

UNDERSTANDING

WHY

"WHAT THE CROW SAID"

IS A NOVEL OF POSTMODERNISM:

Romeo & Juliet

A modern love story of the postmodern age of

internet chat rooms

META-POSTMODERNISM (SPIN)

BY

COLIN LESLIE DEAN

UNDERSTANDING

WHY

"WHAT THE CROW SAID"

IS A NOVEL OF POSTMODERNISM:

Romeo & Juliet:

A modern love story of the postmodern age of

internet chat rooms

META-POSTMODERNISM (SPIN)

BY

COLIN LESLIE DEAN

GAMAHUCHER PRESS WEST GEELONG VICTORIA AUSTRALIA

2006

INDEX

WHY "*WHAT THE CROW SAID*" P.4

ROMEO AND JULIET

(WITH CRITICAL APPENDIX) P.14

This essay will look at the postmodernism of “What the Crow said.” Now exactly what makes a work postmodern it could be argued is itself part of postmodernism. In other words the literary world understands what is postmodernism in post modernistic terms. E. J. Smyth notes that “[m]uch of the debate concerne[s] the viability or otherwise of admitting certain writers ... to the house of postmodernist fiction ... Depending on what definition one is using several kinds of work have come under the postmodernist heading.”¹ The situation is that “[p]ostmodernism can include self-reflexive, meta-fictional novels or more disparate literary forms like non-fiction novel, essay, autobiography and combinations of realism and fantasy.”² The criteria ,or definitions that are used to gauge whether a work is postmodern is it self and eclectic pastiche of theories, opinions, ideologies and styles. From the poststructuralist investigations into language and play to ideas about “... eclecticism , parody, pastiche, self-consciousness, stylistic interplay, generic mixing, combinations of ‘high’ ‘popular’ cultural forms.”³ From J Bath’s idea of ‘replenishment’⁴, or Jameson’s rejection of the cultural elitism of modernism⁵, to Huyssen’s claim that postmodernism rejects dichotomies of categorization and that “all most anything goes”⁶, to G Graft’s idea that postmodernism “ carries to its logical and questionable extremes the anti-rationalist, anti-realist, anti-

¹ E. J. Smyth, *Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction*, R.T. Batesford Ltd, London, 1991, p.14.

² Ibid., p.14.

³ Postmodernist Fiction A, *Study Guide/Reader*, Deakin University, 2005, p.14.

⁴ J, Bath, “The Literature of replenishment: Postmodernist fiction”, *Atlantic* , January, 1980.pp.65-71.

⁵ F, Jameson, “*Postmodernism, Or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*”, Verso, London, 1991, pp. .1-31, 419-421.

⁶ A, Huyssen, “*After the Great Divide, Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*”, Indiana University press, Bloomington, 1986, pp.178-221, 235-240.

bourgeois program of modernism.”⁷ Thus we see as E, J, Smyth points out that it is “[p]erhaps not sufficiently recognized is the extent to which postmodernism is an effect of reading, there can be no absolute definition of what constitutes radical textuality ... [p]ostmodernism must be recognized therefore as a condition of reading ”⁸ In effect As E, J, Smyths notes postmodernism is not a self-contained literary phenomena it is a construction based upon what the literary world has chosen to call Postmodernism.⁹

With this background said and done the criteria I choose to assign to “What the Crow Said”, and for me which makes it a postmodern novel, is that as laid out by G Graft. Along side Grafts criteria I also ascribe pastiche and the language of popular culture as codes or styles that make “What the Crow said” a postmodern novel. For convenience of explication, and because I feel it more cogent [which will become more apparent below] , the anti-rational, anti-realism, as noted by Graft, I choose to call surrealism, as distinct from than the neologism of magical realism. This essay will show that “What the Crow said “ is a postmodern novel because it is a pastiche of surrealist techniques and techniques borrowed from the oral tradition of popular culture through the use of popular, or colloquial language.

“What the Crow said” has been characterized as a postmodern novel, along side other reasons, because it is a Canadian example of magical realism.¹⁰ Now I believe that magical realism is a superfluous neologism. Without indulging in a futile debate, with

⁷ J, Bath, op.cit, p.71.

