yourself and calmly walk toward him. A few feet away he presses a button and

changes the perspective of the television stage to a side on angle. The scene on stage also changes to the death bed scene in the movie 'Wit'. The only difference is that Emma Thompson is being played by Kendra Wilkinson from 'Girls of the Playboy Mansion'.

You take a seat in the recliner along side him and briefly explain why the Grandmasters of Nostalgia are in big trouble and how they will surely die without his help. He doesn't remotely acknowledge your presence. Distracted by the performance all he says is, "I don't go into the so called real world," and then he chuckles at Wilkinson's dramatic attempts.

You plea, "But they're gonna die!"

He doesn't flinch. Instead he changes the stage perspective to an extreme close-up on Wilkinson's nose and mouth. You realise that converting Gruffi Gummi is going to be a new kind of difficult. This is a town where your very powers seem redundant. Every corner and façade is like The Way of the Hipster on overdrive. You need to create a common bond with Gruffi and show him that you are familiar with the tools of his existence.

Do you use your Combat Weapon of Intertextuality (turn to **7**)?

Do you use your Combat Weapon of Irony (turn to **23**)?

13

The trunk flings open. He-Man is cowering toward the back and you extend a hand to help him out. You hand him one of your Walkie Talkies and he fumbles to take hold of it as his eyes adapt to the fading light. He smoothes out his hair with spit and his hand while you find a black trench coat in your backpack. You hand it to him for the purpose of a disguise. Moaning about the quality of the fabric he reluctantly puts it on and you tell him to inspect the interior of the venue while you look for Rainbow Brite in her change room.

Dragging his feet he complies and you dash down an ally to the back of the building. With the backstage door in sight you feel sure that you will get to Rainbow Brite

before Skeletor. As you draw closer three figures emerge from around the opposite corner. It is the Grand Villains Gargamel, Duke Ighorn and Duchess Raven Waves. You duck behind a garbage can and contemplate your next move:

You use your Combat Weapon of Schizophrenia and transform into an urban afro slam poet (turn to **11**)?

You use your Combat Weapon of Intertextuality and sidle past the villains re-enacting the song 'I'm Singing in the Rain' (turn to **18**)?

14

You put on a stereotypical cheerleader's voice and mimic the gestures of an ignorant and self indulgent high school girl by fiddling with your hair and fixating on the reflection of your ass. Your tone is frivolous as if you are discussing a crush on a boy:

“You are like soooo deep and whateverrr. What happened to that cute girl I knew in junior high? You know, like the one with the naturally blonde highlights. I can't believe you like dyed overrr thaaat, sirously, do know how lucky you are!? I used to be jealous of you, sirously, guys would like worship you. Now you're like one of those Goth kids we used to laugh aaat. This whole existential thing is like ruining your styyyyle.”

Rainbow Brite suffocates her cigarette in the ashtray. The sadness in her eyes seems more pronounced through her excessive mascara and eye-liner. She douses an ambient candle with her finger tips and replies, “You're a bitch. How dare you reduce my existence to a teen movie bathroom scene.” Turn to **2**.

15

You hand Gruffi Gummi the parchment and give a quick lift of the chin as if to say, “Go on, read it.” He unrolls it without the slightest trepidation and begins to read it like he's doing you a favour:

There is no denying that there are very significant socio-economic forces in most contemporary societies that enforce and inform cultural experience. “These are based, in part, on the central fact that cultural production is never ‘free’, but is bound into the workings of a capitalist economy, based on commodification.”¹⁶³

Take for example ‘Suburban Mom Gnome god’. In her hand are the keys to an SUV. She drives this car not because she was physically forced but because it was one of the many over-advertised options for her middle-class social status. She was not necessarily duped by the advertising but perhaps her decision was linked more to logic in connection with her lifestyle. If we go back to her middle-class social status, it is more than likely that she has two or three children who attend a good school. This being the kind of school that offers ample extra-curricular activities. Perhaps all three of her children belong to different sports clubs and she is in a lift club agreement with other ‘Suburban Mom Gnome gods’. In this case, an SUV is an ideal vehicle of choice because she often has to drive large amounts of people to and from various locations.

She does not necessarily drive her model of car because the system deemed that it would be so. Perhaps her lifestyle is what deemed the system to deem it so. Even so, whether the car she drives, the clothes she wears or the house she lives in seem obvious or pre-planned, like something you’ve seen on television, this does not reduce her to a one dimensional being who supposedly only operates within these highly structured and stereotypical factions. Of course her choices and personal experiences are linked to her specific cultural classification but those categories and structures do not represent her entirely. She is a complex human being. It is a mistake to believe that you fully understand her or have her pinned. This would be a colonialist mentality of, “divide, categorize, and rule.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Couldry, 2000, p. 50.

¹⁶⁴ Couldry, 2000, p. 92.

Nobody's meaning, no matter how obvious you deem their lifestyle can be understood by a single narrative. Open your eyes to, "identities that resist classification."¹⁶⁵ This, "of course may mean working at odds with the definitional strategies of states or markets."¹⁶⁶ All people are complex beings. 'Suburban Mom Gnome god' might listen to Led Zeppelin or some other counter cultural music while she drives up and down the streets of Suburbia. You can be sure that her interests, tastes and world view do not neatly line up with your classification of her. "The challenge, then, is to retain that awareness of the political significance of culture without reducing its actual complexity."¹⁶⁷ Let's say that political classifications of people is like the English language, "it makes very little sense to say that, for example, the English language 'determines' the experiences of those who speak it: how, if it did, could we go on speaking new sentences and thinking new thoughts?"¹⁶⁸

Refusing to see the ambiguity in an individual's cultural formation is dangerous territory. You should "be very careful about assuming that individuals inhabit easily, without contradiction, the roles and descriptions assigned to them within the wider culture."¹⁶⁹ If you refuse then you too, Gruffi Gummi, can be classified and painted as a 'Gnome god'. In the real world you operated a flea market and focused on locally produced clothing and products. Thus we could shelve you as 'Agent of Change Gnome god'. However, you understand your own perceptions. You know that if you were labelled as 'Agent of Change Gnome god' that this classification only speaks for part of your existence. It is only one aspect of your fragmented and often contradictory identity. You should apply this understanding of yourself to others because "each person carries with them an individual history of reflection which cannot be reduced to shared cultural patterns. Partly pure accident, and partly structured, this history is the trace of that person's perceiving, absorbing, interacting, reflecting, retelling, reflecting again, and so on, a sequence endured by that person alone. This very particular 'structure' is what we mean by 'experience'."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Kearney, 1995, p. 558. cited in Couldry, 2000, p. 105.

¹⁶⁶ Couldry, 2000, p. 105.

¹⁶⁷ Couldry, 2000, p. 50.

¹⁶⁸ Couldry, 2000, p. 51.

¹⁶⁹ Couldry, 2000, p. 53.

¹⁷⁰ Couldry, 2000, p. 51.

Gruffi Gummi un-buries himself from the parchment and looks up. You see the traces of hopeful enlightenment in his eyes but they are shifting, as if searching for a reason to counter this new knowledge. He sighs and speaks with shaky determination,

“Okay cool, that’s fine. Maybe I did underestimate people but I still can’t shake the meaninglessness of it all. I remember my flea market and how the stall owners, my friends, would become so discouraged. You see all of them created original products. They’d strive to offer the customer something authentic. Within weeks of something beautifully new on the stands we’d see the very same thing in major chain stores. And my friends couldn’t compete. So they’d move on and make something new, but the same thing would happen. So as much as ‘Suburban Mom Gnome god’ may be complex, you don’t know what it’s like to see her wearing one of your products bought from a chain store.

On one of many occasions one of my friends created a new T-shirt print. It was a stencilled picture of a plug in a socket but the switch was off. It was a great metaphor for switching off the plug to the system. I saw a ‘Suburban Mom Gnome god’ wearing the chain stores rendition and it pissed me off! This groovy authentic thing but yet its meaning doesn’t seem to shift or change her significantly.”

It appears that Gruffi Gummi is not entirely convinced. Do you:

Speak more Pure Truth (turn to **20**)?

Use your Combat Weapon of Intertextuality (turn to **7**)?

16

With the three of them closing in on you, you summon the Combat Weapon of Self Awareness. Your physical body collapses on the gritty tar and your invisible self hovers above the scene like a CCTV camera. Perplexed they look around for a hidden sniper. Gargamel fumbles to check your pulse and yells, “Dead!” They punch the sky trying to out do each others villainous triumph. Striding away Duke Ighorn shrieks, “Our very presence is deadly! We are unstoppable!” When they are out of sight you withdraw your Combat Weapon of Self Awareness. Turn to **10**.

You arrive on the outskirts of the Lockdown Location. You, Braveheart Lion, Gruffi Gummi, Rainbow Brite and He-Man creep toward the small industrial building. Aside from a reservoir the location is desolate and sparse. Gruffi Gummi leads the way and uses hand signals to discreetly direct the rest of you. Every time you tumble or roll to the next position He-Man finishes off the move like a gymnast and then dusts off his outfit and straightens out his hair. Eventually you reach the reservoir and duck behind its low wall. Everybody is quietly panting. You decide to split up. You and He-Man approach from the front and the other three from the back.

You scurry to the building's wall and hide behind a corner. As you take a breath to make your next move two figures emerge out of the steel door from around the corner. It's Gargamel and Mumm-Ra. Smoking a cigar they walk in your direction talking in hushed tones about Skeletor's failure to apprehend Rainbow Brite, Gruffi Gummi and Braveheart Lion. As they reach the corner you and He-Man duck behind a garbage can. He-Man clumsily knocks the can with his protruding sword and you hear Gargamel say, "What was that?"

You elbow He-Man in the ribs and quietly panic. They're a few feet from spotting you. You see a cat lapping at something on the floor so you pick it up and throw it into Gargamel and Mumm-Ra's view. Gargamel scolds it, "Azrael! What did I tell you about lurking in the shadows and scaring the crap outta me!"

You stare at He-Man and he mouths the word, "Sorry," to you. Gargamel and Mumm-Ra start to one-up each other on their villain costumes as they go back through the door. You follow them and manage to stop the door from locking shut with your foot. Spread out on the floor with the door crushing your ankle you throw He-Man another stare for dawdling. He mouths the word, "What," and picks up the pressure from the door.

Inside is a dimly lit maze of grey corridors. You and He-man split up to find the imprisoned Grandmasters of Nostalgia. You sneak past a dingy room where Megatron and Duchess Raven Waves are playing cards. At the next room you peek through the crack of the door and see Tody quietly crying over a framed picture of Sunni Gummi.

Beyond that you hear the faint high pitched squall of Skeletor's voice. Nearing the room you begin to make out what he is saying.

“Why so grim Papa Smurf!? You're all fools! If you think about it I'm doing you a favour. Look at what your lives have become. Lady Lovely Locks is a stripper for goodness sake! All of you are inconsequential! There was a time when you had a purpose but not anymore and I know that when each of you are alone, making a bowl of cereal or looking in the mirror, it eats away at your soul. So I'm just here to put you out of your misery because I still have a purpose...you all make me sick!”

You hear somebody retort, it sounds like one of the My Little Ponies. “You don't have to do this Skeletor. We've all blended into society, none of us are a threat to you.”

Skeletor laughs, “Stupid pony! If it weren't for your precious Ironic Hipsters I would let you go and you could go back to giving pony rides at the animal farm. But you have all left a legacy, a legacy of obscure nostalgia that is slowly ushering these Hipsters into unconscious activism. When I kill you, you'll all be wiped off the face of the internet and all those re-runs and DVD's will disappear. Then those meddling Hipsters will live out nostalgia in their imaginations where they fluff it up with subjectivity. Without the product itself you'll all be romanticised by them and they'll spend their days longing for the past and being ineffectual in the present. There is no way around it, the Gatekeepers have spoken and you are all going to die!”

Your Grandmasters of Nostalgia erupt in wailing and screams. You use your Combat Weapon of Depthlessness and quietly slide under the door. You retract your weapon and see Skeletor standing in front of the prison cell with his fists in the air doing his villainous laugh. On either side of him Dr. Claw and Duke Ighorn are taunting the prisoners with peanut butter cookies. You summon all your strength and endurance and focus intently on your Inner Force. Without fear you say,

“Not so fast Skeletor.”

He spins around, “Well if it isn’t the Ironic Hipster who vandalised my car. You bitch! You are no match for me. Gonna try your little Weapon of Self Awareness or perhaps your Weapon of Schizophrenia? Fool! You’ll die with the rest of your Grandmasters of Nostalgia!”

