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The Student: Tibor's Class

By Peter Buchanan-Smith

I am so lucky. Everyone I meet assures me just how lucky I am. And I don't argue. Last winter, I took a twelve-week course through the MFA design program at School of Visual Arts called "1,000 Words." It was taught by the bad boy of graphic design, conceptual guru, and perverse optimist despite his terminal cancer. He was a man many of us worshipped. His name was Tibor Kalman, and yes, I admit that I was intimidated by him and absolutely uncertain of what to expect. I had never faced such a prospect, and I expect I never will again.

From the outset, mystery and suspense surrounded Tibor's class. "Forward motion, clarity and surprise, these three principles," Tibor taught us, "are at the heart of all great stories." As it turns out, they also underscored his course. My introduction to Tibor came in the form of a questionnaire. A week before the first class, one of his assistants handed out a sheet entitled "A few questions from Tibor." Through this simple document, he managed to cut to the chase, leaving me questioning my very existence and wanting to learn more. The questions were:

What is your name?

What do you hope to get out of this program?

What do you hope to get out of class? (Or do you just want to get out of class?)

What is your media diet?

What do you want to be when you grow up?

What is your favorite candy?

The first time I actually met Tibor, he was holding forth from his favorite armchair in the living room of his West Village apartment. It was from this room and throne that he conducted all of his subsequent classes and crits. This first one began with a projected slide onto his living room wall, and for forty-five minutes, no one dared to breathe a word. The image on this slide was the foundation for the semester's work, and for some it was the catalyst for a personal design cause.

When the lights came on again, Tibor left us with one parting instruction: "Bring in one image that somehow reacts to the image on the wall." Each week, we flocked to Tibor with more and more images, all of which were (at the very least) a reaction to his image and the ensuing images we chose. Tibor not only wanted to teach us how to use our selected photographs to tell a good story, but demanded that we understand their impact: "A picture is worth a thousand words. Two pictures should be worth two thousand, or even eight thousand words," he said. More often than not, the images we selected were a reaction to the way he provoked, prodded, angered, and inspired us. Tibor wanted us to make decisions from the heart, because these, he assured us, would make the most compelling stories: "If it's going to be any good, it's going to be from the subconscious," he said. "I'm interested in how the story and the dynamics change. Not from a graphic level, but from an emotional one."

Despite Tibor's weakened health, I marveled at his wit, mental stamina, and passionate insistence on giving us students everything he possibly could. Tibor had only known us for a matter of weeks, yet remarkably he was determined to devote some of his precious last days to our enlightenment. I am grateful to Tibor's family for sharing him during this time. Perhaps they'll be glad to know that, like so many others, I now carry the torch of Tibor wherever I go.

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the function of art

The child had never before seen the sea. One day, his father took him to her. They traveled for many, many days until they found her, beyond the tall dunes, waiting, announcing herself in the powerful and fragrant winds, and in the hoarse voices of waves breaking on the shore.

When the child and his father finally reached the crest of the dune, the sea exploded before their eyes. The immensity and brilliance of the sea was so great that the child fell silent, awed by her beauty. When he finally found words, he begged his father in a trembling stutter, "Help me to see!"

celebration of the right to fly

At the entrance to the town of Ollantaytambo, near Cuzco, I was able to break away from a group of tourists, when a local child, sickly and dressed in rags, asked me to give him a ballpoint pen. I had only one, and had been using it to jot down boring notes on archaeology, but I offered to draw a little pig on the back of his hand. Word got around in no time, and suddenly I found myself surrounded by a swarm of children who demanded, at the top of their lungs, that I draw animals on their little hands, furrowed by dirt and cold, skins of burnt leather.

One wanted a goat and another a cobra, some preferred birds high-soaring or sweet of song, chattering parrots, scary owls, and of course some asked for dragons and ghosts.

Then, in the midst of this uproar, a tiny waiflike child, just a bit over three feet tall, showed me the watch drawn with black ink on his wrist.

"My uncle, who lives in Lima, sent it to me," he said.

"Oh, and does it keep good time?" I asked.

