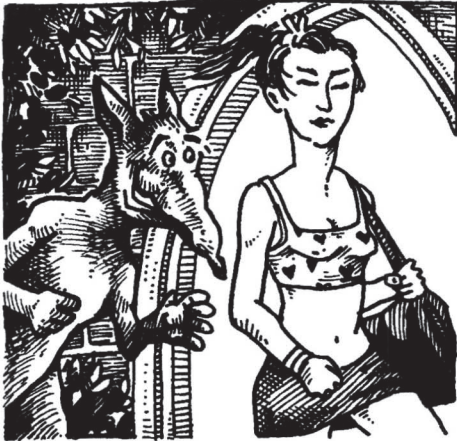
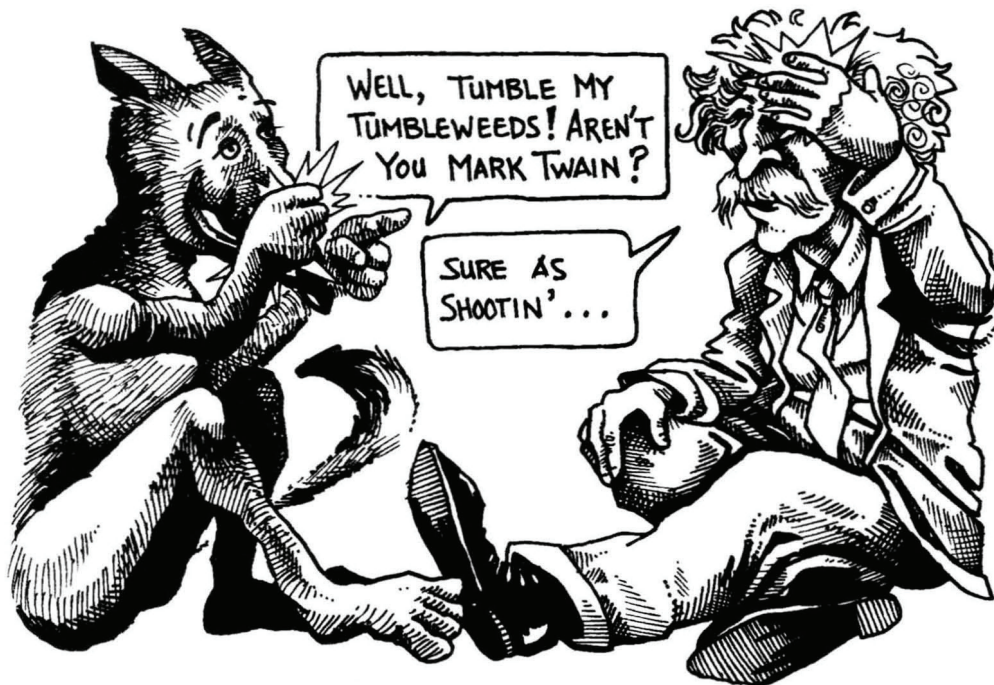


COYOTE WAS GOING ALONG . . .



