

The Thematic Sections of *On Truthtelling* and Some Indications of Their Contents

1. *Difficult Beginning*

Starting off with a both personal and philosophical project, I raise the whole issue of *why* this should be (as project). The matter of *how* it should be is a question prompting another that serves as a kind of answer.

2. *Babyhood, Infancy, Childhood*

How I came to my subject is part of my subject. It is also and always the question of how I might *not* have come to it.

3. *Adolescence*

In my mid-teens I reached a critical point which, as I think, headed me *towards* it.

4. *Young Manhood*

What I now call truthtelling was once a mass of heterogeneous experiences that had a highly erotic and idealistic centre. Being beautiful in complete nudity (to speak figuratively) was perhaps the impossible dream. In any event, it couldn't help but make the confessional and testimonial modes of telling the truth, however rough they may be, attractive and appreciable.

- *Up North*
- *Without Direction*
- *Drugs*
- *The Mine*
- *Stupidity*
- *Mr. O'Connor*
- *Loose in Montreal*
- *Lethargy.*
- *Kingston*
- *A Slow Change of Direction*

5. *European Trip*

I continued with a curriculum more or less self-imposed. The University of Europe came as a sort of higher education and even an elite one that allowed me a certain accommodation with what I call a principle of errancy.

The latter is not different from one that I had in younger years except that formerly it had much more chance of becoming an *errancy* of principle.

6. *Post-European Self versus European Self*

With the teleological account of myself always a part of what I'm doing, there is an untrustworthy element that needs to be challenged. I employ certain ruses against this element that certainly keep it uppermost in my mind. However, it never is exposed or inculcated as such and so, with the reprieve that results, it continues to thrive and do its work.

7. *Post-European Self Revisited (as Bipolar Self)*

As the writer who presents himself so graphically in his subject and, indeed, *as* his subject, I end up exposing the divided self (over-confidence versus under-confidence) normally occulted by truth-tellers.

8. *Playwrighting*

Where the performative takes precedence as the proof and truth of art and where I struggled to say more than I should have (and so said less than was right or true), I unknowingly built up a long commitment to failing as a writer and seeking redemption as one. The latter, so I believe, slipped into my scholarly and philosophical work as a greater preoccupation with style than I had ever had as a poor artist.

9. *Telephone Call to Palm Springs*

It so happens that, both in art and experience, I have come up close to a limit case, an aberration, a denial of any absolute value to truth-telling.

10. *Hooked on Hell in the Land of Golden Promises*

Perhaps I am drifting when I take up a particular case of madness. On the other hand, perhaps I am drawn to it by a secret consideration of the *value* of truth-telling as general understanding, accommodation, and arrangement.

11. *Reasoning on Order*

Trying to offset this focus on the particular, I think about how truth and order both insist upon and miss each other.

12. ***Personal Mission***

Having coming as far as I have with my subject, I take the risk of affirming that it has *always* been my subject.

13. ***Poetry***

It seems that there is something sacred here and yet so very personal or particular that it tends to either generate a heightened interest or meet with none.

14. ***Melancholic Sister***

I have a soul sister who died and who, as one I undoubtedly wronged, I strive to bring back so that she may give testimony.

15. ***Erudition and Earthy Experience***

With respect to life and learning, I have been drawn in opposite directions so much that there has never been a subject I have dealt with more confidently or taken more satisfaction in than the present one.

16. ***The Scholarly Climb***

When I finally embarked upon getting a university education, it was as a means to some greater end that I felt was still working itself out.

17. ***The Critical Voice***

With the awareness that my work is unacceptable to most scholars, I'm committed to exploring this awareness as well as this unacceptability.

18. ***Harking Back to the Heroic***

Due to the fact that *how* I came to my subject is very much part of my subject, I take the risk of giving a lot of attention to it.

19. ***The Critical Voices***

There is the criticism that consensus inspires. There is also the criticism that it inspires against itself.

20. ***The Lure of the Non-Professional***

With respect to the scholar, I have always felt both attraction and repulsion. So much knowledge and learning posed at the highest level and so much simply posing to be at the highest level.

21. ***The Lure of the Unprofessional***

My credentials cannot be the same as those striving for a highly formal or objective account. For them, posing as cerebral (if not celestial) beings with no private parts is the primary means of winning the confidence of others.

22. ***The Phantasmagorical Element***

There is the play of life that is also in the play of truth. Keeping this essentially hidden is where we all are of a necessity forever bordering on false representation.

23. ***Northrop Frye***

I welcomed an order principle in the study of literature. Since many others do not wish this, I'm faced with the issue of my freedom and openness as an always compromised and conditioned thing.

24. ***A Woolly-Headed Professor***

Only in retrospect has the thought come to me that I was hostile to what was close to me in a certain professor because I viewed it in him as a fault.

25. ***A Certain Amount of Clarity***

It seems to me that my swinging towards the study of analytic philosophy, however briefly, is indicative of my wide-ranging approach to a subject palpable in my life and yet so unclear in my head.

26. ***"Remnants"***

When I think about what kept me on a certain course, a rather wayward one, it seems wrong to underestimate many diverse elements that simply discouraged me from any other.

27. ***Nietzsche***

And yet if my path was meant to be as it has become, I can't think of

anything that confirmed it as much as my study of one philosopher.

