The Story of Writing Macao
A Pedagogy for Creative Writing in a Non-Native Context

Christopher Kelen

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Declaration

I declare that this portfolio thesis consists of my original work, published and unpublished, and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution.


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The title of this thesis requires what some may find an unusual style of introduction; one elaborating its deictics. This is a pedagogy for Creative Writing in a non-native context. The two indefinite articles in the foregoing sentence ought to dispel any suspicion of a universalist agenda. The objective of this portfolio is not to tell anyone how something in general ought to be done; it’s to provide a particular example of how something has been done and is being done and in a particular set of circumstances. The hope is that the work will be exemplary; and so worth transmitting on that basis.

The ethical underpinning of the relational deictics suggested is the straightforward Freirean pedagogic proposition that the student is the starting point and that liberation is the goal (Freire, 1972, passim). For the sake of a convenient mnemonic, one might frame that with the crusty old teacher’s adage: ‘you can’t teach anybody anything’. In other words, it’s the encounter that counts where learning is the goal. The notion of dialogue which Freire develops for his classroom has strong affinities with Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of ‘the word shaped in dialogic interaction’ (1994, p. 76) and with the dialogic imagination Bakhtin proposes as characteristic of the heteroglot novel. For an heuristic of writing, the action Freire proposes perhaps entails something akin to Bakhtin's conception of ‘inner speech’: ‘A word in the mouth of a particular individual is a product of the living interaction of social forces’ (1994, p. 58). One might point as well to Raymond Williams’ ‘militant particularism’ (1989, p. 249) to account for what I term a ‘place-based’ aesthetic in the work I describe below. In the case of this particular pedagogy, for Creative Writing in a non-native context, the student’s thematic universe is the starting point for a process which is necessarily dialogic and necessarily cross-cultural. The pedagogic work with which I deal in this portfolio concerns a series

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1 Williams’s concept of ‘militant particularism’ refers to the origins of movements and struggles and the manner in which politics is embedded in what he terms ‘structures of feeling’ and ways of life characteristic of particular places.
of dialogic processes or encounters centered on the creative work (especially the fiction and poetry) of my students. To give that centering some physical reality, please picture time spent listening to people’s stories, time spent editing stories together at the computer screen, and time devoted to e-mail and telephone interactions along these lines.

To bring the particulars into focus – the practical problem have I faced (as a native speaking teacher of English) was to offer non-English native students (studying English at a university in Macao\(^2\), in south China) a more motivating way (a better reason) to be interested in the literature of my culture (i.e. the literature of the western world and especially of the English language). My goal was to get past the ‘read-only’ version of literature as something already canonized and complete and ready to pour into the student *cum* empty vessel; my hope was to get beyond the idea that the teacher’s knowledge was the necessary starting point for a dissemination of knowledge. I wanted to motivate students to live more of their lives in English (and so improve their English) by showing them that literature in English was something they could make themselves; by showing them that culture (even of another language) was a living, a dynamic, process in which they could participate, and in which they could possibly make a mark themselves. I needed to show them that it was necessary to study and to understand literature in order to produce one’s own, but that if one were prepared to make that commitment then it would not be necessary to pledge oneself to literature as some pure end in itself (more cynically, as the pure acquisition of cultural capital); rather a knowledge of literature could become a means of serving ends the student – as writer – might decide. In short, developing literary skills could help the student to express herself in the world language (i.e. English) and thus open up a potentially unbounded and life transforming conversation, a conversation of the cosmopolitan kind.

I needed to sell all or enough of this rationale to the institution employing me (the University of Macau), in order to make possible the goals I’ve suggested above. The consistent selling point has been I think that giving people the opportunity to find

\(^{2}\) A note on the spelling of the name, Macao. ‘Macao’ is the English spelling, officially adopted by Beijing and so by the Macao SAR (Special Administrative Region) government, as the proper Roman script spelling for Macao. ‘Macau’ is the Portuguese spelling and remains in use in many organisation titles, for example, that of the University of Macau. In many cases however these spellings are used interchangeably and perhaps even randomly.
their own voices and to tell their own stories in English is motivating. It motivates the people in question to spend more of their lives in English and it motivates them to find resources for the task (of expressing themselves) which closely approximate the tools required for the purposes of improving one’s general proficiency in the language. This particular pedagogy for Creative Writing in this particular non-native context has helped people to improve their English, so that they might use it, now and in the future, for whatever purposes they might wish. While I believe that the differences made in terms of general proficiency have been marked (and so measurable) I have personally made no effort to undertake such a measurement; I think however that this would be a fruitful research undertaking for a disinterested third party.

My own work for this portfolio is at the intersection of Literary Studies and Creative Writing, in the particular context of a non-native pedagogy; an ‘area’ if I may call it such, with many and varied interdisciplinary investments, some of which I account for below.

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The portfolio consists of an overarching statement, four published refereed papers, and project material concerning the teaching of Creative Writing (in particular of short fiction and of poetry in response/poetry in translation) along with examples of collaboration, fiction and poetry in which I have participated in various roles. These materials together serve to background and to document pedagogic (and related) work conducted at the University of Macau, where I am currently an Associate Professor in the English Dept, and where I have taught Creative Writing and Literature for the last nine years.

All of the work to which the portfolio refers concerns the teaching of writing (and especially Creative Writing) in English in the particular non-native East Asian

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3 To defend a necessary vagueness here, I would like to suggest that an objective study (i.e. an outsider’s examination) of the ‘tools’ and ‘resources’ and the nature of the ‘general proficiency’ posited in this work might yield some interesting and useful results. Difficulties in the descriptive task that this statement entails include accounting for role of the intuition in practices developed over long periods and through dialogic processes and the problem of establishing practical limits to the reflexive aspect of the work.
context of Macao/Hong Kong. The three genres of writing involved are the essay, story/fiction and poetry (including poetry translation and related activities).

The thesis commences with an overarching statement which explains the relationship between the particular papers included in the portfolio and a vast body of work published in various forms (on-line, in-print) as products of ‘The Poems and Stories of Macao Research Project’, of the non-profit community organisation ASM (Association of Stories in Macao) and of its web journals, Writing Macao and Poetry Macao.

The categories of related work (by the candidate) to which the overarching statement refers are as follows:
- Published pedagogic materials for use in the non-native context.
- The publication of edited versions of students’ original creative work in draft, prototype and formally published versions, including the preparation of these works into formats for use in the classroom (at primary, high school and university levels), with exercises and instructions for the local teacher.
- The publication of my original creative work engaging with the local context and as exemplary for student writers.
- The publication of collaborative works with student writers and colleagues.
- Published collaborative work with scholars around the world, e.g. on the ‘poetry of response’.
- Publication of scholarly theoretical works about the project, its background (in aesthetics and textual theory), its practice and pedagogy.

In selecting refereed journal papers for inclusion in the portfolio, the emphasis has been on theoretical works (those in the last category mentioned). The key disciplinary confluence is between literary/textual theory, the philosophy of education and the relation of these to the teaching of writing and especially Creative Writing, in the non-native language learning context.

The function of the overarching statement is to provide the examiner with a global picture of the publication activities related above, so that s/he can understand the dynamic whole of which these parts presented are suggestive. Due to the ‘process
orientation’ of the work, one notes the difficulty in describing activities, of their nature, ongoing. The objective of the portfolio *in toto* is then to show the current state of the work, but also to foreshadow future possibilities.

The parts of the portfolio are as follows:

- **Chapter 1. The Overarching Statement.**

- **published scholarly papers in refereed journals:**

- **project materials:**
  - Chapter 9. *the boy who went under the border* – volume of stories (co-authored and solo) published as a supplement to *Macao Closer*. (2007)
the overarching statement:
talking like a story – writing by the book

a personal note of introduction

It’s now more than ten years since I began the pedagogic adventure – ongoing – of which the present document provides an almost up-to-date snapshot. Where was I then, ten years back? Geographically, I was on five acres in the Myall Lakes district of NSW, near Bulahdelah (100 kilometres north of Newcastle). This is the place to which I plan to return after the current adventure. Back in ’98, I had just put my PhD thesis to bed and after five years solidly at that, felt it was time to do something practical with same – and to make some money. Being owner builders far from the city had left me and my wife penniless and ready for a new expatriate adventure. (We’d already spent three years together in Japan teaching English.) Just as importantly it was time to draw together what till then had been my disparate careers – as a teacher of English to non-natives of that language – and as a creative writer – up to that point mainly of poetry.

A problem at the centre of my thinking was and has continued to be – how to combine these two very worthwhile activities. The key difficulty in doing so was that EFL/Creative Writing was not much recognized as a possibility in the curriculum anywhere, and especially not in East Asia, which was where I was interested in being. Yet it seemed to me that, for intuitively obvious reasons, Creative Writing would be an excellent vehicle for improving the language proficiency of non-native students.

This idea is spelled out in various published papers and conference papers and, in the essay in the third chapter of this portfolio, ‘Creative Writing for Foreign Learners of English: some opening arguments’, in Text (Kelen, April 2002). The longest and most complete of these ‘defences’ (not included in the portfolio) is in the first issue of Writing Macao (Kelen, 2003). In a nutshell, the argument is that because English is the world language (and so those who can make their meaning in that language truly have the capacity to speak to the world and to represent themselves to the world), being able to tell one’s story is in these terms inherently motivating. Students can, through the
vehicle of story writing, easily be encouraged to express themselves and their ‘thematic universe’ imaginatively in what would for them be a new language.

Underpinning the valorisation of imaginative means and ends in education would, in the context described, follow a long lineage in educational philosophy and

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4 My theoretical/pedagogic debt here is principally to Paulo Freire, whose (1970) work, the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* argues for education as a ‘critical intervention in reality’, taking place in dialogic form, the starting point for which is the thematic universe of the student. (1972, passim):

Men emerge from their submersion and acquire the ability to intervene in reality as it is unveiled. Intervention in reality – historical awareness itself – thus presents a step forward from emergence, and results from the conscientization of the situation. Conscientization is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence. (p. 81)

For Freire what unites these processes is the genuine learner centering we have come to associate with the rhetoric of empowerment in the classroom:

The important thing from the point of view of liberation education, is for men to come to feel like masters of their own thinking, by discussing the thinking or views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades. Because this view of education starts with the conviction that it cannot present its own program but must search for this program dialogically with the people, it serves to introduce the pedagogy of the oppressed, in the development of which the oppressed must participate. (p. 81)

The notion of dialogue which Freire develops for his classroom has strong affinities with Bakhtin’s notion of ‘the word shaped in dialogic interaction’ (1994, p. 76) and with the dialogic imagination Mikhail Bakhtin proposes as characteristic of the heteroglot novel. In Bakhtin’s conception of ‘inner speech’: ‘A word in the mouth of a particular individual is a product of the living interaction of social forces’ (1994, p. 58).

What Freire advocates is a ‘problem posing method – dialogical par excellence... constituted and organised by the students' view of the world, where their own generative themes are found.’ The use of such methods ensures that ‘the content thus constantly expands and renews itself’. The teacher, whom Freire imagines in this dialogic method, is a member ‘of an interdisciplinary team’, ‘working on the thematic universe revealed by their investigation’. The task of such a ‘dialogical’ teacher is to ‘represent’ that universe to the people from whom he first received it - and “re-present” it not as a lecture but as a problem’ (1970, p. 91). These methods are, for Freire, to be contrasted with the ‘anti-dialogical and non-communicative “deposits”’ of the banking method of education’ (1970, p. 91). Inner speech and a dialogic method in composition may serve Freirean purposes in the case of the heuristic of the apprentice (and self-apprenticing) writer.
theory, and including A.S. Neill’s emphasis on the key importance of the student’s free creative volition, Vygotsky’s creative process in ‘inner speech’, Herbert Read’s idea of an education through art for peace, Piaget’s education as a means of making creators, and Simone Weill’s ideas of attention and grace.

Convincing an industry that sees itself as practically oriented towards language proficiency and so generally apprehensive of literature and creative content would be a little like justifying the ways of God to man. The critique of pedagogy (and of ideology more generally), the philosophic effort at self-consciousness necessary to a re-set in favour of a creative agenda, whether as means or end, could not be taken as read. Perhaps though I was well qualified to try for such a justification, having an M.A. in Applied Linguistics (of the Systemic Functional variety), from the halcyon days of M.A.K. Halliday’s stewardship of the University of Sydney’s Department of Linguistics. My linguistics background, slight as it was, was tuned unusually towards both meaning and a social orientation. Together with my long and varied ESL/EFL classroom

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It needs to be acknowledged that the provision of EFL education – whatever powers for democratic good and intercultural understanding go on under its aegis – constitutes a vast worldwide industry, centered in and around universities and public and private school systems, instrumentally serving the interests of global capital in the cause of globalization, and rarely raising awareness of or thematizing the issues or stakes raised in the world changes so entailed. Alex Kostogriz and Brenton Doecke write in their (2007) essay, ‘Encounters with “Strangers”: Towards Dialogical Ethics in English Language Education’:

English language education is still deeply embedded in old modernist projects – notably nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism. History shows that these projects were justified morally by a desire for order and progress reflected in a politics of difference and the civilising mission of education…it would have been impossible to justify these projects on moral grounds if the Other had not been constructed as an obstacle in establishing a universal democratic order that ensures social progress. (p. 2)

Kostogriz and Doecke go on to write of cultural essentialism’s role in the ‘normalising culture of modernity’. The point perhaps needing to be made now is that so much of this outdated ideology (of nation, of difference, of civilising mission) has gone unchallenged simply because ethical questions are not to the fore in the formulation of industry practices for ELT profession or its institutional settings. There’s no need to establish or defend ‘on moral grounds’ (any attempt along those lines may be dismissed as ‘politically correct’); the result is that old power relations and flawed assumptions are able to go unchallenged, but more importantly, unseen.
experience I felt that – as a poet – I was now peculiarly well positioned to develop a Creative Writing pedagogy for a non-native teaching context.

So, thesis was submitted and a posting was obtained. First stop was two years in the wilderness of a Hong Kong high school, where my two quite distinct tasks were, firstly to prepare fifth form students for the oral interview in the Certificate of Education external exam, secondly to prepare senior students for the A Level external written exams in English. The entire curriculum in both cases consisted of practising past papers or imitations of them, just the sort of thing you would expect a homework after-school centre (Japanese style juku) to offer. All in all, the experience was chastening; but through it I learned a lot about Chinese students and learning styles and I made it my business to find out as much as I could about Chinese culture and philosophy (and especially philosophy of education).

My paper, ‘Language and Learning Orthodoxy in the English Classroom in China’, in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, (third chapter of this portfolio), derives explicitly from this experience of what is popularly referred to as Confucian Heritage Context in education (as broadly applicable in East Asia.) Despite many misgivings, Confucian educational ideas retain several attractive aspects for this author: namely process orientation (staging of learning activities and outcomes), egalitarianism and the notion of education serving essentially social purposes. Specific affinities with the philosophy of John Dewey account for both his interest and popularity in China, since the twenties of the last century. Beyond this concession to longstanding orthodoxy, the radical challenges offered by Mohism, Daoist and (especially Chan = Zen) Buddhism are of greater interest. An interest in Chinese philosophy and its traditions (and especially their practical nature) helped to ground my understanding of my students and their ways of thinking, in a manner very helpful for the building of a dialogic pedagogy in Creative Writing. The de-mystifying work of Chad Hansen on early Chinese philosophy and particularly his (1992) *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought* has, along these lines, been particularly helpful.

It was working as a Native English Teacher in a Hong Kong School I developed the *panauricon* method for oral practice. This set of interactive classroom procedures – the ‘panauricon’ classroom method – is described in Chapter 6 of this portfolio, in the
paper, ‘Perpetual Motion: Keeping the Language Classroom Moving’, published in 2000 in *The Internet TESL Journal*. The method has since served me and many others well for a range of drill and discussion purposes. And it was in this moral-pedagogical wilderness that I hit upon the idea of an EdD; it appeared as a practical course of action. Perhaps, with just one more string to the professional bow all would be well.

Before my Hong Kong high school contract was up, (doctorate now long since conferred) I had found myself a post (ostensibly in English Literature and Comparative Studies) at the University of Macau, where I am now in my ninth year of teaching. It is with University of Macau students (undergraduate and postgraduate), alumni and colleagues, that I have carried out the practical work to which this portfolio refers.

The questions/problems/goals that I have consistently addressed throughout this period, and that I address in this document, include the following:

- How to harness the creative energy of the learner (non-natives in English) to aid in developing proficiency in that language. In particular, my aim has been to exploit (for the student’s benefit) the fact that the language of a story is typically much closer to the language of everyday life (compared with that of standard academic writing products, like the essay). This is a question I consider below in detailing what I describe as a multi-modal approach to Creative Writing in a non-native context.

- How to empower students through the exercise of their own imaginative capacities – how for instance, best to harness the motivation inherent in enabling people to tell their own stories. I theorise this below in relation to pedagogic ethics suggested and developed by Paulo Freire, by Bakhtin and Levinas and in Critical Pedagogy today.

- How to make the most of institutional frame factors (ways of meeting students) so as to develop an effective balance and staging of spoken and written work. How through such staging to bring students from the telling of a story idea in a workshop setting, through stages in editing to the completion of a publishable work of fiction. I deal with these issues below in the section on ‘Building an institutional and extra-institutional framework for Creative Writing in Macao’.
- How to harness various forms of publication (print, on-line, audio and video production), teaching those skills along the way (or having them taught), so as to best motivate students to write with enthusiasm for a real audience. That ‘real’ would be something that would have to be built, initially from in-class peer interest and through various means of expanding the circle (essentially through increasingly professional forms of publication). I discuss this below in detailed application in the section ‘Methods towards a curriculum for Creative Empowerment’.

To place my personal sense of these related problems within a broader theoretical framework, I will refer to the work of some key philosophers of education and some key contemporary writers in the areas of critical pedagogy and dialogic approaches to literacy. In his (2005) essay, ‘(Trans)cultural Spaces of Writing’, Alex Kostogriz writes in terms of a challenge faced ‘to inject a third dimension into teaching, making it responsive to students’ identities and their cultural and linguistic border-crossing in the construction of textual meanings.’ Favouring a dialogical (Bakhtinian) approach to the challenges of the ESL classroom, Kostogriz proposes a model of interaction that ‘acquires particular significance in multicultural conditions because it is imagines a thirdspace on the fault line between two cultures as simultaneous co-being of differences – the transcultural co-being in which asymmetries of power can be transcended through a critical reconstruction of self’ (p. 116). For Kostogriz, the writing pedagogy of the thirdspace ‘sees learning as a dialogical enquiry, occurring in an interaction of rival ideas and meanings and leading to the more open-minded, more self-critical production on new meanings’ (p. 17). In my (EFL context) case the thirdspace fault line has been between the (foreign) culture of the teacher and the more-or-less monoculture of the Chinese students in the classroom. The challenge there, as stated above, is to negotiate a space in which meaning can be made in the new language without compromising the cultural origins of a voice finding expression in a foreign idiom. In the most negative sense one may read the task as finding means for the subaltern to speak and without having the new idiom and rhetorical requirements of the target language appropriate the voice of the newly empowered subject. There are many senses in which my students are far from ‘subaltern’ or oppressed (in terms of culture or otherwise); however in relation to the world-dominant norms of the language in which they hope to succeed (and so gain various kinds of (especially cultural) capital, they are undoubtedly outsiders, whose proficiency (and so capacity to mean what they wish to
mean) falls far short of that of native-English speakers of comparable educational level. In and out of the classroom, a Freirean emphasis on the student’s world and experience as starting point has been the tool of choice for ensuring authenticity for the student’s voice.

Kostogriz believes that to realize a pedagogy in a space of socio-cultural pluralism ‘means moving from the domesticating representations of cultural knowledge and ways of reproducing this in written texts towards the intellectually empowering practices that would integrate multiple cultural resources, voices and “ways with words” ’ (p. 120). I believe that the multi-modal approach I describe below is a means to achieve just such a result.

Regardless of specific political realities as seen in terms of domination or marginalization or oppression, a key aim of mine has been to develop a creative writing pedagogy specifically for non-natives of the English language. This is, in my view, a hole in the current arrangements, which tend – especially in this part of the world – to favour ‘language sciences’ at the expense of ‘language arts’, and likewise to favour instrumental at the expense of critical functions both in terms of the language being learned and the means by which it is acquired. While ‘creativity’ is certainly a popular buzzword in this part of the world, institutions and academics in East Asia are reluctant to embrace the idea of teaching creative processes, except where these can be directly linked to specific technology applications, generally of a corporate nature (as in Communications courses). An excerpt from the University of Macau English Department’s ‘Academic Objectives’ suggests the more general corporate orientation towards pedagogic goals:

The English Department aims to prepare students for a globally oriented, internationally competitive, and culturally diverse society …Over the years many of our graduates have been successful in the local job market, securing prestigious positions in the government and leading commercial enterprises, and in overseas postgraduate studies, gaining admittance to leading regional, British and Australian universities.

(University of Macau, 2009)
A brief note on geographic context will be apposite here. Macao is an important and longstanding site of intercultural exchange and a place with impressively hybrid cultural credentials. From the late Ming through to the end of the first Opium War, Macao was the principal portal between China and the West. Despite the credentials making this dot on the map a place of particular interest for the student of East-West cultural exchange, despite active local cultural industries and impressive recent achievements, Macao remains in the shadow of Mainland and particularly Hong Kong culture. Macao is a place where local self-consciousness is overshadowed by regional and national senses of identity. Perhaps it is because of a general lack of self-confidence (as well as certain economies of scale) that a local literature in English is only just now beginning to emerge. Then again, it may be that such an expectation is unreasonable. Reverse roles and ask how much of a Chinese language literature does a much bigger city like Sydney have? Certainly, Macao’s English speaking population, though growing, remains small. Certainly, the city’s English proficiency is of vital importance to its prospects as a tourism (and particularly a gambling) hub. While all Macao High School students will have to study English to some degree, the lack of co-ordination of curricula and the lack of specific requirements by government (either for civil servants or in the education system) mean that English is taken far less seriously than in neighbouring Hong Kong (where English has official language status guaranteed for another forty years). Compared with the teaching of English on the Mainland, we can say that practices in Macao are much less uniform and therefore at the top end typically better than what is on offer across the border.

My personal goal in my present post has been, from the outset, to do all I could to establish Creative Writing as a viable discipline (or inter-discipline) for the benefit of both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Along the way, several things quickly became clear. Firstly, that there would be all kinds of institutional impediments. I should make clear here that when I began at the university, there was no Creative Writing curriculum among the English language and literature offerings; it was not the university’s intention to develop such curriculum and so I was not hired for such a purpose. Secondly, it became obvious to me that a curriculum mainly in poetry (my own specialty) would be restrictive and problematic. Restrictive because interest in poetry writing is limited, problematic because of the tendency of students (with the best intentions) to produce various kinds of unacceptable poetastings. I provide a more
complete account of this problem in my essay in *Jacket* in Chapter 8 of this portfolio, ‘Conversation with Tang Poets: Some Notes on the Practice’ (April 2007).

I was soon to discover through very simple innovations (e.g. ‘tell me a story’) that these same students were capable of producing very good fictional and autobiographical narratives. The sensible thing would therefore be to develop a more generalized Creative Writing curriculum, and in particular, a story-making/story-writing pedagogy, appropriate for this particular context of culture. The pedagogic volume, Chapter 7 of the portfolio, *The Story Circle Manual*6, included among the project materials of this portfolio, is the latest in a series of efforts to produce story writing manuals for use by non-native students of English in and out of the classroom. The latest parallel text (English/Chinese) version will hopefully be useful for spreading this particular gospel of story writing throughout the Chinese speaking world. At this point the reader may object to an apparent radical departure from the particular and indeterminate deictics which I claimed to begin. But I would defend the apparent proselytism in the following terms: the ‘gospel’ in this case is for those deictics in particular – that is to say the function of *The Story Circle Manual* is to help people find a thirddspace creative means of accounting for the here and now they share.

While developing story making curriculum and materials for my students, it became clear to me that one key thing missing for my students was a childhood in English. This lack hampers their development, not only in Creative Writing, but in Literature and Cultural Studies; more generally it retards their growth towards language proficiency. If the reader is alarmed at what is perceived as an ‘imperial tone’ here on my part, suggesting lack on the part of the non-native, then let me defend the approach in these terms: however we value the thirddspace between cultures, it nevertheless remains the goal of both institution and students to enter the target culture and to achieve the benefits that entails. However naive or poorly informed their view, institution, students, parents, society-at-large will all better value creativity and ‘spaces between’ if they can be convinced these will aid in achieving more narrowly conceived

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proficiency goals, these entailing conformance to hoped-for norms in the target language/culture. Promoting the idea of a creative space between cultures as an end in itself – however ethically compelling – would be a more arduous task. A childhood in the target language would have been useful, its lack is the *sine qua non* of non-nativeness; so it seems foolish not to address it as such. So many essential patterns of reference and so much of the rhythm and imagery of imaginative language comes from the canonic texts of childhood – nursery rhymes, Lewis Carroll, *The Wizard of Oz*. Being in the rhythm of a language in that sense I feel makes homely the otherwise dauntingly unfamiliar. Of course my students were well equipped both in terms of the child literature (and related folklore) of their own culture (this would be something they would of course bring to their own creative practice) – and with some secondhand Disney-fied versions of western children’s lit. Their own direct experience of texts for children in English was very limited. Because to begin with (and until the last few years) probably a majority of my undergraduate students were English-teachers-in-training and a majority of my Masters students were English teachers-in-service, Children’s Literature seemed particularly relevant. A curriculum that could dovetail Children’s Literature with Creative Writing might be helpful in such conditions.

Children’s Literature has (quite unexpectedly) become an important teaching area for me and in recent years has also become an important focus of my research work. Australian Children’s Literature has been of particular interest to me, reflecting as it does, both my own childhood reading and adult research interests in issues such as race and class and nation. Recent conference papers and publications in this area include the following. (References to Norman Lindsay’s (1917) novel *The Magic Pudding* and Ella McFadyen’s (1946) *Pegmen Tales*, may be obscure to non-Australianists.):

*Published papers/ book chapters:*

2006 ‘Dark Fantasies of Domination: The Fairytale World of Good and Evil Alive in the Twenty First Century’, *Journal of Children’s Literature (Biannual Publication of the Children’s Literature Association of India)*


**Conference Papers:**

2006 ‘The Mirror in the Magic Pudding - cannibal commodification among Australia’s fondest wishes’, Association for the Study of Australian Literature, University of Western Australia, Perth, W.A.


2008 ‘Class, race and national ethos in Ella McFadyen’s *Pegmen Tales*. Other Worlds in Children’s Literature: Fantasy, Reality and Imagination, Biennial Conference of the Australasian Children's Literature Association for Research Victoria University, Wellington, N.Z.

My key strategy in combining Children’s Literature with Creative Writing, has been to use the former as a model for the production of the latter; teaching teachers and potential teachers to write stories for and with their students and to teach their students to write stories. In this way it has been possible to set up an expanding circle of pedagogy and writing practice and to get this kind of curriculum into Macao schools.
What kind of a pedagogy have I been promoting through this ‘expanding circle’? I do not believe that my own (highly eclectic) methods fit closely with existing models of, for instance, process or genre writing, and I am loathe to position myself in relation to these. Thus the need to describe them in this document. I will say however that the methods I use in encounters with students are consciously open, dialogic, intuitive and evolving – they are grounded in wide reading and experience and are adventurously interdisciplinary; whether ultimately orthodox or heterodox it would not be my concern to judge. These methods are explained in more detail in Chapter 4 of this portfolio, in ‘The Story’s Vocation for Peace on Earth’. New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing (2006) and below in my section on methods.

**motivation and philosophy of education**

In terms of motives broadly conceived – I think we should teach creative writing because the processes of culture and of literature are alive. We can participate in them. We do not have to merely be spectators. Our students can read literature so that they can make literature, so that they can speak to the world for and about themselves and about whatever else they wish.

Clearly, the debt expressed to Freire (above) bears on this commitment to empowerment as a goal of education. A more detailed philosophic lineage would take us back to Socratic dialogue and would include the Kantian notion of an education aimed at the development of an autonomous subject, one capable of deciding moral action. Froebel and Robert Morant’s emphases on child (and so student) centering and on play are likewise important to this train of thought, as is Eugenio Hostos’ explicit critique of education as instrument of imperial domination.

In the context of an acknowledged Freirean lineage, the work described might be broadly considered today as within the framework of critical pedagogy. In his (1995) book *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture*, Peter McLaren defines critical
pedagogy as ‘a form of cultural politics aimed at enhancing and transforming the social imagination’ (p. 35). More generally, pedagogy refers, for McLaren, to ‘the process by which teachers and students negotiate and produce meaning’ and to the ways in which ‘we represent ourselves, others, and the communities in which we choose to live’ (p. 34). The teaching of Creative Writing in a non-native context gives emphasis to the idea of representation, because the language medium communicating here is not of-the-place. An ‘other’, in the sense of an interlocutor, is implied in acts of writing and of story telling in such a context. And in this case the teacher-interlocutor is already an other, not of the place.

McLaren writes that ‘rejecting the conservative claim that schooling is a politically opaque and value-neutral process, critical pedagogy has attempted to empower teachers and researchers with more critical means of understanding the school’s role within a race-, class- and gender-divided society’ (p. 32). There is a reflexive agenda here for understanding schooling as institution-in-process, and capable of re-negotiation. The foreign teacher with that kind of agenda in mind would need to re-negotiate on the basis of some understanding of what went without saying in the classroom in question. For this purpose I think that my wide reading in Chinese philosophy (and culture more generally) and my practical experience of the Japanese and Hong Kong classroom (and staffroom) stood me in good stead when I first landed in Macao. Having taught in a wide range of institutional contexts, and at various (age and proficiency) levels, gave me a good understanding of the Confucian Heritage Culture context in education, and of the well concealed assumptions with which its ‘good’ subjects operated without questioning.

Empowerment is naturally a goal of a curriculum for creative engagement with culture and I would like to claim a feminist agenda in the work presented here. The texts and textual/pedagogic practices presented here signal the creation of a new literature in English: namely stories written in English for and about Macao, by young women at the University of Macau and in the wider Macao community, mainly ethnic Chinese and native speakers of Cantonese, writing in English as a language foreign to them. The process of having their voices and their stories articulated and heard is, I would argue, an exemplary process of empowerment.
The ethic engaged for the purpose of the intercultural encounter entailed in the processes and practices of ‘writing Macao’ is that students can read literature in English so that they can make literature in English, so that they can speak to the world for and about themselves, their here-and-now, their who I am. Valorised here is the empowerment that comes of people and place writing of themselves for a world audience in the world language (i.e. English), in print and on the world wide web.

A brief note about the prospects for a critical pedagogy in Macao will be apposite here. In *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture*, McLaren writes:

The challenge of critical pedagogy is a daunting one at this time of historical amnesia, when our public mentors have been replaced by cultural snipers and urban poachers, when counter-hegemonic identities are exchanged for more domesticated aesthetic productions, when the vision of what education should be looks like a mixture of the ‘rah rah’ spirit of an Anglican boys’ school outdoor excursion, the learning opportunities of a boot camp for young criminals, and all the intellectual fodder that can be sifted from a jar full of fossilized brain matter. (1995, p. 25)

While it would be facile to observe that the historical amnesia to which McLaren refers has proceeded unabated (at least up until the Obama inauguration), I am pleased to say that there is no sign among my students of the boot camp for young criminals (or I’m unable to detect it), and there’s no more than the usual amount of fossilized brain matter. There is however in Macao today plenty of ‘rah rah’ spirit with which to contend; it falls into two categories – Mainland-ization and Vegas-ization. Essentially the inhabitants of Macao are paradoxically exhorted to national pride as Chinese and to a gladness that they are fortunate enough to benefit from the employment prospects and general prosperity wrought by the last decade’s onslaught of casino capitalism. One might say that in terms of Deng Xiao Ping’s injunction ‘to be rich is glorious’ that there is no contradiction here. Certainly it is not Marxist values which are being lauded by the powers-that-be in Macao. But the old rusty state apparatus of the Chinese Communist Party is reverently deployed for purposes of stability, and those of us with an interest in human rights may well be disturbed by their legislative and practical erosion. It’s with
deep cynicism about the ‘rah rah’ that Macao people today write as a way of reclaiming their place from these various forms of imperial culture.

In their essay, ‘Radical Pedagogy as Cultural Politics’, McLaren and Henri Giroux write to promote ‘linking the pedagogy of student voice to a project of possibility’ (1995, p. 40). In this case the possibility in question is that of creating a literature in a new language, precisely as a means of representing self and place to others. The pedagogic idea behind ‘writing Macao’ is simply that through presence to the task of self-recognition, through the genuine effort at dialogue between cultures (and between teacher and student), perhaps most of all through sheer hard work and persistent engagement with these tasks, people can learn – can teach themselves – to represent themselves in fiction (and indeed in any artform). What is a genuine effort at dialogue between cultures in this case? Simply it is based on the principle that questions are real if their answers are not already known. In contrast with the guess-what’s-in-the-teacher’s-head model of teacher-student interaction (a model generally never articulated as such by its practitioner), the teacher will be genuinely engaging with students if, through the process, s/he learns what s/he could not have found out without asking the question, could not have known without reference to the experience of the student/interlocutor; learns and in fact did wish to know (as opposed to pretended to want to know). If these three conditions are met – and the student is motivated by the format of talk – then the dialogue will be genuine. In the case in question the idea is simply that everyone has a story to tell and that it is therefore possible and worthwhile to create the conditions in which the story can be told and the story can be heard.

Pedagogic/ethical investments behind this commitment include adherence to Paulo Freire’s notion of the student’s thematic universe offering what I would describe

A proper account of the dialogic process and its role in education (in the western conception) would commence with Socrates and Plato (for instance the theme of recollection in the ‘slave boy’; sections of the *Meno*, and would certainly take in a long list of philosophers and philosophical ideas; these would include Fichte’s emphasis on intersubjectivity, Wittgenstein, Bakhtin, Buber, Jane Addams, ideas of reciprocity expressed by Merleau-Ponty and Benveniste, Nel Nodding’s reciprocity and ‘ethical caring’, Weil’s ‘unselﬁng’ (foreshadowing Lyotard’s ‘diﬀérend’ and Levinas’ notions of alterity), Henri Giroux’s ideas of radical pedagogy as cultural politics and the linking of voice and empowerment.
as a ‘reverse-content’ or anti-canonic curriculum, the necessity and im/possibility of community in the endless reversibility which Emile Benveniste implies in the relations which characterise ‘I’ and ‘you’ as partners in dialogue (1971, pp. 223-30), also of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s notion of wrong-sidedness in the work of literary/aesthetic production:

Like the weaver, the writer works on the wrong side of his material. He has to do only with language, and it is thus that he suddenly finds himself surrounded by meaning. (1964, pp. 44-5)

In the non-native teaching context, through these theoretical vehicles, it is hoped to assert that the student is not merely a sponge to soak up someone else’s classics, rather the student’s culture is a starting point in an exchange, the aim of which is to find understanding, along the lines expressed in Immanuel Levinas’ conception of ‘the word as a window – if it forms a screen it must be rejected’ (p. 205).

Perhaps it will be apt here to update these particular (one may now say ‘classic’) theoretical commitments – and to deal with some of the dangers they suggest – with reference to some recent writings. In Alex Kostogriz’ and Brenton Doecke’s (2007) essay, ‘Encounters with “Strangers”: Towards Dialogical Ethics in English Language Education’, the question of nativeness and non-nativeness is taken up through the vehicle of a ‘sociology of the stranger’ as means of renovating the ethics of language education. Their interest is to ‘re-engage with the binary logic of the native self and the alien Other, and reconsider how this binary continues to shape English language education’ (p. 2). The setting for their investigation is broadly as follows:

Globalisation has destabilised the normalising and ordering cultures of modernity by bringing the binaries between self and the Other, between natives and non-natives, into new kinds of spatial relations where the very idea of distance and separation has been replaced by the spatial ontology of proximity, movement and trans-border flows. (3)

Kostogriz and Doecke are concerned that the teaching of English on the world scale is ‘a political project inextricably bound up with privileging the native self as opposed to
the non-native Other’ (4). All this I agree with, and I would like to suggest that the pedagogy I have been evolving here in Macao should be exemplary as a specific indicated to deal with the problem of this unacknowledged ‘political project’. Using English to tell one’s story can counter the othering entailed in language’s normativity through the simple tactic of making that medium one’s own. ‘Foreign speech’ (speech in the language foreign to the speaker) has this affinity with the poetic: that it is a speech in which nothing can go without saying. The mistakenness of the foreigner where s/he gets beyond her/himself in words is demonstration of this. The foreigner only gradually becomes responsible for the words of the language s/he has borrowed. Poetry, too (paradoxically because of the degree of native skill expected of it), exercises a practice of becoming responsible for words, one in which, indeed, nothing must go without saying. One cannot say ‘regardless of their history’, and yet words become the property of those who use them. Literatures of the world’s Englishes – as developed over the last half century – make the point amply clear. Who can seriously claim today that the English language is less the property of Salman Rushdie than it is of, say, Peter Carey? If the subaltern loses that disability in the act of speaking – of representing itself – then this need not be read as bolstering a universalist agenda for othering and normalization. The world dominance of English is an acknowledged fact (and one under constant pressure, especially of the economic kind, for instance from another imperial idiom – Mandarin Chinese); one works with the fact if one wishes to include others in a conversation I would rather see as cosmopolitan (as many-voiced) than as global (normativising). Ask people to tell you their story and they may well (with or without intending) tell you Hollywood’s, Disney’s; this is a risk countered by maximizing reference to the hic et nunc and realia of lived experience of the personal and particular kind.

Kostogriz and Doecke remind us of Bakhtin’s insight that the other is the origin of our experience, that we enter a world already populated with the words of others (p. 13). The dialogue and the encounter with the other are, along these lines, means by which we become who we are. Bakhtin credits the novel, via Dostoyevsky, with rediscovering the polyphony which is the natural condition of human voices when they arrange themselves in conversation. For Bakhtin, in ‘Literature as Ideological Form’, metamorphosis is a literary theme which ‘serves as the basis for a method of portraying the whole of an individual’s life in its more important moments of crisis: for showing
how an individual becomes other than what he was’ (1994, p. 185). For Jean-Paul Sartre, it is in the nature of the horror which carries me towards the future that my consciousness of being my own future is anguish. That horror abolishes itself just as my decisive conduct is to emanate from a self which I am not yet. There remains anguish in the face of the past. Sartre represents this as the gambler’s resolution not to gamble being surpassed by his consciousness of it (1989, pp. 32-3). The circle of Sartrian bad faith is one in which I flee in order not to know, but I cannot avoid knowing that I am fleeing (1989, p. 43).

Sartre concludes his 1943 opus Being and Nothingness (1989, p 485) with the famous observation that we are ‘condemned to freedom’. ‘Bad faith’, another key theme of that work, is in evidence in so much of the faux-encounter promoted in higher education worldwide today. The re-making of the student as consumer (for instance through faculty-coercive ‘course evaluation’) is a form of student-teacher alienation deserving close scrutiny. Students, encouraged to ‘strongly agree’ or ‘disagree’ with rote opinions once a semester feel themselves through this vehicle exempted from the feedback loop for which the evaluation instrument serves as a kind of bureaucratic parody. In the Confucian Heritage Context of education this amounts to what I call a culture of ‘taught disrespect’; the function of which is diminish the chances of a genuine student/teacher conversation.

In my view, all of the circumstances of teaching demand dialogic encounter, the genuineness of which may be tested by means I have suggested above and below. It is through the polyphonic circumstances of learning that we become ourselves. Teaching in this sense entails an ethical necessity for a meeting of minds which must always exceed that of lecturing or of any kind of monologic delivery of ideas or of information. Following Levinas, Kostogriz and Doecke write that the ‘Other has a power to shape my consciousness of self and of world view’. And they remind us of Levinas’ dictum that saying is the undoing of the said (p. 15). A pedagogy aiming at the production of a new literature – a literature that entails a cultural crossing – must take these exhortations to heart in framing its reflexive ethics. If the other is the origin of my experience, shapes my consciousness of self and world, it’s important to note that a range of implications is suggested here for reading as well as writing. To enter a new culture is to engage with the generic models it provides, with its classics and with the cultural capital with which
canonized works are imbued. Likewise it is to learn the high and low and perhaps
middle-brow of the new culture, to understand what should be disdained, from which
points of view, and why. In Pierre Bourdieu’s sense, it is to learn about the field and to
adopt positions and dispositions from the available possibilities. One uses terms like
‘model’ and ‘classic’ and ‘canon’ mindful of their widespread abuse in uncritical
teaching by those who seek quick-fixes to impose on students. In Confucian Heritage
Culture territory, such reifications of culture as fixed and finished are easily accepted,
and difficult to displace with a more dynamic model of culture as the living creation of
flesh and blood humans. Yet providing those entering the culture of the English
language with a sense of the monuments constituting the canon (however much one
dislikes that metaphoric framework) remains an important responsibility. It is an
important duty because it allows the bearer of that kind of knowledge into those
conversations, participation in which will be essential for anyone hoping to alter
anything of the culture or to produce anything worthwhile or new in it.

The assumptions and intuitions with which the educated native of a culture
works to exercise this capital invested in the canon will naturally (or so it appears) have
a sophistication the non-native might labour a lifetime and fail to emulate. A Conrad or
a Nabokov provides a convenient exception to prove the rule. The other side of this coin
returns us to the ‘dishing up Hollywood, dishing up Disney’ aspersion cast a little
earlier. The point to be made is that, though hailed in the Althusserian manner by the
world’s great global purveyors of culture, in an important sense the non-native of that
culture (shall we say that culture’s non-metropolitan citizen) is incapable of telling
Disney’s or Hollywood’s story. That’s because her language – like every living idiom –
fashions its own narrative reality, entails its own discursive range of possibility (in
fiction as in fact), is perfectly adequate (if you will forgive the tautology) to the universe
of understanding it both constitutes and enables. These facts neither make it finite nor
impermeable, though clearly languages do vary greatly in terms of their capacity and
means of absorbing someone else’s story. The good news is that, however grimly
imperial world culture may seem, the encounter is never merely one-way; nor is the
process of appropriation. Natural language is of its nature, a kind of bricolage – we
make use of the available materials in order to make the sense that needs to be made.
The result is that there is a kind of automatic hybridity in operation when the non-native
reads the new culture. It may be that this hybridity will only come into view when the non-native takes the step from reading to writing in the new culture/language.

The object of a literature between cultures (for instance of the Chinese speaker’s story in English) should be respected as involving nothing less than the creation of a new world, a world that could not have existed before the dialogic encounter which made it possible. Where are the selves and the others in such a picture? The encounter works only when no party to the process is less essential than any other. The encounter works when what is offered from either side (from every vantage) is needful to the result. No pretending!

Kostogriz and Doecke write in favour of a ‘return to ethics’; this on the basis that ‘ethics is ontologically prior to any politics; it is central to the phenomenological encounter between self and Other’ (p. 11). Like references in the early 90’s to a return to democracy in Russia, one has to express a scepticism as to what precisely one might be returning to. (Kerensky’s feeble moment?) I worry that the idea of return might in this context be one more hypostasization against which those committed to the examined life would be well to guard. Perhaps a turn rather than a return is indicated? In any case, I think what’s important is that the ethics in question be of an open and dialogic nature; I will work through the rest of this statement to explore in the most practical terms how such an ethics-in-praxis might be achieved. Onward then to an ethics of the open encounter!

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At this point I should foreshadow here the style of the rest of this statement as shifting back and forth between fiction and a description of practice, hoping to build, not a straightforward, rather a discursive, argument, one which through this means shows theory into practice and which likewise shows practice given pause to reflect on theoretical underpinnings. My main focus will be on extracts from five book length works of fiction (each of a different genre) published in 2006 by the Association of Stories in Macao. These works are by former Masters students whose theses I supervised.
building an institutional and extra-institutional framework
for Creative Writing in Macao

Let me now first briefly describe some of the institutional and extra-institutional framework I have built in order to carry out the mission and abide by the philosophy, described in broad strokes above. Essential parts of the structure include:

Inside the University of Macau’s institutional setting:
- creation of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Courses in Creative Writing and Children’s Literature (and in a number of cases, specialized courses combining the two)
- development of literature courses with a Creative Writing component (e.g. Masters seminars on poetry and the novel, with a Creative Writing assessment component). These courses have provided a useful link between Literature and Creative Writing (and helped to promote the idea of Literature as a hands-on practical subject, and not merely a spectator sport).
- at MA thesis level, pioneering the Creative Portfolio thesis. The thesis is conceived as follows: in lieu of the ‘standard’ literature thesis (notionally an

8 sample course description:
Poetry Today

The course provides an account of the current state of the art of poetry around the world. Including the work of recent Nobel Laureates in literature and other well known living poets from around the world, this course presents a survey of poetic texts from many cultures, styles and genres. Assessment tasks will typically allow students a choice of focus from among the following options – criticism and theory, poetry translation, poetry writing, the teaching of poetry.

9 This conception is essential to the argument in the paper – ‘Creative Writing for Foreign Learners of English: some opening arguments’, in Text.

I think we should teach creative writing because the processes of culture and of literature are alive. We can participate in them. We don’t have to merely be spectators. Our students can read literature so that they can make literature, so that they can speak to the world for and about themselves, their here-and-now, their who I am. And about whatever else it is they wish. That’s the kind of intelligent conversation we should encourage them to join. (2003)
essay/dissertation of 20,000 words), the student produces a portfolio, consisting of a creative work (thus far fiction, poetry or some combination of the two) together with an accompanying dissertation of around 10,000 words). How are the two texts (the two parts of the portfolio) related? It will be best to give examples (as per notes); but the principle has been to avoid exegetic reflection on the student’s own work (except where necessary) in favour of appropriate literary study of relevant models: so the student wishing to write detective stories studies detective stories and writes a dissertation about the genre (studying particular representative texts of the genre), demonstrating – through the process – an understanding of the genre’s workings (in the various dimensions necessary to the creation of texts in that genre)\(^\text{10}\).

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\(^{10}\) Examples of some of the creative portfolio theses in question:

Jodie Leung – the Symbolisation of Macao Identity (including dissertation about Macao identity as expressed through banal circulating items [especially coins, banknotes and postage stamps], and a published collection of the student’s Macao stories, *Lotus I Love You*.)

Cassenna Chan – Critical and Creative Approaches to the Detective Genre in a South China Setting (including dissertation on the detective works of Nuri Vittachi and a published collection of the student’s own detective stories, *Cherry’s Diary*).

Elisa Lai – Literature and Creativity in Macao High Schools (including dissertation as per thesis title and a published novel for teenagers, *The Ice Cream Formula*).

Juliana Ho – Writing Pedagogy and Creative Practice: The Application of Howard Gardner’s MI Theory in the Macao High School Classroom (including dissertation as per thesis title and published book of stories (each corresponding to one of Gardner’s ‘intelligence types’), *Hidden Treasure*).

Lili Han – Fairytale across Cultures (including dissertation as per thesis title and published volume of bilingual [English-Chinese] fairytales, *Climbing a Tree for Fish*).


Petra Seak – modelled on Basho’s *Narrow Road to the Deep North*, this thesis in progress consists of a prose and poetry travelogue/tour of Macao temples.

I have supervised a number of students who have opted for a ‘straight lit thesis’ because they wanted to keep their creative writing apart from the institutional context. Hilda Tam and Amy Wong are examples (I supervised their literature theses – in one case on Angela Carter, in the other on ghost stories across cultures) and – independently and voluntarily (i.e. for no institutional credit) I edited their novels with them. These
Research Projects (tied to classroom and community outcomes)

- Poems and Stories of Macao Research Project – over a period of five years till 2006 (total funding around $600,000), this was the umbrella for English language Creative Writing related research at the university.

- Early Childhood Research Project\(^{11}\) – 2005–2007 (total funding around $250,000 – getting the story making process (in English) into schools at the lowest (most fundamental) level.

- CoW (Collaborative On-Line Writing) Research Project (two year project, currently at half-way point, total funding around $300,000) – co-ordinates a range of international collaborations (for instance in fiction and poetry translation), mainly at graduate level, through various on-line means (direct e-mail, e-mail groups, wikis); these experiments aimed at developing best practices for on-line collaboration\(^{12}\).

Processes took a number of years in each case. All of the novels and volumes of stories in question have been published by in Macao by ASM and are listed in the appendix to this statement.

\(^{11}\) – collaboration with the University of Macau’s Education Faculty – resulting in the publication of a set of six volumes of picture books – written in English and illustrated by Macao people for Macao children. These books were published in late 2008. A key aim of this two-year project had been to develop teaching materials and classroom methodology that would help to improve the (somewhat disadvantaged) position of Filipino children, in Macao pre-schools. The key strategy was privileging the use of language (a natural advantage the Filipino pupils had over their largely monolingual [Cantonese-speaking] classmates). Materials were developed in the classroom in negotiation with teachers and pupils. The activities towards the production of stories and artworks involved students of Children’s Literature/Creative Writing at the university in the making of stories (and accompanying pictures) specifically for this readership. So, for the purposes of this project, a direct link was made between Creative Writing classroom practice at the university and in Macao pre-schools. It is hoped that the publication of six volumes of this material will make the benefit of that experience available to the Macao pre- and primary schools more generally.

\(^{12}\) Although only half way through the project has already resulted in the publication of a volume of collaborative translations: *Pluck a Lotus for Pleasure: Women Poets of the Song Dynasty*. Chicago: VAC, 2008. This 300 pp volume is the result of an on-line collaborative translation project involving five participants (and many observers). Most of those who worked on this volume have formed an expanded group now working with the same technology on Women Poets of the Tang Dynasty. The new project is well underway.
In the broader community:

- **Writing Macao** – first published in 2002 – originally auspiced by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of the University of Macau, now ASM’s independent on-line annual journal of student writing and theory about Creative Writing pedagogy and related subjects in the non-native context.

- **Poetry Macao** – first published in 2007, 3rd issue currently under construction also auspiced by ASM, Macao’s only English language poetry journal, solely on-line up until this point

- **ASM (the Association of Stories in Macao)** – founded in 2005 – a non-profit organization whose aim is to encourage local production of literary work. ASM also provides a platform for writers inside and outside Macao to exchange ideas and to cooperate in creating stories and poems. ASM has so far published 25 novels and volumes of poetry (as at the end of 2008). The most important of these is the first English language anthology of Macao Poetry (containing more than one hundred poets writing from or about Macao and representing the work of seventeen translators).

- **1958 group** – a poetry workshop run off and on-line since 2005, jointly mentored by Christopher Kelen and Yao Jingming (Yao Feng), focused particularly on poetry translation and response.
At this point, it will be apt to bring some detail of methods (pedagogic and text-productive) into focus. My initial focus will be on fiction as process. The author of this chapter is the gweilo (the white ghost [Cantonese] = the foreigner) in the picture, teaching local students how to write stories (hopefully ones worth reading), and in English. Fully aware of the totalising and universalising risks entailed in this task, the brief I have set myself is to teach undergraduates and postgraduates to write stories about their place – about Macao – and about how it is changing and about who they are and who they could be. Here is how I do it. Through direct instruction and through example I show my students the basics of what will work in the way of an English language story\(^\text{13}\). This pedagogy is naturally burdened with assumptions to do with where I am from culturally and to do with the cultural capital of my tradition and its powers over and relevance to them as students of English and its cultures. These are all good things to discuss. Examining these assumptions, I hope – in Socratic fashion – to help make our lives more worthwhile for the living. This kind of reflection is helpful and has a place, but making stories about the place is even better. It is engagement with possibility – through the form of the story – that makes the meta-discourse (for instance this one) possible.

So students learn how to make a story and, once they have made them, their stories are tested through telling out loud – beginning to end – in a ‘story circle’\(^\text{14}\).

\(^{13}\) The *Story Circle Manual* is the latest incarnation in a series of teaching materials for this purpose. Earlier versions include the published in-house teaching manuals – *Making Fiction* (433pp, 2003), *How to Write a Story* (100 pp, 2004) and *Making the Magic Door in the Forest* (96 pp, 2004).

\(^{14}\) Defined in the manual that takes its name from this practice:

A story circle is a group of people who come together for the purpose of making stories, together and/or alone. A story circle is a kind of story writing support group. It’s a response to the fact that writing is mainly a solitary activity. The main function of the story circle is to encourage creative work through constructive suggestion and criticism. The story circle is most interesting and useful when it works across cultures and when talking across cultures it’s especially important to be sensitive to, attentive to and respectful of, difference. Story circles can function all over the world – in the flesh as well as virtually –
where peers and the teacher sit together around the table to listen to and comment on the story, to understand how it works or doesn’t, to collectively approve it, or send it back for amendment or throw it out.

Once the stories are well enough drafted, the teacher sits with students at the computer screen and in the not-quite-face-to-face we engage a dialogue with their work and its improvement as our object\textsuperscript{15}. The key principle behind this encounter, I would describe in the terms of Gilles Deleuze’s dictum:

We learn nothing from those who say: ‘Do as I do’.

Our only teachers are those who tell us to ‘do with me’, and are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce.

(1994, p. 23)

It’s in terms of this dictum, I have endeavoured to maintain my own production of exemplary creative texts while teaching Creative Writing. For the purposes of this portfolio, I have chosen to include one example of a published collection of mainly collaborative stories, as illustration of this practice. This is the (2007) collection, \textit{The boy who went under the border}. These eleven Macao stories for children and teenagers were written with thirteen collaborators, all of whom were students of mine at the University of Macau, at some stage over the last nine years. Two of the stories, ‘The Flying Fairy Casino’ and ‘The Boy Who Went under the Border’ are solo compositions. The book was published as a supplement to the local glossy culture monthly \textit{Macao Closer}, journal for which I am the poetry editor (and a regular contributor/editor of

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{15} This is perhaps the place to acknowledge the author’s commitment to ‘imperfectionism’ as essential to the process (and pedagogy) of literary creation, as for instance propounded by both Ruskin and Arnold (nothing truly noble which is not imperfect) and as suggested by Bloomean ‘misprision’ in \textit{The Anxiety of Influence} (1973, p. 19).
\end{flushright}
fiction). The thirteen stories cover a range of genres (three wishes, myth, parable, fairytale, ghost story, science fiction, comedy).

The most obvious of tasks at the screen is that of turning an un-grammatical melange of worked out plot and character ideas into prose that works. Ockham’s razor is the tool of choice and in these arduous processes the most common questions are these: What do you mean? What are you trying to say here? Why is this character doing/saying what she’s doing/saying? Do we already know about this? Where is this going? Making-grammatical may be the most obvious function of the encounter but plot and character are never out of contention, no matter how well thought through or drafted the story appears.

There is a perpetual lesson in culture the foreign teacher receives in the not-quite-face-to-face as described. Nor is it only cultural exchange that is taking place through this kind of meeting. The teacher is constantly learning new things about the grammar of English, things which could not be revealed except through the encounter between the native and the non-native of the language.

Beyond the persons of the interaction, specific impacts or effects have been envisaged and are over time observed. Locally, the hopeful result for this mainly oral culture is the counter-intuitive one that a culture of reading be initiated through the self-creation of a circle of writers. This process is happening through the publication of student work and through the fact that the student-writer in most cases becomes a high school teacher of English, one in search of local content for her classroom. Globally, the hope is that the practice of ‘writing Macao’ will be exemplary for a place-based aesthetic and accompanying pedagogy.

Before passing on to specific examples of the work produced, it will be appropriate to deal here in a little more detail with the classroom practices entailed (and perhaps to foreshadow a future article dealing with the evolution of these teaching and learning practices. That might be titled, ‘Creative Writing – a multi-modal approach for the EFL Classroom’. Essentially five modes of interaction have been involved in story-making process as I have evolved it at the University of Macau. These are:

- whole class (lecture and presentation)
- half class (story circle – telling of stories for approval around the circle)
- small group (editing together with faculty of group and individual stories in the not-quite-face-to-face)
- small group meetings without faculty
- on-line collaborative writing (interaction in and about student writing using e-mail and or wikis)

Let me briefly expand on what each mode entails and how these relate to each other, in the case of the teaching of a Fourth Year Undergraduate two-semester subject (ENGL 463: CREATIVE WRITING):

- whole class (lecture and presentation) – one weekly three hour session, involving a varied range of activities, oscillating between receptive and productive modes. On the receptive side activities such as reading of texts together, viewing of film texts, exegesis of these; on the productive side, activities such as group discussion, circulation of ideas on paper, telling of individual and group story or poem ideas (fragments or elements) to the class, presentations of stories or poems produced to the class. The three hour session can be broken so that half of the time is spent in story circle mode (i.e. with the class divided in half and meeting in two separate rooms).

- half class (story circle – telling of stories for approval around the circle) – all members of the circle listen to the story being told by the one member who holds the floor at the time; the story-teller can be interrupted/quizzed/challenged re any aspect of the story underway – its elements or detail. The objective of the time in the story circle is to get stories approved by the group (a process in which authority gradually devolves from the tutor to the group members in general).