He draws his sword and starts striding toward you. Without thinking, like a warrior acting on impulse, you summon the Inner Force of Faith and Hope and your chest protrudes with its blinding light. Duchess Raven Waves and Dr. Claw slink into a corner and Skeletor covers his face as he tries arduously to walk toward you through the incapacitating power of the light. He shouts, “Help me you fools!” The next thing Megatron, Mumm-Ra, Gargamel, Duke Ighorn, Dr. Claw, Duchess Raven Waves and Skeletor are in a ring around you struggling to apprehend you because the power of the light has whittled their physicality to slow motion. You spread your arms and emanate more Hope and Faith but the circle of villains is closing in on you.

Eventually and with great effort Skeletor’s purple arm sucker punches you in the stomach. You fly back with its force and you hit the wall. Lying there slightly concussed, the villains close in on you like seething vultures. Skeletor’s blade is poised aloft in the air but amid sure defeat you focus on the Inner Force of Love. Then you hear, “Why don’t you pick on someone your own size.”

It’s Gruffi Gummi rolling up his sleeves with Braveheart Lion, Rainbow Brite and He-Man. Skeletor, confused shouts, “Impossible! Get them!”

The villains disperse to take on the Supreme Grandmasters of Nostalgia. Megatron and Duke Ighorn head for Gruffi Gummi, Dr. Claw and Duchess Raven Waves begin to circle Rainbow Brite and Mumm-Ra coupled with Gargamel descends on Braveheart Lion. He-Man whips out glitter pom-poms and starts cheerleading for you and the Supreme Grandmasters. He sings snippets of different songs like, ‘Gimme Hope Jo’anna’¹⁷¹, ‘Faith’¹⁷² and ‘Up Where We Belong’¹⁷³.

¹⁷¹ Song by Eddy Grant, 1988, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eddy_Grant

¹⁷² Song by George Michael, 1987, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Michael

¹⁷³ Song by Joe Cocker, 1982, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Up_Where_We_Belong

An epic battle ensues. Each Supreme Grandmaster is fighting with the Inner Force. Skeletor has his beady eyes set on you as he launches forward. Just before he makes contact you summon the Inner Force of Faith, Hope and especially Love. The power of these three stop him in mid-air as he flings back and slams against the prison bars. You descend upon him and he rises with a smirk and says, “I see you have been training your Inner Force Combat. Wise Hipster, very wise but I have my own Inner Force!”

Through bulging eyes Skeletor summons the Inner Force of Darkness and the shadows take the shape of slippery distorted figures as they delve toward you. The bright white light radiating from you battles the black smog protruding from Skeletor. One by one the Supreme Grandmasters, having defeated the other villains, stand alongside you and add to the fight with their Inner Force Combat. Skeletor takes it up a level as his eyes turn red and his purple skin tone fades to black. You shout to the prisoners, “Care Bears Stare!”¹⁷⁴ With that the Care Bears hurriedly gather the rest of the Grandmasters and behind the bars they all shout in unison, “Care Bears Care!!!” Then, amid an influx of light, rainbows and hearts and butterflies and unicorns jump from the chests of the imprisoned Grandmasters.

Skeletor begins to wither under the sheer force of the light. Even the prison bars disintegrate. And now the light is all around him. The darkness shrieks and retracts back into his shriveling body. He-Man is still cheering, “Goooooo Nostalgia!” You all watch as Skeletor’s body dissolves into a puddle of sludge. You hear a contorted wail and then...he disappears.

You all burst into cheer and laughter! You have won! Because of you the Grandmasters of Nostalgia live. It has been an arduous journey of self discovery where you learnt the important lesson that although you exist in a postmodern world as a hyper real version of contemporary society, amid all the imagery and signs, you will never forget your most effective weapon, your Inner Force Combat of Faith,

¹⁷⁴ Standard line from the Care Bears series, 1981. The Care Bears' ultimate weapon is the 'Care Bear Stare,' in which the collected Bears stand together and radiate light from their respective tummy symbols. These combine to form a ray of love and good cheer which could bring care and joy into the target's heart. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Care_Bears

Hope and Love. Because of you The Way of the Hipster is safe in its ability to slowly change the face of the world.

Heart Throb, one of the My Little Ponies asks you, “Where to next Hipster?”

“I’d like to go home now and use these lessons there. Oh, and I’d love a Coke.”

Heart Throb, a winged pony replies, “Well hop on.”

You jump onto Heart Throb and wave goodbye to your Grandmasters of Nostalgia. She gallops out of the compound and takes off into the sky. You fly off into a marmalade colored sunset drinking a Coke, from a 250ml glass bottle of course, because it tastes better that way.

THE END

18

You pull a broken polka-dot umbrella from the garbage can and start strolling (A la Gene Kelly) toward the three villains as you sing,

“Du Du Du Du Du Du Du Du Du Du
Du Du Du Du Du Du Du Du Du Du’.”¹⁷⁵

Duke Ighorn looks up at the clear sky and nudges his companions puzzled by the lack of rain. You carry on with the scene and you extend your hand past the perimeter of your umbrella as you feel the drops of invisible rain. The three villains believe in your act and they lift old newspaper sheets above their heads. You retract your umbrella, sling it over your shoulder and sing:

“I’m singin’ in the rain
Just singin’ in the rain,
What a glorious feeling,
And I’m happy again’.”

¹⁷⁵ Lyric from the movie ‘Singin’ in the Rain, 1952,
<http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/singintherain/singintherain.htm>

You jump onto a street pole and begin to swing around:

“I’m laughing at clouds
So dark, up above,
The sun’s in my heart
And I’m ready for love’.”

The three villains abandon themselves to the ‘rain’ as they throw their sheets of paper into the air and perform a musical dance sequence in time with the tune. With flailing arms and cabaret spins they sing:

“She’s singin in the rain
Just singin in the rain
What a glorious feeling,
She’s happy again.”

Closing in on the door you do a Gene Kelly tap dance sequence. You incorporate the action of opening the door with a hop and a skip. The three villains are still lost in their dance sequence and you blind them with a Broadway smile as you close the scene by closing the door with the final line of the song:

“ ‘Dancin' and singin' in the rain’.”

The door closes behind you and you chuck the umbrella withdrawing your Combat Weapon of Intertextuality. Turn to **3**.

19

The seriousness of the situation is overshadowed by its similarity to the famous scene in the movie ‘The Shining’. Braveheart Lion snarls, “Your love will be your end!”

You wittingly interject mimicking Jack Nicholson’s character from the movie.

“Aren’t you supposed to say, “Little pigs, little pigs let me come in. Not by the hair on

your chinny chin chin? Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in...
Heeeeere's Johnny!¹⁷⁶”

Braveheart Lion freezes in mid snarl and furrows his brow. You continue, “Oh...yes. And that means that I should huddle in the corner pull at my hair and scream dramatically...right?”

You hurry to the corner and melodramatically re-enact the fearful woman from the movie. You take it up to an absurd level as you throw your body to the floor and roll around unnecessarily. Lying on your back with you legs flailing in the air you find it fitting to impersonate the Japanese prostitute from the movie ‘Lost in Translation’. So in a broken accent you say, “Lip them Mr Harris! Lip my stocking. Yessss. Lip them! Lip them!¹⁷⁷” You stop abruptly when you realise that you cannot see Braveheart Lion anymore. You sit up and scan the room. A cold shiver shoots up your back like a ping-pong ball. He's standing behind you. You run to the opposite end of the room and watch as he rolls up his sleeve and raises his sharpened claw:

Do you use your Combat Weapon of Fragmentation to evade him
(turn to **30**)?

Do you use your Inner Force and speak Pure Truth (turn to **8**)?

20

You take the ‘Suburban Mom Gnome god’ off the shelf for the sake of your argument. You place her on the floor in front of Gruffi Gummi so that her gaze may penetrate his understanding of her. You begin:

“So ‘Suburban Mom Gnome god’ buys an edgy T-Shirt from a major chain store. Instead of harping on the fact that she didn't buy it at its authentic source, let's think about how cool it is that she's actually wearing it! So what if she carries on with her daily routine. She has responsibilities. At least she's taking your metaphor into the suburbs. Just because she's wearing the T-shirt and she hasn't completely changed her

¹⁷⁶Words from the movie ‘The Shining’, 1980, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TVooUHN7j4>

¹⁷⁷ Paraphrase of words from the movie ‘Lost in Translation’, 2003,
<http://www.silywily.com/lostintranslation.html>

lifestyle to one say, like yours, it doesn't mean that the image has not made an impact on her.

We can't possibly understand her reasons for buying it but for goodness sake, give her space for being an 'unequivocally pained, unambivalently discontented, or momentarily aggressive subject.'¹⁷⁸ Don't you see, she is in a place of '*misrecognition*, this uneasy sense of standing under a sign to which one does and does not belong?'¹⁷⁹ Let it slide. So what if she doesn't abandon the system completely when she wears the 'unplugged T-shirt'. The point is she's reached some level of understanding. Think back to when you weren't an agent for change. Back to those days when you were less enlightened, less informed. The only reason you understand so much is because you dedicated some years of your life to study. Not everybody has that luxury and different people have different processes. It might take some a year and others fifty years. Your purpose is to focus on your own process and respectfully use your knowledge to inform and help other people on their process."

Gruffi Gummi seems a little more convinced but you need something epic, something profound to finish it off. You summon the Inner Force of Hope and you remember the monologue that the Prophetess Sybil spoke in her play. The monologue that speaks of the slow deterioration of the system even though we cannot see it with our own eyes. You speak the monologue from the play 'Sibylla' with as much passion as Sybil:

"You are one of the world's pied pipers. You must be stoic and you must be patient. 'Suburban Mom Gnome' and everyone is unknowingly following your tune because it's the kind of tune that any person can tap their foot to. The kind of tune that gets stuck in your head, the kind that you sing in the shower. Its global melody gently ushers the scales off their eyes. So slow you don't even know it's happening...because the pied piper is stoic...remember? A person could be washing the dishes or driving their car when another transparent scale falls from their eyes. They won't even realize but something...an elusive something, something ephemeral will feel...just off. Like they got up on the wrong side of the bed or took another route to work. A

¹⁷⁸Morris, 1990, p. 25, cited in Couldry, 2000, p. 48.

¹⁷⁹ Butler, 1993, p. 219, cited in Couldry 2000, p. 56.

sensation, an ever so slight tweaking of the mind, deviously apparent...like the scent of rain. In time consciousness catches up with the sensation and it becomes normal. This is when the pied piper's inviting tune, your tune, that rings out through the Gatekeepers circuit, like those major chain stores, entices the person to skip a few more steps into their subtle awakening.

As they dance and skip the pied piper leads them through the desert of the real. Your tune is like a museum curator who points out all the absurdities and mistruths along the way. Sometimes they grow tired and stop to set up camp. The pied piper could continue without rest but you cannot do this without them. So you patiently sleep under the canvas and wait for them to catch their breath, pick up their belongings and carry on.

At present we are still walking through the desert but there will come a time when we reach the promised land. It is a city of truth that always glistens with supernatural varnish and the scent of rain. A city without umbrellas. A city made plain. This city lies just beyond the edge of a mountainous cliff nestled in a valley. The only way to reach it...is to fly. This will only happen when the last scale falls from their eyes. It is then that the pied piper will cease to play his tune alone for they will know it very well. It will shift from a solo performance to the chorus of humanity. Your feet will effortlessly take leave from the ground as you become one with the sky. You'll stay close to the mountainous edge for you cannot go to the promised land without them. As you soar, glide and somersault through the air they will well up with hope and courage. Their souls, longing to taste your true freedom, will surge toward the sky trying to escape the prison of their flesh. The doubting of their flesh will battle the hope of their soul. The pied piper will extend a hand...you will show them how. Slowly they will feel the balls of their feet brush against gravity one last time. Their soul will pierce the flesh and they will fly. They will fly! Just like before the sensation will catch up to their consciousness and then they will join the pied piper and show the others how to fly. Only when every person, even the gatekeepers, take leave from the ground, heavenly angels will join in your chorus as you descend on the city of truth as pioneers of a new

renaissance. Finally the misconception will be over...and a new age will begin.

But you must have hope Gruffi Gummi. And you must persist with patience. We need you out there. The pied pipers of the world are far out numbered. Without you the journey to the promised land will take even longer. Come with me. Leave this place of perpetual referencing and hopeless evasion.”

