

ED Odyssey draft 3 (aliens version)

Enter 2 NARRATORS/MEN IN BLACK:

(speaking in a cheesy enigmatic/dramatic voice a la the 50s sci-fis, begin aloud to catch the attention of the audience)

MiB1:

My fellow Earthlings! Humanity is in grave peril! A race of aliens seeking to take over the world has infiltrated our society!

(possibly a generic "Earth under attack" picture on the projector to substantiate the exposition)

MiB2:

They operate from our very midst, hidden in plain sight near the centre of our beloved city....

(projector: a shot of the G building, possibly with an alien saucer photoshopped on top of it)

...and they are bent on nothing short of total world domination, seeking to assimilate humankind into their ravenous brainwashed puppets.

MiB1:

Led by a cruel intergalactic overlord, who rules with an iron fist from his high-perched commanding pod ...

(projector: a shot of the department office, with a "magnifying glass zoom" on the spot where the "do not disturb outside office hours" sign usually is, but showing "I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds!" instead)

...these invaders have for many years been systematically exterminating the human race by converting innocent civilians into their own ranks.

MiB2:

The process is subtle at first. The unsuspecting victims are drawn to the mystical allure of cryptic outlandish messages, presented to those who are deemed ripe to be harvested.

(projector: the title page of Jeff's welcoming PP presentation (?) zooms in a la the Monolith scene from 2001: A Space Odyssey – accompanied with Strauss - Also sprach Zarathustra playing)

Enter 2 STUDENTS of very scruffy appearance, casual clothing, dishevelled hair etc

<the Czech parts possibly translated into hantec>

e.g.

S1: Ty vole byls na tom informačním nesmyslu co nám vo tom říkali po mejlu?

S2: Ty jo co tě nemá, dyť todlencto je filosofická fakulta, a filosofuje se zásadně nad pivem.

S1: No byl tam nákej týpek asi z Německa, menoval se [Fan Der Cíl] nebo tak, a nákyim divnym jazykem povídal že to tady je fakt hustý.

S2: No a co přesně říkal?

S1: No já tomu moc nerozumněl, ale mam tu něco napsanýho *(produces a crumpled note on a torn (toilet?) paper from his/her pocket, alternatively searches the pockets but doesn't find anything, ultimately snatching it from a less usual place, e.g. a shoe, an ear, cleavage etc).*

S2: No ukaž...(reads in atrocious English) 40% of you won't make it into the second year" ...to asi jako že 40% z nás tím učením nemusí trávit ani sekundu ročně.

S1: No bomba! Ještě tu mam tohle: "You won't be spoon-fed information"

S2: To asi bude náký zásadní moudro, jako s tou lžící z Matrixu.

(both nod their heads in solemn respect)

S1: A taky jsem ještě chytnul "This is not a language school" a cosi jako (*trying to decipher his/her own handwriting*): [dount trast jór kolík]. Dyk tohle není technická fakulta, tak jakejpak kolík? Na co kolík?

S1: Esli třeba nemyslel kolík na prádlo?

S2: Já tady ničí špinavý prádlo práť nebudu! Jednou sem vzdělanec a basta.

MiB1:

When the victims are baited, the process of assimilation into the vile alien race begins. The ensnared wretches are first subjected to a series of inhuman indoctrination practices:

(several STUDENTS sitting, cowering in terror. Whenever one is addressed by the VOICE, he/she gives off a painful gasp as if lashed by a whip)

VOICE (*Booming, disembodied, with notably American accent*): Declaration of Independence!

S1: (*painful sound, after a second's hesitation blurts out*) 4th of July 1776, Thomas Jefferson, influenced by John Locke...uh...life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness! (*quickly cringes as if expecting punishment, when none comes, gives off a sound of relief, breathing heavily*)

VOICE: You! (S2 winces and cries out) Assassination of Abraham Lincoln!

S2: (*thinks for a moment, then speaks quickly*) 14th of April 1865, Washington DC, shot from behind by John Wilkes Booth in theatre...um, was a part of bigger conspiracy, but the rest of it failed! (*remains alert*)

VOICE: Now you! (S3 whimpers, S2 sighs in relief) Montgomery Bus Boycott!

S3:...um...it happened in Montgomery...in...the past...in...uh...(uncertainly) America?...and it involved...uh

(S2 tries to give hint with a gesture, covering his/her head with his/her hand)

...masochists?...and...and...

(S1 shakes his/her head, and tries to gesture big afro hair)

...brainbugs!

VOICE: Wrong! (S3 shrieks)

MiB2:

Then, to strip them of the capability of independent individual thinking, the malevolent alien overseers put their prisoners through the most devastatingly brainwashing procedures:

Several STUDENTS chanting (in unison, mechanical voice, dead-like expression, sitting stiffly upright):
...that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

MiB1:

...and the captives even undergo the horrors of a mysterious practice so foul and unspeakable, that our experts have only just been able to decipher its name as "Li-torture"

(To the music of the Star Wars Imperial March, a TEACHER (ideally an actual department teacher) with a very large book with SHAKESPEARE written on it crosses the stage while cackling maniacally, and enters a "door", shutting it behind him. After a second or two of silence, there is a chorus of agonised shrieks from backstage)

MiB2:

Finally, to prove that they have been utterly bereft of any remaining shreds of humanity, the converts have to assemble their first encoded message, the obscurity and absurdity of which is put to cold, meticulous scrutiny.