- small group tutorial (editing together of group and individual stories in the not-quite-face-to-face) – usually takes place in the tutors’ offices but can take place in corners of the classroom if necessary. The objective of these (notionally) half hour appointments is to get students’ work edited, ready for publication in various forms (e.g. in print, on-line, ready for production or performance/reading out loud). In many cases the timetabled meeting serves as a beginning point for more prolonged meetings between the tutor and the group and/or its individual
members. A voluntary principle is typically practised, so that all group members need not attend every tutorial meeting; they are however encouraged to do so because witnessing the editing of other people’s work is exemplary in various ways and lends the observer an objectivity that may later be helpfully applied to his/her own work. Where there are sufficient teaching faculty available, a two-tiered approach can be instituted, with students meeting weekly with both teaching assistants and professors. In this case the work to be edited will typically flow through a junior to a senior editing meeting (in the current case this will often mean editing first with a non-native speaker, second with a native-speaker of English). Whatever the specifics of the set-up, the practical objective is make student work as publishable (and so as correct) as possible in the circumstances.

- **small group meetings without faculty** – in these students will create their own group stories and produce these in various ways for presentation/performance usually at the end of the semester. These groups typically coincide with the tutorial groups described immediately above (in other words the difference described here is between meeting with and without faculty members). Meetings with teachers will be scheduled on a purpose-built tutorial timetable (which may be added to ad-hoc); student-only meetings are to be worked out among the members of particular groups.

- **on-line collaborative writing (interaction in and about student writing using e-mail and or wikis)** – on-line collaborative writing extends class activities into the open-ended time of the student’s on-line life. Typically in the course of a semester groups will be shuffled in various ways, so as to prevent too much in the way of role complacency in particular groups. Collaborations between members of different classes will be helpful in keeping the interaction on-line (i.e. in discouraging face-to-face discussion of the work taking place on-line). International collaborations (and with speakers of different native languages) will be ideal. Various styles of exercise are tailored to the particular needs and capabilities of the class and its members. For instance, students may be asked to contribute one line or sentence or paragraph at a time to a story already begun for them; they may be asked to write in different voices in a dialogue; they may be asked to solve a particular problem a particular group member has in the composition of an individual story. Although on-line writing can contribute
towards the solution of problems or the creation of stories for groups or individuals, in a majority of cases it will not result in the creation of workable stories from beginning to end. In the process of writing there is usually a discrimination made between text produced for the story proper and text produced as chat or meta-discourse about the story (e.g. deciding what should or should not happen next). In the case of a wiki these would be represented as different threads in the discussion; in the case of an e-mail group (e.g. a yahoo group) they would be discriminated by different subject lines forming message threads). Levels of teacher intervention are generally kept low. So a major function of the on-line writing is to allow a perpetual vehicle for student-to-student inspiration. Expectations are kept low in terms of the likelihood of online interactions producing what will eventually be publishable stories.

It’s the multi-modal approach described above that I think keeps students engaged on creative tasks and – as importantly, in terms of both personal and institutional goals – living more of their lives in the English language.

A brief note on output here: more than eight years into series of related projects concerned, roughly three hundred stories have been edited to draft standard and published in twenty five or so paper covered ‘draft’ editions, averaging around 100pp each, and cumulatively representing a million words or more. Another half a dozen ‘prototype volumes’ have been prepared with selected and re-edited stories, three of these have been prepared as volumes with exercises in comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, etc. (and of course story writing) for use in Macao schools. A ten-volume series of stories for schools (kindergarten to university level) is presently nearing completion. The picture book volumes for pre-school and primary were published by the University of Macao in late 2008. More exciting, nine (mainly graduate) students, all women, have in recent years published their first solo volumes of fiction. It is with excerpts from these the rest of this statement will be concerned, thus allowing me to disappear – as the good teacher should – so allowing the students’ work to shine.
Hilda Tam’s historical novel *Ah Xun’s 5 Destinies*, set in the Macao of the 1950s, is the story of a young bus conductor whose greedy stepmother interferes with her love life. To write the novel, Tam has engaged with the circumstances of her grandparents’ generation, drawing our attention in the process to all manner of continuities and discontinuities between life as it was then and life as we live it today. This kind of fiction then presents the reader with a kind of ‘living history’, for the purposes of which oral history research is indicated.

In Tam’s novel, we see the status conferred by an automobile half a century ago, we note that buses were empty enough for conductors to sit at fixed desks and give change; that they had to *spruik* for customers at stops. We also see that the Macao of those times was a much poorer place, where unemployment and food shortages were widespread problems. Before television, there were night markets in Nam Van (perhaps near where the Hotel Lisboa is now), Chinese opera performances were popular (as they remain). As were the *daiyung* (*wantan*) dumplings, still popular today.

Though subtly (and not so subtly) changed, the roles of men and women, their relationships and conflicts, those of the rich and the poor, the greedy and the meek – these shape the daily fabric of society as much today as they did for Tam’s Ah Xun.

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from *Ah Xun’s 5 Destinies*

*a novel by Hilda Tam*

*Ah Xun was a young bus conductor. Her stepmother, Mrs Leong, was a fortune hunter and disapproved of Ah Xun’s romance with Tou, a poor bus driver. Tou often blamed himself for the way things were and he and Ah Xun quarrelled*

16 Each of the authors whose works of fiction are here cited was taught by me in postgraduate Creative Writing classes. I supervised each of their Masters theses and I edited the works of fiction in question with them, together, at the computer.
when he suggested going to Hong Kong alone to start a new career. A rainy day
and the cold war with Tou, left Ah Xun in no mood to work...

The rain had not abated. There were few passengers taking the bus. Ah Xun
yawned and stretched herself against the back of her seat. She found the time
going very slow. She wanted to go off duty as soon as possible so that she could
get to see Tou. Ah Xun played with the coins on her counter and arranged them
into Tou’s name. She sighed and felt idle.

The bus stopped and the squeaking of the door brought Ah Xun back to
earth. A soaking wet man got on. Chong was in gear and the bus lurched
forward again before the man got to Ah Xun for his ticket. The man tottered to
the counter and smiled. He was wearing a pair of gold framed glasses and the
lenses were misty because of the rain. His hair was clearly pomaded but it was
now dripping wet and the fringe was flat on his forehead. Ah Xun had not seen
this man before. Strange, he had no umbrella. Ah Xun took her eyes off him to
try to be polite. She said, ‘Ten cents, please.’

The man searched in his pocket and he took out a fifty dollar note. Ah
Xun held the note in her hands and she hesitated. ‘Sin saang, it’s a fifty dollar
note.’
The man shrugged and said, ‘Yes, I know.’

Ah Xun frowned, ‘I haven’t got enough for your change. Have you got
any coins? Say one dollar? Five dollar?’

The soaking man found this ridiculous and there was a grin at the corner
of his mouth. ‘I never bring coins.’

‘What an arrogant man!’ Ah Xun thought, but before she could insist, the
bus veered suddenly and came to a halt, and the proud man, obviously seldom
on a bus, having no handhold, was thrown forward.

The man swore. He should have been sprawled on the floor of the bus
but something had saved him. It was the girl who’d stopped him making an ass
of himself. She’d grasped his wrist. He’d caught a handrail with his other hand
and got his balance back. It was as if the two of them were in a freeze-frame.
They were looking into each other’s eyes. It was only when the bus moved on again the man noticed Ah Xun’s beauty. Her dark and liquid eyes, her raven ponytail. Lips like peaches. Those cheeks, a natural pink. He was stunned.

*This was how the wealthy Yiu Jo fell in love with Ah Xun. He decided he would have the girl by whatever means were necessary. His entry into the story brings hopes to Ah Xun’s stepmother and worsens Ah Xun’s relationship with Tou.*

Tam’s story demonstrates how research for creative writing and historical research dovetail beautifully to produce an inter-disciplinary environment – where history benefits the creative process and where creative expression brings history to life. We write from where and when we are – attempts at historical ‘accuracy’ are always limited by our capacity to imagine how the world was before we were around to do the imagining. The more we know about how we got here the more accurate and more convincing our imaginative efforts will be. It is that effort to imagine though which is vital to our capacity to know who we are and to choose who to be. In the case of Tam’s novel that imaginative effort is made interactive. This work of experimental fiction has five alternative endings from which the reader can choose, each matching a different genre with a different resolution and a subtly different conviction.

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For those unaware of the fact, it may be worth mentioning that Macao is – typical of the Chinese seaboard – a place become recently, suddenly wealthy, with all the attendant problems of pollution, overcrowding and increased corruption and criminal activity. In Macao’s case the wealth comes from gambling and related industries and is indicated by the fact that this city of around half a million inhabitants has recently outstripped Las Vegas as the world’s biggest gaming centre and now has the world’s fastest growing GDP. Truly a boom town, Macao now has resources never previously dreamt of, and so the time has come to encourage all its citizens to dream of what Macao’s future might be. The logical place to start is with children and with their education.
Elisa Lai’s *The Ice-Cream Formula* is a fantasy novel for young readers, set in Macao and magical realms adjacent. I think the book can introduce itself.

**from The Ice-Cream Formula**

a novel by Elisa Lai

‘*Foon Yeng! Huan Ying!* Welcome to the opening ceremony of Ice Cream Daddy’s tenth branch in Macao.’ Tim was calling excitedly to the crowd at the entrance of his new ice cream café. ‘We have a huge variety of ice cream for you. If you haven’t tasted ice cream from Ice Cream Daddy, you don’t know what ice cream is. Let me introduce the latest flavours of the season.’

Tim pushed open the café door and started conducting the guests from one fridge to the other. Each had its own sign: ‘Fruit’, ‘Vegetable’, ‘Soup’, ‘Wine’, ‘Chocolate’, ‘Nuts’. Each fridge contained its own variety. Now Tim was introducing the latest flavours – dried figs and pears with Bloody Mary, egg plant and tofu with pistachio nuts, mint chocolate cubes with Crazy Monkey.

‘Come and take a look at my new flavours.’ Tim was pointing at the fridge but looking at the crowd. The crowd’s blank stares persuaded him to look where he was pointing, which was when he saw that there was nothing there. The new Bloody Mary mix was gone and along with it all of the ice cream in the fridge. What was happening? Tim hurried to the other fridges. The ice cream there had also disappeared.

This was not the strangest thing though. Just as Tim was about to apologise to his customers for not having the ice cream ready, he blinked and saw that he didn’t have any. The customers had all gone. Standing in front of Tim were, instead, cones and cups of ice cream. They dressed like humans, they walked like humans, they moved and talked like humans too. Tim couldn’t believe his eyes. He took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes with his sleeves.

Before Tim could think what to do, the cone standing right before him, the Gentleman Ginger Rice ice cream cone, stepped forward and ordered, ‘Taste me!'
Come and have a bite here!’ The cone took off his hat and pointed at his own bald, icy head, showing Tim where exactly he should bite. It was against his better judgement, and Tim couldn’t really say why he did what he did, but he bit where Gentleman Ginger Rice had told him to bite. It wasn’t bad, but it could have been better. ‘It could have been better.’ That was what Tim was thinking when his thoughts were interrupted by a woman’s voice.

‘Taste me! Here!’ Lady Lemon soda took off her long glove as if she was expecting Tim to kiss her hand.

Tim dared not bite the hand of a lady and so he kissed it instead. Then he licked the ice cream on his lips. It was better than Ginger Rice but there was still something odd about it. Something seemed to be missing. But Tim couldn’t think what it was. Not enough milk? Should there be more sugar? Tim was so lost in these thoughts, he hadn’t noticed how close all the other ice cream cones had come.

Tim was completely surrounded. The ice creams were getting closer, closer. The cones were bumping into him. Tim wiped some unknown flavours off his brow. He didn’t even have time to taste any. Wasn’t Tim there to taste the ice cream? No, he was the maker! But now it was the ice cream that was after him.

‘You’re the one missing. We want you. Be with us.’

Oddly enough, the floor under Tim was softening. Everything had begun to melt. The ice creams, the crowd, were melting too. Everything in the café was twisting out of shape. Tim looked at his arms and legs and was relieved to see that at least he wasn’t melting. No, but when he looked up he saw that he was now in the middle of a vast glass ice cream cup. At first it seemed too thick to swim, but Tim knew if he didn’t he’d drown in the sticky mess. Tim tried to get hold of the huge silver spoon leaning in from the edge of the cup. He swam and he thrashed about in the mud in order to grab hold of the spoon. Tim was trying to pull himself up onto the spoon but the ice cream kept sucking and pulling him down towards the sweet centre below. The flavours were down there. To survive, Tim had to get away from them.

‘Let me go! Let me go!’ Tim shouted at the ice cream, at the bowl, as if they could hear him, as if they could understand. That was when the spoon handle
shouted back at Tim, ‘Let me go! Let me go!’ And the spoon handle showed its nasty teeth.

Tim couldn’t let go. Even though the spoon was snapping at him, it was his only hope. Then the spoon started to shiver. It danced like a ribbon, moving up and down, and in the next second it was swaying from one side to the other. The spoon kept shaking and wriggling and trying every way to throw Tim back into the sweet bath.

‘No!’ Tim woke with a loud shout. He found himself sitting at the cashier’s desk, pulling at a big piece of cardboard. At the other end of the cardboard was an old woman, breathless, holding on just as hard as Tim. When Tim let go of the cardboard the old woman fell on the floor.

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The story begins with a dream. Tim Vong, twenty-eight, is an ice cream man. His shop is located near the St. Augustine Church. He’s been trying hard to improve his ice cream and to invent new flavours, but his business is running down. He decides to go back to his old diaries, in which he has recorded old recipes, to hunt for inspiration.

Up in the attic, where his diaries are kept, Tim is surprised to find that one of his diaries is floating in the middle of the room. The pages recording his recipe for making his unique fairy floss ice-cream are blank. Tim is shocked when he finds that this attic has been turned into an ice cream café, one that is only big enough for elves. The elfish shopkeeper, Jeannie, offers to bring him to the boss to have everything explained.

To meet the boss, Tim has to be shrunk to elf-size and to effect this change Jeannie gives him a finger-sized ice cream. Tim recognises his own fairy floss ice cream straightaway and thinks that it must be the café owner who has stolen his ice cream formula. He decides that he has to get it back from the elf, but more
importantly, he also wants to find out what has been added to this elfish ice cream to make it so special.

The now miniature Tim is carried upside down by two elves, who fly over Macao towards the entrance to their world.

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It is only now, seeing Macao from the air for the first time, that Tim Vong realizes just how much his town has changed. He had been too focused on his work to see it before. The new Macao (like much of China) is a place in which old and new sometimes sit uneasily together. In the manner of the automatic and the everyday aspects of life, the long-accustomed often passes unnoticed. One of the writer’s jobs is to draw attention to what might otherwise go without saying. Sometimes in so doing, one reveals a character who insists on making a difference, who will not simply accept the hand fate has dealt her.

Cassenna Chan’s protagonist in her volume of stories Cherry’s Diary is such a character. A Judiciary Police officer (and so a Macao civil servant), Cherry Lam follows in the footsteps of famous legal investigators of Chinese literature (e.g. Judge Dee and Judge Bao), ever keen to have major crimes (murders and the like) to solve. In this last story in the book, ‘The Boyfriend’, Cherry ‘wakes up’ to find herself en route to Hell, facing Pun Kun, the Judge of Life and Death. She argues with the god to at least be allowed to find out how she died and who killed her. The deal she finally wins gives the detective twenty four hours to go back and investigate. The catch is she cannot work in human form and she won’t know what she will be (what form she will take) until she gets back to the crime scene.

from Cherry’s Diary

stories by Cassenna Chan

Alone in a room, everywhere colourless. The family members standing around the bed, some crying. Some look very worried. The girl on the bed is unconscious. But who is she? Cherry wants to come closer and see more clearly,
but she can’t. She looks at her legs and now she has no legs. Then she touches her jaw, now she has no jaw. ‘Ghost! Am I a ghost? … What’s going on?’ At this moment, Manuel walks in with a bunch of lilies, Cherry’s favourite flower. ‘How’s Cherry?’ Manuel asks Cherry’s parents.

That girl unconscious on the bed is Cherry, Cherry the ghost now sees. I’m the one with no feet. A deep breath. Can a ghost do that? It’s a dream, it’s a dream. Wake up, wake up! This murmuring won’t work.

‘No, it’s not a dream,’ a voice comes to Cherry. Cherry doesn’t dare to open her eyes, she keeps listening to the man’s voice. ‘In two minutes, you will die.’ Cherry opens her eyes, and she sees the man in front of her. He’s wearing strange clothes, something Ching Dynasty. His face is long like a horse’s face. He looks vague but Cherry can see that he tends a long moustache. He holds a white notebook in his hand. ‘Good morning,’ he said, ‘Ms Lam, I’m here to take you to Hell.’

‘Are you kidding? Who are you? What do you want?’ Cherry is scared. Why should a ghost be scared of a ghost?

‘Oh, I forgot to introduce myself. I’m Pun Gun. The judge of “Life and Death”. The Ngau Tau Ma Min – you know those two guards – are having annual leave, so I’m filling in. To collect dead spirits is really dull, you know.’

‘What are you talking about?’ Cherry can’t believe that that the cow head and horse face guards from TV really exist.

‘Well, according to the file I’ve just downloaded, it’s time to pick you up, I mean, take you downstairs.’

Cherry is frozen at hearing this.

Pun Gun’s left hand is pointing at the floor. ‘Down you go! Time for Hell!’

‘I’m not yet dead. I’m not!’

Pun Gun looks at his watch. He shakes it. He holds it up to his ear. He hates to admit making a mistake and for a moment – just a moment – his face actually disappears altogether. ‘All right. Two minutes. You will be dead in two minutes, my dear girl.’ The judge gives Cherry a big horsy smile. ‘It’s written here in my “Life and Death Record”’. 
‘But why? I won’t go with you unless you give me a good reason why should I die at this moment? I know it’s a dream. I know I can wake up. I just have to…’

‘The cause of death and the reason of your death are confidential according to the law of heaven, but you could re-appeal this case to the… let’s see – the Appeal Court of the um… let’s see… jurisdiction of Third Heaven, Fourth Level (clerk with the little goatee beard, from memory…) You have to send them a formal written letter. They will reply to your request in three working days. Heaven Standard Time of course.’

‘What? Three working days!? I can’t wait that long!’

They’re always so impatient, Pun Gun thinks. And she hasn’t even asked about Heaven-Earth time conversion yet. If she knew how long the appeal process took…

‘Any other options? Mr Pun Gun!’ Staring at the judge’s notebook, Cherry asks, ‘Can I send them an e-mail on your computer so that they can reply right now? SMS?’

She doesn’t know how lo-tech heaven is. She just has no idea.

Cherry is nodding her head eagerly.

Pun Gun is shaking his sadly.

So nice of the judge to lend her his computer and now here’s the reply back. Less than three seconds. Cherry reads out loud, ‘Now, your request has been approved by the “Life and Death Committee”’. Cherry’s very proud as he reads out the next part. ‘Because of your conspicuous valour in pursuing criminals on earth, and solving cases in strange and – ‘inappropriate’ has been crossed out and replaced with ‘creative’ – ways… you are given twenty-four hours to investigate who killed you. The conditions for this ‘extension of life’ certificate are as follows. First, you can go back in time, but only in another figure, hmm… for example in the shape of a randomly chosen animal; second, whatever the result of the case, whether you solve it or not, whether you bring the murderer to justice, and even if you work out a way of saving yourself, you cannot tell anyone after what has happened to you.’

Who would believe what an animal said, anyway? Cherry thinks out loud. Pun Gun is annoyed and goes on.
‘I don’t know. Don’t interrupt me, I haven’t finished…if you know who the murderer is, you will be able to wake up. That means, you are alive; otherwise, you will be certified dead. In that case I will come again to take you to Hell, only this time we’ll really go. Okay? See you.’ Then he disappeared.

‘Never see you…!’ but before Cherry finishes the sentence, the judge has disappeared.

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Is Cherry dreaming? Is this all real? The experienced reader knows not to take too seriously protestations that characters are awake. A story has much in common with a dream and the best stories stir us from our slumber – show us that we were dreaming before, that we previously had not the measure of our circumstances. Crossing between cultures is also something like the motion which takes us from the waking to the dreaming world, and vice versa. Part of the challenge of representing one’s culture to the world – for instance of representing traditions and their persistence in daily life – is that one may pander to a reader’s comfortable assumptions of how that culture ought to be. A clear danger here is orientalism – the production of ill-informed dreams of the other. When we write of ourselves and our own place in another language there is a danger of self-orientalism – of succumbing to the temptation to make oneself appear merely as exotic, as an object for someone else’s voyeuristic pleasure.

Dreams are a common framing device in stories everywhere. In Chinese detective fiction they are commonly associated with vital evidence in the form of clues not necessarily available to waking consciousness. Dreams – east and west – are traditionally seen as prophetic in the sense of foreshadowing real life events. Superstitions which are deemed unacceptable as basis for reasoned action in the real world may nevertheless serve as important operating principles in fiction.

Macao is widely regarded in China as a place where – despite rapid development – old ways and beliefs have persisted, continuities with tradition have been maintained. The old and the new meet in the conception of luck that drives the gaming industry and so provides the new found wealth of the place. Feng shui (Chinese geomancy) is an important tool in casino strategy (to lure and keep customers) and likewise gamblers
Elisa Lai’s Tim Vong – purveyor of ice cream – gets to see his town afresh thanks to an unexpected aerial view, Amy Wong’s sci-fi historical extravaganza *man, god, ghost* gives the reader a different kind of insight into Macao. It shows some of the modern marvels of the place from the point of view of a character we might otherwise think of as in the ancestor mould. Wong’s protagonist, Hua, has escaped from heaven, where he had a boring desk job but got mixed up in some activities which made his position a little tenuous. Hua got the job in heaven (where he was known only by a number) because of his bravery in life. A cripple, he had died defending a woman’s honour against the invader during the Patriotic War against the Japanese (generally known in the West as WWII). Now, back on earth he meets a mortal who bears an uncanny resemblance to the woman he had saved long ago. This romantic part of the story happens after Hua comes to Macao as a construction worker… or at least that is his cover.

*from man, god, ghost*

a novel by Amy Wong

In the following week, I went to the casino nearly every evening. Because I was always quiet, no one recognised I wasn’t in the workers’ dormitory. I met Lok again in the casino a week later. I told him I didn’t need a guide any more.

‘Well. Maybe you don’t and maybe you still do,’ he said. ‘Do you want to play in other casinos? Do you want to try some special food? I can be your tourist guide.’

It wasn’t a bad idea. I had been winning so much and it was time for me to enjoy. Lok brought me to different casinos every night after that, from the traditional establishments to the new Las Vegas style places. It was fun. The only problem was that I still had to go to work in the day because of the contract I’d come on. It wasn’t long before the foreman of my work team started noticing that I wasn’t good at bricklaying. He was even more suspicious after knowing I wasn’t in the house in the evenings. In order not to get in trouble I told him that I’d won a
jackpot. I gave him some money and asked him not to tell the others. I promised to give him more if he could arrange some holidays for me. After bargaining for a while, he agreed and gave me a two-week vacation. I left most of my things in the dormitory. Anyway the clothes I wore were old and dirty and not worth keeping anymore. The only valuable thing I had was the wooden box which contained the magical pill. In order not to let the others discover it, I brought a chain and put the pill in the little locket which hung from it.

Lok was a fantastic guide. He brought me to the scenic spots, to the best restaurants and took me to other kinds of entertainment. One night after watching the strip dance in a hotel, he suggested going to a night club. Maybe because of the alcohol or my curiosity, I accepted.

When we reached the night club, it was already quite crowded. I saw girls with heavy make-up walking around. They ogled at me, calling me ‘lo sai’, ‘boss’. Lok brought me into a dim lit room and a middle-aged woman with an eternal smile followed us in.

‘Lok, long time no see. Oh! Who’s this lo sai?’

Lok turned to me and said, ‘Mi Mi ma\(^{17}\), this is Mr. Leung. This is his first time to come to Aomen. So please bring the most beautiful girls to us, I don’t want any chu pa\(^{18}\).’

‘Don’t worry. All my girls are beautiful. Mr. Leung, what would you like to drink?’

‘A bottle of whiskey. Some nuts and fruits.’ Lok helped me to answer her.

‘Please wait a minute. I’ll call the girls to come in.’

The woman left the room. After a minute, the door opened again. It was the waiter, followed by two young girls in shining dresses.

\(^{17}\)ma: the short form for mamasan (madam in a brothel).

\(^{18}\)Chu pa: Cantonese – literally it means pork chop but is also used to describe fat or ugly girls.
‘Hello, my name is Bi Bi.’ The one with long straight hair spoke first.

‘I’m Fong Fong,’ The other said with a northern accent.

The room was dark so I couldn’t see their faces clearly. Lok beckoned the girls to sit down and Bi Bi immediately sat beside me. She held my arm and said in a sweet voice. ‘Lo sai, dim ching fu? How should I call you?’

‘Huh? Shen me?’

Realising that I was not able to understand her, the other girl soon sat on my other side.

‘Lao ban (boss), ni cong nar lai? Where you come from?’ Fong Fong asked with her standard Putonghua.

‘Nanjing...’ I turned to her and said, but the moment I saw her face, I was lost. I was in shock because the face I saw was that of Ying, my friend’s wife – the poor girl I failed to rescue back in the war, so long ago.

‘Ying?’ I murmured.

‘Lao ban, you’re so bad! How come you forgot my name so quickly? I’m Fong Fong, not Ying.’

Yes. She can’t be Ying. I tried to persuade myself that it was just a coincidence. But somehow could she still be Ying? Her reincarnation? That might be possible. The likeness was too exact.

‘Lao ban, lao ban.’

Maybe I was thinking too hard, I didn’t notice that Fong Fong was trying to get my attention.

‘Yes.’

‘Come on, have a drink first.’ She poured some whiskey into the glass.

‘Thank... thank you.’

Fong Fong chuckled. ‘Lao ban. You’re so shy.’

‘Haha... Liang lao ban is the first time to come here. Fong Fong, you should be tender to him.’ Lok teased me. He was hugging Bi Bi and started kissing her.
‘Don’t worry. I know what to do.’ Fong Fong sat closer to me, so close that I didn’t dare to move. The glass in her hand was now touching my lips and I was forced to drink the liquid.

Maybe because of the wine or maybe it was because I had never been so close to a girl. I felt hot and I didn’t know what to say. But now I could tell the difference between Ying and Fong Fong. Ying was timid and quiet but Fong Fong was passionate, a tigress. Or was it just because of her job? Whatever the reason, she was fascinating. I can’t remember clearly what happened in the next hour. We must have been playing some games. I must have kept on losing because I remember that my punishment was to drink. I had to drink quite a lot.

The next thing I can remember was Lok asking the girls to get changed to go out with us. I went to the washroom and splashed some water over my face. I must have been at least a little more sober by now because I have a clear memory of Lok pushing me and Fong Fong into a hotel room.

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The reason Hua has done so well on the gaming tables has to do with a magical skill he brought with him from heaven – he is able to see through things. This perspicacity is one which might be usefully modeled for the gambling fraternity more generally. Casino edifices are sprouting up everywhere one looks in Macao because of a very simple fact – generally the house wins and the gamblers do not. There is a strange kind of magic – of the kind Althusser called interpellation – a magic which prevents the losers-in-general from glimpsing their fate-in-common.

However cynically one tackles the phenomenon, there is doubtless something impressively magical about Macao’s gaming industry. (For instance it pays this author’s wages). The magic is worked on the citizens from an early age. Casino culture features again in the last excerpt we will be looking at, from Lili Han’s book of children’s stories (published as parallel text in Chinese and English), Climbing a Tree for Fish. Han’s ‘Carp Story’ is a high school boy’s magic casino adventure. The magic is thanks to the assistance of a carp. Ben, the protagonist, accidentally saves a fish in a casino. The fish
he saves happens to be the seventh son of the Dragon King and so has magic powers. He promises to grant Ben three wishes.

part of ‘The Carp Story’
from Lili Han’s collection of stories, Climbing a Tree for Fish

Ben ran to the water near the Kun Iam Statue in the NAPE area. He poured the seventh son of the Dragon King and all the rest of the carp in the plastic bag into the water. Some of the carp got back energy and swam away. Some looked as if they were already dead. The dragon disguised as a carp jumped happily and swam back to Ben, ‘Dear boy, thank you for your kindness. Now it’s time to grant you your wishes. What do you want for the first wish?’

Ben had trouble believing it was true but still he wanted to have his first wish. He thought of Braces and imagined a lucky life without any homework or exams. ‘I want to be a dealer in the casino,’ he blurted out.

‘Your wish is granted, dear boy. Now go back to the casino. When you want the second and third wishes, come here and call me. Good luck.’ With these words, the carp swam away.

Ben ran back to the casino. The guard did not show any sign of preventing Ben from entering the casino, instead, he saluted Ben, ‘Hi, you’re late today’. Ben was lingering around in the foyer when Braces ran up to him, ‘Finally you’ve come. Hurry up and put your uniform on. The supervisor’s angry again’. Until this moment Ben didn’t realize that he, like Braces, was now one of the dealers.

‘Why is the supervisor angry?’ Ben stepped into the rest room to change into the uniform.

‘You forget things so easily? Every time she is criticised by customers, by her superior or even she’s in one of her moods for no reason, she takes it out on us. I’m used to it.’ Braces shuddered and stared strangely at Ben. ‘And so are you. What’s wrong with you?’

The supervisor was a woman in her thirties or forties. One could hardly judge her true age because she wore so much make-up. Right now, she was
shouting at a group of dealers, ‘Haven’t I told you never to be late to the meeting? What are you thinking!? Don’t look around, Ben. I am talking to you…’ Ben felt he was hit over the head and could hardly hear anything.

After the meeting, Ben was assigned to a table. He was amazed to find that he could manage the chips of different values and distribute them to gamblers. He felt excited. It was so exhilarating to be a dealer. No homework and no exams. How about the supervisor’s shouting? Ben didn’t mind. Compared to teachers’ instructions, it was a piece of cake. The gamblers were generous! They gave tips. The tips were enough to play arcade games for a whole day! Ben couldn’t help grinning when thinking of his own entertainment.

‘Hey, hey, boy, what are you laughing at? Is it funny?’ A man who was losing money all the time cast a stern look at Ben. Ben knew enough to keep his eyes down and his mouth shut.

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To prove that he can make as much money as Braces, Ben asks the carp for his second wish – which is for magic that will change casino chips into money. The carp grants the wish and teaches Ben the magic for changing chips into cash, but he warns that the magic will not work if the element ‘earth’ appears. Ben succeeds on his first attempt at changing stolen chips into cash. The second time though, the magic fails because the element ‘earth’ makes an unexpected appearance. As a result Braces is arrested for stealing chips from the casino. Guilt makes Ben remorseful and, afraid that he too will be discovered, he runs to the carp to make his last wish, which is that his life would return to normal. Ben is transformed back into the middle school student he was at the beginning of the story, but he has learned from his adventure the dangers of foolish greed.
Should we think of luck as good or bad or as something we make ourselves? Or to put it another way – how much of life should be devoted to fatalistic (or determinist) thinking? This is a question equally interesting to those who consider trying their luck and to the writer of fiction. In both cases a Janus-faced orientation to tradition and the future is implied. This ambiguous orientation is embodied in the city-scape of present-day Macao – dominated as it is by feng shui ‘tricks’ – larger than life ‘cameras’ designed to capture the punter’s soul, huge knives intended to cut out the opposition. Macao thrives as a rapidly developing cosmopolitan city (or it did up until the present ‘financial tsunami’), but on the basis of ancient superstitions with regard to luck.

All of the texts dealt with in this statement concern place and reflect what I would call a place-based aesthetics/poetics; they are writing about the here-and-now of experience – through the available genres of fiction. That here-and-now is inevitably between cultures when the object in question is Chinese/cosmopolitan and the vehicle of delivery is English/the world language.

I hope that the stories above have given an accurate impression of the range of interests and the talent of the young Macao women producing the stories presented. A final note on empowerment – what better way to raise the self-esteem of authors than to dignify their work by publishing it in as many forms as possible? I hope through doing this to help to show that our learning and creative processes here and now can command attention and respect, to show that being with literature need not be about judgement or pretending to judge or about a fixed canon of what is already known to be worth reading. Time spent with literature can be about dialogue and creative engagement. Literature can offer this immediacy to its active participants, and creative engagement along these lines can provide a vital and motivating way into culture, on a footing which, if not quite equal with that of the native speaker, is at least tending in that direction.

A curriculum for language learning should be a curriculum for culture and innovation and democratic change. After the golden age, it will not be long until the bronze, and the iron follows often hard upon. The gloss will go and as things tarnish the need to make our own luck will become more and more apparent. Vital to that prospect is the understanding of one’s place and the ability to represent one’s place to and in the world. It is through the means of these kinds of imagining one makes one’s own. The
goal then of this example of culture as creativity should be to build a future wishfully
and make one’s own magic on the way.

ways forward from the present practice

To return briefly to concerns of the theoretical part of the portfolio and the place
of its parts in relation to the pedagogic practices and examples outlined above. One of
my important aims has been to understand the context in which I have been teaching
and learning and writing. To understand my place of practice has taken me on a journey
of engagement with Chinese culture – in my earliest years in China, with philosophy
and an understanding of the Chinese learner; more recently with contemporary and
ancient poetry and poetics. The early phase of this engagement is represented in my
paper, ‘Language and Learning Orthodoxy in the English Classroom in China’, in
*Educational Philosophy and Theory* (2002); the latter in the books of poetry translation
and response I have published:

   Meng Jiao – *Bird in an Empty City* (with Amy Wong and Hilda Tam)
   After Meng Jiao – *Responses to the Tang Dynasty Poet*
   Xin Qiji – *Clear Echo in the Valley's Depths* (with Agnes Vong)
   *Spring Wind Brings the Fireworks – translations variations and responses to the
   poetry of Xin Qiji*
   Li Yu – *song of the water clock at night* (with Petra Seak)
   Nalan Xingde – *tryst* (with Lili Han)
   Yao Feng (Yao Jijingming) – *when the fish close their eyes* (with various
   collaborators)
   *Pluck a Lotus for Pleasure – Women Poets of the Song Dynasty* (with Hilda Tam,
   Amy Wong, Lili Han and Song Zijiang)
   *I Roll the Dice – contemporary Macao poetry* (edited with Agnes Vong)

My proselytic efforts on behalf of a Creative Writing pedagogy have been published in
various venues and been offered a soapbox at conferences and in guest lectures at
universities and elsewhere. The arguments are offered in summary form in ‘Creative

Where to from here?

Creative Writing Pedagogy will remain my key teaching practice for the foreseeable future; it also remains one of my key research interests. The other research interests include literary/cultural studies (and especially of late, Children’s Literature), aesthetics, philosophy of education, and various intersections of these. My longstanding work on national songs has recently been revitalized through collaboration with a sometime colleague, Macquarie University’s Prof. Sasha Pavkovic, with whom I am working on the anthems of the new Balkan states. My own creative practice, as a poet and writer of fiction, and more recently as a visual artist, likewise impacts both on my teaching practice and my more scholarly research interests. Exploring the territory/blurring the line between conventionally academic and creative endeavours has been an important part of my record of innovation in teaching and research. Major pre-occupations of late have been with poetry and consciousness, with poetry and place (especially in the local sense) and with collaborative poetics and the poetry of response. I currently have a monograph (of about 60,000 words) in press in the first of these areas: Poetry, Community, Consciousness – in Rodopi’s Consciousness, Literature and the Arts series. I have recently co-edited a volume of Macao poetry (more than one hundred poets, seventeen translators): I Roll the Dice (ASM 2009); and I am presently well advanced on the work of producing a book about contemporary Macao poetry, to be titled City of Poets. Chapters from this work have already been accepted for conference presentation and for publication in refereed journals. Publication of work in
the area of collaborative poets is ongoing; and a book-length theoretical work is envisaged in the not-too-distant future.

It would be true to say that poetry and poetics are emerging as the centre of my ongoing efforts in various disciplines, and this marks a return to both the focus of my PhD thesis (which was in this area) and of my lifelong commitments as a poet. While story writing remains essential to my Creative Writing pedagogy (as a kind of ‘bottom line’ practice, the shift to mentoring (especially graduate students and writers-in-the-community) in the area of poetry, has been personally pleasing. Working through the translation/response continuum (as documented in my articles in Jacket [April 2007], Segue [Fall, 2006] and Cipher Journal [2006]), I have been able, over time, to achieve important results with individual poets-in-the-making; likewise to facilitate the building of a community of English (and other) language poets in Macao. My emphasis on story writing had begun in part because I had felt it was difficult to achieve results in poetry. Over time, and with the proper attention to innovation, I am happy to have turned this around. Currently five chapbooks and two full-length first volumes of poetry are in preparation for publication this year. One full-length first volume of poetry (Agnes Vong’s glitter on the sketch) was published in 2008 (associated with Vong’s MA thesis under my supervision). Probably the most exciting of the individual poetry projects currently under my supervision, is that of Iris Fan, (a Mainland student in Macao), who is essentially writing a bilingual parallel text volume as a conversation in poetry across languages (rather than as a translation). The work is in part stimulated by a parallel two-way translation project (translating Australian Aboriginal women poets into Chinese, translating Chinese ethnic minority women poets into English). An explanatory essay about poetry and identity will accompany these in the thesis currently in progress. In my view this is groundbreaking experimental work and will provide helpful models for Creative Writing practice, both in Macao and abroad.

Because all of my research interests are interdisciplinary, and because this fact is reflected in my teaching (and especially thesis supervision), I am having to fight constant battles with an institution and with colleagues who find it more convenient to see students, teaching and research fit into pre-packaged slots, who are disturbed both by the challenges routinely concomitant with creative practice and by the fluidity of interdisciplinary enterprises with which they have come to associate me (and my
students). Throughout I am sustained by a commitment to the delicate and dangerous necessity of nurturing the creative spark and of protecting it from various (especially bureaucratic) blocks, from preciousness and from perfectionism.

How to do the nurturing? I would like to suggest that this is achieved through a combination of exemplary practice and openness, of receptivity – to the other as interlocutor in creative practice and to the unknown of the practice itself. In terms of exemplary practice I should like to point out that a major motive behind my taking up visual arts practices (especially drawing and painting) in recent years has been to provide students with a model of a teacher doing what he did not know how to do (thus matching my conventional expectation of them as creative writers and demonstrating that I myself was prepared to take on such a challenge).

I would like to conclude this present stock-take by assessing where my ongoing and sustaining commitments lie and by presenting something in the way of a manifesto for future practice.

Intersection, between-ness (between the persons of the dialogue, between cultures, disciplines), the work in progress, the object of art on the way – these have and continue to be leitmotivs of my work. All I achieve comes from a joy in such motions, from an enthusiasm – I call it passion, I call it vocation. The I Ching tells us that the foolish student seeks the teacher; that it must not be the other way around (Wilhelm, 1984, p. 8). This dictum circumscribes a power relation I believe to be essential in my present context of culture. It suggests a comfortable position for the teacher who is confident in his/her knowledge, confident that s/he has the right stuff. It is a hard-and-fast line reinforced with every use of the address ‘doctor’ or ‘professor’. So this describes part of the global framing of the encounter I have been describing as my pedagogy. This is structure with which to work. But, for learning to take place, there is always an urgent necessity minds meet. Dialogue is indicated and dialogue suggests a fundamental equality of minds; a mutuality in the encounter with the other.

There is a productive imaginative spontaneity that arises for the teacher who engages with students – in the Freirean manner – on the basis of an openness entailing the responsibility to learn from the student; to learn what s/he does not already know,
could not have already known. And so true (not pretended) openness to the other – in
dialogue and in experience – becomes the basis of a pedagogy, which is not some fixed
formula or a description of a goal achieved; rather a passionate commitment – a
commitment to a life’s work, always on the way.

I closed my Ph.D. thesis – more than ten years ago – with the line, ‘I don’t finish;
I walk off the job.’ I feel that I have been true to that conception of the work; and as a
way of progressing from there I would like to conclude with a recently published:

**manifesto for imperfectionism**

We live in a world where culture comes served on a plate – the high stuff is like
haute cuisine, the low like what you get in Macdonalds... either way, *pronto a
vestir*. And it all seems so perfectly what it is. The point is that culture in this
form requires very little effort. Hollywood and Disneyland provide us with a
pre-digested product; all we need do as consumers is swallow. Newspapers are
more or less like this too. In each case the world represented appears to be the
way it has to be. Perhaps not perfect but represented perfectly. But not
represented by us. Just *for us*. And we get used to this. Oh, we still tell stories
and pull faces but we don’t think of ourselves as making culture. Culture’s too
perfect for anyone to really make. When we meet someone who claims to make
culture – well, that’s a bit of an embarrassment. Who does he/she think s/he is?

But how did things get to be so tragic? Think about it – culture is the common
heritage of humanity. It’s something everyone should make, something everyone
should participate in. The irony of present-day alienation from cultural
production is that the technology for making the stuff is now more openly
available than ever before. Especially through computers. It’s easier to
participate than ever before but it’s harder to work up the courage. The problem
is perfectionism. We can’t just have a singalong; we have to do karaoke – and
when we measure ourselves against the stars, we’ll always be found lacking.
Self-consciousness sets in and then we don’t want to be on the stage at all.

The answer is imperfectionism. Being yourself. Doing what you can. Playing for
the sake of play.

Art arises from a process and in this sense we can say that art is a process of free expression. The enemy of art is preciousness. Perhaps the most extreme example of preciousness as a disability is the feeling that one cannot begin. The blank page is perfect – if I write on it it will no longer be so.

But this is all illusion – the preciousness and also the feeling that there’s nothing there, or that you begin from nothing. We think and we see and we act with words and images we have already. The trick is to do something new with these. But we never begin with nothing. What you write, paint, draw, make – is always something next – there was always something before.

So – stare out that blank page, blank canvas! See what’s there! See your own reflection! What you make is who you are! Be brave! Be free! Don’t worry about beginning. You’ve always already begun!

對非完美主義的迷你宣言

客遠文

世界猶如各式菜餚，當中可見不同的地方文化－有名貴的傳統法國菜，或者大眾化的麥當勞快餐，豐儉由人，而一切都似乎很完美。形成這種文化現象並不需要太費勁，荷里活和迪士尼都為我們提供了極易消化的商品，作為顧客的我們只需要囫圇吞棗。報章也莫過如此，世界的形象被人類一廂情願、理所當然地塑造。世界或許並不完美，只是被完美的呈現。可是世界並不是由我們來展示，而是為我們呈現。而我們亦早已習慣。噢！我們還會說故事、做鬼臉，但不把自己當成文化的創作人。文化完美得沒有入認為有能力去創造。若果有人宣稱能夠創造文化，其他人或許會覺他/她不自量力。他/她以為自己是誰？

但事情是如何變得這麼悲哀的呢？試想想，文化是人類的遺產，是每個人都應該創造和參與的事物。諷刺的是，現今發達的科技就是使我們疏遠文化創作的原因。尤其是電腦。雖然它能讓用家更容易去參與創作，可是就
無法讓他們建立自信。問題就在於完美主義。我們不可以經常像歌詠團般放聲高唱，我們也需要卡拉 OK 的協助。跟天上的星星比較，我們永遠都會找到自己不足的地方。一旦我們有了自覺意識，便不會想要走到表演台上去。

解決的方法就是非完美主義。做自己，做自己能做的事。盡情投入，為玩樂而玩樂。

藝術在創作過程中誕生，換言之，藝術可以說是自由表達的一種過程。藝術的敵人是過份講究。吹毛求疵最極端的例子，就是認爲自己沒有創建的能力。這樣的人會認爲空白的紙張是完美的，如果被寫上，便不再完美。

以爲無前車可鑑或認爲一切都得從頭開始均是錯誤的觀念。我們依從已有的文字和形象去思考、觀察和行動。關鍵就在於我們要利用已有的去創新。我們不需要由零開始。你寫的、油的、畫的、做的東西，永遠是後波，不會是前浪。

因此，別再死盯著空白的紙張跟畫布了！看看那裡有什麼東西吧！看看你自己的倒影！你創造什麼，你就是什麼！勇敢前進！自由發揮！別擔心去踏出第一步，因爲你已經準備就緒！

(Macao Closer, December 2008, p. 92)
Part One

Published Scholarly Papers in Refereed Journals
Chapter Two


Introduction:

Based on reading that took place during my time as a high school teacher of English in Hong Kong (a ‘NET’ or ‘Native English Teacher’), my paper, ‘Language and Learning Orthodoxy in the English Classroom in China’, in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, derives explicitly from experience of what is popularly referred to as Confucian Heritage Context in education (as broadly applicable in East Asia.) Despite many misgivings, Confucian educational ideas retain several attractive aspects for this author: namely process orientation (staging of learning activities and outcomes), egalitarianism and the notion of education serving essentially social purposes. Specific affinities with the philosophy of John Dewey account for both his interest and popularity in China, since the twenties of the last century. Beyond this concession to longstanding orthodoxy, the radical challenges offered by Mohism, Daoist and (especially Chan = Zen) Buddhism are of greater interest. An interest in Chinese philosophy and its traditions (and especially their practical nature) helped to ground my understanding of my students and their ways of thinking, in a manner very helpful for the building of a dialogic pedagogy in Creative Writing. The de-mystifying work of Chad Hansen on early Chinese philosophy and particularly his (1992) *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought* has, along these lines, been particularly helpful. While my thinking has moved on somewhat since the time of writing, this paper provides a broad philosophic setting for the thinking and practices described in later parts of the portfolio.
Language and Learning Orthodoxy in the English Classroom in China

CHRISTOPHER KELEN
Department of English, University of Macau, Taipa, Macau SAR, China

Introduction
This paper examines philosophical frame factors for English Language Teaching in the Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) classroom. Drawing on the experience of a Native English Teacher in a government-aided Hong Kong High School it pays attention to two related difficulties: the 'reality' of English in the classroom and the perceived passivity of students. An 'archaeological' approach is adopted to explore the background assumptions and investments of teachers and of the orthodoxies to which they adhere.

A Note on Method
Traditional Chinese philosophy—Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist—has never ceased to exhort teachers and learners towards particular pedagogic and heuristic orientations. In fact from a Western point of view, an insistence, especially through Confucian and neo-Confucian literature, on the correct roles and responsibilities of sages and students, can often feel like nagging: just the sort of nagging one often associates with schoolteachers. The value of learning, the necessity of the rectification of names, the emphasis on sincerity: seem to have been relentlessly instilled with only subtle inflections over millennia. And this kind of repetition of overarching truths sits strangely for the Western reader in a tradition which, like the Socratic, does emphasise a reflexive process of enquiry on the sage's part; as evidenced in Confucius' five steps in The Doctrine of the Mean (study, inquiry, thinking, sifting and practice); as evidenced in Mencius' declaration:

To act without understanding and to do so habitually without examination, following certain courses all their lives without knowing the principles behind them—this is the way of the multitude. (in Wing-Tsit Chan, 1963, p. 79)

In this paper I am interested in exploring what force traditional exhortations may have in language teaching today.

Now in terms of research methods there is no point in asking teachers how they have been influenced by Confucian or for instance Platonic thought when they have perhaps neither read nor had the opportunity to reflect on texts by or about Confucius or Plato. This makes the question however no less relevant to the work
of understanding how and why things happen in their classrooms. Orthodoxy is there in appeals to common sense, in what is taken for granted, in what cannot be easily explained (apparently arbitrary aspects of curriculum, school organisation). To the extent that these are the same as or different from practices ‘in the West’ (to the extent that these can be generalised about), there should be a means of accounting for (at least some of) them. The reflexive work of philosophy is indeed understanding how we are formed (socially, culturally, etc.), why and what it is we are doing, how and why we could change, what it would mean to do so or not to do so.

It may appear relatively easy to notice what seems to be fixed in another culture when it appears to be open in our own. We tend not to notice those options which are habitually closed to us: the arbitrary (from the outside) of the way things are with us. In the Tao Te Ching:

To understand others is to have knowledge;
To understand oneself is to be illumined. (1997, pp. 68–69)

Language learning, language teaching and processes of reflection on these, each engage, perhaps at different levels of abstraction, the kinds of understanding envisaged in the Tao Te Ching. From the point of view of thinking herein lies the value of the intercultural process: despite all the tail-chasing we do learn about ourselves from the genuine effort at dialogue with others. It is likewise part of the philosophic project broadly conceived, a duty to the honour of thought, to interrogate what appear to be discoveries along these reflexive lines: to teach ourselves and others to ask the right questions.

Cultural/Linguistic Assumptions

In the case of the Chinese learner and teacher there are strong reasons for suspecting that assumptions about language and assumptions about the nature of the learning process are closely related and constrain each other in ways which might seem unusual from a Western (whether traditional or progressive) perspective.

In his essay ‘Language in the heart-mind’ (in Allinson, 1991, pp. 75–123 passim), Chad Hansen claims that the Chinese conception of language is prescriptive and pragmatic. The Western model (or folk conception) he claims is, by contrast, descriptive and semantically motivated. Noting in Whorfian terms the inability of Western philosophers to come to terms with essential cross-cultural differences in the conception of language, Hansen claims that shi-fei (right/wrong) evaluations made by the xin (glossed as heart-mind) constitute the ‘core linguistic behaviour’, bian: ‘the key to being able to use names (ming) in guidance’ (ibid., p. 101). Bian is the heart-mind’s active capacity to make a right distinction, to use the right word.

‘Chinese philosophy of language’ claims Hansen, ‘concentrates on the different ways language may handle classification … Chinese theories of language concentrate on permissibility rather than “truth”’ (ibid., p. 106). Contrasting Moist and Confucian patterns of ‘behaviour guidance’, Hansen acknowledges that they have this in common: ‘Both are learned patterns characterised by differences in language—
specifically stressing different terms and making different distinctions’ (ibid., p. 88). Language, in Chinese culture since at least Confucius, is conceived of as being the means by which right action is achieved. Hence Confucius’ doctrine of the rectification of names (cheng-ming) throughout The Analects (1996b, passim).

The emphasis in both the Confucian and the Moist practice is on knowing or finding the correct words for a particular situation, in order that the correct outcome be arrived at. A problem in all of this is the potential relativity and mutability of ming and dao. Both Confucius and Mo Tzu claim that language is conventional (cf. the Platonic dialogue Cratylus; Plato, 1952); according to Hansen the difference between them is that Mo Tzu ‘proposes an ideally constant language as the constant dao’ (in Allinson, 1991, p. 109). A ‘natural’ dao claims Hansen is for orthodox Confucians ‘an absolute prescriptive’ (ibid., p. 107).

We can say that the idea of a range of freely made or even heavily constrained choices is alien to this conception of language. (One might add that according to Hansen the idea of conception, indeed the concept ‘idea’ if we may chase the tail a little here, are likewise alien to the classical Chinese conception of language [ibid., pp. 75–125 passim]. To these assertions one can only reply that we do not succeed in not discussing in English as ‘ideas’, as ‘assumptions’ the constructs of those who perhaps never regarded them as such. Translation, across time and across cultures, is the business of minimising and not eliminating misrepresentation.) The purpose of language for Hansen, in its traditional Chinese conception, its ethical raison d’être, is getting the right things done. In terms of language there is always a right word for a particular place or moment. Getting the right things done is a naturally social rather than individual activity. The theory, for want of a better word, of language as such a system of distinctions (between right and wrong, shi/fei) is one Hansen traces to Lao Tzu, for whom he claims ‘knowing a word was analogous to mastering a skill’ (ibid., p. 80). In Chapter 23 of the Tao Te Ching ‘if one uses the Way as one’s instrument, the result’s will be like the Way’ (1997, p. 489). In fact, for Hansen the place of what we in the West call theory is taken in Chinese thinking by the supralinguistic role which the written Chinese language plays over various spoken Chinese languages. Note that the role of divination in the early development of characters (and vice versa) implies for those characters a role in the work of demonstrating the will of heaven.

A pragmatic attitude to language may have been necessarily prescriptive (especially in its Confucian application) and yet the remarkable thing about the shi/fei role of xin in making bian from a 20th-century view is the way in which this ‘process’ prefigures structural linguistics’ interest in language as a system of choices. For Ferdinand de Saussure, language is a system of choices in which there are no positive or negative terms (de Saussure, 1986). For Confucian and much subsequent Chinese philosophy language is a system of appropriate discursive acts (a continuum from ming to dao) in which there is always a positive and a negative term as disclosed by the shi/fei role of xin in making bian. The selection of words is in other words always subject to judgement: a matter of judgement rather than choice.

What are the implications of these ancient and perhaps deep-seated conceptions for language teaching, especially in the here and now? Hansen notes that both
Confucius and Mo Tzu ‘urge using correct models (social/political leaders) to exemplify, teach and enforce correct usage—to regularise language use. Uniformity in language use leads to co-ordination of behaviour and social order’ (in Allinson, 1991, p. 109).

More significant than, and perhaps one notes enabling, the modelling role is the mastering of a skill analogy Hansen derives from Lao Tzu (ibid., p. 80). The necessity of a correct judgement entering in the use of all words places a theory of language at the centre of the philosophical and especially ethical universe. An effect of this assertion is to acknowledge that the traditional Chinese conception of language, at least the assumptions underlying it, virtually constitute a learning theory in their own right. In other words, you cannot teach a language, or any other skill, without teaching, without modelling, correct practice. The conception of language entails that the language be learned and taught by means of prescription.

It is paradoxical to note on this point that both Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu have in their writing a built-in critique of shi/fei thinking, one which turns largely on the love of paradox itself. Chuang Tzu writes:

How does the principle get covered and the true/false bifurcation arise? How does language (the genuine function of language) get covered and the affirmation/denial bifurcation arise? ... This and That possess the same status. That represents one kind of right-and-wrong; This also represents one kind of right-and-wrong. Is the opposition of this and that really necessary or not? ... The views of right constitute an infinite series, and the views of wrong constitute an infinite series, too. Therefore, I say, there is only the enlightened mind.’ (ibid., p. 282)

However paradoxical its task may be, however anti-intellectual the pretence of the assertion, enlightened mind is surely that which gets it right, which participates ultimately in the infinite series which constitutes the views of right. Lao Tzu writes in the Tao Te Ching:

In words, truth; in government, good order;
In deeds effectiveness; in actions, timeliness—
In each case it is because they prefer what does not lead to strife,
And therefore does not go amiss. (1997, p. 17)

Apart from the ancient critique of the style of thought Hansen posits there are some serious challenges in contemporary scholarship to the idea that right/wrong thinking is more predominant in a Confucian learning culture. John Biggs, in the anthology he co-edited on The Chinese Learner, for instance contrasts the ‘strict individuality’ under which Western students labour with the more pragmatic and eclectic situation of Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) learners (in Watkins & Biggs, 1996, p. 274). Lao Sze Kwang, in an essay ‘On understanding Chinese philosophy: an enquiry and a proposal’, suggests that it is Western philosophy which ‘fixes’ the realm for knowledge. He contrasts this with an open orientation towards the question of where we should go in Chinese philosophy (in Allinson, 1991, p. 290). Likewise Chung-Ying Cheng, in a paper on Chinese Metaphysics and the Nature of Reality, accounts
for the wisdom of the *I Ching* in terms of reciprocal and polaristic unities (ibid.). Is Hansen's work then a culturally inspired misreading of the Chinese heart-mind? Is it a case of seeing the other side's position as fixed in ways which one would probably miss when considering one's own behaviour? Or is there a valid question here as to the basis on which one culture's thought is more prescriptive than another's? It may be that pragmatism or eclecticism are strategies for accommodating differences between more and less prescriptive cultures. It may be that the fixing of certain domains of knowledge is what allows these to open into genuine enquiry; that what the Western reader receives as a relatively inherent vagueness in Chinese philosophy actually hinders open investigation. It may be that reciprocal and polaristic unities (heaven and earth, sage and student, *yin* and *yang*) account for the kind of closed system in a text like *The Great Learning*; that these are in fact a means of accounting for the singularity of the Way.

Accepting for the moment then Hansen's contentions, with a theory of language at the centre of a prescriptive ethical universe one would expect teachers to be least able to escape the ethical assumptions of such a universe; for instance that there always is a correct word, a correct order, a correct form of conduct. One might also expect that those so closely engaged with the delivery of ethics might be in the best position to formulate a critique. It would be useless at this point to claim that the pressure against this derives from the conservatism of Chinese society. What we might be establishing here is the mechanism of that conservatism. Playing reflexively with the relativity and realism of the ultimate *dao* established in language as absolute prescriptive is what makes both Daoism and Moism dangerous from a Confucian point of view. Challenging the necessity or possibility of the rectification of names (*cheng-ming*) or the means by which names may be rectified, they are able to be seen as anarchic forces.

The naturally social activity of getting the right things done with language, would appear, given the Confucian model of the hierarchic flow of authority, as in the three bonds (*san-kang*), to give the teacher, and especially the language teacher, a very clear role to perform: the teacher prescribes the correct words, their correct uses; the teacher corrects the student's errors. This is a role which coincides nicely with what in the West has been derided by progressivists and advocates of student-centred and experiential learning as the 'empty vessel' model in which the teacher has the right stuff and fills up the head of the student with it.

But how does this etymological chase translate into the teaching of a foreign, from the classical point of view, a barbarian, language? None of it matters if the attitudes and discursive modes of the Chinese people (teachers and students) in the equation are sufficiently westernised for them to be speaking the same 'language' about the teaching and learning of English. Nor would it matter if these 'ancient' theories or ideas or assumptions had been convincingly superseded or at least disposed of; were merely the ideas of the ancients.