Gruffi Gummi stands up slowly. He seems changed, his eyes are brighter. He steps toward the ‘Suburban Mom Gnome’ and crouches down to look at her. He taps the plaster of paris and a hollow echo rings out. He picks her up, looks at you and then throws her against the wall. She shatters into fragments. He gives you a mischievous smile and he runs to the nearest shelf and swoops a row of ‘Gnome gods’ onto the floor. They shatter. He yells, “Come on! Help me!” You join him in a chaotic race to break the ‘Gnome gods’. Both of you run up and down pulling and kicking at the shelves until every stereotype lies in a pile of shards and rubble on the floor. Gruffi is revived. Panting, sweating and beaming with a new sense of freedom he says, “Let’s get the hell outta here.”

You use your Lock Picking Tool to hot wire Skeletor’s car. If you have not rescued Braveheart Lion, you tell Gruffi Gummi to meet you at the Lockdown Location and you and He-Man follow the map and speed off to rescue Braveheart Lion (turn to **25**).

You use your Lock Picking Tool to hot wire Skeletor’s car. If you have already rescued Braveheart Lion; you, Gruffi Gummi and He-Man follow the map to the Lockdown Location (turn to **17**).

21

Braveheart Lion sadistically peers through the broken splinters and shards of wood. His gnashing teeth accentuate the whites of his eyes. He growls at you like a murderous mad man and you look to escape out the window but it has been barred with a fine grid of steel. You look back at him and he wails, “Did you think you could heal *my* broken heart?! I told you to leave me alone! And now I will rip apart ever

fibre of your being!” He claws at the hole and begins to force his body through the gap. He’s salivating to kill you. Do you:

Use your Combat Weapon of Irony to defend yourself (turn to **19**)?

Use your Inner Force and speak Pure Truth (turn to **8**)?

22

With gentle eyes and a firm tone you say, “This is your life and it's ending one minute at a time.”¹⁸⁰ Rainbow Brite stubs out her cigarette. The sadness in her eyes seems more pronounced through her excessive mascara and eye-liner. She douses an ambient candle with her finger tips and replies:

“I see all this potential, and I see squandering. God damn it, an entire generation pumping gas, waiting tables; slaves with white collars. Advertising has us chasing cars and clothes, working jobs we hate so we can buy shit we don't need. We're the middle children of history, man. No purpose or place. We have no Great War. No Great Depression. Our Great War's a spiritual war... our Great Depression is our lives. We've all been raised on television to believe that one day we'd all be millionaires, and movie gods, and rock stars. But we won't. And we're slowly learning that fact. And we're very, very pissed off.”¹⁸¹

You become disheartened with her choice of retort and you plea with her, “I agree with you. I do. I have seen the world outside, the routine apocalypse. Every time I think about it and the people it has enslaved it hits me like a Greek pillar joust. But you have a choice...as do I. Either you let it weigh down on you like a perpetual nightmare or you choose to dream. Dream through the darkness.” Turn to **2**.

23

You pick up the remote attached to your recliner and change the television stage to a scene from the movie ‘The Big Lebowski’ and you replace Jeff Bridges with Chuck Norris. It plays out for about ten seconds and then Gruffi Gummi changes the

¹⁸⁰ Line from the movie ‘Fight Club’, 1999, <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Fight-Club.html>

¹⁸¹ Monologue from the movie ‘Fight Club’, 1999, <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Fight-Club.html>

television stage to a scene from the movie 'The Fast and the Furious' and puts Anthony Hopkins in the role played by Vin Diesel.

You change it to 'Girl Interrupted' with Jessica Simpson in Winona Ryder's role. He puts on 'La Vie en Rose' as portrayed by Britney Spears. With each change you both giggle at the choices as it becomes a light-hearted game of one-up manship.

You put on: 'Capote' with Ron Moss.

Gruffi: 'Garden State' with Ron Moss.

You: 'Borat' with Al Pachino.

Gruffi: 'Quills' with Ryan Seacrest.

You: 'Gladiator' with Fabio.

Gruffi: 'Bottoms Up' with Meryl Streep.

You: 'Batman Begins' with Walter Matthau.

Gruffi: 'Shine' with Usher.

You: 'Lost in Translation' with Rhianna.

Gruffi: 'Juno' with Paris Hilton.

You: 'Edward Scissorhands' with David Hasselhoff.

Gruffi: 'The Aviator' with Richard Branson.

You: 'Nell' with Nathan Lane.

Gruffi: 'Forest Gump' with Sean Connery.

You: 'The Matrix' with Keanu Reeves.

Gruffi: 'Mean Girls' with Lindsey Lohan.

Ending with these two self aware choices sends the two of you into hysterics, buckling over and exchanging high fives. Gruffi Gummi slings his arm around you and says, "You ain't all that bad." Now that you've established somewhat of a relationship do you:

Use the moment and summon your Inner Force to speak Pure Truth (turn to **28**)?

Use your Combat Weapon of Intertextuality (turn to **7**)?

24

Inside the Poetry Venue you slink to a dimly lit corner table and survey Skeletor's every move. You watch as he orders an espresso and deviously drops his Zippo to look up the waitress's skirt. You see one of the bar tenders whisper something in his ear and then they look straight at you. You pick up the menu and try to act natural but the glaring Skeletor rises from his table and starts walking toward you. Knowing that an imminent face-off with the most notorious Grandmaster villain is at hand you:

Use the Combat Weapon of Self Awareness to feign death as if you died at the very site of him (turn to **6**)?

Use the Combat Weapon of Intertextuality from Woody Allen's film 'Annie Hall' to confuse Skeletor (turn to page **32**)?

25

Outside Braveheart Lions' unkept old school building you tell He-Man to keep a lookout while you go inside. Piled up against Braveheart Lion's front door, pouring across the pavement and spilling over the curb you see hundreds of bouquets of flowers and encouraging notes. It's like the memorial of a valiant prince. You scan the letters from the people of the city who long for his return. Those that he helped are trying to return the favour. Wading through the flowers to the front door you pass an

old woman hunched over in a shawl. She touches your face and you glimpse her hopeful eyes.

She whispers, “Don’t bother knocking,” as she passes by.

You see that she has left a sandwich and a glass of milk at the foot of the heavily bolted door. A familiar looking feline slinks up and begins to lap up the milk. You step up to access the front door and the cat hisses sadistically. An ominous and dramatically evil voice booms out, “And what do you think you’re doing!?”

You shudder at the realisation of your enemy. His body is hidden behind a heap of tulips and daisies but you see his clenching metallic arm adorned with a spiky gold cuff. It is the notorious villain Dr Claw and the feline is the evil MAD Cat*. He speaks again, “I was told about you. A stupid inspector, a dog with a fake moustache and a little girl might have gotten the better of me but today you will die.”

MAD cat hisses and snickers with his paw teetering over the launch button. Dr Claw gives him a heavy stroke and orders Mad cat to, “Launch the Mad jet!”¹⁸² Mad Cat recovers from the abrasive affection, snarls and presses down on the button. You turn to find He-Man who is lying affectionately among the flowers. He’s positioning a tulip behind his ear when you shout, “He-Man! Help me!” The missile is locked on and whizzing towards you. It makes a wake through the flowers. You leap and jump but the missile follows your course. Split seconds from oblivion He-Man dives in front of you and deters the missile with his sword sending it back into the sky where it explodes. He frantically hooks the tulip back in place and shouts through the explosion, “Get inside! I will hold of Dr Claw and his well groomed feline!”

You look at the bolted door and harness your Combat Weapon of Dephlessness where you reduce yourself to a surface and slide under the door.

¹⁸² Standard line from the series ‘Inspector Gadget’, 1984, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inspector_Gadget

Inside the dingy apartment you withdraw your Combat Weapon of Depthlessness. All the curtains are drawn and the décor droops in the shadowy twilight. To your left is a pile of unwashed plates and glasses, probably belonging to the sandwich and milk lady. You step lightly heading toward a dark wooden door at the end of the corridor. As you approach you see claw scratches and chaotic grooves in the wood of the slightly ajar door. Quietly you slink through and come upon a large empty room. Through the murky light made grainy by the floating dust you see the back of a torn double seater couch set in front of a television elevated by bricks. Moving closer you see that the floor between the couch and the television is a mess with empty whiskey bottles and drug paraphernalia.

On the couch, clutching a three quarter empty whiskey bottle, Braveheart Lion is sprawled asleep. His fur coat is overgrown and dirty and the red heart on his chest is black and broken. You watch him for a while. His chest undulating with the rhythm of sleep and you realise that being asleep is probably the most peaceful place for him. You draw one half of a curtain not wanting to disturb him with too much light. You pull up a stool and sit beside him gently stroking his mane. He begins to sweetly stir and then abruptly sits up, drops his bottle and scuffles to block the light while he puts on his dark lens sun glasses. He stumbles to the opposite end of the room and grapples a cigarette box for the last one. He lights it and without even looking at you he says,

“Get out!”

You try to speak but every time you utter a sound he throws a bottle against a wall and points to the door. With drunken cognition he realises that you are not going to cease so he grabs his last bottle of liquor and stumbles out the room using the wall as a steady guide. You follow after him but he slams the door and locks it. You hear his body collapse onto the floor on the other side. You realise that you are going to need a miracle to bring him back so you:

Use your Fountain Pen and Moleskin Journal Tool to write messages with Inner Force Combat and speak Pure Truth (turn to 9)?

Use your DVD of 'A Clockwork Orange' Tool and with your Combat Weapon of Intertextuality, show him the scene that was used against him by Skeletor (turn to 29)?

26

You clap your hands like a three year old who's seen a white rabbit pulled from a top hat. You scamper up to her, grab her hands and flippantly begin to spin her around as if you were frolicking on some far off pastoral estate in pastel gingham. Beaming and whirling through the summer air you sing the 1940's English school song with the syrup of innocence:

“A-tisket a-tasket

A green and yellow basket

I wrote a letter to my love

And on the way I dropped it

I dropped it, I dropped it

Yes, on the way I dropped it

A little girlie picked it up

And took it to the market

She was truckin' on down the avenue

Without a single thing to do

She was peck, peck, peckin' all around

When she spied it on the ground

A-tisket a-tasket

She took my yellow basket

And if she doesn't bring it back

I think that I shall die

A-tisket a-tasket

A green and yellow basket

I wrote a letter to my love

And on the way I dropped it

I dropped it, I dropped it
Yes, on the way I dropped it
A little girlie picked it up
And took it to the market

(Was it red?) No, no, no, no
(Was it brown?) No, no, no, no
(Was it blue?) No, no, no, no
Just a little yellow basket”¹⁸³

You spin to the ground cushioned in a patch of wild lilies and you hold your stomach lightly as you giggle with the splendor of youth. Your arm floats down beside you expecting to feel the jovial presence of your playmate. But she isn't there. Your giggling tapers with nervousness and you part the encompassing lilies looking for your friend. You see her crouching menacingly with her back against the washed out concrete wall in her change room. Something about her Gargoyle pose tells you that she didn't follow you to the summer estate. Rainbow Brite speaks with the same burning in her eyes:

“You forget that I am still your Grandmaster. Dark or light I can snap you like a twig. You're an amateur with your perpetual irony.”

She rises like a super villain and draws closer to you. Each step draws the curtains of your mind as she uses the Inner Force of Darkness to envelop you. Like a tea bag soaked for three days your essence is being diminished. You try to get up but when you reach your knees the darkness saturates your strength leaving you with muscular entropy. Rainbow Brite hangs over you like a bird of prey as she summons more darkness. Through your bulging eyes the shadows take the shape of slippery distorted figures. They delve into you and send your mind stumbling down black corridors as your grasping hand tries to find a steady wall. They take hold of your heart and squeeze. Your eyes shoot open from the wretched pain! Through the blackness you

¹⁸³ <http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/lyrics/ticket.htm>

see her burning red eyes and the sadistic glisten of her medusa hair. As she speaks through gritted teeth these two features pulsate with a devilish punctuation:

“Irony can only get you so far! You have failed me and you have failed your mission. Before death takes you away know this...I will personally kill every single one of your precious Grandmasters in lockdown! I’ll see you in hell!”

Your chest lurches forward as you gasp your last breath. The darkness overcomes you. You die.

27

You centre yourself as they edge closer. They are three feet from you pounding their bats into the palm of their hands and doing their villainous laughs. You crouch down and then spring forth sending out seven hologram images of yourself. You and your images leap and dive and the three villains start swinging their bats frenziedly. Every time they think they’ve blundered you their bat moves swiftly through your hologram image. You can only execute this combat weapon for another ten seconds so you:

Use your Yo-Yo Tool (turn to **33**)?