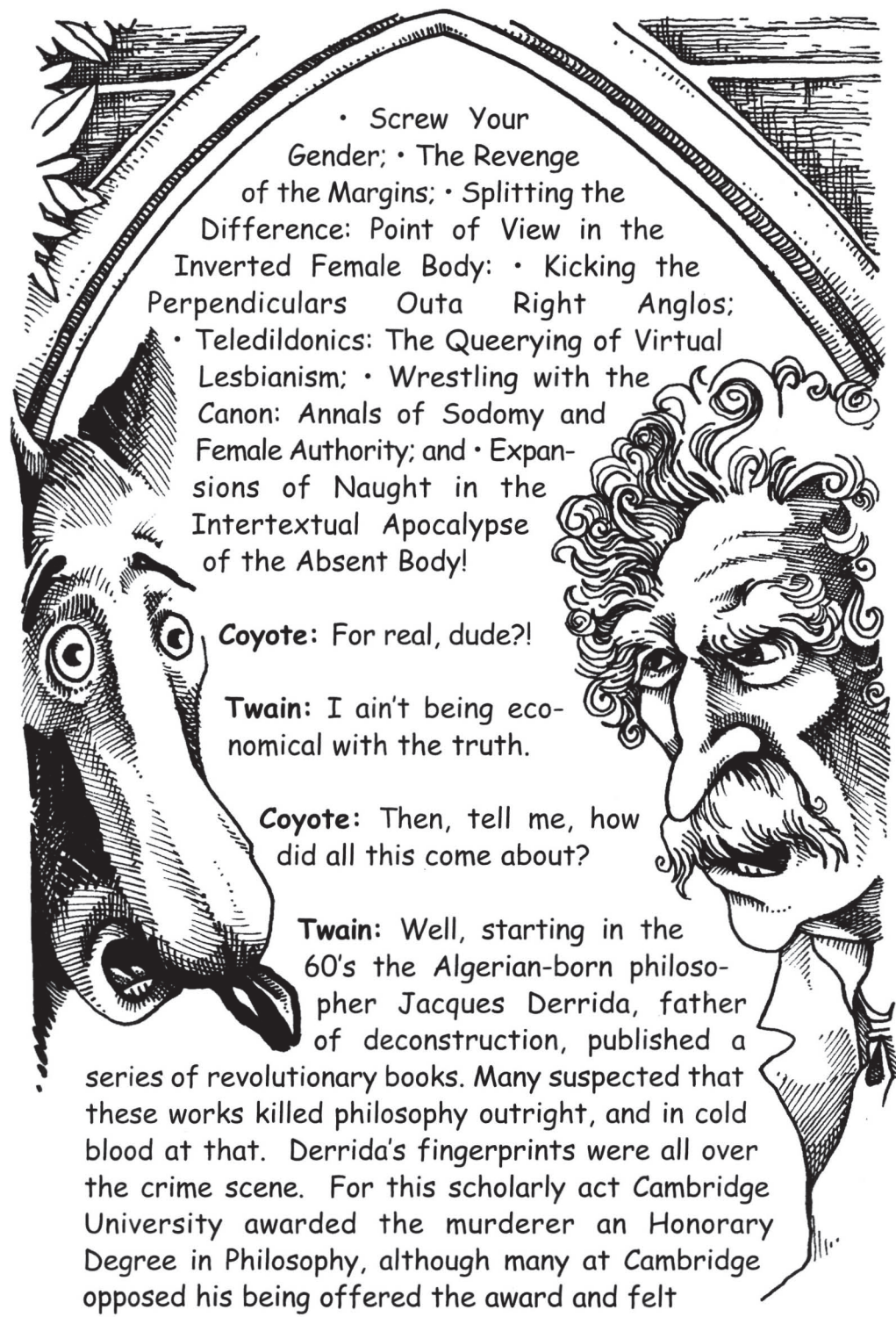


Coyote: Well, I thought you had kicked the bucket!

Twain: Actually, rumors of my death are greatly exaggerated. And who might you be?

Coyote: My name is Coyote, and I have been thinking of, ummm, going back to school, you know, to pursue an . . . ummm . . . education, and I was wondering if you would, ummm, care to advise me on this issue.

Twain: I would rather get tarred and feathered and run outta town on a rail than t' get more schoolin', cause there's lots a fellow just can't get from books. But if you're dead set on book learnin' I must tell you that our universities have been taken over by deconstructors and that you'll be up to your eyeballs in textbooks with titles such as:



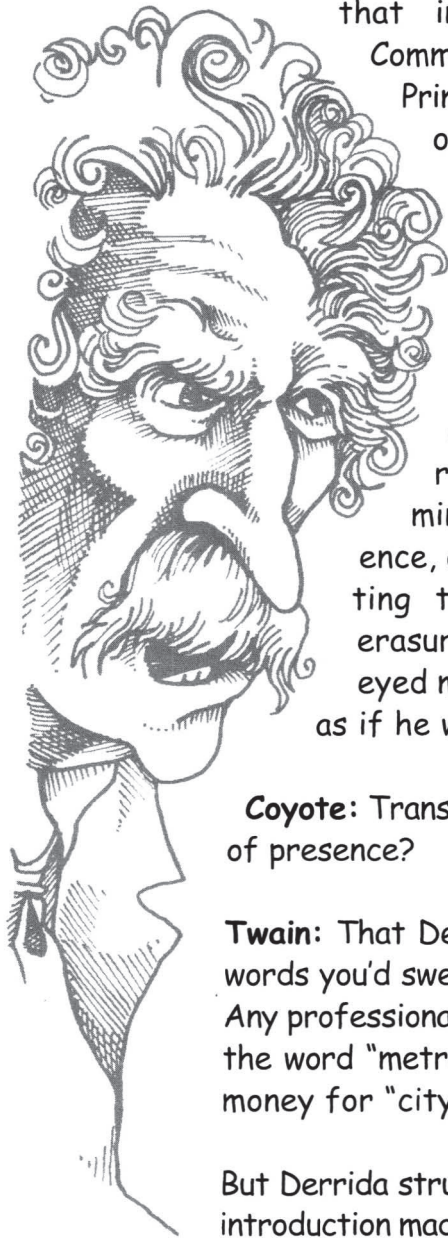
- Screw Your Gender;
- The Revenge of the Margins;
- Splitting the Difference: Point of View in the Inverted Female Body;
- Kicking the Perpendiculars Outa Right Anglos;
- Teledildonics: The Queerying of Virtual Lesbianism;
- Wrestling with the Canon: Annals of Sodomy and Female Authority;
- and • Expansions of Naught in the Intertextual Apocalypse of the Absent Body!

Coyote: For real, dude?!

Twain: I ain't being economical with the truth.