Does the ancient Chinese conception of language (and learning) as articulated in works by Confucius and Lao Tzu, Mencius and Chuang Tzu, have much relevance to the way people think of and use words today? Does it have much relevance to the way people learn and teach today? Just as Westerners, whatever their professed
beliefs, carry the baggage of Platonic and Judeo-Christian thought patterns just because these are in the words and stories and discursive patterns we use, so, I will argue, it is even less realistic to think that Chinese people are immune to the effects of the discursive patterns with which they formulate thought.

In either case philosophy and its resort to the 'invention' of constructs like reason or logic, like ming or dao, may merely have served to articulate (or approximate) the means of thought which were already in the words. The scope of the present paper does not afford a reflexive consideration of the relationship between thought and language on this scale. If there is, however, something in the operation of an orthodoxy which encourages or alternatively hinders the possibility of reflection on ethical/pedagogic practices, this could be a relevant cultural difference; it could impact on the possibility of learning.

There are a number of reasons why orthodoxies should be taken if anything more seriously in China than in the West. One reason is that the culture and some of the means of its transmission are far older and far more continuous. Another is the correlation between state power and scholarship (as the province of a learned elite), the long-lived examination system keeping the gate between these. The cultural revolution can be seen as a serious and essentially unsuccessful attempt to disrupt this nexus.

In China, compared with the West, state (and family) power and knowledge (however lacking direct equivalents of these Western concepts may be) appear, and despite the fame of certain hermits, to have been less ambiguously unified as sources of authority.

While the religious tradition may be a pluralist one and the relationship of the state orthodoxy eclectic towards it, that eclectically formed orthodoxy has been remarkably durable. The Confucian orthodoxy essentially prevailed as the official doctrine of the state from the time of its adoption by the Han court until the foundation of the Chinese Republic. With some significant breaks, notably during the Yuan, a knowledge of literature relevant to it was examined for the purposes of entry into the civil service from Han times until 1905. No other social doctrine and no other means of transmission have prevailed for so long in human history elsewhere.

It would be naive to think that the disruption of the last century and a half of Western imperialism and new ideologies should have simply dissolved the older patterns of popular consciousness which attended the operation of power and knowledge in imperial China.

Accepting this, a methodological question arises as to where we might find models for an enquiry into the historico-discursive bases of contemporary orthodoxy education practices. The study of the orthodox practices of previous epochs could provide such a model. One would then be looking for echoes of our experience in records of others' experiences. This is a kind of homeostatic trap which, rather than fail in the effort of avoiding, we might indulge to effect. Some examples: in Charlotte Furth's essay, 'The patriarch's legacy: household instructions and the transmission of orthodox values', a study is made of the formulaic aphorisms passed down from one generation to another in Ming and Ch'ing times. For Furth it was by means of
these instructions that ritual culture was not merely imposed and transmitted, but recreated: ‘Household instructions supported and contributed to this repeated reinvention of the orthodox world order and represented a willed, living performance by social actors.’ From the point of view of a neo-Confucian orthodoxy it was only such active initiative which ‘thwarted ritual decay through social consumption’ (in Kwang-Ching Liu, 1990, p. 207). Furth writes that patriarchs adopted a negative and fearful tone in their instructions:

The appeal to ritual order and the attempt to present themselves as ancestors-to-be encouraged patriarchs to maintain an air of calm, magnanimity and spiritual poise. Still they wrote as givers of rules: if they suggested that moral behaviour is accessible and learnable, they also hinted of sanctions. In the rhetorical form of the rule, implicit ‘do nots’ outweigh ‘dos’. If following the rule is a matter of restraint, self denial, and repression, its articulation rouses a subliminal image of the chaotic forces of license just held in check by a thin calligraphic line of commands. (ibid., p. 195)

In Alexander Woodside’s essay ‘State, scholars and orthodoxy: the Ch’ing academies 1736–1839’, there are likewise familiar echoes, suggestive of a continuity in the operation of an educational orthodoxy. Woodside writes of an orthodoxy of ‘social and ritual oughtness’ (ibid., p. 160). Reminscent of present conditions in for instance Hong Kong, Woodside reports an early 19th-century scholar’s claim that the ‘potency of the expectations that the examination system encouraged had warped the whole content of education’ (ibid., pp. 172–173). For a number of reasons the institutions of which Woodside writes did not succeed as ‘uncompromising organs of centralised thought control’ (ibid., p. 172). A culture of preferment, chronic absenteeism and administrative vagueness seem to have prevented the Imperial Court from exercising any effective control of the curriculum, especially in southern China. A number of other observations feel pertinent today: ‘Their forced obsession with academic testing ... drove out the books’ (ibid., p. 174). Woodside writes of a ‘paralysing vulgarization’ of the schools’ corporate cultures, of the ‘unwholesome bureaucratisation of teaching’ (ibid., pp. 178, 182), both of which might be thought to now apply, if under the aegis of the Hong Kong rather than the Manchu examinations authority.

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Whatever credence we give the observation, it is widely believed that Chinese society is conservative in the sense of resistant to change. Another way of looking at this might be to say that Chinese culture has managed to preserve more in the way of traditions and continuities than most other cultures. It therefore has more to conserve. It has succeeded in preserving itself where other cultures have failed. Chinese characters—while clearly subject, as other discursive systems are, to change, remain the oldest continuously used form of human discourse.

Add to these factors the powerful prescriptive force which Hansen perceives in the language itself and we begin to get a picture of the means by which a culture might
‘protect’ itself from change. If, as Hansen argues, assumptions with the force of a learning theory are built into the everyday Chinese conception of language, then teaching by other methods or with other assumptions should involve significant efforts at introspection on the part of teachers. Resistances to change and to other, to ‘new’ conceptions of language and of learning depend on how difficult it is to imagine a different process from the one you already know.

From the point of view of teaching, if you think that there is always and necessarily one correct form of one correct word/idea for each instance of a discourse then it will be hard for you to convey to students the idea that they have choices to make in language, that they decide what it is that they wish to or have to express, that their ‘job’ as language learners and users is to make choices of meaning. The passivity of students is virtually guaranteed in these conditions, such as are derided in the West under the rubric, ‘chalk and talk’.

One could claim that it makes sense to try to accommodate one’s learning strategies to the mindset (weltanschauung, what-have-you) of the target language or at least not to fight against it. On account of this assumption, learning to think in a language actually means thinking how to learn a particular way, in the style if you like of the target language. The specific heuristic of a language is the thought a student must master in order to progress in that language. This hypothesis may or may not prove true or absolute or practical in application. There are strong intuitive reasons to believe that culturally disparate approaches to learning can cross-fertilize: learning a foreign language by definition involves getting between cultures. This explains why learning languages becomes easier and why people get better at it. An interest in grammatical accuracy for its own sake certainly assists Chinese students in making the meanings they wish to make in English even if that interest manifests in skills and abstractions which are alien to the mindset of English.

Nevertheless, a stubborn resistance to the manner of thinking incumbent in the words of a language necessarily slows the student’s progress. It helps to imbue those words and that manner of thinking with an unreality which renders the target language difficult to take seriously as a means of communication. Perhaps that is the measure of a language’s foreignness in any particular context: how seriously can it be taken? One begins to learn by imagining away some of that foreignness. One begins to learn by imagining that one has something to say and someone to say it to in the target language. That’s how one gets ‘serious’ as a language learner.

**Orthodoxy by Decree**

My contention is that there are a number of aspects of (especially neo-) Confucian orthodoxy applicable in the operation of Hong Kong High Schools, and which have co-opted certain Christian-Platonist ethics4; that this agglomeration of (Eastern and Western) assumptions actually serves not only to lock teachers into a fairly narrow conception of their role and the role of the school but to actually block reflection on this and related issues, to make it difficult for teachers to see the narrowness of their perspective, where it comes from or how it could be changed.
Apart from its other effects this narrowness in perspective actually militates against the teaching and learning of a language like English because it represents a type of thinking alien and resistant to thought in English: it represents thought alien to the kind of thinking students have to do in order to progress in English.

The one right way\(^5\) (a monolinearism?), reflected in the state orthodoxy and the three bonds, which was balanced with religious diversity throughout the more than 2000 years of Confucian hegemony in China, is now in most Hong Kong High Schools combined with the (admittedly weak) demands of monotheistic religious orthodoxy. Christian-Platonist thought, with its emphasis on the inadequacy of sublunary practices, serves to further undermine both the self-esteem of the learner and the relevance of the material to be learnt. The English language is something very far-off. The real rules are hidden in the clouds somewhere. Getting to those rules could of course constitute a very useful learning experience for students. It might require deductive skills which, though perhaps never taught as such, may serve the student in many aspects of life and learning.

The nature of authority as conveyed in the concept ‘orthodoxy’ is perhaps, from the Western viewpoint, most inscrutably expressed in the Confucian aphorism: ‘Cheng is cheng’. Chi-yun Chen, in his essay ‘Orthodoxy as a mode of statecraft: the ancient concept of Cheng’, translates the saying in the following terms: ‘To govern is to coerce with force or authority’. This is stated in preference to the ideal more generally ascribed: ‘To govern is to rectify’ (p. 30). For Chi-yun Chen, who gives a detailed account of the etymology of cheng and related terms in Chou bronze inscriptions, the pragmatic credentials of orthodoxy are early established and indicate:

a non-moral but goal-oriented root meaning that is concerned mainly with the result of the action, namely the successful versus the unsuccessful. Moral meaning was added later. The reference of cheng evolves from (1) a military action, which gives rise to (2) a political dominion, which is given (3) moral justification. It may also be said that it has a positive, forward-looking, action oriented, even revolutionary connotation, contrary to the notion of rigidity and fixity that the word orthodoxy often implies. (ibid., p. 31)

Whether the pattern of conquest leading to dominion for which moral force is later sought may be allowed to apply to contemporary classroom methodology in Hong Kong (it could serve after all as a Nietzschean description of human history or the origin of laws), it is certainly true that the literature associated with the development of cheng and related terms is full of reference to the prescriptive role of the teacher in maintaining social order through orthodox conduct.

Hsun Tzu, one of the formative thinkers of the early imperial orthodoxy, who argued for the permanent operation of the dao of heaven, described the role of teachers in relation to ritual and order thus:

Rites have three bases. Heaven and earth are the basis of life, the ancestors are the basis of the human species, and rulers and teachers are the basis of order ... If there were no rulers and teachers how would order be
brought about? If even one of these were lacking there would be no safety for man. Therefore rites serve heaven above and earth below, honour the ancestors and exalt rulers and teachers. These are the three bases of rites. (ibid., p. 31)

Teachers are thus given an essential role in something as fundamental as the ‘safety of man’. There are two points of particular relevance here which Chi-yun Chen makes in concluding his paper. The first is to emphasise that the ‘idea that without an orthodoxy-by-decree the realm would be disorderly and the realm could not function’ had become already in the Han period ‘firmly incorporated into the imperial outlook. The empire’s need for a “correct” cultural policy transcended the ideological particularities of Confucianism, Mohism, Legalism and Taoism.’ Is there evidence to suggest that the doctrine, or perhaps better, assumption, of the efficacy of such an orthodoxy by decree’ has ever been superseded?

The second point emphasised is that ‘the concept of orthodoxy was germane only to a comparatively small group of thinkers and scholar-officials in ancient China. As to the multitude of common people, they were perhaps more accustomed to the norms set by kinship values and folk religious beliefs’ (ibid., p. 31). In another essay in the same volume, ‘Socioethics as orthodoxy’, Kwang-Ching Liu argues that kinship institutions (of the common people) were vital in shaping the cultural elite’s worldview, a view which had to accord with those institutions in order to have effect. The irony is that the overtly decreed Confucian orthodoxy of Han times was the province of a relatively small proportion of the population; that in a complex, modern world in which consciousness of that orthodoxy has been buried, it perhaps governs more closely the actions and thoughts (the selection of Chinese characters for instance) of a far greater number; of special importance here, a large number of teachers.

Combining Kwang-Ching Liu’s view of kinship institutions with Chad Hansen’s deductions about the relationship between (especially philosophic) language and ethics, orthodoxy and learning, one could argue that Han China became a place in which language and ritual ensured the orthodoxy which rulers had to impose as the will of heaven; that this has been the subsequent force of the Confucian orthodoxy. While it is easy to criticise this, from a Western libertarian view, as a self-perpetuating cycle allowing of no dissent, it is also possible to see how such a cycle ensures order as fait accompli and renders democracy a noisy and unnecessary distraction. From the point of view of pedagogy, there is a right and correct teaching: it is the duty of schools and of teachers to provide it.

The point I wish to make here about the role of schools in this cycle is that it is two-edged: a school hierarchizes the process of reification while it reifies the hierarchy; that is, it makes the process and the forms of control self-perpetuating.

**Reality, Self-motivation and the Passivity ‘Problem’**

There are styles and degrees of reality. And one of the measures of reality (though this might seem like a Platonic inversion of the cave variety or a Confucian circle⁶)
is motivation. What motivates you to learn a language (whether we measure the result of this motivation in vocabulary or grammar, the ability to hold forth or to follow a story) facilitates the real of language development. Whatever makes language learning successful makes one’s growth in and use of a language real. It furnishes a real capacity even if this is seldom able to be used. You can really mean things in your head all to yourself. The more remote from the real of communication with others no doubt the more difficult the language learning process will be for most people.

The reality of the (target) language used in the classroom, measured in terms of the ‘real’ usage of native speakers outside, is one index of a classroom’s level of motivation. But motivation more broadly conceived is a better measure of the reality of the target language for the students in the classroom. The full-blown native usage of the language is an obscure reality because it presents the students with an impenetrable ‘wall’ of text in which they cannot participate. By contrast, the here and now work of getting something done with language, whether that is in the task of understanding a text or of simulating participation in one, whatever imagination that requires, has the effect of making the target language real to students.

The mediating function of a learning setting forces us to discriminate between two types of reality: that of the target context of culture and that of its approximation in the classroom; likewise between two types of motivation: that of needing or wishing to communicate in the target language with non-natives of one’s own language, as opposed to any means by which one can be encouraged in and around the classroom to acquire the skills and knowledge which make that communication possible.

If growth towards proficiency is the overarching goal then it is in everyone’s interests to have these versions of the real and of motivation coincide: the classroom’s approximations should be relevant to the contexts for which students are being prepared; those motivating factors at work in the classroom should be the ones which lead students to proficiency.

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In The Analects, Confucius establishes himself as the model of the indefatigable learner-teacher. That model is one of passive learning: ‘I have listened in silence and noted what was said, I have never grown tired of learning nor wearied of teaching others what I have learnt’ (1996b, p. 79).

In the ‘traditional’ Confucian Heritage Culture classroom a kind of ‘default setting’ passivity is guaranteed by the physical layout of the room. The teacher is not among the students. The teacher is apart from students, these days often tethered to the wall by a microphone on a lead. The students do not have microphones. The factors which militate against real, student-centred, self-motivated learning are powerlessness, lack of control, pressures against creativity, pressures to conform. In a teacher-centered classroom students are not there to ask questions, to develop topics, to decide what to study, to work out which fields or issues to enquire into. These are all given; these are the teacher’s work. The learning agenda is generally seen as imposed on the teacher from above. And likewise where students are asked
questions it is rarely their own opinions or judgements that are sought, if only for the simple reason that they are not credited with having these: judgement is what the teacher hands down. The questions students are asked in the class are the traditional schoolmaster's questions, closed questions, you're on the spot and now guess what is in the teacher's head questions. They are not really questions at all. They are pretend questions and if in English they are in a language for pretending. What is the reward for guessing what I'm thinking? My approval, generally expressed as my mark; in other words the evidence of the teacher's and not the student's judgement.

Passivity may be a vicious cycle in another sense, that of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Some research is reported showing that it may be the result of an expectation on the part of teachers (Biggs in Watkins & Biggs, 1996, p. 280). Perhaps docility is a symptom of as well as the product of inertia, of a deep-seated conviction that things cannot change and that one personally has nothing to add. In a process roughly akin to lecturing the students who are there about the laziness of latecomers, teachers may be railing against passivity and drilling students in it at the same time. Whether or not a docile disposition to learning is something which Confucian Heritage Culture students bring to the classroom, there is no doubt that a teacher-, book- and examination-centred classroom encourages such a disposition.

Of course, there is in and since Confucius plenty of philosophical backing for a passive attitude to learning, such as combines with a deferential attitude to the teacher. For the pioneer of Neo-Confucianism, Chou Tun-I, teachers are the means through which good may be promoted in the world (in Wing-Tsit Chan, 1963, p. 488):

those who are first to be enlightened should instruct those who are slower in attaining enlightenment, and the ignorant should seek help from those who understand. Thus the way of teachers is established. As the way of teachers is established there will be many good people. With many good people the government will be correct and the empire will be in order. (ibid., pp. 468-469)

From Chou Tun-I's viewpoint there is an essential relationship between teaching and the inculcation of moral principle, such that while the most honourable thing in the world is moral principle, the most valuable thing virtue:

At birth man is ignorant. He remains stupid when he grows up if he has no teachers or friends to help him. Thus moral principles become valuable and honourable when they are possessed by man through the help of teachers and friends. (ibid., pp. 468-469)

The sage in many neo-Confucian readings is one who cultivates a passive kind of empathy with the universe. In Shao Yung a sage is better than a mirror because 'he reflects the universal character of the feelings of all things':

The sage can do so because he views things as things view themselves; that is, not subjectively, but from the viewpoint of things. (ibid., p. 488)

From the Western point of view it may be difficult to reconcile what appears as a
collective docility in the classroom with an ability to ‘perform’ individually when required (for instance in exams, even oral exams, and especially in overseas settings). Biggs accounts for this in terms of the CHC student’s cue-seeking strengths, arguing that CHC students are ‘particularly sensitive to what they perceive as demands to be met’ (in Watkins & Biggs, 1996, p. 280). He also acknowledges that their motivations are pragmatic to a degree that renders useless a claimed ‘Western’ dichotomy between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (ibid., p. 273). The CHC learner is for Biggs one availed of:

superordinating collectivism that derives from the Confucian notions of order and stability; in return for obedience and loyalty to the collectivity, principally the family, the individual is given security and face, but when those duties have been fulfilled, the individual is encouraged to pursue his (‘his’ is used advisedly) own interests. (ibid., p. 274)

In fact the Confucian conception of knowledge and the means by which it is acquired stress individual effort and especially thought. In The Great Learning:

It is only when one is able to investigate things that knowledge can be perfected. It is only when one’s knowledge is perfect that one can be sincere and honest. (1996a, p. 6)

For Mencius, ‘if we think we will get them (the principles of things)’ (in Wing-Tsit Chan, 1963, p. 59). For Cheng I: ‘the source of learning is thought ... If one extends knowledge to the utmost, one will have wisdom. Having wisdom one can then make choices’ (ibid., p. 552). Likewise Cheng Hao gave these specific instructions to the student:

The student should hold fast to the mind with seriousness. He should not be anxious. Instead he should nourish and cultivate it deeply and earnestly, immerse and soak himself in it. Only then can he be at ease with himself. (ibid., p. 530)

For Cheng Hao the investigation to the utmost of principle, the full development of nature and the fulfilment of fate are to be accomplished simultaneously (ibid., p. 531).

So we could say that despite the value placed on a humility achieved by means of a (an at least partly) docile disposition learning in the Confucian tradition is in fact a highly self-motivated activity. Lu Hsiang-Shan writes ‘a student must make up his mind’ (ibid., p. 584).

But in the school spoon-feeding feels easier than getting students to learn for themselves or think by themselves; possibly because of what Biggs identifies as a pragmatic and cue-oriented motivational style. Likewise translation seems easier than the effort involved in thinking in the other language. Translation may in fact be a means of domesticating or pacifying those words from elsewhere which disorder my own, which upset my own habits and expectations. In any educational setting established expectations are difficult to upset. Whether overtly or covertly order may
adopt the means to perpetuate itself. But how can an order perpetuate itself across cultures? Getting between cultures necessarily involves some disordering of expectations, of habits, of realities.

From the point of view of the language teacher it is irrelevant whether self-motivated and experiential learning is generally, or for most purposes, more successful or whether it makes better individuals or people who are better able to find things out for themselves. Those global pedagogic concerns are obscured by an immediate fact that for language learning what works is real dialogue, communication, real tasks, really having something to achieve with people, having a job to do. Styles of learning which incorporate these kinds of activity (and thinking) are markedly more effective than passive methods.

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Reality is always contested and in such contests epistemology and ontology scribble over each other as over not-quite-erasable palimpsests. Of great interest are those places and moments when such contests become visible. The changeover in Hong Kong is such a moment: a moment in which Hong Kong people begin to ask themselves which reality it is they refer to: as Chinese, as Westerners. What kind of home-grown hybrid do they need to be or become?

In intercultural environments success depends on achieving the best and not the worst of both worlds. One has not to feel merely that one is constrained by two sets of rules but rather that one has a view into two very different worlds, that one is able to tackle the difficult task of seeing those worlds from each others’ points of view. The key to achieving such a goal will be in suspending one’s disbelief for long enough to succeed in thinking in those other words which seem so alien to begin with.

Notes
1. Note that Chapter 49 of the Tao Te Ching could easily be read as a critique of shi-fei thinking in general:
   - The Sage has no heart of his own;
   - He uses the heart of the people as his heart.
   - Of the good man I approve
   - But of the bad I also approve,
   - And thus he gets goodness.
   - The truthful man I believe, but the liar I also believe,
   - And thus he gets truthfulness (1997, pp. 104-105)

2. Orthodoxy in thought is in these terms then a set of visible signs rather than a Socratic syllogism or a Kantian paralogism of reason.

3. Whether or not this might be true of other languages is a moot point here.

4. Foremost among these must be the distrust of perceived reality which Plato promotes in his theory of the real and illusion as expressed in the cave analogy in the Republic.


6. A fine example is where The Great Learning teaches: ‘Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their
knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things. Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete their thoughts became sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated" (Library of the Future, 1994, p. 1).

7. Merleau-Ponty writes of such questions: ‘And so it is not a question asked of someone who doesn’t know by someone who does—the schoolmaster’s question. The question comes from one who does not know, and it is addressed to a vision, a seeing, which knows everything and which we do not make, for it makes itself in us’ (1968, p. 167).

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Chapter Three


Introduction:

My proselytic efforts on behalf of a Creative Writing pedagogy have been published in various venues and been offered a soapbox at conferences and in guest lectures at universities and elsewhere. My essay, ‘Creative Writing for Foreign Learners of English: some opening arguments’, paints with a broad brush motives for Creative Writing curriculum in a non-native language learning context. It is one of a number of ‘defences’ of a new pedagogy published or given at conferences. The longest and most complete of these (not included in the portfolio) is in the first issue of Writing Macao (Kelen, 2003).

In a nutshell, the argument is that because English is the world language (and so those who can make their meaning in that language truly have the capacity to speak to the world and to represent themselves to the world), being able to tell one’s story is in these terms inherently motivating. Students can, through the vehicle of story writing, easily be motivated to express themselves and their ‘thematic universe’ imaginatively in what would for them be a new language.

In terms of motives broadly conceived – I think we should teach creative writing because the processes of culture and of literature are alive. We can participate in them. We do not have to merely be spectators. Our students can read literature so that they can make literature, so that they can speak to the world for and about themselves and about whatever else they wish.
University of Macau

Christopher Kelen

*Creative Writing for Foreign Learners of English: some opening arguments*

Abstract:

In the native-speaking context, broadly there are two types of reason for teaching creative writing: therapeutic reasons and canonic reasons. You teach creative writing because the process of writing is good for students, good for us all. Or you teach creative writing because literature comes from somewhere: someone had to write it. And - if there's to be any more - someone has to be equipped to write it. The much-argued presumption in this later case being that creative writing is teachable.

The point of this paper is to make an argument for an explicit pedagogy in creative writing - in the writing of imaginative literature - directed at the English as a foreign language classroom. The argument is made on the basis of efficacy. Not for fun, not for self-development, not because canonic or even good works might be produced along the way, not for inter-cultural understanding in its own right. Not for any of these justifiable ends in themselves. But because creative writing is a best way into the forms of proficiency which languages demand of their non-native users. It's a best way in because those ends coincide with the language learner's most readily generalised goals.

Pandora's Demands

I think the genuine effort to welcome strangers into your language and culture always and inevitably opens a Pandora's box. From the foreigner's point of view that box unopened has very tall walls on every side: there's a wall of sound, a wall of words to learn, a wall of grammar, a wall of texts and contexts. All these imply a different geography of the mind from that which the foreigner grew up in. The moment one begins to unpack the box though, to explain the simplest text, where it comes from, where it goes, one begins to see the parenthetic and digressive manner of imbrication of text and context. Contexts fold in and out of each other, fall in and out of each other. Following - participating in - conversation means chasing those texts and contexts back into other texts and contexts and conversations, those which enabled them. The learner and
teacher experience vertigo by turns in this process. It's a process which seems endless and nearly inescapable in just the ways that conversation is endless and nearly inescapable.

One of the best things about teaching your own language to foreigners is that it lays bare all sorts of assumptions which you'd never thought to challenge, never known were there. To use the parlance of the Russian Formalists, it de-automatises or de-familiarises your language for you. Provided you're prepared to take students' questions as to what things mean and how they mean what they mean in the spirit of a dialogue between cultures you can't avoid seeing and hearing patterns you would not otherwise have noticed. So much for the teacher. The student on the other end of the teacher-enlightening conversation is hopefully picking up (sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously) the patterns needed to get into the language and use it: use it for the purposes which suit her.

I don't want to argue that telling tales is more important than making arguments. In fact I think there's a strong case that learning to argue well is the university's unique contribution to the social fabric it inspects and intervenes in. The university has its Pandora's box vocation. In a way then the question about whether and how and with what emphasis universities teach creative (especially fictive) uses of language is an ironic question about what relationship the scholarly world ought to have with the real one (assuming for a moment the validity of such a separation). Making judgements and making arguments on the basis of these (and vice versa) are tools for intervention in reality. The odds of changing the world without interpreting it first are slim.

**Duties to Thought, Thought's Duties to Us**

Why bother telling stories? Why bother framing arguments? Stories are a way of interpreting the world, a way of making sense, a way of making something satisfying out of what might otherwise seem chaotic or unreasonable. Story and argument are ways of understanding the world. Understanding is a kind of power: if you understand why and how things happen then you might be able to make things happen yourself. Different stories and different arguments reveal different understandings, different worlds. What kind of traffic is possible between worlds and between ways of understanding?

When understanding between cultures (or peace) is the aim then there is a spirit of crossing from one mind to another: a dialogic spirit. It's notoriously difficult to keep a conversation of that nature and order on the rails. That's because there aren't any perfectly level
playing fields between cultures. That's because there are power relations between 'partners' in dialogue. However I think that people whose work is between cultures do have a duty to keep conversation going.

But to keep it going on whose rails? One struggles inwardly to fairly perform such duties out in the world with others. It's hard to be fair to other sorts of sentience because it's hard not to read the world all our own way. Not all stories or arguments are good or useful or effective. There's a fine line between platitude and the serious work of world repair which story or argument might facilitate or mar. There's a fine line likewise between the cynicism of a stance sufficiently knowing and the renovation of knowledges which actually leads to improvements: to better knowledge or a better world.

The non-natives I'm with enable me to see what my culture and my words feel like from the outside, something which would be much more difficult without them. Non-natives, like children, have an affinity for the aspect of language which Merleau-Ponty refers to as wild meaning (Merleau-Ponty 155). In the process of getting control of words they take words to (and beyond) their limits. They test them by finding out what they can and can't do with them. But the meanings that foreigners make and mar and struggle for are different from those children play with. That's because those new and foreign words are not their first means of meaning. They are coming from somewhere as full of sense and as full of nonsense as where I am, where I come from. They are as languaged in their sentience. When we talk to each other, when we understand each other, we get a new angle on each other's sense and nonsense. We make sense and nonsense of each other, we guide each other by these means. Poetry (since the twentieth century particularly) has this affinity with foreignness: that it does to one's own language what a foreigner cannot help but do to another language.

That kind of reciprocal guidance which the native speaking teacher and the non-native learner offer each other, depends on the possibility of an open dialogue, depends on a kind of indirection: the conversation if truly open is negotiated and thus has charge of itself. It is neither mine nor yours.

If then the imaginative text offers the individual language learner one of the best ways in this is because it suits a proficiency in indirection: a kind of inter-cultural flexibility. The properly playful text - as indirected text - may have the best prospect for promoting hybridity. It may have the best prospect, that is, for allowing cultures to find each other, rather than being imposed on or compelled by each other. To the extent that - like a conversation - it doesn't know where it's going, the playful text has a chance of allowing those
participating in it to find each other on an equal footing.

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Coming into a language then involves two types of taming. The non-native tames the words of the language they are coming into. Through that process of taming they become her words. They lose their alien character as they become familiar, useful. And the language tames the non-native. They lose their alien character as they manage to make more and more non/sense with what were new words, now words becoming familiar. The target language translates or limits or reduces (or expands) her manner of meaning to the acceptable range of the target language.

An interlocutor, whether interested in that process itself or not, if interested in writing, finds the journey useful because, whether consciously or not, it allows her to simulate the experience of being outside of her means of meaning. The experience of taming for the tamed may bring some glimpses of the wild. That's what recovered innocence is about in poetry: the effort to see and feel and speak for the first time again. And here's the paradox: poetry's interest is in the effort to see and feel and speak for the first time, yes, but as I am now, with the equipment I have now for the task. I think this is one of the impossible tasks with which poetry is burdened: to be inside and out of words at once. That's a lot like being a foreigner.

**Creative Responses to Culture**

The odds of interpreting the world without changing it in the process, perhaps in imperceptible ways, are low. That's the observer's paradox one has to live with if one hopes to speak or write or teach at all. The fact that intentions are not always realised does not mean that interpretive efforts are without effect. It's merely the case that effects are not fully predictable. That's what makes them worthwhile.

Which is more eloquent: story or argument? Which is more evocative? One wisely mistrusts the obvious answers here. One wisely mistrusts the question. The greater eloquence of the story - if you accept that answer - is to do with the work its reader has to do. The complicity of this reader whose doubts can only be as to veracity is better than that of the reader who must wonder whether to agree or not. Why? Because a story cannot lead with the authority of an argument. A story has a better kind of authority: the authority which demands (rather than deferring, delaying or denying) interpretation.

But the fact is that stories carry and promote arguments (hopefully
more than one at a time). And arguments depend on and make sense of stories. That's where they come from. That's where they go. The best stories and arguments blur and fold across the genre line so that the line is not even noticed. That seamlessness is the absent manner in which creative effort makes itself invisible.

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My argument is for reading and writing imaginative literature. Reading it so you can write it. Writing it so you can read it. Reading and writing it because, like it or not, it is demanded of you as part of the competence demanded of participation in a culture. I call this a creative responses to culture approach. It's about responding to culture in kind. It entails a dialogic style of text focused teaching; teaching which involves students in a cycle of reception and production. It is a means of equipping the learner with skills for a dialogic kind of literacy: as an ongoing way into a culture, as a way of becoming a player in a culture.

Stories and our memory of them then provide both an interpretive function and a shorthand for the business of interpretation. By tagging a particular situation with a particular story (or fragment evocative of a particular story) we save ourselves the trouble of explaining how we see it, of justifying a position as our own. Borrowing a story for such a purpose is then like borrowing an argument or an identity. The old cliché that there are only twenty stories (or a hundred or five) refers to this pigeon holing function. It's a way of demonstrating the iterative aspect of the range of human understanding and response. These are the ways of seeing the world, this is the range of events. It's in this essentialising manner that story and argument meet generically. A world view is a circular argument. It has to justify itself in its own terms. It has that epic knack of the tale able to be joined anywhere because constantly retelling itself. Like a Möbius loop or a Fortunatus' purse: the inside is the outside. Which is to say that the outside is lacking.

Stories in this sense are like metaphors. Or you could say that metaphors are like stories. Better to say that story and metaphor participate in some kind of reversible relation. They filter the real through or into familiar or unfamiliar others: other events, other situations, other stories.

I think that - however much recycling is involved - it's important to get new stories written because that kind of writing expands the range of human understanding: the range of humanity. I think that the question of originality in relation to that task is much more complicated than it is generally credited to be. The non-native brings that question into sharp relief because, having only experienced as it were the last five minutes of the culture, it's easier for things to seem new to her. That's how the non-native's naïvety in the language they
are entering is like and unlike the recovered innocence for which the poet strives. This must of course be less true with English language culture than for any other today because of English's world language status. The words of English are familiar almost everywhere. And yet the non-native and the poet still have plenty of opportunity to bring us to words as we've not come before.

**Language and Literature/Reading and Making**

If it's important to get the non-native's story read then it's important to get that story into English. That's the easiest way for a story to breathe in the world today. If you want people to be able to work fluently with the English language and you want their stories to be available to anyone who understands the English language then it makes sense to help those people to learn to tell their stories in English. One of the problems with this project is that non-natives - like the rest of us - see their own language as the natural vehicle for representation, for instance for the making of metaphors or the telling of their stories. English is an other language with other purposes: purposes which are specific, or in the context of the university, specifically academic. Those purposes usually entail the use of referential (rather than representational) strategies with language. You could gloss the difference between these two types of language as the difference between saying 'I love you' and 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' Not that the academic context will often require either of these particular utterances. But it will require picturing and storytelling. It just doesn't imagine itself as making that kind of demand. The French philosopher, Michele Le Doeuff in her book *The Philosophical Imaginary* shows convincingly though that even the driest and most 'direct' or 'rational' of philosophies gets where it's going discursively by means of imaginative excursions. It's her thesis that 'there is no kind of thinking which does not wander' (Le Doeuff 12).

Story and poem require representational language: language for picturing, for imagining. A lot of everyday conversation, not to mention the great mass of story-based popular culture, requires that kind of language. Explanation in general has recourse to it. As does argument. It's difficult to give an example without picturing things in words. Fluency in a language entails a reading ability in popular culture because it entails participation in conversation. If you can't imagine with your interlocutor you're in trouble. That's why dreaming in a target language is such a sign of a breakthrough in learning. When you dream in a language you're learning you have crossed an imaginative threshold out of your native culture. Or at least your unconscious thinks that you have.

Academic discourses, as Le Doeuff shows, also require
representational abilities of their readers and writers. It's merely the case that they don't imagine themselves as requiring those abilities. They present a different kind of myth of themselves to the world. They represent themselves to the world as 'plain speaking'; and for the most part the world takes them at face value. This myth goes back a long way. Note that Aristotle needed his metaphorical 'bare facts' (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 654) in order to explain the contrast between tropic and 'normal' discourse.

Whether discourses delude themselves about their nature or not is a moot point for native speakers. The native is already on the merry-go-round and acculturated to the other means of meaning which allow discourses to delude - or not to delude - themselves. The native copes well with the metaphorical and narrative strategies which a discourse might employ and at once deny. They cope well with a curriculum hidden in that manner because that's probably the way they came. They may well be heavily invested in hiding the curriculum because hiding it may keep down the membership of the exclusive club of which they are a member. The non-native on the other hand may just be confused; may have a hard time getting membership.

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Why does English require a specific or an academic purpose? How can its purposes be made specific or academic? For those who believe, with Merleau-Ponty, that the meaning is not on the words like the butter on the bread (Merleau-Ponty 155), the assumption that language and culture lack direction in their own right is untenable. A conversation knows where it is going.

That spectre haunting every effort to assert in its own rights culture as an end of investigation, culture as the thing to produce - the assumption that practical ends must be poured into the means which language provides - tends to paint literature and creative writing people as fringe dwellers, people living on borrowed time. It paints them as people to be humoured because they might be useful along the way because they have a familiarity with the equipment of language and culture, a familiarity which could however be dangerously obsessive. That's more or less how Plato saw them in the *Republic*.

Literature, creative writing, cultural studies are read along these lines as frivolous accessories to the real business of writing the business letter, of getting the chemistry report done, of handing in the essay for another subject. As if it were only because the world has to get things done that we're bothering about English at all. I think that this unargued assumption is fairly deafening from outside of the humanities. How should we word carers, word workers, deal with it inside the humanities? I don't think you're obliged to blow
Montezuma kisses when he's standing over you with the blade honed and ready to tear your heart out.

For the non-native as much as the native the university needs to provide a place where language and all it enables - as opposed to a narrow agenda of the day - are ends in themselves, given free rein as such. Why? Why do the lit. types and the creative types have to harp on about the need for openness and vagueness, for picturing and digressing and for lack of direction? Simply because the most essential functions of language learning are entry into a new culture, participation in that culture, transaction between cultures: these things in their own right. Getting to do those things entails openness and indirection. It entails imaginative effort. It involves the inward eye.

The inevitably intercultural agenda of the language classroom is best served by taking the target culture and participation in it seriously. It is not well served by cowering before the immensity of canons or the difficulty of explaining how texts work, how they relate to each other, how to get into conversations about them. No discipline would be served by those lacks of strategy.

Nor does respect for the openness of and openness to the creative in language commit anyone to disorganisation or to impenetrable mysteries. A teacher helps students to find their ways in. That means organising and penetrating the mysteries. Not ignoring them. Not killing them off.

It is the creative in language - the reading and the writing of it - that opens out possibility, that opens onto worlds other than as they are, worlds other than this one we're in as-it-is. It is the interpretive range creative work demands which opens onto the posture of the genuine question: the question without an answer presupposed. That's the speech act at the heart of peaceful dialogue. The genuine question is the mind's most open act. It's in that spirit one crosses between cultures if one does. One needs to become unsure in order to investigate a certainty: for instance the certainty of who I am, for instance the certainty of your difference from me. It's only through uncertainty that the other worlds of imagination become possible. Argument depends on these things. They are a kind of content for it: both the setting and the what there is to argue about.

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Let's sum up the steps in this argument then. That difference in culture is to be respected and that the best way of demonstrating this respect is through a dialogue, that the products of culture should be taught. And that the products of culture should be responded to, critically but also in kind. This is not only because that's the best way to learn how they work but because that's the respect they
Dialogue between cultures entails cultural production as well as reception. One side speaking while the other only listens does not constitute a dialogue. Dialogue involves more than a 'read-only' approach. Participation in a dialogue between cultures implies more than merely the production of critical texts. If the creative text is studied because it is a peak product, then there is no parity in the conversation until the student has the opportunity to create, as well as to respond critically, to what others have created.

The Canonic is Cathartic

To return to the split with which I began, between the canonic and the cathartic. To those, natives or non-natives, first finding their way into it the canon seems more like a wall (to admire or to piss on, or both at once, as the case may be) than a process one could learn to participate in. I think the read-only (lit. crit. only) approach to imaginative literature actually encourages that view.

For non-natives, to begin with, the wall is a particularly apposite image. Canon, grammar, lexicon are all the inalienable property of others. Questions of plagiarism and demands for originality start out being difficult to compass for this reason. To begin with all of the words are somebody else's. It doesn't matter how many. None of them are mine. So it's hard to see what wouldn't constitute stealing. There's an irony in that personal battle with plagiarism. It's when you've really appropriated the words that you're free to use them, that you can no longer be accused of stealing. Possession is nine tenths of the law.

Of course these kinds of facts contradict the international status and use of English. Just about everyone who teaches English does actually feel a moral obligation to help the non-native to find a way in. That's why we don't for instance deliberately teach mistakes. Language may be a game but it's not just a game. It's the game in which the real goes on.

Asking which ways might be the best ways into the game points to serious ethical questions about the mixed messages which we can't help but send students. The native speaker's knowledge of her language is so unconscious that it is difficult for the native speaker to begin to explain. Which kind of facilitation is best? Which kind of facilitation would be least hypocritical with regard to the openness of its secrets? Few get to join the near-natives’ club.

When we teach literature without fostering or allowing a creative response to it, when we teach essay but not story writing, we are
delivering a message about which corner students ought to be in, about what kind of access they can have.

The ethical bottom line on this, for those of us who dedicate our lives to literature in various forms, is that we should not perpetuate the idea that we are divided from the world's past literary production by an impermeable membrane through which one can watch but not touch.

In an increasingly virtual world the danger of that kind of isolation is growing. But in an ever smaller world, with ever better access to the world's past literary productions (among the information rich at least), the possibilities for participation and for blurring the lines between production and reception and between modes of delivery are ever greater.

The battle of the living writer, the learning writer, is as the battle of the dead, to be heard. A taming battle. The taming of context to your text. Of technology, of genre, of the means of telling, to your tale. The challenge is as Ezra Pound put it: *to create the style by which your work will be judged* (Scully 32).

If the taming fails in the end, if it all gets beautifully out of control, as in Yeats' poem 'The Circus Animals' Desertion', wouldn't that be the ultimate triumph? Your creatures, canonised, survive you. That's the secret hope of every writer. Words - acts of communication - take over from the whims which would have directed them.

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Every place, every people, every person has a story to tell. Everybody's here-and-now is important. The world deserves to hear from us and we should all have the right to tell the world. That telling means making arguments, means agreeing and disagreeing with what other people say. But it means more than that. It means playing with the words at our disposal in our own way. It means telling our own tales in our terms. And it means meeting others half-way with the words which make sense to them. It means letting others' tales be told.

With stories we can follow the playwright's old maxim: *don't tell me, show me.* In a story a question need not be framed as such. The one telling can lead us to many questions. Arguments may of course adopt these narrative means of leading us to indirection, to individuation. And in that case it's story telling techniques which the hortatory writer needs to adopt.

It's wrong to think that there's a level of language competence below which people don't have stories to tell or means of telling them. That cannot be true for people who already have a language and culture at
their disposal. Such a claim would be like saying that there was a level below which they had nothing to mean or to understand. You can tell a story with your hands. You can ask a question with your eyes. With first words stories begin.

We teach literature because the English language isn't just a pile of words and a set of rules for putting them together. Every language is much more than that. We teach literature because teaching language is teaching culture. And we have a responsibility to introduce students to the best cultural products of the language. Literature is the best way into the idioms and the stories of a culture for the simple reason that literature is the language's best product. There's a reason why it survives. Understanding a culture by means of its best products is the key to an intelligent conversation with the members of that culture.

I think we should teach creative writing because the processes of culture and of literature are alive. We can participate in them. We don't have to merely be spectators. Our students can read literature so that they can make literature, so that they can speak to the world for and about themselves, their here-and-now, their who I am. And about whatever else it is they wish. That's the kind of intelligent conversation we should encourage them to join.

References


Dr Christopher Kelen teaches in the English Department at the University of Macau. He holds degrees in literature and linguistics from the University of Sydney and a doctorate on the teaching of the
writing process, from UWS Nepean. His fourth book of poems, Republics, was published by Five Islands Press in Australia last year. In 1999 he won the Blundstone National Essay Contest, conducted by Island journal. He also won second prize in the Gwen Harwood Poetry Award that year.
Chapter Four


Introduction:

‘The Story’s Vocation for Peace on Earth’. presents an extended practical meditation on the ethics of a pedagogy as practice. It brings some detail of methods (pedagogic and text-productive) into focus. Its concern is with fiction as pedagogic/heuristic process.

This paper documents story teaching/learning processes as they occur in and out of the classroom. Through direct instruction and through example I show my students the basics of what will work in the way of an English language story. This pedagogy is naturally burdened with assumptions to do with where I am from culturally and to do with the cultural capital of my tradition and its powers over and relevance to them as students of English and its cultures. This kind of reflection is helpful and has a place, but it is well to remember that engagement with possibility – through the form of the story – that makes the meta-discourse about story-making (for instance this one) possible.

Students learn how to make a story and, once they have made them, their stories are tested through telling out loud – beginning to end – in a ‘story circle’, where peers and the teacher sit together around the table to listen to and comment on the story, to understand how it works or doesn’t, to collectively approve it, or send it back for amendment or throw it out. Once the stories are well enough drafted, the teacher sits with students at the computer screen and in the not-quite-face-to-face we engage a dialogue with their work and its improvement as our object.

There is a perpetual lesson in culture the foreign teacher receives in the not-quite-face-to-face as described. Beyond the persons of the interaction, specific impacts or effects have been envisaged and are over time observed. Locally, the hopeful result for this mainly oral culture is the counter-intuitive one that a culture of reading be initiated through the self-creation of a circle of writers. This process is happening through the publication of student work and through the fact that the student-writer in most cases becomes a high school teacher of English, one in search of local content for her classroom. Globally, the hope is that the practice of ‘writing Macao’ will be exemplary for a place-based aesthetic and accompanying pedagogy.
The Story’s Vocation for Peace on Earth

Christopher Kelen
English Department, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Macau, Macao S.A.R., China

Working with the assumption that the story is the chief imaginative means through which the mind deploys language, this paper examines the role of story writing in the second or foreign language classroom. Focusing on the balance between predictable and unpredictable elements in the story, it explores an affinity between the ‘complication’ presented by a foreign culture and the kind of complication we regard as essential to the success of a story. The ethics of Jean-François Lyotard and Immanuel Levinas are invoked for the purpose of understanding the role of foreignness in the process of fiction. Examples of student and collaborative work from Writing Macao are offered to demonstrate the practical operation of conflict and resolution in the short fictions of non-native students of English. Finally, fiction’s generic affinity for conflict resolution is lauded.

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The absolutely foreign alone can instruct us.
Levinas, Totality and Infinity (1969: 73)

In Ovid’s retelling of the story of Python, we learn how the conflict of elements generates the unfolding story of life. After the Flood, the pious couple Deucalion and Pyrrha, as instructed, throw the bones of their mother (stones) behind them and thus the human race, destroyed for its wickedness, is regenerated. From the mud left by the flood, the postdiluvian world arises, in the process later to be known as spontaneous generation.

When heat and moisture are blended, we know that they lead to conception;
everything owes its first beginning to these two elements.
Though fire is at war with water, their combination produces
the whole of nature – procreation from friendly enmity.
(Ovid, 2004: 26)

The view that the world as we know it is the result of – and is continually evolving as the result of – conflict dates back to the pre-Socratic philosopher, Anaximander.¹ In Ovid’s story the vast serpent Python emerges from the mud and terrorises the world until it is brought low by the shafts of Apollo. The resulting peace and the fame of the god’s exploit in returning the world to
safety are to be celebrated ever after in the Pythian Games. In this exemplary myth of origin we see how fundamental conflict and its resolution are to the story. The Pythian Games have been superseded but enmity, friendly or not, goes on generating tales worth telling.

**Here and Now**

In this essay, here at the other not-quite-an-end of the story, I hope to offer practical demonstrations of the operation of conflict and resolution in the short fictions of non-native students of English. Let me then foreshadow the style of the work as shifting back and forth between fiction and theory, hoping to build, not a straightforward, rather a discursive, argument, one which through this means shows theory into practice and which likewise shows practice given pause to reflect on theoretical underpinnings. The works in question are from and with students from my creative writing classes at the University of Macau. Most of the work in question (and much more) can be viewed online at the *Writing Macao* site: www.geocities.com/writingmacaoonline.

Before we return to stories in particular or the thinking behind or succeeding them, perhaps a personal note will be apt, to account for who and where I am, and how these stories happen. I teach local students how to write stories (hopefully ones worth reading) in English. Fully aware of the totalising and universalising risks entailed in the brief, I teach undergraduates and postgraduates to write stories about their place – about Macao – and about how it’s changing and about who they are and who they could be. Here’s how I do it. Through direct instruction and through example I show my students the basics of what a story has to do, of what will work in the way of an English language story. This pedagogy is naturally burdened with cultural assumptions to do with where I’m from and to do with the cultural capital of my tradition and its powers over and relevance to them as students of English. These are all good things to discuss. Examining these assumptions, I hope – in Socratic fashion – to help make our lives more worthwhile for the living.

Once the stories are well enough drafted, I sit with students at the computer screen and in the not-quite-face-to-face we engage a dialogue with their work and its improvement as our object. The most obvious of tasks here is that of turning an ungrammatical melange of worked out plot and character ideas into prose that works. Ockham’s razor is the tool of choice and I would say that in these arduous processes my most common questions are these: what do you mean? What are you trying to say here? Why is this character doing/saying what she’s doing/saying? Do we already know about this? Where is this going? Making-grammatical is the most obvious function of the encounter but plot and character are never out of contention, no matter how well thought through or drafted the story appears.

Job satisfaction for me has a lot to do with the perpetual lesson in culture I’m receiving in the not-quite-face-to-face I’ve described. Nor is it only cultural exchange that’s happening through this kind of meeting. I’m constantly learning new things about the grammar of English, things that I
believe could not be revealed except through the encounter between the native and the non-native of the language. Self-interest here has to do with the application this experience finds in my own writing, and in several genres.

I teach story writing and so it is apt I should now reveal my conviction in doing so. Locally, the hopeful result for this mainly oral culture is the counterintuitive one that a culture of reading be initiated through the self-creation of a circle of writers. This process happens through the publication of student work and through the fact that the student-writer in most cases becomes a high school teacher of English, one in search of local content for her classroom. Globally, my hope is that the practice of ‘writing Macao’ will be exemplary for a place-based aesthetic and accompanying pedagogy. In broad political terms I hope that, against the wheels of progress and the failure to acknowledge what falls under those wheels, through the process of the story we can keep alive the openness of conversation; those wheels and words offered each implying a restlessness, an endlessness. Against Zeno’s arrow not arriving, Martin Buber’s (2002: 109) ‘fragile life between birth and death’ which ‘can nevertheless be a fulfilment – if it is a dialogue’.

**Exercise of the Imagination**

The exercise of the imagination and in particular of the hypothetical faculty (what we might call the ‘what if?’ principle of fiction) have a beneficial cathartic effect for all who avail themselves. On the psychological plane, it is obvious that acts of fiction connect the reader or writer with the unconscious sources of the individual imagination, such as are revealed uniquely to us in our dreams.

Dreams show us worlds different from but clearly connected with those we experience in our waking hours. What is fictional about a fictional story is the conjecture that the world could be different in some way from the way we know it really is. That seems like a straightforward distinction: the distinction between fact and fiction. But the line entailed is far from clear. That is because one person’s fact is another’s fiction. Reality comes in versions and reality is contested. Story making is one of the ways of creating an alternative version and so contesting reality. This is one reason why writers of fiction have so often been in trouble with the powers that be. It’s why Plato expelled the story makers of his time (the poets) from his ideal country in the *Republic*. Writers of fiction show their readers how the world could be different. That could be very threatening from the point of view of those who want to keep the world the way it is. People may be motivated to maintain the status quo for the simple reason that they’re the ones with power or status or money or comfort in the world as it is. Often too it is the case that the weakest, though having apparently little to lose, may suffer the most devastating loss.

Consider the power relations, the nature of the conflict they engender and the style of resolution found in Hilda Tam’s short fable for children written this last semester.
The Fat Fish and the Crocodile

Hilda Tam

A fat little fish was the fastest swimmer in the river. The other big fish always wanted to eat her but they could not swim fast enough to catch her.

One day, a crocodile met the fat fish when she was waddling by the river. The crocodile had heard about the fast fish and he had decided he would like to have a taste of this fat fish. The crocodile understood that he wouldn’t be able to catch her just by jumping in the river, but he had had a plan in his mind for some time already.

The crocodile said to the fish, ‘Hey, little one, it’s a sunny day! Why don’t you come up to the bank and play?’

The fish sneered, ‘What’s so interesting up there?’

The crocodile did his best to look surprised and said, ‘Oh! Don’t you know you can enjoy many wonderful things on the shore? I spend most of my time out of the water! You can lie on soft grass and bathe in the sunshine. You can taste many kinds of delicious insect. You can also meet a lot of little animals. They are nice and you will have a good time with them.’

The little fish’s eyes shone with interest. She was tempted but she was a bit worried. ‘What if . . . I meet some big animals there and they want to eat me?’

The crocodile laughed into the air. ‘Come on, silly! Haven’t you forgotten that you are the fastest! Trust me.’

The fish smiled and agreed with the crocodile. She strained to jump up onto the ground. But once she had reached the ground, she could not move a bit and she felt dry under the sun. Too late she understood that the crocodile had tricked her. The crocodile giggled a little after he’d swallowed the little fish down.

Know your place.

The parable here is instructive for various kinds of cultural exchange which appear to be and in fact are not equal. This fable also usefully illustrates some general fiction theory. Conflict is the motor of suspense. Suspense in the most general sense is what foreshadows resolution, however unpleasant or unsatisfactory that resolution might be.

More essential than any of this are two hidden aspects of the story – its conviction and its dialogic aspect; conviction because a story worth reading proves something in the time honoured manner of the trusty and crusty old dictum: don’t tell me, show me; dialogue because a story with a reader is already between people. In my case I am interested in the story that is not only – as it unavoidably is – between reader and writer, but also between student and teacher (and vice versa, reversing roles), also across cultures, across languages. Macao is an interesting place to witness and to practice this kind of cultural exchange. That is because this dot on the map is the Western world’s original China portal, and has continued in that role now for nearly half a millennium.
Conflict between cultures often shakes up the status quo and shakes the complacent out of their comfort zones. Such is the case in this long-ish (8000 words) rather adult story on which I collaborated with a group of students a couple of years ago. In ‘The Gweilo Wins’, some cross-cultural clichés are set at odds when a *gweilo* (white ghost = foreigner) tries to rent a room from some local Chinese (actually themselves not so long since arrived in Macao from mainland China). The story is set in the 1950s. Mario, the *gweilo* in question, has in fact been put up to this mission impossible by his girlfriend, who happens to be the daughter of the house.

‘Excuse me? Is there a room for rent here?’ Mario asked, trying to sound as innocent as possible.

‘Yes, come in and I will show you.’ In her mind Mrs Siu was spending the rent already. She only wished the rent had been higher. Rich *gweilo* she was thinking.

Mario followed Mrs Siu in. He looked around himself, anxious to get a first hand glimpse of his beloved’s surroundings. This was where she grew up ... this was ... But Mario’s train of thought was interrupted by their arrival at a very small dim room. The whole house had been a disappointment – he hadn’t imagined Lan’s family so poor – but this room was a shock to Mario. So small, so dim, so dusty, and the smell of no human having taken an interest for a long time.

‘Sir, this is the room for lease. It’s a very nice room and ...’ As Mrs Siu was talking to Mario, Mr Siu came to them, with a big broom in one hand. He was about to wave the broom at Mario’s feet – to sweep out the ghost – when Lan came into the house.

‘Pa, what are you doing?’ shouted Lan. Everyone stopped talking. The atmosphere was icy.

‘It ... He is a *gweilo*! I won’t let a *gweilo* into my house. Get out of here.’ Mr Siu went purple with rage.

Mario could not say a word. He’d never experienced this kind of treatment. All he could do was to leave the house at once. That night, he met Lan again as usual and they discussed what they could do.

‘Your dad seems to hate me very much. What can I do?’

‘I’m sorry, honey. I never expected that he would have such a serious *gweilo* phobia. We have to think of a better plan.’

The conditions of conflict are now clearly established and will drive the plot on to what should appear as its logical conclusions. The local girl and her Portuguese boyfriend must team up to defeat the girl’s father’s prejudices, and this will be done at the expense of a wealthy older suitor, who comes into the story a little later. The world will be altered, and at someone’s expense.

**The Hypothetical Agenda: All More Fully Human**

At a very deep level every story is subversive of the real conditions that enable it. Every story – in the business of making fiction of the facts – cannot
help but challenge how things are, cannot help but turn some part of the world as it is on its head. The underlying principle here is that fiction exercises a deep human need to think difference and to think differently.

And so fiction – whether you think of it as an instinct or type of logic – depends on a facility for the hypothetical. It depends on an ability to imagine a world different from that in which the imagining is done.

* * *

In today’s world more people can read and write than ever before but how easy is it for people to tell their own story and have others listen to it? Today more people than ever before share common means of communication – the English language, the world wide web. The opportunities to connect people are better than ever before. The internet provides those with access with great interactive possibilities. The internet offers something humanity in its conversation has never known before: the possibility of instant dialogue with anyone anywhere.

Any voice anywhere, everywhere at once: there are plenty of problems with this ideal in action. Not everyone has equal access to a computer, not everyone is equally proficient in English, not everyone has equal skill at or opportunity to assert her or his opinion. Humanity’s conversation has never been one between equal partners, so it should not come as a surprise that the field of play remains somewhat sloping today. North/South conflict and those means by which it is hidden and/or exacerbated concern the welfare of humanity and concern the notion of and the prospects for peace. Mindful of the need to encourage a read-and-write agenda for culture, the hope of Writing Macao is to promote a pedagogy based on some simple principles. These are that:

- Everyone has a story to tell.
- Everyone can learn how to tell his or her own stories.
- English today is the world language, so if you can tell your story in that medium, then it has a potentially huge audience. The simple ethical principle behind this is that humanity’s conversation is one in which all humans should be entitled to play a part, both as listeners to and as tellers of stories. We will be more fully human if we really hear others’ stories; we will better realise our own human potential if our own stories are listened to.

* * *

The work of peace and its promotion is always vital, always urgent. Its vehicle is dialogue. It would be naïve to imagine that such a dialogue was without its enemies. In his 1948 address to the Dominican monks of Latour-Maubourg on the topic ‘What Unbelievers Expect from Christians’, Albert Camus perceived there being a great unequal battle between ‘the forces of terror and the forces of dialogue’ (p. 32):
We are faced with evil. And as for me, I feel rather as Augustine did before becoming a Christian when he said: ‘I tried to find the source of evil and I got nowhere.’ But it is also true that I, and a few others, know what must be done, if not to reduce evil, at least not to add to it. Perhaps we cannot prevent this world from becoming a world in which children are tortured. But we can reduce the number of tortured children. And if you don’t help us, who else in the world can help us to do this?