Use the Combat Weapon of Self Awareness (turn to **16**)?

28

Gruffi Gummi grabs his NATO jacket from the arm of his recliner and says, “Come on. I wanna show you the POP STAR PARALLEL PROTRUSION SECTOR.”

He walks ahead excitedly and glances back to offer you a cigarette. You don’t want to ruin the burgeoning friendship but time is against you so you summon the question and nonchalantly say, “So what’s the vibe with this Hipster Commune? It’s pretty cool, kinda like Disneyland but surely your day pass has gotta expire sometime?”

Gruffi turns on his heels and subtly shakes his head and speaks with expected disappointment, “Don’t play this game with me. You’re not the first to try and

‘rescue’ me. Papa Smurf offered me food and boarding if I helped out on his subsistence farm. Whether I live in this Disneyland or the Disneyland of rural existence it’s all just a theme park and I prefer these rides. And you’re no better than me. You had just as much fun in the REFERENCE CONVERTOR SECTOR...admit it.”

You persist, “Sure. It was cool. But it’s not real. It’s like watching a movie, it’s cool and it’s fun but it isn’t real. I wouldn’t live out my life in this place.”

Gruffi shouts, “Well I would! And I do! Look, you’ve got a good heart kid but it’s inevitable that you’ll end up here too. Soon enough you’ll realise that this is the real world.”

You retort, “If this is the real world then what’s the problem with leaving and living out your days in the other ‘real world’?”

Gruffi with an air of arrogance, “That’s cute, an obvious rebuttal. Like I said, in time you’ll end up here...Both worlds are the same but this place is honest about its absurdity. It’s like the world out there accelerated for people like you and me who see it all and just want to get on with it really. See, out there we’re a small percentage of a majority who actually believe in the illusion, who form their lives around and for the illusion. You might find this place repetitively grotesque but out there the repetitiveness of false hope, false change, and false enlightenment is more grotesque and farcical than anything you see here. I tried to make a difference, only to realise that my big difference was being assimilated straight back into the system which rendered the whole thing void, meaningless. Where at first I might have got a small amount of people to think it ended up with me involuntarily getting a large amount of people to buy...I don’t wanna be a play play bobble head revolutionary anymore...Come with me, I wanna show you something.”

You follow Gruffi Gummi in pensive silence. His argument is making sense. You focus all your strength and summon the Inner Force of Hope to continue the quest and rescue him as opposed to him enslaving you. Quietly smoking a cigarette he leads you past a number of carnivalesque real-meets-media-virtual life spectacles, until you

reach an un-kept small holding. In the middle you head toward a little house that resembles the one from 'The Wizard of Oz' meets the witch's cottage in 'Hansel and Gretel.' The front door is red and the paint has dried in drips and swirls. Bronze lettering has been screwed to the door. It reads, 'Gnome gods'. He opens the door and you follow him inside. In the shadows you see him scan the walls with his hands until he finds the switch and flicks on the fluorescent lights.

It's beautifully obscure. The walls are lined with shelves that are packed with garden gnomes. Gruffi doesn't speak, he takes a seat and allows you to scan the shelves. There's thousands of them. You move to the nearest shelf and observe an intricately painted gnome. It's a female. Painted is a string of pearls, a beige camisole with a pink cardigan, white linen pants and tan coloured sandals. In either dwarfed hand she clutches a cell phone and car keys. There's a bronze plaque on the base of the gnome, it reads, 'Suburban Mom Gnome god'.

You shift to another gnome whose black beard has been sculpted up and around his head to fall like a fringe covering his one eye. He wears a black T-Shirt with the slogan 'Love Kills' across the front, dark blue skinny jeans and black Converse sneakers. He has a black-studded belt and a lip ring. The plaque reads, 'Emo Gnome god'.

You're starting to get the picture and you pick up the pace as you skim over a few more 'Gnome gods'; 'Pope Gnome god', 'Revolutionary Gnome god', 'Pseudo Revolutionary Gnome god', 'Hip-Hop Gnome god', 'Business Gnome god', 'Cyclist Gnome god', 'Florist Gnome god', 'Shopkeeper Gnome god', 'Doctor Gnome god'...

You would need days to get through all of them. The contents of this house are like a microcosm of existing social positions and types. You turn to Gruffi Gummi for some kind of answer.

He says, "This is what I do in my spare time."

"You must have a lot of that."

“Now do you see?”

“You paint these gnomes according to social stereotypes put them on your shelf and think that now you know everything about that kind of person. Right?”

“Sort of. Take ‘Suburban Mom Gnome god’ as an example. I’m not saying that I know every suburban mom in the world on some sort of personal level but I am saying that I know every suburban mom in the world on a structural level. So I don’t know what they’ll do from moment to moment but I do know what position they play in society and what position they think they play in society. It’s the same with every gnome here. What good is a person who’s been defined and shelved? It’s meaningless, they’re only good for catching the dust. We are all victims of ‘categories, classifications and frameworks of the culture.’¹⁸⁴”

Gruffi Gummi just used cultural theory to back up his already strong argument. You fight the urge to become a member of The Hipster Commune. To just give it all up and quietly slip into the game. But you realise that Gruffi Gummi is under the misguided impression that all people or cultures can be categorized. You look around at the looming ‘Gnome gods’ all painted and placed and say,

“Gruffi, you’ve fixed these ‘Gnome gods’ in time as if the people they represent are unthinking robotic beings who have no personal experience or perceptions. You’re a contradiction. You lament about the power the system enforces yet you do the very same thing to people and cultures. Don’t you see that ‘Mapping the “cultures” of others is now generally understood within anthropology to be an instrument not of science but of power, heavily implicated in the practices involved in, and in some respects still continuing after the formal end of, colonialism.’¹⁸⁵ You’ve become what you’ve always hated. You’re a microcosm of the very same system that reduced your beauty, your efforts, your experience and your will to change, to a manufactured product with a set price and dimensions. A shiny product sitting on a shelf beaming back at you, just like these ‘Gnome gods’.”

¹⁸⁴ Stuart Hall cited in Couldry, 2000, p. 50.

¹⁸⁵ Couldry, 2000, p. 92.

Gruffi interjects, “You’ve got a point but it’s flawed. Look around at the thousands of ‘Gnome gods’ in this room. Each one you’ve seen seems familiar doesn’t it? You see the roles people play in the real world as much as I do. So what’s wrong with painting it and putting it on a shelf? These people shelved themselves way before I did. You see, if I ever miss the real world I come here. At least in here they know their place. Out there all these ‘Gnome gods’ act like they actually exist like they’re not a walking stereotype. No thanks. I prefer it here.”

Gruffi Gummi honestly believes that the massive array of people these ‘Gnome gods’ represent don’t count. He actually thinks that these kinds of people aren’t real and for that reason he won’t leave the Hipster Commune. You must act quickly. Do you:

Use your Combat Weapon of Irony (turn to **23**)?

Take the rolled parchment from your backpack to reveal Pure Truth (turn to **15**)?

29

You get out your portable DVD player Tool from your backpack and load up the movie ‘A Clockwork Orange’. You skip to the scene where the lead character Alex, played by Malcolm McDowell is strapped into a chair and forced to watch images that spew forth the evils of the world. A similar scenario happened to Braveheart Lion when he was captured by the Grand Villain Skeletor. The only difference is that in the movie Alex is medicated to feel overwhelmingly sick when he is confronted with anything resembling the imagery. Braveheart Lion however, was medicated with an obscure strain of hopelessness. The drug assured that the more evil he saw the more he would replace love with cynicism and emptiness until nothing else remained.

You press play and slide the player under the door. You cross your fingers and hope that the scene will nudge him into remembrance. It plays out to the sound of his heaving breath as the back of his head begins a thumping metronome on the other side of the door. As the scene escalates so does the aggressive pounding on the door which seems to buckle and crack with every bang. The hinges start to loosen and you

nervously back away. The wood starts to flake and tear and the centre of the door caves in sending dust and broken dreams into the air. Turn to **21**.

30

You focus and summon your strength as you leap forward and send seven hologram images of yourself darting feverishly around the room. Braveheart Lion stands like a demonic totem pole. His only movement are his eyes as he watches you and your holograms like someone scanning a noisy web page trying to find the right link. His claw twitches at his side. You and your holograms bounce off the walls and run circles around him as you muster more energy and hope that he will grow dizzy. Amid the frenzy he closes his eyes and shoots out his claw. It jabs you in the back between your rib cage. Your eyes bulge and your holograms disappear. He thrusts it in further. You cough up blood onto the tips of his claw now protruding out of your chest. Your existence begins to tunnel into a far off point. You gasp once more and he drops his arm and whispers, "Love hurts," as you slide off his claw. You die.

31

You close your eyes and breathe. Using Pure Truth requires grace and sincerity. The Inner Force of Faith, Hope and Love empower you. You open your eyes and begin:

Soon enough the shadows start to close in,
Too much darkness affects even a passive soul,
Still clutching the letter she alters her position and sits
On the lighter side of the corner,
The lighter side of blue,
How beautiful she would be
How beautiful she can be.

A strong wind comes,
She feels no hands
But something is lifting her.
It feels like a Battalion of hands gently urging her to her feet.
Out of the corner of her eye she sees the shadows cower,
And now the light is all around her

And she floats in purity.
As the light seeps through her muscles
Between her veins
Pierces her heart
And awakens her soul,
Years of folding her letter unravel and she screams.

Like a child first out of the womb
She screams
She screams for years lost
She screams
She screams for the hands
She screams
She screams for the overwhelming sensation of light cracking through her
Hardened bones, she screams
She screams for her letter
She screams
She screams out of awe of her revelation

She screams still holding the letter she fights the desire to let it go but
His presence is much bigger than her and His glory requires it of her.
Slowly her arms let lose their fastened grip
Until her limbs stretch wide to saturate
To touch
As much as she can of Him.

A quenching fire drives out the masked voices and she thinks she will burst
From the tangible presence of
Hope
And Love.

He holds her close as they watch her letter ascend into the heavens
Through beams of dusk coloured light.
The whole earth sighs with her

A sigh of relief
A sigh of gratitude.
You see, in a breath her letter is made new.
He stamped it,
Embossed and golden it reads,
'Return to sender'
Return me to my sender.

Finally her letter has a destination,
A home.
And for the rest of her days she will walk in the light,
In the quenching fire
Because she's walking home,
Because she is walking with her love,
Because she is walking toward her letter.

I am the letter
She is the letter
You are the letter
Return me to sender
Return me.

Turn to 4.

32

The raging Skeletor is just two feet away. You stand up and impersonating Woody Allen you say, “Well, I didn’t start out spying. I thought I’d surprise you. Pick you up from school.”¹⁸⁶ Skeletor comes to a halt and wrinkles his eyebrows trying to place the quote. You carry on before he is able to snap out of it, “So you wanna go into the movie or what?”¹⁸⁷ Skeletor involuntarily replies, “No, I can’t go into a movie that’s already started, because I’m anal.”¹⁸⁸ You reply, “That’s a polite word

¹⁸⁶ Line from the movie ‘Annie Hall’, 1977, <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Annie-Hall.html>

¹⁸⁷ Line from the movie ‘Annie Hall’, 1977, <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Annie-Hall.html>

¹⁸⁸ Line from the movie ‘Annie Hall’, 1977, <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Annie-Hall.html>

for what you are.’¹⁸⁹” You turn your back on Skeletor and still holding the scene you begin walking toward the door. Inches from escape you hear him say, “Sometimes I ask myself how I’d stand up under torture.’¹⁹⁰ You know what he has said is from the movie you have been referencing but something in his tone was different, it felt sinister. You realise that he is not dazed by your Combat Weapon of Intertextuality anymore. Before you can contemplate your next move your body surges forward. You crumple to the floor. Battling to breathe your hand registers a sword lodged in your back. Skeletor abruptly withdraws his sword through your burning flesh. He kneels down and sadistically whispers, “You deserve to die for even thinking you were a worthy match for me.” In a pool of your own blood your last emotion is languish over failing your mission.

You die.

33

With seconds of Fragmentation left you unhinge your yo-yo and start swinging it in an ‘around the world’ motion to pick up speed. Your images are doing the same thing. Gargamel leaps out of the way of a hologram yo-yo and turns directly into the path of your yo-yo. With a flick of the wrist your yo-yo spins out and hits him directly between the eyes. He falls over and you turn to take care of Duke Ighorn and Duchess Raven Waves who are messily ducking and diving to avoid the holograms. Just as you steady yourself, Ighorn and Raven hysterically dodge another hologram’s yo-yo and they face plant each other. They fall over. The three of them lie concussed in a body pile. You shake your head (a la Jerry Seinfeld).