Coyote: Then, tell me, how did all this come about?

Twain: Well, starting in the 60's the Algerian-born philosopher Jacques Derrida, father of deconstruction, published a series of revolutionary books. Many suspected that these works killed philosophy outright, and in cold blood at that. Derrida's fingerprints were all over the crime scene. For this scholarly act Cambridge University awarded the murderer an Honorary Degree in Philosophy, although many at Cambridge opposed his being offered the award and felt



that instead he should be dubbed
Commanding Officer of Obfuscation,
Prime Minister of Mystification, Emir
of Evasion and Furher of Fraud!!!!

Coyote: Well, why did he get
the degree?

Twain: He's got a knack for
writing books that mystify
almost everyone who attempts to
read them and for standing sober,
mind you, in front of a sober audi-
ence, and carrying on and on about put-
ting transcendental signifields under
erasure and disemboweling the cock-
eyed metaphysics of presence, why just
as if he were talking about nothing!

Coyote: Transcendental signifields? Metaphysics
of presence?

Twain: That Derrida spits out so many ten-dollar
words you'd swear that he's getting paid for them.
Any professional lecturer knows better than to use
the word "metropolis," when he can get the same
money for "city."

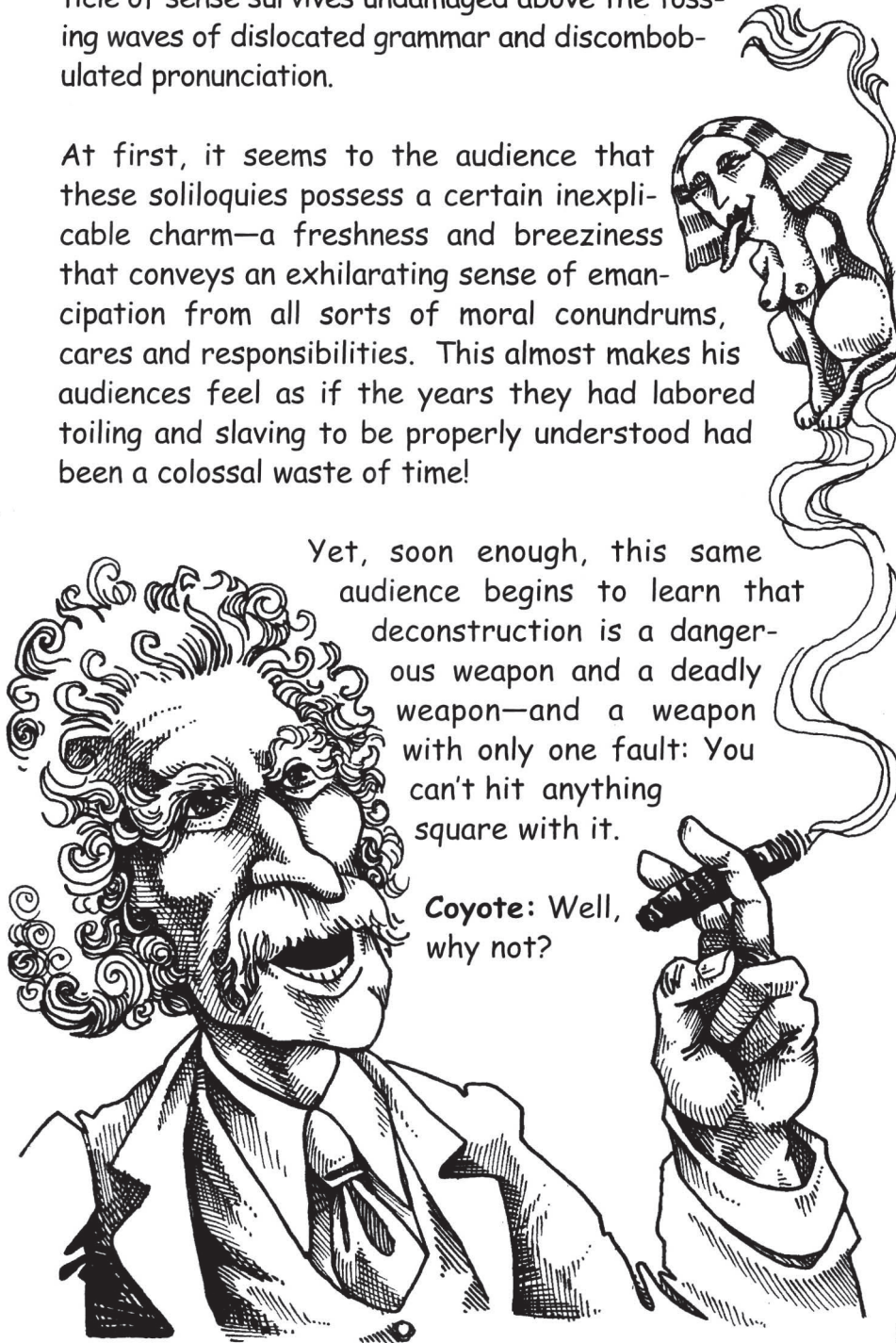
But Derrida struts on stage, usually after a lengthy
introduction made up of half a hog's share of two-bit
words. He faces his audience; his face as inscrutable
as the Sphinx. Not knowing quite what to expect, the audi-
ence fidgets and squirms and farts and squiggles. Suddenly,
the Sphinx smiles, opens its mouth, and then the fountains of its
eloquence spurt forth: Its tongue gets as busy as a one-legged —

