

7. So much for Corporal Trim's body and legs. – He held the sermon loosely – not carelessly, in his left hand, raised something above his stomach, and detach'd a little from his breast, – his right arm falling negligently by his side, as nature and the laws of gravity order'd it, – but with the palm of it open and turned towards his audience, ready to aid the sentiment, in case it stood in need.

8. – He was alive last Whitsontide, said the coachman. – Whitsontide ! alas ! cried Trim, extgending his right arm, and falling instantly into the same attitude in which he read the semon, – what is Whitsontide, Jonathan (for that was the coachman's name) or Shrovetide, or any time or time past, to this ? Are we not here now, continued the corporal (striking the end of his stick perpendicularly upon the floor, so as to give an idea of health and stability)—and are we not— (dropping his hat upon the ground) gone ! in a moment ! Twas infinitely striking ! Susannah burst into a flood of tears.
(V, vii)

UPCOMING EVENTS AT REDCAT

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May 29–30: Partch DARK/Partch light

June 11–21: The Wooster Group: *La Didone*, A Baroque Opera

June 25–27: Yvonne Rainer: *RoS Indexical* and *Spiraling Down*

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SAMUEL WEBER: *WHAT IS A LITERARY IMAGE?*

May 14, 2009

8:30 pm

presented by

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

California Institute of the Arts

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SAMUEL WEBER:

WHAT IS A LITERARY IMAGE

Text Passages Quoted



1. We pray for one last landing/ On the globe that gave us birth/ Let us rest our eyes on the fleecy skies/ And the cool, green hills of Earth.

2. The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

3. About the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity—an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn—a pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued. Shaking off from my spirit what must have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature

seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

4. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued; for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened — there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind—the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight — my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder — there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters — and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the “*House of Usher*”.

5. Before the Corporal begins, I must first give you a description of his attitude otherwise (...) you would be apt to paint Trim as if he was standing in his platoon ready for action.— His attitude as you can conceive. He stood before them with his body swayed, and bent forwards not just so far, as to make an angle of 85 degrees and a half upon the plain of the horizon [...] (II.xvii)

6. He stood (...) his right leg firm under him, sustaining seven-eighths of his whole weight, — the foot of his left leg, the defect of which was no disadvantage to his attitude, advanced a little, — not laterally, not forwards, but in a line betwixt them, — his knee bent, but that not violently, — but so as to fall within the limits of the line of beauty ; — and I add, of the line of science too,—for consider, it had one eighth part of his body to bear up, — so that in this case the position of the leg is determined, — because the foot could be no further advanced, or the knee more bent, than what would allow him, mechanically, to receive an eighth part of his whole weight under it, — and to carry it too.