⁸ E. J. Smyth, op., cit , p.11.

⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰ B, Edwards, “*Theories of Play and Postmodern Fiction*”, Garland Publishing, Inc, 1998, pp. 192-210.

academics, I maintain that what goes under the neologism magical realism is adequately captured in the older term surrealism. Surrealisms concern with the irrational, its anti-realism and absurd dreamlike motifs collapsing the boundary between the real and unreal, between reality and phantasy, between normality and psychosis¹¹ captures equably well what goes under the postmodernist term magical realism without the use, or invention of another term like magical realism. All these psychotic elements covered by surrealism then are seen in what “What the Crow said.” From the pastiche to the use of popular culture, to the use of an oral and story telling technique, to the use of colloquial expressions and folklore “What the Crow said” is a prime example of how the absurd and irrational make “What the Crow said” a postmodernist novel. The leitmotif of “What the Crow said” is surrealist absurdity, irrationality and psychosis. All the other postmodern codes or styles used in “What the Crow said” are used to bring out, or highlight the surrealist leitmotif. If one word was to characterize what makes “What the Crow said” a postmodern novel it would be “psychotic”. “What the Crow said” is an excursion into the world of psychosis as bizarre as any painting by Hieronymus Bosch.

“What the Crow said” is a Canadian example of the South American magical realism of Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s “One Hundred years of Solitude.”¹² B, Edwards notes that “One Hundred years of Solitude helps explicate the narrative of “What the Crow said.”¹³ The trace of “One Hundred years of Solitude” intertextuality weaves its way through

¹¹ E. B. German, *Surrealist Poetry in English*, Penguin Books, 1978, pp. 25-54.

¹² B, Edwards, op.cit, pp. 192-210.

¹³ Ibid., p.192.

“What the Crow said.”¹⁴ In “One Hundred years of Solitude” Edwards notes that Marquez presents “... bizarre numbers and meticulous descriptions too extraordinary for rational belief ...”¹⁵ Here we see no more than an explication of the surrealist enterprise under the guise of the neologism “magical realism”

“What the Crow said” moves through episode after episode, through an absurdity of reason. Each chapter each new episode presents a tangible encounter with the absurd, the irrational an anti-realist landscape of surrealistic images and dream like encounters with the psychotic as bizarre and wierd as any painting by Hieronymus Bosh. Chapter after chapter juxtaposes absurdity upon absurdity until the incongruities expand beyond reasons ability to encompass the meaning of the irrational and psychotic images, contexts, anecdotes and gossipy stories. The incongruities in “What the Crow said” present a telescoping of absurd images such that the reader is filled with a sense of wonder at the phantasy land suggested by the images; a phantasy land that normal consciousness is unfamiliar with except in the readers own dream world, or the explications of the mental life of psychotics.

The town of Big Knife is situated in a mythical place, a no man’s land within nowhere. It is ambiguously between the borders of two provinces Alberta and Saskatchewan.¹⁶ This sets the scene for the dreamlike psychotic tale. Father Basil points out the absurdity of

¹⁴ Ibid., p.196.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.204.

¹⁶ R. Kroetsch, “*What the Crow said*”, General Publishing Co, Limited, Don Mills, Ontario, 1978, p.36.

Big Knife “[t]he world is out of motion. We inhabit a strangled universe.”¹⁷ The sprocket wheel of being is jammed.”¹⁸ Bizarre or surreal descriptions, highlighting the psychotic ontology of Big Knife, proliferate the narrative of “What the Crow said.”