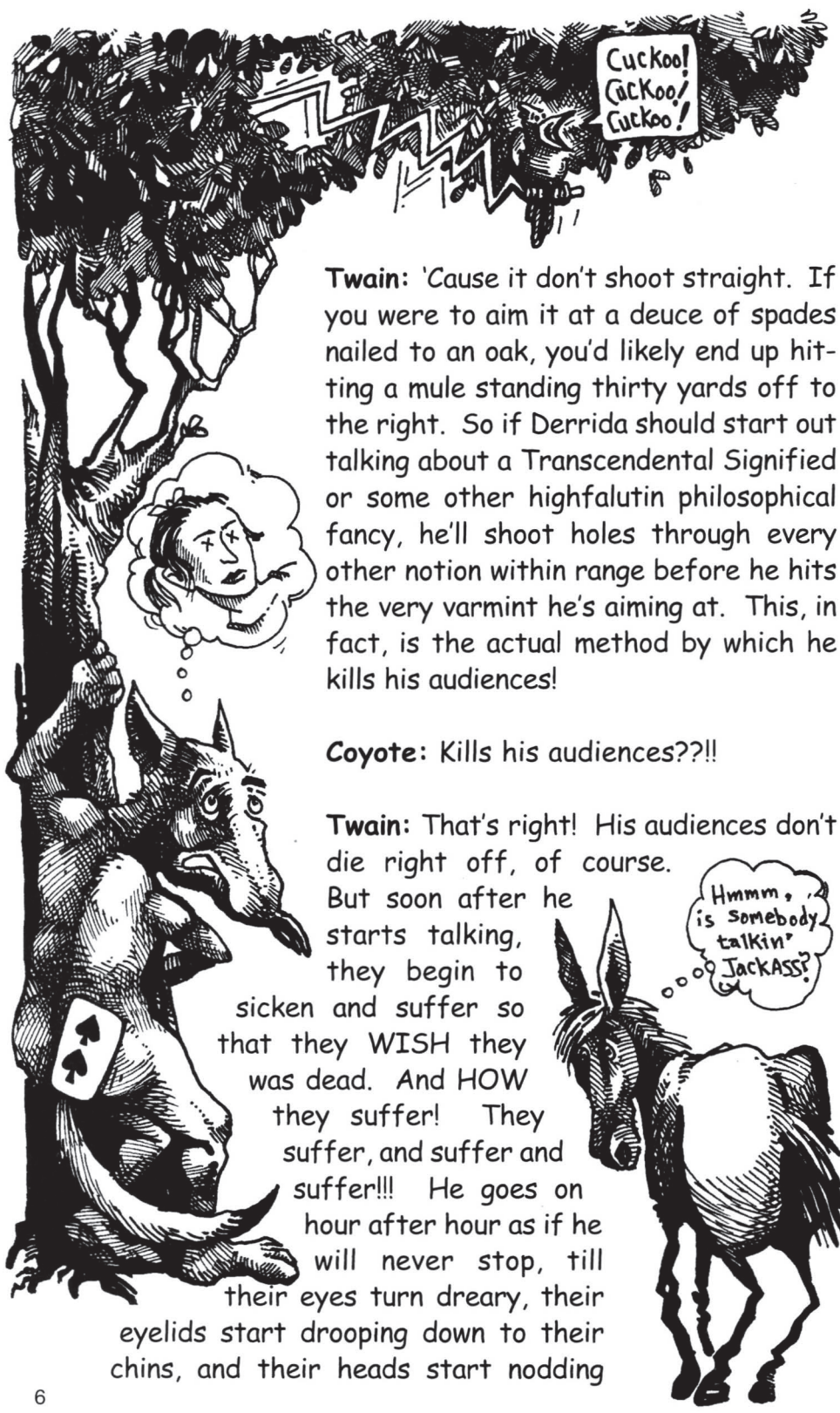
man at an ass-kicking contest, raining down the thirteen parts of speech for forty days and forty nights, burying its audience under such a desultory deluge of linguistic debris that not a particle of sense survives undamaged above the tossing waves of dislocated grammar and discombobulated pronunciation.

At first, it seems to the audience that these soliloquies possess a certain inexplicable charm—a freshness and breeziness that conveys an exhilarating sense of emancipation from all sorts of moral conundrums, cares and responsibilities. This almost makes his audiences feel as if the years they had labored toiling and slaving to be properly understood had been a colossal waste of time!

