The Comedy, the Comedy!

Mistah Kurtz, he resurrected

1. **On Academia, Aeronauts, and Carbon in General**

Once I was at a huge conference center abroad, attending one of the scientific conferences that were simultaneously happening at this glorious venue. As it usually is in the predestination explained by binary logic, I was aware only of my own literary conference. The awareness of others came only later but surely gloriously so.

After a long day's work, I indulged myself with pissing at the venue toilette. I opted for the pissoir, not for reasons of stoicism but rather for purely, even if ontologically relative, hygienical reasons. And then I heard it. I heard a grown-up crying from one of the cabins (I'm note sure if 'cabin' is the right term, however, I like it for its aeronautical connotations, and, anyways: this cabin does contain a seat, and the user is kind of bound to look up during the process). The cry was getting more and more bitter. After using gravity to execute final works on my pissing, my empathy switch turned on and I approached the cabin door.

- Sir, are you fine?
- No! – was the Aeronaut's answer.
- Do you need help?
- How are you taking this?
- What?
- The burden of conferencing.
- Well, I'm used to it. Not to conferences but to my depression management.
- I can't manage myself anymore. Actually, it's not that I can't, but I rather don't want to anymore.
- I know what you mean.
- It's all so fake… These smiles hurt me. The futility of it all.

By the sound of Aeronaut's voice, I concluded that he was an older man. I was wondering

how could that presumption help resolve this peculiar lavatorial situation when the man exploded into a vivid demonstration of sobbing.

- I barely had time for my children! All the traveling, meeting, ego-tripping… I hardly know my children! And what for? What for? A few books that no one reads and three proposed technical terms that never caught up!
- Sir?

He violently hit the inner part of the door and shrieked:

- And I don't care if you quote me! Do you hear that? I don't give a fuck if you quote me or use my terms or the other guy's terms! Couldn't care less!

There was a sound of him rapidly hitting his forehead. Several blows, all producing skin sounds of crackling quality. I reckoned he wouldn't be able, in such a haste and emotional distress, to precisely hit on his forehead every time he hit. He must have used the entirety of his head skin as a landing ground for his palm in order to produce such hasty slaps. I supposed that the presumption was correct, and concluded that he must have been a largely bald guy. I mean, had he been a hairy type, all the slaps that missed the forehead would be silent. Not silent like, for example, the vocal A in some Croatian nouns that physically drop the vocal from the radix in different grammatical cases (as if Croatian was abundant with vocals in the first place; *sic*!, and *sic*!, and triple *sic*! What a waste indeed!), but more like the English silent B in doubt – it's there but it's not.

- That is such an unfair exchange! – I heard the Aeronaut cry out.
- Well, sincerely, it is. But anyone in our line of business should be clear with that fact before even submerging oneself into the matter. I mean, all the Post-Modern literature is telling us, to paraphrase in a very lavatorial manner: *It's all futile, stop us while you can*.
- What kind of literature?
- Well, most of it. But I used the PoMo specifically for my example. That's the one we can extract the most from.
- Pomos? You work with vegetables?
- .. Perhaps in a broader sense, yes. Literature is my field. Canadian, what's more. *I*

extract from PoMo… Figure of speech, I guess.

- I extract from carbon.
- Carbon?
- Yes, carbon. Why the surprise? In which panel of the ICOC 2025 are you in?
- None, sir. I am in the Panel 3 of the ILFUC 2025.
- The I-what?
- The conference on International Literary Fund for Unraveling Canada(s).
- Oh, gosh! That literature!
- What about you?
- I'm here for the International Organic Chemistry Conference.

(Now, a pinch of self-referentiality as a righteous PoMo technique: Here I'm hoping that the reader had forgotten the introductory remark about a few different conferences happening at the venue simultaneously. If you didn't forget, that's your problem, not mine. I did the best I could. You should forget more in order to allow your self to be surprised sometimes. Yeah, yeah… I can hear you nagging. Oh, you must be the kind of person that opens the presents two days before the Christmas just to fuck it all up and call it "suspense".)

