

Illustrated Comments on the Apophatapataphysical Metrics of Cosmic Humor

by strannikov

Apophatapataphysics, a Quantum Era refurbishment of classical pataphysics which takes account of both actual and imaginary semantic displacements and voids throughout the cosmos, is almost always a matter of not straying close, of maintaining a discrete orbit about a hot location (an inflamed liver, a seething brain, rumbling intestines), in enough proximity to gain warmth, nutrition, or inspiration, at enough distance to not risk spontaneous combustion. (Measurements of mass, velocity, trajectory, topography, and temporality are critical and merit close approximation in transcription.)

Apophatapataphysics properly practiced thus is a matter of maintaining narrative and critical orbit around not a black hole but around a void with or without any physical equivalence to any CMB Cold Spot or Dipole Repeller. Even without detectable thermal radiation, even with nothing visible or gravitational directly adjacent, shivering at a discreet distance from such a void can be at least as rewarding (and safe!) as being close pals with roving planets and strolling stars, buddies with eccentric comets and straying asteroids, or chums with zipping neutrinos and pedestrian bosons, since low thermal readings are seen now to conserve quantum potentials from the pernicious effects of gravity, at least briefly.

In other words: as measurement anomalies and discrepancies persist and multiply in ferocity and frenzy despite deference to gravity in the realm of baryonic matter, taking laughter seriously promises to become only more and more significant a matter as age and era yield to succeeding aeons and millennia.

Now that we begin to see dimly just how apposite is the classical ‘pataphysical law of the ascent of a vacuum toward a periphery (Book Two, “Elements of Pataphysics”, Chapter 8, “Definition”—although we hasten to concede, naturally: “this is true only in the majority of cases, depends upon the point of view, and is codified only for convenience—if that!”), our task is modestly lightened: but we are by no means relieved of the burden gravity promises to impose upon us for many years more (measurement problems only proliferate, they are not dying off conveniently). What makes children laugh can very well frighten adults, but beasts of unanticipated demeanor are not reproducing at lower rates simply to accommodate us to surly reality (I myself would never have advocated entrusting autoclaves to children under age eight, but no one solicited my views in time).

The science of imaginary solutions which pataphysics is, can afford to withhold its classical solutions to the extent that apophatapataphysics remains content to elucidate (however quietly) its quantum measurements of the oscillations governing the risible and the jocular that thread through baryonic matter (the vast preponderance of dark matter and dark energy discernible in these latter days begins to suggest just how dark the humor of existence is).

In summation: only with reliable apophatapataphysical metrics calibrated to Risibility Quotients and Jocularities Indices intrinsic to classical pataphysics will we be equipped to investigate the mysteries of noir comedy and noir humor in the realms of dark matter and dark energy, since their application in the familiar, sunny realm of baryonic matter hardly looks superficial.

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Hypothetical expositions being worthless without illustration, we cite here a typical sample of “l’humour noir” emanating from the realm of baryonic matter. (Note that the citations of familiar

historical figures and contexts themselves constitute no guarantee of provenance.)

Dining on Women: An Interim Sequence

Early in September 1792 royalist-loyalist the Princesse de Lamballe, feisty bourgeois pamphleteer Olympe de Gouges, and an anonymous tricoteuse all found themselves in the same Paris café. Once loud coarse rowdiness erupted in one corner, de Gouges and the tricoteuse abruptly left the café unmolested. (Turbot Lamballe in an adapted bouillabaisse sauce with capers, portions being limited, was celebrated local fare served through the third of October.)

In early November 1793 proto-feminist pamphleteer Olympe de Gouges and the selfsame anonymous tricoteuse found themselves together in another Paris café. Both managed to exit the café alive, although de Gouges was escorted by an eclectic group of rowdy sans-culottes, aggrieved Marat partisans, other assorted Jacobins, and some rabid Hébertists and thus found herself on the way to a free coiffing (at public expense) in Paris's scenic open-air Place de la Révolution salon. (Faisan de Gouges glazed in Armagnac and toasted almonds graced at least a few tables almost to the end of November, available portions being smaller of necessity.)

In early June 1794 the selfsame anonymous tricoteuse was spotted in yet another Paris café chatting amiably with two surviving Hébertists and a suspected surviving Dantonist by bloodthirsty Public Safety Committeeman Louis-Antoine de Saint-Just from the street outside. The tricoteuse did not accompany Saint-Just from the scene, but neither was she invited to get her hair rearranged by the rowdy group of sans-culottes that dangled her and her interlocutors from four nearby lampposts. (Too tough and sinewy for agreeable chewing, anything with alcohol would only dry her out, not eminently flavorful except with a heavier dose of garlic than most could stand, but by the time she was cut down next afternoon, the ambient summer heat had already gotten to work—still, two out of three, and you should have heard the raves for the first two!)

Then of course at the end of July 1794

After March 1796, the tedious fashion of devouring men returned.

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This piece will never be as darkly humorous as Jean Richepin's "Constant Guignard", not in one or two thousand years (in fact: never—the lame satiric intent is too opaque to merit the genre designation "satire" [would the ostensive satiric target be revolutionary zeal or haute cuisine?], the comic allusions to dining notwithstanding): a sound representative of the noir humor genre nevertheless, its dark humor is so obvious as to make a correlated Risibility Quotient or Jocularitry Index score superfluous. (Some theorists propose [without evidence, of course] that noir humor emanating from the realms of dark matter and dark energy, to be recognizable in the baryonic realm as humor, will feature more caricature and exaggeration than typical baryonic productions. This academic tendency sets the stage for more rounds of the enduring controversy over the generic markers distinguishing "Senecan comedy" and "Plautine tragedy", a dispute to which we are eager not to contribute.)

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