Yet, soon enough, this same audience begins to learn that deconstruction is a dangerous weapon and a deadly weapon—and a weapon with only one fault: You can't hit anything square with it.

Coyote: Well, why not?





Twain: 'Cause it don't shoot straight. If you were to aim it at a deuce of spades nailed to an oak, you'd likely end up hitting a mule standing thirty yards off to the right. So if Derrida should start out talking about a Transcendental Signified or some other highfalutin philosophical fancy, he'll shoot holes through every other notion within range before he hits the very varmint he's aiming at. This, in fact, is the actual method by which he kills his audiences!

Coyote: Kills his audiences??!!

Twain: That's right! His audiences don't die right off, of course. But soon after he starts talking, they begin to sicken and suffer so that they WISH they was dead. And HOW they suffer! They suffer, and suffer and suffer!!! He goes on hour after hour as if he will never stop, till their eyes turn dreary, their eyelids start drooping down to their chins, and their heads start nodding

down to their knees. Yet he stands there babbling with the absolute confidence of Adam, knowing that what he speaks no other man hath spoken before.

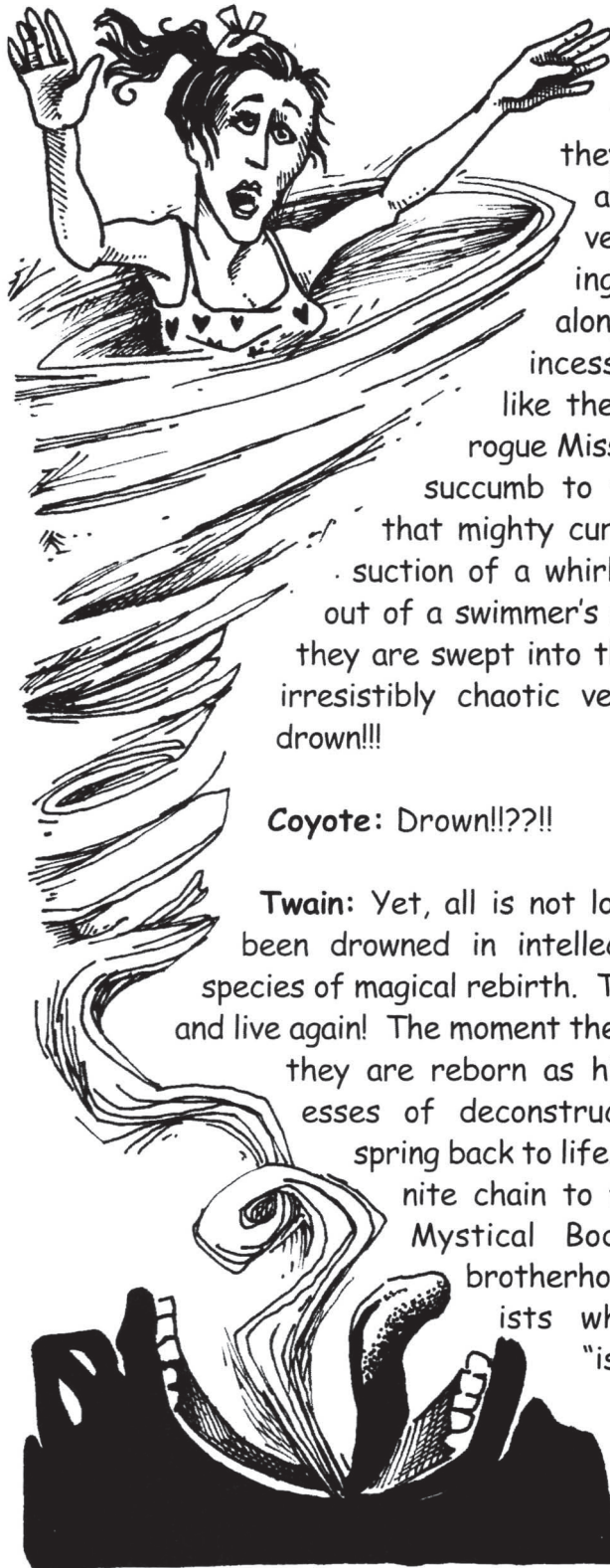
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And just when you think the poor souls in his audience can't look any sicker or sorer, well, they turn green and yellow and keel over like corpses. Of course that Sphinx pays no heed, but merely stands there pontificating while contemplating this growing sea of stiffs. After a stretch of time so long that most of the corpses have begun to stink, the Sphinx smiles with the tranquil satisfaction of one who has just relieved his mind of a considerable load.