"It's a bit slow," he responded.

a celebration of friendship

Juan Gelman told me of an old woman who, on a street in Paris, fought against a brigade of municipal workers with her umbrella. The workers were catching pigeons when, emerging from a Model T Ford and brandishing her umbrella, she rushed into the attack. Swinging the umbrella with both hands, she cleared the way and untied the nets where the pigeons had been trapped. As they flew away, she turned on the workers, who tried to protect themselves however they could with their hands.

The workers stammered apologies that the woman refused to hear: Don't take it so hard . . . These are good orders from above . . . the pigeons are ruining the city . . . they're a terrible plague. When the furious woman's arms grew tired, she leaned against a wall to catch her breath, and the workers asked her for some sort of explanation, and she said: "My son died, and became a pigeon." They then proposed, "Lady, why don't you just take your son and let us work in peace?" They said that they had a lot of work to do, trapping the millions of pigeons that were loose all over Paris.

"Oh no!" she exclaimed. "That I would never do!" Looking through them as though they were made of glass, gazing into space, and far away from them, far away from everything, she said:

"I don't know which pigeon is my son. And, even if I did, I still wouldn't take him with me. What right do I have to separate him from his friends?"

a library is not a cemetery

It was at the Doñate's house, not far from Barcelona. Pilar and Antonio were watching television. On the screen a Latin American novelist spoke, a repentant leftist fervently dedicated to the confusion of free enterprise with the freedom of the spirit.

The novelist was in the midst of his praise of money and disenchantment, in the midst of his attack on those of us who believe that capitalism is not an inevitable curse, when a tremendous racket came from just above the television set: the three volumes of *Memory of Fire* had fallen, as if out of sheer will, creating a terrible noise as they tumbled from the bookshelf.

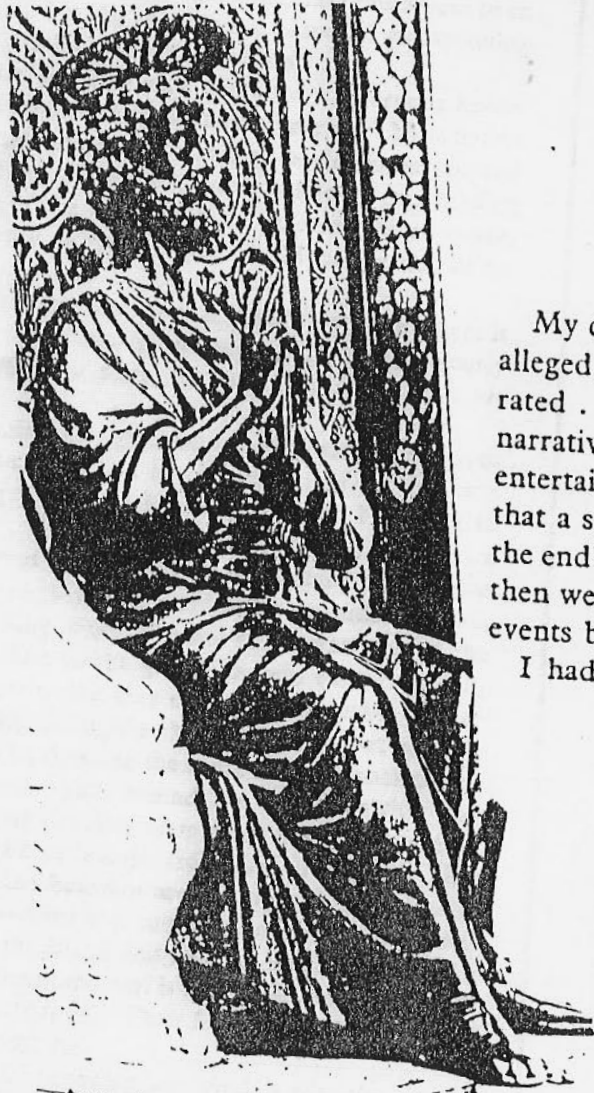
Several days later, and in a very casual way, Pilar told me what had happened. After all, since books are filled with human words, there's nothing strange about them expressing their indignation. □

Eduardo Galeano is a writer who lives in Montevideo. His latest work is the trilogy *Memory of Fire: Genesis, Faces and Masks*, and *Century of the Wind*, published by Pantheon Books, New York.