28. ***The Return***

When I finally accepted the fact that, as a playwright, I would never succeed, I set my sights on becoming a sort of scholar.

29. ***Morality Revisited***

I went back to university studies with a kind of reckless beyond-good-and-evil attitude. As much as this was my sense of moral superiority, it was also the irreducible dogmatism that this essay has a vested interest in not ignoring.

30. ***A New Turn***

That great ally and sustaining force in life, self-love, is both a subtle and secretive thing. Fortunately an opportunity has arisen to integrate it into my work and make it more tolerably visible.

31. ***More Essays (and More about My Essays)***

The desire to be admired and so to admire myself cannot be eliminated but merely held in check. Bringing in some of my old university papers would hardly seem right if I didn't involve them in a certain amount of controversy.

32. ***Briefly on Feminism***

But just as the subject of truth-telling largely escapes and goes beyond me, so there are others that, with a mixture of respect and scorn, I nod at and then pass by.

33. ***On Getting Personal***

Even amidst my most scholarly reflections and concerns, I still seek the authority or authenticity (but am I the only one?) of the poet.

34. ***Formalism***

I have fought it as the force that impinges on freedom while recognizing that without it there would be no possibility of its expression.

35. ***Egoism***

Where my ego joins up with my essays, it goes from one extreme to the other.

36. ***Causality***

There doesn't seem to be any other philosophical concept that, when deconstructed, confounds so quickly the opposing elements of reason and belief.

37. ***The Analytic/Synthetic Distinction***

Rarified discussions about meaning or sense never make complete sense. It is unlikely then any other discussion will.

38. ***Time for a Reckoning***

Whatever there is in me that is the mere *pose* of the truth-teller deserves to be subverted.

39. ***Case against Academia (1995)***

What we attack is always a too-close-to-us that threatens like a takeover.

40. ***Statement of Purpose (1993)***

A declaration of war can take many different forms.

41. ***Letter of Acknowledgement and Appreciation to Three Professors at the University of Winnipeg (1993)***

And all wars seem to be carried out by gentlemen.

42. ***Address to a Class of Philosophy Students at Concordia University (1994)***

It is a constant struggle to figure out what I'm fighting for, where my honour lies, and what I'm willing to risk.

43. ***My Earliest Experience of Concordia University (1994)***

And it goes without saying that, in such matters, one needs justification.

44. ***But Then Someone Asked Me: "Why are You the Only One to Make Such Loud Complaint?" (1994)***

Where the concern is both rather rarified and quite personal, there doesn't seem to be any way to express it effectively without a certain amount of histrionics.

45. ***But Here Are Three Satisfied Ones (1994)***

It is a characteristic of making one's case that one has to take in (and presumably nullify) objections.

46. ***Letter to the Chair of the Department (1994)***

My case against Academia can be judged to be both idiosyncratic and idiotic. At least, I allow that it *can* be judged this way.

47. ***Second Letter to the Chair of the Department (1994)***

But, when all is said and done, it is my fighting spirit that I love in all its errancy and, if it didn't err at all, it would err most fatally.

48. ***Response to the Report on My Essay (1995)***

Intellectualism, broadly considered, falsely covers over much ignorance just as it honourably combats and vanquishes it.

49. ***Report on Professor Shamus's Course (1994)***

Indeed, there is always something in the institution that borders on caricature.

50. ***Letter to Professor Shamus (1995)***

And yet it is precisely the less caricatural elements that are most threatening to the non-conformist.

51. ***The One Sweet All-Embracing Encounter (1995)***

Who perhaps must endanger himself if he is to avoid becoming a parody of one.

52. ***My Montreal Experience (1995)***

But parody or no, there is the phantom element in all we do.

53. ***Some Mad Thoughts about Philosophy (1995)***

And yet the desire to defy even this with some extraordinary effort is always on.

54. ***To the Top of the Mountain***

At least for some. For if the illusion of the substantiality of our daily lives is dominant, it weakens the need for the other sort of illusion.

55. ***Driving the Nail of Dissidence and Discontent Deep into the Wood of Philosophical Discourse***

By attacking the pretense of substantiality in philosophy, I'm trying to confirm my own – even as pretense.

56. ***Questions and Problems vis-a-vis the Role of Philosophy in Wittgenstein (1995)***

How typical I am in wanting to top the thought of another even while not understanding it fully.

57. ***Hegel in Brief***

What is so little kept in the mind, despite all arguments to the contrary, is essentially not believed.

58. ***End of the Trajectory***

My ego is the eye upon myself that will close upon a sight going on without it and open to all thought save the one of making a nostalgic return.

58.1 ***(The Master's Thesis with Michel Foucault as My Hero)***

- *Appendix I: Some Questions and Answers*
- *Appendix II: Further Reflections on Foucault and the Foucauldian Debate.*
- *Appendix III: Nietzsche, Foucault, Selfhood, and "On Being*

Personal”

58.2 **(The Doctoral Thesis with Jacques Derrida as My Hero)**

➤ *Appendix: Honour and Integrity in Philosophy: Are They Possible?*

59. **Alice Turns on Her Hero**

I need my most secret self to tell me that losing my most secret self is essentially an act of hygiene.

60. **The Final Word**

Our legacy will always be the same trust and mistrust – the space of gratitude, magnanimity, freedom, and many other things – that we ourselves inherited.