A number of strategies are implied in the project to which Camus points. Bearing witness is a first step towards necessary action, and I shall return to this ethos shortly in relation to the *differend* of Jean-François Lyotard. Also indicated are the dialogic, as differently conceived in Buber and Bakhtin, the face-to-face of Immanuel Levinas and the décréation (unselfing) pedagogy of Simone Weil.

How do these ethical/discursive/pedagogic constructions concern the story as it written individually and in collaboration? How does the here-and-now of the story under construction concern the prospects for peace?

**It Was the Dream Itself Enchanted Me**

Simone Weil (1951: 115) believed that *attention* was the key to dealing with the suffering of others in this world:

Those who are unhappy have no need for anything in this world but people capable of giving them their attention. The capacity to give one’s attention to a sufferer is a very rare and a difficult thing; it is almost a miracle; it is a miracle. Nearly all those who think they have this capacity do not possess it.

Miracles in this unnoticed sense begin, if not at home, at least in the here-and-now, wherever and whenever that may be. It may be difficult to seek a prescription for a capacity which by definition falls below the threshold of consciousness, yet perhaps it will be best if we start by paying attention to our own miracles of attention, as witnessed across the border between dreaming and waking.

The link between the story and the dream is what vitally unites the individual and social sides of the possible, the imaginable. Stories in the manufactured sense, with generic structure and so on, are modelled on the experience of the dreamer, an experience common to humans in general and to many other species. Just watch a dog dreaming and you realise that there is something very ancient going on whenever the light plays on that screen we waking folk imagine behind closed eyes ... The dream is a kind of proto-story.

In ancient times and still today in oral societies, the epic (forerunner or species of what we call the novel?) provides a speech community with a collective equivalent of dreaming. Through the epic a community could laud its heroes, sing its own collective praises, explain itself to itself. The epic told (and tells) why and how the world is as it is, how everything came to be. And the epic was and is a circular form of story, one which can be joined or
re-joined at any point, because eventually, through flashbacks and recaps, it will re-tell the listener all the listener needs to know to understand where she finds herself in the story and also in the wider world. If the story changes in the process of its re-telling then this is something no one will ever notice; the reason for this is that the story only changed to the extent that its audience needed it to (c.f. Walter Ong’s account of homeostasis [1982: 46–49]). And so the epic through its unnoticed shift over time manages to remain the wish fulfilment of the audience which dreams together in the form of its story. Consider the converse proposition: those dreams at night we cannot share are myth made on the personal scale. By contrast, in the epic it is the collectivity of the story that makes a people who they are.

Today, it can be difficult to conceive of classic epics like the Iliad or the Odyssey in quite these terms; that’s for the simple reason that we know these as written texts, texts quite different in form from their now long-lost originals. (A ‘transitional’ text type would be Virgil’s Aeneid: an originally written epic.) A better modern example of the epic formula for keeping the dreaming on the collective track would be the television soap. Tune in at any episode and after an hour or two of viewing you know all you need to know about that world and its aspirations. You keep viewing if these are close enough to your own world to be relevant, if at once they are surprising enough. Whether the story is on paper or on the screen, the modern reader/audience equipped with novelistic assumptions must hear the characters before they come to life. No voice = no verisimilitude = no veracity. The truth in fiction is told in the manner of the story; it is narrated, never argued. It comes from a point of view; that is to say the truth in fiction is someone’s, that of someone in particular.

Let us return to the difference between the actual dream of the individual and the collective epic imagining of the tribe. The audience of the epic need not recognise itself as being under a spell or see itself as dreaming together. On the other hand anthropology has led us to suspect that the hard and fast line (and the off/on switch) that characterises our conception of an un/conscious divide in psychic life might be rather more modern and Western than we had imagined. The same could be said for the generic line we draw between the fictional story we see in a novel or on screen and the purportedly true story we read in a newspaper. That particular straight line and likewise the faith we place in it may be more or less modern luxuries.

**Whose Truth Will Set You Free?**

Truth is a big issue for every type of writing and for every kind of writer. Which truth to tell through the beautiful lie we call fiction? The great crossroads in story telling today is the point at which we face the choice between saying how the world is and saying how it should be. We could make that choice a little subtler: it’s between, on the one hand, showing a reader her own world, wicked or otherwise, or someone else’s s/he ought to know about (wicked or otherwise), showing these worlds through whatever filters are indicated for the task, and on the other hand showing a hypothetical world: the way the world could or should be or might under certain circumstances have been. Of course, you could do the job negatively too: show how badly
things might have turned out, to show us how lucky we are, what we’ve got to hold onto. Each of these choices concerns witnessing and truth, because reality, being always under negotiation, and the future always at stake, truth and witness concern the hypothetical and the psychological as much as the ‘objective conditions’. I think the best writing shows the connection and the disconnection between the cathartic truth of the what’s-in-front-of-you-but-you-hadn’t-noticed kind and the hypothetical variety. The miracle is perhaps in attending to and in witnessing the distance between the two.

Then where does that kind of gap leave the truth? The easy answer is: in the plural category. It’s not that there’s something better than truth, it is that truths are numerous and ever proliferating. The truth will set you free? But which one? Whose? Here is a crisis. Surely only your own truth can set you free, the kind of truth the dreamer is accustomed not to question? And it is truth of this kind the writer of fiction or poetry seeks to express. If you have a reader or an audience then this can only be by virtue of the possibility that your truth can also be theirs. It is personal truth in the share-able sense the storyteller of all ages has sought to offer her own kind. That is a kind of catharsis.

I think we can thus say that truth is more fundamental to the story even than conflict. Because a story breathes only to the extent that its characters and plot are credible, because a story proves something, we can claim that truth is both the basis of and the ultimate consequence of conflict and of its resolution. Truth in the fictional sense is the ring the story runs around its reader.

Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogic and multiaccentual novel, as exemplified by Dostoevsky, is distinguished from the epic by what Bakhtin sees as an outcome genuinely indeterminate while in the making. Let us return then briefly to ‘The Gweilo Wins’ to see how the truths and conflicts are brewing in that story. By now our gweilo had been swept out of the house once again by the paternal broom.

A couple of weeks passed, and still there was no one for the room in the Sius’ house. ‘Today we have to eat porridge with sweet potatoes again because we don’t have much money left.’ Mr Siu complained to his family, not a hint of apology in his voice.

‘What? We have had porridge with sweet potatoes for nine consecutive days.’ Mrs Siu knew why. ‘So you can’t get a job and no one wants the room. What can you do?’

‘I don’t know, let’s wait for a few more days. Wait and luck will come to us.’

‘The luck has already come and gone. You swept the rich gweilo out twice! I don’t mind who it is. It doesn’t matter if he is from Africa (Mr Siu winced) or from the Moon (he smiled). Whoever is the next one to knock at our door for a room – and has the money to pay for it (Mr Siu nodded) – will be our tenant.’

‘Okay,’ the husband said, in an uncharacteristically meek moment.

Just as he uttered this fatal word, there came a knock at the door. When it was opened, Mario appeared. This was the third time he’d come again and he’d promised himself that this would be the last time he would ask Mr Siu to rent the room to him. If he failed, he would never come again. He was only doing this because of constant pressure from Lan, who
knew from experience that her father could be worn down with time. Her strategy was simple and traditional. No more sexual favours until he did what she told him.

Mario had changed his strategy for this last effort. This time he held a bunch of bank notes in one hand as he was knocking on the door. The notes were fanned out as if he were a bank teller in a money counting competition. In the blur of this action, Mr Siu, answering the door, imagined that he saw incense paper being fanned before him. And now he looked up to see a ghost. In his meek and beaten frame of mind, he’d already automatically muttered ‘yao mud gwai gon?’ as he’d opened the door. And now he saw the gweilo who was haunting him. He seemed to have brought his own rice. That . . . man . . . again.

‘Oh, it’s you, the gweilo again . . . ’ And now he recognised that what was in Mario’s hand was money, and lots of it. Another kind of rice. Siu’s eyes brightened.

Soap or multiaccental polyphonic experience? The high and the low of work so devoutly local and (even if homeostatically) present may not be easy to call. Dynamism is some kind of key though. Character, plot, story all work to the extent that they transform the conditions that enabled their reading.

**Man and Cockroach: Differend**

The tale told to the tribe had (and still has) to satisfy the group rather than just the individual’s conscious and unconscious expectations. There’s a lowest common denominator in the reception of popular culture and this means that there must be a predictable set of distorting lenses through which the story for the masses passes and continues to pass (in order to become and later remain canonic). It means that the popular story fits into a highly structured and strictly rule-bound genre. Think of the Homeric epic if you can imagine you’re hearing/reading/seeing it for the first time; think of the TV soap. Yes, the epic surprises (in order to excite) but it works with the audience’s expectations: it drags people in by giving what they want at some fundamental level, it satisfies them by surprising them with the sort of thing they’d like to hear (like to be helped to imagine) and it resolves things so as to encourage them to see their world – or another – in terms acceptable to their worldview.

All literary texts (in fact all texts) depend generically on iteration. If you recognise no structure then you cannot follow what is happening. We know our way through a story we do not know because, in an important sense, we have been here before. Because we’ve been here before, we know how to read. ‘The Gweilo Wins’ is hopefully written in such a way that the gweilo reading it (in English after all) need not have been to Macao in order to follow the story. The reason beginning readers (in their own or another language) have so much trouble with the text is because they haven’t been in that context or genre before, or not very much or not very far. Now you could say that both high Modernist and Postmodernist poetry do their best to test just how far we can go in the direction of doing without recognisable structure. Or look at it another way, they put – try to put – their reader in the position of the
beginning reader, that character who has trouble making headway because everything is too much of a surprise. Naturally it is the same for the foreigner reading in a new language.

There is an affinity along these lines between the normal position of the non-native of a culture and the position of the poetry reader. Let me express the idea in the following terms. Poetry (since the 20th century particularly) has this affinity with foreignness: that it does to one’s own language what a foreigner cannot help but do to another language. This is a postulate on which I have meditated at length elsewhere, for instance in a 1997 paper in *Text* titled ‘Poetry as a Foreign Language’ (http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/april02/kelen.htm). Experimental poetry and fiction put their reader through non-stop crises and give her very little to grip on with during the ride.

Yet where surprise – in the sense of epiphany or *satori* – is a key element then the non-native in a language has a distinct advantage. The non-native has a head-start at the de-familiarising, de-automatising work vital in fiction and perhaps even more so in poetry. If she can get past the various hurdles between her and a readership, the non-native is worth hearing from because s/he can’t help but see things differently. She has crossed a border akin to that which the sleeper crosses entering into a dream, crossed into the other world where things cannot be known as they were. She is a little like Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*, visiting the wood ‘where things have no names’. In this a-semantic space where everything forgets itself, we find an apt metaphor for the situation of the foreigner who, entering a new culture, has lost the name for everything s/he knows.

On the face of things the non-native’s strongest suit must be in speaking of and for her own culture; in fact though it may be her entry into the culture of the telling (in this case English) which provides her reader with the most valuable experience. There’s a powerful reflexive analogy at play here between the role of the non-native writer and that of the reader, native or otherwise. The more open the text, in Umberto Eco’s sense, the more the satisfaction for the reader who squarely faces the task of finding her own way. What choice has the non-native writer but to set to work with an all-purpose tool, one with which she’s yet to quite come to grips?

* * *

Jean-François Lyotard (1988: 137) believes that ‘the activities of thought have a . . . vocation: that of bearing witness to *differends*’. An extraordinary claim: that thought could have some particular vocation to unify it and that in the New Testament manner of bearing witness. What is it exactly that thought is to witness for Lyotard? What is a *differend*?

For Lyotard (1988: xi) a *differend* is suggested in the observation that ‘a universal rule of judgement between heterogeneous genres is lacking in general’. Lyotard defines the *differend* as ‘the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be put into phrases cannot yet be’ (p. 13). As such we may regard it as what lies between communities implied in speech intelligible to their participants. Lyotard (1988: 9) claims that society is inhabited by *differends*. He writes that:
there is a differend between two parties when the ‘settlement’ of the conflict that opposes them appears in the idiom of one of them while the tort from which the other suffers cannot signify itself in the idiom.

That situation, I would argue, obtains wherever a law (and for example a grammar or a canon of works) is the possession of particular parties. The relationship between law and justice, or one might say, the circle in which these terms demand and deny each other, is such as to ensure that the question of ownership is kept open. Poetry, because it subjects its own language to the exigencies of a position between languages, plays a role akin to that of bearing witness to differends. It does of its nature what Lyotard demands of thought.

Let us briefly consider a case of apparently irreconcilable idioms, the silence between cultures represented as between species, represented Babel-like as degeneration from a more felicitous epoch. From a story co-authored with my student Vivian Kuan:

Although Ah Ming was merely a fuzzy dot in Mr Lou’s blurry eyes, in the snack seller’s mind there was nothing but the cockroach. Ah Ming, on the other hand, was waiting on the tray to trap the man. Lou hit the tray and those sauces and he thought at first that he had hit the cockroach as well. The oil fell. The soy sauce toppled over. The vinegar spilled, the mustard oozed down over the edge. All the while Lou was trying to save something, anything. In the end he not only failed to save a drop of sauce but he lost his own balance in his effort to juggle all those falling items. The last thing he grabbed at was the ketchup squeezer. It must all have taken less than three seconds, but there was Lou, face down in the oil and soy and vinegar and with ketchup all over his back. He appeared to his customers now as the bloody vanquished gladiator. What the customers might not so easily have noticed was the victorious Ah Ming standing proudly on top of Lou’s head, his armour unscathed, as if triumphing in the arena over some wild beast. That was the end of that particular battle but the fight has kept on to this day. You should know that Ah Ming and Mr Lou have remained till now under the same roof together, although their roles are far different now from what they were in the days of their friendship. Their hatred would never be diminished and the war between them would never stop.

There’s no peace or love or understanding in this resolution; there is in the manner of the myth, explanation of the world’s wicked ways, how they came about. There’s witnessing the truth of difference making positions irreconcilable. Where then are the prospects for another kind of resolution, that which points in the direction of peace? What kind of witnessing would suffice in that cause?

**The Word Is a Window**

Complication – difference in the form of the unexpected, the point of decision – is what makes a text worth being with. The unexpected
demanding-our-reaction is what we read for. The unexpected is likewise a motive for being between cultures, between languages. There’s an ethical imperative here, one which I won’t labour, but which is elaborated nicely in the philosophy of Immanuel Levinas. Allow me to fragment his work in *Totality and Infinity* in order to give you a logical progression through the train of thought with which Levinas (1969) has inspired me.

The event proper to expression consists in bearing witness to oneself, and guaranteeing this witness. (p. 201)

Discourse is thus the experience of something absolutely foreign, a *pure* ‘knowledge’ or ‘experience’, a *traumatism of astonishment*. (p. 73)

History is worked over by the ruptures of history, in which a judgement is borne upon it. When man truly approaches the Other he is uprooted from history. (p. 52)

Levinas (1969: 52) writes of a ‘relationship with the other that does not result in a divine or human totality, that is not a totalization of history but the idea of infinity’. For Levinas this is where all communication is tending because for Levinas the generality of signification is infinity, that which we may otherwise regard as the existence of alterity. Language, in this context of limitlessness, takes on the form of extended epiphany. It is the other speaking in me – the astonishment of this – which enables my selfhood in language.

This business for Levinas is fundamental to dialogue of every kind. There’s a kind of foreignness of partners to each other in dialogue which makes exemplary, even primal, the position of the non-native in a new language. Levinas (1969: 92–93) writes that ‘the presentation of the Other to me’ is ‘the primordial event of signification’ and that the ‘world is offered in the language of the Other’. How else could one learn a language, another’s or one’s own? Likewise, how could one come into a story, either making one or making one’s own?

Iteration makes automatic what should be regarded in the light of a ‘traumatism of astonishment’. It’s not difficult to see that poetry traumatises words and their ways of falling together in order to recapture an astonishment otherwise lost. The complications and crises of fiction have this function too, as do those turns of dialogue in which one truly decides what to say. Levinas (1969: 101) writes ‘he who speaks to me and across the words proposes himself to me retains the fundamental foreignness of the Other’.

The work of fiction (or one might say, the bringing of worlds into being) depends on a community of reader and writer; it depends on their surviving certain crises together. We won’t get there without approaching the other. And here is a permanent motive for the foreigner to write as a foreigner. She always has a head start in the business of approaching alterity. She is always from elsewhere than her new means of meaning. Less so over time perhaps, as she travels further into the foreign idiom, she remains always, in an absolute sense, a foreigner in the language which is not hers. In this manner her experience of language and culture, of the story she reads or she makes or the story she is in,
each equally models the welcome which the truth of fiction requires of its participants.

* * *

Role reversal is one way of bearing witness. Like the carnival (in Bakhtin’s reading of Rabelais) it shows the world turned upside down, and shows how things might otherwise be. Once the accepted order is overturned, the emperor’s ‘new clothes’ may be revealed for what they are. With the explosion of laughter, tension is released, and so the climax/punch line is one that may point in the direction of resolution as reconciliation: a general lightening up all around. The adult entering the foreign culture – like Alice in her wood with no names – participates in a series of role reversals, the first and most obvious of which is the transformation from knowing all the names to knowing none, from being in control to being at the mercy of. The question is can s/he laugh at herself, can s/he accept the laughter of others as with, not against, her (?). The question is, how is that laughter intended (?). What do intentions count for in the world turned upside down?

Let us return at this point to our rich gweilo who – for the sake of love – has found himself at the mercy of prejudices and superstitions he cannot fully understand.

Let us see how, just at the climax of the story, Lan and her gweilo boyfriend manage to extricate themselves from the apparently terrible turn of events (which they have in fact stage managed).

‘Poor Lan, how can she do such a thing before she gets married? It’s immoral! No man will want an impure girl!’ Mrs To added.

‘Mum … no one wants me now. What can I do? Wu … wu … ’ Lo gong,³ say something. Tell them it’s not like what they think!’

‘Um … it’s … We …’ Mr Siu did not want to tell the truth. He thought of the old saying ‘don’t wash your dirty linen in public’. He had to think of a way to cover this scandal. But the question was, how?

Suddenly, a voice broke the silence. ‘Let me marry Lan, please. I’ve loved her since the first day I came here. I don’t care what she has done. She is still pure to me. She is my angel. I want to protect her.’ Mario’s Cantonese was so bad that everyone present looked puzzled, but Mario appeared to be in earnest.

‘No! You are a gweilo! How can I let my daughter marry you?’ But this was just an automatic reaction. After having fought that dirty old man together, Mr Siu for the first time in his life felt a kind of bond with a gweilo. It would take him some time to admit this to himself though. There was a long pause while everyone took stock of the desperate circumstances, of the gweilo’s generous offer, of the father’s stubborn stance.

‘Lo gong. What’s wrong with gweilo? Don’t be so stubborn. It’s more important that our girl can find a man who really loves her.’

‘But … but …’
‘No more “buts”. Let your daughter make the decision this time. Lan, do you want to marry Mario?’ Lan nodded her head. ‘OK. That’s it. Mrs To, Mrs Cheung, Mrs Chan. He’s my future son-in-law, Mario. Pretty handsome, right?’

And so – through devious means – the father’s mind is opened. And so an awkward peace is achieved, in which our young Pyramus and Thisbe outwit the prejudices that stood in their way, so as to meet and remain under one roof.

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Levinas tells us that consciousness tears us away from the there is. That is what the foreigner’s sentence is always doing to the cultures from which she comes and goes.

She’s always getting it wrong to get to be right, always rewriting the rules to go on. Some people find themselves in life with the option of crawling back into their holes at the first sign of such crises. Unavoidable for some, perhaps it is better for all, to tell or to write your way through. By such means you open yourself to astonishment. By such means you write your own story. By such means you become yourself.

A last word on openness I’ll leave to Levinas (1969: 205): ‘The word is a window; if it forms a screen it must be rejected’.

The Story’s Vocation for Peace on Earth

Let us then peer through the window into one last story, to see quite different kinds of conflict and a different style of resolution. We are looking from a crowded street, through a shop window, into a restaurant, one reopening after refurbishment. It is a Japanese restaurant. In Lei Un’s story ‘Kai Xin Dian’ (‘A Japanese Restaurant in Macao’), we meet several kinds of cultural misunderstanding, mis-crossing. Though written in English, dialogue and thought in the story take place in three other languages – Cantonese, Mandarin and Japanese. All but one of these characters is Chinese; none of them is a Westerner. Point of view shifts throughout the story and there is some stream of consciousness (in English) to show where characters are slipping between idioms. To establish the parameters for the conflicts to come: certain Macao locals regard the mainlanders in the restaurant as ignorant bumpkins; Mandarin-speaking mainlanders (upright party members) regard certain of the locals as debauched and corrupt, disrespectful of female comrades and so needing to be taught a lesson. Correct ideology and commercial savvy mix comically as well at times:

‘Mi xin, superstitious!’ Wang Ju couldn’t share her comrade’s enthusiasm, ‘I’ve told you a thousand times. As a member of the Party, you’re here to observe and investigate, not participate in the corrupt fu bai activities. Tang yi pao dan – sugar coated poison, is dangerous.’ Then to Fong, ‘Comrade, remember to give us a discount.’
The Western reader – tending unavoidably to orientalise – may well think of Chinese (and even ‘Eastern’) culture as homogeneous. This story should help to unravel that misconception. An important question for the reader of ‘Kai Xin Dian’ relates to Chinese attitudes to Japanese culture. How variously might this exotic delicacy be mis/understood? Sushi (the raw) is anathema to traditional food values; the anti-Japanese war will never be forgotten.

Here’s the opening scene of the story:

Two middle-aged waitresses in black uniforms are sweeping the floor of a Japanese restaurant and laying tables. The name of the restaurant is ‘Kai Xin Dian’, or ‘Joyful’. Inside, there are six light-coloured wooden tables and each table has four chairs. The cashier’s counter is in the corner, with a Guan Gong (the God of war) altar behind. Grace, the head waitress, a petite and sensitive looking woman in her thirties, is pacing agitatedly around the restaurant, checking the cashier’s counter, offering incense sticks while keeping an eye on the two waitresses.

Customers come and deal in their various ways with the strangeness of the menu. To cut to the chase (and without spoilng the plot on the way), here is the kind of North–South (Mandarin–Cantonese) conflict the reader can look forward to.

He pointed his greasy fingers at Zhang Zhu Ren and shouted in Putonghua, ‘Can ni pi shi! It’s none of your business! Who do you think you are? Sei bak lou! You northern peasant! I can do whatever I want! I can pay my way! I can buy up your ugly female company if I want. But I wouldn’t go with her even if you paid me. Hahahaha . . .’ ‘Ni ta ma de bu xiang huo le! Bastard, you’re dead!’ Zhang Zhu Ren’s fist had connected before his words.

There’s husband–wife (chef–waitress) conflict as well, which leads to the following climactic scene.

Seconds later, Grace was standing in the kitchen doorway hurling sushi from a tray with all her strength. Her hair was loose, her eyes were red with fury. ‘Hui sei la! Go to hell, take your sushi with you!!’ It was only after this battle cry and only after she’d thrown the last piece, the virago collapsed in a heap on the sticky floor.

Levinas (1969: 73) tells us ‘the absolutely foreign alone can instruct us’. Making stories allows you to give yourself distance from your own circumstances. Fiction makes perfect life, which is not. And on the other hand, a worst-case scenario shows you things were not as bad as you thought. If – as per the old dictum – all your characters are you, then distance is the key to making them do what is required of them. Objective distance is the means of
putting your characters to work for you, allowing you to express whatever it is you need to express.

The personal catharsis involved in the distancing work of fiction entails, among other things, sorting the angry from the reasonable moments in order to work out who’s who and what’s what (put crassly, who the good guys and the bad guys are). In moments of anger everything would be much easier if the world really were black and white. Making a story you create the people who can do the work of letting the steam off for you. Fiction is where every emotion, response, reaction can be tested vicariously, that is with relatively little risk. Fiction is the other world – reversed, upside down or just minutely different – where you can do what you cannot, what you would not, what you dare not, what you don’t.

The dream–story nexus is what’s motivating for the writer of fiction, for the one who shows the unseen story, for the maker of worlds other than as-is. Motivation and affect are closely related; which is merely to say one is most easily mobilised in causes about which one feels most strongly. Motivation and affect form a kind of circle because the need to express what must be expressed is highly motivating.

The authorial process of disinvestment is the reverse of what the reader does in identifying or imagining allegiances with characters in the story. The maker of the story distances herself from her own potential feelings and actions in order to convey them; the reader in ‘living’ or ‘siding with’ the experience offered in the text, crosses a gulf towards another’s human experience. The symmetry of these processes suggests among other things that it would be extremely useful for the reader of stories to have at least some training in making them as well. How else can she understand how the process of identification works?

* * *

Resolution is very commonly lacking in life, however conveniently the grand narratives of history may deploy it. Consider clan warfare, violence between nations, the action and reaction that leads from war to war and makes history appear to be that kind of series. Against that brutal reality the ultimate ethical justification for the writing of stories lies in their fundamental generic structure. Suspense is nine tenths conflict yet unresolved. Conflict is the story’s main motor. The best thing about the story is that it provides the kind of resolution often lacking in life: the resolution of conflict.

My claim is not that fiction is some pure kind of thought or that its writers are angelic creatures incapable of wrong, but rather that the story has a vocation for peace in the world, because the story is a means of conflict resolution. The story is – in its structure – a means of imagining peace. Against xenophobia and the refusal to witness, I hope through this paper to have proposed and exemplified a particular pedagogy of creative practice, one fostering the kind of dialogue that opens onto peace and reconciliation.
How to make genuine the dialogic effort to speak neither for nor over one’s interlocutors? We should take our cue from Albert Camus, who, back in 1948, made those Dominicans the following offer:

I shall try not to change anything that I think or anything that you think (insofar as I can judge of it) in order to reach a reconciliation that would be agreeable to all. On the contrary, what I feel like telling you today is that the world needs real dialogue, that falsehood is just as much the opposite of dialogue as is silence, and that the only possible dialogue is the kind between people who remain what they are and speak their minds. (p. 30)

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I should like to close now with a glimpse of an uneasy peace, perhaps the kind that descends on the stage at the end of a Shakespearean tragedy, when there is simply no one left to kill or be killed. Here’s how Lei Un’s ‘Kai Xin Dian’ ends. When the dust of the mêlée has settled:

The group of three marched out of the restaurant in triumph. Bringing up the rear, just as triumphantly, the Macao man – sans date – for whose pleasure they had fought so bravely. The door hadn’t quite swung shut when a new customer entered. Nikon in one hand, phrasebook in the other, he thought nothing of the fact that the very welcome ‘Irashaimase’ was emanating from below eye level. He didn’t look down to see the mess at all. It was the hiragana on the wall that drew him. ‘Okonomiyaki, Japanese pancake. Onaka ga suita. So hungry. Nice, nice. Moshi moshi ... Ano ne ...’ Ying and Fong brushed past on their way to the door and it was to them the humble customer directed his enquiry, in his best English. ‘Also you have congee, ne?’ There was no answer. The waitresses were gone, the proprietors still laid out on the floor. To whom could the hungry man appeal? Only the Guan Gong standing on the altar stared down, invincible halberd in hand.

What kind of generic resolution can we look forward to from the story? Perhaps not one full of love and understanding, but rather one that keeps dialogue open, one that keeping possibility afloat, suggests another story. The story arises because of conflict but we are entitled to hope from the story for the possibility of ways out and ways on. The story worth reading provides us with a crisis most effective when it best challenges our sense of who we are. The story worth reading is one that makes problematic what we took to be our own point of view. Conflict and resolution, peace and dialogue: if scepticism of dominative discourses leads us to abandon seeing these things sub specie aeternitas then perhaps we should rather cast over all an eye as jaundiced and as problematic as that of the Guan Gong god of war on the shelf: mute general adversary of every complacency, ambiguous icon of culture.
Correspondence

Any correspondence should be directed to Dr Christopher Kelen, English Department, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Macau, P.O. Box 3001, Taipa, Macao S.A.R., China (KitKelen@umac.mo).

Notes

1. And is known to the modern world through the development of this view by Lucretius.
2. Written with Carmen Lao, Amy Wong, Hilda Tam, Gloria Leong and Silvia Wong.
3. Cantonese, meaning husband.

References

Chapter Five


Introduction:

Finding the Foreign Space of Poetry:
In the Wood Where Things Have No Name

For dear is an alien tongue
To Zeus who cares for the stranger
And governs the counsel of Kings
– Aeschylus’ The Suppliant Maidens

I am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me.
– Menander

Consider great ethical questions the thinking world now faces. Some of these questions concern war and terror and weapons of mass destruction. Some concern population movements, rights to be where one wants to be, responsibilities incumbent on those who simply are where they are, likewise on those in motion (voluntary or otherwise). There are questions about rights to protect borders, and the responsibilities entailed by those various boundaries which situate subjects as actors in and on the world. Differences between and distinctions among persons challenge notional identities and equalities of the ‘before God’ or ‘before the law’ variety, just the kinds of ideal that have characterised the reign of liberal humanism.

In the twenty first century, national and corporate interests tend to veil the ‘us and them’ structure of experience in which lines on the map and colour of skin really do sometimes make life terrifyingly unequal. Media and military vectors in the world today conceal fundamental facts of distinction, realities of advantage and disadvantage. In particular, these more and less visible operations of power divide the rich and comfortable from the exploited and the endangered and, in so doing, they conceal the worldwide suffering which sustains myths of freedom and of a concomitant universality of rights, the avowal a great good for all in the prospect that all polities might be democratic. Opinions and property and ultimately lives are not of equal value, despite the propaganda and the wishful thinking to that effect.

The great questions to which I allude and the concealment of the facts which might answer them, all have to do with the ways in which one is able to deal with others, with those who are different from me because we cannot understand each other. There are many kinds of difference able to divide people and peoples from each other. Often conflict is simply the result of different people wanting the same thing. Still, in many cases the issue of understanding is fundamental; where understanding is at issue, dealing with language (and cultural) difference is a key to a possible resolution of conflict.

Learning how to and making the effort to understand others is one of the most positive and hopeful things humans can do for each other, and for themselves. The empathy required for (and enabled by) such an effort entails the act of ‘becoming foreign’. It involves the engaging of a spirit of foreignness, which I will argue, is fundamental to the mind motion we call poetry. It is fundamental not just because, thousands of years ago, Plato expelled the poets from his ideal world. That weak and whimsical act against the competition was the symptom of a problem already obvious to Plato’s
The poets (and the artists in general) – then as now – already have an affinity with the ‘outside’. Acts of the imagination are efforts to approach other minds, minds other than as mine is. Oscar Wilde has remarked that all forms of government are failures. I think Plato’s Socrates had lit on the idea that poetry was in some sense the opposite of the idea of government. Plato’s solution to that little difficulty was to give the poets a garland each and send them on their way. But – in a sense no less metaphorical than that in which Plato’s republic should be taken – the poets were out there already, up against the limits of understanding, at the dangerous border between sense and nonsense.

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In this essay I hope to marry two intimately related aspects of my own experience – these being the time I have spent with non-natives of English (particularly with natives of Chinese, and ostensibly teaching them how to do things with my language), and the time I have spent with poetry. It has long been my view that there is an intimate connection between these experiences, along the lines of this modernist formulation: that poetry does to its own language what the foreigner cannot help but do to the language she is entering. On the basis of this hypothesis one may contend that poetry’s is therefore a community of foreigners or of strangers to themselves. An impossible kind of community, which – having a duty to privilege its outside – furnishes the hope (more needful today than ever) that life may be breathed into Menander’s dictum that no human differences should be foreign to we humans. To give the idea a more contemporary resonance and to make more explicit the poetry-politics connection here implied, Octavio Paz’s notion of the ‘other voice’ will be apposite.

Through the mouth of the poet there speaks – I emphasize speaks, not writes – the other voice. It is the voice of the tragic poet and the buffoon, the voice of solitary melancholy and merrymaking, of laughter and sighs, the voice of the lovers’ embrace and of Hamlet’s contemplation of the skull, the voice of silence and tumult, mad wisdom and wise madness, the intimate whispers of the bedroom and the uproar of the crowd in the square. To hear that voice is to hear time itself, the time that passes but comes back, transformed into a few crystalline syllables. (74)

Without resort to any universal or canonic judgments, I think that what each of us finds best in poetry represents – yes – a crystal – that imagined perfection of words to which the voice returns. Inside that crystal – for those who look closely and for those who look again – what goes on is an unending and ever-changing dance, one which is reflected differently in the eye of each beholder. I do not know about hearing “time itself” but I do know that every word we have is a kind of time capsule – a hall of mirrors (or a black hole?) in which all that has been meant by this means, lies irrevocably spent. The word goes whirling on in this dance. Poetry does it honour by acknowledging this uncanny loss of meaning where meaning is most familiar.

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So much for my general premise and the worlds of activity I hope to connect. My focus in this paper is on a particular instant or moment, which will be – I hope – exemplary for our considering the affinity of poetry for the non-native’s situation, and of poetry’s power – of making new worlds and making worlds new – through coming into language. The key instance I wish to consider in this light is Alice’s speech defying moment in the Looking-glass land’s ‘wood where things have no names’. The bulk of this essay examines the conditions of this apparently a-semiotic space. I conclude by considering its functional implications for poetry.
In the third chapter (‘Looking-glass Insects’) of Lewis Carroll’s classic, Alice has crossed a border akin to that which the sleeper crosses entering into a dream, crossed into the other world where things cannot be known as they were. In this a-semiotic space where everything forgets itself, we find an apt metaphor for the situation of the foreigner who, entering a new culture, has lost the name for everything s/he knows.

The Worn Coin

In The Poetic Image C. Day Lewis writes of passages in Gerard Manley Hopkins Journals “where he describes an object with such minute and scrupulous accuracy of detail that the object itself completely disappears” (24). For Lewis this is a fault and perhaps it is on a par with the accusation sometimes leveled at the overly word engaged – of having vanished into a rather intimate orifice, one unmistakably their own. Lewis writes of T.E. Hulme’s view of poetry, that its “great aim is accurate, precise and definite description” (23). Hulme writes that the poet’s task is to “see things as they really are”, that this task demands the “concentrated state of mind, the grip over oneself which is necessary in the actual expression of what one sees.” For Hulme, poetry “chooses fresh epithets and fresh metaphors, not so much because they are new… but because the old cease to convey a physical thing and become abstract counters” (24).

Echoed here is a nineteenth century idea we find expressed independently in Nietzsche and Mallarmé. Mallarmé writes of language as a worn coin passed silently from hand to hand (368). In Nietzsche’s much quoted passage in “On Truth and Falsehood in an Extra-Moral Sense”:

What therefore is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms: in short a sum of human relations which became poetically and rhetorically intensified, metamorphosed, adorned and after long usage seem to a nation fixed, canonic and binding; truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions; worn out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses; coins which have their obverse effaced and now are no longer of account as coins but merely as metal. (1974, p. 180)

The quest for a truth beyond that which lies in words suggests an idealism which leads to the ineffable and the inexpressible – in short it points to frustration. The mirror world here indicated is suggestive of Alice’s general predicament in Looking-glass land. Every effort to elude representation ends in more of the same.

In this essay I work on the basis of an affinity between the position of the poet and the position of the foreign language learner. The poet wishes to do the kinds of things in and to her own language that the foreign learner cannot help but do to the language she is entering. Consider Paz’s conception of the “new” poem: “Each new poetic work challenges the public’s mind and taste. To appreciate it a reader must learn the vocabulary of the work and assimilate its syntax” (96). To some extent the creation of such works entails taking the mechanism of language apart to get an idea of how it runs. To return to our previous metaphor: in these hands the coin is no longer worn. In the terms the Russian Formalists adopted, the poet strives to de-automatise or to de-familiarise the language s/he uses, to bring back to life dead metaphors and metonyms. The non-native cannot help but draw attention to these automated features of language which are opaque to her. It is by drawing attention to them – for instance through a question – she manages to understand what (and perhaps how) words mean. And so both poet and the subject entering culture (=language) find themselves bearing witness in quite similar ways. Each witnesses the truths of culture which use has drawn from our attention. As with witness more generally, we can expect trauma to result from those encounters which draw attention to lost truths, to truths yet to be found. For Immanuel Levinas, this trauma is in the nature of language/communication more generally. Discourse, Levinas writes is the
“experience of something absolutely foreign, a pure ‘knowledge’ or ‘experience’, a trauma of astonishment” (73).

The comfort we each feel in our own idiom belies the sometimes routine terrors experienced beyond and between familiar means of communication. The age of nations is the age of exiles. The displaced person – like the unknown soldier – is one of the key characters of the twentieth century. To have left home because you had no choice remains today one of the world’s archetypal situations.

The refugee may experience the world s/he is trying to enter (usually the West) in the manner of the man from the country in Franz Kafka’s story ‘Before the Law’. That character spends a lifetime failing to get through a gate which he learns at the last was built only for him. If you cannot see that the gate in front of you is for you to pass through then effectively you are seeing a wall in your way. The language of “liberation” – and whether recognized as such or not – may also be the brick wall facing the refugee. It is the bureaucratic means of keeping someone out, as in Naomi Lazard’s “Ordnance on Arrival”:

Welcome to you
who have managed to get here.
It’s been a terrible trip;
you should be happy you have survived it.
Statistics prove that not many do.
You would like a hot bath, a hot meal,
a good night’s sleep. Some of you
need medical attention.

None of this is available.
These things have always been
in short supply; now
they are impossible to obtain.

This is not
a temporary situation;
it is permanent.
Our condolences on your disappointment.
It is not our responsibility
everything you have heard about this place
is false. It is not our fault
you have been deceived,
ruined your health getting here.
For reasons beyond our control
there is no vehicle out.

That these victims are not blamed or tortured may be of little consolation to them. Their circumstances appear as inescapable. Who is responsible for these anonymous people, for their suffering? What responsibilities do we – or does humanity in general – have for them? In whose game are they playing, caught? Terror being the theme of times millennial, their plight is one which will instruct us should we be brave enough to witness. What Lazard’s poem does not witness – and this is no criticism of the work – is the terror that comes of being lost for words, because one is between idioms.
Pawns in Chess

Alice ends Chapter Two of her adventures in the Looking-glass world with the recognition that she is a pawn and that she must soon move. Pawns in chess, we must remind ourselves, are generally moved, rather than self-moving, but as good readers we overlook this nicety of life on our side of the mirror in order to keep up with Carroll’s plot. Volition, and its grammatical counterpart, agency, are at stake here, in a manner typical of Alice’s predicament. It is the oneiric logic of Alice’s ever-shifting situation which finds her next surveying a landscape in which bees turn into elephants, in which Alice finds herself running down hills and jumping over brooks, and then traveling on a train that likewise – despite some trepidation on the part of the passengers – jumps brooks.

After her train journey, Alice converses with the Looking-glass Insects for whom the chapter is named. The companionable (and chicken-sized) gnat with whom she speaks regards Alice as one of them, just as the live flowers had in the previous chapter. After the tearful gnat sighs himself away, Alice presses on, through an open field with a dark wood on the other side of it. This is the wood (foreshadowed by the gnat [51]) where things have no names.

The principal interest of this paper is in exploring the symbolic and suggestive range of this brief sojourn. Granted Carroll’s Alice books enjoy the status of international touchstone for the imagination and its unpredictable ways, Alice’s passage evokes for readers from varied cultures, not only the entry into culture of the child, but less obviously the entry of the non-native into a new language. Several sorts of reflection, other-sidedness or mirror imaging suggest themselves in and around the circumstances of those entering culture. Foremost of these is probably “orientalism”, that flawed thinking which might be defined as the failure to recognise in oneself a failure to see others.

Foreshadowed in the wood where things have no names is the “making strange” of the Russian Formalists of the next century and their view (most famously Roman Jakobson’s) of the “poetic function” of language. In Alice’s journey through these woods (and more generally), the reader witnesses the de-automatising or de-familiarising effects of the non-native’s approach to another (a new) way of naming. Those approaching words a first time remind the too familiar user of the forgotten strangeness of words. The newness of naming is more generally evoked in the Carrollian paranomastic world-view. In Carroll’s works for children, if a word is worth attending to then there is always another way it could go. The business of portmanteau words, which Humpty Dumpty will explain in making sense of “Jabberwocky” (102), suggests strongly what Freud will call *condensation*. Humpty Dumpty says that his words mean precisely what he wishes them to mean, neither more nor less. This is unconvincing and nicely suggestive of the pride before a fall which usually accompanies efforts at linguistic prescriptivism (or determinism). Even the simplest words are susceptible to uses which, in these terms, will be mistaken. With hindsight we might claim that revealed here is a collective unconscious of the everyday kind, found in words in general. “Way” itself offers a good example in the context of Looking-glass land.

Alice attended to all these directions, and explained, as well as she could, that she had lost her way. “I don’t know what you mean by your way,” said the Queen: “all the ways about here belong to me – but why did you come out here at all?” she added in a kinder tone. “Curtsey while you’re thinking what to say, it saves time.”

Alice wondered a little at this, but she was too much in awe of the Queen to disbelieve it. (87)

In these lines we see how a way with words may be possessed and how that form of possession may be associated with – perhaps enable or be the result of – the possession of less metaphoric territory. Already Alice has conjectured such a big picture quickly after she discovers the chess board.
“It’s a great huge game of chess that’s being played – all over the world – if this is the world at all, you know. Oh what fun it is! How I wish I was one of them. I wouldn’t mind being a Pawn, if only I might join – though of course I should like to be Queen, best.” (40)

Suggested in Alice’s surmise is both the unreality of the world beyond the familiar and the desire to participate in it. The desire for innocent participation slides “naturally” (i.e. without notice) into a desire for mastery. The connection between these (and the violence implied) has been foreshadowed on the other side of the mirror in Alice’s Queen fantasies and by her viciousness: “once she had really frightened her old nurse by shouting suddenly in her ear, ‘Nurse! Do let’s pretend that I’m a hungry hyaena, and you’re a bone!’” (18).

This imperious outlook makes the wood where things have no names suggestive of the unmapped territory of the Victorian mind – the kind of space in which a Livingstone and a Stanley might meet – the dark woods of a dark (because unknown) continent. C.S. Lewis’s Narnia owes all sorts of debts to Wonderland and Looking-glass land, but perhaps above all it is nostalgic for this unmapped space, located in the territory of others, where the British child may come to rule over adults who are diminished by their alterity, or one might say, by virtue of having been dreamt.

Alice’s sojourn through apparently a-semiotic space is brief and its outline is quickly recounted. After much name based banter, the gnat vanishes and Alice gets up and walks on:

She very soon came to an open field, with a wood on the other side of it: it looked much darker than the last wood, and Alice felt a little timid about going into it. However, on second thoughts, she made up her mind to go on: “for I certainly won’t go back,” she thought to herself, and this was the only way to the Eighth Square. (55)

It is just at this point Alice recognizes that she is entering the wood where things have no names. As a pawn she has no choice but to go on and it is through fearful territory she must travel if she wishes to realize her ambition of becoming a queen. This is a winter’s tale and though notionally above-ground, much darker than the summer spirited wonderland adventures.

Entering the woods Alice ponders the danger of losing her name; she worries that if she is given a new one it will be ugly. Her mind wanders on the theme of answering to a name in the manner of a dog. By the time she is in the forest proper she is tired and ready to appreciate the shade offered, but by now she can no longer think of the words “wood” or “tree” and so paradoxically she is able to place herself with certainty in the space where things cannot be named.

In the midst of Alice’s determined (yet futile) efforts to remember who she is, a Fawn wanders by. There is immediate rapport via eye contact between these creatures who can name neither themselves nor each other. Pressed by Alice to divulge his identity, the Fawn promises to do so if Alice will come along with him a little further. “I can’t remember here,” he says. The two progress together lovingly, Alice’s arms around the soft neck of the Fawn, until they come out of the woods and, in the moment of recognition, the Fawn flees at top speed. Alice is saddened by his departure but comforted to remember who she is once more.

The Way that Can Be Told...

The popularity of the Alice books has outlived the Victorian colonial mindset; the spaces and the imagery of these texts live on with us, suggestive of that era, and likewise suggestive both of the persistence and the madness of an imperial way with the world. The reader makes her way through Victorian mind-space as a foreigner, but the foreigner of English (the non-native of this language) has no choice but to read the ubiquitous tale and its canonic imagery as a classic of western mind
chaos. The mixture of madness and method here is uncannily like that encountered by the non-native as she makes her way through space which is foreign to her, though less so the further she goes.

Alice’s business above with the polysemy of “way”, and likewise with being in the place which itself cannot be named, is suggestive of the opening of the seminal text in the Daoist canon, the *Dao De Jing*. Like Carroll’s *oeuvre* this text is among the most contentious in the history of translation, and so the intention here is not to offer a straightforward gloss as if the meaning were unproblematic. The first lines may be transliterated from Mandarin as:

\[
\text{dao ke dao fei chang dao} \\
\text{ming ke ming fei chang ming}^3
\]

The conventional translation is usually something like: “the way that can be told is not the unvarying way”. The conventional wisdom in the way of interpretation is that “the path” in life or wherever metaphorically intended is mysterious to the point of ineffable. Chad Hansen, in his *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought*, rejects the assumption of ineffability and – for convenience – gives the characters in these lines the following sequence of values: “way:speak can be way:speak not constant way:speak/name can be name not constant name.”

The “way” metaphor/symbol is central to both Chinese and Western culture. Jesus’ self-metaphorics (contiguous with truth and light) and Robert Frost’s way less traveled come to mind. One might argue that, *dao* being the key word in one of the three key religions of China (Daoism), its significance is greater in the East. The point is moot; what is important is that this term offers wonderful opportunities for cultural comparison.

Hansen argues that the first lines of the *Dao de Jing* are about language and action, not about mysticism or metaphysics. Language – and particularly naming – being inconstant, it is unreasonable to expect language to convey unchanging guidance (or what we in the West might traditionally think of as eternal truths):

For Laozi, what lacks constancy is not the experienced world of particular physical objects, but the system of name use. No unchangeable system of discourse exists. This is not because things change, but because names (and their distinctions) do. (218)

Then what is *dao* in the Daoist conception? *Dao* is prescriptive discourse. A *dao* tells you how to do something. The first chapter of the *Dao de Jing* expresses scepticism about the prospect that anybody can tell you in any permanent, definitive way, how something ought to be done, or what something necessarily has to be called.

*Dao* in this sense is precisely what Alice needs to get to the other end of the board and become a queen. It is precisely the inconstancy of naming – of which the Red Queen’s use of the word “way” provides a prime example – which makes the getting there so difficult.

**Zeno’s Arrow**

In their *Dictionary of Imaginary Places*, Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi write that “Looking-Glass Land is the tangible proof of Zeno’s refutation of space” (382). The paradox of the arrow is obviated because in Carroll’s creation “visitors proceed from one point to another without the unnecessary and infinite bother of covering intermediate space.” National borders in the modern world, dividing languages, currencies and customs from each other, might be conceived in just these terms. The unknown world on the other side makes as little sense to its non-native as any of the world’s random corners might make to a child. In the a-semiotic space of the forest where
everything forgets its own name, we find an apt metaphor for the situation of the foreigner who, entering a new culture, has lost the name for everything s/he knows. Yet there might be something Edenic in just such a loss or lack. In “The Balance of Brillig”, Elizabeth Sewell writes “There is some suggestion here that to lose your name is to gain freedom in some way, since the nameless one would no longer be under control… It also suggests that the loss of language brings with it an increase in loving unity with living things” (387).

Alice’s dialogic encounter with the world she negotiates is suggestive of larger concerns for culture’s novitiate and for the manner in which the experience of those entering culture might be exemplary for (adult) others to whom culture’s conditions have become invisible because automated. Alice’s conversations with those she meets, and particularly with the gnat, involve the reader in a train of thought one might trace back to the physis-nomos debate in the Cratylus of Plato (and which perhaps foreshadows the symbolic logic of the century to come). The contention over nature and convention in the Cratylus signals the beginning of an ongoing debate in the western world about the great undecidables of signification:

Hermogenes. I should explain to you, Socrates, that our friend Cratylus here has been arguing about names; he says that they are natural and not conventional; not a portion of the human voice which men agree to use; but that there is a truth or correctness in them, which is the same for Hellenes as for barbarians. (85)

Socrates in the Cratylus says that trusting names and the givers of names condemns us to “an unhealthy state of unreality” (114).

Consider the Fawn Alice meets in the woods (a character clearly foreshadowing the Mr Tumnus of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe5). This creature only becomes scared of Alice and only runs off in fear when names have returned because the two of them (Alice’s arms around the Fawn’s neck) have now left the woods.

“I’m a Fawn!” it cried out in a voice of delight, “and, dear me! You’re a human child!” A sudden look of alarm came into its beautiful brown eyes, and in another moment it had already darted away at full speed. (58)

Alice almost cries with vexation at having lost this new friend before she had really found him; before she had found out who he was, just at the moment when she had discovered what he was.

Between Alice and the Fawn is a dialogue which notionally cannot begin because no one knows who or what his/her interlocutor is. Yet there is a dialogue, there is rapport and even affection. These are all shown as innocent. In the manner of a child’s innocence, we see, on both the Fawn’s and on Alice’s part, an openness and a welcome to the unknown other. Reminding us of an Edenic expulsion, the openness and the welcome are dissolved by fear born of knowledge. This fearful knowledge – like that of the non-native entering the new culture – is born of the world of already named entities. The world already named presents as lack to the subject who requires but does not yet have those names. The irony – and it is one which satirizes so much name/title based distinction in human affairs – is that Alice and the fawn could only be close when they did not know who they were.

Terror for the Fawn is in the truth of words and the reality which these convey to the visible world. The Fawn’s fear can be perhaps read as akin to that which Socrates expressed at the conclusion of the Cratylus:
if the very nature of knowledge changes, at the time when the change occurs there will be no knowledge; and if the transition is always going on, there will always be no knowledge, and, according to this view, there will be no one to know and nothing to be known. (114)

Knowledge as process defeating knowledge as object is the pseudo-problem here. In the West’s ancient reflexive imaginary: the paradox of the arrow not getting there is a self-image of failure. Manguel and Guadalupi are right when they claim that the leaping about in Looking-glass land shows us the refutation of space, as per Zeno’s paradox of the arrow which cannot be in motion because at any moment it is located somewhere. In his essay, “Blessed Rage: Lewis Carroll and the Modern Quest for Order”, Donald Rackin writes:

There can be no telos, no final goal or ultimate “meaning” within Alice’s biological nature or her natural surroundings: Her natural curiosity and her human need for what she calls the “meaning of it all” make her, like us, a permanent stranger to her natural environment. She will never attain that Eden she calls “the loveliest garden you ever saw.” (400)

As in Zeno’s paradox, so in Looking-glass land: everything is where it is but it cannot have got there.

There is a bivalency in operation which allows us past this contradiction. Alice is the arrow whose motion through space may – in the terms Deleuze and Guattari lay out in A Thousand Plateaus – be conceived alternatively as smooth (the chaos of the world) or as striated (the order of chess). The “world as chessboard” metaphor makes motion possible (or dynamic) for Alice where it is impossible (or circular) for certain others. In the wood where things have no name we see both the realization and the refutation of the paradox of the arrow as applied in interpersonal communication. It is impossible for these characters to reach each other in the sense of knowledge of self or other, and yet there is a conversation between them. The conversation falls apart once those speaking are able to be named. Meta-awareness defers the possibility of meaning and so kills action.

Who Dreams of the World in the Mirror?

One of the beautiful clichés of Chinese thought which Westerners love to appropriate (witness Cronenberg’s [1993] M. Butterfly) is Zhuangzi’s parable of one Zhuang Zhou who dreamt he was a butterfly and forgot he was a person. Zhuangzi asks us whether Zhuang Zhou dreamt of the butterfly or the butterfly dreamt of Zhuang Zhou. The story has parallels in Western thought: notably in the Meditations of Descartes and in Alice’s speculations along with the brothers Tweedle with regard to the Red King in Through the Looking Glass. A twentieth century example is in Borges’ story “The Circular Ruins”. In each case reflexive aim at identity is taken by positing contrast between reality and a state of mind in which one would not know one’s self or one’s state of mind.

In the western tradition what is most obviously at stake here is Platonism, especially for Carroll’s world, as espoused by Bishop Berkeley in the eighteenth century. Is the real world an idea in God’s mind? Is this proposition reversible? Is God something humans have dreamt? What if either party were to wake? Interest lies not in answering the questions but in playing out the logical consequences of the hypotheses they posit, and more particularly in giving them context. Between Carroll’s world and ours, between colonial and notionally postcolonial worlds, between Europe’s mind and the mind of its others, it should be acknowledged that China could be that Red King sleeping, Europe might have been its dream. China devoted much of the nineteenth century to the hope that the West was only a bad dream. The strange religious rhetoric of the Tai Ping rebellion2 (1851-64) can be read as a condensation or conflation of Christian and home-grown anti-Confucian tendencies which conspired against China’s official waking consciousness.
Tweedledee advises Alice not to wake the king because he is dreaming of her and if he were to leave off dreaming of her then she would go out “like a candle” (70). Subject-object games with agency and volition are played out here through a nuanced of lexicon and syntax. The grammarian’s “dummy it” is employed to give the weather volition just where Alice is deprived of it: “It may rain if it chooses.” (72). The unease created by means of this trick is, for Alice and her sympathetic reader, one of Kafkaesque unfairness. At the end of the story we will learn that the Red King is in fact a character in Alice’s dream. Possibilities are not foreclosed with this revelation however; it remains possible that Alice and everything in her story was dreamt by the king. Some questions with regard to transformation and volition left open, there is a more remote possibility a kitten dreamt it all. Such questions are the subject of the novel’s last chapter, “Which Dreamed It?” and they are left open by the work’s interactive conclusion: “Which do you think it was?” (172).

Tweedledee and Tweedledum’s “dittos”, by which they indicate that they too are dreamt characters (71), take on a new veracity here. They are the mirror image of subjectivity centering the whole of the text; they are dreamt both by Alice and by the Red King.

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The dreamer, Lacan tells us, lacking the power to say no, does not challenge the truth or facts of the dream. Through thought and conversation, Alice’s reality is constantly challenged and one might observe that, unlike Lacan’s dreamer, Alice gives as good as she gets. This is especially true if we regard her as the refusenik of someone else’s (i.e. the Red King’s) dream, as the one who protests, “I am real!” (71). As a literary device dreams have long been and remain a vehicle obviating the “normal” constraints on plot concerning logic and common sense. More fundamentally, the process of dreaming and the processes of fiction are closely related. The “reality” of characters in fiction is such as to demand of them precisely Alice’s style of meta-awarenesses, and her protest: “I am real!” Outside of the text which frames and re-frames Alice, as dreamer and as party dreamt, the reader/ voyeur can only take Carroll’s “dreamwork” as engagement with the literary imagination and with venerable traditions in thought. Plato’s cave and Descartes’ demon are evoked here and remind us of the dangers which inhere in assumptions as to reality or the identity of what is true with what is sensible.

Foreshadowing modernism and frustrating allegorical interpretation, Carroll’s Looking-glass world provides the reader with a view into a space where self-consciousness takes the form of a loop, in which Alice and the Red King dream and are dreamt. The loop is closed but ambiguously, which is to say its meaning remains deferred because it is open to interpretation. Among the allegories frustrated here, one might place at the top of the list those mis-recognitions associated with orientalism.

How can real and imagined worlds coincide? All that separates real from imagined worlds in Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass* is a single dissolving surface, passage through which commences adventures into the impossible. Among much business foreshadowed here, Lacan’s mirror stage establishes the boundary between the infant and its external reality (and so the ego) through the (imagining) process of self-recognition. For Lacan it is the initial lack of wholeness in the body that begins the child’s concerted processes of alienation and self-construction. The self is formed in the Other mis/recognised in the mirror. That capital O indicates that it is an *imaginary* order the pre-verbal (and pre-Oedipal) child is entering. In Lacanian theory the *imaginary* order is prior to the *symbolic* (associated with language) and the *real*, these comprising three sequentially ordered stages in subjective development (1-7 passim).

The mirror is also essential to those prejudices which go under the name of orientalism because in this binarising world view what is different from me depends on my image. It is only from my lacks
that the other can be known. In this way orientalism provides a kind of reverse or negative image, the image of an alterity. The orientalist imagines that s/he is looking through clear glass when in fact s/he is looking into a mirror. In other words, the orientalist thinks s/he has in mind an image of another culture’s reality but is in fact merely projecting on that other culture her own ideas of the exotic, these providing a third party onlooker with the orientalist’s self-description.

The works of Lewis Carroll are littered with violence and with casual threats from arbitrary powers. For those who engage these works today, equipped with critiques of colonialism and orientalism, empathy is a key question. Does the violence of Carrollian fiction reify the exercise of arbitrary power as the acceptably wicked way of the world, or is violence in these works a kind of witnessing – the kind one might read as foreshadowing the engagement with the dialogic to be found in Martin Buber, Mikhail Bakhtin or Immanuel Levinas? Levinas writes that “the presentation of the Other to me” is “the primordial event of signification” and that the “world is offered in the language of the Other” (92-3). Levinas tells us, “The word is a window; if it forms a screen it must be rejected” (205). Which kind of surface is it Alice passes through into Looking-glass land? Which kind of surface do we, as readers, peer into when we read of Alice’s adventures?