Translated from the Spanish by Tracey Hill.

If it took hundreds of thousands of wooden cartwheels to make the ruts in the flagstones of Pompeii, and thousands of thousands of bare shuffling knees to reshape the steps of Durham Cathedral, wonder at how many millions of soft lips were necessary to kiss away this bronze foot of Saint Peter in Rome.

Peter Greenaway



My dictionary says a story is 'a sequence of events that have, or are alleged to have happened, a series of events that are or might be narrated . . . a person's account of his life or some portion of it . . . a narrative of real or, more usually fictitious events, designed for the entertainment of the hearer . . .' and so on. Even a small child knows that a story isn't just a series of events, because he says 'And is that the end?' If we say 'A story is a series of events that might be narrated' then we beg the question, which is: 'Why do we narrate one series of events but not another?'

I had to decide what a story was, and present a theory that an

improviser could use on the spur of the moment in any situation. Obviously, the 'seventeen basic plots' approach would be too limiting. I needed a way to handle anything that cropped up.

Suppose I make up a story about meeting a bear in the forest. It chases me until I come to a lake. I leap into a boat and row across to an island. On the island is a hut. In the hut is a beautiful girl spinning golden thread. I make passionate love to the girl . . .

I am now 'storytelling' but I haven't told a *story*. Everyone knows it isn't finished. I could continue forever in the same way: Next morning I am walking around the island when an eagle seizes me and carries me high into the sky. I land on a cloud and find a path leading to Heaven. To one side of the path I notice a lake with three swans. One of the swans suddenly disappears, and an old man stands in his place . . .

The trouble with such a sequence is that there's no place where it can stop, or rather, that it can stop *anywhere*; you are unconsciously waiting for another activity to start, not free association, but *reincorporation*.

Let's begin the story again: I escape from a bear by rowing across to an island. Inside a hut on the island is a beautiful girl bathing in a wooden tub. I'm making passionate love to her when I happen to glance out of the window. If I now see the bear rowing across in a second boat, then there was some point in mentioning him in the first place. If the girl screams 'My lover!' and hides me under the bed, then this is better storytelling, since I've not only reintroduced the bear, but I've also linked him to the girl. The bear enters the hut, unzips his skin, and emerges as the grey old man who makes love to the girl. I creep out of the hut taking the skin with me so that he can't change back into a bear. I run down to the shore and row back to the mainland, towing the second boat behind me (reintroducing the boats). Then I see the old man paddling after me in the tub. He seems incredibly strong and there's no escape from him. I wait for him among the trees, and pull the bearskin around myself. I become a bear and tear him to pieces—thus I've reincorporated both the man and the skin. I row back to the island and find the girl has vanished. The hut has become very old and the roof is sagging in, and trees that were young saplings are now very tall. Then I try to remove the skin and I find it's sealed up around me.

At this point a child would probably say 'And is that the end?' because clearly some sort of pattern has been completed. Yet at no time have I thought about the *content* of the scene. I presume it's

about sexual anxieties and fear of old age, or whatever. Had I 'known' this, then I wouldn't have constructed that particular story, but as usual the content has looked after itself, and anyway is only of interest to critics or psychologists. What matters to me is the ease with which I 'free-associate' and the skill with which I reincorporate.

Here's a 'good night' story made up by me and Dorcas (age six).

'What do you want a story about?' I asked.

'A little bird,' she said.

'That's right. And where did this little bird live?'

'With Mummy and Daddy bird.'

'Mummy and Daddy looked out of the nest one day and saw something coming through the trees. What did he have in his hand?'

'An axe.'

'And he took the axe and started chopping down all the trees with a white mark on. So Daddy bird flew out of the nest, and do you know what he saw on the bark of his tree?'

'A white mark.'

'Which meant?'

'The man was going to cut down their tree.'

'So the birds all flew down to the river. Who did they meet?'

'Mr Elephant.'

'Yes. And Mr Elephant filled his trunk with water and washed the white mark away from the tree. And what did he do with the water left in his trunk?'

