

3 pieces written for the opening of Ingrid Kerma's Blushing Brides
Broadbent
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Flirt 1

Du hast wunderschönen Augen.
You have lovely eyes.

Ich mag deinen Humor.
I like your sense of humour.

Kommst du mit zu mir?
Do you want to come back to my place?

Nein, das geht mir zu schnell.
No, that's too fast for me.

Flirt 2

1. Debord says: Une science des situations est à faire, qui empruntera des éléments à la psychologie, aux statistiques, à l'urbanisme et à la morale. Ces éléments devront concourir à un but absolument nouveau : une création consciente des situations.

2. Žižek says: Chion hypothesizes that the fundamental matrix, the paradigmatic case, of this discrepancy between action and reaction is the sexual (non-)relationship between man and woman. In sexual activity, men 'do certain things to women', and the question is: *is woman's enjoyment reducible to an effect, is it a simple consequence of what a man does to her?* From the good old times of Marxist hegemony, one perhaps remembers the vulgar-materialist 'reductionist' efforts to locate the genesis of the notion of causality in human practice, in man's active relating to his environment: we arrive at the notion of causality by generalizing from the experience of witnessing how, every time we make a certain gesture, the same effect occurs in reality.... Chion proposes an even more radical 'reductionism': the elementary matrix of the relationship between cause and effect is offered by the sexual relationship. In the last analysis, the irreducible gap that separates an effect from its cause amounts to the fact that '*not all* of the feminine enjoyment is an effect of the masculine cause'. This 'not-all' has to be conceived precisely in the sense of the Lacanian logic of 'not-all [*pas-tout*]': it does not in any way entail that a part of a woman's enjoyment is *not* the effect of what a man does to her.

3. Wittgenstein says: "Wenn man aber sagt, wie soll ich wissen, was er meint, ich sehe ja nur seine Zeichen", so sage ich, "Wie soll er wissen, was er meint, er hat auch nur seine Zeichen."

4. • **Limit, going for the.** The question of the minimum limits of literary form was of particular interest to François Le Lionnais. He devoted two articles to its exploration. This first is from CP1:

François Le Lionnais Three Cases of Pushing Things to the Limit

1. A poem comprising a single word:

FENNEL

2. A poem comprising a single letter:

T.

3. A poem based on punctuation:

:
1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
6; 7; 8; 9; 10.
12?
11!

Concerning (2), Le Lionnais wrote: "I fear that the reduction of a poem to a single letter may lie on the far side of the acceptable limit. But there's nothing wrong with having fun, is there?"

5. That sounds interesting.

6. It's in the Oulipo Compendium. You can borrow it, if you like.

Wedding, List

1. In Deianira a dinner is defined as an assemblage of 12 persons.

1.1 The person convening the dinner must provide a plate for each person from outside the household.

1.2 In a city of 12 individuals, each living alone, each person must own 12 plates, for a society total of 144.

1.3 In a city of 6 couples each couple must own 12: 2 plates for personal use and 10 for hospitality, for a society total of 72.

1.4 If the number of persons in the city were to rise to 13, the city would require 169 plates if each person lived alone and all members of the city must be invited to every dinner.

1.5 If the definition of the dinner party is immutable 1 person must be excluded from each party. The city then requires 156 plates of which 143 are dedicated to hospitality.

1.6 Surplus capacity is inseparable from the institution of the dinner party.

1.7 If 2 persons form a household, a wedding is held. The difference between the requirements of the couple and those of the institution of the dinner party is supplied by persons attending the institution for furnishing the institution of the dinner party.

2. In Ocandryx a friendship is defined as a circulation of books.

2.1 Words are spoken within the home, of course, to members of one's immediate family.

2.2 An exchange of books outside the household may be followed by:

2.2.1 Silent return of the books by both parties;

2.2.2 A written request to keep the book.

2.2.2.1 If both parties issue such a request, a brief verbal exchange may follow. More extended verbal exchanges follow exchange and retention of a larger number of books.

2.2.2.2 If A issues a request to keep the book of B, but B returns A's book, no words are spoken, but A has the right to send B a second book whose selection, of course, is made in light of the book of B which has been retained.

3. In Szrgää a dinner is defined as an assemblage of 12 persons and a friendship is defined as a circulation of books.

3.1 Each plate bears the name of a philosopher.

3.1.1 Two jars stand at the head of the table. One contains porcelain discs, each bearing the name of a philosopher. The other contains glass discs, each bearing the name of a diner.

3.1.2 The head of the household draws a disc from each jar and places the pair of discs upon the table, repeating the procedure until the jars are empty.

3.1.3 The plates are set out on the table, matching each to the name of the philosopher on the disc.

3.1.3.1 The drawing of discs and placement of settings is performed at the beginning of the week.

3.1.3.1.1 Guests are not told which philosopher they have drawn: it would be a breach of courtesy to imply that a guest was uneducated, and the educated, of course, are assumed to have familiarity with the arguments of all philosophers.

3.1.3.1.2 It is recognised, however, that this assumption dates from a time when there were only 4 philosophical schools: the Academics, the Stoics, the Epicureans and the Cynics.

3.1.3.1.3 It is recognised, moreover, that the relations between any philosophical position and any 2 other philosophical positions are complex. To ignore the fact is to trivialise philosophy in the name of social nicety.

3.1.3.1.3.1 The number of possible pairs of philosophers which may be drawn from a pool of 11 is 55.

3.1.3.1.4 It is therefore a matter of philosophical decorum to permit each guest to discover not only the allotted philosopher but the two adjacent philosophers.

3.1.3.1.5 Each guest devotes the following week to the study of the allotted philosopher in order to debate the adjacent philosophical positions in accordance with the allotted philosophical position.