- There are MORE DIFFERENT CONFERENCES happening here SIMULTANEOUSLY? – I said quite SURPRISED.
- Oh, yeah. A few scientific ones. And obviously other types of conferences as well. Your literary conference, for example. And, if I'm not mistaken, the National Society of Exotic Dog Breeders is on the 4th floor too.

Wait. Wait-wait. Is he proposing the heretical idea that Literary study is not science? What's more, listing us on the same page with feather-winged, blue-eyed, blond dogs?

- Fuck my carbon – I sighed.
- Excuse me?
- Nothing – I said automatically, closing all the vents and dams, hence turning off my anyhow underfinanced center for empathy: the heart's on holiday, folks!
- Sir, thank you for your help. However, I'd like you to leave now. I do not wish you to see my face. I hope you understand me. I have to get the grip of myself. After all, I am the afternoon Panel 7 keynote speaker – he said.

I didn’t hear that sentence because I was already gone. I was out on the huge parking lot. A dog with its owner approached me and I startled them by saying:

- Woof!
- Holy Carbon, man, what’s wrong with you? – shouted the dog owner.

I just went on.

Nah, this last thing never happened. I just wanted to complete the logical *salto mortale* with a dog, and I also wanted once more to pronounce “CARBON”.[1]

NB: This text refers to the existential troubles of researchers in non-humanistic fields, those for which, let’s be frank, we don’t give a flying fuck: Screw them and their blue depressions! We, the inhumane humanists, who kill each other at conferences in the name of political correctness as much as of pretentious transgression, are not like them! **Note to self**: *Think about this the next time you cry in the car, pathetic punk!*

2. **From the Quest for Knowledge to Subduing it with Abbreviations: A Poem in the Excel Format**

(Naturally, you will have to imagine the Excel Sheet – It has to be present here only as an idea as it is physicality incompatible with the rest of the academic context.)

(Special thanks to the amateur civil association Freedom Under Conspiration! (FUC!), famous for its deep and independent research of all-science on the Internet, primarily the social media comments, for having the body of the poem equipped with a decent Chorus.)

Hic sunt dracones

A note for you, thinking creature, a note for you, beloved brother

That this sheet

Will explain, in all its sadness, will unravel, in its full glory,

A miraculously plucky feat.

A feat undertaken by a silly species

That emerged both from wisdom

And from Great Logic's daily feces,

Konnichiwa, konnichiwa, konnichiwa.

Chorus[2]: *Hollow Men, Hollow Men, Hollow all the way,*

Oh what fun it is to ride around

The prickly pear!

By the means of tenderness and the means of slaughter,

By the airy elegance of a butterfly and

By the sharpness of a love call from a horny otter,

(I'm now tempted to squeeze in the boy named Hairy Potter)

Through all existence, this foolish species boldly tried

To create an ideal Academia: serious and dry.

Konnichiwa, konnichiwa, konnichiwa.

Chorus (refusing to sing, then rioting): *We will not sing for these idiots. They get a PhD and then they think they can rule the world. Seriously! Not our problem. What a bunch of*

clowns! Let them do one day's work in a factory, and you'll see them cured of philosophy. Phi-lo-so-pheeeee. Anyway, we know better. We know everything better. We found it on the Internet! Or better, Mrs Google did it for us.

Seriousness led to exaltation, and exaltation

Led to – where else but the love of abbreviation!

And hence they spoke in this manner

(Funny lot – please, judge them not):

i.e., APA, and all eds.,

vol., pp take some meds,

MA, cf., and an ibid.

A fair TE makes you vivid.

Dr.sc. and AI

Which one of us is soon to die?

D bE N gggg MaT

Ca. Aaaa kg NOZGDRGHHHHH PeePeePee

Re, re, re, re, re, re, ga, ga, ga

… Konnichiwa?

Someone from the Chorus: *Stop the poem! Don't you see it's stuck?*

Someone else from the Chorus: *Call the Dwarf, that little puck!*

(DWARF appears in the EXCEL Sheet. He's carrying a book by Emile Cioran. Inspecting the poem.)

