

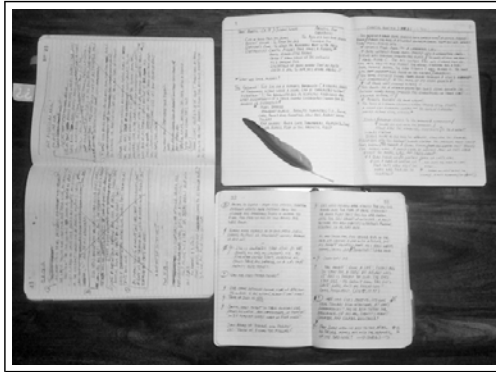
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'THE DEVIL IN THE DETAILS' - ESSAY ON WRITING BY CRAIG CLEVINGER

Posted March 3rd, 2010 by Dennis



*The moleskin black notebooks of Craig Clevenger

By now you all know Craig Clevenger. He's beloved on this site for all his contributions to us over the years. He started out as just an author we all quickly became obsessed with. His debut, *The Contortionist Handbook*, was a landmark novel, a book you'd see fans of Chuck's clutching at readings, with dogeared pages, creased up spines and pen scribbles with quotes and underlined passages all throughout. The book eventually made its way before Chuck's eyes, and he flipped for it. You might remember there was a year where Chuck barely did an interview where he wasn't pimping Craig's debut novel. He even offered this quote for the paperback edition:

"I swear to God this is the best book I have read in easily five years. Easily. Maybe ten years."

Soon after completing his second novel, *Dermaphoria*, something great began to happen with Craig and he became more than just an author. The dude got hungry. Hungry to teach. Recognizing what a natural proclivity he had for tutoring people, through his thorough, essay-length Forum posts, we decided to harness that knowledge and offered him up one of our ground breaking Master's Program Workshop Intensives. Craig's writing workshops on our site soon became some of the most popular entries we'd offer. From three hour conference calls to sometimes 24/7 feedback with his writing students, Craig was quickly becoming something of a guru.

Today, we unveil the next incarnation of that raw knowledge the guy seems so good at sharing: the writing essay. And this one's on the house, folks.

Here's a quick tease of what lies in *The Devil In The Details*:

What follows are some fundamental techniques for letting your reader visualize rather than visualizing for them. We'll achieve this by choosing only a few select details (in spite of the temptation to grab more) and pitting those details against each other, so their contrast creates a depth which cues the reader on filling in the rest. We'll end by experimenting with syntax and sentence structure first, then using modifiers second.

This is a thorough essay that scratches the surface of what you'd get in the beginning phases of an MFA creative writing course. Craig's become something of a pro at this, so do yourself a favor and study this thing. Then, if you want more, consider joining our next Writers' Workshop. Craig's already taught a bunch of them and will probably be teaching more in the future.

[Read 'The Devil In The Details'](#)

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COMMENTS

| | |
|---|--|
| Wed, 03/03/2010 - 15:47 #1 | |
| JKaboi i just wanna be a real boy | hey, i remember this essay. from his shotgun and hotseat intensives. i just printed it. im about to read it for any adds or revisions. |

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A factual review with the surface anatomy of four lobes.
Joshua Chaplinsky



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The Slovenian post-Marxist strengthens his output with a valuable little book.
Phil Jourdan

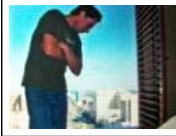



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William Lashner
William Lashner's Metamorphosis
Rob Hart



Jesse Ventura
Politics in America is Identical to Pro Wrestling
Christopher Stipp

| | |
|--|---|
|  <p>From: hope youre heaven sent, and youre hell proof Joined: 12/03/2003</p> | <p>thanks, denn ! thanks, clev !</p> |
| Top | Login or register to post comments |
| Wed, 03/03/2010 - 15:53 #2 | |
| <p>kasey_carpenter some guy...</p>  <p>From: here Joined: 12/21/2003</p> | <p>Good times.</p> |
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| Wed, 03/03/2010 - 16:13 #3 | |
| <p>wickerkat Perception is nine-tenths of reality.</p>  <p>From: Chicago Joined: 06/11/2006</p> | <p>Craig is my hero. Taught me so much. I never would have written "Stillness" which will be out in Cemetery Dance's Shivers VI very soon, or have had the ability or confidence to write Transubstantiate. He's so smart and talented. If you have the opportunity to study with him (I took TWO intensives with him) do it. NOW. Don't hesitate if you have an iota of talent and any passion or ambition at all.</p> |
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| Wed, 03/03/2010 - 17:24 #4 | |
| <p>perlman3030</p>  <p>From: Texas Joined: 01/28/2008</p> | <p>Thanks. That really put things in perspective for me.</p> |
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| Thu, 03/04/2010 - 03:39 #5 | |
| <p>matthew.odonnell</p> | |



The Fist Typist.



From: Newcastle,
Australia
Joined: 07/07/2009



Craig, this is incredibly generous of you. I want to chime in and say a HUGE thanks to you for all the free information you dispense. Your essays, lessons and insight into the craft are invaluable, so, I'm sure I can speak for all the writers here at The Cult when I say a big Cheers.

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