The bee swarm that that fucks Vera, and by implication gets her pregnant, sets the ball rolling at Big Knife and usher in the surreal. Big Knife is in summer but it is still snowing ice and snow are every where . The narrator notes that the people of Big Knife put the beginning of the absurd happenings at Big Knife down to the bee swarm fucking Vera. We have the surreal episode of Jerry Lapanne eating 420 pounds of brick and stone so that he might escape prison and marry Rita . We have the card game that lasts 151 days. The crow that talks is quite a surreal image. There is Mick who has lost his right legs and genitals getting Rose pregnant.¹⁹ Liebhaber perfects a three -titted cow.²⁰ Nick Droniuk gets excited over a cow teasing a bull then inserts himself accidentally into a semen collecting device.²¹ There is Gladys getting pregnant to every one involved in a fight at a sports match.²² Isador Heck in try to kill a crow falls out of the tree and ends up hanging upside down for two hours before the branch broke.²³ The baby JG expresses himself through shitting.²⁴ The absurd ontology of Big Knife can be seen when the narrator notes that sometimes the cows mooed sometimes they did not. Sometimes hail fall instead of rain Sometimes dust blew through closed windows. Thistles or pigweeds sometimes grew

¹⁷ Ibid., p.52.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.52.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.66.

²⁰ Ibid., p.70.

²¹ Ibid., p.70.

²² Ibid., p.75.

²³ Ibid., p.78.

²⁴ Ibid., p.79.

faster than the wheat.²⁵ We have the surreal situation where a man lost all his barbed wire fence playing cards while another lost the roof of his house and another lost his entire crop even before cutting it.²⁶ The face of the baby JG shows no sign of aging.²⁷ There is the surreal image of Andy Wolbecks toes made out of billiard balls.²⁸ Equally surreal is Bill Morgan wiping the frosted socket of his missing left eye.²⁹ There are indications in “What the Crow said” of absurd or surreal happening that can only be discovered or understood by a close understanding of Canadian culture. There is one incident where Vera throws her baby to the pursuing wolfs and the corresponding approval of this by the community³⁰. This episode if consistent with the book would most likely be considered absurd in Canadians culture. This indicates that perhaps hidden in the book are absurd scenes that can only be really seen by Canadians themselves.

The absurd, or irrational episodes go on an on through out the narrative of “What the Crow said.” The every day is made strange by its incorporation into the surreal. There is a series of absurd descriptions such that rational belief in the real is fractured and we learn to inhabit a mythical dream like psychotic ontology. The irrational is generated by exaggeration and a focusing upon the fine detail of the banal . The banal is made bizarre and surreal by exaggeration taken to absurd limits. Beneath the apparent real of the banal lies the psychotic world of Big Knife. Masquerading as the every day lies the surreal and irrational hidden not to deeply in what is an anti-realist novel. The use of the every day

²⁵ Ibid., p.68.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 92.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 86.

²⁸ Ibid.,p. 98.

²⁹ Ibid, .p. 32.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 60

to highlight the irrational is seen in the way the narrator uses every day popular colloquial language

Using folk idioms and colloquial expressions epitomizing the popular culture of the area Father Basil states” [t]he bull pinion of existence has jumped the heifer gear of eternity.”³¹ Here we see in Father Basils expressions of the every day colloquial expressions of popular culture used to highlight the irrational psychotic landscape of “What the Crow said.” This everyday language is juxtaposed with the idiolect of high, or proper language of the literary world. This juxtaposition thus brings out vividly the absurdity and irrational within “What the Crow said.” Language itself is used to demonstrate the psychotic.

The way language is used to highlight the absurd can be seen in a number of instances, When the card players are huddled together every day popular language is used to in a vivid manner. The narrator notes that “ [t]hey farted, and their farts almost warmed them.”³² Here the absurdity of Big Knife is brought out in the idea that farts could warm somebody. Similarly the narrator goes onto note that “[t]heir assholes were raw and bleeding from the combination of diarrhea and prairie hay that was full of thistle and buckbrush.”³³ The absurdity that they could play cards that long that their assholes bled is brought out by the vivid image created using popular colloquial language. An even more startling image of the absurd or surrealistic using language is when the men are trying to frighten a magpie. At first the men tried to frighten the magpie by calling to it in the

³¹ Ibid., .53.

³² Ibid., p.100.