Now, most listeners, of course, are not killed off. If they possess enough horse sense, they soon start questioning themselves as to what state of things he's talking about, and end up questioning whether he's talking about any state of things at all. They get up and high-tail it outta there before the lecture turns fatal. But those poor souls who lack this deep

sagacity, those unfortunate souls who remain, those heedless souls who suspect there must exist

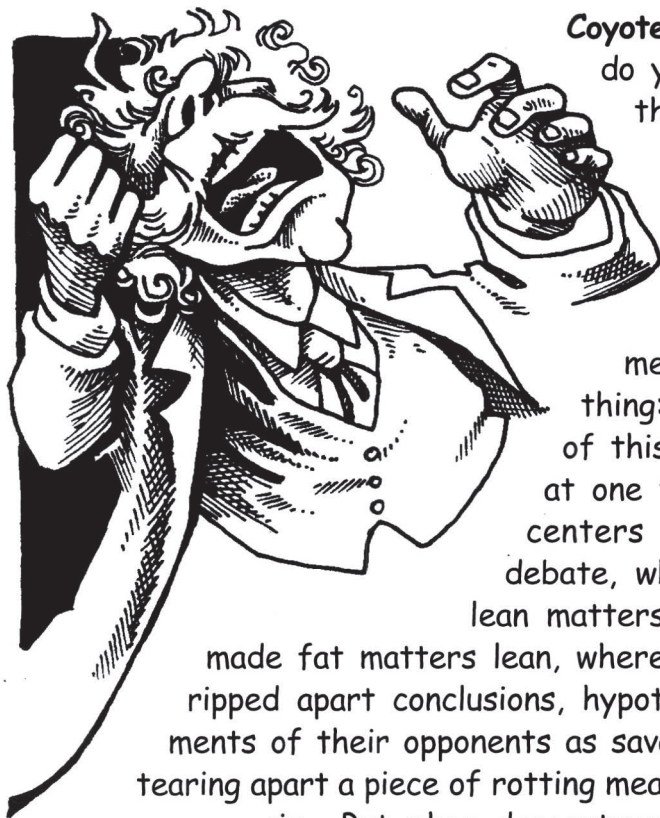




some kernel of profundity hidden deep in that verbal deluge, why they begin to be swept along in that torrent of verbosity, that hypnotizing current that rolls along in its sweeping and incessant rippling rhythms like the wide, ever-rolling and rogue Mississippi, and they slowly succumb to the hypnotic sound of that mighty current, which is like the suction of a whirlpool sucking the spirit out of a swimmer's strokes, and eventually they are swept into the very Center of that irresistibly chaotic verbal deluge—and they drown!!!

Coyote: Drown!???!

Twain: Yet, all is not lost. Though they have been drowned in intellect, they experience a species of magical rebirth. They rise from the dead and live again! The moment they leave that auditorium they are reborn as high-priests and priestesses of deconstruction. Their corpses spring back to life. They fan out in an infinite chain to form a great and holy Mystical Body—a great babbling brotherhood of deconstructionists who form a veritable "island" of deconstructionism with surging rivers of language as deadly as Derrida's.

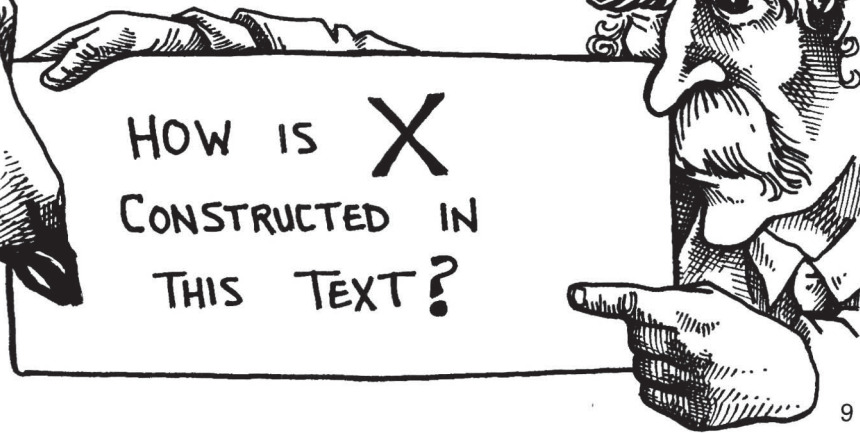


Coyote: Hmmmm. Well, do you have to know that deconstructionist language to get chicks?!

Twain: Chicks, Schmicks! Let me tell you something: The universities of this here land were at one time magnificent centers of intellectual debate, where some made lean matters fat and others

made fat matters lean, where sharp debaters ripped apart conclusions, hypotheses and arguments of their opponents as savagely as vultures tearing apart a piece of rotting meat tossed into the air. But when deconstruction arrived, the clashings of warring theories, ideas, notions and schools once thundering through the halls yielded slowly to the dogmatic drone of the following chant, which now echoes from every classroom:

WELL, X
SURE DOESN'T
MARK THE SPOT.



HOW IS X
CONSTRUCTED IN
THIS TEXT?