Turn to **10**.

¹⁸⁹ Line from the movie ‘Annie Hall’, 1977, <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Annie-Hall.html>

¹⁹⁰ Line from the movie ‘Annie Hall’, 1977, <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Annie-Hall.html>

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Pop Culture Picture Reference Appendix In Order of Appearance:



Amélie

Amélie is a 2001 French film directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet and starring Audrey Tautou. Its original French title is *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain* ("The Fabulous Destiny of Amélie Poulain"; *poulain* is French for foal). Written by Jeunet with Guillaume Laurant, the film is a whimsical and somewhat idealised depiction of contemporary Parisian life, set in Montmartre. It tells the story of a shy waitress who decides to change the lives of those around her for the better, while struggling with her own isolation.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Am%C3%A9lie>)



Björk

Björk Guðmundsdóttir (born November 21, 1965) is an Icelandic singer-songwriter, composer, actress and music producer. She has been nominated for 13 Grammy Awards, an Academy Award and two Golden Globe Awards (including one for acting). She is best known for her expressive vocals and an interest in many kinds of music, including pop, alternative rock, jazz, ambient music, electronica, classical and folk, as well as her eccentric costumes. Her singles "It's Oh So Quiet", "Army of Me" and "Hyperballad" all charted in the UK Top 10. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bj%C3%B6rk>)



Virginia Woolf

(Adeline) Virginia Woolf (née **Stephen**; 25 January 1882 – 28 March 1941) was an English novelist and essayist, regarded as one of the foremost modernist literary figures of the twentieth century. During the interwar period, Woolf was a significant figure in London literary society and a member of the Bloomsbury Group. Her most famous works include the novels *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *Orlando* (1928), and the book-length essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929) with its famous dictum, "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction."

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bj%C3%B6rk>(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Woolf))



Sylvia Plath

Sylvia Plath (October 27, 1932 – February 11, 1963) was an American poet, novelist and short story writer. Known primarily for her poetry, Plath also wrote a semi-autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar*, under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas. The book's protagonist, Esther Greenwood, is a bright, ambitious student at Smith College who begins to experience a mental breakdown while interning for a fashion magazine in New York. The plot parallels Plath's experience interning at *Mademoiselle* magazine and subsequent mental breakdown and suicide attempt.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sylvia_Plath) Picture from separate source,

(<http://www.sylviaplathforum.com/images/10.jpg>)



Seinfeld

Seinfeld is an American situation comedy that originally aired on NBC from July 5, 1989 to May 14, 1998, lasting nine seasons. Many of its catchphrases have entered into the popular culture lexicon. The eponymous series was made by Larry David and Jerry Seinfeld, with the latter starring as a fictionalized version of himself. Set predominantly in an apartment block on New York City's Upper West Side (but shot mostly in Los Angeles, California), the show features a host of Jerry's friends and acquaintances, which include George Costanza, Elaine Benes and Cosmo Kramer.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seinfeld>) Picture from separate source, (<http://api.ning.com/files/seinfeld.jpg>.)



Snoop Dogg's Father Hood

Snoop Dogg's Father Hood is an American television reality show starring rapper Snoop Dogg and his family. His family includes his wife Shante, his daughter Cori whom he calls "Choc", his son Cordell whom he calls "Rook", and his oldest son Corde whom he calls "Spank". It premiered December 9, 2007 on E! and premiered on January 13, 2008 in the UK. It is rated TV-14, but is often mistaken to not be rated. It is broadcasted on MusiquePlus in Canada. Despite the nature of the show, it is widely believed to be scripted because of the exaggerated characteristics of each member, including Snoop himself.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snoop_Dogg's_Father_Hood)



Kim Kardashian

Kimberly Noel Kardashian (born October 21, 1980) is an American stylist, apparel retailer and television personality. She is perhaps best known for her social life, stolen sex tape, and her appearances on reality show *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kim_Kardashian)



Nicole Richie

Nicole Camille Richie (born September 21, 1981) is an American actress, author, celebuntante and an aspiring singer. The adopted daughter of Lionel Richie, she is perhaps best known for her role in the reality television show *The Simple Life*. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicole_Richie)



Gwen Stefani

Gwen Renée Stefani (born October 3, 1969), is an American singer, songwriter, fashion designer, and occasional actress. Stefani fronts the rock/ska punk band No Doubt, whose 1995 album *Tragic Kingdom* propelled them to stardom, selling 16 million copies worldwide. Stefani recorded her first solo album *Love. Angel. Music. Baby.* in 2004. The album was primarily inspired by music of the 1980s, taking Stefani's work further into more pop, dance music, and enjoyed international success with sales of over seven million. The album's third single "Hollaback Girl" became the first U.S. digital download to sell one million copies. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwen_Stefani)



Regina George

Regina George is a character from *Mean Girls*, a 2004 film directed by Mark Waters (*Freaky Friday*), written by (and co-starring) Tina Fey, and starring Lindsay Lohan, Rachel McAdams, Amanda Seyfried, Lacey Chabert, and Lizzy Caplan. At the top of the social ladder are a trio of girls known as "The Plastics," a group of popular and spiteful girls who rule the roost: the ditzy Karen Smith (Amanda Seyfried), the nosey Gretchen Wieners (Lacey Chabert) and the acid-tongued Regina George (Rachel McAdams). Regina is considered the "Queen Bee" of the school and is adored by all the other girls in the school, who hold her in such high esteem that even being punched in the face by her is considered an honor. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mean_Girls)
Picture from separate source, (http://thedailycrush.com/uploaded_images/mcadams-765144.jpg)



Jane Fonda

Jane Fonda (born December 21, 1937) is an American actress, writer, political activist, former fashion model and fitness guru. She rose to fame in the 1960s with films such as *Barbarella* and *Cat Ballou* and has appeared in films ever since. She also produced and starred in several exercise videos released between 1982 and 1995.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_fonda)

Picture from separate source.

(<http://www.poster.net/fonda-jane/fonda-jane-photo-jane-fonda-6234671.jpg>)



MTV

MTV (Music Television) is an American cable television network based in New York City. Launched on August 1, 1981, the original purpose of the channel was to play music videos guided by on-air hosts known as VJs. Today, MTV still plays a limited selection of music videos, but the channel primarily broadcasts a variety of pop culture and reality television shows targeted at adolescents and young adults. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mtv>)



Beyoncé Knowles

Beyoncé Giselle Knowles (born September 4, 1981), commonly known as **Beyoncé**, is an American R&B singer-songwriter, record producer, fashion designer, fashion model, film producer and actress. Born and raised in Houston, Texas, she enrolled in various performing arts schools, and was first exposed to singing and dancing competitions as a child. Knowles rose to fame in the late 1990s as the lead singer of R&B girl group Destiny's Child, the best-selling girl group of all time.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beyonce_Knowles)

Picture from separate source,

(http://img.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2007/10_01/BeyonceR_468x766.jpg)



Michael Jackson

Michael Joseph Jackson (born August 29, 1958) is an American musician and entertainer. The seventh child of the Jackson family, he debuted on the professional music scene at the age of 11 as a member of The Jackson 5 and began a solo career in 1971 while still a member of the group. Referred to as the "King of Pop" in subsequent years, five of his solo studio albums have become some of the world's best-selling records: *Off the Wall* (1979), *Thriller* (1982), *Bad* (1987), *Dangerous* (1991) and *HIStory* (1995). (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_jackson)
Picture from separate source, (http://imagecache2.allposters.com/images/pic/54/039_30399~Michael-Jackson-Posters.jpg)



Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc (c. 1412– May 30, 1431) also known as "the Maid of Orleans", was a 15th century Catholic saint, and national heroine of France. A peasant girl born in Eastern France, Joan led the French army to several important victories during the Hundred Years' War, claiming divine guidance, and was indirectly responsible for the coronation of King Charles VII. She was captured by the English, tried by an ecclesiastical court and burned at the stake by the English when she was nineteen years old. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_of_arc)



Sally Spectra

Sally Spectra is a fictional character on the American soap opera *The Bold and the Beautiful*. Sally was played by actress Darlene Conley from December 1988 until Conley's death on January 14, 2007 and last appeared onscreen on January 26, 2007 via flashback memorial. Sally, in fact, has not been seen on camera since fall 2006. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sally_Spectra)



Hindu goddess Durga

In Hinduism, **Durga** (Sanskrit: "the inaccessible" or "the invincible") or *Maa Durga* (Mother Durga) is a form of Devi, the supreme goddess. Goddess Durga is considered by Hindus to be the mother of Ganesha, and Kartikeya. She is thus considered the fiercer, demon-fighting form of Shiva's wife, goddess Parvati. Durga is depicted as a warrior aspect of Devi Parvati with 10 arms who rides a lion or a tiger, carries weapons and assumes mudras, or symbolic hand gestures. This form of the Goddess is the embodiment of feminine and creative energy (Shakti). (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durga>)



Paris Hilton

Paris Whitney Hilton (born February 17, 1981) is an American celebuntante, singer, actress, model, and businesswoman. She is best-known through the television series *The Simple Life*. She has appeared in several minor film roles, most notably in the horror film *House of Wax* in 2005. In 2004 she published a tongue-in-cheek autobiography. In 2006, she released her debut album *Paris*. Hilton's career pursuits include singing, modeling, acting, writing, and television. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_hilton)



Ridge Forrester

Ridge Forrester Sr. (also known as **Ridge Marone**) is a fictional character from the American soap opera *The Bold and the Beautiful*. Ridge has been played since the show's beginning in 1987 by actor Ronn Moss. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ridge_Forrester)

Barry Manilow

Barry Manilow (born June 17, 1943) is an American singer-songwriter, musician, arranger, producer and conductor, best known for such recordings as *I Write the Songs*, *Mandy*, *Weekend in New England* and *Copacabana*. Manilow's achievements include sales of more than 76 million records worldwide. In 1978, five of his albums were on the best-selling charts simultaneously; a feat equalled only by Frank Sinatra and Johnny Mathis. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barry_Manilow)





The Hulk

The **Hulk** is a fictional character that appears in comic books published by Marvel Comics. The character first appeared in *The Incredible Hulk* #1 (May 1962), and was created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hulk)

Skeletor

Skeletor is a fictional character in the *Masters of the Universe* franchise, the arch-enemy and main antagonist of He-Man. Tagged "The Evil Lord of Destruction", he is the greatest threat to present-day Eternia. Depicted as a muscular humanoid with a purple hood over his yellowish bare-bone cranium, Skeletor seeks to conquer Castle Grayskull so he can learn its ancient secrets, which would make him unstoppable and enable him to conquer and rule all of Eternia.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skeletor>)

Picture from separate source,

(http://members.shaw.ca/plastic_afro/skeletor.jpg)



My Little Pony

My Little Pony is a line of colorful toy ponies marketed primarily to young children and produced by the toy manufacturer Hasbro. "My Little Pony" was first introduced in 1982, following the related *My Pretty Pony* toy, introduced in 1981. "My Little Pony" became immensely popular during the 80s, at one point even outselling Mattel's Barbie. The original toy line ran from 1982 to 1995 (1992 in the U.S.) and inspired animated specials, including an animated feature length movie and two animated television series.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_little_pony)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:JPG>)



Idi Amin

Idi Amin Dada (August 17, 1925 – 16 August 2003), commonly known as **Idi Amin**, was a military dictator and the President of Uganda from 1971 to 1979. He took power in a military coup in January 1971, deposing Milton Obote. His rule was characterized by human rights abuses, political repression, ethnic persecution, extrajudicial killings and the expulsion of Asians from Uganda.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idi_amin) Picture from separate source,

(http://www.kazoongas.com/paulo_biendo/it/idi_amin_dada_1.jpg)





SpongeBob Square Pants

SpongeBob SquarePants is an Emmy-nominated American animated television series and media franchise. It is one of Nickelodeon's Nicktoons and is currently the most watched show on the channel. In 2007, it was named by TIME as one of the greatest television shows of all time. The series is set in the Pacific Ocean, in the fictional city of Bikini Bottom and on the surrounding lagoon floor.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sponge_bob_square_pants)



Kurt Vonnegut

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (November 11, 1922 – April 11, 2007) was a prolific and genre-bending American novelist known for works blending satire, black comedy and science fiction, such as *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), *Cat's Cradle* (1963), and *Breakfast of Champions* (1973).