'He squirted it over the man.'

'That's right. And he chased the man right out of the forest and the man never came back.'

'And is that the end of the story?'

'It is.'

At the age of six she has a better understanding of storytelling than many university students. She links the man to the birds by giving him an axe. She links up the water left in the trunk with the wood-cutter, whom she remembers we'd shelved. She isn't concerned with content but any narrative will have some (about insecurity, I suppose).

I say to an actress, 'Make up a story.' She looks desperate, and says, 'I can't think of one.'

'Any story,' I say. 'Make up a silly one.'

'I can't,' she despairs.

'Suppose I think of one and you guess what it is.'

At once she relaxes, and it's obvious how very tense she was.

Status

I The See-saw

When I began teaching at the Royal Court Theatre Studio (1963), I noticed that the actors couldn't reproduce 'ordinary' conversation. They said 'Talky scenes are dull', but the conversations they acted out were nothing like those I overheard in life. For some weeks I experimented with scenes in which two 'strangers' met and interacted, and I tried saying 'No jokes', and 'Don't try to be clever', but the work remained unconvincing. They had no way to mark time and allow situations to develop, they were forever striving to latch on to 'interesting' ideas. If casual conversations really were motiveless, and operated by chance, why was it impossible to reproduce them at the studio?

I was preoccupied with this problem when I saw the Moscow Art's production of *The Cherry Orchard*. Everyone on stage seemed to have chosen the *strongest* possible motives for each action—no doubt the production had been 'improved' in the decades since Stanislavsky directed it. The effect was 'theatrical' but not like life as I knew it. I asked myself for the first time what were the *weakest* possible motives, the motives that the characters I was watching might really have had. When I returned to the studio I set the first of my status exercises.

'Try to get your status just a little above or below your partner's,' I said, and I insisted that the gap should be minimal. The actors seemed to know exactly what I meant and the work was transformed. The scenes became 'authentic', and actors seemed marvellously observant. Suddenly we understood that every inflection and movement implies a status, and that no action is due to chance, or really 'motiveless'. It was hysterically funny, but at the same time very alarming. All our secret manoeuvrings were exposed. If someone asked a question we didn't bother to answer it, we concentrated on why it had been asked. No one could make an 'innocuous' remark without everyone instantly grasping what lay behind it. Normally we are 'forbidden' to see status transactions except when there's a conflict. In reality status transactions continue all the time. In the park we'll notice the ducks squabbling, but not how carefully they keep their distances when they are not.

Here's a conversation quoted by W. R. Bion (*Experience in Groups*, Tavistock Publications, 1968) which he gives as an example of a group not getting anywhere while apparently being friendly. The remarks on the status interactions are mine.

MRS X: I had a nasty turn last week. I was standing in a queue waiting for my turn to go into the cinema when I felt ever so queer. Really, I thought I should faint or something.

[Mrs X is attempting to raise her status by having an interesting medical problem. Mrs Y immediately outdoes her.]

MRS Y: You're lucky to have been going to a cinema. If I thought I could go to a cinema I should think I had nothing to complain of at all.

[Mrs Z now blocks Mrs Y.]

MRS Z: I know what Mrs X means. I feel just like that myself, only I should have had to leave the queue.

[Mrs Z is very talented in that she supports Mrs X against Mrs Y while at the same time claiming to be more worthy of interest, her condition more severe. Mr A now intervenes to lower them all by making their condition seem very ordinary.]

MR A: Have you tried stooping down? That makes the blood come back to your head. I expect you were feeling faint.

[Mrs X defends herself.]

MRS X: It's not really faint.

MRS Y: I always find it does a lot of good to try exercises. I don't know if that's what Mr A means.

[She seems to be joining forces with Mr A, but implies that he was unable to say what he meant. She doesn't say 'Is that what you mean?' but protests herself by her typically high-status circumlocution. Mrs Z now lowers everybody, and immediately lowers herself to avoid counter-attack.]

MRS Z: I think you have to use your will-power. That's what worries me—I haven't got any.