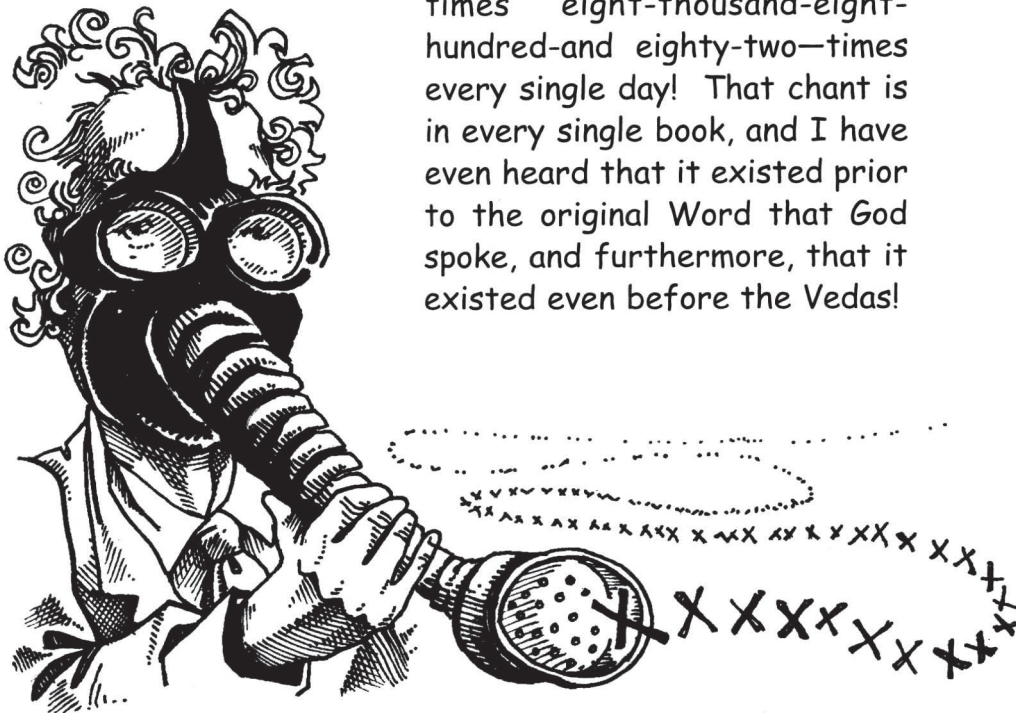
Now, 'X' stands for "race,"
"gender," "sexual preference,"
"class," etc. And the implication is
that all our ideas about these things
are so full of hog slop
that they can be readily discombobulated,
dismembered, disemboweled and deconstructed—and of
course the world will be a better place because of
this!!!

That chant is chanted in every tongue that Babel
bequeathed to earth, and flavored with whisky,
brandy, kava-kava, beer, cologne, sozodont, tobacco,
garlic, onions, grasshoppers—everything that has a
fragrance to it—through all the long list of things
that are gorged or guzzled by the sons and daughters
of Adam. I've never smelt any chant as often as I
have smelt that one; never have smelt any chant that
smelt so variegated as that one.

