



Surface Detail (Iain M. Banks)

- Highlight Loc. 8591 | Added on Monday, February 21, 2011, 11:36 AM

What're these shit-kickers up to?

I just now watched the new video by JayZ and Kanye West, directed by S. Jones. I'm afraid it is as close as is possible to absolutely, bear-bones meaninglessness. Synopsis: Jay and Kanye approach 300k Maybach with power-saw and blowtorch. Jay walking glowers back into the

camera mischievously, however, the two don't do jackshit in the way of demolition. Cut to next sequence. Car is dismantled in dim hangar by, most likely, customs' mechanics, however the figures are not identifiable. Cut to next sequence. Jay and Kanyezi ride the freshly gutted, roofless, fire-spitting, weirdly duct-taped car around the parking lot of what looks like an aviation hangar. Four models strapped into the back-seats scream for their life while managing to look amused. Interspaced are shots of equally bare-bone pyro-effects outside that same hangar at night-fall, as well as the two of them rapping in front of a gigantic US flag [though the stars might be the logo of either one's label]. In the car scenes JayZ now and then touches a sort of zippo-lighter glove to the concrete which sends sparks flying. The strong sense one gets is that Jones' considers displaying the very barest artifacts of a "hiphop clip" [luxury car, destruction of luxury, women, visible pyro apparatus] to create an aesthetic of its own: the stage that is blatantly shown to be a stage, the naked self-deconstruction. What he forgets is that this solipsistic attention to the self only yields results when there is something interesting to be said about the self, e.g. as in the well-known sequence: [Trauma] Denial – Anger – Bargaining – Depression – Acceptance. However the clip, in my view is just emptiness gazing at its very own

navel: the car doesn't mean anything any more so it is taken apart and duct-taped AND the ladies don't even stand for masculine fantasies any longer, they are just strapped into the back seat and hauled along for the ride. What I couldn't help noticing is that the album is called "Watch the Throne", well, the throne is empty and the two emperors, clowns really, are running around without any clothes on as the proverb has been saying since the beginning of proverbs. And just in case the sense of arbitrariness for arbitrariness' sake hasn't quite soaked through yet, they sold off the ramshackled Maybach for charity, likely a nominee for the most absurd good deed 2011.



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And so, to a certain degree, the very diametric opposite to this vapid openness, an exhibition and destruction of one's riches under the watchful eyes of the multimedial multitude, would have to be some sort of secrecy. A voluntary drawing back to oneself or at least a small circle of family, friends and acquaintances. The feedback volume would certainly drastically decrease while the quality of the interaction should, on the whole, exponentially explode. Become not only more meaningful but actually cross the tresh-hold into meaningfulness rather than being a ill-disguised call to attention to one's own website/blog/facebook-site.

Here is what got me to thinking along these lines:

Zero History (William Gibson)

- Highlight Loc. 5898-5900 | Added on Thursday, December 23, 2010, 08:30 PM

That Japanese idea of secret brands. The deliberate construction of parallel microeconomies, where knowledge is more congruent than wealth. I'd have a brand, I decided, but it would be a secret. The branding would be that it was a secret. No advertising. None. No press. No shows. I'd do what I was doing, be as secretive as I could about it, and avoid the bullshit.



I liked/like the idea though I have no business with branding. However, being secretive to me has not been enough, I've decided to make this blog of mine a sort of "secret" tout court. I'm not sure that inaccessibility and secrecy are identical but factually they seem to be. Nobody can read these lines right now other than myself and perhaps some semi-criminal wordpress administrator. The blog itself, rather than being a medium of communication has been, in a way of writing, reabsorbed into my consciousness. Like secret stacks of writing it has become a material/digital extension of myself that functions much better ordered than the jumble of my daily thinking. Or at least a bit better. No press [there never has been]. No shows [you can't click on it]. No readers [access denied]. The avoidance of bullshit is total. I reside inside the blog with only my own mental dung-heap to cultivate, there are indeed not even microeconomies just the perplexing paleotropical egotope of this here evolving self.

