

November 8



21st and Ninth.



January 1, Oh, Oh, 9

Blamed. Entirely. Situation.

The elephants of style, or:

December 29, 2008

Toward a Revised Curriculum for Elements of Rhetoric:

A) Compose a three-paragraph email scam letter. The prose should convey a sense of urgency and play on the emotional tension between “haves” and “have nots.” For example, you are a decent, educated person in a “developing” country caught in terrible circumstances which can only be relieved by an outflow of U.S. \$ sent to a third party.

Even if the appeal is not successful in obtaining the desired response, your letter should produce a sense of guilt and shame in the recipient, and a sense that, by having ignored your plea, that they have failed to do a good and needful thing for a fellow being in distress, albeit one less privileged than they.

The style may use unconventional and even ungrammatical English and should contain at least one memorable, resonant image or locution that leaves the reader moved despite themselves and uncertain about the right course of action. Points will be given for bravura assertions of wildly improbable situations supported by implausible assertions.

B) Write a monologue for someone begging on a crowded subway car. Your narrator has no obvious physical disabilities, so appeals must be grounded in victimization by unfortunate circumstances. Same rules apply as in A).

Grammatical exercises:

Invent an incommensurable personal pronoun and subject/object confusion.

E.g.: She is sick to his stomach.

Coin a euphemism. E.g.: Genital contractor for prostitute.

Term paper:

Write a novel in which the protagonist is named Numbskullnikov.

January 1

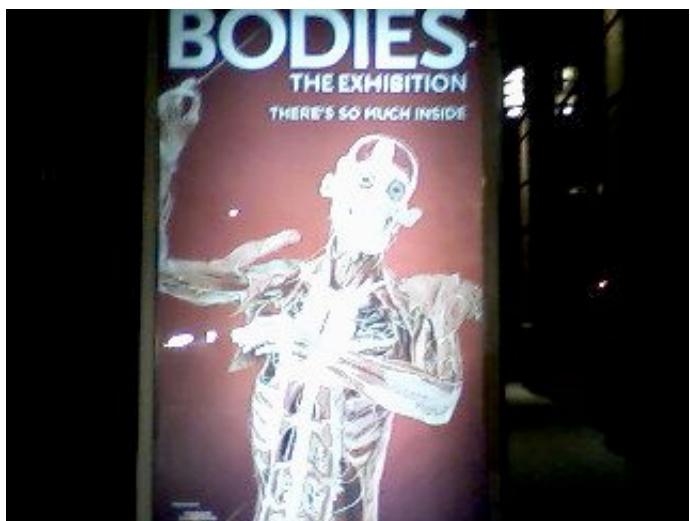
A friend emails you about a strange occurrence while she was visiting friends in the country.

I was walking through the woods the day after Christmas with Julie and her son Jake. Jake was leading the way with Julie following and me in the rear. As we came towards a marsh area, just before a reservoir fed by the creek we were following, I spotted a hawk. I was surprised I was the first to see it as we were essentially walking in a line. The hawk was dead. Oddly, we couldn't fathom what killed it. It looked unharmed, and had not been disturbed by any animals since its death. It was perfectly intact.

Jake was so excited by the find and intended on plucking the feathers and stripping the bird to its skeleton (since he collects the skeletons of dead animals he and his parents find in the woods). We left the bird behind with the intent that Jake and his dad Mike would retrieve it. Mike was so taken with the perfection of the bird that he decided it should be stuffed. But after speaking with several taxidermists, he learned that the red-tailed hawk was a protected species, and that no one would touch it. So they decided to return the hawk's body to the spot where I found it.

Enclosed is the photo Julie sent me of Jake and the bird.





Church and Walker.



"The air was very cold and filled with small ice crystals on Dec. 28th when we saw these strange pillars of light," Aigar Truhin of Sigulda, Latvia told Spaceweather.com. 'My son exclaimed, *The aliens are coming!*' It certainly looked that way."

Spaceweather showed the photo to two experts on atmospheric optics who replied: "These pillars are mysterious," say Les Cowley and Marko Riikonen. "They have unexplained curved tops and even curved arcs coming from their base. Arcs in rare displays like these could be from column crystals to give parts of tangent arcs others could be the enigmatic Moilanen arc or even the recently discovered reflected Parry arc. We do not know – so take more photos on cold nights!"

September 13

Much has been said of the virtue of consciousness. Yet and unsparing look at the mechanisms of domination among civilizations and individuals will show that, in fact, sublimation of awareness and even denial are a species of power all their own, and all the more puissant for their ineffability. Or put as a maxim: Only that which remains partly unknown is most effectively put to use.

What else to do but provide ourselves and one another with a measure of comfort?

He advanced only if pushed, came only if pushed, "as the wind blows;" "as a feather spins;" "as a millstone turns."

From François Jullien, *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China*, p. 40.

The defenestration of Houston.

Hurricane Ike does not follow, say, the Brazos river north toward Ft. Worth via Waco, but rather the eye moves roughly along I45 toward Dallas. From there, it's predicted to tack northeast bringing it evermore sharply across southeast Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and, on Monday a.m., Toronto.

Ike's trajectory will thus describe a gigantic irregular C (for China?) inscribed across the Antilles, the U.S. heartland, into Canada and, presumably, back out into the Atlantic. Weather as calligraphy.