“**I weep for you,” the Walrus Said**

The question of empathy is a persistent theme throughout the works of Lewis Carroll. In *Through the Looking Glass* perhaps more than elsewhere, empathy is tested through the “making strange” characteristic of the world to be explored. That world-to-be-explored is experienced from the point-of-view of a subjectivity which is naturally imperial (that of the British school girl experiencing worlds foreign to her) and so remains for the most part undisclosed. In Carroll’s dream, the child’s entering culture becomes a kind of world mastery. That mastery is concealed by the powerlessness of the subject-as-child subject to powers as arbitrary as they are foreign to her. The chaotic (often impossible) space of others is mastered in the form of a game which orders it and makes it sensible, even if the rules of making sense are often submerged. It is interesting to compare this Oxford man’s fantasy of an immediate shift through a single surface into the world of curious others, with like Oxford fantasies in the following century of “Inklings” J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis (men whose fantasies we should read as enabled in large part by Carroll’s). In the Narnia books, British adults may have botched their job of world domination but the children nevertheless inherit an empire on the scale of the one their parents have lost. In terms of the religious allegory\(^2\) in the story, this is their God given right. Lewis Carroll writes when the empire is in a phase of vigorous expansion and into the planet’s darkest and most remote corners. Tolkien and Lewis write when the empire’s star is waning. For C.S. Lewis’s Pevensie children and for Tolkien’s Frodo and Bilbo it is axiomatic that they do not know their way. The reader, however, finds their moral universe – and its perpetual good/evil struggle – quite predictable. If empathy is well out of the question in these later works, then what drives Alice through Looking-glass land is a desire for power, quite casually accepted as proper; she will follow the rules as she finds them in order to become a queen. A step back from these three *oeuvres* reveals as much more challenging (and perhaps more convincing) Alice’s awe and the uncertain ethics she must negotiate, for instance when unable to name her way and the space through which she moves.

Comparing with Carroll’s, J.R.R. Tolkien’s and C.S. Lewis’s characterisation, one notes as more genuine and more serious Alice’s engagement with the foreign others and the ethical dilemmas faced through the imperial/colonial project. A Frodo or a Peter Pevensie must live up to challenges, Alice has to challenge, dialogically, all that she is expected to live up to. Tweedledee’s recitation of “The Walrus and the Carpenter” brings to the fore the kind of ethical dilemma characteristic of Alice’s always unstable position.
As indicated by the insistent “contrariwise”, Tweedledee and Tweedle Dum’s is a battle of enantiomorphs (mirror images each of the other). In the Walrus and Carpenter tale Tweedledee recites for Alice, treachery and exploitation are naturalized in the dialogic encounter of two characters, who though physically different, share common assumptions with regard to their rights to dominate powerless others. In making a judgment of them, Alice has to choose between action and intention as the deciding factor. At first Alice prefers the Walrus because he at least pitied the oysters a little. When Tweedledee tells her that he ate more, she changes her mind. When Tweedledee tells her that he ate as many as he could, Alice sensibly decides “they were both very unpleasant characters” (69). The absurd unreality of the first stanza (sun shining in the night) contrasts ironically with the grim reality of the last (the eaten oysters not answering).

In terms of world-historical ethics, this call to judgment invokes Hegel’s weltanschauung and in particular the master/slave dialectic. The possibility of ethics in the world as made exemplary by “The Walrus and the Carpenter” is forestalled by the matter-of-fact rule of might which sees the oysters eaten by those in a position to control the narrative. The cruel and domineering Alice of the other side of the mirror, here models affront for the reader. These two Alices – aspects one might say of the one personality – likewise model the self-examination on the question of judgment which will take the reader beyond the nineteenth century’s ready acceptance of European world domination.

Foreshadowed throughout Alice’s dialogues with sentient others is likewise a way from and beyond nineteenth century philology. Of the various Saussurean binaries presaged, perhaps the key to Alices’s experience is the dichotomy between the arbitrary and the motivated (those phenomena with knowable and those with unknowable causes). This is the line along which much of the story’s paranomastic magic is worked. Before learning what the rules are one needs to know whether there are any and with what range they would apply. The heuristic principle in action – familiar to the language learner – is simply the practical one of being wrong a lot to get to be right. The arbitrary/motivated divide is as fundamental to the non-native’s experience of a new culture as it is to the native speaking child’s entry into her own culture. This division applied to mapped space is itself suggestive of ambivalence between smooth and striated space, of the hierarchized space of sense bigger than those who are subject to it as opposed to space which can be governed by the imagination.

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In the Dao de Jing, as for Alice in the wood, it is the way itself that cannot be named. Which way is it that will not be named? Herein lies the contention among translators and philosophers. Point of view has much to do with the manner in which these things are problematic. From the reader’s third person omniscient viewpoint, it is at all times possible to name what pertains to Alice’s circumstances in the wood where things have no name. As Elizabeth Sewell writes, “This is a terrifying situation, but Carroll preserves the readers from it by subjecting Alice alone to the experiment” (387). So we can say that it is for the pleasure of the reader that the speaking subjects of the story are left without the words required to know themselves or their situation. The empathetic reader who takes up the text’s reflexive demand observes here from the outside Wittgenstein’s dictum that the limits of my language are the limits of my world. The reader encounters Alice’s dialogic difficulties with a sense of déjà vu, and thus the unexpected reversals and reciprocities in the text connect the reader with the fact of difference and power as these apply both in intercultural encounters and in the acculturation of the child.

In Chapter 11, “Queen Alice”, questions of objectification and master/slave dialectic are brought to a head when the Red Queen introduces Alice, first to the leg of mutton, then to the plum pudding. The result of these eerily anthropomorphic encounters with one’s dinner is deferred by the whisking
away of both dishes (although Alice calls the pudding back, slices it, and is taken to task for doing so). The contemporary reader may think of the speaking ox who wants to be eaten in Douglas Adams’ \textit{The Restaurant at the End of the Universe}. If the contemporary resonances of this passage are powerful then that is because here Carroll drew to our attention so much unresolved business, not only as pertains to the “eat or be eaten” fears of carnivores in general, but as relates to what the well fed of the world needs must take for granted.

The Chapter 11 dinner table is the place where the question of empathy becomes unanswerable. What begins with the edible items granted a fleeting subjectivity, becomes a proletarian revolution-in-progress, delivered metonymically: here it is the utensils of the world unite, with the object of overwhelming a character like Alice, who has hitherto never suspected them of harboring volition. Of this circumstance, William Empson in his essay “The Child as Swain” has written, “The guests are inanimate and the crawling self-stultifying machinery of luxury has taken on a hideous life of its own” (356). This passage into the terror of a full reciprocity of subject and object will return us to the pale of reason – the shaking of the Queen cum kitten – which leads to Alice’s waking from a dream, to our waking as readers from her dreamt world.

The antipodean reader is reminded of a text roughly half as old as Carroll’s. Australian author, Norman Lindsay, believed the Red Queen’s dish introductions and whiskings-away unfairly deprived Alice of a meal. He put the meat and the pudding together in his (1917) children’s classic \textit{The Magic Pudding}, creating a cut-and-come-again affair (i.e. an infinitely renewable source of pre-cooked food). In Lindsay’s novel the anthropomorphic meal stakes are ratcheted up a notch: the story is centered on the pudding-on-legs, one Albert, who is both recalcitrant child and portable cornucopia. In Carroll’s adventure, as in Lindsay’s, the subaltern speaks, and in a thick, suety sort of voice: “‘What impertinence!’ said the Pudding. ‘I wonder how you’d like it, if I were to cut a slice out of you, you creature!’” (160).

A kind of latter-day junior Caliban, Lindsay’s magic pudding embodies both the convenient servility of the meal and the recalcitrance of the becoming subject who knows his own mind. For Albert is, like Alice, a knowing subject; but being himself the pudding, he is, unlike Alice (and unlike the characters in his story), never afflicted with appetite. Rather, his never failing wish is to abscond. Lindsay’s extended play with a character embodying the master-of-his-own-appetite/slave-of-others’ contradiction was made possible by the chaotic Rabelaisian conditions which bring Alice’s dream to its climax. Those conditions all concern the revolt of that which is eaten or of those, now given human intentions and locomotion, who facilitate the process of eating: a voice from the tureen speaks, the White Queen disappears into the soup, the ladle wants Alice out of the way. Realized here, where we would expect the most genteel of circumstances, is the threat of the mechanism of our comfort coming to life in pursuit of its own interests.

Even in the fiction of Alice’s dream, the contradiction is resolved. On the “other side” of the glass, inside the dream, already the Red Queen has dwindled. We return to the relativity of sizes and the state of play that existed when Alice’s imperial adventure began. Unlike Kafka’s nightmare traps, these have the virtue of dissolving: “I’ll shake you into a kitten, that I will.” (165). In Norman Lindsay’s story, the spell of the story is dissolved by those subjects in it, who make their way, and who make a rough kind of justice as they go. They take the advice of the story’s most genteel protagonist, the koala, Bunyip Bluegum, who tells his fellow puddin’-owners, “We have merely to stop wandering along the road, and the story will stop wandering through the book” (168).

Thus the reader leaves Albert the pudding fenced in his own tiny puddin’ paddock up in a tree, where he can be relied on to abuse his privilege of shouting rude remarks to passers-by. Power here is to those adult subjects who have seized it. Others are in thrall to the justice they make as they go.
on their way. By contrast, the ultimate power bestowed on Alice through her adventure is that which allows her to dissolve the dream.

I Can’t Remember Here

In the classical world Zeus was the god of borders and of strangers. Thus the friendless foreigner and the one who, coming into new space, was deprived of a voice, could at least rely on empathy where it most counted. Alice has been such a god herself and she remains throughout the character who crosses the border from waking into dreaming and so becomes a foreigner. Her becoming foreign is suggestive of the coming into culture constituted by childhood, likewise of the foreignness of adult and child mindstates, each to the other. Reading, as we must, much of the dialogue and the plot’s anticipation “contrariwise” to expectation, we recognize in Alice’s position the metalespsis of Socrates (on trial but) accusing the Athenians, which is to say, holding up to them a mirror.

However digressive, Alice’s is always a practical exercise in the philosophy of language; she always has circumstances from which to extricate herself. However they are read, texts survive in the measure that readers find their angles and imagery apt. What remains or becomes apposite of a text surviving from one age to another need not be all considered above the threshold of consciousness. In the case of a story meant to coincide with a dream of ambiguous provenance it would be a surprise to find all of the necessary connections demonstrated with waking clarity. The mirror may be brilliantly shone, the passage through it nevertheless entails an evanescence, a melting away, “just like a bright silvery mist” (21).

Ours is a world in which empire has become invisible and yet its effects are no less tangible for that. One of the most apt images for this condition is the one we discover with Alice stepping through the looking glass into a world where she is an invisible giant handling the kings of another world as if they were chess pieces, as if they were her pawns (which they for the time being are). Alice’s talking with characters about what they cannot see commences with the cat (14); Alice’s brief omnipotence, as an invisible giant holding a king, is foreshadowed in her fantasies of power and its vicious exercise on the other side of the glass. An obsession with wickedness and with otherness, with the finding of fault and with the necessity of judgment, are all voiced in Alice’s waking pre-adventure world (or perhaps it would be better to regard this as a world between adventures). The likely setting of the story on Guy Fawkes’ Eve14 is itself suggestive of questions as to the nature of order and anarchy and where honest intentions might lie.

We can read the moral certainties of the world on the waking side of the looking glass as themselves beginning to vanish in the silvery mist of the crossing which begins the journey. Through words the certainty of words is challenged; it is challenged because words are made foreign in the foreign space Alice now visits. By the end of the story Alice has known God-like omnipotence, and contrariwise, she has also known how it is to be objectified out of volition altogether: “‘I hope you don’t suppose those are real tears,’ Tweedledee interrupted in a tone of great contempt.” (71).

Has the European mind been broadened in the manner the Tory clergyman Lewis Carroll imagined for Alice? Alice in waking remains uncertain whose dream she was in but at least she has woken, she knows she dreamt. If Alice is an unusual subject then it is not only in this particular effort at self-knowledge. As Nina Auerbach points out in her essay “A Curious Child”, “Other little girls traveling through fantastic countries… ask repeatedly ‘Where am I?’ rather than ‘Who am I?’ Only Alice turns her eyes inward from the beginning, sensing that the mystery of her surroundings is the mystery of her identity.” (336). Let us return a last time then to the situation which leaves Alice nameless, to her relationship with and attitude to the Fawn. Suggested here is inter alia an agenda for peace, love and understanding in the place where names are forgotten. “I can’t remember here,” the Fawn tells Alice, urging her on towards a space in which he will indeed remember, and in which
memory (such as words contain) will necessitate flight because it will render unviable a community of innocents. The wood is a place between, a vestibule between cultures, or perhaps a place where culture is in abeyance. The wood is – like the dream itself as seen from the waking side – a place where subjects are conditioned by, though they cannot remember, culture. Returning to the geopolitical setting of world as chessboard and so as ordered space, we see that memory depends on place, and memory is shown as disembodied in the unheimlich world of her own making through which Alice passes as a foreigner.

Which dreamt it? Perhaps, for the sake of everyone’s safety, we should let that Red King go on snoring; or perhaps more optimistically we might leave the last word to the gnat who suggested to Alice how convenient it might be to go home without one’s name (54).

The Foreign Space of Poetry

If I may return briefly to the Naomi Lazard poem cited earlier (“Ordnance on Arrival”), that depiction of space between (and so out of) culture and Carroll’s depiction of the encounter between Alice and the deer, have in common a failure to represent the a-semiotic space which they take as their theme. Instead what the reader is offered is an illusion of such space. From the comfortable frame which permits our reading we are never deprived of the needful words; rather we witness subjects out of culture. The difficulty elided here by the “dubbing” is something along the lines of Lyotard’s differend: “the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be put into phrases cannot yet be” (13). Lyotard claims that society is inhabited by differends. To put this all in the frame of legal language he writes that:

there is a differend between two parties when the “settlement” of the conflict that opposes them appears in the idiom of one of them while the tort from which the other suffers cannot signify itself in the idiom. (9)

A differend is what lies between the communities that are implied (but not necessarily noticed) in separate modes of speech, each of which is intelligible to its participants. It is the manner of the barrier that makes others unintelligible to me. Differends are means of making others other, and the differend as a term is a means of accounting for misunderstanding that arises from the effort to translate between languages, mindsets, weltschmuck, conceptual schemata, etc. This term points to the difficulty in translation, to the accommodations and illusions that go into and under the name of that process. Its presence in those mediations and failures at mediation is suggestive for theories about language in general. Does language itself (do signs themselves) arise from misunderstandings between idioms or languages? Is that one of the ways in which new signs, for instance new words, arise? Are efforts to account for others in my language doomed? I might drown out their voice with words that I take to be theirs but which are actually mine. On the other hand there is the danger that I appropriate their ideas. Thoughts are shared between cultures as between people but there are ethical concerns arising in the instances of borrowing or theft. The integrity of thought is at stake here in questions to do with plagiarism and authority and originality, questions usually read as between individuals, but applying in more complex forms between peoples.

By what means does one enter another’s language or means of thought? How can thinking be concerted? How can argument be honest, across cultures, or in any circumstance? Where does awareness and where does duty lie in relation to these unavoidable problems? For Lyotard bearing witness to differends is a duty to the honour of thought.

***
Metaphor – which we may happily gloss from the Greek as “carrying across” has long been thought essential to poetry. Translation and the many related poetic activities which do not quite fit under its aegis are all yet indeed carryings across. Lewis Carroll, in the space described in this essay, has asked us to imagine answers to several related questions. What if we had no baggage at all, nothing to carry across? Or what if we had no signs with which to carry ourselves across? What if there were no sign of us at all? Would we lose or discover ourselves through that kind of aporia? If these circumstances are not able to be actualized then we should at least recognize that, in the manner of Shelley’s “unacknowledged” legislation, imagining the impossible is one of poetry’s necessary vocations. If the carrying across is essential to poetry then Carroll’s text challenges us – even if by sleight of hand – to imagine that ineffable place of the carrying as paradoxically pure – as an empty handed place, one untainted by investment. This challenge will not help to make the unreal real. As is often the case with efforts to imagine the impossible, its effect may be quite the opposite. Against the preciousness of such perennial claims of exemption from duties of witness, one must insist that the place of poetry is effing-effable. Recognising that there is nothing pure or ineffable or disinvested helps to focus on the nature of the materials and methods and the motives for (likewise the effects of) the carrying across.

Recognition is the key point here. It is only through presence to the circumstances of travel that the points of origin and destination may be brought effectively to mind. This happens paradoxically, just when the enabling encounter has occluded the view of where we are from and where we are going. Against the orientalist mindset it may be claimed that recognition of (and presence to) one’s own circumstances is achieved only through the genuine (and thus genuinely flawed) effort to meet the other as a partner in dialogue. Poetry’s particular vocation for witness concerns the foreign-ness and the becoming foreign entailed in the encounter I have in mind here, that for which Alice and the deer she meets are emblematic.

From this line of reasoning I conclude that, while it is often claimed that poetry is lost in the translation, in fact poetry is in the translation, and in the translation’s being never quite right, that is to say, lost.

***

This said, poetry’s place in the sense we are developing here – nevertheless indicates a kind of Alzheimer’s space – necessarily a place of forgetting, where an ethics of presence overrides the baggage of assumptions with which we were brought. The reader’s here-and-now with the poem (worth being with) delivers that reader equally from the terrors (from all the affections and disaffections) of what has been and from those of what is yet to come. Alice’s radically ambiguous circumstances in the wood with no names are suggestive of this dilemma. Presence and absence are acts implying each other, acts implying the reframing necessitated by the genuine encounter which occurs when subjects meet (physically, metaphorically) in a place between.

Poetry is in the fact that the territory between languages does not quite satisfy the meaning making demands of either of two sets of native speakers. Earlier I suggested that Plato’s Socrates had lit on the idea that poetry was the opposite of government. To consider this from another angle, one might rephrase to say the words of a poem behave in a manner opposite to that of the words in a dictionary. That is to say they are duty bound to misbehave. The words remain in a poem (the poem continues to be worth reading) to the extent that they remain in motion. The words in the dictionary are signs arrested, pinned down like butterflies deprived of the jungle which gave them life. They are deprived of life in order that we might get a better look at them. Looking at them however we confirm them in their shrouds and death masks. Words governed are meaning arrested. But the
dictionary is weak against the power of conversation. Merely to return words to their death throes is to animate the poetry in them.

Translation is a process of never quite arriving. Something like a differend will always remain between the idioms from and to which the ideas are carried. The idea entering one culture from another will always be somehow stuck like Kafka’s man from the country – never able to get through a gate the function of which is to conceal the law one is hoping to approach. Perversely perhaps, poetry’s is an analogous process – that of making one’s own words foreign.

The mistakenness, the noise, the static, the not-quite-rightness, of every way between languages, is I think the home of poetry: a place of exile. Poetry, because it subjects its own language to the exigencies of a position between languages, bears witness to the differences and misunderstandings between those who are different from each other.

The non-native tames the words of the language s/he is coming into. Through that process of taming they become her words. They lose their alien character as they become familiar, useful. And the language tames the non-native. S/he loses her alien character as s/he manages to make more and more non/sense with what were new words, now words becoming familiar. The target language translates or limits or reduces her manner of meaning to the acceptable range of the target language.

An interlocutor (for instance a teacher), whether interested in that process itself or not, if interested in writing, finds the journey useful because, whether consciously or not, it allows her to simulate the experience of being outside of her or his means of meaning. The experience of taming for the tamed may bring some glimpses of the wild. That is what recovered innocence is about in poetry: the effort to see and feel and speak for the first time again. The paradox is that poetry’s interest is in the effort to see and feel and speak for the first time, yes, but as I am now, with the equipment I have now for the task. I think this is one of the impossible tasks with which poetry is burdened: to be inside and out of words at once – to be a foreigner in one’s own words.

**Diasporatic Posture**

Between languages, in the betweenness of language, is the critical space for poetries, if only because we know nowhere but in language to be between subjects (subjects becoming in language as such).

**Becoming foreign** is that exile which forces us to deal with our own abject. It presses us into an archaeology of the self as practice – forever throwing up a new beginning beyond which we are forbidden and therefore, as Orpheus, we cannot help but look. **Becoming foreign** can only ever be a work of recognition, of the strangeness of the self which is lost in the effort of regarding with other eyes; of offering its eyes to others, that they may see out of their foreignness the paths which lead away to home.

These efforts must entail as well the recognition of the past of one’s becoming, those means by which I am possessed and have possession. It is not these means but rather their recognition (in the effort at a memory longer than my own) which bring me into the face to face with the other, even where that other has effectively ceased to be a presence. Alterity in this sense is a kind of haunting, an infinite falling away of echoes, of cadences in which I must listen so as not to hear my own voice. Poetry then is the failure of an effort at self-consciousness, characteristic of that reflection which Sartre names as diasporic (157).

The reader of poetry hopes to be, as the student of a foreign language inevitably is, bracing for the unexpected; expecting that is to be shown, in the act of its overturning, the assumption thus far unseen. But the language learner (native or foreign) and poetry’s permanent apprentices approach
this overturning from opposite directions. The language learner’s uses and attempts at use, are prior to that knowledge, and its burying borne of having heard a thousand times, of having spoken a thousand times; that knowledge and the necessity of its fading which Mallarmé described as the worn coin placed silently in my hand; the necessity of hearing without attention.

The language learner’s efforts are based on, what is from the general viewpoint of the language they are entering, a more or less severe restriction of resources and methods. At first nothing is automatic because there is neither consciousness nor unconsciousness of system. At first it is a struggle to mean anything. The language learner is able to stumble upon something new because her or his language is not fully formed by the patterns of assumption which operate unconsciously in the fluency of the native. Thus the language learner may stumble on (or into) mistakes which interest the avowedly conscious attentions of poetry’s apprentices. And thus there may always remain something charmingly foreign (and other than accent, something in the turn of phrase) in the speech and in the writing of the long-term resident of another culture. (And equally something grating, an annoying failure to live in the terms of the adopted idiom.) The language learner may uncover or create errors which interest the conscious attentions of poetry’s apprentices because the poetry maker too is interested in what charms and grates in language and if s/he wishes to escape from the fact of meaning’s erosion in pragmatic speech must acknowledge an impossible position which is both beyond and before the wearing to which Mallarmé refers. Beyond and before, because poetry is, as we have noted, both the effort at and the defeat of consciousness.

The passages beyond (or within) the mundane which aesthetic uses of language attempt, always, however they disguise themselves (as imitations or revivals), consist in attempts at a speech which has not yet been spoken. It is a necessary condition of such attempts that they retain a maximum of awareness of those echoes which they can neither fully avoid nor fully remember, those echoes and nuances which naturally adhere in the choice of words and their arrangement.

The coming into a language of the child or non-native must be imagined as closely homologous with the becoming of languages both in particular and in the general manner of poetry’s interest: in the creative manner. Common in both cases, whether intended or not, is what we might describe as the heuristic value of being mistaken. For the language learner a discovery of mistakenness has an heuristic effect, which has generally come to be perceived as a benefit, as a sign of progress (i.e. being wrong a lot in order to get to be right). The utility of mistakenness (i.e. it is by being mistaken I cease to be mistaken), is for the language learner, in the hope of its being the means to its own transcendence. For poetry’s permanent apprentice, the condition of being mistaken is a practice which needs to be learned (and the learning of which may well be assisted by the example of the language learner) for its own sake (or for the sake of a foreign view of the self). It is a practice closely aligned with that of daring not to know. We can say that it is by means of this relation, in which consciousness fails to escape the exigencies of its own regime, that poetry absolves itself of the taint of bad faith: daring not to know does not exempt us from being mistaken, it guarantees both this outcome and the consciousness of it. Heidegger writes on the practice of being mistaken:

   Everything here is the path of a responding that examines as it listens. Any path always risks going astray, leading astray. To follow such paths takes practice in going. Practice needs craft. Stay on the path, in genuine need, and learn the craft of thinking, unswerving, yet erring. (186)

Listening and craft and following a path are here all aesthetic practices, each with ethical implications. Heidegger’s politics ought to suggest to us that embracing mistakenness provides no absolution for errors committed. In Auden’s lines from his disowned “Spain”:
History to the defeated
May say Alas but cannot help nor pardon.
-- (in Cunningham, 97-100)

Then who may pardon those failures which go under the aegis of orientalisms or fascisms, failures in fairness to others? Paz writes:

Between revolution and religion, poetry is the other voice. Its voice is other because it is the voice of the passions and of visions. It is other-worldly and this-worldly, of days long gone and of this very day, an antiquity without dates. Heretical and devout, innocent and perverted, limpid and murky, aerial and subterranean, of the hermitage and of the corner bar, within hand’s reach and always beyond. All poets in the moments, long or short, of poetry, if they are really poets, hear the other voice. It is their own, someone else’s, no one’s and everyone’s. Nothing distinguishes a poet from other men and women but those moments – rare yet frequent – in which, being themselves, they are other. (151)

Great ethical questions imply personal situations, concern the face of the other, concern facing up to uncomfortable truths. The exemptions and elisions with which such questions are hedged deserve to be witnessed. Such witness implies the eyes of another.

***

Immanuel Levinas has written that God is the face of the other. Perhaps it is not for humans to see that face. If one imagines that the act of speaking for – of representing others – is the act in which they are deprived of a voice, and even a face, then does it not become an urgent task to not speak for others, to not picture them? What would these kinds of inaction and silence achieve?

Acts of poetry and acts of translation are the means by which we hear the voices of others, and our own other voices. Acknowledging a need to listen need not drive us into silence. But perhaps our efforts to get beyond the miseries of imperialism would be more fruitful if we looked away from rather than towards our own ‘humanity’. That’s the kind of suggestion Suzanne Knowles makes in ‘Fox Dancing’.

Tall as foxglove spire, on tiptoe
The fox in the wilderness dances;
His pelt and burnished claws reflect
The sun’s and the moon’s glances.

From blackberry nose to pride of tail
He is elegant, he is gay;
With his pawsteps as a pattern of joy
He transfigures the day.

For a hat he wears a rhubarb leaf
To keep his thinking cool,
Through which his fur-lined ears prick up.
This fox, he is no fool

And does not give a good-morning
For the condition of his soul:
Our efforts to understand others may necessarily be frustrated by our inability to represent them in other than our terms, and yet – to invoke Robert Frost – the something of ours that doesn’t love a wall may require of us that we be lost in translation. Perhaps that is where we come to ourselves. The question remains though: how can we study with the fox to be whole?

Christopher Kelen
University of Macau

Notes

1. There is earlier foreshadowing of a less specific kind by the Red Queen: “Speak in French when you can’t think of the English for a thing – turn out your toes when you walk – and remember who you are!” These are instructions designed to generate ambivalence: Alice has to imagine herself a foreigner, and a chess piece and herself (44).

2. Attributed to the possibly mythical Laozi and conventionally dated to around 600 B.C.E.

3. Pinyin romanisation for Chinese words is used throughout this paper for the sake of consistency.

4. Hansen’s argument is on the basis that the standard version of this opening line – which comes into modern western scholarship through the attitudes of a Buddhist (i.e. western from the traditional Chinese point of view) influenced neo-Confucianism – wrongly “embodies an ancient interpretive hypothesis that all Daoists must worship a mystical godlike dao. Thus they presume in translation what they cannot find in the original: assertion of the existence of a single, ineffable dao” (215). The point with regard to singularity is startlingly simple. There is no reason to translate the line in either singular or plural form because this distinction is simply not there in Chinese.

5. In either case we meet a young girl’s timid and vulnerable guide in a dark and potentially dangerous place.

6. The Red King’s perpetual sleep (and supposed dream) relative to Alice’s dreamt adventure through words is suggestive both of Berkeley’s notions of a divine grammar and the assumption that the ideas in God’s mind are of a different quality to those in our minds.

7. Its leader Hong Xiuquan believed himself to be the younger brother of Jesus Christ.


9. It should be acknowledged that C.S. Lewis vigorously denied that these works were allegorical.

10. The foreshadowing of modernism, the postmodern, the Kafka-esque etc., have been well rehearsed in many scholarly treatments of Carroll’s works, and evidenced in the interest of Carroll’s works for authors as diverse as Lacan and Borges, Foucault and Deleuze.

11. For example, parole vs. langue (in idiomatic as opposed to “proper” usages), diachronic vs. synchronic (as in the word play with “jam” [78] and indeed much of the chapter “Wool and Water”),
and syntagmatic vs. paradigmatic (playing word choice against the contextual variability of the spoken chain).

12. Suggested here is Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s notion of wrong-sidedness in the work of aesthetic production:

   Like the weaver, the writer works on the wrong side of his material. He has to do only with language, and it is thus that he suddenly finds himself surrounded by meaning. (44-5)

13. There are a number of Carroll allusions in Adams’ oeuvre, some more and some less noticeable, e.g. the division of the radio series of The Hitch Hiker’s Guide to the Galaxy into “fits”, as in the organization of The Hunting of the Snark.

14. See Martin Gardner’s note in The Annotated Alice (144).

Works Cited


Part Two

Project Materials
Chapter Six


Introduction:

It was working as a Native English Teacher in a Hong Kong School I developed the *panauricon* method for oral practice, the set of interactive classroom procedures – described in the paper, ‘Perpetual Motion: Keeping the Language Classroom Moving’, published in 2000 in *The Internet TESL Journal*. My only concerted excursion into methodology writing, the procedures described in the paper have since served me and many others well for a range of drill and discussion purposes. Specific benefits of the method are that it keeps ideas flowing, helps to prevent cliques and ghettos forming in the classroom, and that it helps to keep conversation in the target language.
story circle manual

「故事圈」
故事寫作手冊
story circle manual

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All text by Christopher (Kit) Kelen
KitKelen@yahoo.com.au

Translated by Hilda Tam and Iris Fan
da_tam@yahoo.com
christarfan@hotmail.com

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part one: the story circle project

1 everyone has a story to tell

The world is full of voices, full of people with something to say. The world is full of people who deserve to be listened to. The world is – among other things – an endless conversation. That conversation – carried down through generations and across languages and cultures – is the common heritage of humanity. That conversation is the vehicle of countless stories of all kinds through which we humans learn who we are and through which we also decide who and how to be.

‘Humanity’s great ongoing conversation’ sounds like a wonderful idea – and so it is – but it’s an idea with a few problems in practice. Humanity’s conversation has never been one between equal partners. This book and the project it introduces are based on some simple principles. These are that:

- everyone has a story to tell
- everyone can learn how to tell his or her own stories
- English today is the world language, so if you can tell your story in that medium, then it has a potentially huge audience.

This book and the project it introduces are based on a simple ethical principle: humanity’s conversation is one in which all humans should be entitled to play a part, both as listeners to and as tellers of stories. We’ll be more fully human if really hear others’ stories, we’ll better realise our own human potential if our own stories are listened to.
第一部份：故事圈計劃

每個人都有故事可說

這個世界充滿聲音，所有人都有話要說，全世界都有值得別人聆聽的人。這個世界在某種程度上說是一場永無休止的對話。這種對話經過世代的、跨越語言及文化的傳承，是人類的共同財產。對話也是傳播數以萬計的故事的媒介，從這些故事中我們得以瞭解自己是誰，決定自己要成爲哪類人及如何成爲這類人。

“故事是人類永不停息的對話”聽起來是個了不起的構想，的確如此，但這個構想實現起來卻存在著不少問題。人性的對話從來不是在平等的對話者間進行的。這本書和這個計劃的內容以一些簡單的原則為基礎，比如：

- 每個人都有故事要講
- 每個人都能學習如何講他們的故事
- 英語是當今的世界語言，所以如果你能用英語講自己的故事，就可能有大量的聽眾

這本書和這個計劃的內容都遵循著一個簡單的道理，那就是：人性的對話需要全人類的參與，每個人都要同時扮演聽眾及講述者的角色。通過聆聽別人的故事我們才能成爲更完整的人，而讓人聆聽我們的故事，就可以更好地瞭解自己的潛能。
2
the principle of fiction

Why write stories? Why make up stories (in the fictional sense) when there’s no much truth in the world, hidden and waiting to be told? And why would a story be the way to get going a conversation of the kind discussed in the chapter you’ve just read?

The basic reason for making stories has to do with the fundamental principle of fiction. That principle can be summed up in two words: What if…? What if… the world were different somehow? What if one single but vital thing changed? How would the world be different then? Or what if the change were in you rather than ‘out there’? What if you looked at things from a different angle? What if you stood in someone else’s shoes, saw with someone else’s eyes? The what if… principle brings us to the question of truth in fiction, or of truth in art more generally. The point is that stories in the fictional sense show us truths of a different kind from those we meet in the newspaper.

We can fit what if… questions into a few basic categories. Listing them reveals that the fundamental choices for the writer of fiction are
- to create a world different in some way from the here and now in which s/he writes, a kind of parallel universe
- to create a future from what s/he already knows of present and past
- to create a different past from the one s/he (and everyone else) knows
- to show the reader how the world looks through her eyes (and so to make the reader see differently)
- to show the reader another point of view (or other points of
2
故事的原則

為什麼要寫故事？為什麼要「捏造」故事（從虛構層面說），當世界有這麼多真相等待被揭發時，為什麼還要虛構故事？為什麼故事會在前章所述的那種對話中產生？

創作故事的原因基本與故事本身的原则有關，這原則可用二字概括：「假如」。假如世界變了會怎樣？假如唯一至關重要的東西改變了，世界又會怎樣的不同？或者假如改變的是你而不是外界？假如你從另一個角度看事物會怎樣？假如你穿上別人的鞋子，用別人的眼睛看事物會怎樣？這個「假如」原則讓我們發掘故事裡的真相，或更確切的說，帶領我們認識文學的真理。要留意的是，故事的真相與我們在報紙上看到的有所不同。

我們可以把「假如」的問題置於一些基本類別中，這可揭示故事作者對題材的基本選擇：

- 創造一個與作者當下身處的不同世界，一個與之對應的世界
- 創造一個作者從現在或過去推出的將來
- 創造一個不同的過去
- 向讀者展示作者眼中的世界（從而令讀者從不同的角度看）
- 向讀者展示另一角度的觀點（或其他角度的觀點），例如：讓男人知道一個女人的看法和感受；向公民
view) again, e.g. to show a man how a woman sees and feels, to show the citizen the migrant’s point of view, to give the fish a bird’s eye view.

The first two options on the list above you’ll recognise as characteristic of science fiction, e.g. the journey to another planet uncannily like and unlike our own. The other options though also involve ‘going somewhere’ the reader wouldn’t have gone by herself. They make the reader a traveller and they make the writer a kind of tour guide, someone showing an unfamiliar place to an interested party, or perhaps showing the familiar place in a new light. In every case the what if... principle reveals that the process of making stories is the process of imagining a world other than the world as known. The what if... principle of fiction is closely related to a fundamental characteristic of every successful story. A story that works gives its reader new information: a story must surprise its reader. Or look at it another way: in a story something has to happen. Without the element of surprise there’s nothing to read for. If everything in a story is already known or too easy to predict (too obvious) there will be no point in reading. So if there’s a recipe for making a successful story, we now have the most essential ingredient.

Why surprise the reader? Why take her where she hasn’t been? The answers are as simple as the questions. They do require some faith however. Wishing to show the reader a world different from the one already known implies that either the world needs changing or that it needs to be looked at differently.

Story making, seen in these terms, is an important kind of political action. To change the world you have to first see how it could be different: you have to see a different world and/or see the world differently. So showing a world of change or a world that needs changing could be the first step towards making things better. But
展示移民的觀點：讓魚知道小鳥所看到的

你該認出上述兩項是科幻小說的特點，比如：到一個與我們地球一樣或不一樣的星球旅行。其他選項雖然同樣涉及「去某個地方」，但這個地方是讀者無法到達的。它們使讀者成爲旅客，而作者就像導遊，向感興趣的人們展示陌生的地方，或以新的視角向讀者介紹熟悉的地方。「假如」原則讓我們知道創作故事的過程就等如構思一個我們不熟知的世界。「假如」是與每個好故事的基本要素緊密相關的。好的故事能帶給讀者新意，一個故事一定要讓讀者感到驚訝。或者換個說法，在故事中，總有些事情需要發生。沒有讓人驚訝的元素，故事就沒有可讀性。如果故事中的每一件事都說清了或很容易被預料到（太明顯）的話，繼續讀下去也就沒意義了。所以，如果有創作好故事的秘方，我們現在已有了最關鍵的材料。

為什麼要使讀者驚訝？為什麼要帶他到沒去過的地方？答案就如問題一樣簡單。故事都有一些信念。作者希望向讀者展示不同於已經被熟知的世界，暗示這個世界需要改變，或者需要從不同的角度觀察它。

因此故事創作可說是重要政治行爲。要改變這個世界，首先你必須看出這個世界怎樣才會不同，你必須看到一個不同的世界，或以不同的眼光看世界。所以展示一個改變了的世界或一個需要改變的世界就是改善世界的第一步，但故事創
story writing isn’t just political action, it’s also at the same time, a
kind of therapy, both for the writer and for the world around her.
We could call it *world therapy*. Stories are a way the world can ‘get
things off its chest’. Perhaps now you can see why there are – why
there need to be – so many stories in the world. The world has a big
collective chest and a lot of worries to work through.

The cathartic or therapeutic function of stories is closely
connected with the fundamental structure of the story – the basic
plot structure – that will be outlined in the second part of this
manual. That function is especially connected with endings because
the final stage of the sequential structure of a story is *resolution*.
Resolution is what is very often lacking in life. That lack leaves a lot
of us frustrated and/or angry a lot of the time. The best thing about
the story is that it provides the kind of resolution often tragically
lacking in life: the resolution of *conflict*. Conflict is one of the most
important ingredients in the very general plot we’re beginning to
brew. We’ll get to the details of this shortly, for now let’s just note
that there can’t be any resolution in a story unless there’s something
to resolve. To join up the circle: that something to resolve is usually
in the form of conflict.

The therapy function of the story is important for the reader,
naturally, and in several different ways. Get home from work and
turn on the television: there you see other people and their troubles.
For a change, you’re not the one who has to worry. If the story’s good
though, you will worry. You’ll worry for the characters you *identify*
with because you feel *empathy* for them. Their pain is your pain. But
only temporarily, only while you’re inside the story’s frame, under
its spell. When the story’s over, finished, resolved, you turn off the
television and sleep like a baby, safe with the comforting thought
that you haven’t had to go through what those characters on the
screen just went through. Because of the resolution of the story you
作不只是一個政治上的行為，同時，它也是一種療法，對於作者或他的世界的治療，我們可稱之為世界療法。故事是一種能讓世界「把事情傾吐而出」的工具。或許現在你能明白為什麼世界有這麼多而又那麼需要故事。世界有海納百川般的心胸和無數待排遣的憂慮。

故事的淨化及治療功能與故事的基本結構緊密相連，故事的基本情節，手冊的第二部份將予以探討。這個功能與故事結尾的關係特別紧密，因為故事娓娓道來的最後階段就是結局。生活中往往缺乏結局，這個缺陷令大多數人時常感到灰心或憤怒。故事最好的一面就是能提供一種解決衝突的辦法，而無奈地這種辦法往往是生活中所缺少的。即使是最普通的情節都需要衝突這個要素，我們將在以後更詳細地介紹。現在我們要注意的是，如果故事中沒有要解決的衝突，就根本不會有結局，即是說，有待解決的事情都是衝突所引起的。

故事的治療功能對讀者而言在多方面都是重要的。下班後打開電視機，你會看到其他人和他們的煩惱。換言之，你不是那個需要去擔憂的人。如果這是個好故事的話，你會在角色身上看到你自己影子，替他擔心，因為你感同身受。他們的痛苦即是你的痛苦。但這都是暫時性的，你只是投入了故事，情緒受其內容影響而已。當故事結束時，你關上電視機，像嬰兒般酣睡，為自己不必經歷那些角色的遭遇而感到放心。無論結局是好是壞，它讓你和裡面的角色都覺得一切已經完結。你讀故
generally also have the feeling that it’s all over – for better or worse – for the characters you were watching as well. There’s a lesson too in the story you’ve seen. *There but for the grace of God*… Stories help us to know how to live, how to avoid mistakes. They help us because they show us how things might otherwise be, for instance if we’re not careful, if we go too far, if… Stories show us the *what ifs* in life that separate fantasy from reality. That might be the most important boundary in human affairs. Certainly stories are a vital part of the collective fantasy life of every community, every people.

Stories are everywhere. We see them, read them, hear them, every day. When we go to sleep at night something very like a story comes to us in the shape of a dream. Perhaps it’s from dreaming humans first got the idea of making up and telling and hearing stories in their waking hours? Dreams are core of the individual’s fantasy life, and they tell themselves, they don’t need any planning or polishing.

As with dreams, all stories worth reading teach the reader something she or he didn’t know. A good story instructs its reader but it rarely teaches directly in the sense of telling someone what to do or how to be. A good story teaches by example: it shows you, it doesn’t tell you. The good story shows you something that moves you, it shows something that gives you a deep emotion – in touch or in tune with the truth of the story. The story that works for you as a reader is the one that puts you in touch with some important truth in your own life, a truth you hadn’t known before, something unexpected. Nagging and preaching never moved anyone to do anything except adopt a strategy to avoid being nagged or preached at later on.

Let’s recap. To see things anew can have a world changing effect. Stories can change the world because they show you how the world might or should otherwise be, stories teach you to see a world different from the one you knew (or thought you knew). They teach
事的同時也上了一課。感謝上天的恩典，故事能教導我們如何生活，如何避免犯錯。故事能幫助我們是因爲它們能展示事情會怎樣向其他的方面發展，例如，如果我們不小心，如果我們走得太遠，如果……故事能展示在我們生活中用以區分想像和現實的「假如」。這可能是人類活動的最重要的界限。當然，故事是所有族群構建他們共同的夢幻家園的基石。

故事遍佈每個角落。我們每天都看見、閱讀，聽見它們。當我們晚上睡覺時，一些類似故事的東西以夢的形式呈現出來。也許人類最初是因爲受到做夢的啓發才會在醒著的時候構思和講述故事。夢是每個人幻想生活的核心，它們向自己傾訴，不需要任何計劃或雕琢。

就像做夢，所有值得一讀的故事都教會讀者一些他們不知道的東西。一個好故事會引導讀者，卻很少直接說教，告訴某人去做某事或怎樣去做。一個好故事用例子教導：它向你展示，但它從不告訴你。好故事有令你感動的地方，它所蘊涵的真理能誘發你深刻的感情。故事能啓迪讀者，是因爲它能讓你思考一些生活中的真理，一些你不曾得知，意料之外的真理。嘮叨和說教從來不能感動人，這些做法只會讓人想要逃避聆聽教訓。

簡而言之，重新觀察世界能產生改變這個世界的效果。故事能改變世界，因爲它們向你展示世界可能會或需要變成什麼樣，故事教你以不同於以往的（又或是不同於你所知道的）眼
by example, by showing.

To write your own stories or only to read, only to watch what the TV and the bookshop gives you? The conviction behind this book is that the world needs changing and it needs to be better understood. By making our own and listening to each other’s stories we can better understand our world and its potentials and we can play a vital role in imagining and so deciding how our world can be.

Democracy as we know it today is mainly a spectator sport. Voting can be a little like choosing between pepsi and coke. Sport too is, for many people, a matter of enthusiastically watching to see which of two teams will win. Sometimes it’s like that inside a story. But from the outside and from the outset – from where the writer begins to make a story – the possibilities are infinite. In writing a story – making a world that isn’t – you learn to exercise the maximum of human freedom. You can have your characters do anything. When you write a story you’re making a universe, you’re making the rules for the place you’ve imagined.

The world – the real one we live in – belongs to everyone in it. The playing field mightn’t be terribly level but getting to tell your own story will help to make the world fairer. This book depends on a straightforward premise: that making stories is simple and it’s something everyone can do. It follows from this proposition that everyone has a story or stories worth listening to, that the world will be a better place if we listen to each other’s stories, if we encourage each other to make them. The world will be better if we all participate in the process of imagining other worlds and worlds otherwise, if we all engage with the what if...? principle of fiction.
光看待這個世界。故事以例子教導讀者，向讀者展示真理。

你想寫故事，還是只是閱讀書本、看電視？這本書背後的主旨就是世界需要改變、需要更好地被理解。通過寫故事和聽別人講故事，我們能更好地認識世界和它的潛力，我們能在想像中扮演重要的角色，以此決定世界何去何從。

今天我們所認識的民主，只是一場能吸引眾多觀眾的運動會。投票就像在百事可樂和可口可樂之間作出選擇那般瑣碎。體育運動也是如此，對大多數人來說，只是讓他們抱著熱情，觀看誰勝誰負的比賽。有時候，故事裡的世界也是一樣，但在作者開始創作的時候，其可能性則是無限的。寫故事，創造一個與此不同的世界，可以讓你探索人類最大的自由度。你能讓你的角色做任何事情。寫作時的你其實在創造著一個宇宙，在你想像中的地方按你的規則行事。

世界屬於存在其中的每一個人。這個賽場可能並不公平，但講出自己的故事可以使世界公平些。這本書有一個直接的前提——創作故事很簡單，每個人都能做到。它秉著如果我們能相互鼓勵創作，每個人就都有值得別人傾聽的故事這個主張。如果所有人都參與這個想像另一個世界或不同於我們的多個世界的過程，亦或者能一起以「假如」這個故事原則思考問題，世界就會變得更美好。
**Asking questions/taking action:**

Who would you like to invite into your story circle? Make practical and impractical lists of people whose stories you would like to hear and with whom you would like to share your stories.

What’s the story? What’s important to you? What matters and what doesn’t? Make lists of answers for each of these questions and share them around the story circle. What can you agree together is worth talking about, making a story about?

Together make a list of *what if* questions (about the past, the present and the future, about yourself, about others). Each of these questions should lead to the imagination of a world different in some significant way from the one we already know. Could any of these (or any combination of them) be the basis for a story?
練習：
你想邀請誰參與你的故事圈？列出那些你想聽他們講故事的人和你想與之分享故事的人（包括可實現和不可實現兩種）。

故事是什麼？什麼對你來說是重要的？什麼是要緊的和不要緊的？為每個問題作答，並在故事圈中與他人分享。有什麼是你們一致同意值得探討，值得創作出故事的？

一起列個「假如」問題的表格。（關於過去，現在和未來，關於你自己和別人）每一條問題都應引導我們去想像一個我們不熟悉的世界。其中有沒有一些（或者它們的綜合）能成爲故事的藍本？
neither speaking for nor over

Imagining a different world, seeing yourself and others differently: these are the what if... skills you need to make stories. Reading and hearing the stories of others is the best way to get these skills. Reading and hearing stories from other cultures is the best way to get your own culture into perspective. That shift in point of view helps you to look from a distance at yourself and your own ideas and beliefs. With that distance you have the opportunity to reconsider the question of what you believe in, and what you want to prove to the world.

The problem with the universal culture Hollywood and Disney present the world today is that it drowns out other voices: the voices of difference and the voices of dissent. The problem with universalising culture is that has genocidal effects. The number of languages and culture on the earth is steadily declining just as is the number of animal species. In culture, as in nature, the effect is devastating. All humans are made less when the world is lessened in this way.

How does universalising culture work? The story made and marketed so as to sell everywhere succeeds only as far as it manages to speak for everyone. The blockbuster movie is the one that calls to all of us everywhere, as if by name. Our interests may not be the same as those of the protagonist in the story or the maker of the movie. Our language, our culture, our deepest beliefs may all be different, and yet we feel as if this story is ours. Everyone can understand and identify with what’s happening in the shoot-em-up cops and robbers formula film with car chases and deadly encounters, everyone can feel scared and feel relieved at the appropriate moments. One of the effects of
多元敘事方式的意義

想像一個不同的世界，從不同角度觀察你自己和其他人，這就是你要用來創作故事的「假如」技巧。閱讀及聆聽別人的故事是學習這種技巧的最好方法。閱讀及聆聽其他文化的故事是洞察自身文化的最好途徑。這種角度的轉變使你從一段距離外回望自身、想法和信念。這段距離使你有機會去重新思考關於你相信及想向世界證明的事情。

荷里活與迪士尼的普世文化湮沒了其他不同及反對的聲音。普世文化有一種近似大屠殺般的負面影響，語言及文化的種類如同珍稀動物般瀕臨滅絕。對於文化來說，這種負面影響就如在自然界中一樣具毀滅性。人性的特質也會隨著文化類別的減少而消失。

普世文化是如何取得效果的？故事人能為所有人說話，才能獲得商業上的成功。風靡一時的賣座大片能像點名般號召身在不同地區的所有人。我們的興趣可能和故事主角以及電影製作人的有所不同。我們的語言、文化及最根本的信仰可能都不一樣，但卻彷彿感覺那是屬於我們自己的故事。每個人都能明白和分辨有追車、死傷橋段的警匪片裡所發生的事情，每個人都能適時地感到害怕和放鬆。這類文化的其中一種影響是將暴力正常化，變得可
this kind of culture is to make violence normal and acceptable. As viewers, we’re glad it’s not happening to us but we accept it as part of the way the world is, as something about which nothing can be done. And so our culture and the deep sense of who we are and could be altered without our permission.

In the new millennium, Hollywood and Disney make culture monolithic; they make it seem as if all cultures were one and all people could be expected to think in the same way. That kind of thinking leads to disappointment for everyone. When the stories we’re told or the real world fails to turn out as in the fairytale we think that the characters or the plot or both are abnormal. In fact the problem was that our expectation was unfair. We unreasonably expected others to be like us, we didn’t allow other people to be who they really are. When they turned out to be themselves, we felt worried and upset. Worse than that though, they felt worried and upset because they failed to recognise themselves in the universal mirror. All of this happened because somebody who had the power spoke over somebody else, because somebody spoke for somebody else. Such a privilege was never given, it was assumed. It’s important to remember that these things were done by rich and powerful people and in order to make more money.

How to get around the problem of culture being served up as universal medicine, designed to cure or to dull all pains equally? D-I-Y! Culture is something we can make ourselves. And if we want to make our own stories, if we want others to listen to them, then we have a duty to listen to theirs. Hearing others may not be as simple as it sounds. If their voices are truly different from our own, then we may need some training before we can understand them. We need to already be in the conversation in order to understand the story. We need to understand the story in order to join the conversation. How do we get into this loop? How do we genuinely meet those different
接受。作為觀眾，我們慶幸並沒有發生在自己身上，卻默認它是世界的一部分，是一些無法改變的事實。所以文化中關於「我們是誰」和「我們可以成為誰」的深層含義在未得到允許時就被改變了。

新千禧年，荷里活及迪士尼造成的文化壟斷，令人們覺得只有一種文化，它們期望所有人用同一種方法思考。這種觀念使所有人失望。當人們聽到的故事和現實與童話的世界不符時，我們會覺得這些角色及情節或兩者都是反常的。事實上，問題出於我們不公正的期望。我們理所當然地覺得別人和自己一樣，不允許其他人做真實的自己。當其他人做自己時，我們會困惑及失望。更嚴重的是，我們之所以困惑和失望是因爲不能在世界這面鏡子中認清自己。發生這樣的情況，都是因爲有些人比其他人更有話語權，並為他們代言。我們從未被賦予這種特權，只是在裝腔作勢。謹記那些有錢有權的人的所有作爲都是為獲得更多。

如何避免文化被當作世界通用的，對所有苦痛一概有效的「靈丹妙藥」？答案是，D-I-Y！我們能自己締造文化。如果我們想寫自己的故事，想其他人都聽到，那麼我們也有責任去聽別人的。聽故事沒有想像中簡單，如果別人的「聲音」和我們的完全不同，我們則需要進行訓練去明白他們。我們需要先參與對話才能明白故事。我們需要先明白故事才能參與對話。怎樣才能進入這個圈子？怎樣才能真正面對那些不同？
from us?

Let’s return to the principle of fiction. Through the what if... principle we can picture difference and hopefully get out of our own skins for long enough to imagine how the world is for others. One of the most straightforward differences to imagine is role reversal. In conversation this means putting yourself in each other’s shoes. You work in a café serving travellers? Imagine you’re the traveller instead. Where would you go next, what would you do? What will your story be? You’re the traveller? Imagine instead that you work in the café, that you’re staying – that you’re from the place – where the real you was just passing through. What will you do here if you stay? What will the story be?
讓我們回到故事的原則。通過「假如」原則我們就能描繪那些不同，跳出長久以來自身的思維局限，想像他人的世界。其中一個最直接的方法就是角色轉換。在對話裡實行的話，就是站在別人的角度思考問題。你在一個咖啡館招待遊客，那麼把自己想像成一位遊客，接下來會去哪兒？會做些什麼？有什麼故事？如果你是遊客又會怎樣？想像你在咖啡館工作，而你看到真正的自己剛剛經過，你會做什麼？故事又會怎樣？
**Asking questions/taking action:**

By what means can you show others that you really do want to hear their story? How can you encourage them to tell it?

Local character: What aspects or features of the place you’re in could you include in a story in order to make it distinctively of this place?

Can you think of a story that could only happen where you are now? Can you think of a story that could only happen now?

Imagine swapping the contents of your pocket with the next person you meet. How would the story continue from there?

Think of more examples of role reversal and then try to imagine their consequences.

Imagine you fall in love with and marry the next person you meet. What would be the story of your life together? What if you married that next person you met without falling in love? What if you fell in love but never married?
練習：

怎樣可以向其他人證明你對他們的故事感興趣？怎樣鼓勵他們開口？

你可以利用本地的情況和特點編造一個故事，說服讀者它是在這個地方發生的嗎？

你能想像一個發生在你現在所處的地方的故事嗎？你能想像一個發生在此刻的故事嗎？

想像你要跟下一個遇見的人交換口袋裡的東西，故事會怎樣發展？

多想些角色轉換的例子及其實行後的結果。想像你與下一個遇見的人相愛並結婚，你們在一起生活的故事會是怎樣的？假如你並沒有和下一個遇見的人相愛卻要和他結婚？假如你們相愛但永不結婚？
4
the story circle project –
conception and connection

Story is a word with many meanings. At least three have been used so far in this manual. Because these meanings overlap in various ways it may be useful to make a quick comparison. Story in the fictional sense (the made-up story) contrasts with story in the journalistic sense (the best available account of events or explanation of what really happened). Story in the personal sense of ‘everybody has a story to tell’ in some ways falls between the two. What’s highlighted in this third kind of story is point-of-view and the personal nature of truth: this is the story that is about and belongs to someone. Is that kind of story fictional or factual? The question is difficult to answer but it draws our attention to the fact that the human capacity to imagine stands somewhere between the factual and the fictional: based on what is known the mind makes its way into an unknown future.

Between two kinds of truth – the fictional and the factual – humans understand and shape their world. We don’t do this understanding or this shaping in a completely free way or as if starting from the beginning without any rules. Truth is about the world we are given, but equally it is from and about ourselves, about who we are and who we can be. It’s by being true to ourselves and understanding the truths of others we humans can do more than merely imagine a future; we can negotiate one together.

In conversation and in story, in talk with a practical purpose and in talk with art in mind, the truth of what is and the world as-is weigh in against the deeper truth of what may be, of what could be: the truth of our what if...s
4

故事圈計劃 — 概念及連繫

故事這個詞有很多種意思。至少在這本手冊中就有三種。但由於這三種意思有部份是相同的，所以容易進行比較。虛構意義上的故事（捏造的故事）與紀實性故事（真正發生過的事件或對於事件真相的解讀）是對立的。「每個人都有故事可講」這種個人意義上的故事從某些方面說則是介於以上兩者中間的。這第三種故事所強調的是觀點和真理的個體性：一個關於和屬於某人的故事。這種故事是虛構的還是紀實的？這個問題很難回答，但它引起我們注意一個事實，那就是人類的想像力介於真實與虛幻之間，亦即是說，想像力是基於已知的事實構思未知的將來。

人類在虛構與真實之間，理解與構建他們的世界。但我們不會隨意理解或構建。真理來自我們的世界，同樣也來自我們自己；真理是關於我們是誰和我們可以成爲誰。通過真實地面對自己和理解他人，未來才不會停留在想像中。我們也可以跟其他人一起討論真理。

在對話和故事裡，在有實際目的和技巧性的談話裡，我們可以透過「假如」的問題發掘更多或質疑世界隱藏的真相。
Stories are everywhere? Once you begin to see the making of stories as something you can participate in yourself, you realise that not only are stories there in the sense of being ready made to read, to hear; stories are also ready to be created. The raw materials for fiction are everywhere around us. The conditions always exist for the making of stories because there are in every situation something new and surprising, something unobserved that can be brought to light; and there is every situation an infinite number of what if...s that could apply, depending on point of view, and limited only by past and present conditions and by the imagination of an author.

The aim of this manual is to encourage the process of story making, to encourage the kind of dialogue that allows people to tell their own story to others and so find and deliver their own truth. The principle at play here is simply this: you have heard out your partner in a conversation when you’ve let him or her get to the end of the story. This often requires patience and it often requires encouragement. No conversation is on a perfectly even footing; it’s usually easier for one party to dominate and for the other to be more of a listener. We’d probably all go mad if we seriously attempted to make every conversation and every relationship in our lives perfectly equal. But that doesn’t mean our conversations and relationships couldn’t be improved by being more equal. The aim of this project is a free exchange leading to a more equal sharing of stories, the result of which will hopefully be that people will come to treat each other more fairly.

