section 9: comparison to previous approaches

Seth Cable

A. Rehearsal for Transcendence

"Are you okay?" she laughed from the top of the stairs. "We tripped over each other", we lied. We would wait until later to try again, when we were well and truly alone, and there was no one to call for help.

B. Your Name is on the Chyron

"So, are we post-apocalyptic yet?" asks my owner as he watches his favorite news channel. He doesn't know - or simply doesn't care - that I can understand.

C. Livia Drusilla

<<You have to stop comparing yourself to your mother>>
<<I'm not! I'm just saying that she spent a lot more on my funeral, is all>>

D. It's July and I'm Wearing a Coat

The worst cases were put into deep freeze for future reference. We were gathered around them, pushed in close so they couldn't escape our sight. The goal, I believe, was to scare us into acquiescence.

My cousin leaned towards me and whispered, "I'll bet you anything those aren't really real."

"Oh, they're real," replied my older brother from behind us. "That one there, I actually met one time. Of course, he looked pretty different back then."

At that, my aunt spun around and hissed, "Hush, you all. The singing's about to begin."

E. Introductory Seminar

"Let's begin our discussion today by considering this video. It's a wedding party, right? Everybody's having fun. Everybody's happy. Bride and groom are dancing. So, does anyone think they know what's about to happen? Would anyone like to guess?"

"They're all going to be gunned down by one of our drones?"

<a scattering of awkwardly coughed laughter around the classroom>

"Uhm, well, okay, Michael. But, that wouldn't be very improbable, would it? No, unfortunately, that would be quite likely. So, would anyone else like to guess? Alright, let's just run the video..."
After a few more moments of continued dancing, the bride pulls herself away from the groom. She steps back clumsily, and falls to her knees. Then, from waist to chest, her ornately ruffled white dress appears to implode and shrink to the ground, as a purplish liquid pools beneath. In the next instant, her arms and face darken to the same violet tone and slough off like dripping batter. An older woman, possibly the mother of the bride, haltingly steps forth, rigid with shock. As she draws near to the bride’s remains, a thin tendril emerges from the viscous pool. Before anyone can react, the wisp surges towards the woman’s abdomen and emerges from her back.

“Now, I’m going to guess that nobody here saw that coming! This here is just a terrific example of an improbability.”

*a cascading clatter of finger strokes on laptop keyboards*

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