³³ Ibid., pp. 100-101

voice of a crow i.e. caw caw. Now as this scene goes on they end up calling to each other in the voice of a crow i.e. crow crow. This is a completely absurd surreal scene where we have a crow talking in the voice of humans and humans talking in the voice of a bird or crow. This absurdity is captured in the very language used namely the colloquial caw caw. When Leibhaber hears that Gladys is pregnant he exclaims “Fuck” This “Fuck” plays the part of highlighting the absurd surreal world that is Big Knife. The narrator notes that “Fuck ...[was] not a violent command ; an outcry, rather , at the deceit of the world. The world’s deceit of her wistful fools. “It’s impossible” he shouted.³⁴ A final example of how every day popular language is used to demonstrate the surreal , or irrational is when the ghost of Martin Lang returns to touch Liebhaber on the shoulder. The ghost complains that it is cold enough to .”[f]reeze the nuts of an iron bridge.”³⁵ Here the absurdity of the Big Knife is again highlighted by the language used. The absurdity of a ghost and the fact that it was not a cold night, even though there is an ice lighthouse standing by is captured in the use of colloquial language which is out of sink with the not cold night itself.

Thus we see in “What the Crow said” a prime example of postmodern fiction as outlined by Graft i.e. anti-rationalist, anti-realist, anti-bourgeois. The novel is an excursion into the irrational , a journey through and anti-real psychotic landscape of the absurd or surreal. “What the Crow said” blurs distinctions between the banal and the serious between the trivial horrible tragic and sometimes ludicrous. “What the Crow said” is a fusion of the everyday the nightmarish and the psychotic. “What the Crow said is a

³⁴ Ibid., p.74.

³⁵ Ibid., p.56.

pastiche of techniques. It uses surrealistic techniques along side the use of oral techniques. Language in its colloquial and popular modes creates and enhances the oral techniques while highlighting the absurd or surreal nature of Big Knife. This use of language is anti-bourgeois in that it can unsettle middle class sensibilities through the shocking and obscene nature of the language. Big Knife thus becomes, through these techniques, not so much a mythical world as, a psychotic landscape of the bizarre, surreal, ludicrous, nightmarish; a dream like world where there is a strangled universe and the sprocket wheel of being is jammed as bizarre as any painting by Hieronymus Bosh. "What the Crow said" weaves, materials derived the oral traditions of Canada, the every day and banal, into an ever-shifting kaleidoscope of surreal patterns where ordinary events and descriptive is combined with fantastic and dreamlike elements to masquerade as the real but in effect is no more than a surreal world inhabited by absurd characters and happenings, a world straight out of the mind of a psychotic and the paintings by Hieronymus Bosh . It is these characteristics that makes "What the Crow said" a postmodern novel for me.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Edwards. B., *“Theories of Play and Postmodern Fiction”*, Garland Publishing, Inc, 1998.

German. E, B., *“Surrealist Poetry in English”*, Penguin Books, 1978.

Huysen. A., *“After the Great Divide, Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism”*, Indiana University press, Bloomington, 1986.

Jameson. F., *“Postmodernism, Or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”*, Verso, London, 1991.

Kroetsch. R., *“What the Crow said”*, General Publishing Co, Limited, Don Mills, Ontario, 1978.

Postmodernist Fiction A, *Study Guide/Reader*, Deakin University, 2005, pp. 2-24.

Smyth. E, J., *Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction*, R.T. Batesford Ltd, London, 1991.

Romeo & Juliet

**A modern love story of the
postmodern age of internet
chat rooms**

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:24 hello Romeo Romeo where the fuck are you what are you doing

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:24 PM ummm pulling my cock waiting for u to come online I have been reading colin deans erotic poetry its made me so fucking horny his line “cat-like lap thy soft hooded bud” from evil flowers and “tongue lash thy gush” made me think of the last time I licked u luscious hairy cunt tell me something horny about your cunt Juliet or will you leave me so unsatisfied

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:24 PM *oh romeo yes I know what colin deans poetry can do I have been reading “oestrus lamentations of a wet cunt” it got me so horny I was hoping you would be online I need a fuck so bad now can I come visit you now Oh romeo what satisfaction do you want tonight I’d wear a pair of white cotton panties even though you wouldn’t be able to see them under my jeans you’d know I was wearing them*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:24 PM now that would be horny to know