DWARF (to the Chorus): *Poor cell, poor cell. All it needs is a Merge&Center. And some love in AutoSum. There. Now it's done.*

Someone else-else from the Chorus: *Will the poem now be fine?*

DWARF: *I don't know. Let us test it. Let's insert new rows in line.*

And there it is, my dear friend,

Explained, revealed

And in plain sight:

Academy deprived of laughter

Indeed is a horrid plight:

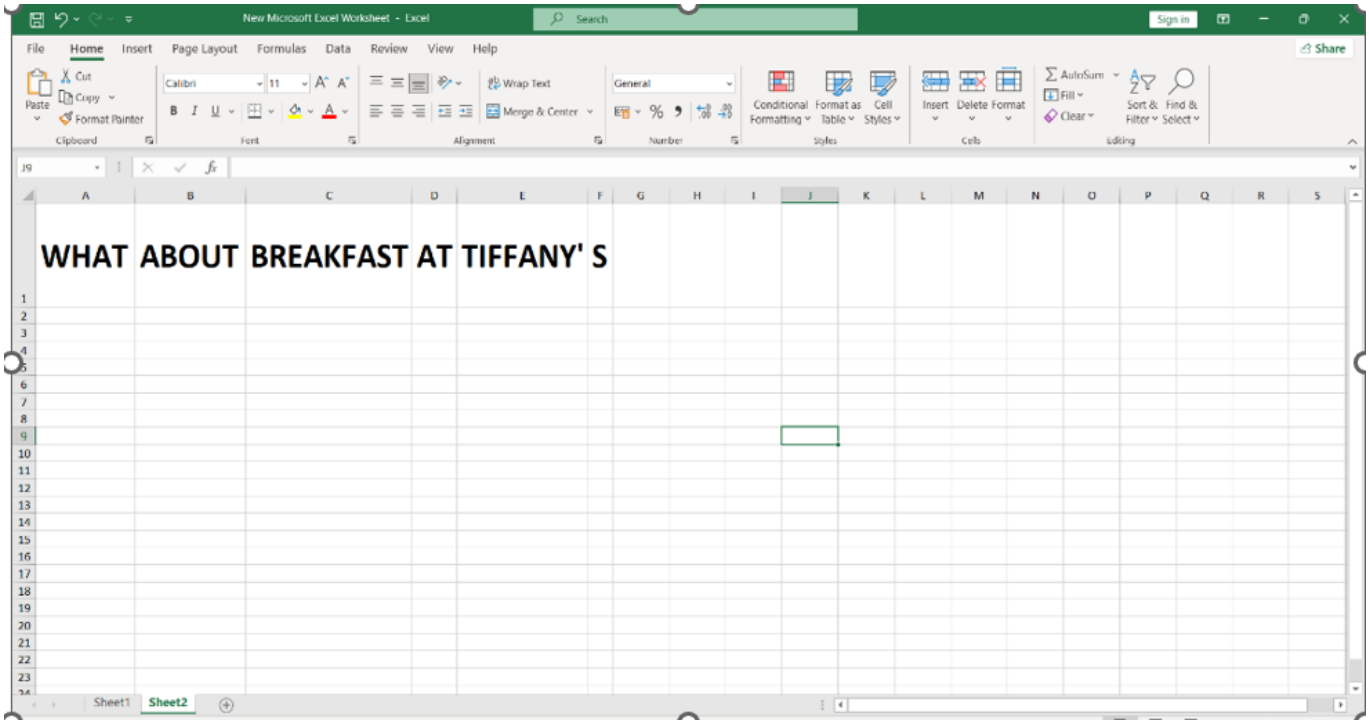
Abbreviated: devoid of light.

Ko-nni-chi-waaaaaaa (touché).

Someone else-else-else from the Chorus: *Nonsense, this poem. Utterly cheap esoterica. Why don't you give us something serious, like Carbon Chemistry?*

DWARF: *Well, I understand it. But that's probably due to the fact that I have a PhD in Aeronautics: I know what flies and what doesn't. And I can tell you what's prim and proper!*

Someone else-else-else-else from the Chorus (to Dwarf)**:** *You prejudiced, elitist, stiff, hypercritical, sad, ignorant, boring, unthinking, arrogant, pathetic little cunt*![3]



(Although an Excel Sheet in theory runs forever, I will now deliberately and, and somehow gladly, close this Sheet 1. Should you be interested, in Sheet 2 you can find a mathematic proof of the existence of both minus and plus zero, added provided by the courtesy of the option Insert Equation.)