And all this is the strategic work of Hu Hao?

Twin towers of Lehman and Merrill fall más o menos seven years – one female jing cycle – after the WTC. This time one tower is in midtown, the other in Lower Manhattan on WTC landfill. This time, the buildings stay upright. The collapse is internal.

Congress acts by voting in turmoil limits. Too late, government no longer exists.

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli lauds Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI, who carved himself a dukedom and subdued it by appointing a certain Ramiro, truly a brutal fellow, as governor. When Cesare discovered that the “recent harshness had aroused some hatred against him, and wishing to purge the minds of the people and win them over...he had this official [Ramiro] cut in two pieces one morning and exposed in the public square... This ferocious spectacle left the people at once content and horrified.”

The market is inconsolable.

Dam building, marsh draining, combusting the earth herself – a grand project of yin control and destruction now folding, wave-like, back on itself.

December 1



Moon, Venus, Jupiter. And Bombay, mon amour.

September 13

It all cycles back to Vietnam, the yin morass into which our Anglo-Saxon yang was so disastrously sucked by Kennedy, the ultimate chaser of wetness. Thus Diem, thus Tet, the lunar new year, thus scrambling up the ladder to the choppers hanging above the Saigon embassy.

And now Mac, no Machiavelli, not even much of a Machination, his existence organized around a denial and displacement of a central organizing shame – that of being broken, made animal, made female, thus the arms of typhoon swing round again, converge the space between 1960 and 2008-9, a forty-eight (6x8) and 49 (7x9) whirlwind, whirl fire, whirl metal, wood, earth and sea.

September 24

Headlines that will live in infamy: “Paulson Works the Hill, Trying to Close the Deal.” NYT.

September 25

The bailout or the bullet. No ballots of note on the menu.

January 2

No drama? We'll see. Perhaps reality will provide it, rather than personality.

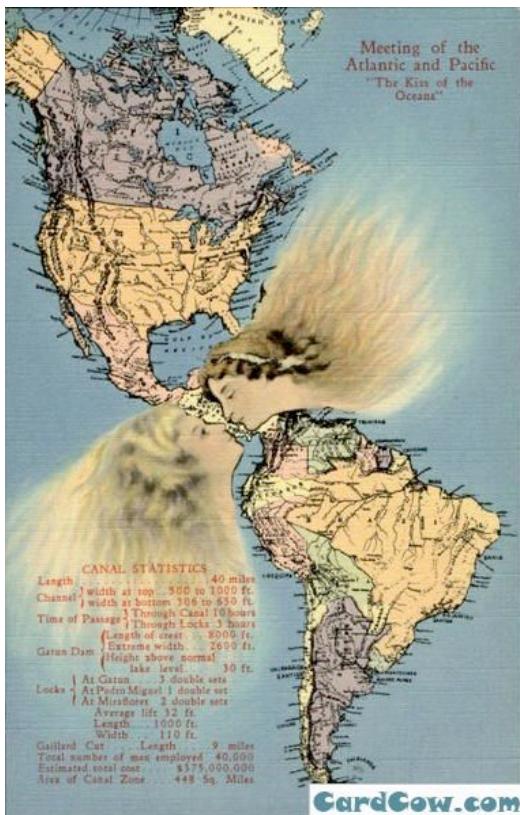
"A prudent ruler," advises Niccolò, "cannot, and should not, honor his word when it places him at a disadvantage, and when the reasons for which he made the promise no longer exist."

October 2

Out with the old world, in with the new:

August 14, 1914: first military engagement of French & German forces in the Great War.

August 15, 1914: formal opening of Panama Canal, begun and abandoned by the French. Passage from Atlantic to Pacific of the cargo ship Ancon.



Using this venerable postcard as leverage, is possible to see, without too great an effort of imagination, todas las Americas as a figure 8. Also as a body with its waist at the isthmus. Works up or downside. It's a geomantic propensity. We sense a different flow of global energy meridians entirely if our orientation is not strictly longitudinal and latitudinal, but makes use of the verticalized infinity sign.

Rebus sic (im)perfectis et fluentibus, mutatis mutandis = We are all among other things in the (im)perfect and fluid state of things, with suitable and necessary alterations.

Metaxu = the separation which connects.

September 27

While the Shenzou 7 spacecraft floats above it all, Typhoon Jangmi (derived from the ancient Chinese word for “rose,” [changwei in Mandarin]) stands poised to hit Taiwan as a Cat. 4 with sustained winds of 135-155 and gusts up to 190 mph.

If one entertains the possibility that such storms can be steered, this typhoon may be seen as a tactical move toward an eventual shift in sovereignty. If predictions are correct, after severely damaging Taiwan, Jangmi-Rose – which viewed by satellite possesses a very lovely floral shape – will go on to dump vast quantities of water on South Korea and Japan.

An Islamic note: Typhoon derives via Arabic from Typhon, Gaia’s most ferocious offspring, a chthonic fellow, narrowly bested mano a mano by non other than Olympian Zeus himself.

¿Por qué no bailas?

Why don’t you dance?

Symphony of evil. Bale = ancient symbol-personification of malevolence, as in “baleful,” or “bailout.”

Hooked on chthonics.