The story circle project is an initiative of Planetdevotion (Green Arts World Alliance). Planetdevotion is a group of artists and writers dedicated to fostering the creative spirit, to the healing power of imaginative expression and to the critical vocation of thought and of art. The story circle project is a group of people spread all over the world communicating their stories and their conversation through a
故事無處不在？當你開始把創作故事看成自己也能做的事情時，你就會明白故事不只是用來閱讀、聆聽，還可以創作。我們周圍充滿創作故事的原材料，也具備創作故事的條件，因為每種情況都存在一些新的、使人驚訝的、被忽略而又值得去關注的「假如」。「假如」能發揮的空間視乎觀點與角度，受限於過去與當下的條件和作者的想像力。

這本手冊的目的是推動故事創作的進程，鼓勵人們相互講述故事，從談話間發現及交流想法。規則再簡單不過，就是從頭到尾聽完同伴們的故事。這往往需要耐性和鼓勵。任何對話都不能以平等的地位進行，一方主導對話，另一方作爲聆聽者是常見的情況。如果要嚴格地將談話和社交關係都平等化的話，我們可能都會變成瘋子。但這不等於說我們的對話和關係不能改進，使之比較平等。這個計劃的目標是鼓勵透過自由的交流，讓大家分享相當份量的故事，藉此希望人人都獲得比較平等的對待。

故事圈計劃起源於地球奉獻組織，即綠色藝術世界聯盟。地球奉獻組織由一群具創新精神、相信想像力有治癒功能，並視評論藝術和思想為己任的藝術家和作家組成。參與故事圈計畫的人遍佈世界各地，以博客（部落格）進行故事交流及
weblog. (Perhaps over time a network of blogs and sites may develop.) This manual is the starting point. If you’re reading the manual on-line then you may have already found the blog. If not, or if you’re reading this book in print, you can find the blog at

http://storycirclemmanual.blogspot.com/

If you do wish to contribute to the project, there are plenty of ways you can do so. Various possibilities will be mentioned throughout the manual but the most obvious way you could help would be with building the blog and expanding website and/or working with the manual to create your own stories and to help others create stories and get them up on-line. Story circles are a great way for beginning writers to encourage each other and a story circle could easily get itself started by working through the exercises at the end of each chapter in the manual. Essentially a story circle is a group of people who come together for the purpose of making stories, together and/or alone. A story circle is a kind of story writing support group. It’s a response to the fact that writing is mainly a solitary activity. The main function of the story circle is to encourage creative work through constructive suggestion and criticism. The story circle is most interesting and useful when it works across cultures and when talking across cultures it’s especially important to be sensitive to, attentive to and respectful of, difference. Story circles can function all over the world – in the flesh as well as virtually – and they can be connected with each other by means of the world wide web.

The internet is a wonderful tool with which to build a people’s literature; that’s to say, not a literature of the rich and powerful or of the already famous, but instead a literature written by anybody and by everybody. The idea here is to build a community of readers by first creating a community of writers. You might think of this as the opposite of the expected order of events, but the kind of community
對話（希望假以時日能發展成有系統的博客和網頁）。這本手冊就是起點。如果你是在線上閱讀這本手冊的話，你可能已經找到了該博客。如果你讀的是書，那麼博客的網址是：

http://storycirclemanual.blogspot.com/

如果你想支持這個計劃，你有很多可以做的。手冊中會提及各種可行的方法，但最簡明的方法莫過於建立博客，建立更多網頁，用從手冊中學到的知識創作自己的故事，幫助其他人創作並把故事上傳到互聯網。故事圈對第一次創作故事的人來說是一個很好的相互鼓勵的方法，他們可以輕鬆地完成每一個章的練習即而開始寫作。故事圈最主要的功能是提出富建設性的意見去鼓勵創作活動。故事圈能以跨文化的形式進行，這也是它最有意思及最有用的地方。透過故事圈，我們可以更留心發現、關注及尊重差異。故事圈在全世界都能起作用，我們可以通過互聯網聯繫在一起。

互聯網是開始文學生涯的好途徑，它不只是屬於有錢、有權或者有名氣的人。任何人都可以參與，寫作屬於所有人的文學。其意念是希望能以聚集作者來建立一個讀者群。你或許會覺得這方法的邏輯有點顛倒，但故事圈是
the story circle project builds depends on dialogue and give and take: if you want your peer to listen to you then you have to listen to them. In this way you learn from each other’s efforts.
一個建立在對話，以施與受並存為基礎的群體。如果你想同伴們聽你說，那你也得聽他們說，這樣才能共同進步。
**Asking questions/taking action:**

It’s often difficult in conversation or other turn-taking activities (like for instance story telling) to say whether the turns are fair. Fortunately watches and clocks are available to make up for our poor judgment. Take turns telling stories (or talking about a topic) giving each other equal time (for instance five minutes each). Don’t allow any interruptions. (The point of this exercise is not to insist that all stories should be the same length; stories should – case by case – be as long as they need to be. The point is for partners in dialogue to get a feeling for what an equal exchange would actually be.)

How can you build a story circle where you are right now? Who could be interested? Who could you get involved? When and where and how often could you meet? Make a list of common themes or topics that might interest people in a local story circle. How could you advertise the circle to get people involved? Are there any dangers or pitfalls you need to watch out for?
練習：

我們通常很難判斷對話或以輪流方法進行的活動（比如講故事）的次序是否公平。幸好手錶和時鐘可以幫助我們作出公平的判斷。輪流說故事（或圍繞一個主題討論），給每個人同樣的時間（比如每人五分鐘），期間不能打斷講者的話。（這練習並不表示每個故事都要有相當的長度。故事應該視不同情況而定，需要多長就多長。限制時間只是想大家能公平交流。）

怎樣在你所處的地方建立一個故事圈？誰會感興趣？可以邀請誰參與？你們可以在何時何地見面？多久見一次面？列出能讓本地故事圈的組員感興趣的主題或話題。你可以怎樣宣傳故事圈，吸引更多人加入？有沒有你需要注意的危險或陷阱？
So you want to make stories and tell them and have others listen to them? What exactly do you want to share with the world? Why does your story need to be told? Think back to our most essential story ingredient, and ask: what kind of surprise do you want to give to your reader/listener?

If surprise is the most essential thing in a story, then there needs to be something behind it, something driving it. There needs to be a reason for the writer to surprise the reader. If there’s no reason then the surprise is a gimmick, the difference the story makes is gratuitous, it’s merely surprise for its own sake. The need for something to drive the surprise in the story brings us to a fundamental feature of every story worth reading, it brings us to a fact many readers (and some writers) find difficult to accept. The simple fact is that a story proves something. It doesn’t prove something in the way that a long detailed argument or a theorem in geometry might, it doesn’t prove something by hammering it into a reader’s head. A story proves what it proves in the way that it teaches: by practical demonstration, by example, by showing, not by telling. Consider a very simple example. In Aesop’s fable ‘The Boy who cried Wolf’, we’re shown the trouble the boy gets into through repeating his practical joke. He cries ‘wolf’ to get the attention of the villagers. They’re angry with him but he enjoys the joke so much he has to play it again. When the wolf finally does come and the boy really needs help, his cries are ignored, thus proving that: ‘Even when liars tell the truth, they are not believed’. Each of Aesop’s fables ends with a moral coda of this kind, clearly stating the story’s conviction. In Aesop’s fables – as with many stories for children – we’re shown the consequences of particular actions and then we’re told explicitly what those consequences are. In stories for adults that kind of telling tends to feel too explicit, too preachy.
你想創作故事？你想向其他人講自己的故事嗎？你想有聽眾嗎？你有什麼是想和全世界分享的？為什麼你的故事需要說出來？回想一下我們創作故事最重要的材料，然後問：你想怎樣帶給讀者或聽眾驚訝？

如果驚訝是故事中最重要的元素，那麼其背後應該有一樣東西推動它的。作者需要一個理由解釋他為何要讓讀者感到驚訝。如果沒有理由，那麼驚訝也只是一個噱頭。為了驚訝而驚訝，故事的特別之處亦變得無意義。驚訝是需要動因的，這樣故事才值得閱讀。驚訝也能帶給讀者（以及一些作者）一些他們難以置信的事實。簡單來說，故事需要證明某些事。證明的方法並不需要長篇大論的論證，也不需要用鐵鎚將要說明的東西釘進讀者的腦袋。故事是利用實證、例子、展示（而非直述）將要證明的東西教導讀者。想想一個非常簡單的例子，在《伊索寓言》的《狼來了》中，男孩持續開著他那屢試不爽的玩笑而使自己陷入的困境。他喊「狼來了」是為了引起村民的注意。村民都很生氣，但男孩卻很享受這個玩笑而多次玩弄村民。最後當狼真的來了時，他怎麼叫喊也無人理會。以此證明，就算愛說謊的人說了真話，別人也不會相信他。每一篇《伊索寓言》的結尾都有類似的道德教訓，清楚地表明故事的主旨。《伊索寓言》及其他兒童故事向我們展示了特定行爲的因果關係。但在成人故事裡，這樣做就會太過明顯，過於說教了。
Show me, don’t tell me. That should be the fiction writer’s most important motto. And even though this manual is not a work of fiction, the motto shall now be put into practice by showing you an example that demonstrates how conviction works without being made explicit. The example is the story in Shakespeare’s play Macbeth. Macbeth is the story of a man who – once the idea has been planted in him – will stop at nothing to achieve and retain absolute power. In case you’re not familiar with the play, or you’ve forgotten the plot, here’s the story in outline.

Somewhere in the distant past, two Scottish lords, Macbeth and Banquo, are returning from a victorious battle against a rebel army. Macbeth was very brutal in the battle, he sliced an enemy in two and put his severed head on the battlements of the castle where the battle took place. On their way Macbeth and Banquo meet three witches in a lonely place. The witches recognise them and tell the future for them. They address Macbeth, in turn as Thane (Lord) of Glamis (his present title), then as Thane of Cawdor, then as ‘king that shalt be.’ They then tell Banquo that he shall be lesser than Macbeth and greater, not as happy but happier, not king but the father of kings.

While the two are still wondering about this strange encounter a messenger comes from the king to confer upon Macbeth – for his services in battle – the title of Thane of Cawdor. This amazing and immediate ‘proof of the witches’ prophecy takes hold in Macbeth’s mind.

Macbeth gets home and tells the witches’ prophecy to his wife who is a very bad influence on him and encourages him to take whatever steps are necessary to make the rest of the witches’ predictions come true. The opportunity to realise Macbeth’s ambition for absolute power comes when the kind and gentle King Duncan arrives with his sons to visit Macbeth in order to honour him for his victory and his new title.
「向我展示，而不是告訴我」，應該是故事作者最重要的座右銘。雖然這本手冊不是故事書，但我們也會本著這個座右銘，向你展示巧妙表達主旨的方法。這個例子就是莎士比亞的《麥克白》。這個故事關於一個一旦有野心就會不顧一切地追求和維持勢力的男人。如果你不熟悉劇情，或忘了具體的情節，那麼下面就是故事的梗概。

很久以前，兩個蘇格蘭貴族麥克白和班柯，從平叛中凱旋而歸。麥克白曾把一個敵人撕成兩半，並把屍首的頭砍下來掛在戰場的城門上。回程中麥克白和班柯在一個荒涼的地方遇到三個女巫。女巫們認出他倆並為他們預言將來。她們稱呼麥克白，先是葛萊密斯領主，然後是考特領主，最後是「未來的國王」。接著她們告訴班柯，他將比麥克白低微，但比他更偉大；他會獲得幸福且比麥克白更幸福，因他雖不是國王但卻是無數國王之父。

當他倆仍對這個奇遇感到困惑時，國王的信使前來嘉獎麥克白在戰爭中的功績，授予他考特領主的勳位。這就一下子證明了女巫神奇的預言，從此女巫的話就佔據了麥克白的腦子。

麥克白回到家，告訴他的妻子關于女巫的預言，她唆使麥克白無論如何都要讓女巫剩下的預言實現。仁慈的國王鄧肯帶著兒子們來到麥克白家慶祝他的勝利和進爵，這時麥克白盲目的野心便開始彰顯。
That night, Duncan, tired from his journey, goes to bed early. Macbeth and his wife get the king’s bodyguards drunk and drugged so that they’ll sleep soundly and then Macbeth stabs Duncan to death.

Sure enough, the morning after everyone can see through the shows of grief Lord and Lady Macbeth put on, even though they’ve tried to make the king’s bodyguards look guilty. The bodyguards are executed before they can give anyone their version of events. Duncan’s sons flee fearing for their lives, leaving the vacant throne to Macbeth. Now all of the witches’ prophecies concerning him have been fulfilled.

Macbeth now turns his attention to the other part of the witches’ prophecy, the part suggesting that Banquo’s sons will be kings. Now king, Macbeth organizes a banquet for the Scottish lords. And he organizes for paid assassins to murder Banquo and his son on their way to the banquet. Macbeth wants to accept only the part of his fate that favours him.

Banquo is killed but his son Fleance manages to flee. The banquet goes on and Banquo comes too – as a ghost. The ghost sits in Macbeth’s seat and even though Macbeth is a very brave man this is simply too much for him. Macbeth is the only one who can see the ghost and so his behaviour seems very strange to the rest of the party. After this Macbeth and especially his wife show signs of madness. They can’t sleep, they have bad dreams. And of course they know that Fleance is still alive and that therefore the prophecy of Banquo’s sons ruling Scotland can still come true.

In desperation Macbeth seeks out the witches. He finds them in a cave cooking up horrible ingredients in order to do their witchcraft, and in this case to foretell the future. The witches conjure up spirits who give Macbeth specific, but again riddling, warnings. They tell him to beware of Macduff, the Thane of Fife.
當晚，鄧肯由於旅途勞累，很早就睡了。麥克白和他妻子在侍衛的酒裡加了蒙汗藥，等他們睡著後，麥克白乘機殺了鄧肯。

第二天早上，雖然麥克白和他妻子設法將罪名加諸於侍衛身上，但人人都能看穿他倆只是在演戲，而那些侍衛在想說出事實之前就被滅口了。王子們因為害怕都逃走了，把王座留給了麥克白。於是女巫所作的預言都一一實現了。

麥克白開始將注意力轉向女巫預言的其他部份，就是她們預言班柯的子孫會成爲國王。作爲現任國王，麥克白爲蘇格蘭的領主舉辦了一個宴會，他還買通了刺客在去宴會的路上刺殺班柯和他兒子。麥克白只想實現對他有利的預言。

班柯死了，但他的兒子弗列安斯逃脫了。宴會舉行期間，班柯變成鬼魂坐在麥克白的位置上。麥克白再勇敢也承受不住這驚嚇，由於只有他才可以看到鬼魂，其他人覺得他的行爲非常怪異。在此之後，麥克白，特別是他的妻子都發瘋了。他們睡不著，做惡夢。他們當然知道弗列安斯依然活著，因此班柯的兒子將成爲國王統治蘇格蘭的預言依然有可能實現。

絕望中麥克白在一個岩洞裡找到女巫，她們正煮著一些用來施法和預言的可怕東西。女巫特別地爲麥克白召喚神靈，給他仍舊如謎語般的警告。她們告訴他要小心費輔的領主麥克德
But then they tell him that no one ‘of woman born’ should have power to hurt him. And they tell him that Macbeth shall never be defeated until Birnam Wood (a forest) come to Dunsinane Hill.

Macbeth is somewhat comforted by the improbability of his defeat. How can he be hurt if no one born of woman can hurt him? How can he be vanquished if a forest has to move in order to achieve his defeat? Forests don’t move. Still, the first news he hears after his second meeting with the witches is that Macduff has fled to England and joined an army led by Malcolm, son of the late king Duncan, an army formed to oust Macbeth. Macbeth immediately has all of Macduff’s family killed.

The queen, by this stage having gone completely mad, dies, probably a suicide. Macbeth has some death wishes himself but firms his resolve for the coming battle. As the time of the battle nears a messenger comes to Macbeth and tells him that, unbelievable as it might seem, he has witnessed Birnam Wood moving towards Dunsinane. Macbeth is distraught at this news, which he won’t at first believe. But it turns out that Malcolm has told his soldiers to chop down the trees and carry them so as to conceal the true numbers of his army.

The battle ensues and Macbeth gets into close combat with Macduff who has a serious score to settle with him. Macbeth, you will remember, has killed every member of Macduff’s family. Macbeth haughtily tells his opponent that his is a charmed life and that he’s not afraid because no one of woman born can hurt him. Then Macduff lets Macbeth know that he was born by Caesarian section, that he was ‘from his mother’s womb untimely ripp’d’. All prophecies now appear to be resolved and Macbeth’s will snaps. Macduff offers mercy but it is refused. He wins the fight and chops off Macbeth’s head. Malcolm becomes the new king of Scotland.

Ghosts and kings, witches and madness, blood and guts,
夫，然後又跟麥克白說沒有一個「女人生下」的人能傷害他，她們告訴麥克白他永遠不會被打敗，除非勃南的樹林移到鄧西嫩山上。

麥克白聽到自己不會被打敗而感到安慰。除非世上有不是女人所生的人，除非樹林為了打敗他而移動，這些沒什麼可能發生的事讓他覺得自己不會被征服。樹林雖然沒有移動，但在他與女巫的第二次會面後，便聽到麥克德夫已逃到英格蘭，並且加入了一支由先王鄧肯的兒子馬爾康率領的討伐馬克白的軍隊。麥克白立即株連了麥克德夫的家人。

而王后此時已經完全瘋了，後來還死了，可能是自殺。麥克白也想尋死，但他要籌劃即將開始的戰爭。當戰爭迫在眉睫，一位信使告訴麥克白，他親眼看見勃南的樹林向鄧西嫩山移動。這個消息使麥克白發狂，所以剛聽到時他不肯相信。其實是馬爾康為了使他的軍隊顯得壯大而叫士兵把樹砍了充數。

隨著戰爭的持續，麥克白終於要面對他的宿敵——麥克德夫。你應該記得麥克白已殺了麥克德夫全家。麥克白自大地告訴敵人，他的人生受到魔法庇佑，他無所畏懼，因為沒有一個女人生下的人能傷害他。麥克德夫告訴麥克白他生於皇族（是凱撒的子孫），不足月就被從母親的腹中剖出。現在所有預言都已應驗，麥克白被打垮了。麥克德夫想饒了他，但麥克白拒絕。麥克德夫最終獲勝並砍下了麥克白的頭顱。馬爾康則成為蘇格蘭的新國王。

鬼魂、國王、女巫、瘋子、鮮血、內臟和會移動的樹
marching forests: there are many things in the story to surprise the first time reader. But what drives these surprises? What does the story prove? What drives the action of the story from beginning to end? The idea behind the play – the conviction of the story – is startlingly simple. It’s this: **blind ambition leads to self-destruction**.

Action – or what happens in the story – happens because characters do things, because things happen to them and they respond, or else they are swept along in actions not of their making. Perhaps they’re swept along despite everything they do. In the example we’re considering now, everything that Macbeth, the character, does, everything that happens in the story *Macbeth*, proves that blind ambition leads to self-destruction. Read the play or go back through the story and test it out against this conviction. Macbeth’s role in the play keeps him on a path that leads inevitably to his own destruction (and that of many others along the way). As a character, he has choices all along, but once he’s set his foot on the evil path he makes decision after decision leading to his own doom. More importantly though, there’s nothing in the play that distracts us from the story’s conviction. There’s no *digression*.

Now that we’ve got an easy and reliable example of conviction, let’s formulate a clear definition with practical application. Conviction (sometimes called *premise*) is what the story proves. It drives the difference the story makes. Surprise, essential to the story, turns the reader’s world around. There’s not much point turning the world around if you’re not sure which way it should end up facing. There has to be a point in showing your reader the *what if* of another world. A story worth reading or hearing has that kind of a point. The point of the story is what we call conviction.

Conviction is fundamental to the logic of the story. It’s not a part of the sequential structure (to which we’ll turn shortly) but
林都能讓初次閱讀的讀者感到驚訝。但是什麼在驅使這些驚訝？這個故事想要證明什麼？是什麼在推動故事從開頭到結局的一連串動作？在這部劇作的背後，故事的主旨非常簡單，那就是——盲目的野心將導致自我毀滅。

情節中人物的舉動，或者說是在故事裡發生的事情，都源自角色所做的事。當有事發生時，角色會作出反應，即使事件不是角色引起的，他們也會被牽涉其中。在《麥克白》這個例子當中，角色所做的以及在故事裡發生的事情，都可以證明盲目的野心會導致自我毀滅。通過重讀劇本或者故事來檢驗一下這個主旨吧！麥克白這個角色在劇中無法避免走向自毀的路途（其他角色在過程中亦不能倖免）。作爲一個角色，他有選擇權，但每次決定都使他逐漸走上這條自毀的道路。整個故事沒有什麼能分散我們對故事主旨的注意力，亦即沒有任何旁支末節。

我們已經有一個簡單且可靠關於主旨的例子，現在讓我們在它的實際應用方面多加闡述。主旨（有時又叫中心思想）就是故事所要證明的。它是讓故事與眾不同的要素之一。驚訝對於故事來說非常重要，它能改變讀者的世界。如果你對改變後的世界毫無頭緒，那麼改變就沒有意義了。所以向讀者展示一個「假如」的世界是需要有意義的。一個值得閱讀和聆聽的好故事都要具備這點，當中的意義就是故事的主旨。

主旨是故事的邏輯基礎。它並不是因果鏈中的一環（我們將在以後討論這一點），但它使這個因果鏈可行，因此主旨比
it makes that kind of structure possible, i.e. conviction is more fundamental than for instance, resolution. Events are ordered in a story so as to prove the story’s conviction.

A quick re-cap: story writing has the potential to be world changing political action. That doesn’t mean the writer hits the reader over the head with heavy moral lessons or with telling her what to do. Rather every story has a conviction that drives the action the reader experiences once in the story.

Let’s get back to logic for a moment. A story proves something, that something is the story’s conviction. The conviction the story proves can be expressed in a consequential way, as an if... then... statement. Usually that if... then... statement will be reversible. Let’s make Macbeth our example again. If you are blindly ambitious then you will destroy yourself. Reverse the proposition: If you’re not blindly ambitious then you won’t destroy yourself. Notice how one of these two propositions is much more impressive (or dramatic) than the other. In this case the story is driven by the positive sense of a conviction about blind ambition and its effects. One can’t imagine much drama in a play proving that unambitious people don’t wreck their own lives. Reversing the conviction is however a useful way of testing its logic, making sure that it works.

Please note that the if... then... logic of the story’s conviction is not necessarily the logic mathematicians or bankers prize. In some ways the logic of fiction is like the logic of a dream. The inner logic of the story is somewhat independent of the world around it, the ‘real’ world of the reader and writer. But then why should the logic of fiction be the logic of the real world? Don’t we watch movies to unwind, to escape? Hopefully what fiction delivers to the reader is the kind of logic that makes her think again, look again at what had been familiar. It’s the kind of logic that makes unknown what
結局還更重要。故事裡情節的鋪排都是為了證明主旨。

簡而言之，故事創作有改變世界的潛質，有深遠的政治意義。但這並不代表作者需要向讀者說教或者直接告訴讀者該做的事。其實讀者需要投入故事的情節來領悟當中的主旨。

讓我們先討論有關邏輯的問題。故事所證明的事就是主旨。故事要證明的主旨可以用「如果⋯⋯」這個能表達因果關係的句式來陳述。這個「如果⋯⋯」句式通常是可以的反過來說的。再以《麥克白》的主旨為例：如果你有盲目的野心，你將會毀滅自己。反過來說：如果你沒有盲目的野心，你就不會毀滅自己。注意這兩種說法，哪一種更具戲劇性，比較容易讓讀者留有印象？在《麥克白》裡，內容是根據前者的主旨發展的。如果以後者作爲主旨，證明沒有野心的人不會自我毀滅，人們則會很難想像會有什麼精彩的劇情。將主旨反過來陳述，可以測試它是否符合邏輯以及這個邏輯是否正確的好方法。

請注意「如果⋯⋯」的故事邏輯不同於算術邏輯。從某些方面來說，故事的邏輯就像夢的邏輯。故事的內在邏輯，跟讀者及作者的真實世界邏輯有別。但為什麼故事的邏輯要跟真實世界的一樣？我們看電影不是為了放鬆，或者暫時逃離現實嗎？故事的邏輯是希望能使讀者重新去思考和觀察所熟悉的事物。當中的邏輯讓熟悉的事物都變得陌生。所以可行的故事
had been familiar before. So the conviction of a story that works, far from re-confirming the moral certainties of its reader, often has the effect of giving her serious doubts. More to the point, it makes the reader work. The story works only to the extent that it succeeds in making the reader work. The reader has to interpret the story in order to understand how it could have meaning for her. That kind of understanding does not apply merely to the world in the story, it’s useful to the reader because it applies in some way to her real world as well. Perhaps the story provides the reader with the logic that allows her to see how illogical the world around her is, at least at times. In the case of Macbeth the reader who grasps the story’s conviction with regard to blind ambition (i.e. that it leads to self-destruction) understands precisely what the protagonist of the story (i.e. Macbeth) does not understand.

Great stories resonate with conviction. They don’t bludgeon their readers with morals or with telling them how to live or what to be. Great stories persuade us how to be and what to do, they persuade us by example. They tell us what we had to know but didn’t know before we read the story. Stories worth reading or hearing persuade us with a knowledge so important it has to be shared. But those examples and that knowledge are only as strong as the conviction behind them. It’s by virtue of conviction that fiction re-makes the world. As an author, your stories must have the strength of such convictions.
主旨，除為了肯定一些道德思想外，還要讓讀者對世事產生疑惑，更甚之，使讀者有所行動。好的故事能讓讀者思考。讀者需要自己詮釋故事以探求它對自身的意義。讀者能理解不僅是故事裡的世界，他們從故事領會到的也能應用於真實世界當中。或許故事至少能使讀者明白到真實世界是多麼的不合邏輯。以《麥克白》為例，麥克白不能明白盲目野心為何會導致自我毀滅，但讀者可以通過其主旨了解這個道理。

好的故事都能反映主旨。他們不會用道德說教來指導讀者如何生活、成爲怎樣的人。好的故事會用例子來誘導我們學習做事的方法及該做的事情。故事要我們了解的事，是我們在閱讀他們之前不明白的。一個值得閱讀及聆聽的故事都有非常重要且需要分享的道理。故事的主旨夠強，才能有相當的例子和學問作引導。因爲主旨，故事才能有重建世界的能力。作爲作者，你的故事一定要有一個有力的主旨。
Asking questions/taking action:

Makes some lists under the following headings:

What’s wrong with the world? How could it be better? What do you really believe in? What don’t you believe in at all? What do you want to/need to prove (to specific others, to yourself, to the world)? As a writer, what could you hope to prove? What could you hope to show a reader that s/he doesn’t already know?

Think through the plots of some stories you love and try to work out the conviction behind them. Make a list of convictions that could be used to drive stories. Here are a few examples to add to:

- Blind ambition leads to self-destruction.
- If you don’t fight, you lose.
- If you dig a hole for someone else, you’ll surely fall into it yourself.
- The truth will set you free.

If you’re in a story circle it will be useful to compare your lists of convictions. Which ones can you agree about? Which convictions do you disagree with? Of those you agree with, which are the most and the least important? Compare your priority order for the convictions you’ve agreed on.

As you work through the chapters of the manual, creating hopefully many stories, make sure that each has a conviction. Keep a list of convictions for later comparison and keep all of your story notes in a folder for later use too. It’s often difficult to predict how fresh ideas could be later combined to create stories.
練習：

以下面這些內容為題，列出：

世界有什麼不合理之處？如何能使它變得更好？你真正相信的是什麼？有什麼是你根本不相信的？你有什麼想證明的（對特定的人，你自己，或對世界）？作爲作者，你希望證明什麼？當讀者不了解你要證明的事情時，你要怎樣向他展示？

在你喜歡的故事裡找出它們的主旨。列出可以推動情節發展的主旨，以下是一些例子：

盲目的野心將導致自我毀滅。
不進則退。
害人終害己。
真理必叫你們得自由。

如果你在故事圈裡，你可以跟其他組員比較大家列舉的主旨。哪些主旨是你同意的？哪些是你不同意的？在你認同的主旨當中，哪些比較重要？按其重要的程度將主旨排序。

當你讀完了本手冊的一些章節，並創作了一些故事時，請確定它們都有主旨。由於我們很難預料新的想法和構思日後會如何結合成一個故事，因此請記錄主旨以備稍後進行比較，並將所有與故事創作有關的筆記都放進一個資料夾裡吧！
part two:
story making essentials

6
plot

Conviction is essential but it isn’t a part of the story’s sequential structure or plot. Then what is that structure? What does it consist of?

Minimal plot structure is very simple. It’s based around the idea introduced back in chapter one: something unexpected has to happen. Let’s call that something unexpected an event. No event = no story. Plot is the what happens of a story. It’s the event structure, the sequence of the action. The novelist E.M. Forster explained plot in this way in his book Aspects of the Novel. He compared these two sentences:

The king died and then the queen died.
The king died and then the queen died of grief.

Forster thought the second of these sentences constituted a plot whereas the first did not. The second sentence shows itself to be part of a plot because it joins events in a chain of cause and effect, whereas the first sentence joins events that might only be randomly related to each other. The ‘died of grief’ in the second sentence answers a question (‘Why or how was it the queen died?’) and so involves the reader in a pattern of making sense of things that have happened.

In a plot, cause and effect – as reflected in the question ‘why?’ and its answer – unite action and behaviour. The way characters behave – what they do – creates the action of the story.
第二部份：故事創作的要素

6

情節

主旨是必不可少的，但它並不是組成情節的順序和結構的部分。那麼，這個結構到底是什麼呢？它是由什麼組成的呢？

最小型的情節結構非常簡單。它建立在第一章所介紹的概念上：一些不可預料的事情一定會發生。讓我們把這些不可預料的事情稱為「事件」吧。沒有事件就沒有故事。情節就是在故事中所發生的事。它是事件的結構，動作的順序。小說家E.M.福斯特在其著作《小說面面觀》裡以對比下面的兩個句子來解釋情節結構：

國王死了，之後王后也死了。
國王死了，之後王后因傷心過度也死了。

福斯特認爲第二句有情節結構，而第一句則沒有。第二句之所以是情節結構的一部分，是因為當中有涉及因果關係，而第一句只是把事件隨意拼湊在一起而已。第二句中的「因傷心過度」能解答「王后為什麼及怎樣死去？」的問題，讓讀者能說得通當中發生的事情。

「為什麼」的問題能夠反映情節裡的因果，其答案亦能連合當中的動作和行爲。角色的行爲以及他們做的事，都能催生
Why do things happen as they do in a plot? Events happen because characters have made them happen. Surely things can also just happen to characters, as they can in real life? True. You can have your whole cast wiped out by an earthquake or a tidal wave, but if nobody could see that disaster coming – if there was no slight hint of such a possibility – then it won’t function as part of a plot. Events, to be credible, need to be foreshadowed in a plot. The plot has to allow those events to have a cause in the action of the story.

The word plot has two related meanings in English. A plot is the what happens of a story, and it’s also a secret plan to make something happen. The idea of a secret plan is very relevant to the idea of plot in fiction. As we’ve seen with conviction, there is a plan under the surface in a story, a plan which may or may not be secret. Think back to Macbeth. There’s nowhere in Shakespeare’s play that a character steps out of the action to address the audience directly and tell them ‘this play teaches us that blind ambition leads to self-destruction’. There are wiser and subtler warnings given by various characters. Macbeth – like all of Shakespeare’s great tragic characters – at times has great insights into his own situation. But the play’s underlying moral principle – blind ambition leads to self-destruction – is something we have to work out for ourselves. In the case of Macbeth, the protagonist of the story, it’s our privilege as an audience to understand what this very intelligent man is unable to accept about himself, about his choices in life. We learn from a distance what he misses by being stuck in his body with its particular destiny. It’s the action of the play that teaches the audience. This teaching by example is both very powerful and very subtle; it’s inexplicit.

What we observe with conviction is that a story works and is structured by means it need not disclose. But there’s more that a story has to do. We haven’t yet mentioned the ‘who’ of a story. A story has people in it. Or animals who are really people. In a story
故事的情節。在一個情節結構中，事情為什麼會這樣發生而不是那樣發生呢？這是因爲角色讓事件這樣發生的。當然，有些事情也可以像在現實般自然的發生在角色身上。沒錯！你可以令所有角色於一場地震或海嘯中死去，但如果沒有人能預見災難，而故事又沒有顯示一點點的蛛絲馬跡的話，此部份便不能作爲情節。在情節結構中，事件需要先進行鋪墊才能令人信服。情節結構當中的事件是必須有起因的。

情節的英文“Plot”有兩種相關的意義。情節可指故事裡發生的事，亦可解作秘密計劃。秘密計劃這概念與故事情節的概念是有關聯的。在討論主旨時，我們已知道每個故事表面下都有一個明顯或隱秘的計劃。在莎士比亞的《麥克白》裡，沒有一個角色從故事情節裡跳出來，然後直接告訴觀眾「這部劇作告訴我們盲目的野心將導致自我毀滅」。許多角色都能以更聰明、更巧妙的方法向觀眾傳達這一點。如莎士比亞所有偉大的悲劇角色一樣，麥克白有時也能敏銳地洞察他的處境。但是該劇最深層的寓意——盲目的野心將導致自我毀滅——是需要我們自己領悟出來的。在《麥克白》這個例子中，只有作爲觀眾的我們才能理解如此聰明的主角不能忍受自己和人生的理由。我們可以用旁觀者的角度，知道他走進末路時要失去的東西。這些東西都是戲劇透過情節來教導觀眾的。這種通過例子來勸喻的方式既有力又隱約，還能在不知不覺間起作用。

討論完故事主旨之後，我們了解到讓故事可行以及建構的手段是不需在當中明說的。但故事要做的不僅僅如此。我們到現在爲止還未提及故事中的「誰」。故事中有人物，或者代表
something happens to someone. And as there is almost always more than one character, we can go further. Something happens to people in a story. Their situation changes and they change with it. Usually the characters bring about at least some of those changes. So the plot is something that happens because of what the characters do to each other, or because of the ways in which they affect each other. The vital element here is conflict. In general the plot progresses because characters disagree or differ, or even because they both want the same thing, but only one of them can have it.

Something happens to people in a story? It would be better to say that something happens between people in a story. People act and are acted on and as a result of those actions things change.

A shorthand for plot would then be the who-does-what-to-whom of a story. That’s how characters are in the plot. It’s the behaviour of the characters in the story that delivers the action that constitutes the plot. It’s through the who-does-what-to-whom structure of a story that characters shape the plot in the reciprocal process by which plot shapes the characters. This is what is intended by the formula for fiction sometimes described as plot = character. The story happens through the action of characters. Through the action of characters the plot progresses.

Now you could say a plot, any plot, has a minimum structure, as follows: Beginning then Middle then End. Aristotle made an observation along these lines a long time ago. It’s hard to argue against this description but it isn’t necessarily very useful. A piece of string has a beginning, a middle and end, but it’s arguable as to where one should draw the lines between these. A piece of string has a beginning, a middle and an end, and so what? We need a more useful description of basic plot structure from which to work. Here it is. Here’s the most basic structure a story can have and still function
人物的動物。故事的某件事情會發生在某個人物身上。由於故事中往往不只一個人物，我們可以更進一步發展情節。一些事情發生在角色身上。他們隨處境的變化而變化。通常角色也會造成處境的一部分變化，所以情節可以說是由角色間的互動和相互影響所引發的。當中的關鍵元素是衝突。總的來說，情節之所以能夠推進，是因爲角色之間有分歧和差異，或者因爲他們都想要同一樣東西，而只有其中一人能得到它。

與其說某些事情是發生在人物身上，倒不如說是發生在人物之間。人物有所行動又對事件有所反應，結果這些行爲使事情改變了。

情節以簡略的方式表達，可以說是「某人對某人做了某事」。情節裡的角色就是這樣的。角色的行爲引起事件，繼而構成情節。通過「某人對某人做了某事」這一結構，角色塑造情節，而相對地情節也塑造了角色。因此故事的元素有時候會被公式化為「情節＝角色」。通過角色的動作，故事才會發生，情節才能得以發展。

現在你可以說任何情節都有一種最簡單的結構，即：開端-中段-結尾。亞里士多德在很久以前就已經觀照過這一結構。雖然我們很難挑出這種表述的毛病，但它不一定是有用的。一條繩也有開始、中間和結尾，但我們該在哪部分劃分這三點卻是有爭議的。即使一條繩有開始、中間和結尾又怎樣？我們需要一個更加可行的基本情節的表述。這裡就有一個，一個最基本且可行的故事結構：

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as a story:

A story grabs you, it gets you in.
A story surprises you, it has some kind of turn or complication.
A story has resolution.

That grab has the function of a newspaper headline or billboard: it attracts your attention and makes you want to read on. The complication has the effect of turning you around. It’s a surprising development in the action of the story; it’s a surprise because it’s not what you would have expected. The resolution needn’t fix everyone’s problems, but it puts an end to the complication (or series of complications) that drove the story. That’s why Calm ∧ Action ∧ Calm doesn’t quite do justice the fundamental structure of plot. Think of Macbeth, a story that begins and ends in the heat of battle. Resolving the complications essential to a particular plot does not mean solving all the world’s problems. The world goes on having problems after the story’s finished and this is what makes other stories possible. Nor do all the loose ends have to be tied up, there might be enough elements of a plot left unresolved in order for there to be a sequel. Macbeth 2?

The simplest story structure is, as listed above, Grab then Turn then Resolution. For the sake of brevity, from now on when we need to refer to this simplest structure, we’ll call it G^T^R.
故事先聲奪人，令你走進其中。
（注：「先聲奪人」，英文是“grab”，以下用G表示）

故事能使你驚訝，內裡必有迴腸百轉。
（注：「迴腸百轉」，英文是“turn”，以下用T表示）

故事包含結果。
（注：「結果」，英文是“resolution”，以下用R表示）

G正如報紙的頭條或公告牌，它引起你注意，令你繼續讀下去。T有令你的思路轉向的力量。它是在故事裡讓人吃驚的事件發展，這些發展之所以使人驚訝，是因爲它們是出乎讀者意外之外的。R不需要解決所有人的問題，但它必需給T（或一系列的T）一個結果。這就是平靜^動作^平靜不能表述基本情節結構的原因。回想一下《麥克白》，故事開始並結束於激烈的戰鬥。用特定的情節來解決所有的糾葛，並不代表能解決世界上所有問題。即使故事已結束，世界還有很多問題仍未解決，亦因爲此，才能造就其他故事的出現。這也並不是說所有鬆散的結局都需要被「綁緊」，或許情節裡一些未被解決的問題足夠讓你創作該故事的下集，也許還會有《麥克白II》？

正如上面所說，最簡單的故事結構便是G^T^R。為了方便起見，從現在開始，當我們涉及這個最簡單的結構時，我們就把它稱為G^T^R。
**Asking questions/taking action:**

How is the structure of a fictional story different from that of a news story? Which kind of story has more resolution? From a fiction maker’s point of view, a story in the journalistic sense usually seems to be missing something. That doesn’t mean the news isn’t useful for the writer of fiction. Human interest stories in the newspapers and on television are often fictions just waiting to happen. Change the names and the places and fill in the missing parts of the plot structure and you will have a story. Find some news stories with human interest and try to work out what parts of the basic plot structure are missing. Then try to fill in the gaps so that the story works and so that it proves a conviction.

By yourself and/or in your story circle generate grabs, turns and resolutions for possible stories. Try to talk a story through by using the following procedure:

- everyone thinks of a grab to get a story started
- everyone tells her or his grab to the group, which then chooses the one to go ahead with
- everyone thinks of a next part of the story, of a further complication (or complications) leading to a climax
- everyone tells her or his further complication/s to the group which again chooses the best plot for the story
- in the same way resolutions are suggested and one is chosen

Please note that (if you prefer or want a variation) you can do all of these things silently, by writing in the circle, and by passing your ideas around on sheets of paper. Note also that this procedure will generate many more ideas than are needed for one story. That doesn’t
練習：

一個虛構的故事和一個紀實故事有什麼不同？哪種故事包含更多的解決辦法？從一個故事創作者的角度來看，一則新聞故事往往似乎欠缺了些什麼。這並不意味著新聞對故事創作者沒有用。人們在報紙或電視上感興趣的新聞或許能被發掘作爲故事題材。只要改改人名和地點，將情節結構中遺漏的部分補上，你就能創造出一個故事了。找一些能引起人們注意的新聞，試著找出基本情節結構中遺漏的部分，然後嘗試把它們補上，使這個故事可行，並可以表達某個主旨。

以個人和/或小組的形式，用G^T^R來創作故事。嘗試用下面的方式來講故事：

• 每人都想出一個“G”（吸引人的點子）來構思故事的開頭。
• 每個人都向同伴們說說自己想出來的“G”，然後選出一個來繼續創作故事。
• 每個人都來想想故事的下一個部分，即一個或多個“T”（轉折），以此來創作故事的高潮。
• 每個人都向同伴們說說自己想出來的“T”，然後選出最好的作爲故事的一部分情節。
• 用同樣的方法選出最佳的“R”（結局）。

请注意，（如果你想有更多的變化形式）你可以自己照著以上程序，將主意靜靜地寫在紙上，然後在小組裡相互傳遞。另外要留意的是，這個過程中會產生比實際需要還多的主意。這並
mean that all of those ‘extra’ ideas are useless or need to be discarded. Nothing needs to be wasted from this process. A group might, in one sitting, produce as many group stories as there are members, on the other hand, maybe the individuals who came up with particular ideas will want to keep them and create individual stories, adopting whatever helpful suggestions are made. It’s best to be flexible in deciding what to do with story ideas. Don’t worry about who owns what. Learn by sharing.

Once the group comes up with what everyone agrees to be a finished story, test it out, by asking a simple question: what does the story prove? Chances are, if you can’t answer that question, then there’s something wrong with the story. Chances are, if there’s something you feel isn’t working in the story, conviction is the most likely element missing or unclear. If the story does work though and you just can’t quite name the conviction then probably your ideas are subtle and wonderful and you have no further need for this manual.
非表示這些「額外的」主意是沒用的或應扔掉的。我們不應該浪費在這個過程中得到的所有東西。有時候，在一次小組討論中，有多少組員就可以想出多少主意，但另一方面，某個組員也有可能想出一個特別的主意，想留著它並將它用於自己創作的故事中。這個時候，他就需要聽取任何有用的建議。靈活地處理所想出來的主意是再好不過的了。不必擔心哪個主意是誰想出來的，我們要通過分享來學習。

當整個小組都認爲已經有一個成形的故事時，那就要開始用一個簡單的問題來檢驗它了：這個故事證明什麼？如果你們無法回答這個問題，故事就有可能是出了一些問題。如果你們覺得故事有問題，那很有可能是關於主旨的。主旨是最容易被遺忘或表達不清的元素。如果故事是可行的，但你們卻無法清楚地表達主旨，你們的主旨可能是夠隱約、夠好了！如果是這樣的話，你不必再讀這本手冊了。
Where can we find minimal examples of this minimal story structure? The shortest texts should be the first place to look: rhymes and songs, jokes and fables, fairytales. Take a stanza of a popular song. It’s from Ira Gershwin’s lyrics to the ‘Saga of Jenny’, from the 1940’s musical, *Lady in the Dark*.

Jenny made her mind up when she was three  
She herself was going to trim the Christmas tree.  
Christmas Eve she lit the candles, tossed the tapers away:  
Little Jenny was an orphan on Christmas Day.

This stanza contains a perfectly formed but minimal plot. What grabs us? The idea that a three year old girl is going to do something as difficult as trimming the Christmas tree. Of course this seems innocent enough, but in the next line we see that trimming the Christmas tree herself means independent and unsupervised action. That creates a surprisingly dangerous situation. And in the last line we see the results of that danger. The house burns down and the people (her family) who were not watching Jenny closely enough, die in the fire. This gives us – not a happy ending but – a neat resolution to the story. And note that the story has everything we could ask: a clear setting (domestic Yuletide scene with Christmas tree), a strong character, presumed conflict (having been told not to play with candles?) and a powerful conviction, expressed ironically as the moral of the chorus throughout the song: ‘Don’t make up your mind.’ You see Jenny’s problem throughout her life was that she always made up her mind.
7

最簡單的故事 — 幾個例子

怎樣才能找到這樣一種簡單故事的例子呢？我們要首先看看那些最簡短的文本：韻文、歌曲、笑話、寓言和童話故事。讓我們以一首流行歌中的一節為例，作詞人是艾拉．蓋希文，歌名是《珍妮之歌》，出自二十世紀四十年代的音樂劇《嫦娥幻夢》。

“珍妮在她三歲時下定決心
要自己去裝飾聖誕樹
平安夜她點起蠟燭，
卻不小心打翻了小蠟燭
聖誕節小珍妮成了孤兒。”

這是一段既完美又最簡練的情節結構。是甚麼引起我們注意？是一個僅三歲的小女孩要完成裝飾聖誕樹這件複雜事。裝飾聖誕樹似乎沒什麼特別，但第二句卻讓我們知道，裝飾聖誕樹對女孩而言是一種獨立自主的行爲，這製造出一種使人驚訝的危險情況。接著在最後的幾句中我們得知危險的結果，她的家被燒毀，而珍妮的家人卻因爲沒有好好看管她而葬身火海。這帶給讀者一個雖然不美好卻簡潔的故事結局。而且請注意這短短幾句已包含了我們需要了解的所有：一個明確的場景（有聖誕樹的典型佳節景象）、一個鮮明的角色、可推測的衝突（她有被告知不能玩蠟燭嗎？），與一個有力的主旨。整首歌的副歌部分用諷刺手法表達出所要傳達的道德教誨：不要輕易下定決心。我們可以看出珍妮一生中的最大弱點就是她的過份固執。
Decisiveness was always her undoing. If only Jenny hadn’t made up her mind then she wouldn’t have got into trouble.

Other stanzas of the song also constitute perfect little stories in their own right. Here are two of them. The next:

Jenny made her mind up at twenty two
To get herself a husband was the thing to do.
She got herself all dolled up in her satins and furs
And she got herself a husband but he wasn’t hers.

And the last:

Jenny made her mind up at seventy five
She would live to be the oldest woman alive.
But gin and rum and destiny play funny tricks
And poor Jenny kicked the bucket at seventy six.

Each of these stories draws our attention to the dangers of being decisive. In each case a surprise – an event that could not have been predicted – draws attention to the fact that although we may choose to do or to not do certain things in life, we cannot predict or be in any way certain of the outcomes of our actions.

Taken together, these simple stories form a chain that creates a longer story: the saga of Jenny, the story of a woman’s life. The point is that the invariable minimum Grab-Turn-Resolution structure can be repeated any number of times in a story, but if it doesn’t happen once then you don’t have a story. ‘The Saga of Jenny’ provides a good example of what we could call additive plot structure.
固執是她的致命傷。如果她沒有固執地決定什麼，她便不會遭受如此痛苦。

這首歌的其他章節也以不同的方式講述了這種小巧的故事。下面是其中兩段：

“珍妮二十二歲時下定決心
接下來要做的事是為自己找個丈夫
她盛裝打扮穿上絲綢和毛皮衣服
終於她得到了一個丈夫但他不屬於她”

最後一段：

“珍妮七十五歲時下定決心
她要做最長壽的老婦
但是受杜松子酒，朗姆酒和命運的捉弄
可憐的珍妮七十六歲就死了”

每一個故事都能讓我們知道隨便做決定的危險。每一種情況都有使我們驚訝的事情。不可預知的事件能引起我們注意。
在生活中不管決定做什麼或不做什麼，我們都無法預知或確定這些行爲的結果。

這些小故事可以連成一篇更長的故事：珍妮的故事可是一個女人一生的故事。重點是最簡單的G^T^R結構可以在故事中無數次重複使用。如果這個結構一次也沒有出現，那就很難構成一個故事。《珍妮之歌》是一個可加情節結構的範例。
could describe the plot of the larger story, as G^T^R^G^T^R^G^T^R. It’s a story made of stories, each the same size and each with the same amount of complication.

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Jokes also provide a good example of minimal story structure. And because jokes depend for their humour on timing, they need to be tightly plotted to work. They surprise the reader and deliver their punch line (resolution) at just the right moment to release the tension they have built up through suspense. Suspense is what keeps the reader in the story, suspense is what will be released when the action (and often the conflict) in the story is resolved. The philosopher Kant likened the process of the joke to the blowing up and bursting of a bubble. The joke is the basis of comedy. You could say that just as a story may consist of many smaller stories, or of a repeated Grab ^ Turn ^ Resolution plot structure, so a comedy may consist of many jokes. Those jokes will naturally be organized in a larger story structure that must make sense in its own right. Here’s a first simple joke for kids.

‘Who’s the king of the jungle?’ the proud lion asked the frightened deer.

‘Y...You are, your majesty,’ the deer stammered. The lion said, ‘That’s the right answer,’ and went off satisfied that the deer knew her place and how powerful he was.

The lion next met the towering giraffe. He looked up at her and, in a threatening tone, he asked, ‘Who’s the king of the jungle?’

There was a moment’s hesitation and then, from high above, ‘You are,’ said the giraffe meekly, a little nervous of the lion’s jaws.

‘That’s the right answer,’ the lion said once more. Full of confidence now the lion approached the elephant and – because the elephant was so much bigger than him – he asked as rudely as he
你可以這樣描述更長故事的情節結構：G^T^R  G^T^R  G^T^R  G^T^R。這是一個由故事組成的故事，每一個故事的長度都相同且具有同樣數量的糾葛。

笑話也是最簡故事結構的例子。由於笑話在乎表達幽默的時機，所以更加需要緊湊的情節結構。它們在最適當的時候釋放懸念所鋪墊的張力，說出讓你發笑的話（結果）讓讀者驚訝。懸念是吸引讀者讀下去的要素，在事件（通常是衝突）被解決的時候才會消失。哲學家康德將笑話的過程比作吹脹及吹破汽球。笑話是喜劇的基礎。一個故事包含了很多小故事，或包含了重複的G^T^R情節結構。同樣，一部喜劇也可包含很多個笑話。那些笑話自然而然被置於一個較大的故事結構中並能各自起到作用。接下來是一則給小朋友的笑話：

「誰是森林之王？」驕傲的獅子問被嚇怕的小鹿。
「你…… 你是，尊敬的陛下。」小鹿支支吾吾地答道。獅子說：「答對了。」然後自滿地離開，對小鹿明白自己的地位和力量感到滿意。

獅子又遇見了高大的長頸鹿。他抬起頭看著她，霸氣地問道：「誰是森林之王？」
一陣猶豫後，長頸鹿從高處溫順地回答：「你是。」長頸鹿看到獅子的大牙感到緊張。
獅子又一次說道：「答對了。」滿懷信心的獅子走到大象跟前，因爲大象比牠強壯得多，所以他用最粗魯的語氣問道:
could, ‘Who’s the king of the jungle?’

The elephant snorted and coughed, considered trumpeting but decided against it. All the while the lion was getting angrier and angrier, waiting for an answer. And then the elephant simply picked up the beast with his trunk and threw him halfway across the jungle.

From a great distance away, all the animals heard the lion’s tiny voice, ‘No need to get angry just because you don’t know the right answer.’

In – let’s call it ‘the lion king’ joke – what grabs us is the lion’s pride. The turnaround comes with the elephant’s response. The resolution is in the punch line, the lion’s ironic comeback to the elephant: ‘No need to get angry just because you don’t know the right answer.’ Conviction? As it says in the Bible: ‘pride cometh before a fall’. If, through arrogance, you push too far, eventually your luck will run out. In the lion king joke the suspense builds as the potential for conflict becomes more evenly matched. There’s more tension because the lion has to be braver each time he approaches a bigger animal. Notice that, until the elephant picks the lion up and throws him across the jungle, there isn’t any real conflict in the story; there’s plenty of potential for conflict though. That potential for conflict is what keeps the listener in the story. With each conflict brewing we want to know what will happen. Will there be a fight? Will one animal back down? The art of telling a good joke is in keeping a listener in. The listener is kept in with detail, much of which will end up being irrelevant. It won’t be clear though, what’s relevant and what’s not, until the final release, until the punch line. Suspense is building because the listener’s need to know what happened, next and next and in the end, is likewise always growing.

Anyone who wishes to make strong plots should study the joke because the joke’s dependence on timing tests the effectiveness
「誰是森林之王？」

大象哼哼鼻子，接著又咳嗽了幾下，想叫喊但又放棄了。獅子等待著答案，愈來愈憤怒。然後大象只用鼻子就把獅子提起來拋到了森林的中央。

所有動物都聽到了獅子在遠方微弱的聲音：「就算不知道正確答案，你也用不著生氣啊！」

在這個“獅子王笑話”中，我們被獅子的驕傲自大所吸引。大象的反應就是轉捩點，獅子對大象諷刺的回答「就算不知道正確答案你也用不著生氣啊」是讓人發笑的話也是結局。主旨是什麼？如《聖經》中所說，「驕兵必敗」。如果你愈來愈自大，那麼幸運最終就會消失。在這個獅子王笑話中，懸念建立在發生衝突的可能性上。當獅子遇見愈來愈大的動物，表現得愈來愈勇敢時，張力也愈來愈強。請注意，在大象把獅子拋到很遠之前，雖然有很多潛在的衝突，但還未有真正發生。衝突發生的可行性吸引我們往下讀。醞釀中的衝突能吸引我們，讓我們期待接下來會發生的事。會有一場打鬥嗎？會有一個動物倒下嗎？好的笑話才可以留住聽眾。在笑話中，讀者被其細節吸引，但它們最後會變得不相干。可在最後結果和讓人發笑的說話出來之前，我們是分不清哪些相干和哪些不相干的。懸念在聽眾想知道發生的事情時累積，隨情節一步接一步的發展而增加。

每個想創作出有力的情節結構的人都應該研究笑話，因為笑話對於時間安排上的依賴能夠測試出結局是否可行。大聲讀
of resolutions. The test and result are immediate in the case of a joke told aloud. If you don’t get a laugh then your joke didn’t work. Here’s an anonymous joke of which many variations and elaborations are available. Let’s call it ‘Baked Beans’. It’s told in mock fairytale mode.

Once upon a time there lived a man who truly loved baked beans. Now we all know what effect the eating of baked beans has on the digestive system. This man’s reaction to baked beans was particularly strong and particularly embarrassing.

One day the man met a girl and fell in love. As the couple got to know each other it became increasingly likely that they would get married. The man knew that if he married the girl and continued eating baked beans as usual then his marriage would be a disaster because the girl would not be able to put up with the noise or the smell.

When it became clear that the couple would be married, the man searched his soul and decided to make the supreme sacrifice. He decided to… give up baked beans.

So the two got married and all went well for the first months of their marriage. Then one day – and it happened to be the man’s birthday – on the way home from work, his car broke down. They lived in the country so there was no way for the man to get home but by walking. The man started on his way and called his wife as soon as he came to a phone box. He let her know what had happened and told her he’d be late. She told him to hurry home so that she could give him his present and so that they would be able to enjoy his birthday together.

On his way home after the phone call the man passed a small café he had never paid much attention to as a driver. He was almost
出一则笑话就能立即检验出结果。如果没人笑，那你的笑话就没起到作用。下面是一则可以作出多种改编和扩充的无题笑话。我们就把它叫做《烤豆》吧，它是以讽刺童话的形式陈述的。

从前，有一个男人真的很喜欢吃烤豆。我们知道吃烤豆会引起消化系统作出何种反应。这个男人对烤豆的生理反应非常强，所以特别地使人尴尬。

有一天，这个男人遇见了一个女孩并爱上她。随着了解加深，他俩很快就到了谈婚论嫁的阶段。这个男人知道如果他在婚後继续这么吃烤豆，就会把他们的婚姻变成一桩灾难。他知道女孩不可能忍受吃烤豆后所産生的噪音和臭味。

当他俩肯定会结婚时，那个男人决定为爱作出重大牺牲。他决定再也不吃烤豆了。

於是他們结婚了，婚後的一个月裡一切都很美满。直到有一天，这天是男人的生日，在下班回家途中，他的車壞了。因為他們住在郊外，所以男人只好步行回家。他經過電話亭便給妻子打了電話，告诉她发生的事，说要晚點才能到家。妻子告诉他要儘快趕回来以便她能送他禮物，一起好好慶祝他的生日。

打完電話，男人在途中經過一間以前開車時從未注意過的
past the café when a familiar and enticing smell overwhelmed him. It was the smell of baked beans. You can imagine how hungry the man was after all this walking and being anxious from his difficulties with the car.

He decided that if he were to break his vow just this one time and in this unusual situation, and eat baked beans just once, he would feel better. He still had far enough to walk home to be able to walk off any adverse 'side effects'. What harm could be done?

Once in the café with a bowl of baked beans before him he found he was ravenous. He ordered a second bowl, and a third. He knew his wife probably had a wonderful birthday dinner ready for him at home, but he just couldn’t help himself.

He felt heavy on his way home. It was a noisy trip but on a country road there was no one to hear. Arriving home, the man felt fairly safe that the explosive phase of his digestion was over.

His wife met him excitedly at the door and told him that she had a birthday surprise for him. To keep it a surprise though, she had to blindfold him and lead him into the room where she had the present ready. So the wife led the husband blindfolded into the dining room. She led him to the head of the table and sat him down.