3. **Long Live Relaxed Academia! And Also, Sarma.**

After introducing George previously in the text, it is time to now do the same with Giorgio, the inspiration of this short scientific article (that will bring me like billion ECTS in triple AAA, or to rephrase it more orgasmically: triplaaa rated magazines all around porn-loving universe, a.n. the so-called PLU rating). I could now start with one of the numerous quotes or ideas that we have examined together in the few days we spent together in the semi-fictional land of Khrwatska (where we, among other things, also held negotiations with witches, fairies, vocal Rs, and actual dwarfs) but instead, I will create an effect of a painfully PoMo-fashioned author's self-referentiality by stating the following: In the beginning of the creation of this passage, I am opening a bottle of Chianti presented to me by my dear friend

Giorgio Baruchello, a great philosopher from Akureyri, Iceland, an instinctive and spontaneous connoisseur of our existential situation, but most of all – a truly honest and lovable guy.

(OK, it will take me about 3 minutes to open the bottle – it's the one with the old-fashion cork – and fill in the glass, then a minute of *merak*, so, please, buzz off for approximately 4 minutes.)

Here we go again. I'm back. Welcome. The wine is great.

Giorgio and I go back to the year 2018, when we met at the Akureyri conference dedicated to Canadian Literature (on that occasion too I blasphemed about poor George Bowering). To put it shortly, Giorgio and I clicked right away, more in a sense of two paesani/paežani than in the sense of the band The Click! (Alright, sorry about this). We remained in contact through the years, actively exchanging ideas, thoughts, support, that is, nonsense. During that time, I had an honour to see two of my quasi-whatever articles published in the *Nordicum-Mediterraneum* journal, critically and professionally edited by Giorgio himself.[4] In February this year, thanks to Giorgio, Háskólinn á Akureyri, and particularly to ERASMUS Almighty, I had a chance to visit Giorgio again. During the time spent in Akureyri, we continued our constant analysis of everything, mostly in one of the three city pools and in the Kristjánsbakarí, where every day I overdosed on súkkulaði hringur and philosophy. [5]

There, in Akureyri, I witnessed the pre-birth efforts in the creation of Giorgio's first literary exploration in English, *Uncanny Soulscapes in Uncustomary Dreamscope*. Of course, I was happy and proud to hear that Giorgio had finished his manuscript not so long ago, and that it will soon be published in a new series of books by the Canadian publisher Northwest Passage Books[6]. I must add here, against the will of my dormouse Jumpy and my brown forest frog Merlin, but on great insisting of my ego called Mr. Belzebubović: not only that I had supported Giorgio's project from the beginning, but he had included a warm dedication to me in the Acknowledgments as well (well, of one of his many books in any case!). You can imagine that I was exhalated when Giorgio asked me to participate in the launch of the new book series at the Library of Akureyri on November 19 this year. "And that's not nearly all" (Manson, 2001); Giorgio asked me to act as one of the characters from the "Alien Day" farce

of the *Uncanny Soulscapes in Uncustomary Dreamscope*, Otto (Neurath), together with a fantastic guy and seemingly serious Canadian professor, Andrew Loman of Newfoundland[7]. This is one of the principal features of great men – they bring interesting[8] people together. So, I was Otto and Andrew was an Ensign of the Star Trek's USS Enterprise, and we were talking mostly about steering cocks, launched probes, liberal utopias, moral duties, and snoring captains. And the dreams that science fiction is made of.

It was a necessity that that Andrew and I should join the book launch via Zoom[9]. That did not in any way curb the sheer intellectual exuberance of the event, although it might have, perhaps, helped preserve its moral latitude (as I tend to drink a lot on the occasions of launchings; already had a few bitter conflicts about that with Elon. Damn, where is Mars?). Ok, I wish I didn't forget to switch off my camera after my performance. This way, unbeknownst to me, my ugly Dinaroid, post-Illyrian, and largely neo-Balkanic face was all over the screen (and Library, and Akureyri, and the dreams of the people present, etc.) during the whole event[10]. It would have helped if at one moment I didn't start picking my nose. But, enough about me. Drop dead, Belzebubović!