[Mr B then intervenes, I suspect in a low-status way, or rather trying to be high-status but failing. It's impossible to be sure from just the words.]

MR B: I had something similar happen to me last week, only I wasn't standing in a queue. I was just sitting at home quietly when . . .

[Mr C demolishes him.]

MR C: You were lucky to be sitting at home quietly. If I was able to do that I shouldn't think I had anything to grumble about. If you can't sit at home why don't you go to the cinema or something?

Bion says that the prevailing atmosphere was of good temper and helpfulness. He adds that 'A suspicion grows in my mind, that there is no hope whatever of expecting co-operation from this group.' Fair enough. What he has is a group where everyone attacks the status of everyone else while pretending to be friendly. If he taught them to play status transactions as *games* then the feeling within the group would improve. A lot of laughter would have been released, and the group might have flipped over from acting as a competitive group into acting as a co-operative one. It's worth noting how much talent is locked away inside these apparently banal people.

We've all observed different kinds of teachers, so if I describe three types of status players commonly found in the teaching profession you may find that you already know exactly what I mean.

I remember one teacher, whom we liked but who couldn't keep discipline. The Headmaster made it obvious that he wanted to fire him, and we decided we'd better behave. Next lesson we sat in a spooky silence for about five minutes, and then one by one we began to fool about—boys jumping from table to table, acetylene-gas exploding in the sink, and so on. Finally, our teacher was given an excellent reference just to get rid of him, and he landed a headmastership at the other end of the county. We were left with the paradox that our behaviour had nothing to do with our conscious intention.

Another teacher, who was generally disliked, never punished and yet exerted a ruthless discipline. In the street he walked with fixity of purpose, striding along and stabbing people with his eyes. Without punishing, or making threats, he filled us with terror. We discussed with awe how terrible life must be for his own children.

A third teacher, who was much loved, never punished but kept excellent discipline, while remaining very human. He would joke with us, and then impose a mysterious stillness. In the street he looked upright, but relaxed, and he smiled easily.

I thought about these teachers a lot, but I couldn't understand the forces operating on us. I would now say that the incompetent teacher was a low-status player: he twitched, he made many unnecessary movements, he went red at the slightest annoyance, and he always seemed like an intruder in the classroom. The one who filled us with terror was a compulsive high-status player. The third was a status

expert, raising and lowering his status with great skill. The pleasure attached to misbehaving comes partly from the status changes you make in your teacher. All those jokes on teacher are to make him drop in status. The third teacher could cope easily with any situation by changing his status first.

Status is a confusing term unless it's understood as something one *does*. You may be low in social status, but play high, and vice versa. For example:

TRAMP: 'Ere! Where are you going?

DUCHESSES: I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch . . .

TRAMP: Are you deaf as well as blind?

Audiences enjoy a contrast between the status played and the social status. We always like it when a tramp is mistaken for the boss, or the boss for a tramp. Hence plays like *The Inspector General*. Chaplin liked to play the person at the bottom of the hierarchy and then lower everyone.

I should really talk about dominance and submission, but I'd create a resistance. Students who will agree readily to raising or lowering their status may object if asked to 'dominate' or 'submit'.

Status seems to me to be a useful term, providing the difference between the status you are and the status you play is understood.

As soon as I introduced the status work at the Studio, we found that people will play one status while convinced that they are playing the opposite. This obviously makes for very bad social 'meshing'—as in Bion's therapy group—and many of us had to revise our whole idea of ourselves. In my own case I was astounded to find that when I thought I was being friendly, I was actually being hostile! If someone had said 'I like your play', I would have said 'Oh, it's not up to much', perceiving myself as 'charmingly modest'. In reality I would have been implying that my admirer had bad taste. I experience the opposite situation when people come up, looking friendly and supportive, and say, 'We did enjoy the end of Act One', leaving me to wonder what was wrong with the rest.

I ask a student to lower his status during a scene, and he enters and says:

A: What are you reading?

B: *War and Peace*.

A: Ah! That's my favourite book!

The class laugh and A stops in amazement. I had told him to lower his status during the scene, and he doesn't see what's gone wrong.

I ask him to try it again and suggest a different line of dialogue.