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurt_Vonnegut)



Quentin Tarantino

Quentin Jerome Tarantino (born March 27, 1963) is an Academy Award-, BAFTA Award- and Palme d'Or-winning, Emmy- and Grammy Award- nominated American film director, screenwriter and actor. He rose to fame in the early 1990s as an independent filmmaker whose films used nonlinear storylines and stylized violence. His films include *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Jackie Brown* (1997), *Kill Bill* (Vol. 1 2003, Vol. 2 2004) and *Death Proof* (2007).

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quentin_tarantino)



Frida Kahlo

Frida Kahlo (July 6, 1907 – July 13, 1954) was a Mexican painter, who has achieved great international popularity. She painted using vibrant colors in a style that was influenced by indigenous cultures of Mexico as well as by European influences that include Realism, Symbolism, and Surrealism. Many of her works are self-portraits that symbolically express her own pain and sexuality.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frida_Kahlo)



Juno

Juno is a 2007 American comedy-drama film directed by Jason Reitman and written by Diablo Cody. Ellen Page stars as the title character, an independent-minded teenager confronting an unplanned pregnancy and the subsequent events that put pressures of adult life onto her. Michael Cera, Jennifer Garner, and Jason Bateman also star.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juno_%28film%29)



Hunter S. Thompson

Hunter Stockton Thompson (July 18, 1937 – February 20, 2005) was an American journalist and author, most famous for his novel *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. He is credited as the creator of Gonzo journalism, a style of reporting where reporters involve themselves in the action to such a degree that they become central figures of their stories. He is also known for his promotion and use of psychedelics and other mind-altering substances (and to a lesser extent, alcohol and firearms), his anarchist views and his iconoclastic contempt for authority.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunter_S_Thompson)



I Heart Huckabees

I Heart Huckabees, also known as *I Love Huckabees*, and written as *I ♥ Huckabees*, is a 2004 comedy film from Fox Searchlight. It was produced and directed by David O. Russell, who co-wrote the screenplay with Jeff Baena. The film reunites Russell with actor Mark Wahlberg, who had previously worked together on the 1999 film *Three Kings*.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_heart_huckabees)



Kevin Costner

Kevin Michael Costner (born January 18, 1955) is an American actor, producer and Academy Award-winning director. He is well-known for his roles as Lt. John J. Dunbar in the film *Dances with Wolves*, Jim Garrison in *JFK*, and Ray Kinsella in *Field of Dreams*.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kevin_Costner)



The Girls of the Playboy Mansion

The Girls Next Door, also known as *The Girls of the Playboy Mansion*, is an American reality television series broadcast on the E! The series focuses on the lives of Hefner's three girlfriends who live with him at the Playboy Mansion: Holly Madison, Bridget Marquardt, and Kendra Wilkinson. Mr. Hefner is often on the show along with various Playmates and other celebrities.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Girls_of_The_Playboy_Mansion)



Tyra Banks

Tyra Lynne Banks (born December 4, 1973) is an American television personality, Emmy Award-winning talk show host, actress, supermodel, former teen idol, and businessperson. She became famous first as a model in Paris, Milan, London, Tokyo, and New York, but television appearances were her commercial breakthrough. She is known best as hostess/judge of the reality television show *America's Next Top Model* since its 2003 debut, and is currently hosting her own Daytime Emmy Award-winning talk show, *The Tyra Banks Show*.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyra_banks)



Panthor

Panthor is Skeletor's evil feline companion, a giant purple panther who serves as an evil counterpart to Battle Cat. Panthor is portrayed as Skeletor's pet, being at the right of his throne. In battle, Panthor dons an armor that allows Skeletor to ride him. Sometimes Skeletor acts cruelly towards Panthor, but when compared with Skeletor's behavior to his other henchmen, Panthor is relatively well treated.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panthor>)



Darth Vader

Darth Vader is a fictional character in George Lucas' science fiction saga *Star Wars* and was the primary antagonist for most of the series. In the original movie trilogy, the character is depicted as a formidable Dark Lord of the Sith and the brutal head enforcer of the Galactic Empire's rule across the galaxy.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darth_vader)

Care Bears

The **Care Bears** are a set of characters created by American Greetings in 1981 for use on greeting cards. The original artwork for the cards was painted by artist Elena Kucharik. In 1983, Kenner turned the Care Bears into plush teddy bears. Each Care Bear comes in a different color and has a specialized insignia on its belly that represents its duty and personality. This insignia was known as their "tummy symbol". The Care Bears appeared in their own television series from 1985 to 1988, in addition to three feature films: *The Care Bears Movie* (1985), *Care Bears Movie II: A New Generation* (1986), and *The Care Bears Adventure in Wonderland* (1987).

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Care_bears)





Gummi Bears

Disney's Adventures of the Gummi Bears is an American animated television series that aired in the United States in the mid-1980s through the early 1990s. The show was created by The Walt Disney Company, and loosely inspired by the gummi bear candies; Disney CEO Michael Eisner was struck with inspiration for the show when his son requested the candies one day. The series premiered on NBC on September 14, 1985. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gummi_Bears_%28Cartoon%29) Picture from separate source, (http://sueczech.files.wordpress.com/2007/04/gummi_bears.jpg)



Betty Boop

Betty Boop is an animated cartoon character appearing in the *Talkartoon* and *Betty Boop* series of films produced by Max Fleischer and released by Paramount Pictures. With her overt sexual appeal, Betty was a hit with theater-goers, and despite having been toned down in the mid-1930s, she remains popular today. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Betty_Boop)



Princess Calla

Princess Calla is the daughter of King Gregor, ruler of Dunwyn. She is an adventurous character of considerable talents, and she often drags the dumbstruck Cavin (who she is overly fond of) into story situations. She also befriended the Gummi Bears in due time and is close friends with Sunni. She hates the pomp and circumstance that comes with being royalty while wishing to be more involved in the governance and defense of the realm. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Disney%27s_Adventures_of_the_Gummi_Bears_characters) Picture from separate source, (http://www.cubbi.org/gummi/images/calla_15.)



Cavin

Cavin is the squire of Sir Tuxford, of King Gregor's court. Cavin befriends the Gummi Bears in the first episode and shares the same ambition as Cubbi - to become a knight. Cavin also had the medallion, given to him by his grandfather, that opened The Great Book of Gummi, the source of all Gummi Bear wisdom. The young squire also has a secret crush on Princess Calla. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Disney%27s_Adventures_of_the_Gummi_Bears_characters) Picture from separate source, (<http://cortneywilliams.com/gummibears/images/cavin.png>)



Duke Ighorn

Duke Sigmund Ighorn- The primary villain of the series. A former knight of Dunwyn, he was exiled after conspiring against King Gregor. He found refuge in Castle Drekmore and formed an army of local ogres. He is a bad-tempered and scheming villain, who constantly seeks the conquest of Dunwyn. After having encountered the Gummi Bears, he has employed their secrets

time and again to fulfill his plans, but he always meets only short-lived success at best.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Disney%27s_Adventures_of_the_Gummi_Bears_characters)

Picture from separate source,
(<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/ru/8/86/3ight4bv.gif>)



Gargamel

Gargamel the sorcerer is the sworn enemy of the Smurfs. He is an evil wizard, though his powers appear very limited; he actually seems to be more of an alchemist as his main ability is to create magic potions. His main goal in life is to destroy the Smurfs. He is perpetually stooped, his robe is worn and patched, and his teeth are rotten.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gargamel>)



Megatron

Megatron is a character from the various Transformers universes, being the evil leader of the Decepticons and the primary antagonist of the series. *Wizard Magazine* rated him the 68th greatest villain of all time.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megatron>)Picture from separate source,

(<http://transformers.wdupload.wikicomplete.info/local--files/g2:megatron/original-megatron.jpg>)



Mumm-Ra

Mumm-Ra is a fictional character from the animated TV series *ThunderCats*. He is the main villain on the show, demonstrating absolute mastery of magic.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumm-Ra_the_Ever-Living) Picture from separate source, (<http://www.cheezey.org/thundercats/pissedmummye.jpg>)



Toadie

Toadwart (Toadie) The smallest ogre on Drekmore, and Igthorn's lackey and second-in-command. As his name suggests, he is a fawning and enduring character who - mostly - bears any bullying and punishment brought upon him by the Duke and his fellow ogres. He is also (by some small margin) the smartest of his kin. Although Toadwart is largely an enemy, there are rare occasions where he learns the values the Gummi stand for.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Disney%27s_Adventures_of_the_Gummi_bears_characters) Picture from separate source, (<http://www.ultimatedisney.com/images/g-i/gummibears1-03.jpg>)



Shredder

The Shredder is a fictional character in the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* universe. He is a villainous ninjutsu master also known by the name **Oroku Saki**.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shredder_%28TMNT%29) Picture from separate source, (http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/5/59/TMNT1987_Shredder.png)



Duchess RavenWaves

Duchess RavenWaves is the villain in the 1980's TV series *Lady LovelyLocks*. She reigns over Tangleland, but that is not enough for her, so she is always scheming to take over the kingdom of *LovelyLocks*. She hopes to achieve this by trying to cut off some of *Lady LovelyLocks*' magical hair and so gain the princess' powers. Sometimes the duchess gets close to succeeding, but she never quite does.

(<http://ladylovelylocks.org/node/16>) Picture from separate source, (<http://members.aol.com/abishort/lady/pictures/illus3.jpg>)



Ogres

Ogres - Duke Ighorn's shock troops. Big and strong, but very stupid; they constantly call their master "Dukie" (much to his annoyance). Only three have ever been mentioned by name: **Zook** (with green skin and orange hair) and **Gad** (purple skin and metal helmet), who are a sort of Ighorn's bodyguards (their names are taken from Gadzook!). The only other Ogre named is **Umma**.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Disney%27s_Adventures_of_the_Gummi_bears_characters)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://www.blackwolf>

[images.com/images/dis/dis0113_md1.jpg](http://www.blackwolfimages.com/images/dis/dis0113_md1.jpg))



Sunni Gummi

Sunni Gummi- The "token preteen" of the bunch who often rebels against the clan but learns her lessons eventually. Sunni is quite fond of rather 'radical' fashions, and her dream, with an overactive romanticism, is to one day be a princess.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Disney%27s_Adventures_of_the_Gummi_bears_characters)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://www.ultimatedisney.com/images/g-i/gummibears1-30.jpg>)



Hells Angels

The **Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC)** is a world-wide motorcycle club whose members typically ride Harley-Davidson motorcycles. In the United States and Canada, the Hells Angels are incorporated as the **Hells Angels Motorcycle Corporation**.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hells_angels)

Picture from separate source,

(http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/44118000/jpg/_44118520_bikerinprocession416.jpg)



Professor Coldheart

Professor Coldheart is one of the villains in the Care Bears series.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Care_Bears_%28TV_series%29#Characters)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://carebears.raqoon.ca/1980/tv/dic/dic.>)



Papa Smurf

Papa Smurf is a male fictional character from the Smurfs. He is the third oldest of the Smurfs (after Grandpa and Nanny), and their leader. He can be easily distinguished from the other Smurfs by his red clothes and his bushy white beard. He serves as the Smurfs' leader and as a paternal figure of which the Smurfs usually go to when they require counsel and he is always concerned about the Smurf's wellbeing and harmony. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papa_Smurf)



Mahatma Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (2 October 1869 – 30 January 1948) was a major political and spiritual leader of India and the Indian independence movement. He was the pioneer of *Satyagraha*—resistance to tyranny through mass civil disobedience, firmly founded upon *ahimsa* or total non-violence—which led India to independence and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghandi>)



Lady Lovely Locks

Lady Lovely Locks is one of the heroines in The Lady Lovely Locks animated series which began in 1987, concurrent with the release of the toyline. The premise of the series is that Lady Lovely Locks is the princess of the Kingdom of Lovelylocks. She and her friends are aided by the Pixietails in keeping the kingdom safe from its enemies. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Lovely_Loc)
Picture from separate source, (<http://www.tressie.net/enchantment/lllborder.jpg>)



He-Man

He-Man "The Most Powerful Man in the Universe!" is a heroic fictional character in the Masters of the Universe franchise. He is the alter ego of Prince Adam and also the twin brother of She-Ra. The character's name comes from the word *he-man*, which was once used to describe a strong, masculine and virile male. He-Man and his friends defend Eternia and the secrets of Castle Grayskull from the evil forces of Skeletor. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/He-Man>)