A STUDENT enters, wearing a tuxedo, but obviously nervous and shaking, carrying a thesis-like book. He sits down awkwardly, dropping the book in the process. He picks it up with a nervous giggle

VOICE: *(different than the first, markedly American, but with a goblin-esque quality to it – we all know whom we want to allude to here :-)*

Well little thing, I understand that your work is concerned with “The Windhover” by Gerard Manley Hopkins’ , is that right?

STUDENT *(slightly nervous, but it is clear that it is a rehearsed speech):*

Um, yes, well, in my thesis, I have conducted extensive research into Hopkins’ other works and biography, and I have concluded, that in the poem, he longs to coalesce with the bird only spiritually, not physically.

VOICE *(slyly):*

Are you sure?

STUDENT *(thrown off balance, but still fairly confident):*

Well, it is possible that the poet’s fettered sexuality might have been the cause of his desire for spiritual uplifting, nevertheless...

VOICE *(Interrupts very sternly, ideally a la Joker’s “Look at me!” scene in The Dark Knight):*

No! Tell me the truth!!

STUDENT *(goes to pieces):*

I don’t know! Please, tell me what the truth is!

VOICE *(back to its normal demeanour):*

Use your imagination!

STUDENT *(hopelessly):*

Okay, um...Hopkins...Hopkins...uh...(completely at a loss at first, then grasps at the wildest imaginable option)...wanted to have sex with God! *(shocked about actually uttering it, he covers his mouth, but is relieved after the Voice’s response)*

VOICE *(satisfied):*

Yees, excellent thinking! Congratulations puny one, your education is now complete!

<Possibly a small ceremony here, where the STUDENT is presented with an antennae headband, or a different “badge of alien-ness” from either the teacher-torturer or a dark-hooded figure>

MiB1:

Yet, what is worst, after they have been completely assimilated, these newborn aliens are unleashed upon our society. In their pursuit to take over the world, they occupy seemingly inconspicuous positions so that they could exchange vital intelligence encoded in their secret cipher.

Upon “inconspicuous positions”, enter 2 STUDENTS with mops and aprons, possibly KFC/Tesco etc uniforms, speaking with perfect diction and impeccable pronunciation

(more specific lines still plausible)

S1: I bid thee a fair eve, my fellow-in-arms.

S2: What ho, my friend.

S1: Have you also been assigned to this spectacularly mind-numbing chore?

S2: Indeed, I'm afraid 'tis so.

S1: Well, we might as well proceed. Would you do the honours?

S2: Okay...let's say the blank verse?

S1: Blank verse it is.

(follows a sort of dance, where the STUDENTS mop the floor, following the metre of the blank verse by making alternating short and long strokes with their mops, beginning with a short one, then a long one. In total, each should do 10 short and 10 long ones. At the end S1 looks at S2 with a frown...)

S1 *(indignantly)*: Blank verse is not rhymed!

S2 *(sheepishly)*: Of course, sorry! *(He repeats his last stroke in a markedly different manner)*

S1: Anyway, I think it's a very Freudian sense of humour on the part of the establishment, making us run around here with those phallic contraptions in hand.

S2: Tell me about it. If Foucault still lived, he might name his fourth book of *History of Sexuality* "The Hop about the Mop".

S1: Or maybe "The Full Throttle with a Bottle". Yesterday, I was sorting out the new Coca Cola vessels, and I would swear they make them look more priapic with every design.

S2: Oh you know the whole soft drink industry...

BOTH *(unison, disdainfully)*: so bourgeois...

S1: But...let's not be so prejudiced. You also have to look at it from the synchronic, not only the diachronic, point of view.

S2: Still, they could at least have sensible slogans.

S1: You mean *(mockingly)* "Open Happiness"?

S2: Exactly! Did you notice it doesn't even meet any of the Gricean maxims of co-operation?

S1: Yes, positively staggering. And don't get me started on the Czech translation – *(disgustedly)* "radost otevřít" - Jiří Levý must be turning in his grave.

S2: Exactly, they're not even trying to preserve the polysemy, let alone any cultural equivalence. I mean, what is this? The middle-ages?

S1: Well it's been lovely seeing you, but I have to make my exit. That troglodyte of my superior wants me to assume the nocturnal shift yet again.

S2: I see. Well then, a thousand times good night!

S1: Oh? Ah, yes. Parting is such a sweet sorrow that I shall say good night till it be morrow.

(Both laugh, perhaps with a non-ED worker nearby scratching his/her head in confusion)

MiB2:

So take heed, fellow Earthlings, for this threat is more devious than you know. As we speak, many of the aliens are in this very room, intent to return to their mothership tomorrow and help it devour more and more innocents to turn into gibbering abominations!

MiB1:

One of the aliens may be sitting right behind you, or even next to you...and while you might not even be aware of it, you yourselves may already be lost to them! So could even be one of us, after all..

(MiB2, who has meanwhile equipped the antennae (?) cackles sinisterly. Horrified, MiB1 flees the stage. MiB2 claps his hands, then half-skulks from the stage, still cackling.)

On the signal of the clapping:

- *Projector: a shot of stylized faculty owl logo, with crimson blazing eyes, alien tail etc. Under it:*

"There is no ESCape!" or "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here!"

- *The x-files music theme starts playing*

- *Lights fade out (?)*

An important note for anyone reading: if you think that you have a better idea about any specific parts or even the whole concept, then you are probably right, and should come up with your ideas ASAP!

Feel free to contact me about your ideas and observations at jherrmann@mail.muni.cz