A: What are you reading?

B: *War and Peace*.

A: I've always wanted to read that.

A now experiences the difference, and realises that he was originally claiming 'cultural superiority' by implying that he had read this immense work many times. If he'd understood this he could have corrected the error.

A: Ah! That's my favourite book.

B: Really?

A: Oh yes. Of course I only look at the pictures . . .

A further early discovery was that there was no way to be neutral. The 'Good morning' that might be experienced as lowering by the Manager, might be experienced as raising by the bank clerk. The messages are modified by the receivers.

You can see people trying to be neutral in group photographs. They pose with arms folded or close to their sides as if to say 'Look! I'm not claiming any more space than I'm entitled to', and they hold themselves very straight as if saying 'But I'm not submissive either!' If someone points a camera at you you're in danger of having your status exposed, so you either clown about, or become deliberately unexpressive. In formal group photographs it's normal to see people guarding their status. You get quite different effects when people don't know they're being photographed.

If status can't even be got rid of, then what happens between friends? Many people will maintain that we don't play status transactions with our friends, and yet every movement, every inflection of the voice implies a status. My answer is that acquaintances become friends when they *agree* to play status games together. If I take an acquaintance an early morning cup of tea I might say 'Did you have a good night?' or something equally 'neutral', the status being established by voice and posture and eye contact and so on. If I take a cup of tea to a friend then I may say 'Get up, you old cow', or 'Your Highness's tea', pretending to raise or lower status. Once students understand that they already play status games with their friends, then they realise that they already know most of the status games I'm trying to teach them.

We soon discovered the 'see-saw' principle: 'I go up and you go down'. Walk into a dressing-room and say 'I got the part' and everyone will congratulate you, but will feel lowered. Say 'They said I was too old' and people commiserate, but cheer up perceptibly. Kings and great lords used to surround themselves with dwarfs and cripples so that they could rise by the contrast. Some modern celebrities do the

same. The exception to this see-saw principle comes when you identify with the person being raised or lowered, when you sit on his end of the see-saw, so to speak. If you claim status because you know some famous person, then you'll feel raised when they are: similarly, an ardent royalist won't want to see the Queen fall off her horse. When we tell people nice things about ourselves this is usually a little like kicking them. People really want to be told things to our discredit in such a way that they don't have to feel sympathy. Low-status players save up little tit-bits involving their own discomfiture with which to amuse and placate other people.

If I'm trying to lower my end of the see-saw, and my mind blocks, I can always switch to raising the other end. That is, I can achieve a similar effect by saying 'I smell beautiful' as 'You stink'. I therefore teach actors to switch between raising themselves and lowering their partners in alternate sentences; and vice versa. Good playwrights also add variety in this way. For example, look at the opening of Molière's *A Doctor in Spite of Himself*. The remarks on status are mine.

SGANARELLE: [*Raises himself*.] No, I tell you I'll have nothing to do with it and it's for me to say, I'm the master.

MARTINE: [*Lowers Sganarelle, raises herself*.] And I'm telling you that I'll have you do as I want. I didn't marry you to put up with your nonsensical goings-on.

SGANARELLE: [*Lowers Martine*.] Oh! The misery of married life! How right Aristotle was when he said wives were the very devil!

MARTINE: [*Lowers Sganarelle and Aristotle*.] Just listen to the clever fellow—him and his blockhead of an Aristotle!

SGANARELLE: [*Raises himself*.] Yes, I'm a clever fellow all right! Produce me a woodcutter who can argue and hold forth like me, a man who has served six years with a famous physician and had his Latin grammar off by heart since infancy!

MARTINE: [*Lowers Sganarelle*.] A plague on the idiot!

SGANARELLE: [*Lowers Martine*.] A plague on you, you worthless hussy!

MARTINE: [*Lowers her wedding day*.] A curse on the day and hour when I took it into my head to go and say 'I will'!

SGANARELLE: [*Lowers notary*.] And a curse on the cuckold of a notary who made me sign my name to my own ruin.

MARTINE: [*Raises herself*.] A lot of reason you have to complain, I must say! You ought to thank Heaven every minute of your life that you have me for your wife. Do you think you deserved to marry a woman like me? [*And so on*.]