She was about to remove the blindfold when the phone rang. She made him promise not to look and went off into another room at the other end of the house in order to answer the phone.

With his wife out of the room the man felt relieved. He realised by now he still had some rumblings down below he’d be more comfortable if he could give vent to. Now, with his wife out of the room, he shifted his weight, lifted a leg and let forth. The room
小咖啡館。他本來要走過它的，卻被一股美妙熟悉的氣味吸引住。這是烤豆的香味。男人被壞車弄得神經緊張，又走了這麼一段路，肯定會餓了。

他認為如果只是在這樣不尋常的情況下違背一次諾言，吃一次烤豆可以讓他感覺好些。他還有一段路要走，可以利用時間釋放烤豆的任何副作用。這又有什麼壞處呢？

在咖啡館，當一碗烤豆出現在男人面前時，他覺得胃口好極了。他點了第二碗，第三碗。他知道妻子也許為他在家準備了豐盛的生日晚餐，但他就是停不下來。

回家的路上他感到肚子脹極了。這是一段喧鬧的旅程，但在僻靜的鄉村路上沒人會聽見。回到家時，男人感到非常安心，因為在消化過程中的爆發性階段已經結束。

他的妻子在門前興奮地迎接他，並告訴他，她準備了一個生日驚喜。為了暫時隱藏這個驚喜，她必須蒙住他的眼睛，把他帶到她已準備好的禮物所在的房間。於是妻子拉著被蒙上眼的丈夫來到飯廳。她把他帶到桌子前讓他坐下。

正當她差不多要拿走遮眼布時，電話響了。她叫他答應不偷看後便到另一邊的房間接電話。

妻子走出房間後男人終於放鬆下來。他知道自己的肚子仍在咕嚕嚕地響，如果他能再排出一些的話會更舒服些。現在，妻子不在跟前，他移動身體的重心，抬起一條腿，然後釋放。
was full of rotten eggs, but no matter. His wife was still on the phone. The man felt for a serviette on the table before him and desperately fanned around himself. But still the urge was on him. And the next explosion was more impressive than the one before. Anyone outside of the window would have thought a truck motor was being started. He fanned again and again the urge came. This time the windows shook, the dishes on the table rattled and though the man couldn’t see this, the flowers in the vase on the table wilted and died.

But still his wife was on the phone and still the man kept fanning like fury. He felt more comfortable now. Perhaps he was safe at last. Time passed without further seismic activity. The man felt that the air had settled when he heard his wife’s footsteps in the hallway at last. The man was a picture of innocence when his wife walked back into the room.

She apologized for having taken so long. She asked if he had peeked and sheepishly he said he hadn’t. Then she removed his blindfold and screamed ‘Surprise!’ Around the table were seated a dozen of the man’s oldest and closest friends. They had been invited for a surprise party. And everyone there had indeed got a surprise!

Note how tension builds up through the story. The man takes time to walk home so we have to wait to find out what will happen when he gets there, what kind of present his wife will give him. Once home, the man is blindfolded. He can fart safely we think till his wife gets back. But what will happen then? Will he be able to control himself?

A joke works if it works because it releases tension in a way we wouldn’t have thought of. Releasing tension is, interestingly, exactly what our protagonist in the Baked Beans joke wants to do.
房間立刻充滿了爛雞蛋的惡臭，但不要緊，他的妻子還在打電話。男人在面前的桌子上摸到一條餐巾，於是拼命地用它在自己周圍扇起來。但那種急迫的需要還在，而第二次的爆發要比第一次更強烈。窗外的人一定會以為是—輛貨車在發動了。他又扇又放。這次窗戶都被震動了，桌上的碗碟被震得咯咯響，但男人卻看不見，桌上花瓶裡的花也謝了。

但他的妻子還在打電話，男人也瘋狂地用餐巾扇著。他感到舒服多了，或許他終於安全了，時間過去了，男人沒有再進一步爆發。最後當男人覺得很空氣回復正常時，走廊裡傳來了妻子的腳步聲。當他的妻子走進房間時，他假裝什麼事也沒有發生過的樣子。

她爲了太久而道歉。她問他有沒有偷看，而他則羞怯地回答說沒有。然後她便拿開他的遮眼布大喊：「驚喜！」桌子的周圍坐滿了男人的親朋好友，他們都被邀請來參加一個驚喜派對。而這裡的所有人確實都得到了一個驚喜！

注意張力在故事中是如何建立的。男人需要時間走回家，所以我們要等待才能知道他回家後發生的事情以及妻子會給他一份怎樣的禮物。一到家，男人就被蒙住眼睛了。我們以爲他可以安全地放屁直到妻子回來。但是之後又會發生甚麼事？他能控制自己嗎？

好笑話行得通，是因爲它以我們無法想像的方式釋放張力。釋放張力，就如主角在烤豆笑話裡想做的事。他的情況從字面上便能解釋康德的吹汽球比喻。我們笑這個男人放屁，可
His situation makes literal Kant’s ideas about the joke as bursting a bubble. In this case the man is the bubble. We laugh at the man letting it out, but we laugh harder at him when we see that there were others in the audience with us all along. The man’s bubble (of secrecy, or privacy) is burst when we share the witnessing of his physical bubble bursting. There’s a trick to the joke that alters the structure of the story we seem to be in when we’re hearing it.

Let’s think through the Grab ^ Turn ^ Resolution structure of this story. At the beginning of the story the man is happily unmarried and what grabs the reader’s attention about his situation is this curious problem he has. He loves baked beans but baked beans make him fart. You might say it’s not so unusual to fart and it’s not so unusual to love baked beans. You might say it’s not so unusual for people to be afflicted with the things they love (smokers regularly die of lung cancer) but in this story it’s this circumstance that makes us pay attention to this character. He loves baked beans and farts because of them: this is all that we know about this character, who is, in other respects completely normal. Both qualities are presented to us as in an extreme form. His passion is strong, as are its effects. But because his passion is strong we know that his sacrifice is great.

The turn in the story mirrors the grab: to get the thing he loves (the girl) he must give up the thing he loves (baked beans). This decision is his defining moment and the man rises to the challenge. He reforms himself and chooses the girl ahead of the baked beans. So he’s decided on new priorities in life. There’s something mock heroic in this crisis in the story and in the choice the protagonist makes. The passion and the sacrifice may be great within the confines of this story but they’re not great against those of the famous heroes of famous stories. It’s through this set-up that the story is established as comic before we get to any punch line.
是當我們知道故事中的其他人一直和我們一起笑時，我們則會笑得更厲害。男人的汽球（秘密的或私密的）在我們目睹他放屁時吹破。這個笑話還有一個把戲，就是能改變讀者自以爲身在其中的故事結構。

讓我們理清這個故事的G^T^R結構。故事一開始，男人是一個快樂的單身漢，吸引讀者注意的是他的奇怪問題。他愛吃烤豆，但烤豆使他放屁。你可能會說放屁沒有什麼特別，愛吃烤豆也很平常。你可能會認爲人們被自己喜愛的東西折磨是很平常的（例如吸煙者就經常死於肺癌）。但在這故事中，就是這類情況使我們關注角色。他喜歡吃烤豆，又因爲這樣做而放屁，這就是我們所知道關於角色的一切。從某些方面來說，他是一個完全正常的人。他對烤豆非一般的熱愛和吃完烤豆後強烈的反應都是十分極端的。但由於他對烤豆非常熱愛，我們知道他作出的犧牲也會很大。

故事中的T反映了G：爲了得到他的所愛（那個女孩），他放棄了喜歡的東西（烤豆）。這個決定是他的關鍵時刻，也因此這個男人開始接受挑戰。他改變自己並在女孩和烤豆間選擇了女孩，重新決定了生命中處於第一位的事物。故事中的危機和主角所作的決定均有諷刺的英雄主義。熱情和犧牲在這個故事中或許顯得很偉大，但與著名故事中的著名英雄們相比，就顯得小巫見大巫了。在引人發笑的話還沒出現前，故事就是這樣設置成喜劇。
In fact once we know that a joke’s being told we have to expect a punch line. Perhaps we can manage to forget that one is coming and that way we’ll be really surprised when it does come. But the teller of a joke can’t rely on that kind of memory lapse. The joke teller’s best trick is to distract the reader so that the reader – though expecting to be surprised – will not be able to predict the manner in which she will be surprised. In the Baked Beans joke what distracts us from the embarrassing possibility that our man might have company is simply the certainty with which he assumes he’s alone. We forget that he’s not in a position to know because we assume that the blindfold is related to something in a big box with a ribbon around it.

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In the Baked Beans joke one complication leads to another, giving the reader a chain of surprises, of which the last needs to be the best because it needs to release the tension built up through the joke’s telling.

Following the example of the joke, it might be sensible to think of basic plot structure as simply tension and release, with (as E.M. Forster argued) some kind of causal connection between them. In other words, there’s a reason for the tension in story. It’s related to the action, it’s brought about by and it affects characters. And likewise there’s a reason for tension being released in the story. Action also brings about the story’s resolution.

It’s easy to find analogies in life for the structure of the story. That’s probably because the story – in its simplest form – is one of the most basic things people can do, with words, and even without them. A story is like life because in a story one thing leads to another, though hopefully not in a way one could predict. A story can be structured like a dream, it surprises us because it reveals a world different from
事實上，一旦我們知道這是個笑話，就會一直在期待那句讓人發笑的結局。如果我們嘗試忘掉這一點，那麼在它出現的時候我們就會真正地感到驚訝。但是說笑話的人卻不能指望這種「記憶喪失」的情況。說笑話的人最厲害的一招就是能使讀者分心，雖然讀者期待驚訝，卻不能預知自己將以怎樣的方式被驚訝。在烤豆笑話中，我們未有發現房間裡還有其他人，是因爲男人以爲只有自己一人。我們忘記了他正處於一無所知的位置，因爲我們以爲他被蒙上眼睛是跟一盒用絲帶繫好的禮物有關的。

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在烤豆笑話中，一個糾葛引起另一個，給予讀者一連串的驚訝，所以最後的一個一定要是最好的才能釋放說笑話過程中所建立的張力。

根據這個笑話的例子，把基本的情節結構簡單地看作張力和釋放也許是合理的，(如E.M.福斯特所主張的)它們之間有著某種因果關係的聯繫。換言之，張力在故事中是有原因的。它與事件有關，由角色引起並影響角色。同樣，張力在故事中得到釋放也是有原因的。事件也帶出故事的結局。

在生活中很容易能找到類似這種故事結構的例子。這可能是因爲故事的最簡易的形式，是人們用文字甚至不用文字便能做到的。故事就如人生，一件事可以引發另一件事的發生。在故事中，將要發生的事情最好不要被讀者預知。故事像夢一樣被構建，它使我們驚訝是因爲它展示了一個不同的世界。也許
the one we know; that’s probably because dreaming is what first gave humans the idea of telling stories. A story is structured like the act of sex; that might be because the grab and the complications and the resolution involved in sex are what keep the human race going. Living in a male dominated world, it shouldn’t surprise us that the structure of conventional stories typically more closely resembles men’s than women’s experience of sex.

The joke shows us how resolution – in this case the punch line leading to laughter – depends (like sex) on a release of tension. The building up of tension throughout the course of a story is known as suspense or rising action. We’ll return to these terms shortly.
人類是因爲做夢才得到講故事的靈感。故事也像性行爲般被構建，在性行爲當中的吸引、糾葛和結果都是讓人類得以繁衍的事情。生活在男權社會，我們並不驚訝地發現，傳統的故事結構，是特別接近於男性的性體驗而不是女性的。

笑話展示了結局是如何依賴張力的釋放。在故事進程中建立的張力，我們稱之爲懸念或者上升情節。我們將很快對這些詞語進行解釋。
Asking questions/taking action:

Tell jokes around the story circle. Once they’re told try to make maps to explain/reveal their structure. Try to recycle the structure you’ve noted – changing names and places – in order to create a new story. Note that the new story need not necessarily be a joke.

Make lists of grabs, lists of complications and lists of resolutions. Can you match items from these last three lists in order to create a workable plot (or plots)? Will any of these potential plots match the lists of possible convictions you made at the end of Chapter 5?
練習：

在故事圈中說笑話。一旦說完了，請嘗試著畫圖來解釋／揭示故事的結構。試著採用你記錄下來的結構，改變當中的名字和地方，從而創作一個新故事。請注意新故事並不一定是要笑話。

把可以成爲G, T, R的內容分別列成表。你能否把三個表中的內容進行配對，從而創作一個（或多個）可行的情節？其中可行的情節組合能否與你在第五課最後寫出的主旨相配呢？
8
foreshadowing and digression

Although we’ve so far been looking at very simple stories, already you’ll notice that apart from G^T^R structure there are a number of other story elements at play. Perhaps the most difficult thing about getting started as a story maker/writer is that in a story so many different things are happening at the same time. If one element is not working then chances are all the rest will fail as well. For this reason it’s a good idea now to briefly look at the elements fundamental to every kind of story. Some of these have already been discussed and the rest – foreshadowed here – will be treated over the next few chapters. Let’s take another joke as an example in order to consider the various elements of a story and how they relate to each other.

Two men are drinking in a bar high up in a skyscraper in the middle of the city. They’ve both been there for some time. Each has lost track of how many drinks he’s had. They haven’t spoken to each other yet but now one man leans across to the other and says ‘Great place... just great!’

The other man looks skeptical, and responds, slurring slightly, ‘Yeah, well why would that be?’

The first man motions his new friend over towards the window and says, ‘Just look at that...Just look...’

‘What?’ The two men are looking down on the city street thirty floors below them. There’s nothing unusual happening there. They both feel a little chilled by the air conditioning in the bar.

‘Oh all right, I’ll show you.’ And with this, the first man opens the huge glass window in front of them, allowing the warm night air to rush into the bar. The bartender throws a suspicious glance in the direction of the pair, but they don’t notice him and, saying nothing, the bartender goes back to his chores, washing glasses and
伏筆與旁支末節

在我們研究過了簡短的故事後，你們應該已經留意到除了G^T^R結構外，故事還有許多不同的元素。也許對於故事的創作者來說，開始時最困難的地方，就是故事中有許多不同的事情在同一時間發生。如果一個要素不成功，那麼很可能連帶著其他的都會失敗。因此我們現在就來簡單地看看每種故事都需要具備的基本要素。其中的一些已經討論過，而剩下的，先賣個關子，將在以下的章節中討論。讓我們再用一個笑話作例子來仔細衡量故事中的其他要素，並探討它們之間的關係。

兩個男人在位於市中秋的摩天大樓高層的酒吧裡喝酒。他倆已經來了有一陣兒了，都記不清自己已經喝了多少杯。他們之間並沒有對話，直到其中一個挨過來說：「真是個好地方……太棒了！」

另外那個男人看起來鬼鬼祟祟的。他口齒不清地回答道：「對，可這又怎麼樣？」

第一個男人示意他的新朋友往窗外看去，說：「看看，看一下吧……。」

「什麼啊？」第二個男子答道。他們一起看向三十樓之下的城市街道，並沒有什麼不尋常的事情發生。酒吧裡的空調吹來的冷氣使他們感到一陣涼意。

「好吧，看我的。」說時遲那時快，第一個男人推開了他們面前的那扇大窗子，讓暖暖的晚風吹進酒吧。酒保用疑惑的眼神看了他們一眼，但他們並沒察覺，而酒保什麼都沒說，回到自己的工作，清洗酒杯並把它們放回櫥櫃。第一個男人這時

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putting them back in their cabinet. The first man now steps up onto the window ledge. His drinking mate looks worried but the man on the ledge appears supremely calm. The drop below him is terrifying but he doesn’t even seem to be trying to balance. A moment later he has stepped from the ledge into the air beyond. He doesn’t fall, he hovers mid-air. The night air is still and calm around both men. It’s pleasantly warm. Not a word said.

After a minute of hovering like this – a minute that seems like eternity – the first man steps back inside where his companion now appears spellbound, dumbfounded. All his cynicism has dissolved. It’s as if he’s had a religious experience. Next the first man – without saying anything – motions the second towards the open window. It’s his turn now. The second man feels that his life is at the crossroads. He’d been visiting bars, he now realised, because of the trouble he couldn’t face at home, at work. His life was a mess. That’s all in the past now. Now he knows his life has changed forever. There’s no going back. Still, without a word exchanged, the second man moves towards the window, steps up onto the sill. The bartender casts a doubtful, half worried, half resigned look in the two men’s direction, before going back to the beer he was pouring. The bartender isn’t looking when the second man, having taken a deep breath, bravely and decisively steps forward, plunging thirty floors to his death.

The bartender looks up now, gives a tired sigh and addresses his remaining regular customer, ‘You know you’re really not such a nice guy when you’ve had a few drinks, Superman.’

Let’s think through the story elements in the Superman joke:

**Setting** – in this case, a bar high up in a building in the city.
**Action/Plot** – drunkenness, hovering in mid-air, a falling death.
踩上窗檯，他的同伴看起來很擔心，但窗臺上的男人卻表現得非常冷靜，他有從高處墮下的危險，但他好像一點都不在意要保持平衡。過了一會兒，他踏出窗檯走進空氣中。他沒有掉下去，卻懸在半空中。夜晚的空氣凝滯在他們周圍，非常舒適暖和。沒有人吭聲。

第一個男子就這樣在空氣中懸浮了一分鐘，這一分鐘又是永恆，他踏回酒吧。同伴看得出了神，被嚇呆了。他彷彿剛經歷了一場神跡般，再也無法譏笑第一個男人。接著第一個男人什麼都沒說，向第二個男人指著窗子。輪到他了。第二個男人覺得自己處於生活的十字路口，他現在意識到自己經常流連酒吧，是因為無法面對的家庭和事業的問題。他的生活根本是一團糟。現在一切都過去了。現在，他知道自己的生活永遠的改變了，再也回不去了。他倆仍沒有對話，第二個男子走向窗戶，踩到窗檯上。酒保在繼續倒啤酒前，向這兩個男人的方向投去疑惑的、一半擔憂一半放任的眼神。之後他便沒有在看。第二個男人深吸了一口氣後，便勇敢且果斷地向前走去，投向三十層外死亡的懷抱。

酒保抬起頭，疲倦地嘆息並對他剩下的那位常客說：「你知道當你喝醉後不是個好人嗎？超人。」

讓我們回想一下超人笑話中的故事元素：“

背景——市中心高樓上的酒吧。
情節/情節結構——醉酒，在半空中懸著，摔死。
Complication – the character hovering in the air is not what we expect, the character falling to his death is not what we expect, the character turning out to be Superman is not what we expect.

Cause and effect/Motivation – the second man steps out the window to his death because he believes he has just witnessed a miracle and he trusts the man who’s shown it to him; he believes that a miracle which applied to someone else could also apply to him. Superman’s motivation turns out – unexpectedly – to have been malice.

Credibility – drunkenness makes stupid bravery credible.

Character/Conflict – not apparent till the end of the story, perhaps never apparent to the second man; perhaps we shouldn’t call it conflict at all, yet it fulfils the function of conflict in the story: the second man is maliciously tricked into suicide (or is it?).

Suspense – we want to know what’s out the window, we want to know why the first man can hover in mid-air, whether the second man will be tempted out, whether he too can hover in mid-air, why the first man could and the second man couldn’t.

Climax – the second man falls to his death.

Resolution – in the falling action of the story (sorry, that was irresistible) we find out why the man died.

Point of view – the story is narrated in the third person; the point of view to begin with is close to that of the second man, by the end of the story it’s at a little distance from that of the barman.

Empathy, identification – we tend to empathise with the second man. Up until the time of his death we experience most of the story as he does. We know what he knows and doesn’t and we have similar doubts and fears, we make similar (and unfounded) leaps of faith.

Conviction – be skeptical of miracles and you might have a longer life, or don’t expect others to perform the miracles your life requires.

The joke works because all of these elements are working
糾葛——我們沒有預料到角色會懸在半空，也無法預料角色會摔死，更無法預料之前的那個角色原來是超人。
因果/動機——第二個男人之所以踏出窗檯和摔死是因爲他相信剛才親眼目睹的奇蹟，他相信那個男人在他面前所做的，他相信在別人身上發生的奇蹟也會發生在自己身上。超人的動機是一場惡意預謀，這也是我們無法預料的。
可信性——醉酒使魯莽可信。
角色/衝突——直到故事結尾才顯現，或許對第二個男人來說根本沒有衝突。或許我們甚至不能稱之為衝突，但它在故事中的確起到作用；第二個男人的自殺是被惡意預謀的（事實是否如此？）。
懸念——我們想知道窗戶外面有什麼，我們想知道為什麼第一個男人可以懸在半空中，第二個男人是否會上鉤，他是不是可以跟第一個男人一樣懸在半空中，以及為什麼第一個男人可以但第二個不行。
高潮——第二個男人摔死了
結局——從故事的下降動作中，我們知道那個男人死亡的原因。
視角——這個故事是以第三人稱敍述的；開始時較接近第二個男人的視角，最後則以稍微有段距離的酒保的視角結束。
同理心，認同——我們會同情第二個男人。直至他死的那一幕，我們是跟著他共同經歷這個故事的大部分內容的。我們了解他所知道和不知道的，我們和他一起分享疑惑與恐懼，我們做出類似的（且沒有根據的）信念上的跨越。
主旨——對奇蹟保持懷疑你會活得更久，或不要指望別人會表演你生命所需的奇跡。

這個玩笑是可行的，因爲所有要素都同時起到作用，而不
together at the same time, not because the listener or reader is aware of the fact that they’re working. In fact, the opposite is true: when the reader starts thinking about the elements of the joke and whether or not they’re working, that usually means something’s wrong: it usually means the joke didn’t get a laugh and we want to work out why it wasn’t funny.

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The joke relies for its surprise on the trick of getting the reader to take her eye off the ball. In fact this is a key technique of many types of story. How to distract the reader? The best way is through the balanced use of foreshadowing and digression. Let’s quickly define these terms. When the story foreshadows it lets us know in advance that something important – something of particular importance – is yet to happen. In the most general sense we already know that there’s something – or that there are things – of importance yet to happen in the story: that’s the rest of the plot. Foreshadowing points the reader or listener in a particular direction, the right one. The problem is that, at the time one’s attention is being directed by what could be foreshadowing, one cannot yet know whether it’s the right direction or not. If it’s not the right direction we’re being pointed in, then the pointing is a digression. In the best stories foreshadowing and digression are impossible to pick apart until after the event. Only with the hindsight of the story’s resolution can we know which was which. The reader’s uncertainty about the way in which events will unfold builds tension and makes the events truly surprising when they come.

Think of our last story, the Superman joke. There’s foreshadowing when we see that the first man can hover in mid-air without falling because as we later learn, he is Superman. The bartender is ‘half worried, half resigned’ because, as we later learn, he’s seen Superman with a few drinks in him before. The second man’s fantasies about miracles and his life at the crossroads, with everything
是因為聽眾或讀者注意到它們在起作用。事實上，反過來說才是真的：當讀者開始思考這個玩笑中的要素，並判斷它們是否在起作用時，往往是代表故事裡有錯誤。這通常代表笑話一點都不好笑，而我們想弄清楚到底為什麼不好笑。

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這個笑話透過引開讀者的注意力來建立驚訝。事實上這是大部分故事都包含的重要技巧。怎樣分散讀者的注意力？最好的方法是通過平衡使用伏筆和旁支末節。讓我們先來解釋一下這些術語。為故事鋪排伏筆，能使我們了解接下來會發生一些重要的，但現在還未發生的事情。在一般情況下，我們已經能預料到一些事情，知道一些重要的事情將會在故事或其餘的情節中發生。伏筆為讀者或者聽眾指出了一個特定及正確的方向。問題在於，讀者的注意力雖然被伏筆所指引，但他們其實還不能判斷方向是否正確。如果讀者發現方向是錯誤的話，它們便是旁支末節。在最好的故事中，伏筆與旁支末節是直到事件發生後才能被區分的。只有在我們知道了故事的結局後才能將之分清楚。讀者無法確定哪些是作爲建立張力的事件，哪些是最後真正使他們驚訝的事件。

回想我們最後的那個故事，那個超人的笑話。作者已經在一些地方埋下了伏筆，我們看到第一個男人懸在半空中卻不會往下掉。後來我們都知道他是超人。我們看到那個帶著「一半疑惑，一半放任」眼神的酒保，後來我們知道，他以前在這裡見過喝醉的超人是什麼樣。關於第二個男人對奇跡和生活的幻
about to change: that’s digression. There isn’t going to be a miracle, the man is going to die. In an ironic sense, there’s foreshadowing here too; the man’s life is about to ‘change’ in a very final sense.

Let’s look at an example of foreshadowing from the writer’s point of view, a clichéd example. You want a character to have a heart attack towards the end of your story. In the first act you show the audience that the character has a weak heart. How could you do that? He could clutch his heart and stumble around weakly. That might be too dramatic (even melodramatic). He might have to go back home because he forgot to take his heart pills with him. Or you could just have a conversation where another character asks him ‘What are those pills you’re taking?’ And he replies ‘They’re for my heart.’ This clear kind of foreshadowing is known as a ‘plant’. The author has planted a seed that must grow into something later in the plot. Or not. The problem with the plant is that its effectiveness depends on the audience not being terribly aware of it. A plant works when the audience can forget that it’s there as the story goes on, but be reminded in the end, for instance when the character in question has his heart attack, just before he would have saved the beautiful girl. It’s hard to forget a plant that is well known because you’ve met it before in another story. And it’s hard to forget a plant given great emphasis. Regular heavy handed reference to the heart pills will lead the reader to expect a heart attack. On the other hand fiction writers should never lose sight of the experience of their readers. Sometimes the best way to trick the reader who’s expecting to be tricked is to give them what they expected in the first place. Lots of foreshadowing with the heart pills makes a heart attack so obvious that the reader assumes she’s being tricked, distracted. When the heart attack actually comes then it actually is a surprise. One shouldn’t expect to get away with that kind of trick too often. Nor does every story need much digression. If you think back through the stories we’ve studied so far, you’ll see that Macbeth has plenty of foreshadowing (the witches’ prophecies) but virtually no digression.
想，以及一切都將改變的想法都是旁支末節。這裡不會出現奇跡，這個男人會死。諷刺的是，這裡也被埋下了伏筆，從結局來說，這個男人的生活將要「改變」倒是事實。

讓我們從作者的角度來看一個關於伏筆的老一套例子。你想安排一個角色在故事的最後心臟病發作。首先應該在故事開始的時候交代這個角色的心臟有問題。應該怎樣做呢？你可以在故事中描述他緊握自己胸口虛弱地步履蹣跚。這也許太誇張了（甚至太俗了）。他也可以因為忘了帶救心藥而非要回家拿不可。你也可以安排一場對話，當另一個角色問：「你經常帶在身上的什麼藥啊？」然後他回答道：「是心臟病的藥。」這種明顯的伏筆可以比喻為一株植物。作者在情節中種下一顆會長出或不會長出果實的種子。觀眾不太注意這些植物時，它們才能發揮最好的作用。好的伏筆會使讀者在故事進行時忘掉它，在最後又提醒讀者它的存在，比如那個角色在救一位美女時心臟病發作。被濫用的伏筆很難被忽略，因爲你在別的故事中已經見過它了。一個被著重描述的伏筆也很難被忽略。如果作者著重地描寫救心藥，那麼讀者就會預料到角色會心臟病發作。另一方面，故事作者不能忘掉讀者的經驗。有時候，戲弄讀者的最好辦法，就是如他們所願，給他們預料的劇情。如果著重描寫救心藥，明顯預示心臟病發作這一情節，讀者會覺得作者只是在故意轉移自己的注意力。但當心臟病真正發作時，往往是讀者始料不及的。一個人不能總指望這種小伎倆，同時，不是所有的故事都需要這麼多的旁支末節。如果你回顧一下我們所討論過的故事，就會發現在《麥克白》中（女巫的預言）埋藏了很多伏筆，而實際上沒有任何旁支末節。
In the case of the Baked Beans joke we are pointed – as with jokes in general – explicitly in the direction of a surprise. That’s foreshadowing but it’s not very specific or clear what kind of event might lie ahead. There’s nothing we could call a plant in this case. The mention of a ‘present’ was a kind of digression because we couldn’t know at the time that the ‘present’ might be something like a collection of friends throwing a surprise party and secretly, silently, waiting for the protagonist’s blindfold to be removed. This in itself would not be very surprising but the blindfold has made these people invisible from the protagonist’s point of view and so when we find out that time has elapsed in their presence and when we remember what was happening in that elapsing time, all of the tension that was built up in waiting to find out what the surprise present could be, is released. The bubble bursts. The wait was worthwhile.

How to decide whether it was worthwhile? Suspense is related to how long we have to wait for a result and to how interested we are in getting the result. Timing is crucial. The longer the protagonist sits there farting and the louder he farts in front of his friends, the funnier it will be in the end when we find out that that’s what’s been happening. Up to a certain point. Credibility is the key here. We won’t believe it if he sits there farting for three days, we don’t believe it if his farts blow the back wall of the house down. The reason the wait was worthwhile and the bursting of the bubble gave the joke a satisfying resolution was that it was somewhat of a surprise, it wasn’t what we had been expecting. It was a surprise to us because we had been subtly misled by a digression.

The trick to the effective use of digression in a story is that it has to seem no less important and no less plausible than what will turn out later to have been foreshadowing. Only after the event, once we know the ‘result’ of the story, will it be clear that a particular instance in the plot was a digression and another particular instance foreshadowing. When you analyse the story once you know it complete, it becomes clear that a particular digression or series of
在烤豆和大多數的笑話中，我們都被明確地指向驚訝的方向去。伏筆並不會明確和清楚地表明接下來會發生的事件。因此在這種情況下，故事裡沒有可以被稱為「線索」的東西。故事裡提到的「禮物」只是一種插敘。我們當時無法得知「禮物」可能是一群靜靜地等著主角取掉眼上的布條，然後大叫「驚喜」的朋友。雖然這樣的情節不怎麼新穎，但以被蒙上眼睛的主角的視角來看，那些朋友是不存在的。當我們知道他們的存在，並回想在剛才發生的事情時，之前在等待發現禮物而建立的張力一下子被釋放了。汽球破了。所有的等待都是值得的。

怎樣才算值得等待呢？懸念與我們需要等待結果的時間和對結果感興趣的程度有關。時機非常重要。主角坐在那裡，在朋友面前放屁，放得時間愈長愈響，就愈使我們在得知實情後覺得愈有趣。但到了某個特定的程度，可信性就成了關鍵。我們不會相信他坐在那裡連續放三天屁，也不會相信他的屁會把屋子的後牆都震塌了。等待是值得的，汽球的爆炸帶給笑話一個滿意的結局，這都是因爲結果使人驚訝，且不是我們一直所期待的。我們感到驚訝，是因爲我們被旁支末節巧妙地吸引住了。

在故事中巧妙地運用旁支末節，它要與伏筆一樣的重要和含糊。只有在事件發生後，我們才能真正分辨出伏筆和旁支末節。當你知道故事已結束而試著分析它時，你便會清楚某個或
digressions was necessary to the story, because of the way in which it led the reader up the garden path. A particular instance of digression may be referred to as a ‘red herring’. A red herring takes the reader off the scent of the right trail. If the character who’s been clutching his heart, stumbling round the stage looking for his heart pills all the time, does not in the end have a heart attack, then those pills and antics were red herrings. Crime fiction particularly depends on this technique. It’s vital for suspense that the wrong person be suspected of the crime.

Digression is vital to many stories because, carefully masked, it is the best way of developing a surprise for the reader. It is perhaps for this reason that Laurence Sterne called digressions the sunshine of reading.
某一系列的枝節是故事所需要的，它們都是帶領讀者走向花園小徑的要素。某種情況的旁支末節常常被當成轉移注意力的技巧。它令讀者迷失了正確的方向。如果那個角色一直手抓胸口步履蹣跚地找他的救心藥，最後卻沒有心臟病發作，那麼這些藥丸和動作就是為了轉移讀者注意力而使的伎倆。犯罪小說特別依賴這個方法。最強烈的懸念就是無辜的人被懷疑成兇手。

旁支末節對於很多故事來說都是不能缺少的。由於它們能隱藏在故事當中，利用它們經常能使讀者驚訝。大概就是因爲這一點，勞倫斯·斯特恩才把旁枝末節稱為閱讀的陽光。
**Asking questions/taking action:**

Think of digressions that could be foreshadowing and vice versa. Try to make a list of ‘plants’ that might or might not mislead the reader.

How could you foreshadow the following story resolutions?
- A plane crashes in the desert. Only a small child survives.
- A wife shoots her husband in a crowded restaurant.
- The Earth is destroyed by a meteor from outer space.
- After many years away the hated daughter is accepted back into her family.

Think of digressions which could take the reader off the scent in the following plots.
- A hero breaks an evil spell by rescuing a princess from a wicked dragon.
- A son avenges the murder of his father.
- A jealous wife destroys her husband’s lover.
- A clever scientist saves the Earth from certain destruction.
練習：

想一些可成爲伏筆的旁支末節，反之亦然。嘗試列出現可或不能分散讀者注意力的「線索」。

怎樣爲以下的故事結局鋪排伏筆？

• 一架飛機在沙漠中墜毀，只有一個小孩生還。
• 一名妻子在擁擠的餐館中槍殺了自己的丈夫。
• 來自外太空的一顆流星摧毀了地球。
• 多年後，那個受排擠的女兒又重新被她的家庭接受。

想一些可以把讀者的注意力從以下情節中引開的旁支末節。

• 一位英雄從邪惡的龍那裡救出公主，打破了一個魔咒。
• 一個兒子為被謀殺的父親報仇。
• 一位妒火攻心的妻子毀掉了丈夫的情人。
• 一位聰明的科學家拯救處於某種毀滅中的地球。
wishing machines

So far we’ve discussed the story almost exclusively in terms of plot. Now it’s time to look at the story from the point of view of character. Remember the reversible formula: plot = character. Plot = character because without the people in the story there simply is no story. Every story has some conviction behind it and only characters can carry convictions, likewise only characters can be in conflict and it’s usually through conflict a story generates the action a plot can resolve.

If conflict drives the plot and creates the suspense that keeps the reader in the story, then it is characters who are responsible for the conflict. Conflict is fuelled by the desires of characters. Characters are wishing machines and it’s their wishes make the story go. When characters – especially major characters – stop wanting things (or stop wanting things to happen or not happen), this is usually a sign that the story is grinding to a halt.

To foreground the importance of desire as a motor of conflict, let’s look briefly at a very simple type of story, a kind of fairytale called the ‘three wishes story’. The particular story I’ll discuss here is usually called ‘The Woodcutter and his Wife’. I’ve chosen it because it’s short, simple and easy to imitate.

A woodcutter gets three wishes from an elf who is rewarding him for not cutting down his tree. The woodcutter gets home and tells his wife who, in her eagerness, accidentally wastes a wish by wanting a lot of sausages. The husband, angry at the waste, wishes the sausages up his wife’s nose. He stops himself just before he wishes
到目前為止我們討論的大部分都是關於情節結構中的術語，現在是時候討論故事中角色的視角問題了。請記住這個可逆轉的公式：情節＝角色，角色＝情節，角色不存在，便不能成故事。每個故事背後都有主旨，只有角色才能帶出故事的主旨。同時，只有角色才能參與衝突，而故事需要通過衝突才能衍生解決的情節。

如果說衝突推動情節發展並產生使讀者繼續讀下去的懸念，那麼角色就是衝突的負責人。衝突是由角色的慾望所激發的。角色是許願機器，正因為他們的願望，故事才得以繼續發展。當角色（特別是主角）停止想要某種東西（或停止渴望事情發生或不發生時），通常這就是故事的碾子停止轉動的標誌。

為了強調慾望作爲衝突的原動力的重要性，讓我們看一種非常簡單的，名叫「三個願望」的童話類型。我將要討論的這個故事通常被叫做《樵夫和他的妻子》。我選它的理由是因為它簡短，容易舉例。

樵夫因爲沒有砍小精靈的樹，小精靈便獎賞他三個願望。回到家後，他把這件事告訴了妻子。他的妻子心急下說出了想要多點兒香腸，於是不小心浪費了一個願望。丈夫為了被浪費的願望而生氣，希望香腸可以堵住妻子的鼻孔。他覺得自己太笨了，於是希望自己的舌頭被割下來，不過好在他及時阻止了
his own tongue cut out for having been so stupid. The two of them try to tug the sausages out of the wife’s nose but with no luck. The magic is too strong and there is nothing for them to do but to lose the last wish in getting the sausages out of the wife’s nose.

That’s it: three wishes wished: G T R: conflict, suspense, climax, resolution. Conviction: Look before you leap. What grabs the reader is the magic coming into the story. An ordinary person is doing an everyday thing (his job) when suddenly something magical happens. He is offered wishes in return for an act of kindness on his part. The first complication is that the wish that should have or could have made life better or even perfect for the woodcutter and his wife is wasted and appears to have made only a trivial improvement in their lives. But in fact the result of that first wish and complication is worse than it immediately appears because it sets the previously harmonious couple into conflict with each other, and so leads to a second complication. The second complication is that the second wish, spent in anger, has a negative effect that only magic (in the form of the third wish) can undo. The resolution of the story is in the use of the third wish to restore the situation to that which existed at the beginning of the story. By squandering their wishes these two have ended the story exactly where they began: as a poor woodcutter and his wife eking out a meagre existence in the forest.

In the three wishes story in general, we can say that the first wish is usually in some way unexpected for the reader because unplanned for by the character making it, and leads to a surprising outcome – usually a setback. The second wish often seems much smarter – or is at least better thought through – but turns out to be misplaced in some way. Or sometimes the second wish just corrects the damage done by the first. In the case of the woodcutter’s story the second wish has made things worse, much worse than they were before. Either or both of the first and second wishes can be virtual
自己。夫妻倆絕望地試著把香腸從妻子的鼻孔裡拉出來。但願望的魔力實在太強了，他們甚麼也做不了，除了為把香腸從妻子鼻孔裡弄出來而用掉最後一個願望。

就是這樣，三個許願的過程已包含了G^T^R、衝突、懸念、高潮和結局，而主旨是三思而後行。故事中的魔法吸引了讀者的注意。一個普通人做著日常的事情（他的工作），突然間某些神奇的事情發生了。因爲他所行的好事而得到三個願望作爲回報。第一個糾葛是他們浪費了可能會使他們的生活變得更好甚至完美的願望，他的妻子把這個願望浪費在一件只能稍微改善生活的小事上。但事實上，第一個願望和糾葛的結果使事情變得更糟，因爲它令事前和睦的夫妻之間發生衝突，並由此引發第二個糾葛。第二個糾葛是在憤怒中被浪費掉的第二個願望，它產生了一個負面影響，只有魔法（以第三個願望的形式）才能把它消除。故事的結局是通過第三個願望使一切恢復原狀。通過浪費掉一個又一個願望，夫妻倆在最後又回到了以前的生活：作爲樵夫與他的妻子在森林裡的貧窮生活。

一般在「三個願望」故事中，我們可以說第一個願望在某些方面通常是讀者無法預料的，因爲角色在沒有準備的情況下許了願，產生了令人驚訝的結果，通常是一種退步。第二個願望看起來許得更聰明或至少是經過深思熟慮的，但從某些方面看卻是許錯了。或者說有時第二個願望只是修正了第一個願望所引發的破壞。在樵夫的故事中，第二個願望把事情弄得比以前更糟。第一和第二個願望事實上都有可能是意外。有時就像
accidents. Sometimes – as in the case of the woodcutter’s story – the third wish needs to be devoted to correcting accidents. The difference between the second and third wish is that after the third there are no more wishes and therefore – by default – there is a resolution and an end to the story. But what kind of wish will satisfy the reader by resolving the story?

There are two categories of possibility. Either something changes for the characters so that the scene is different at the end of the story; or the scene is the same at the end as at the beginning of the story, in which case the characters have been changed by their experiences, i.e. they now know something that they did not know at the beginning of the story. This is the most common resolution. Usually, the third wish sets things to rights and returns the wisher to a situation not unlike the conditions prevailing before the first wish – the difference being that the wisher is wiser and/or happier for a better understanding of themselves and their situation and potential. So it’s older and wiser rather than happily ever after. It’s important to note the way in which characters change through such a simple story. The fact that experience changes the woodcutter and his wife is highlighted by the way in which their wishes change throughout the course of the story.

The three wishes plot pattern fits into a broader pattern making use of sequences of three related events. This is common in fairytales but also in many other genres (or kinds of story): a hero has three tasks or three goals to attain, or makes three attempts to do something. Consider the case of the fisherman who met the jinnee in *The Arabian Nights*.

There once was a poor fisherman who put out his nets four times each day just to feed his family. One day he had set his nets and went to haul them in when he discovered that they were too heavy to
在樵夫的故事这个例子中，需要用第三个愿望来改正错误。第二和第三个愿望之间的差别，在于第三个愿望后就再没有其他愿望，因此只能默认故事已到了解决冲突和结局的部份。但什么样的愿望能使读者满意故事的结局呢？

这里有两种可能。一是对角色而言，某些东西改变了，故事中的情况最终也随之改变；二是故事中的情况始终没有改变，但角色由于自己的经历而发生了变化。例如，最常见的结局就是角色知道了一些他们一开始不知道的事情。通常，第三个愿望使事情回复正常并使角色回到与第一个愿望之前相似的状况，不同之处是许愿者将变得更聪明和或更快乐，因为他们能更好地了解自己、处境和潜力。所以他们变得更成熟和聪明，而不单单是“此以后过著幸福的生活”。请注意角色是如何通过这样一部简单故事而改变的。樵夫和他的妻子在故事的不同阶段所许的愿望突出了经历使他们改变的这个事实。

三个愿望这种情节结构的模式，适用于可连续使用三个关联事件，内容更广的故事。这在童话和其他体裁（故事的类型）中是常见的。主角有三个任务或三个目标，或有三次机会做一件事情。请以《一千零一夜》中那个遇见精灵的渔夫为例思考一下这种情况。

曾经有一个贫穷的渔夫每天为了养活家人而撒四次网。有一天，当他撒下网然后正准备把它扯回来时，却发现网重得拉
gather. He heaved and heaved and in the end found that in his nets he had caught the body of a dead donkey. After retrieving and spreading the nets out on dry land he cast them again and this time he hauled in a large clay jug filled with sand. He threw away the jug and cast his nets again. This time when he drew them in they were filled with pieces of broken pots and broken glass. Before setting his nets again he prayed to Allah that this next time his nets might bring in for his family their daily bread.

And when the fisherman tried to haul in his nets for the fourth time he discovered that something was tangled in them. So he stripped off and dived to the bottom of the sea and when he hauled in the nets this time he took from them a copper jar shaped like a cucumber and sealed with a lead cap. The cap was stamped with the seal of King Solomon, son of David. Seeing this, the fisherman rejoiced for he knew that he would sell the jar for a small fortune in the bazaar. But the fisherman was curious about what was inside the jar. He shook it and realised it was quite heavy. He simply had to open the jar so he worked with his knife at the lead plug until it came loose and he could finally remove it. Once the stopper was off the jar the fisherman was surprised that there seemed to be nothing in it. He left the jar on the ground and returned to the business of catching his family’s dinner.

Soon however smoke came pouring from the mouth of the jar and soared in a spiral up into the sky. The ground shook and the clouds trembled in a terrifying manner. The smoke condensed into the form of a huge jinnee, whose head reached up to the clouds while his feet touched the ground. The fisherman stared at the jinnee, who cried out, ‘There is no God but Allah and Solomon is his Prophet. Apostle of God, do not slay me. I will never disobey your laws.’ The fisherman was very surprised but remembered the seal on the stopper of the jar. He said to the jinnee, ‘Solomon has been dead for eighteen
不回來。他拉呀拉，最後發現網中有一頭死驢子。在他把網全部拉上來並在沙灘上攤開後，他又撒了一次網，這次他收網時發現裡面有一隻裝滿沙子的泥壺。他把壺扔掉，再次撒網。這次當他收網時，這些網中充滿了破罐的碎片和碎玻璃。當他再次撒網前，他向阿拉祈禱，希望收網時能給他的家人帶來今天的糧食。

當漁夫試著第四次收網時，他發現網纏住了一些東西。於是他脫下衣服潛入海底。這次當他拉網時，順著拉上來一個像黃瓜一樣，被鉛蓋密封的銅瓶子。蓋子上貼有大衛的兒子所羅門王的封印。看到這個，漁夫很高興，因為他知道這個瓶子可以在市場上賣個好價錢。但漁夫也很好奇瓶裡裝的是甚麼。他搖搖瓶子，發覺它很重。他想打開瓶子，於是用刀子翹瓶塞，直到它變鬆可以被拿掉。當瓶子打開後，漁夫驚訝地發現裡面什麼都沒有。他把瓶子扔在地上，然後繼續為家人的晚餐忙碌。

但是不久之後，煙霧從瓶口中湧出來，旋轉著往天上升。一時間天旋地轉。煙霧逐漸聚成一個巨大的精靈，他頭頂天腳踩地。漁夫目不轉睛地看著，向精靈大喊道：「阿拉是唯一的神，所羅門是他的先知。神的使徒啊，請不要傷害我。我永遠不會違背你的旨意。」漁夫感到很驚訝，但他想起瓶塞上的封印。於是他對精靈說：「所羅門王八百年前就死了，現在世界
hundred years and now the end of the world is approaching.’ Then the jinnee said ‘Fisherman, be of good cheer’. But the fisherman didn’t like the sound of those words and asked the jinnee what he meant by them. And the jinnee explained that the fisherman had to die this very hour.

The fisherman asked why he had to die and the jinnee replied that the fisherman had only to choose the manner of his death and he would kill him on the spot. The fisherman naturally wanted to know why it was the jinnee was so ungrateful to someone who had rescued him from eighteen hundred years in a stoppered jar. So the jinnee told the fisherman his story.

He had been one of the heretical jinn who would not embrace the true faith. So King Solomon had him sealed in a jar and cast the jar into the sea. For the first hundred years of his captivity the jinnee swore that whoever released him would be rewarded with great riches. But no one released him. So for the second century he swore that the hidden treasures of the earth would be given to his rescuer. But no one set him free. So the jinnee swore that whoever got him out of his accursed jar would be granted three wishes. Another four hundred years passed, the jinnee lost all patience and now swore that whoever released him from the jar he would immediately kill. The only choice he would offer his saviour would be the manner of his death. After that the jinnee lost track of time but kept his resolve to kill whoever should release him from the jar.

And now the jinnee again told the fisherman that he should make his choice of death. But the fisherman naturally pleaded for his life. ‘Spare my life and Allah will spare yours,’ he argued. ‘Make your choice now for you will die within this hour’, the jinnee replied. ‘You should pardon me for having freed you,’ argued the fisherman. ‘It is because you have freed me that you must die,’ replied the jinnee.
末日就要到來了。」精靈接著說：「漁夫，請不要垂頭喪氣。」但漁夫不喜歡這些字眼，他問精靈是什麼意思。精靈解釋說漁夫在這會兒就要死了。

漁夫問他為什麼會死，精靈回答說他只需要選擇一個死法，然後就會被殺死。漁夫當然想知道為什麼精靈會這麼忘恩負義，殺掉把它從八百多年被困的瓶中放出來的人。於是精靈對漁夫說起自己的故事。

他曾是不肯接受真理的叛逆精靈之一。於是所羅門王把他封在瓶裡，並把瓶子流放到海裡。被困的頭一百年，精靈發誓不管是誰放了他，他都會以巨大的財富作爲回報，但並沒有人釋放他。到了被困的第二個百年，他發誓會把所有隱藏在地下的金銀財寶都贈予他的解救者，可惜還是沒有人來釋放他。於是精靈發誓要是誰能從這個被詛咒的瓶中釋放他，便會得到三個願望。又过了四百年，精靈失去了所有耐性，於是他發誓要是誰救了他，他便會立刻把這個人殺掉。他給予救他的人的唯一選擇是讓他選擇死法。之後精靈不知被困在瓶裡多久，但他決心要把從瓶中釋放他的人殺死。

這時，精靈再一次告訴漁夫他可以選擇死法。但漁夫只求他饒命，「饒我一命，阿拉也會饒恕你的。」漁夫爭辯道。精靈答道：「快選擇吧，你將在一小时内死去。」漁夫爭辯道：「你應該饒恕我，因爲我釋放了你。」精靈回答：「正是因爲你釋放了我，所以你一定要死。」
Seeing that his situation was apparently hopeless the fisherman realised that his only hope of surviving this encounter was through the use of the brain God had given him. So he asked the jinnee whether if he asked him a simple question he would promise to answer it honestly. The jinnee agreed and the fisherman asked him how it was that he could fit in a jar that was not big enough to hold his finger or his toe. The jinnee accepted the taunt and responded, ‘So you don’t believe that all of me could fit into that little jar?’ ‘No, I don’t believe it,’ responded the fisherman. ‘And I won’t believe it until I actually see it with my own eyes’.

At this taunt the jinnee shook in a most terrifying manner, shaking the clouds and the earth with him, and then turned back into smoke, and then poured back into the jar. Immediately the fisherman stopped the mouth of the jar with the lead seal.

The jinnee argued with the fisherman from the inside of the jar that he should release him once more, and that this time he would grant the fisherman whatever he wished. But the fisherman would not be tricked and the jinnee is to this day still in his stoppered jar on the floor of the sea just where the fishermen threw him back.

For a while it seems like this tale is the opposite of – or a grisly parody of – the three wishes story. The fisherman is offered only a choice of the manner of his death, that’s not the kind of wish most people would think to wish for. Notice how this story depends for its motivation on a story inside it. This is a feature of tales from The Arabian Nights. The jinnee’s strange motivation – his wish to kill whoever rescues him – can only be understood by means of the jinnee’s own story. We could summarise the plot of the fisherman’s story as follows:
明顯地看到他所處的絕境，漁夫意識到在這次遭遇中，他唯一的生存希望是運用神賜予他的頭腦。於是他問精靈是否能誠實地回答他一個簡單的問題。精靈同意了。漁夫問精靈怎麼可能鑽進這個連他的手指或腳趾都裝不下的瓶子裡。精靈聽出他的嘲笑於是答道：「所以你不相信我能鑽進這個小瓶子裡？」漁夫回答：「我不相信，除非我親眼看到。」

為了反駁這個嘲笑，精靈可怕地搖晃著，驚天動地，不一會就變回了煙霧，然後鑽進瓶中。漁夫趕緊用鉛蓋封住了瓶口。

瓶裡的精靈與漁夫爭吵著說他應該再把他放出來，這次他能給漁夫任何想要的東西。但漁夫才不會上當，精靈至今還呆在被封住的瓶子裡，在他被漁夫扔掉的那片海上漂流。

這個故事有一陣子似乎跟三個願望的故事相反。漁夫唯一能選擇的就是自己的死法，這不是那種大部分人都想做的選擇。請留意故事裡的動機。這是《一千零一夜》的特色故事。精靈希望殺死救他的人，我們只有通過他的故事，才能了解他這個奇怪的動機。我們可以如下般總結這故事的情節結構：

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Grab: Hungry fisherman nets rare old treasure
Turn: Jar in net turns out to contain jinnee
Turn: Jinnee once released determines (unjustly) to kill rescuer
Resolution: Fisherman outwits jinnee and gets him safely back into the jar
Conviction: The humble man with his wits about him...

Consider for a moment the desires of the protagonist and the antagonist of this story. The jinnee’s desire is something the reader could not have anticipated. It’s for revenge on anyone at all. This (completely unreasonable and unpredictable) desire is also in the end the jinnee’s undoing. The fisherman’s desire changes though, or it comes full circle. He starts and ends the story just wanting to feed his family. Building to the climax though his only desire is to remain alive. It’s for that purpose he uses his wits. If he hadn’t been clever enough he would certainly have died, if he’d given in to the jinnee he would have died. If he’d given up hope – if he’d given up his strong desire to survive – then he would have died. Desire (in this case of a very fundamental kind, the desire to live) is what kept the fisherman – and the story – alive, alive through to a satisfying resolution. Again, remember satisfying resolution doesn’t have to mean a happy ending or the triumph of good over evil; a satisfying ending has to resolve the conflict in the story so as to prove the story’s conviction.
吸引：饑餓的漁夫打撈了稀世古寶。
轉折：網中的瓶子裡原來關著一個精靈。
轉折：精靈一被放出來就決心（不公平地）要殺害救他的人。
結局：漁夫智鬥精靈，並把他再次關進瓶中。
主旨：匹夫鬥智不鬥勇。

思考一下故事中正反人物的慾望。精靈的慾望是讀者無法預知的。這是對所有人的報復。這個（完全不合理也不能被預料的）慾望亦是最後精靈失敗的原因。漁夫的慾望雖然一直在變，但最終回到原位。故事從一開始到結束，他都只想著養活家人。但在故事達到高潮時，他唯一的慾望是繼續生存下去。正是為了這個目的，他運用了自己的智慧。如果他不是這麼聰明，很可能早就已經死了，如果他向精靈屈服，他可能已經死了。要是他放棄了希望，放棄了他強大的求生慾，他也可能已經死了。慾望（在這個例子中是基本的求生慾）正是令漁夫和故事「活著」，直到有了一個令人滿意的結局。此外，請記住，令人滿意的結局並不代表是一個大團圓結局或者正義戰勝邪惡；一個令人滿意的結局一定要通過解決故事中的衝突而傳達出故事的主旨。
**Asking questions/taking action:**

Make lists of possible wishes for a three wishes story. Choose one or more of these wishes and from them try to work out a plot. How does your story change the situation of the characters? How does your story change the characters themselves? What would the conviction (in a fairytale, the moral) of the story be?

Around the story circle: Silently, on paper, everyone creates:

1. a circumstance for the granting of three wishes (characters plus story setting) then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
2. the first wish, then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
3. the consequence of the first wish, then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
4. the second wish, then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
5. the consequence of the second wish, then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
6. the third wish, then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
7. the resolution and/or conviction of the story

Imagine two characters want the same thing. Try to create a simple (G^T^R) plot structure that will resolve their conflict. (Note, the resolution needn’t be happy or peaceful.) What conviction could your story prove?
練習：

為三個願望故事列出一些合適的願望。從這些願望中選擇一個或多個，通過它們試著構思一個情節。你的故事怎樣改變角色的處境？你的故事怎樣改變角色？故事的主旨（童話中是道德教誨）是甚麼？

在故事圈中：大家安靜地在紙上寫：

1. 可以引出三個願望的情況（角色加上故事背景），然後把紙傳給下一位，繼續寫
2. 第一個願望，然後把紙傳給下一位，寫出
3. 第一個願望的結果，然後把紙傳給下一位，寫出
4. 第二個願望，然後把紙傳給下一位，寫出
5. 第二個願望的結果，然後把紙傳給下一位，寫出
6. 第三個願望，然後把紙傳給下一位，寫出
7. 結局和/或故事的主旨

想像兩個角色想得到同樣的東西。嘗試構思一個簡單的（G^T^R）情節結構去解決他們的衝突。（注意：結果不一定要快樂或和平）你的故事主旨是什麼？
Make a list of things you want. You can start with a shopping list of just commodities, but try to add specific abstract items as well (e.g. the love or respect of a certain person).

Make some lists of possible wants which aren’t yours (things people you know might want, things characters in a story might want). Are there possible sources of conflict that could be generated by these conflicting desires?

Take the list from the exercise immediately above and add some magic to grant yourself three wishes. From these wishes, create a modern day fairytale, for adults or for children (or in two versions, one for each).
列出你想要的東西。你可以先列一個購物清單，但試著同樣加進去一些比較抽象的事物（比如，一個特別的人的尊敬和愛）。把你覺得別人可能想要的東西列成表（你認識的人們可能想要的東西，故事中的某個角色可能想要的東西）。在這些矛盾的欲望中能構成故事中的衝突的嗎？

直接在以上練習時所列的表中加入一些魔法去實現自己的三個願望。從這些願望中創作出一個給成人和小孩的現代童話。（或兩個版本，每種一個）。
Stories are motivated. Stories are motivated principally by the circumstances and the desires of characters. What characters do they do for a reason. What happens in a story happens for a reason. In a story, one thing leads to another, in a logical way. All this might seem obvious but it points to an important difference between what happens in a story and what happens in life. Life is full of unexpected events and characters having no connection with the events and characters we already know. One could say that religion is necessary for most humans because most humans simply can’t accept that events in their lives could be unconnected. Most people demand to see themselves in a story, even if it’s not for them to understand the plot or see what the conviction or resolution of the story might be. Stories work by connecting the unexpected with the expected. Remember Forster’s definition of plot: the king died and then the queen died of grief. Most fundamentally, the events in a story are causally related to each other so that their sequence in the form of a plot leads the reader through complications or crises to a climax to a resolution. Stories are motivated and this means that a satisfying ending is one that resolves the conflict in the story so as to prove the story’s conviction.

Complications or crises? Each complication in the plot should provide a key character with a crisis, or point of decision. Crises are character shaping moments in a plot. Convincing characters – like the stories they’re in – are convincing because they are motivated. Their decisions make them who they are, but also show who they are.