The book. I'll use a few words to describe it because that is usually the case with great stuff; you don't need to explain too much. What is this book? It's a mirror. In it, a reflection of an erudite and partially a saint. A person worn out by the time he did in Heaven. A guy who was smuggling meanings and ideas from Heaven to Hell and vice-versa. A guy who knows what you will say next but still succeeds to respect you. The guy too smart to take anything seriously. Time for another glass of Chianti.

Giorgio has broken all laws, torn down all walls, disregarded stale etiquettes and petty formalities, laid a huge cable[11] through the center of the unshaken idea of traditional academia. Thanks to him, I've come to like Marx – Groucho, that is. Because Giorgio is some kind of Kraus – either Karl or Chris, pick the one you like better. He got Monty Python and LaWanda Page dancing together. Giorgio's done with comedy what others have done with tragedy – he too has dirtied his hands with stages, the souls and bodies of real people, and given actors like Andrew and myself something meaningful to play with. Giorgio threw the idea of the (un)creative academic milieu, which had trained us and forced us to think and write like robots, into the cold stream of Akureyri's Glass River. Then he ran to the seashore where the river meets the sea. There he saw the traditional academia float on the river,

frozen, humble, free of burdens. Truthful. Alive. Revealing. And then he asked the floating academia:

- Hey, cruel old freak, do you want to hear a joke?

Giorgio did not do that because he hates academia. Quite the opposite! He gave academia the ride of its life. He gave it, and us, the most precious gifts of all: *Humour and laughter*. The gifts that make sense to us. And, if you imagine all this as a sort of a present box (remember: the holidays are coming!), the box is tied by a wonderful bow. This bow is one of the most important messages for us human beings, including inhumane humanists; a message both ancient and brand new: *Do not take yourself seriously*. Let me repeat it: *Do not take yourself seriously*. Got it, now? Seriously!

Incidentally, I will stop listing metaphors – Chianti is now having the best of me.

Romans used to say that the poison is in the tail (of the scorpion). Screw scorpions and imagine that poison is actually the sweet nectar of the brave. So, there is a sweet *coda* in this story. A few weeks after the book launch, and again, thanks to ERASMUS Almighty, Giorgio visited me in my godforsaken village of Rim (which is, to emphasise the paradox, a Croatian name for Rome). He stayed with us for only five days, a time far too short to discuss all the aspects of the *sarma*, an Ottoman dish of minced meat prepared in the leaves of various plants. The Turks would probably get flabbergasted if they knew that here we prepare our version of *sarma* in cabbage instead of the grape leaves. Hereby, I publicly apologize for that. We are some kind of Slavs after all, and cabbage is for them the same what the ring is for Gollum. Minced meat (animal of choice), with added rice, rolled in cabbage leaves, then cooked. Wonderful meal and not too difficult to prepare, especially if you have experience in rolling joints. Don't get judgemental because of this narcophiliac comparison– I didn't prepare the *sarma*. My mom did.

And I could go on about *sarma* forever[12], but I will, instead, structure the coda of this litany in a radically different manner. I will shortly talk about a different type of food – the *food for the soul*. I am endlessly grateful that I had a chance to spend another five days with Giorgio, and there are five main reasons for that. Firstly, I got the chance to engage in endless philosophical analyses of uncountable themes with someone who knows

incomparably more about philosophy than me. That was a great learning – the type of authentic exchange that I'm craving for. Secondly, these five days seemed as a natural prolongation of the book launch. I felt like I was promoted from being Otto into being the Steering Cock of the Ship. Thirdly, I got a chance to laugh basically non-stop for almost a week. Incentives for laughter varied from canonic philosophical texts to the idea of shit stuck on one's shoe's sole. Fourth, I got the chance to hang around with a great guy and a great friend in various bizarre derelict locations along the historical Louisiana[13] Road. We proclaimed an ethereal state-like entity of Louisanastan including all the locations we visited, with the official anthem: *Helicopter, Helicopter!*[14] Finally, fifth, I got the chance to brag to the village about having a posh Icelandic friend.[15]

Yes, one more thing. Being around Giorgio was incredibly inspiring. His airplane is still halfway to Iceland, and I already wrote all this nonsense. I have to stop now. Chianti dried out anyway. Cut the cable.Wait! Just a sec. Elon is trying to pass me a message for you.