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I've been wanting to do what I am doing here for a long time. The idea is to more or less loosely [but not randomly] bring together the passages and quotes of the writers I have most enjoyed reading and see if they might not be fitted together in some abstract, abstracting pattern. The last thing I want this to be is the notion of a random, arbitrary [and thus extremely lame] post-modern bricolage. Rather it should

be a meditation on the subjects that have given me the most to think about, without feeling obliged to a slavishly linear style or some kind of fiendishly, intelligently worked-out argumentative structure as in a social sci PhD thesis. Instead a manageable, organic arrangement of topics that seriously concern me and I believe might concern others. Probably my own idiosyncratic attempt to participate in what Dave Wallace called [I'm just reciting from memory] the “deep, meaningful conversation” one feels engaged in when reading a great writer. That great experience of being unalone.

So anyway, in terms of the “paleotropical egotope of [an] evolving self” of an even minimally ambitious writer this would mean giving serious consideration to words. I can't help coming back to thinking of them as the fundamental, eight-pronged lego stones of our crafts from which we somehow manage to construct entire imaginary [at times even imaginative] cosmic.



Reading Like a Writer (Francine Prose)

- Highlight Loc. 270-71 | Added on Monday, January 10, 2011, 03:01 PM

I realize it may seem obvious, but it's surprising how easily we lose sight of the fact that words are the raw material out of which literature is crafted.

Well, I personally find it impossible to lose sight of the fact. I love words, I love words to an almost silly degree. I don't think of it as geeky because it is evidently not. One of the best ways we can communicate with our fellow humans or show affection [at least in the absence of big bucks or carnal relations] is through speaking [or occasional writing]. And the speech is performed in words and if we want it to be aesthetic and produce wondrous blossoms and fruits of meaning, why, we cannot help but use words. The more, the merrier, the magnifiquer. Taking this view, I've begun compiling list from one of my favorite websites, dictionary.com, which every day blesses the Anglophonic world with a freshly enthralling word of the day. And in this same spirit I struck upon this fabulous list, which is G. Lutz by way of J. Madera via D. White:

Lutz's extensive use of the negative prefix "un-" and his deft embedding of archaisms and neologisms has made my word-hoard from Divorcer necessarily, yet unsurprisingly, long:

Un

bursting, veriest, unfinished-looking, ungabby, breviated, revelational, lap-spanning, queering, uglifiers, tattooery, suckily, unwandering, anagrammable, squisses, unscared, soothant, hexahedral, florets, psoriasis, consequentia, uncitified, flippancies, warmingly, agitant, mouthy, spitty, apparitional, freakened, odd-fangled, lorn-looking, candified, putty-faced, punctilio, lunarly, loonery, abroil, sung-spoken, flauntily, oddments, underfrippy, cruddily, apartmentware, sievy, overshootings, looksiness, splittage, beauts, coarse-wrought, yonderous, undermatter, uneerily, down-voicedly, unrosy, aslop, unpreened, iffily, gladiolus [etc.]

And did write the following myself [one must never be afraid to make a fool of oneself for something one put in honest work/d for]

Not because of the idea per se but because the mental clip of seeing sheep jumping over a fence or even just trotting through a gate was so idiotic that it

distracted me and, ultimately, made me more nervous rather than sleepy. Then I suddenly struck upon a good idea, something that would also help keep my good and civilized senses in place: go through the vocabulary of the English language. At least the chunk I could actively recall.

I started with Aa... which bloody word started with Aa...? At least one I should know, I thought. With a jump it came to me: armadillo. I had read about this in a famous person's autobiography and it made me feel damn good about myself. I continued: Aachen [I had been there once as a child and decided to let proper names count too], Aaron, aargh [those funny exclamations in the cartoons]. Then I fell into a long blank. I wanted one more double AA expression, it was an acute, sharp urge like having to go to the bathroom, not to take a bath but a piss. I delved into my memory, time went out the window. I finally I came to something semi-convincing: AA, alcoholics anonymous. I decided that acronyms should also be allowed to further the cause of my falling asleep, even classy neologisms.

Ab... was a lot easier, of course. I didn't mind banal terms: abacus, abandon, abattoir, Abbasid, abbot, abbreviation, abdomen [my dear abdomen!], abduction, Aberdeen [which struck me as particularly cheap], abeyance [bit of pride there], abhorring [my injuries, I knew], abjure the realm [this gave me an inexplicable frisson], ablation, abnormal [this whole damn situation I was in], aboral, aboulia [the possibility of which had been a long-standing fear of mine], and so forth. I didn't get very far, not even to Ac... because I fell asleep as planned.