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:24 PM *I'd go through your books, pulling out the ones I was interested in, then sit on the floor quietly read them getting horny making those white panties wetter and wetter*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:24 PM oooyes just knowing that would drive meto a frenzy

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:24 PM *I'd look up at you occasionally licking my lips, but otherwise looking totally innocent, like I wasn't sitting there getting hornier and hornier*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:24 ummm innocence is sohornyyy

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:24 PM *eventually I wouldn't be able to help it any more, I'd slowly unzip my jeans - and you'd get a tiny glimpse of those white panties then I'd slide my hand into them to rub my clit watching you with heavy lidded eyes*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:24 PM ohhhhhhhh yes watching but cant do nether ummm so horny

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:24 PM *my lips are slightly parted, and very soon I'm panting, my eyes closing all you can see is the movement of my hand inside my panties*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:24 PM ohhhhhhhhhh my cock throbs and pre-cums ohh the joy

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:24 PM *my nipples are rock hard under my bra, and I move my other hand underneath my bra to squeeze and tug on one*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:24 PM let me see tease memakeme
burst

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:24 PM *totally absorbed now,
no awareness of the world around me, just my
fingers on my clit, and nipple would you like me to take my top
off?*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:24 PM YESSSSS slowly let me see
your juicytits red nips o make me crazy tease me make me
sweet make me want u crazyyyyyy

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:24 PM *I'll need two hands to pull my
top off I'll have to stop stroking my clit, maybe I don't want to
stop even for a second*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:24 PM oooooo dont stop dont stop get
wetter getpuffy let me see your tits heeve under your
bra

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:24 PM *maybe you should take over stroking my clit while I take my top off*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:24 PM yesssssssss yessss rolling the hood back seeing that pink grape ohhhtickling it flicking it ummm watching it go redd ooooooooooooo using my knob to stroke your clitrubbing my precum intoitas I run my knobs eye over that bud

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:25 PM *I pull my top over my head, then shake my hairback before reaching behind to unclip my bra what should I do with my hand now stroke up nipples or stroke your cock*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:25 PM stroke up your nipples squeezzzzzzzze those tits make your nipples spike ooooooo I want your tight wet cunt overmyknob

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:25 PM *I want your mouth on my nipples, suck them hard while I rock myself against your cock*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:25 PM ummmmm licking pulling biting your red nippleohhh the taste the softness grab my cock tease me bring it to your luv hole run it around the entrance then with draw it oooh the pleasure

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:25 PM *I gently stroke your cock rubbing it over my cunt hole getting it wet, then rubbing it over my clit*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:25 PM suckingfrantically sucking with short sharp sucks slurp slurppppp ummm rolling your nip on my lips as I suck and pull with my lips

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:24 PM *letting go of your cock to grip my hands in your hair gasping, and pushing forward fuck me now please*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:25 PM your back rubs up and down on the wall yourarse BANG BANG BANG into it as I hold your arse cheeks with your cunt impaled on my tool

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:25 PM *make it rough
fuck me hard punish me for teasing you*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:25 PM gasp GaASP U SLUT take that TAKE THAT whore piss out your cunt cream down my thighs let it drip on the floor fucker UPPPP UPP SLAM RAM

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:25 PM *yes! use me, anything you want
make me take it*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:25 PM digging my nails into your bum cheeks takethat u SLUT TEASERS tits jiggling are pounding SLUT TAKE THATTTTTTTT

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:25 P M *forgive me! I'm a slut, I can't help it, I need to be punished treated like a slut*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:25 PM cummm on slut piss for me u little slut alldown my leg I want to hear my cock SLURPPP SLURP as it goes IN UPP UPP your arse against the wall TAKE THAT FOR TEASING ME

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:25 P M *yes yess*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 P M pulling your hair as I bit your neck cry slutCRYYY for what u have done for me TAKE THAT pinch dig SLAP SLAP on your arse