3.1.4 Statistics are compiled on the correlation between philosophers and unexpected illness. A last-minute Hegelian is always in demand.

3.2 The distinction of a family is marked by the antiquity of its philosophers.

3.2.1 A set of plates that has been passed down for 5 centuries produces dinner conversation of

antique flavour. Any aspirant to social distinction, of course, acquires a set of antique philosophical plates.

3.2.2 It is not uncommon, though contrary to the philosophical aleatorianism of the city, to have 3 or 4 sets of plates. The younger generation has no patience with Plato and Aristotle, but it is occasionally necessary to invite one's parents to dine.

3.3 The number of permutations of n distinct objects is $n!$, where

$$n! = n \times (n-1) \times (n-2) \times \dots \times 2 \times 1$$

The number of permutations increases very rapidly as the number of objects being arranged gets larger.

$$4! = 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 24$$

but

$$8! = 8 \times 7 \times 6 \times 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 40\,320$$

and

$$12! = 12 \times 11 \times 10 \times 9 \times 8 \times 7 \times 6 \times 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 479\,001\,600$$

3.3.1 This is a very large number of possible permutations of philosophical positions. A man who attended dinner every night for 80 years from the age of 10 could be present at a maximum of 22 900 permutations.

3.3.2 A city of 17 000 000, of whom 13 000 000 were above the age of 15 ("diners"), could exhaust the permutations in 3 days.

3.3.3 A city of 1 000 000 diners could exhaust the permutations in 40 days, assuming all diners started from a position of familiarity with all 12 philosophical positions, so that the week's notice was not required.

3.3.4 The city of Szrgää is much smaller.

3.3.5 This rate of exhaustion of permutations, anyway, depends upon restriction to 12 philosophers.

3.4 It was observed by the young, who are impatient, that even in antiquity, when Szrgää knew of only 4 philosophical schools, no amount of discussion brought the city noticeably closer to a philosophical flavour of any kind. The introduction of new philosophers to dinner services altered nothing but the philosophical arguments presented in the course of dinner.

3.5 A radical proposal was made: that all dinners should be publicly announced, and the place

of the Last-Minute Hegelian be reserved for the first to claim it. Acquaintance with the host should no longer be a prerequisite for attendance.

3.5.1 It was objected that this would stigmatise Hegelianism and the diner displaying familiarity with its terms.

3.5.2 It was suggested that the Last-Minute Guest should be permitted, instead, to occupy a philosophical position by choice.

3.5.3 Realists saw that this deprived hosts of a certain class of the chance to place their own name by the philosopher of their choice, a practice which, though against the spirit of the lottery, was by no means unknown. It was outrageous that a random stranger, walking in off the street, should enjoy a privilege previously reserved for the host.

3.5.4 It was suggested that a glass disc with Last-Minute Guest should be included with the names of known diners, and paired at random with a philosopher.

3.5.5 It was argued that this stripped the scheme of the single greatest benefit it had offered to hosts, one whose value accounted for the overwhelming support it had won: removal of the need to find a Hegelian at short notice.

3.6 A radical proposal was made: that a guest, regardless of philosopher assigned by lot, should have the right to bring the gift of silence.

3.7 A radical proposal was made: that the institution of the dinner party should be deployed to combat the sexual diseases which had ravaged the city since its exposure to the West.

3.7.1 A man who had drawn the position of Bentham (or it may have been Mill, or Williams, or Singer) proposed: that the Utilitarian at every dinner with a Utilitarian position should be required, upon leaving the dinner, to persuade a hotel to supply prophylactics in every room along with paperwrapped soaps.

3.7.1.1 It was observed that there were only 12 hotels.

3.7.1.2 The 'Benthamite' replied: In Szrgää.

3.7.1.3 The objection was made that a diner who in no way endorsed Utilitarianism, but had merely rehearsed its arguments in the name of social decency, might be compelled to travel to Deianira, or Ocandryx, or even (when the hotels of the immediate vicinity had been exhausted) *New York*, where hotel owners would think the request the mark of a fanatic rather than of one who had simply had the bad luck to draw the Utilitarian position at a civilised dinner. The hotel owners of Szrgää could be expected to comply with an appeal which was a dining requirement. Outside Szrgää it would be another matter. Surely such activity was best reserved for those who were Utilitarians by conviction.

3.7.1.4 The 'Benthamite' replied: It is our practice to discuss philosophy at dinner. It is not our practice to discuss philosophy in circumstances where one argues from conviction.

3.7.1.5 The observation was made that last-minute Utilitarians would be in even greater demand than last-minute Hegelians.

3.8 The young are impatient of tradition. It is said that a son of the porcelain manufacturer, returning from a journey to Vienna, bought 12 identical dinner sets, removed from each the plate bearing the name of Wittgenstein, and held a dinner at which Wittgenstein appeared on every plate. 11 other dinners followed, each dedicated to a single philosopher. That such occasions are inseparable from sexual practices of unparalleled depravity requires no explanation.

3.9 A guidebook to Szrgää directs the visitor to the porcelain factory, which also produces compact yet authoritative guides to the 100 most important philosophers. It advises the visitor that all 24 of its hotels provide prophylactics; that one may dine free of charge for the whole of one's stay if one is prepared either to discuss philosophy or to remain silent throughout the meal; that one will not be spoken to until an exchange of books has taken place. It gives guidance on the books most likely to win rapid friendship. A volume of Plotinus will always be well received, for it is virtually impossible in these degenerate times to find a last-minute neoplatonist.

3.9.1 It is a matter of pride in Szrgää that anyone can dine with the prime minister or the owner of the porcelain factory. It is a matter of curiosity that so many tourists have drawn the Utilitarian position.