

Taking Latin Prose Comp (By Strategy): A Latin Translation of Oblique Strategies

Patrick J. Burns, Fordham University

Marymount School Latin Club 4/14/15

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Latin Prose Composition

The “argument” against...

- “dead language”
- “useless”
- “elitist”
- too difficult for today’s students
- pedagogically unsound or ineffective
- no audience
- etc...

Latin Prose Composition

The “argument” against...

“We have no native speakers, no living context, no easy standard spoken or written version from which to teach this particular skill. ...In fact, we have been teaching our students to write a fake, Greek or Latin, dredged up from the swamp of the memories of our own professors and their professors before them.”

—R.J. Ball & J.D. Ellsworth

“Against Teaching Composition in Classical Languages” (1989)

Latin Prose Composition

Example: Shakespeare into Latin

280

LITERARY AND CRITICAL. [Part IV.

CCCCX.

Beatrice and Benedick.

D. Pedro. The lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you ;
the gentleman that danced with her told her she is much
wronged by you.

Benedick. O, she misused me past the endurance of a
block ! an oak but with one green leaf on it would have
answered her ; my very visor began to assume life and
scold with her : she told me, not thinking I had been
myself, that I was the prince's jester : that I was duller

from Ramsey's *Latin Prose Composition*, vol. 2. (1903)

Latin Prose Composition

Twitter and the new “living context”



Edward Zarrow @... ⏮ ⏭ ⭐

Liceti, de Monstrorum Caussis ...
'vacca vitulum semihominem
peperit' #favorites #loqlat
#latinteach



Chris B. @magisterb480

5d

Profecturus sum in itinere diurno,
quod in feriis vernalibus sum et
mihi placet visere loca varia.
#loqlat

Recent tweets with #loqlat

Ancient How-To Lit

Sententiae, apothegmata, etc.

- *Gnomai* of the Seven Sages (e.g. Γνῶθι σεαυτόν.)
- *Monosticha* of Menander
- Sententiae, e.g. from Publilius Syrus or Seneca Minor
- Apothegmata of the Desert Fathers
- The Ten Commandments
- *Disticha Catonis*

Ancient How-To Lit

Disticha Catonis

LIBER I

1. Si deus est animus, nobis ut carmina dicunt,
Hic tibi praecipue sit pura mente colendus.
2. Plus uigila semper neu somno deditus esto;
Nam diuturna quies uitiiis alimenta ministrat.
3. Uirtutem primam esse puto, conpescere linguam:
Proximus ille deo est, qui scit ratione tacere.
4. Sperne repugnando tibi tu contrarius esse:
Conueniet nulli, qui secum dissidet ipse.
5. Si uitam inspicias hominum, si denique mores,
Cum culpant alios: nemo sine crimine uiuit.

from W.J. Chase's *The Distichs of Cato* (1922)

Oblique Strategies

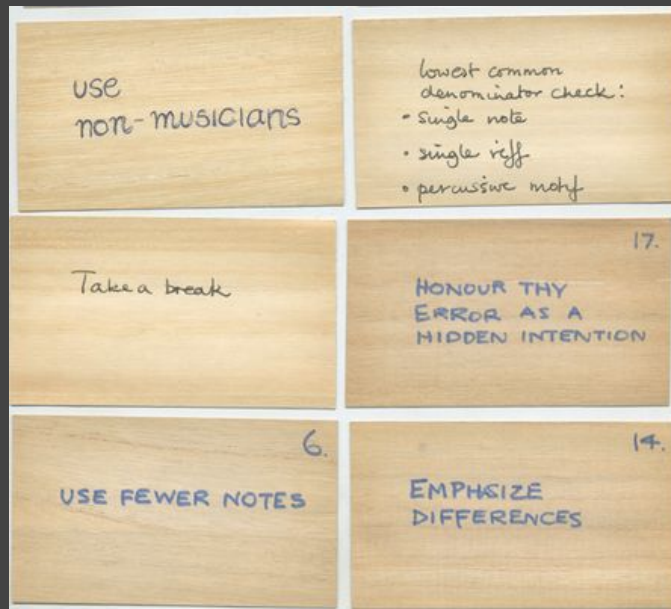
Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt



<http://www.revelinnewyork.com/sites/default/files/photo1big.jpg>

Oblique Strategies

Original Cards



from <http://www.brainpickings.org/2014/01/22/brian-eno-visual-music-oblique-strategies/>

Oblique Strategies

Published Deck



New edition of the *Oblique Strategies* published in 2013

Oblique Strategies

“The function”

“The function of the Oblique Strategies was, initially, to serve as a series of prompts which said:

‘Don’t forget that you could adopt *this* attitude,’

or

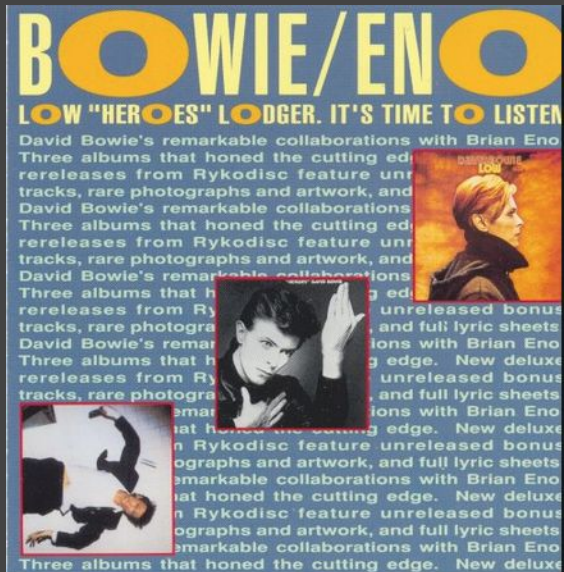
‘Don't forget you could adopt *that* attitude.’”

—Brian Eno, KPFA interview 1980

<http://www.rtqe.net/ObliqueStrategies/OSintro.html>

Oblique Strategies

Bowie's "Berlin" albums



from Rykodisc reissue of "Heroes", Low, and Lodger.

Consilia Obliqua

Working Plan

- *Brevitas*

Consilia Obliqua

Brevitas

Estne perfectum?



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Brevitas

Requiesce.



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Working Plan

- *Brevitas*
- *Obscuritas*

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Obscuritas

Aqua.



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Consilia Obliqua

Obscuritas

Portu tuto designato
consiste ad ancoram.



<http://bit.ly/consilia-obliqua>

Consilia Obliqua

Working Plan

- *Brevitas*
- *Obscuritas*

“Brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio.”—Horace, *Ars Poetica* 25-26

Consilia Obliqua

Working Plan

- *Brevitas*
- *Obscuritas*
- *Latinitas (ad fontes)*

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Latinitas ad fontes

Ne rumpas pacem.



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Consilia Obliqua

Latinitas ad fontes

Consilia Obliqua: *Ne rumpas pacem.*

Aeneid 12.202: Nulla dies pacem hanc Italis nec
foedera rumpet.

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Consilia Obliqua

Latinitas ad fontes

Collige aliquas partes
collectaeque trahantur.



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Consilia Obliqua

Working Plan

- *Brevitas*
- *Obscuritas*
- *Latinitas (ad fontes)*
- *“Ludititas”*

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“Luditas”

Esto immundus.



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Consilia Obliqua

“Luditas”

Tolle legem.



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Consilia Obliqua

Working Plan

- *Brevitas*
- *Obscuritas*
- *Latinitas (ad fontes)*
- *“Ludititas”*
- *Novitas*

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Novitas

Ne formides sententias
detritas.



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Consilia Obliqua

Novitas

Dividuum communem
minimum perscrutare—
unum ictum, unam vocem,
unum membrum.



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Consilia Obliqua

Novitas

Cogita aliam
deminutionum rationem.



<http://bit.ly/consilia-obliqua>

Consilia Obliqua

Novitas

Sinistrorsum,
dextrorsum, prorsum.



<http://bit.ly/consilia-obliqua>

Consilia Obliqua

Why?

Product of translation

≠

Purpose of translation

Consilia Obliqua

Why?

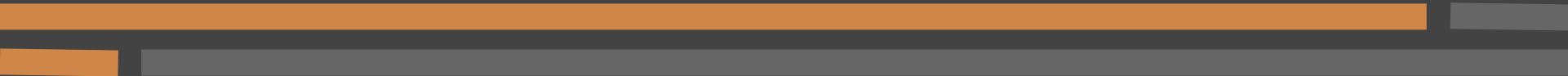
Creating our own
living context—
using Latin as a catalyst
for the production of more Latin.

Consilia Obliqua

An experiment

Proposal—

We try to use the *Consilia Obliqua* to transform a terribly boring Latin sentence into a strange and wonderful (and by necessity, very brief) story.



Consilia Obliqua

An experiment

FILIA AGRICOLAE AMAT COLUMBAS.



Consilia Obliqua

An experiment

⁴³ Nos. 1 to 4 are intended as elementary reading. They are easy texts. A child can enjoy the animal fables, as it can find interest in Theodulus' stories of the gods. Cato offered easy practical wisdom. In our day beginners are not given texts at all, but stupid practice sentences instead (*Filia agricolae amat columbas*). The first author read is Caesar—particularly adapted to disgust a twelve-year-old boy with Latin. Lucan, Statius, and Claudian are seldom taught today, even in universities.

⁴⁴ The limitation of the concept *auctor* to poets occurs elsewhere; cf. Thurot in *Notices et extraits*, XXII, Part 2, p. 112, n. 2.

from E. Curtius *Latin Literature and the European Middle Ages*, p. 51

Consilia Obliqua

An experiment

FILIA AGRICOLAE AMAT COLUMBAS.



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