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 P M *oh god yes like that hurts, but it feels sooo good*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 P M SLAP SLAP bad BAD slut busting your cunt formaking me horny

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 P M *yes cunt muscles spasming
around your cock as I start to cum, cream sliding out of my cunt,
your cock slurping through it*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 P M running my nail down your tits
down your back feel THAT HURT SLUT cry heave up your
arse as I stick a finger in your bum hole CRYYYY U LITTLE
WHORE for teasing me

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 P M *ooohh
tears slowly seeping from my eyes,
I'm sorry, I'm sorry oh yess*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 P M cummm slut cum as I dig my
nails into yourarse CUMMMMM SLUT as the pain burns your
arse cream piss squirt as the pain STINGS fucker

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 P M *screaming as I cum,
my cunt milking your cock sucking it deep,
yes cum inside me ,I'm your cum slut*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 PM TAKE THATTTT cock up cunt
busting your holeSCREAMM SLUT

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 PM *screaming gasping*
so good

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 PM AHHHHHHHHHH hot sticky
spooof WHITE AND SLIPPERY spurts up that hole pinching
ahhh sprayingooze u slut PINCHHHH feel the pain burn u
slut TAKE THAT FOR BEING MY CUM SLUTTTTTT

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 *jesus!! Oh Romeo Romeo*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 PM ahhhhhhhhhhhh breaking
the wall as I with oneHUGE HEAVEEEE thrusts my cock up
spurting spraying pinching u slut AHHHH cum slut take
what u deserve

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 PM *oh arching into you in one final lunge before slumping against the wall*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 PM pulling cock out covered with my spooof and your cunt piss umm see it shine as I wipe it on your left tit CUM SLUT

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 PM *falling to my knees, then I look up at you and ask may I clean you cock with my mouth?*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 PM yessss lick it like the CUM SLUT u r lickit tastethe salty spooof

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 PM *mmm stroking my tongue over your cock, around the head before taking it into my mouth and sucking*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 PM rub the spooof on your face let me see it simmer on your cheeks CUM SLUT

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 PM *mmmm yes*

*wrapping my hand around your cock, and rubbing
it over my lips, and cheeks before sliding it into my mouth again
to finish cleaning up the mess I made*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 PM BENDING DOWN holding your
face hard pullig it towards me clutching hard looking at u with
eager eyes spooof shimmering on your lips
holdingyour head THENNN jamming my mouth on
your mouth KISSSSING hard tasting my sppooof
and your cum on my lipps sucking your lips
clean as I hold your head tight

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 PM *mmmmm*

*my tongue darts out to stroke over yours,
my arms sliding around your neck*

Romeo 31/03/2007 5:26 PM we collapse on the floor my
finger in your swollen cunt your hand on my ozzy cock our
mouth together kissing in a delireum

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 PM *twisting a little underneath you to rub my sore nipples over your chest kissing you, my hands in your hair oh now now I cum*

Romeo 31/03/20 5:26 PM u cum babey juliet did u cum

Juliet 31/03/2007 5:26 PM oh yeah Romeo oh fuck my bounty is so fucking deep it is as boundless as the sea my cunt as deep Romeo the more I give to you oh fuck the more I have for both are infinite ohh stay but a little I will cum again

Romeo 31/03/07 5:26 PM oh fuck yeah all this is but a dream cum Juliet lets fuck again

Juliet 31/03/07 5:26 PM shit, I hear some noise within, I must go Romeo a thousand times good night

