

ASSORTED MEDITATIONS

I. It's important to have a gripping opening

A. Primacy

1. Take The Fifth

a. There's only one Fifth

i. Any cab driver could sing you the opening of The Fifth

aa. Though I've been told the cab drivers in Sydney are in the know with the hippest from Darmstadt

bb. Phil Glass was a cab driver before becoming Famous New York Minimalist Composer Philip Glass

b. Sure, Schubert, Schumann, Mahler, and Shostakovich had fifths, just not The Fifth

c. Brahms chose not to incriminate himself

i. He stopped with Four

aa. Brubeck took Five, but he didn't go anywhere with it

2. I remember much of my childhood

a. My friend Karen doesn't believe in free will, which is an interesting position to take considering she remembers very little of her childhood

i. Everything is a result of something else

aa. Freud would have us believe that we are a result of our childhoods

ii. Of what, then, is Karen a result?

B. Recency

1. Anywhere I lay my head down, I will call my home

a. Seeing old friends is like going home

i. Yesterday old friends helped me move my home from Kansas to Hayes (initially the Governor of Ohio)

aa. Though I ended up sleeping near the beach

bb. After watching Tom Waits in Down By Law

cc. Which is not to say it was a frame job

ii. Seeing old friends in places foreign to both of you creates a transient sense of home

b. Driving across country one's home is transient

i. Assuming one sleeps in one's car

ii. Or drives with old friends

2. Repetition is your friend

a. You can't go back to the beginning, unless you write a *da cappo*, but even still, and though it may look like the beginning on paper, it's not actually the beginning because you are someplace in the middle

i. Like Kansas

ii. Trying to take back time warrants an automatic five minutes in the penalty box

- aa. Hayes got four years in the White House
- b. Recent primacy

II. The body of the work should be structured to support the central ideas

A. More elaboration is called for

1. Just know: Nobody is going to remember the details of the body save those who invented or outlined the details (you), and those for whom the details are directly related to their own work
 - a. We are, after all, obsessed with ourselves
 - b. A part of which is our body
2. Repetition may be allowable, though its better if in the form of a permutation or variation
 - a. Said in as many ways as possible, it will relate to as many people as possible
 - i. And become a part of them
 - aa. Which is a good thing
 - bb. Because you want there to be as much of YOU in the world as possible, and as the part of the world that most dramatically affects human life seems to be other people, you want you to be in as many people as possible

B. But questions arise:

1. Freedom or Formalism?
 - a. Standing between a cliff and the ocean it was brought to my attention that another interesting aspect of this environment is the meeting of the sound of the ocean and the silence of the cliff. I hadn't much thought about the silence of the cliff, but it was true. The silence was palpable, despite the raging surf.
 - b. Clearly I've made my choice
 - i. I am obsessed with my body
 - ii. This morning I went running along the ocean
 - aa. Having found my home, upon waking, to be near the beach
 - iii. It was in the shower after my run where I made it
 - aa. The choice, that is, not my body, nor my home
2. Is brevity the soul of wit?
 - a. Foucault had some interesting things to say about that
 - b. Groening carries his gags into comedic oblivion
 - i. His answer is no
 - i. Logic taken to any extreme becomes absurdity
 - aa. And ceases to be logical
3. Where is my mind?
 - a. Where are the minds of my students?
 - i. My Grandfathers were a Train Engineer and Shipping Clerk
 - aa. I don't know what My Grandmothers did, if anything, other than raise 6 and 7 children, respectively

ii. My Father is a Mechanic, My Mother Fixes Computers
iii. I was raised in the Not-Culture of middle class suburbia, and am only just barely able to change the oil in my car

iv. There is an onslaught of information attacking each of us every day. Somehow we have to filter it. In academia we filter via specialization. In the filtration process we come to know and love and cherish particular ideas, traditions, understandings, stories, anecdotes about historical figures? AS THOUGH THEY WERE OUR OWN? as though the stories that were told to me by my composition professor about his composition professor?

aa. Richard Hoffmann (mine)

bb. Arnold Sch? nberg (his)

? were stories about my great grandfather, as though Vienna is where my family is from and not Rochester, NY, via Buffalo, NY, via Germantown, PA, via Canada, from some farm in France? as though Sch? nberg's correspondences with Gustav Mahler are somehow closer to me than the meager savings bond left for me by my grandfather? my decision to be a composer has given me a rich cultural heritage (inheritance?) not available to my parents and grandparents who did not decide to become composers.

aa. I've decided to call this phenomenon

Pedagogical Pedigree

b. The minds of the students with whom I attempted to engage in a discussion about this very topic were someplace other than a place that allowed them to engage in said discussion

i. Their minds were elsewhere

c. My parents, who are saddened that I no longer refer to Rochester as my home, and when old friends call my parents' house in Rochester must tell them that I live in California, probably find *my* mind elsewhere most of the time

4. Is cleanliness next to Godliness?

a. "Next to" might mean "the next best thing to," or "in close proximity to" and if the latter, and if opposites do attract, then cleanliness may actually be the opposite of Godliness

b. The devil is in the details

c. I came up with the details for this piece while in the shower

III. A brief conclusion bringing together all of the disparate ideas, resolving conflicts, and reflecting upon what we've gained in the process is most praiseworthy

A. Recapitulate

1. If I had been planning ahead, I would have made sure that we gained something in this process, like for example a symphonic form

a. This no doubt would have tied together the scattered metaphorical material on a deeper structural level

i. Except that nobody but me would get it