(*The Misanthrope and other plays*, translated by John Wood, Penguin, 1959.)

Most comedy works on the see-saw principle. A comedian is someone paid to lower his own or other people's status. I remember some of Ken Dodd's patter which went something like this: 'I got up this morning and had my bath . . . standing up in the sink . . .' (Laugh from audience.) ' . . . and then I lay down to dry off—on the draining-board . . .' (Laughter.) ' . . . and then my father came in and said "Who skinned this rabbit?"' (Laughter.) While he describes himself in this pathetic way he leaps about, and expresses manic happiness, thus absolving the audience of the need to pity him. We want people to be very low-status, but we don't want to feel sympathy for them—slaves are always supposed to sing at their work.

One way to understand status transactions is to examine the comic strips, the 'funnies'. Most are based on very simple status transactions, and it's interesting to observe the postures of the characters, and the changes in status between the first and last frames.

Another way is to examine jokes, and analyse their status transactions. For example:

CUSTOMER: 'Ere, there's a cockroach in the loo!'

BARMAID: Well you'll have to wait till he's finished, won't you?

Or again:

A: Who's that fat noisy old bag?

B: That's my wife.

B: Oh, I'm sorry . . .

A: You're sorry! How do you think I feel?

2 Comedy and Tragedy

This essay on laughter Bergson maintained that the man-falling-on-a-banana-skin joke was funny because the victim had suddenly been forced into acting like an automaton. He wrote: 'Through lack of elasticity, through absent-mindedness, and a kind of physical obstinacy: as a result, in fact, of rigidity or of momentum, the muscles continued to perform the same movement when the circumstances of the case called for something else. This is the reason

for the man's fall, and also of the people's laughter.' Later in the same essay he says: 'What is essentially laughable is what is done automatically.'

In my view the man who falls on the banana skin is funny only if he loses status, and if we don't have sympathy with him. If my poor old blind grandfather falls over I'll rush up and help him to his feet. If he's really hurt I may be appalled. If Nixon had slipped up on the White House steps many people would have found it hysterical. If Bergson had been right then we would laugh at a drowning man, and grand military parades would have the crowds rocking with merriment. A Japanese regiment is said to have masturbated by numbers in a football stadium as an insult to the population of Nanking, but I don't suppose it was funny at the time. Chaplin being sucked into the machine is funny because his style absolves us of the need for sympathy.

Tragedy also works on the see-saw principle: its subject is the ousting of a high-status animal from the pack. Super-intelligent wolves might have invented this form of theatre, and the lupine Oedipus would play high status at all times. Even when he was being led into the wilderness he wouldn't whine, and he'd keep his tail up. If he crumbled into low-status posture and voice the audience wouldn't get the necessary catharsis. The effect wouldn't be tragic, but pathetic. Even criminals about to be executed were supposed to make a 'good end', i.e. to play high status. When the executioner asked Raleigh if he wouldn't rather face the light of the dawn he said something like 'What matter how the head lie, if the heart be right', which is still remembered.

When a very high-status person is wiped out, everyone feels pleasure as they experience the feeling of moving up a step. This is why tragedy has always been concerned with kings and princes, and why we have a special high-status style for playing tragedy. I've seen a misguided Faustus writhing on the floor at the end of the play, which is bad for the verse, and pretty ineffective. Terrible things can happen to the high-status animal, he can poke his eyes out with his wife's brooch, but he must never look as if he could accept a position lower in the pecking order. He has to be *ejected* from it.

Tragedy is obviously related to sacrifice. Two things strike me about reports of sacrifices: one is that the crowd get more and more tense, and then are relaxed and happy at the moment of death; the other is that the victim is *raised* in status before being sacrificed. The best goat is chosen, and it's groomed, and magnificently decorated. A

human sacrifice might be pampered for months, and then dressed in fine clothes, and rehearsed in his role at the centre of the great ceremony. Elements of this can be seen in the Christ story (the robe, the crown of thorns, and even the eating of the 'body'). A sacrifice has to be endowed with high status or the magic doesn't work.