

Dreams of succulence: what is *The Dark Knight* about?

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Abstract. What is the film *The Dark Knight* about? Is it about sovereignty? I speculate that the opening scene is a dramatic reaction to a mundane event: an essay competition set by a bank which “goes wrong.”

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What is the film *The Dark Knight* about? “Is it about how they kiss with enormous succulence?” I think that is something else. “Is it about sovereignty?” That is a well-known interpretation (see Chaudhary 2012), but I have another interpretation, at least of the opening scene, though it is on the unsophisticated side. In this scene, a bank is robbed. Some people, hired by a villain called the Joker, break into a grand and official-looking bank. The Joker himself crashes in using a school bus, one of those iconic yellow ones, and drives off with the money.

Now this does not seem very realistic to me – such people breaking into such a bank – but perhaps I just do not understand relevant aspects of reality. Anyway, let us grant that it is not realistic. Nevertheless, it might be a dramatic reaction to something more mundane that actually happened. The scene is actually about those events.

“Like what?” This is what I imagine actually happened. A wealthy bank decides to do some good and sets an essay writing competition for high school students on some economic issue, such as “Why are some countries rich and some poor?” Each year they set the competition, changing the question of course. The winner often turns out to be suitable for work in the bank and opportunities are given

to them, and even some opportunities for the runner up. The competition is going so well that the reward for winning becomes that you get to run the bank for a day, with the runner up helping. Some anarchists decide that they are clever enough to win the competition. An anarchist is the winner and so is the runner up. They steal some paper clips!

Notes. (a) “They kiss with enormous succulence,” is Virginia Woolf on a film of the Russian novel *Anna Karenina*. (I think I did not understand the novel when I read it, more than two decades ago, but it feels like protection in this frightening realm of film analysis.) (b) The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis actually does set a yearly essay writing competition for high school students. I borrowed one of its titles.

References

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