Elon, can you hear me? Oh, fuck. The line is broken. The cable I cut… Oh, no!

4. **Sources Used**

Baruchello, Giorgio.

Its&bits of literature, music, and philosophy (uncritically, often randomly, sometimes unbecomingly).

Chianti, Riserva (2022) Italy

Endnotes

[1] I still don't feel this is a righteous ending of the story. I miss that American filmic element of the 'joy of revenge'. The crying Aeronaut didn't quite get what he deserved. So, next to the word CARBON, just one remark: My friend George Bowering could beat the fuck

out of this meek Aeronaut, even at his present age. George would extract the essence out of this crybaby and, just for the hell of it, forever divide the notions of ‘key’ and ‘note’ in his chemically framed think-bulb, and so by the means of a traditional concussion. John Wayne might approve of it.

[2] Do read in the Cell Note (also known in the Excellish language as the EFFECT function) that the Chorus uses *Jingle Bells* melody to more-or-less rhytmically utter this pseudo-lyrical crap.

[3] Dear readers, I apologize: I simply couldn’t rhyme the less-and-less obscene word *cunt* with anything, and I wanted it to be the last word in the line. A similar phenomenon was described by the band Bloodhound Gang in their seminal (interdisciplinary) song *Three Point One Four*: “It’s hard to rhyme a word like vagina” (BhG, 1999), where they, with questionable success, tried to rhyme it with both Calvin Klein and North Carolina.

[4] And that much about protectionism and corruption. You let the two guys from Southern Europe meet for a day, and the next thing you see is that the first guy is publishing the other guy’s crummy half-creations in an otherwise respectable magazine. People of the North, be aware of us!

[5] Truth be told, we actually did some teaching too. I recollect very little of that.

[6] A supreme guerilla publishing house, a light at the end of the tunnel of the Capitalist monetization of p-books, led by brave Brendan Myers.

[7] Why don’t they spell it Newfundlund, why? I mean, no problems with Labrador, and more so, there is that dog too. But Newfoundland? I love Canadians, I really do, but sometimes I’m in doubt whether they are actually fucking around with us.

[8] By interesting (and great), I mean Andrew Loman. Although I admit I too could be interesting to the staff of our local mental facility. My wife would give me a ride there, if ever needed.

[9] Thank you, People’s Republic of China. Seriously, no irony intended.

[10] Andy Hill, you got to love my face

[11] I didn't want to explain this, but I feel like I have to. In some European languages, 'to lay down the cable' means to take a dump. When you think of it, it's an association based on the outer appearance of objects, but it also carries an important symbolic layer: The one pointing towards the idea of 'returning to nature' (i.e., I took from nature, now, Nature, there's your shit)' or being in a direct contact with nature (i.e. if 'cable' is seen as a telephone cable, you could literally ring Nature: 'Hello, Nature? Fancy a shit?')

[12] Thank Good Lord Laurence Sterne did not know about *sarma*. Uncle Toby would still be talking about it.

[13] Named after the Napoleon's second wife Marie Louise, the Duchess of Parma. Two culture-specific links here: Firstly, in Louisanastan we dislike this road in general because it was built by the Austrian colonial power, which, of course, never gave us anything good. Secondly, we dislike any affiliation with Parma as they are twinned with Sampdoria, and in that sense inimical to Genoa.

[14] This one is kind of difficult to explain. I'd have to start with explaining the phenomenon of the Balkan turbofolk music but have no sufficient attention to do so. Instead, feel free to ask Giorgio to perform this everlasting anthem to you, both the audio and the choreo. He'll be glad to comply. Just take care he doesn't fly away.

[15] Truth be told, we actually did some teaching too. I recollect very little of that.