Romeo 31/3/07 5:26 PM oh fuck a thousand times the worst

CRITICAL APPENDIX

There are a number of characterization of what makes a work postmodern. The ones that I find applicable to this work are those that characterizes postmodern literature as having anti- real and irrational, or bizarre themes mixed with intertextuality.³⁶ and made up of “... eclecticism , parody, pastiche, self-consciousness, stylistic interplay, generic mixing, combinations of ‘high’ ‘popular’ cultural forms.”³⁷ This work is postmodern because it is a parody of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* and contemporary methods of popular sexual behavior. Also it is a combination of high and low culture in regard to the risqué language used in colloquial speech and the middle class idioms of expression and grammar. This dichotomous presentation juxtaposes contrary language games creating a sort of jarring bizarre languagescape which mirrors postmodern culture in its mixing of different classes and ethnicities. This work is made up of generic mixing where popular and middle class culture is mixed, or merged with classical Shakespearian literature and the motifs and language of pulp sex magazines. This mixing of genre and stylistic merging creates a literature version of the postmodern culture which is anarchic, eclectic where anything goes. Similarly the format of the work is that of the internet chat room where block of texts rather than a continuous narrative is the form. This presentation of the work in an internet format is itself a presentation of the medium of some popular culture. This format gives the work an irrational bizarre and anti-real

³⁶ B, Edwards, “*Theories of Play and Postmodern Fiction*”, Garland Publishing, Inc, 1998, pp. 196, 204.

³⁷ Postmodernist Fiction A, *Study Guide/Reader*, Deakin University, 2005, p.14.

flavor, much like some works in magical realism such as, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and *What the Crow Said* . There is thus surreal flavor to the work in its presentation of incongruous language games, genres, styles and generic mixings. The over all effect felt in the work is meant to be an anti-realism which collapses the boundary between the real and unreal, between reality and phantasy. Along side these characteristics language from *Romeo and Juliet* intertextuality weaves its way through parts of the work adding to the parody and genre mixing . This intertextuality adds to the phantasy and anti-real nature of popular internet chat rooms by highlighting how language is used to create illusions and be a medium for alter egos via mimicking stereotype of love and eroticism .

Juliet sets the scene when she opens the work with the comment “Romeo Romeo where the fuck are you what are you doing” Here she is parodying Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*. With this bit of intertextuality she sets the mood for the parody of popular love as well as *Romeo and Juliet*. By using colloquial language she sets the scene for the dichotomy between hers and Romeo’s language. Where Romeo’s language is more crude and lewd hers is more middle class. Where she uses correct grammar and punctuation Romeo is full of misspelt and incorrect grammar. This dichotomy adds a bizarre, or unreal feel to the dialogues in its juxtaposition of high and low language. The bizarre, or anti-real nature of internet chat room romance is highlighted by the fact that the whole dialogue takes place within only two minutes, which adds to the phantasy nature of the work. The block nature of the format mirrors that of internet chat rooms thus giving it a popular feel and mood by incorporating popular culture. What adds to the bizarre and anti-real feel is

the mixing, or merging of the high language of Shakespeare and the low, or popular languages of *Romeo and Juliet*. This mixing and mimicking of language creates the phantasy world of chat rooms in their attempt to use stereotypes of love and eroticism in their attempts at seduction. Towards the end of the work intertextuality appears again when passages from *Romeo and Juliet* weave their way through the dialogue, to create a final feeling of unreality and complete illusion and phantasy in regard to two alter egos trying to get off on each other. Such statements by Romeo as “oh fuck yeah all this is but a dream cum Juliet lets fuck again” and Juliet “shit, I hear some noise within, I must go Romeo a thousand times good night” and Romeo again “oh fuck a thousand times the worst “ parody Shakespeare as well as parody internet love.

Thus we can see why the work is a postmodern fiction. It is a pastiche of themes borrowed from high and low cultures through its use of popular, or colloquial language mixed with middle class language and the language of Shakespeare. This genre mixing and style merging is used to parody both *Romeo and Juliet* as well as popular culture as well.

THE END OF ROMEO AND JULIET

Thus we have here in *Romeo and Juliet* a postmodern parody of postmodernism. In other words like most postmodern fiction the interpretation/analysis of the work is perhaps more important than the work itself, as it gives the work its hidden meaning. Like abstract art needs its explanation before it makes sense, *Romeo and Juliet* is pornography until it is elevated by its postmodern explanation. Thus *Romeo and Juliet* is meta-postmodernism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Edwards, B. *Theories of Play and Postmodern Fiction*, Garland Publishing, Inc, 1998.

Postmodernist Fiction A, *Study Guide/Reader*, Deakin University, 2005, p.

14.