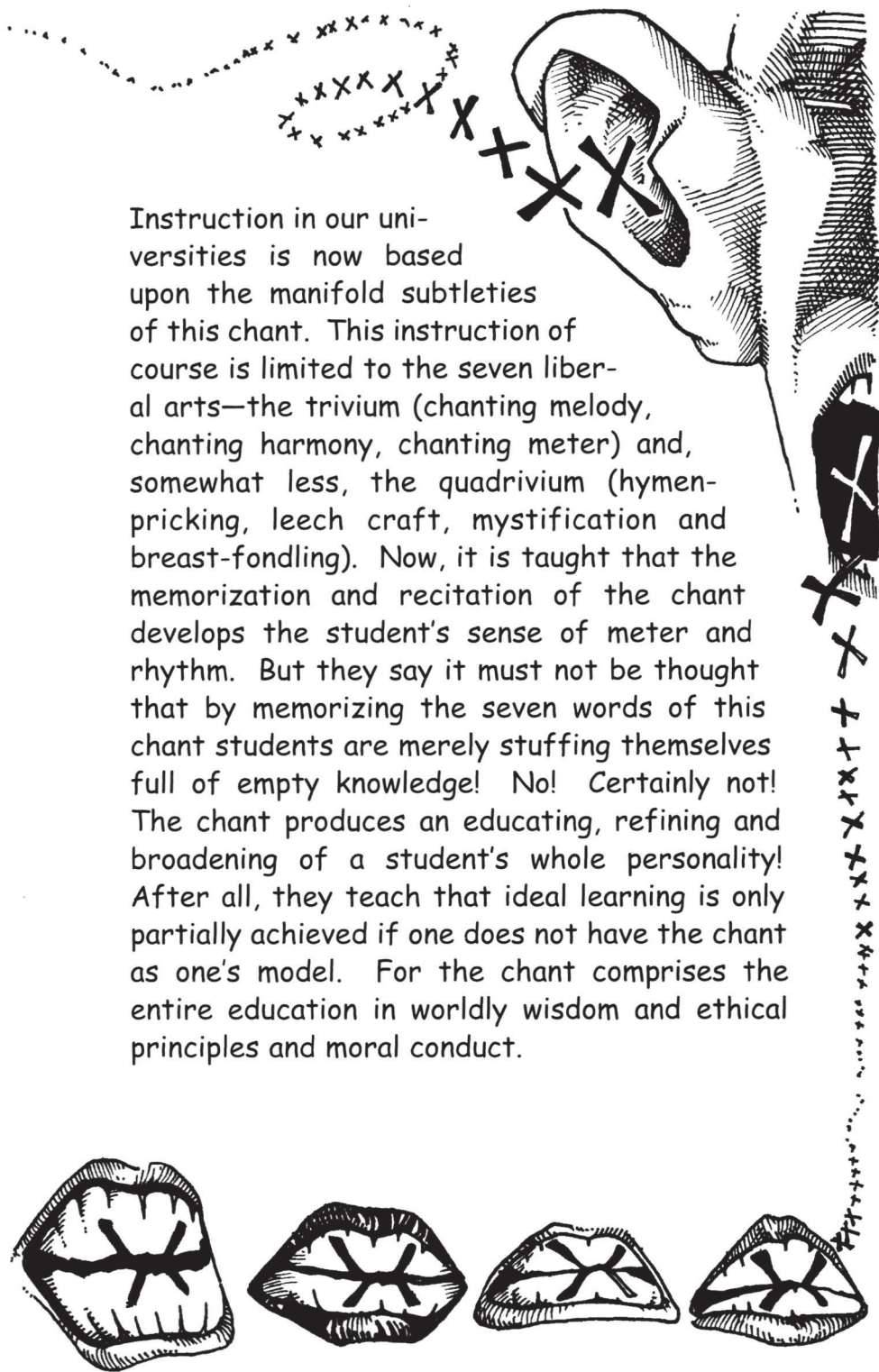
Thus you never could learn to know it by its smell, because every time you thought you had learned the smell of it, it would turn up with a worse smell.

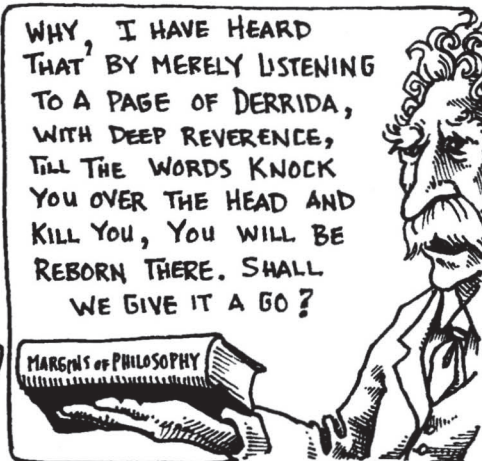
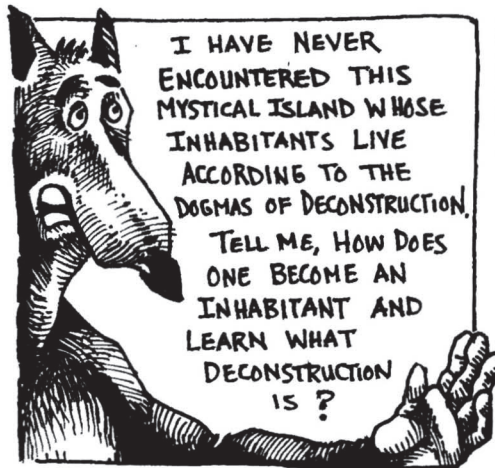
On the whole Island of Deconstruction there is not one high priest professor who is able to cork that chant inside his or her belly and not let it out—and survive!

A typical student must listen to that chant, smell that chant, and chant that chant an average of eight-thousand-eight hundred-and-eighty-one—or sometimes eight-thousand-eight hundred-and eighty-two—times every single day! That chant is in every single book, and I have even heard that it existed prior to the original Word that God spoke, and furthermore, that it existed even before the Vedas!



Instruction in our universities is now based upon the manifold subtleties of this chant. This instruction of course is limited to the seven liberal arts—the trivium (chanting melody, chanting harmony, chanting meter) and, somewhat less, the quadrivium (hymen-pricking, leech craft, mystification and breast-fondling). Now, it is taught that the memorization and recitation of the chant develops the student's sense of meter and rhythm. But they say it must not be thought that by memorizing the seven words of this chant students are merely stuffing themselves full of empty knowledge! No! Certainly not! The chant produces an educating, refining and broadening of a student's whole personality! After all, they teach that ideal learning is only partially achieved if one does not have the chant as one's model. For the chant comprises the entire education in worldly wisdom and ethical principles and moral conduct.





WHY NOT ?