The Joker

The **Joker** is a fictional character that appears in comic books published by DC Comics. Created by Bill Finger, Bob Kane and Jerry Robinson, the character first appeared in *Batman #1* (Spring 1940). The archenemy of the superhero Batman, the Joker is a master criminal whose characterization has varied from a violent and murderous sociopath, causing chaos and committing crimes for his own amusement, to a goofy and virtually harmless trickster-thief. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joker_%28comics%29)



Magneto

Magneto is a fictional character that appears in comic books published by Marvel Comics. The character first appears in *X-Men #1* (Sept. 1963), and was created by writer Stan Lee and artist Jack Kirby. A powerful mutant, with the ability to generate and control magnetism, Magneto, ever since his first appearance, has been the X-Men's most prominent enemy. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magneto_%28comics%29)



The Penguin

The **Penguin (Oswald Chesterfield Cobblepot)**, was introduced by artist Bob Kane and writer Bill Finger, making his debut in *Detective Comics #58* (December 1941). The Penguin is depicted as a short, obese man and is one of Batman's greatest enemies. He is known for his love of birds and his specialized high-tech umbrellas. A mobster-type criminal, he fancies himself a "gentleman of crime". ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penguin_\(comics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penguin_(comics)))

GHD

Good hair day (also known as 'GHD') is an English hair styling company, and the UK's leading manufacturer of hair irons and hair products. Owned by Jemella Group, the company was founded in 2001 by Martin Penny, Gary Douglas and Robert Powls. The company's notability comes from its "iconic" line of hair irons, which have been described as "one of the most successful hair products in history" by the Yorkshire Post.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_Hair_Day)

Picture from separate source,

(http://www.hoffi.co.uk/store/media/gbu0/prods/m/ghd_mk4_c.jpg)





John Travolta

John Joseph Travolta (born February 18, 1954) is an Academy Award-nominated and Golden Globe Award-winning American actor, dancer, and singer, best known for his leading roles in films such as *Saturday Night Fever*, *Grease*, and *Pulp Fiction*.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Travolta)



Look Who's Talking

Look Who's Talking is a 1989 comedy film which stars John Travolta (James Ubriacco) and Kirstie Alley (Mollie Jensen). Bruce Willis plays the voice of Mollie's son, Mikey. The movie also features George Segal as Mollie's client, Albert, who is the illegitimate father of Mikey. The film was written and directed by Amy Heckerling.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Look_Who%27s_Talking)



Pulp Fiction

Pulp Fiction is a 1994 film by director Quentin Tarantino, who cowrote the film with Roger Avary. A crime drama with a nonlinear storyline, the film is known for its rich, eclectic dialogue, its ironic mix of humor and violence, and its host of cinematic and pop culture references. The film was nominated for seven Oscars, including Best Picture; Tarantino and Avary won for Best Original Screenplay. It was also awarded the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. A major commercial success, it revitalized the career of its leading man, John Travolta, who received an Academy Award nomination, as did costars Samuel L. Jackson and Uma Thurman.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pulp_Fiction_%28film%29)



Tyler Durden

Tyler Durden is a character from *Fight Club* (1996) which is the first published novel by American author Chuck Palahniuk. The plot is based on an unnamed protagonist who struggles with his growing discomfort with consumerism and changes in the state of masculinity in American culture.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyler_Durden)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://i2.photobucket.com/albums/y8>)



Rainbow Brite

Rainbow Brite was an animated television series introduced by Hallmark Cards in 1984. In the franchise's backstory, a little orphan girl named Wisp is taken by an unknown force to the Colorless World. She must find the Sphere of Light, which is the tool she needs to bring color to the land. After using it to defeat the Dark One, an evil hooded being with twitchy fingers, the unknown force renames Wisp as Rainbow Brite.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_Brite)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://i142.photobucket.com/albums/r112/sayletgirl/rainbowbrite.gif>)



Gruffi Gummi

Gruffi Gummi is a no-nonsense, perfectionist and conservative every-job-Gummi. He is the technician of the group and can also be viewed as the de facto leader of the Gummi Bears, but his stubbornness, authoritarian nature, conservatism and use of pure muscle is an irritant. However, Gruffi is respected as a source of stability with his practical nature that saved the day numerous times.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Disney%27s_Adventures_of_the_Gummi_Bears_characters)

Picture from separate source,

(http://www.cubbi.org/gummi/images/gruffi_1.)



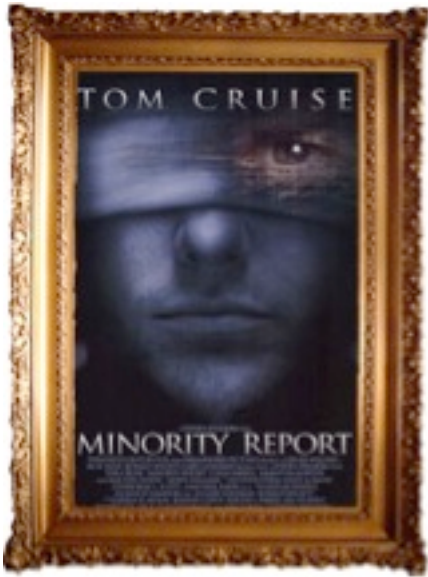
Braveheart Lion

Braveheart Lion is one of the Care Bear Cousins who lives in the Forest of Feelings. He is the leader of the Cousins and his tummy symbol is a big red heart with a small crown.

(http://images.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=http://i3.ebayimg.com/01/s/08/b4/6b/c2_2.JPG&imgre)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://reviews.ebay.com/Care-Bears-are-More-than-Teddy-Bears-Part-2->)



Minority Report

Minority Report is a 2002 science fiction film directed by Steven Spielberg, loosely based on the Philip K. Dick short story of the same name. It is set in Washington, D.C. in the year 2054, where a special police department called "pre-crime" apprehends criminals based on foreknowledge, provided by three psychics termed "pre-cogs". The film stars Tom Cruise as John Anderton, a pre-crime officer, who heads the pre-crime police force.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minority_Report_%28film%29)



Rubik's Cube

Rubik's Cube is a mechanical puzzle invented in 1974 by Hungarian sculptor and professor of architecture Ernő Rubik. Originally called the "Magic Cube" by its inventor, this puzzle was renamed "Rubik's Cube" by Ideal Toys in 1980 and also won the 1980 German Game of the Year special award for Best Puzzle. It is said to be the world's best-selling toy, with over 300,000,000 Rubik's Cubes and imitations sold worldwide.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubiks_cube)
Picture from separate source,
(<http://images.smarter.com/blogs/rubiks-cube.jpg>)



Allen Ginsberg

Irwin Allen Ginsberg (June 3, 1926 – April 5, 1997) was an American poet. Ginsberg is best known for the poem *Howl* (1956), celebrating his friends of the Beat Generation and attacking what he saw as the destructive forces of materialism and conformity in the United States at the time.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allen_Ginsburg)
Picture from separate source,
(http://archives.waiting-forthe-sun.net/Graphics/InfluencesGraphics/ginsberg_rally.jpg)



Friedrich Nietzsche

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (October 15, 1844 – August 25, 1900) (German pronunciation): was a nineteenth-century German philosopher and classical philologist. He wrote critical texts on religion, morality, contemporary culture, philosophy, and science, using a distinctive German language style and displaying a fondness for aphorism. Nietzsche's influence remains substantial within and beyond philosophy, notably in existentialism and postmodernism. His style and radical questioning of the value and objectivity of truth raise considerable problems of interpretation, generating an extensive secondary literature in both continental and analytic philosophy. Some of his major ideas include interpreting tragedy as an affirmation of life, an eternal recurrence (which numerous commentators have re-interpreted).

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fredrick_Nietzsche)

Red Butler

Red Butler is one of the Color kids in the Rainbow Brite series. He is a smooth-talking, full-of-charm, fun-loving boy. he is always in search of new adventures and is ever ready to rescue anyone in distress.

(<http://www.rainbowbrite.tv/cinfo/red3.gif&imgrefurl>)

Picture from separate source, (<http://members.tripod.com/~reiny/RB/redbutler.jpg>)



The Color Kids

Rainbow Brite and the Color Kids (and their helpers, the Sprites) live in Rainbowland and are in charge of all the colors on Earth. Each Color Kid is in charge of his/her respective color, and their Sprites mine Color Crystals from the Color Caves, which are turned into Star Sprinkles by a process much like using cookie cutters.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_Brite#Characters)

Picture from separate source, (<http://www.rainbowbrite.net/pics/rb10.gif>)



Pac-Man

Pac-Man is an arcade game developed by Namco and licensed for distribution in the U.S. by Midway, first released in Japan on May 22, 1980. The player controls Pac-Man through a maze, eating pac-dots. When all dots are eaten, Pac-Man is taken to the next stage.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacman>)





Karl Marx

Karl Heinrich Marx (May 5, 1818 – March 14, 1883) was a 19th-century philosopher, political economist, sociologist, humanist, political theorist and revolutionary. Often called the father of communism, Marx was both a scholar and a political activist. He addressed a wide range of political as well as social issues, and is known for, amongst other things, his analysis of history. His approach is indicated by the opening line Chapter 1 of the *The Communist Manifesto* (1848): “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles”. Marx argued that capitalism, like previous socioeconomic systems, will produce internal tensions which will lead to its destruction. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_marx)



Das Kapital

Das Kapital is an extensive treatise on political economy written in German by Karl Marx and edited in part by Friedrich Engels. The book is a critical analysis of capitalism and its practical economic application and also, in part, a critique of other related theories. Its first volume was published in 1867.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Das_Kapital)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://www.aworldtowin.net/images/images330/MarxCapital.jpg>)



Hanson

Hanson is an American pop rock band formed in Tulsa, Oklahoma by brothers Isaac, Taylor, and Zac Hanson. They are best known for the 1997 hit song "MMMBop".

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanson_\(band\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanson_(band)))

Picture from separate source,

(<http://www.babble.com/CS/blogs/famecrawler/2008/isaac-hanson-new-baby-cc.jpg>)



A Clockwork Orange

A Clockwork Orange is a 1962 novel by Anthony Burgess, which was later the basis for a 1971 film adaptation of the same name by Stanley Kubrick. The novel was chosen by *Time Magazine* as one of the 100 best English-language novels from 1923 to 2005.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_clockwork_orange)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://www.moviewallpapers.net/images/wallpapers/1971/a-clockwork-orange/a-clockwork-orange-3-1024.jpg>)



Super Size Me

Super Size Me is a 2004 documentary film written, produced, directed by and starring Morgan Spurlock, an American independent filmmaker. Spurlock's film follows a 30-day time period (February 2003) during which he subsists entirely on food and items purchased exclusively from McDonald's, and the film documents this lifestyle's drastic effects on Spurlock's physical and psychological well-being and explores the fast food industry's corporate influence, including how it encourages poor nutrition for its own profit.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supersize_me)



Chucky

Charles Lee Ray, a.k.a. "**Chucky**" is a fictional character, the primary antagonist in the *Child's Play* horror films series, with the original screenplay credited to Don Mancini, John Lafia and Tom Holland.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chucky_%28Child's_Play%29)



The Matrix

The Matrix is a 1999 science fiction-martial arts-action film written and directed by Larry and Andy Wachowski and starring Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss, Joe Pantoliano, and Hugo Weaving. It was first released in the USA on March 31, 1999, and is the first entry in *The Matrix* series of films, comics, video games, and animation. The film describes a future in which reality perceived by humans is actually the Matrix, a simulated reality created by sentient machines in order to pacify and subdue the human population while their bodies' heat and electrical activity are used as an energy source.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_matrix)



Superman

Superman is a fictional comic book superhero widely considered to be one of the most famous and popular of such characters and an American cultural icon. Created by American writer Jerry Siegel and Canadian-born artist Joe Shuster in 1932 while both were living in Cleveland, Ohio, and sold to Detective Comics, Inc. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superman>)

Martha Stewart

Martha Stewart (born **Martha Helen Kostyra**; August 3, 1941) is an American business magnate, author, editor and homemaking advocate. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martha_Stewart)



Johnny Depp

John Christopher "Johnny" Depp (born June 9, 1963) is an American actor known for his portrayals of offbeat and eccentric characters such as the title character in *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, Jack Sparrow in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series and Willy Wonka in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. He has collaborated with director and close friend Tim Burton in six films. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johnny_depp)



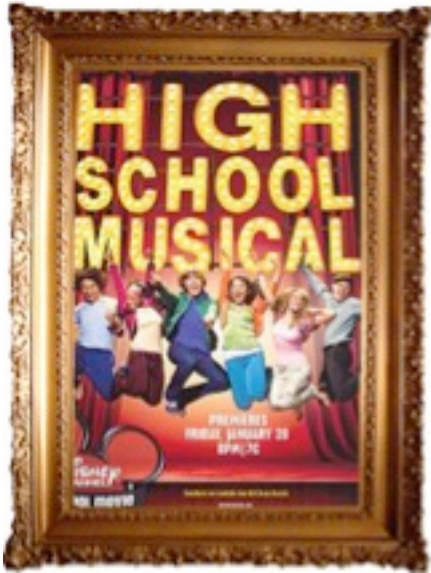
Rolling Stone

Rolling Stone is a United States-based magazine devoted to music, politics, and popular culture that is published every two weeks. *Rolling Stone* was founded in San Francisco in 1967 by Jann Wenner (who is still editor and publisher) and music critic Ralph J. Gleason. The magazine was known for its political coverage beginning in the 1970s, with the enigmatic and controversial gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson. *Rolling Stone* changed its format in the 1990s to appeal to younger readers, often focusing on young television or film actors and pop music. This led to criticism that the magazine was emphasizing style over substance. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolling_stone)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://sobogosse.files.wordpress.com/2007/04/rolling-stone-cover.jpg>)





High School Musical

High School Musical is an Emmy Award-winning American television film. Upon its release on January 20, 2006, it was the most successful Disney Channel Original Movies (DCOM) ever produced.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolling_stone)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://sobogosse.files.wordpress.com/2007/04/rolling-stone-cover.jpg>)



Nancy Drew

Nancy Drew is an amateur sleuth, the fictional heroine of a popular mystery series, primarily aimed at the children-young adult audience, and written under the collective pseudonym "**Carolyn Keene**".

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nancy_Drew)



Morpheus

In the Matrix films, Morpheus is the captain of the *Nebuchadnezzar*, which is a hovercraft of the human forces of the last human city, Zion, in a devastated world where most humans are grown by sentient Machines and kept imprisoned in the Matrix, a virtual computer-generated world. Morpheus was once a human living inside the Matrix until he was freed earlier in life.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morpheus_%28The_Matrix%29) Picture from separate source,

(<http://www.poster.net/matrix-the/matrix-the-reloaded-teaser-morpheus-4100405.jpg>)



Neo

The character **Neo** lives in the world of the Matrix, an illusory construct in which humans are neurally connected to a gigantic computer system which simulates the world of the late 20th century.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo_%28The_Matrix%29)



The Scream

The Scream (Skrik), 1893-1910) is a seminal series of expressionist paintings by Norwegian artist Edvard Munch, depicting an agonised figure against a blood red sky. It is said by some to symbolise the human species overwhelmed by an attack of existential angst.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_scream)



Simulacrum

Jean Baudrillard progressed beyond both Saussure's and Roland Barthes' formal semiology to consider the implications of an historically-understood (and thus formless), version of structural semiology. Baudrillard argues that the image has undergone several successive historical phases of development. He states: *These would be the successive phases of the image:*

- 1 It is the reflection of a basic reality.
- 2 It masks and perverts a basic reality.
- 3 It masks the absence of a basic reality.
- 4 It bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum.

For Baudrillard, the transition between (2) and (3) above marks the decisive shift into simulacra. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Baudrillard)



Slush Puppie

Slush Puppie is a slush drink marketed by Cadbury-Schweppes in over 50 countries, and through its Dr Pepper/Seven Up division in the U.S. Slush Puppie was acquired by the Icee Company on 2006-05-30. A Slush Puppie has two major components; the base and the flavoring. The base is made from a special syrup that is mixed with water and then frozen. This creates a mixture resulting in pellets of ice in a sweet liquid. The taste is simply that of the flavored syrup.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slush_puppie)

Mills and Boon

Mills & Boon is a British publisher of romance novels. It was founded in 1908, and was independent until its purchase in 1971 by Harlequin Enterprises with whom the company had had a long informal partnership.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mills_and_boon)

Picture from separate source,
(http://www.gibsonbooks.com/shop_image/product/40872.jpg)



Zoot Suit

A **Zoot suit** (also spelled **Zuit Suit**) is a suit with high-waisted, wide-legged, tight-cuffed pegged trousers and a long coat with wide lapels and wide padded shoulders. This style of clothing was popularized by Hispanics, Italian Americans, African Americans, and Filipino Americans during the late 1930s and 1940s.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoot_suit)



Annie Hall

Annie Hall is a 1977 romantic comedy film directed by Woody Allen from a script he co-wrote with Marshall Brickman. It is one of Allen's most popular films: it won numerous awards at the time of its release, including four Academy Awards, and in 2002 Roger Ebert referred to it as "just about everyone's favorite Woody Allen movie".

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie_hall)





Bill Murray

William James "Bill" Murray (born September 21, 1950) is an Oscar-nominated, Emmy-, Golden Globe- and BAFTA-winning American comedian and actor. He first gained national exposure on *Saturday Night Live*, following that with roles in films such as *Kingpin* (where he played the legendary Ernie "Big Ern" McCracken), *Stripes*, *Caddyshack*, *The Razor's Edge*, *Ghostbusters*, *Groundhog Day*, *Space Jam*, *Rushmore* and *What About Bob?*. He has gained acclaim for recent dramatic roles, in films such as *Lost in Translation*, *The Lost City*, *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*, *Broken Flowers* and *The Royal Tenenbaums*.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Murray)



Cruella

Cruella de Vil is a fictional character and the primary villain in Dodie Smith's 1956 novel *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*, Disney's 1961 animated film adaptation *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*, and Disney's live-action film adaptations *101 Dalmatians* and *102 Dalmatians*. In all her incarnations, Cruella kidnaps dalmatian puppies for their fur.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cruella_DeVil)



No Logo

No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies is a book by Canadian journalist Naomi Klein. First published by Knopf Canada in January 2000, shortly after the WTO Ministerial Conference protests in Seattle had generated media attention around such issues, it became one of the most influential books about the anti-globalization movement and an international bestseller
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_logo)



Hippie

The **Hippie** subculture was originally a youth movement that began in the United States during the early 1960s and spread around the world. The word *hippie* derives from *hipster*, and was initially used to describe beatniks who had moved into San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district. These people inherited the countercultural values of the Beat Generation, created their own communities, listened to psychedelic rock, embraced the sexual revolution, and used drugs such as cannabis and LSD to explore alternative states of consciousness.
(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippie>)



Moonbag

Fanny packs reached the peak of their popularity in the late 1980s and early- to mid-1990s. Today, however, fanny packs are considered unfashionable by most people. Weird Al Yankovic, for instance, mocks the wearing of fanny packs in his song "White & Nerdy." Many consider the fanny pack a sure mark for an out-of-place tourist, invoking the traditional tourist stereotypes known around the world. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fanny_pack)



Read Along Story Book

Read-Alongs are a series of illustrated books for children with accompanying recordings of the books being read. The first Read-Alongs, book-and-record sets, were released in 1965 by Disneyland Records (now Walt Disney Records); several hundred titles have been produced. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disney_Read-Along) Picture from separate source, (<http://disneyshopping.go.com/webapp/wcs/store/servlet/DSIProductDisplay?catalogId>)



Rock and Roller

Rock and roll (also known as **rock 'n' roll**) is a form of music that evolved in the United States in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and quickly spread to the rest of the world. From its early-1950s inception through the early 1960s, rock and roll music spawned new dance crazes. Teenagers found the irregular rhythm of the backbeat especially suited to reviving the jitterbug dancing of the big-band era. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_and_roll) Picture from separate source, (http://www.echonews.com/1116/images/rock_n_roll_dance_lismore.jpg)



Mod

Mod (originally **modernist**, sometimes capitalised) is a subculture that originated in London in the late 1950s and peaked in the early to mid 1960s. Significant elements of the mod lifestyle included music, such as African American soul, Jamaican ska, and British beat music and R&B; fashion (often tailor-made suits); dancing and motor scooters. Pete Meaden, a noted mod personality and early manager for The Who, called mod an aphorism for "clean living under difficult circumstances". (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mod_%28lifestyle%29) Picture from separate source, (www.rosehilldesigns.co.uk/portfolio_images/D is/fig-41-mod-world.psd.jpg)



Punk

The **punk subculture** is based around punk rock. It emerged from the larger rock music scene in the mid-to-late-1970s in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Australia.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punk_subculture)

Picture from separate source,

(<http://projekte.free.de/schwarze-katze/bilder/punk/punk04.jpg>)



Mr This

Mr. Men is a series of 45 (only 43 published in English) children's books by Roger Hargreaves started in 1971. **Little Miss** was an accompanying series of 39 (only 30 published in English) books by the same author with female characters that started in 1981.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mr_Men)



Justin Timberlake

Justin Randall Timberlake (born January 31, 1981) is an American pop singer-songwriter, record producer, dancer and actor. He has won six Grammy Awards as well as an Emmy Award. Justin Timberlake came to fame as one of the lead singers of pop boy band 'N Sync.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justin_timberlake)



Paper Doll Booklet

Paper dolls are figures cut out of paper, with separate clothes usually held onto the dolls by folding tabs. They have been inexpensive children's toys for almost two hundred years. Today, many artists are turning paper dolls into an art form.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper_doll)



Atari

The original Atari Inc. was founded in 1972 by Nolan Bushnell and Ted Dabney. It was a pioneer in arcade games, home video game consoles, and home computers. The company's products, such as *Pong* and the Atari 2600, helped define the computer entertainment industry from the 1970s to the mid 1980s. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atari>)



Xbox

The **Xbox** is a sixth-generation video game console produced by Microsoft Corporation. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox>)



Emo

Emo is a current style of hardcore punk which describes several variations of music with common roots and associated fashion and stereotype.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emo>)

Picture from separate source,

(http://img39.picoodle.com/img/img39/8/6/10/f_EmoLovebyanm_2bb5b02.jpg)



Che Guevara T-Shirt

Appearances of Marxist revolutionary **Che Guevara** (1928 – 1967) in popular culture are common throughout the world. Although during his lifetime he was a highly politicized and controversial figure, in death his stylized image has been transformed into a worldwide emblem for an array of causes, representing a complex mesh of sometimes conflicting narratives. His image has achieved a cult following and is viewed as everything from an inspirational icon of revolution, to a logo of "radical" chic. Most commonly he is represented by a facial caricature based on Alberto Korda's famous 1960 photograph entitled *Guerrillero Heroico*. The evocative simulacra abbreviation of the photographic portrait, allowed for easy reproduction and instant recognizability across various uses.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Che_Guevara_in_popular_culture) Picture from separate source,

(<http://sgthrottle.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/04/che-guevara-shirt.jpeg>)



Choose Your Own Adventure

Choose Your Own Adventure is a series of children's gamebooks first published by Bantam Books from 1979-1998 and currently being re-published by Chooseco. Each story is written from a second-person point of view, with the reader assuming the role of the protagonist and making choices that determine the main character's actions in response to the plot and its outcome. *Choose Your Own Adventure* was one of the most popular children's series during the 1980s and 1990s, selling over 250 million copies between 1979 and 1998, and translated into at least 38 languages.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choose_your_own_adventure) Picture from separate source, (<http://www.gamebooks.org/gallery/cyoa066n.jpg>)



Dr. Claw and MAD Cat

Dr. George Claw is a partially-seen character who is the main villain in the animated television series *Inspector Gadget* and the *films* that followed. He runs a criminal syndicate called "M.A.D.", whose mascot is an evil cat named "MAD Cat" (which he keeps by his side).

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dr._Claw)
Picture from separate source, (<http://i135.photobucket.com/albums/q157/CatFannatic/Dr.jpg>)

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<http://www.everything2.com/node/1401320>
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<http://www.plyrics.com/lyrics/sayanything/admitit.html>
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<http://www.lovequotescollection.com>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eddy_Grant
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Michael
<http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/singintherain/singintherain.htm>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Up_Where_We_Belong
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TVooUHN7j4>
<http://www.silywily.com/lostintranslation.html>
<http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Fight-Club.html>
<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/lyrics/ticket.htm>
<http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Annie-Hall.html>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Am%C3%A9lie>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bj%C3%B6rk>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Woolf
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sylvia_Plath
<http://www.sylviaplathforum.com/images/10.jpg>
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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snoop_Dogg's_Father_Hood
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kim_Kardashian
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicole_Richie
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