You might be thinking that this emphasis on the importance of motivation contradicts the idea that the surprise element is essential to stories. It’s not the case that we have to understand every event and every decision of every character in a story just at the time those
動機與可信性

故事是有動機的。故事基本上是被角色的欲望和境遇所帶動的。角色的行為是有其原因的。在一個故事中，一件事接著另一件，是有邏輯的。這些看起來似乎很明顯，但它同時指出故事中所發生的事與現實生活中的事之間有著重要的區別。生活中充滿我們無法預料的事件和人物。你也許會說宗教對於大部份人來說是必要的，因為大多數人都無法接受生活中的事件之間是沒有聯繫的。很多人都覺得人生如戲，即使他們根本無法了解故事的情節、主旨和結局。故事將可預知和不可預知的聯繫起來。還記得福斯特對故事情節結構的定義嗎？「國王去世後，王后也因悲傷而死去。」故事情中中的事件最基本的是由因果關係聯繫在一起，以它們的順序所展現的情節結構帶領讀者經歷糾葛或者危機，直到高潮和結局。故事是有動機的，這意味著一個令人滿意的結局可以解決故事中人物之間的衝突並表達出故事的主旨。

糾葛或危機？情節中的每一處糾葛都應該帶出一位關鍵角色的危機，或需要他作出決定的點。危機是情節中塑造角色的時刻。可信的角色，就像他們所在的故事，要有動機才顯得可信。他們所作的決定塑造了他們，也表現了他們的特點。

你可能會認為我們強調動機是與讓讀者驚訝的要素互相矛盾的。我們並不需要在故事發生的同時，了解每一個事件及角
events and decisions are happening. Perfect understanding every step of the way would kill off one of the most important sources of suspense in a story: that is, not yet knowing what will happen.

In fact, we don’t just want to know what happens to characters, there’s an important sense in which we also want to know who those characters really are. True character in this sense is revealed by the ways in which characters get through (or don’t get through) crises. When characters act in inexplicable ways we want to know why. The reader can tolerate a mystery as to what motivates a character. That kind of mystery can generate suspense, but only for so long. The reader can likewise tolerate only so many inexplicable events. The story has a duty to explain how at least most or sufficient of its events are connected. In order to work a story must be credible or convincing. The reader must be able to believe and understand enough of what’s happening in order to read on.

By now you’re probably thinking that myths and legends, fables and fairytales, will not fit this formula because each of these genres depends on events that are incredible because they’re magical. More likely, you’re wanting to throw the idea of credibility out the window because there are too many types of stories that don’t seem to fit the mould. But there’s a good reason not to discard credibility as a criterion for the success of a story. The explanation of the seeming anomaly is simple: credibility is genre sensitive. In other words, if you’re in a myth it’s OK to meet a dragon, if you’re in a fairytale there’s no problem having an enchanted castle where you sleep for a hundred years or a thousand or turn princes into frogs with a kiss. If you’re in a sci-fi story you can travel much faster than light, and so on. A reader makes allowances for the fact that she’s in fiction, or, to use a more technical term she suspends disbelief.
色做的決定。完全了解故事中的每一步會磨滅懸念，那就是，還不清楚將要發生什麼事的部份。

事實上，我們不僅想知道接下來什麼事會發生在角色身上，同時也希望能真正了解那些角色。角色的真面目是在他經歷（或不經歷）危機時被揭示的。當角色作出一些莫名其妙的行為時，我們都想知道原因。讀者可以暫時忍受不清楚角色的動機，這種謎團可以加深懸念。同樣，讀者也可以忍受一些莫名其妙的事件。但故事至少需要將故事大部分的聯繫解釋清楚。一個可行的故事起碼先要是可信的，或能說服人的。讀者需要能夠相信和了解足夠多的「到底發生了什麼」才能繼續往下讀。

現在你可能會認為這種公式並不適用於神話傳說、寓言和童話，因為以上每一種體裁都是魔幻的，並依賴於神奇的事件。更有可能的是，你正想著要把可信性這個概念從窗戶扔出去，因爲有太多的故事並不尊崇這一概念。然而，把可信性作爲衡量好故事的標準之一卻有它的理由。其實對於好像是特例的解釋很簡單：對於不同體裁的可信性要求不同。也就是說，在神話中遇見龍很正常；在童話中你在一個被施了魔法的城堡裡睡了一百或一千年，又或者用一吻把王子變成青蛙都是沒有問題的。如果在一個科幻故事中，那麼你可以跑的比光還快，諸如此類。讀者對於自己處身於虛構故事中這個事實是默許的，或者，用一個更技術性的短語來說，就是讀者「暫緩不信」，意思是說暫且不計較故事真實與否，完全浸入劇情當中。
Genre by genre different suspensions of disbelief are demanded of readers. In fact, they help to define genre. A fairytale in which nothing magical happens isn’t really a fairytale. No amount of willingness to suspend disbelief will however compensate for bad plotting. A bad plot is most obviously revealed through transparent manipulation. When that happens it’s obvious to the reader that the writer has lost control of the story and has desperately tried to find a way to save it. The two most common credibility problems, revealing this desperation on the part of the author, are the convenient coincidence and the deus ex machina. The convenient coincidence is where, for no reason at all, something happens to smooth out the complications in the plot. Let’s take an example: a character knows too much or has become too powerful for the story to go on as it should: that character has a convenient accident and is thus taken out of the action. The problem with the convenient coincidence is that because there’s no foreshadowing there’s no motivation and because there’s no motivation the event has no credibility. The deus ex machina (or God out of the Machine, a device in Greek tragedy) has a similar function although it is in a way the opposite of the convenient coincidence. The deus ex machina is used when the story has got out of control and only outside intervention (that of God or a god) can save the situation. Usually this happens in the last scene. In the Western genre in old Hollywood films the deus ex machina might be in the form of the U.S. cavalry’s arrival out of nowhere, just when the heroes were about to bite the dust.

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As readers, we need characters with whom we can identify in a story. We need conflict and/or danger to build our identification with those characters. And we need the characters with whom we identify and the characters with whom they conflict to make the story by responding to the crises that shape them as characters. We also
讀者對於不同體裁的「暫緩不信」要求都不同。事實上，它們也正好起到區分體裁的作用。一個沒有發生任何與魔法有關的事件的童話就稱不上是個童話故事。故事若不能讓讀者「暫緩不信」就是爛情節。讀者最容易識破那些被作者顯然操作的爛情節。當它在發展的時候，讀者能明顯感覺到作者掌控不了故事，所以才絕望地想找個方法來救場。隨意安排巧合和捏造解圍人物都是最常見的顯露作者拙劣的常見可信性問題。隨意安排的巧合會把糾葛無來由地解決。讓我們舉個例子吧，一個角色知道的太多或者變得太強大，以致故事不能正常進行下去，於是作者便隨意安排巧合，使角色脫離故事。隨意安排的巧合最主要的問題在於缺少伏筆和動機。因爲沒有動機，事件便變得不可信。解圍人物（機器中蹦出的神，希臘悲劇中的常用手法）也有類似的問題，其作用跟隨意安排的巧合的相反。解圍人物是指出現在故事的發展失去控制時用來挽救局面的外力（耶穌基督或某個神）。一般來說這種情況發生在最後一幕。在荷里活早期的西部類型片中，解圍人物的表現形式是美國騎兵隊剛好在主角就快被打倒時從天而降。

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作爲讀者，我們需要那些在故事中可以被認同的角色。我們需要各種衝突和/或危險以認同角色。我們需要那些我們認同的及和它們對立的角色，透過反應危機塑造自身性格來構建故
need the story to be convincing, to be believable, and to be internally consistent: to make sense of itself in its own terms.
事。我們也需要故事具有說服力和可信性，並且內容前後一致，使它們以自己的形式表達出意義。
Asking questions/taking action:

Make a list of events that would only be credible in a fairytale.
Make a list of events that would not be credible in a fairytale.
Make a list of genres and against them list the ways in which the reader in that genre needs to suspend disbelief in order to find the story credible.

List surprising though credible crises and complications for characters in a story.
List different possible reactions characters might have to each crisis.
Try to think of more surprising (though still credible) reactions to (or decisions in those) crises.
Try to think of crises or reactions that would have the effect of changing the genre of the story. Could the change you’ve brought about this way be accepted by the reader?

Look for a story (or stories) among these lists. Try to play with the possibility of beginning in one genre and ending in another.

Around the story circle: Silently, on paper, everyone creates:
1. a circumstance for a story (characters plus story setting), then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
2. what happens first: a grab or first complication, then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
3. the consequence/s of that first event, then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
4. further complication/s/crises, tries to build more suspense, then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
練習：

試列出只有在童話中才顯得可信的事情。
試列出在童話中顯得不可信的事情。
列出一些體裁，並為這些體裁列出需要讀者「暫緩不信」才能使故事顯得可信的方法。

請為一個故事中的角色列出使人驚訝但卻可信的危機和糾葛。
列出角色對於每個危機所可能做出的不同反應。
想出一些角色在面對危機（或做決定的時刻）更加使人驚訝（同時可信）的反應（或決定）。
想出可以改變整個故事體裁的危機或反應。讀者又能否接受你所想出來的相關改變？

從這些表中發展出一個（或多個）故事。試著以一種體裁開始，以另一種體裁結束故事。

在故事圈中，大家安靜地在紙上寫：
1. 故事環境〔角色和故事背景〕，接著把紙傳給下一位，寫出
2. 故事中最先發生的，吸引或第一個糾葛，接著把紙傳給下一位，寫出
3. 第一個事件的結果（或多個結果），接著把紙傳給下一位，寫出
4. 進一步的糾葛（或多個糾葛），危機，嘗試設置更多的懸念，接著把紙傳給下一位，寫出
5. more plot leading to a climax, then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
6. a resolution, then the paper is passed to the next person in the circle, who writes
7. the conviction of the story

Carrying this process out on paper should create as many stories as there are people in the group. Only rarely will the group agree that the stories are of equal value. But if any of the stories is good then the credit should go to everyone in the group because the successful story was the result of a group effort. The paper process can be short-circuited to create a single group story, line at a time, talking around the circle. Try it with a fairytale first. The first speaker starts with ‘once upon a time’, then everyone adds a line a time, until it is possible for someone in the circle to finish the tale with a ‘happily ever after.’
5. 更多情節，帶出故事高潮，接著把紙傳給下一位，寫出
6. 故事的結局，接著把紙傳給下一位，寫出
7. 故事的主旨

繼續以這種傳紙的方式，創作和故事圈中人數一樣多的故事。雖然大家不會認爲所有的故事都具有同等價值，但只要其中有一個好故事，那麼功勞就應該屬於所有人，因為它是大家的勞動成果。創作一個小組故事，傳紙的次數可以相應減少，每人每次只寫一行，然後在故事圈中討論。一開始大家可以嘗試創作童話。第一個人以「很久以前」開頭，然後一人說一旬，直到故事圈中有人能用「從此以後過上幸福的生活」作結尾。
Action in a story can be classified in two types: circular and forward. *Circular action* describes the habits and routines, the actions that identify or define a particular character: the nervous twitch, the untrimmed moustache, the cough first thing in the morning, the perennial love of baked beans. *Forward action* by contrast changes characters and setting, it transforms the story, moves it along. A story like *Macbeth* is virtually all forward action. We get to see how characters are by seeing them in action, by seeing them making the story happen and at the same time being changed by it. Circular action is part of the character and setting development of a story, forward action is what causes the plot. Or rather without forward action the plot goes nowhere. It’s through the forward motion of the plot that tension or suspense is created and the action of the story rises.

Think back to the Baked Beans joke. In that story a series of turns or complications creates the crises through which the protagonist must negotiate a way by making decisions. Circular action: he loves baked beans but they make him fart. That’s OK but he wants to get married. Forward action: he gives up baked beans because he gets married but one day his car breaks down near the baked beans shop. He thinks it’s OK to eat the baked beans because he has a long way to walk home and he thinks he’ll have stopped farting by the time he gets there. But he’s wrong, he’s still farting. Then luckily for him, he thinks, his wife leaves him alone so that he can fart in peace. But he’s wrong again, he’s not alone; and now at the end of the joke his position seems impossible. There’s nothing he can do or say that could conceal his guilty secret again now that it’s out. It’s his acute embarrassment we laugh at. Our pleasure is in the fact that he now has no escape.
故事中的人物的行為可以分為兩類，循環往復和向前推進。循環情節用來描述習慣和慣例，區分和解釋特定角色的行為：緊張抽搐，鬍子拉碴，早上的習慣性咳嗽，對烤豆無法停止的熱愛。相比起來，線性情節改變角色和背景，改變了故事，使故事向前推進。如《麥克白》的故事中實際上全是線性情節。我們通過情節了解角色，觀察他們是如何使故事發生的，同時又怎樣被故事改變。循環情節是角色和背景發展的一部分，線性情節是情節結構的動因。或者這麼說，如果沒有線性情節，情節結構就無法建立。通過情節結構中的線性情節，張力和懸念才得以建立，故事的情節結構才得以上升。

回想一下烤豆笑話。在那個故事中，連續的轉折和糾葛通過主角需要與自身協商作出決定而建立了危機。循環情節：他喜歡吃烤豆，但這令他放屁。這也沒什麼大不了，但可惜的是，他想結婚。線性情節：他放棄了愛好，因爲他結婚了，但有一天他的車在烤豆店附近壞了。吃了烤豆也沒什麼大不了，因為他離家還有很長的一段路，可以在到家前停止放屁。可惜他錯了，他還是在放屁。之後挺幸運的，他想，因爲他的妻子留他一個人呆著，所以他可以無所顧忌地放屁。但他又錯了，他並不是一個人，到了笑話的最後他的情況似乎是不可能的。他無法解釋和做任何事情，以用來再次遮蓋使他內疚的秘密，因爲秘密已經揭開。我們笑他如此尷尬，因爲他再也無處可藏而感到快樂。
Once the setting is established the story is all forward action. Notice the role played by the string of ‘buts’ in this equation. It’s the series of reversals for the man in the story that put him in an ever more difficult situation (further and further up a tree, or down in a hole, depending on which metaphor you prefer). One thing leads to another. When something seems to be resolved it turns out surprisingly to be a new complication. The structure could be described as \( G \text{^T} \text{^T} \text{^T} \text{^T} \text{^T} \text{^T} \text{^R} \). Or you could describe it as follows: Grab ^ Turn ^ Resolution (=) Grab ^ Turn ^ Resolution (=) Grab ^ Turn ^ Resolution. Each apparent Resolution becomes the Grab for the next turn in the story. In this way the story rolls forward and builds up at the same time. At the very end it turns out that, just when we all thought we could breathe a sigh of relief, the stakes are the highest and the embarrassment is therefore the most acute. We don’t sigh, we laugh.

Suspense or tension rises as the complications get a protagonist into an ever more difficult situation. The story in other words builds and gets more exciting as things get worse for the character with whom we identify. This is known as *rising action*. This blowing up of the bubble is, as we’ve noted, typical of the joke. It’s also more generally characteristic of stories.

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Perhaps better than a joke is the effect of not knowing till the story’s told whether what one’s being told is a joke or not. That kind of surprise has become more common and important in stories over the course of the twentieth century. It’s the surprise the reader experiences when she discovers that she wasn’t in the genre (the kind) of story she had thought she was in. Flann O’Brien’s very short story ‘The Taxi Driver’ is one of my favourites. I think it helps to imagine a strong Irish accent for the telling and some dark Irish pub ambience to go with the tale. The storyteller begins by claiming to
一旦建立好背景，故事就成了線性情節。請注意那些一連串的「但」所扮演的角色。正是一連串的逆轉使故事中的男人面對更加困難的情況（爬樹爬得越來越高，鑽洞鑽得越來越深，視乎你喜歡哪種比喻）。一件事引起另一件。當某件事看起來好像解決了，但其實只是進入了一個新的糾葛。這個結構可被描述為$G^T^T^T^T^T^T^T^T^T^T^T^R$。或者你也可以這樣描述它：$G^T^R(=)G^T^R(=)G^T^R$。每個明顯的解決辦法成爲故事接下來的轉捩點。故事以這種方式向前推進並得到發展。到了最後，當我們以爲能鬆一口氣時，原來才爬到了最高點，所以這個尷尬才顯得最厲害。我們沒有嘆氣，我們大笑。

懸念或張力在糾葛使主角進入更加困難的境地時加深和增強。換言之，故事發展使人更興奮是由於我們所認同的角色遇上更壞的情況。這就是上升情節（將故事推向高潮的事件或行動）。這就像吹汽球，如我們已經注意到的，是笑話的特徵，也是故事比較普遍的特徵。

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或許比笑話還要好的是直到故事結尾，我們都不知道它是否是一個笑話這種效果。這種驚訝在二十世紀的故事中愈來愈常見和重要。這是讀者以爲自己一直在讀某種體裁（類型）的故事而最後發現其實不是時所體驗到的驚訝。福蘭·奧布萊恩的短篇故事《計程車司機》是我所喜愛的之一。我覺得如果在聽故事時想像講故事的人有愛爾蘭口音，再想像自己置身於一間
have had a remarkable life, and that his memoirs would make very
good reading.

Years ago a friend from Dublin suggested we spend an
evening together and I agreed to this because I believed him to be a
philosopher, in other words a gentleman of worthy intelligence. But
this hunch of mine was proved wrong, because as soon as we met he
made me go to a pub with him and drink a lot of whiskey.

After we’d been drinking a while in this pub my friend told
me he wouldn’t have another drink in the place because – and he
subtly nudged me to let me know – there was a sinister man drinking
a dark kind of beer called stout at the other end of the bar. I glanced
quickly in the direction indicated and saw a tall man dressed in black
who looked like a corpse. His face was grey. And his features were
grim.

We left this pub quickly and drove many miles to another
village. Naturally we needed a drink when we got there. But before
we could take a sip we were shocked to see that the same dark
character was in this pub too, and drinking the same glass of stout,
or so it seemed.

Quickly we finished our drinks and made our way to another
village, where the whiskeys we had ordered had only just arrived when
we saw the black figure again. We were shocked naturally, we drank as
fast as we could drink and made for a far distant and deserted hamlet.
We needed to get as far as possible from this terrible spectre. But
remember too that we were in shock, so naturally we needed a drink.

Of course, as you’ll have guessed, the dark figure was there
as well. My friend was now swallowing his whiskey down in large
gulps. I told him that we had no choice but to face this dark force.
漆黑的愛爾蘭酒館，會有所幫助。講故事的人一開始宣稱自己有著不平凡的一生，而他的回憶錄很值得一讀。

幾年前一位都柏林朋友邀我與他共度一個晚上，因爲我相信他是一位哲學家，就是說他很有智慧，所以就答應了。但是後來證明我的預感是錯的，因為當我們見面時，他使我也一起去了酒館並喝了很多威士忌。

我們在這個酒館裡喝了一會兒後，朋友告訴我他不想在這兒喝了，他用手肘輕輕推我並跟我說，在酒館的另一頭有一個不祥的男人在喝著一種叫做司陶特的黑啤酒。我從他所指示的方向瞥了一眼，看見一個穿黑衣的高個子男人，像一具僵屍，面色蒼白，長相猙獰。

我們很快便離開了酒館，坐車走了幾里到達另一個村莊。自然而然，當我們到達那裡時又想去喝一杯。可正當我們喝第一口時，卻驚訝地發現那個黑色的傢伙也在酒館裡，而且正喝著同一杯司陶特，或看起來是同一杯。

我們很快喝完，然後起程前往另一個村莊，當我們點的威士卡剛擺到面前時，卻又看見了那個黑色的傢伙。於是我們吃了一驚，能喝多快就多快，然後去往一個遙遠荒涼的小村莊，心想離這個可怕的傢伙越遠越好。但請記得我們受了驚嚇，所以自然需要再喝一杯。

當然，就如你可能已經猜到的那樣，那個黑色的傢伙也在那裡。我的朋友現在正大口大口地把威士忌往下灌。我告訴他
He looked at me horrified but could not speak. Trembling with fear I approached the dark creature. I told him that I didn’t like the look of him. He said the same back to me. I asked him why he followed us and he told me that he couldn’t go home until we first went home. ‘Why not?’ I stammered. His answer was, ‘Because I am the taxi-driver.’

In this joke/story the tension rises through a series of complications which are in fact the same complication repeated but with building intensity. What’s so surprising in this story and so suspenseful turns out to be so logical and so funny. How can this dark apparition keep turning up wherever these two protagonists go? But we know that he will be there. We become accustomed to this spooky destiny that faces them. There’s no escape from what must be a supernatural power. And then the bubble bursts. Of course the taxi driver is there. Why wouldn’t he go into a pub when he’s driven passengers there? Where else should he go?

The conflation of the joke and the ghost story is easy to accept because both genres have a very similar structure. The basic model ghost story also depends on the blowing up of a bubble. The bubble bursts with a blood curdling scream or with a sinking feeling; either of which indicates that the doom of the protagonist is sealed. Or it ends with danger averted, a sigh of relief and a happily ever after. Each of these kinds of sudden falling action deflate the bubble rapidly; they dissipate suspense, they release tension.

Suspense and tension are what keep the reader in the story. We want to know what will happen next. And we want something particular to happen. Or not happen. For instance, we know the bad guys are plotting some evil deed. We’re worried about what will happen to the hero (or protagonist). We know that the suspense in the story is working on us as readers or as viewers when we physically feel the tension, when we flinch at the protagonist’s perils, or better still, when we cannot bear to look.
我們除了面對這股黑勢力外再沒別的選擇了。他恐懼地看著我但沒出聲。我一邊嚇得發抖一邊靠近那個黑色的傢伙。我告訴他我不喜歡他的外表。他也同樣這麼對我說。我問他為什麼跟著我們，他告訴我因為如果我們還沒回家那他也回不了家。我結結巴巴地問：「為什麼回不了？」他的回答是：「因為我是你們的計程車司機。」

在這個笑話／故事中，張力通過糾葛而不斷增強，這些糾葛是重複的，但卻能建立緊張感。故事中使人驚訝和使人生疑的部分事實上卻很有邏輯，很有趣。這個黑色的鬼怪怎會出現在我們的每個地方呢？我們知道他也會在那兒。我們對兩個主角所要面對的恐怖的命運已經習以爲常。除了超自然力量外再也沒有別的可能了。接著汽球破了。計程車司機當然也在場。爲什麼他不能跟乘客一起去酒館呢？他還能找到哪兒？

這種笑話和鬼故事的結合很容易被接受，因爲兩者都具有相似的結構。基本的鬼故事類型也取決於「汽球爆炸」。汽球爆炸於一聲血腥尖叫或一種下沉的感覺，任意一種都能指明主角被毀滅的事實。結局也可以逃脫危險結束，主角鬆了一口氣和「從此以後過上幸福的生活」。每一種這樣的下降情節都迅速地放出汽球裡的氣，它們驅散了懸念，釋放了張力。

懸念和張力是吸引讀者往下讀的理由。我們想知道接下來會發生什麼事。而且我們想要一些特別的事情發生，或者不發生。例如，我們知道壞人正在部署陰謀詭計。我們爲將要發生在主角（英雄）身上的事情而擔心。當我們知道故事中的懸念正對作爲讀者或旁觀者的我們起作用時，我們能在生理上感覺到張力，當我們在主角冒險時我們嚇得縮頭縮腦，更有甚者，我們甚至不敢去看。
Asking questions/taking action:

Make a list of circumstances that will naturally provide suspense. Here are a few serious examples to get you started. Fill in the gaps and create new scenarios, both serious and comic:

- Your protagonist wakes up in a strange place, wonders where she is and has to find out how she got there.
- Your protagonist has amnesia. He can’t remember who he is and as the story is told in the first person, we as readers won’t know who he is till he finds out himself.
- Your protagonist is being stalked by a paid killer. But why?
- A bomb will go off in a building in the city at 2 p.m. tomorrow afternoon. Your protagonist/s has/have the task of finding the building and disarming the bomb.
- Two rival groups are racing to be the first to... Only the winners will get the...
- Your protagonist has a terminal disease but before she dies she must fulfill the promise she made to her dying...

Try to develop one or more of these scenarios into a complete story.
練習：

列出可以自然帶出懸念的情況。這裡有一些有用的例子能幫助你開始。請填空並構思新的劇情，既有嚴肅的也有滑稽的：

• 你的主角在一個奇怪的地方醒來，不知道自己身在何處，想弄清楚自己是怎麼來這兒的。
• 你的主角有健忘症。他記不得自己是誰，故事以第一人稱敘述，我們在他弄清楚自己是誰前不知道他是誰。
• 你的主角被一個殺手跟蹤。但為什麼？
• 一枚炸彈將於明天下午兩點在城市中的一座大廈裡爆炸。你的主角們接到任務要找出這座大廈並拆彈。
• 兩個競爭團體為了……而爭第一，只有贏了的一方才能得到……
• 你的主角得了不治之症，但在他/她去世前必須完成一個生前的承諾……

嘗試根據這些劇情創作出一個或多個完整的故事。
Suspense is the motor of the story. It’s working when action is forward and rising. But where does suspense come from? How can it be generated? Suspense arises because there’s something at stake in a story. We, the readers, care about the outcome, care about the characters (or at least some of them, for instance the good guys), and so as the stakes in the story rise for the characters, the tension rises for the reader. The stakes in the story are closely related to conviction: the conviction behind the story is what makes the action and the characters worth caring about. But conviction is behind the story, there’s usually something more immediate fuelling the suspense. That something is conflict.

Conflict comes from something more basic still – from the fact that characters want something. It’s the needs and/or desires of characters that fuel the conflict that creates the suspense that drives the action forward towards a resolution. One thing leads to another. This sounds complicated but it can actually be very simple. Get one of these aspects of the story right (desire or conflict or suspense) and the others will usually fall into place.

Let’s take an example of a simple story driven by simple desires and conflicts. We’ll build it up from the writer’s point of view and use this example in order to practise basic plotting. Let’s start with the headline that gets our attention: BOY AND GIRL FROM FEUDING FAMILIES FALL IN LOVE. That’s a grab. We’ve got your attention. And let’s get this clear. A grab isn’t just boy sees beautiful girl and heart throbs. It isn’t just boy and girl unproblematically fall in love and live happily ever after. Nor is ‘happily ever after’ any kind of resolution to a story. That cliché merely describes how a
衝突與結局

懸念是故事的動力。懸念在情節向前發展並逐漸走向高潮時起作用。但懸念是從哪兒來的？它是怎樣產生的？當在故事中有險象環生的情節時，懸念就出現了。作爲讀者，我們想知道結果並關心角色（或至少是其中的一部分角色，比如那些好人），正如角色一步步面臨故事中的險情，讀者也愈來愈緊張。故事中的險情與主旨密切相關，隱藏在故事背後的主旨使我們關注情節的發生和角色的命運。但主旨是隱藏在故事背後的，因此通常有一個因素能快速地引發懸念，那就是衝突。

衝突來自於更基本的部分，它是來自於角色想得到一些東西這一事實。是角色的需要和/或欲望激起了衝突，也因此引發了懸念，從而使情節發展直到結局。一件事引起另一件事。聽起來好像挺複雜的，實際上卻非常簡單。把故事中的其中一方面做好（欲望，衝突，懸念），其餘的自然而然也會好的。

讓我們以一個關於因欲望而引發衝突的簡單故事爲例，我們將從作者的視角描述這個故事並用這個例子來實踐簡單的情節構成。讓我們先從引人注意的標題開始：來自世仇家庭的一對男女墜入愛河。這是吸引人的地方。它已經吸引了你的注意，所以讓我們繼續往下說。吸引人的不僅是男孩看到漂亮的女孩後怦然心動；也不僅是男孩和女孩順利地相愛，從此以後過著幸福的生活。這並不是說「從此以後過著幸福的生活」的結尾是圓滿的；實際上這樣毫無新意（或「陳詞濫調」）的結局只說明主要故事講完後可能出現的狀況，體現了人們的一種
situation might be after a story is already over. It describes how life ought to ideally be: happily resolved. But a retirement plan is not a story. There’s not much ‘happily ever after’ in the newspaper. That’s because it doesn’t sell, it doesn’t grab anyone’s imagination. Keep in mind that – in both the fictional and the newspaper variety – the story is generally a place most people would rather not be. News, in the sense of new information, is what makes a story worth listening to. So here’s the news: BOY AND GIRL FROM FEUDING FAMILIES FALL IN LOVE.

Needing to know is a powerful potential source of suspense in a story. What do we want to know about these love birds from the feuding families? We want to know what’s standing between them and their happily ever after, we want to know how strong their love is, how big the barriers to it are, and whether their love will triumph in the end.

Here’s the scenario. These kids love each other. But their families hate each other. We want a happy ending. But how can there be a happy result for them? They face a crisis, which means, very simply, that they need to make some kind of decision. Either they obey their parents and give up on their love for each other, in which case that’s the end of our story. (Although it could be the beginning of another story.) Or they decide that their parents – much as they love them, and so feel inwardly torn – do not know what’s best. Their love is stronger than their parents’ stupidity or hate or bossiness. Their love is worth fighting for. If that’s the case then they’ll need some kind of plan.

So what are their options? They could run off together, get away from their silly families and live their own lives. Sensible outcome, but not much of a story. What if they try to do that but then something goes wrong? What if they decide to meet somewhere? That’s it, let’s start on the forward action.
美好願望。報紙上的故事就很少會出現「從此以後過著幸福的生活」。因為這行不通，無法吸引任何人的注意。請牢記，不管是虛構的還是紀實的，大多數人其實並不想成爲故事的一部分。新聞，從新資訊的意義上說，才是令故事值得被聆聽的原因。所以下面這則標題裡選新聞： 來自世仇家庭的一對男女墜入愛河。

故事潛在的懸念在於我們急切地想知道的事。關於這一對來自世仇家庭的戀人，我們想知道些什麼？我們想知道他們愛情之路上的絆腳石和他們未來的美好生活，我們想知道他們的愛有多強烈，愛受到的阻礙有多大，以及他們的愛情最終是否勝利。

劇情是這樣的。這對孩子彼此相愛，但是他們的家庭卻有世仇。我們想要一個大團圓結局。但是他們怎樣才能有個美滿的結局？他們面臨著一個危機，其實非常簡單，那就是他們需要做出決定。他們或者尊崇家族的傳統，放棄兩人的愛情，故事到此結束。（但也可能成爲另一個故事的開端）。或者他們覺得有愧於父母對他們的愛，但父母並不知道自己最需要的是什麼。他們的愛情強過父母的愚昧、仇恨或專橫。愛情值得他們去奮鬥。如果真是這樣，那麼他們就需要作出一些計劃。

所以能選擇做什麼呢？他們可以一起逃走，離開他們愚蠢的家庭然後過自己的生活。這是合乎情理的結局，但對於一個故事來說是不夠的。萬一在他們在嘗試這樣做的過程中出現了什麼問題呢？如果他們決定在某個地方見面呢？這就是我們接下來要說的上升情節了。
The lovers don’t want to arouse suspicion, so they go separately. Here’s their plan. They’ll meet in a place no one goes very much. By an old tree they both know. It’s in a cemetery. (That gives us a little extra spooky suspense.) The girl arrives first but is frightened off by – here’s a surprising complication – a lion. The lion doesn’t attack her because it’s already having its dinner. In fact its paws are covered with blood. The girl’s frightened though, she runs away and she drops her cloak as she goes. Here’s another serious complication. The lover’s plan has gone wrong. What can they do? There’s a problem that needs to be resolved. Note that the lovers are now not in a position to decide what to do together. They have to act independently. The girl’s hiding in a cave until she thinks it’s safe to come out and try to make her rendezvous with boyfriend again. But when she gets back to the tree, what does she find?

She discovers that the boy, having found her cloak bloodied by the lion’s paws, has drawn the worst and wrong conclusion, namely that she’s been killed by the lion. At this point there could be several possible resolutions. For a happy ending, the boy could weep and moan until the girl shows up, at which moment the reunited lovers breathe a sigh of relief and live happily ever after. For a tragedy, the boy kills himself and then the girl, discovering the boy dead, takes his sword, and kills herself in order to join him in the afterlife.

Other possibilities? These would be the compromise endings. The boy survives his suicide attempt as a cripple and the girl nurses him back to full health or as an invalid for the rest of his days. Or girl survives suicide attempt and becomes nun. Or, girl is rescued by handsome stranger. Now note that, for various reasons, the compromise endings are not satisfying as resolutions. Naturally there are lots of other possibilities. Boy kills lion and barbeques it for girl. He’s not worried because he knows that she’s always late for appointments. This would be a parodic ending. In other words, it
這對戀人不想引起猜疑，所以他們分頭行動。他們的計劃是：在一個人煙稀少的地方會合，在一個墓地裡那棵他們都知道的老樹下等待對方（這給我們帶來一個額外的恐怖懸念）。女孩先到，但是被一隻（這裡出現了使人驚訝的情況）獅子嚇壞了。獅子並沒有襲擊她，因為它已經吃過晚餐了。事實上它的爪子上也沾著血。那個女孩嚇得跑了，但在逃跑途中不小心丟下了自己的斗篷。於是就產生了一個更為嚴重的情況。戀人的計劃出錯了。他們該怎麼辦？這裡有一個急需被解決的問題。請注意這對戀人現在已經不能決定一起做什麼了，他們必須獨自做出決定。女孩躲在一個山洞裡，直到她覺得安全了才出來，然後試著趕往和男孩的約會。但當她回到樹下時將發現什麼？

她發現那個男孩找到了上面印滿血爪子的斗篷，以至於作出最壞的錯誤判斷，他以為她被獅子吃了。這個時候可能出現幾個結局。大團圓結局是那個男孩一直哀傷地哭泣直到女孩出現，於是兩人都鬆了口氣，從此幸福地生活在一起。悲慘的結局是男孩自殺了，然後女孩發現男孩已經死了，於是拔出他的佩劍自刎，希望來世再與他相見。

有沒有其他的可能？一些折衷的結局。那個男孩自殺失敗從此變成了一個跛子，女孩照顧他直到他完全康復，或者男孩一直沒有康復而一生殘疾。或者是女孩自殺失敗然後成了一位修女。再或者是女孩被一個英俊的陌生人所救。現在請注意，由於眾多的原因，折衷的結局作爲解決辦法都不能令人滿意。其實結局還存在其他可能，比如男孩殺了獅子並把它烤了獻給女孩，他一點都不擔心，因爲女孩約會的時候總是遲到。這就
would be taking the reader out of the genre she thought she was in to begin with. In this case the genre shift would reduce tragedy to farce.

There are other possible tragic endings as well. The boy might foolishly have attacked the lion – thinking that would make him appear brave to the girl – but lost and been killed in that way. Or the girl could have had a fatal tussle with the beast. The boy could have arrived while the girl was fighting the lion and then both of them got killed. None of these variations works. The right ending – the proper tragic ending – is the one in which the boy mistakenly believes that his girlfriend is dead, and so, before she can tell him otherwise, he kills himself, leaving her to find him dead, take his sword and so on.

Why is this the right ending? Why don’t the other endings work? Now, it’s easy to say that the original plot is the right one because the story is famous and it’s the one we’re used to it. And there is a danger of a chicken and egg discussion here: it works because we know it’s the right one, it’s the right one because it works. But there is something much more satisfying about the ‘right’ ending, isn’t there? It resolves much more than the other endings do.

In order to say what was resolved, we have to see where the conflict in the story was. The fundamental conflict in the story was between generations. It was between parents and children. The parents won’t allow the relationship between the lovers and so the lovers have to take things into their own hands. That’s more or less the story’s grab. The turn comes when fate takes things out of the lovers’ hands. The resolution is the manner in which the lovers deal with the hand fate has dealt them. From the moment they part they find themselves facing crises alone. The girl (Thisbe) has to decide what to do when she sees the lion. Once she’s found a safe hiding place she has to decide how long to stay there, decide when it’s safe to come out, and hopefully take into account the fact that the boyfriend
成了一個諷刺結局，因為它改變了一開始讀者以爲自己所讀故事的體裁，在這一點上，它使悲劇變成鬧劇。

當然也存在其他悲慘結局的可能。男孩可能鹵莽地襲擊獅子，以爲這樣能使他在女孩面前顯得勇敢，但他失敗了並因此喪命。或者是女孩與獅子展開致命的搏鬥，男孩及時趕到但他倆卻都因次喪命。每種可能都不可行。真正的結局，一個恰當的悲慘結局是男孩誤以爲女孩死了，於是在她真正可以告訴他真相前，男孩自殺了，剩下她最後發現了他的死亡，拿起男孩的佩劍然後自刎。

爲什麼這才是合理的結局？爲什麼其他的結局不可行呢？現在我們可以直接地說原本的情節才是合理的，因爲這個故事非常有名而且我們對它都耳熟能詳。雖然這有點類似於關於先有雞還是先有蛋的爭論：它是可行的因爲我們知道只有它才是合理的，因爲它是合理的所以也才是可行的。但總有一個更加令人滿意的結局存在吧？它比其他的結局更能解決問題。

爲了說明什麼被解決了，我們必須在故事裡找出衝突發生的地方。故事裡最根本的衝突是不同代人之間的矛盾。它存於父母和孩子之間。父母不允許兩個孩子相愛，因此這對戀人必須自己掌握命運。這或多或少是故事吸引人的地方。故事的轉折在於命運使戀人無法掌控。結局就是戀人被命運所捉弄。從他們分開的那一刻起，就發現要獨自面對危機。女孩（西斯貝）必須在面對獅子時做決定。一旦發現了藏身之處就要決定在裡面呆多久，什麼時候出來才安全，並且可能也知道她的戀
(Pyramus) may be looking for her and be, at the very least, worried. Pyramus has to decide by himself what to do when he can’t find Thisbe. Should he keep looking? Should he go home? Seek advice? And when he finds her bloodstained cloak, what should he do then?

It’s essential to the ‘right’ story – to achieve the proper tragic consequences – that the characters make some ‘wrong’ decisions. Pyramus has to put two and two together and come up with six in order for us to get to a tragedy instead of a narrow escape. It’s the tragic ending that resolves the conflict set up at the beginning of the story. It doesn’t matter if we’ve forgotten what that conflict was as the story reaches its climax (the highest point in the action). One thing has already led to another. It doesn’t matter if we haven’t met the antagonist characters with whom the lovers (our protagonists) were in conflict. The conflict once established drives the action that takes us through complication and climax to the story’s tragic resolution.

Notice how the lovers are partly responsible for what happens to them but that certain unpredictable things (e.g. the lion) are out of their control. And notice that timing is everything. Timing (in this case bad timing) is what allows the suspense necessary to the story. If boy and girl had met up before the girl met the lion then there wouldn’t have been any complication and therefore there wouldn’t have been any story.

Perhaps you’ve recognized this story is that of ‘Pyramus and Thisbe’, an ancient Greek myth of which Shakespeare was rather fond. Shakespeare adapted it in Romeo and Juliet, and he made it his play within the play in A Midsummer Night’s Dream. The conviction? You could be very dour and mean and say that the conviction is ‘Obey your parents.’ But I don’t think that’s really what the story teaches.
人皮拉摩斯正在找她，或至少會為她擔心。皮拉摩斯需要在找不到西斯貝的時候自己決定接下來怎麼做。他是否要繼續尋找？還是回家？尋找幫助？當他發現帶血跡的斗篷時，下一步該怎麼做？

對於一個合理的故事來說，為了達到悲劇效果，必須使角色做出一些錯誤的決定。為了使我們得到一個真正的悲劇而不是剛好的逃脫，皮拉摩斯必須在做決定時出錯。解決由故事一開始就有的衝突的是悲慘結局。當故事步入高潮（情節的頂點）時，即使我們忘記了衝突是什麼也不要緊。一件事已經引發了另一件。我們沒有遇上與這對戀人（我們的主角）有衝突的反派角色也不要緊。只要推動情節的衝突建立了，就能帶著我們一路從糾葛到高潮最後到達故事的結局。

請注意，雖然在過程當中有不可預料的事情（比如那隻獅子），但這對戀人對悲劇的發生也要負上一部份的責任。而且也請注意時機就是一切。時機（在這個情況中是不好的時機）使故事需要懸念。如果男孩和女孩在女孩遇到獅子之前就見面了，那麼他們就不會陷入任何糾葛中，因此也就不再有故事可說。

或許你已經認出這個故事就是《皮拉摩斯與西斯貝》，一篇莎士比亞喜愛的古希臘神話。莎士比亞在《羅密歐與茱麗葉》中改編了這個故事，並把它作爲《仲夏夜之夢》的戲中戲。主旨是什麼？你可以非常不留情地說是——聽從父母。但我並不認爲這就是故事真正表達的。這個故事的主旨，就如
The conviction of the story – as in Romeo and Juliet – is that true love is unstoppable. It may not conquer all, but it won’t be stopped by feuding parents.

In the context of this book however, the lesson for the fiction writer is as follows: Resolution is of the conflict in the story, it’s the means by which the story proves its conviction.
《羅密歐與茱麗葉》的主旨一樣，表達了真愛是無法阻攔的。也許它不能戰勝一切，但至少不會被互相仇恨的兩家父母所阻撓。

此書給故事作者的教誨是：結局蘊涵在故事的衝突中，而通過這樣才能表達出自己的主旨。
**Asking questions/taking action:**

Make a list of major conflicts that have occurred throughout your life.

What are the major conflicts in the world today? What are their causes?

Make a list of causes of conflict in your home/ in your workplace/ around you in the everyday world... Try to match each of these causes of conflict with a conviction, then build a simple G^T^R plot to prove the conviction and resolve the conflict in the story. Remember that your story should begin by establishing the conflict to be resolved, or else with that conflict already established.

Around the story circle, share:
1. What are the main conflicts in your life?
2. Are there conflicts from which you are running away?
3. What kinds of conflict must be faced in life, which can (or should) be avoided?
4. What means are justified for the resolution of conflict?
5. Which means of resolution cannot be justified?
練習：

列出在你生活中出現過的主要衝突。

當今世界的主要衝突是什麼？它們的起因又是什麼？

列出發生在你家及工作環境中或世界每一天……所發生的衝突的原因。試著把每個衝突的起因與一個主旨聯繫起來，然後設置一個簡單的 G^T^R 情節結構來證明主旨，並解決故事裡的衝突。請記住你的故事必須從產生有待解決的衝突開始，或者從已經產生的衝突開始。

在故事圈中，討論：
1. 你生活中的主要衝突是什麼？
2. 你逃避過哪些衝突？
3. 什麼樣的衝突是一生中必須面對的？什麼是可以（或必須）避免的？
4. 解決衝突具有何種意義？
5. 哪種解決方法無法被衡量？
The tale of the clever Fisherman and that huffy Jinnee provides an excellent example of what dramatists call the **unity of opposites**. The best way to picture the unity of opposites is to see the characters in a story sitting on either end of a see-saw. When one is up the other is down, when the one that was down goes up then the one that was up is down. The one we *identify* with is the protagonist and the one we don’t identify with is the antagonist. Note that the protagonist needn’t be all good, nor need the antagonist be all bad. This picture is over-simplified but the see-saw image gives you the general way of seeing the connection between protagonist and antagonist and suspense and conflict. Think about the fisherman and the jinnee. One of these characters is always powerful at the other’s expense. If you want to test the good-bad aspect of identification, then think about *Macbeth*. Macbeth is not the good guy but we do identify with him. Our fisherman is a more clear-cut case. It worries us when he’s in danger. We care about what happens to him, we *empathize*.

In a conventional story it’s helpful if we can *identify* with at least one character. That probably means that we experience the story – or a large part of it – from that character’s (or those characters’) point of view, or from a point of view close to theirs. We know how s/he feels. It’s as if we feel the same things ourselves. We have *empathy* for the character. Identification with a *protagonist* makes suspense and tension easy to convey. *Suspense*, remember, is what keeps the reader *in* the story. Suspense depends on identification because it depends on the reader caring about what happens to a particular character. Which particular character? We’re worried about what will happen to the protagonist. We feel tense when the character with whom we identify is in danger. We relax for a while when the danger is passed.
13
認同和同理心

聰明的漁夫和傲慢的精靈的故事正是角色相互對立的好例子。想像故事的兩名主人翁坐在蹺蹺板的兩端。當其中一人升起時，另一人則會在低處，而當在低處的人升高時，本來在高處的人便得下降。我們認同的是主角，不認同的是反派角色。要注重主角不必是個大好人，而反派角色也不一定是個萬惡不赦的壞人。蹺蹺板的說法可能過於簡單，但是它能讓你看見主角和反派角色之間，以及懸念和衝突之間的聯繫。就漁夫和精靈而言，其中一方總是處於相對的優勢中。若想弄清楚自己對角色好壞的認同情況，可用《麥克白》作標準作測試。儘管麥克白不是好人，但我們都認同他。而漁夫的情況就再簡單不過了，當他有麻煩時，我們會擔心他，會關心接下來發生在他身上的事，由此產生同理心。

在傳統的故事裡能至少認同一個角色有助於讀者對故事的理解。這或許能表明我們能從角色的視角（或接近角色的視角）去體驗故事（或故事的大部份）。我們知道角色的感受，就如置身其中。我們對該角色產生同理心，認同那角色使我們更易了解他所體驗的懸念和情感。要記住，懸念是留住讀者繼續閱讀故事的重要元素。讀者認同角色，才會關心在他身上發生的事。因此懸念是取決於認同的。讀者會特別認同哪個角色？主角。當讀到我們認同的角色身處險境時，我們會替他緊張。當他度過危機時，我們就感到放心。試想想皮拉摩斯和
Consider the doomed lovers in the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. We could get more suspense out of the story if the boy were still alive when the girl finds him. Will he live? Will he die? There’s suspense while we’re finding out. That suspense is only as strong as our identification with the character whose future is in doubt or in the balance.

Suspense is most easily achieved through conflict between characters. And that conflict most powerfully develops suspense when it’s clear that the audience has duties to identify with a certain character or certain characters, as against certain others. Conflict doesn’t generate suspense very successfully if we don’t care who wins or loses. Suspense works for an audience when, through the process of identification, they themselves have a stake in the action.

Back to ‘Pyramus and Thisbe’. There are actually two parallel conflicts in this story. There’s the conflict between generations, as previously mentioned. But there’s also a more obvious conflict, a conflict almost too obvious to notice. That’s the conflict between the lion and the lovers (or you could read it symbolically as the conflict between wild nature and the plans of humans). It’s the threat of the lion that builds the suspense which keeps us in the story till the characters start doing away with themselves. If we didn’t identify with the girl and the boy then we wouldn’t care about their fate.

Notice how in the case of both conflicts it’s the absence of any possible ‘middle way’ that creates the crises in the story and so moves the action along. Quite obviously there’s no compromising with a lion, unless you’re a lion tamer, which neither of these lovesick kids was. But then the lion didn’t kill any body (well, any human body) in the story. Pyramus jumped to the wrong conclusion about what the lion had had for dinner. In other words Pyramus’ fatal mistake was in assuming that his girlfriend hadn’t managed to compromise with a lion, when in fact the point he’d missed was that she hadn’t actually
西斯貝這對戀人。如果在女孩找到男孩時他仍然活著，故事的懸念就會更強。男孩會繼續生存下去？還是他會死呢？當我們想要找出結果時便會產生懸念。我們對角色的將來存有多少疑問，懸念就有多強。

懸念最容易通過角色之間的衝突表現出來。當觀眾感覺有責任認同一個或一群角色，反對另一些角色時，其中的矛盾便能加強懸念。如果我們不在乎誰勝誰負，懸念便不能在衝突中出現。在觀眾認同某角色的時候，才會與角色一同體驗情節，懸念才能發揮效果。

再說皮拉摩斯和西斯貝的故事。這個故事實際上有兩個平行的衝突。如前所述，其一是兩代人之間的衝突。但還有一個更明顯的衝突，一個很容易被我們所忽略的衝突。那就是獅子和情人之間的衝突（或者你能把它象徵化，視它為自然界和人類意念之間的衝突）。獅子對主角的威脅為故事帶來懸念，讓讀者繼續讀下去。如果我們不認同女孩和男孩，那麼我們便不會關心他們的生死。

請注意，在這兩種矛盾衝突中「第三種道路」的缺席建立了故事中的危機並使故事得到發展。獅子顯然不會妥協，除非有一位馴獸師，可惜這對戀人的任何一個都不是。但獅子在故事裡並沒有吃掉任何人，而皮拉摩斯卻莽下判斷。他以為女朋友不可能逃脫，但事實她根本沒有跟獅子對峙就逃跑了。男孩
struggled with a lion. She’d merely run away from one. So there’s a case of presumed conflict leading to dire consequences. What of the generational conflict? Surely there could be reconciliation between the lovers and their parents? Couldn’t there? In life, hopefully! Because in life sensible, sane, well balanced people are always trying to avoid being in a story by trying to avoid conflict. But in ‘Pyramus and Thisbe’ the possibility of reconciliation with the parents is so far from being considered that none of the parents need even appear in the play.

We feel *empathy* for the lovers. Everyone’s scared of a lion and these two are innocents, so we’d like to see them protected from the cruel world and their own stupid mistakes. After all, it’s only for love they’re taking the desperate measures they’re taking. And the power of love is central to the premise they’re proving. That’s why our empathy for them leads us to wish them free of their folly, but not, importantly, free of their impetuosity. Let’s be clear about this. We don’t want Pyramus to kill himself; we don’t want him to do it because he’s making a big mistake. But Thisbe’s suicide is satisfying for the reader because it resolves the story because it allows the lovers to be reunited, albeit in death.

Plot = character, character = plot. In this simple story it’s easy to see how the characters develop through the crises they negotiate. They leave the parental nest to become adults and quickly meet their fate. It’s easy to see how they make the story as they go. It’s their decisions, made at moments of crisis – to run away, to kill themselves – that in fact constitute the plot. It’s also easy to see in the case of this story that plot and character point to the conviction in a cumulative way. It’s not that a particular character needs to agree with or state the conviction of the story. Rather it’s growing identification with that character leads us to the realisation of the story’s truth.

Let’s quickly recap the empathy/identification arrangements.
私下假定的衝突讓他推出了可怕的結局。兩代間的衝突是什麼？就是戀人跟他們父母可否和解的問題。可以和解嗎？如果是發生在現實世界，我希望他們可以。因爲在現實當中，理智的人總是懂得避免衝突。但在皮拉摩斯和西斯貝的故事裡，由於他們的雙親並沒有出現，我們是無法知道他們能否和解的。

我們對那對情人產生同理心。獅子人人懼之，所以每個人都希望無辜的戀人在殘酷的世界裡犯下愚蠢的過失後仍能得到保護。畢竟，他們所做的一切都是為了愛，而他們想證明的也不過是愛的力量。因此我們希望他們能脫離險境。更直接地說，我們不想皮拉摩斯自殺；我們不想他因誤解事實而自殺。但西斯貝的自殺令讀者滿意，因爲此橋段讓故事結束，並能讓那對苦命鴛鴦死後重聚。

情節 = 角色，角色 = 情節。透過這簡單的故事，我們能看到角色的人格是在他們面對危機時培養出來的。他們離開父母，成年後不久便受到命運的擺佈。可見故事是由他們的經歷創造的。在最重要的關頭，他們要逃走和自殺的決定建構了劇情。我們從情節及角色裡明白故事的主旨，而不需某角色去特別說明，因此對角色產生認同可引導我們了解故事的主旨。

現在讓我們重溫同理心跟認同之間的關係。在《樵夫與妻
in the stories we’ve studied so far. In ‘The Woodcutter and his Wife’ we identify with the couple in conflict. If only they weren’t at each other’s throats they might have got something out of those wishes. We could be perverse and identify with the elf watching on, but that would be another story. In ‘The Fisherman and the Jinnee’ the unity of opposites comes into play. Our empathy for one character at any time depends on where he stands in relation to the other. Note that in the inside story, the jinnee deserves our empathy: he’s stuck in that nasty jar for eternity. The jinnee loses our empathy as his intentions turn nasty. As with ‘Pyramus and Thisbe’, presumed conflict – the presence of an assumed antagonist (that sinister character) – is also what drives the suspense in ‘The Taxi Driver’. Discovery that the presumption was wrong is what bursts the bubble and lets out the laughter in the end. In Macbeth we identify with a murderous villain and somehow hope that he’ll avoid the well deserved and very satisfying fate he meets in the end.

What these varied examples should show is that there are useful techniques but no formulas for getting readers to identify with characters. The character who deserves my empathy is one who could be me. Given different circumstances, a different roll of fate’s dice, I could have stood in that character’s shoes. Put the right obstacles in front of a protagonist and in overcoming them – or in failing to overcome them – that character becomes human, becomes flesh and blood. His or her strength or weakness is mine. Put that character in competition with a powerful antagonist and there will be suspense in the story as long as the result remains in doubt. When the story is resolved – heroically, tragically, however – the protagonist’s truth will have been shown and the story will have proved its conviction.
子》的故事中，我們對於夫妻之間的衝突產生認同。假如他們沒有吵架，他們可以透過許願得到更多。我們也可以去認同那一隻小精靈，但這樣的話就是另一個故事了。在《漁夫和精靈》中，相互對立的雙方則奏效。我們對於角色的同理心依其所在的處境而定。由於精靈要被永遠困在瓶中，因此他應當得到我們的同理心。而在他有不軌企圖時，他則失去了我們的同理心。在《皮拉摩斯和西斯貝》和《計程車司機》中，主角假定其中某角色為反派角色，使故事產生懸念。當他發現推測錯誤時，則給結局帶來歡笑。在《麥克白》裡，我們認同這個殺人如麻的壞蛋並希望他能逃避應得的報應。

以上例子均說明有使讀者對角色產生認同的技巧，但沒有固定的模式。讀者大多對可以想像為自己的角色產生同理心。被置於不同環境，讓骰子決定自己的命運，讀者也可以投入故事中的角色。給主角設下一些難關，在他成功闖關或失敗的時候，他會變得像人一樣有血有肉。讓主角跟厲害的對手競爭，只要勝負未分，故事就一直有懸念。當故事結束時，無論是喜劇還是悲劇，我們都能看到主角的真面目，而故事的主旨則以此而定。
**Asking questions/taking action:**

Make a list of qualities to describe a character with whom you can easily identify.
Make a list of qualities with which you could never identify. (If you find this difficult then the easiest way about it is to make a list of things you yourself could never do. Imagine a character doing all those things and you should have someone with whom it is hard for you to identify.)
Make a list of circumstances that would tend to rouse empathy for a character.
Make a list of circumstances that would make it difficult to empathise with a character.

Now, from the lists above, try out four plot/character possibilities:
- Easy to identify with character in easy to identify with circumstances
- Hard to identify with character in difficult to identify with circumstances
- Easy to identify with character in difficult to identify with circumstances
- Hard to identify with character in difficult to identify with circumstances

Around the story circle, try to role play characters in these positions. From this play you might begin to create complications towards a plot, either for a story to write together, or to write individually.

Which of these will be easiest to write as a story? Which of these will make the best story? Compare notes around the story circle. Which of these do you want to write? Go ahead and write it.
練習：

列出容易使你認同的角色有哪些特點。
列出你不會認同的角色的特點。（如果你覺得困難，可以列出一些你不會做的事情。想像某角色會做那些你不認同的事，身邊應該有些人是得不到你認同的。）
列出能令讀者對角色產生同理心的情況
列出難以令讀者對角色產生同理心的情況

現在，透過以上列表，創造四種情節或角色：
• 容易認同的角色及容易認同的情節
• 難以認同的角色但容易認同的情節
• 容易認同的角色但難以認同的情節
• 難以認同的角色及難以認同的情節

在故事圈中，試試利用此習題所得的進行角色扮演。從中或許能幫助你創作出更複雜的情節，你也可以跟其他人合寫或分別創作。

以上哪些情節或角色是最容易發展成一個故事？哪些情節或角色能發展成最好的故事？在故事圈裡跟大家分享所寫的吧！你想創造哪個故事就寫出來吧！
To work for a reader, a story needs to be credible and the people in it therefore need to stay in character. That doesn’t mean that characters can’t change, that doesn’t mean that all action should be circular. On the contrary, what most interests the reader in a story is the journey of a dynamic character, the one who makes and is made by the story: Macbeth on his path to destruction, the fisherman saving himself from the jinnee. The reader will though have trouble seeing why the same character should be drunk in one scene but claiming to be a tea-totaller in the next. How can the same character love alcohol and hate it from one scene to the next? Of course this is possible, it’s possible because characters can be complicated. Some of the most interesting characters are the ones whose lives and opinions are the most contradictory. So the demand for consistency doesn’t mean that the reader can’t accept a complicated character or a changing character, it means that inconsistencies in character need to be motivated somehow by the story. The danger – particularly in a short story – is that your reader will fail to recognise a character who is inconsistent. The longer your story the more room you have to make characters complicated and to show them changing.

How real is the world in your story? Remember it’s a story, not real life, and so it only needs to be believable and consistent in the terms of its genre. How real are the characters who inhabit the story? One of the questions you should ask yourself about the characters you create, and likewise about other authors’ characters, is: how real or genuine are the choices they get to make in the story? Round or dynamic characters are the ones who get to face crises by making real choices. The more real their choices the more seriously we take the crises precipitating them. The plot develops as a result of the choices these
可信性與令人信服的角色

為了說服讀者，故事是需要其可信性的，而當中的人物也應與其角色性格相符。這並不代表角色的性格不能有任何轉變，劇情也不一定要迂迴曲折。可是最能吸引讀者的是動態人物。故事由人物創造，人物為故事而生。麥克白踏上自毀之路、漁夫逃脫精靈的考驗等等就是例子。有時候，讀者會覺得奇怪，為什麼同一角色能在戲中喝得爛醉，而轉眼間卻又聲稱自己只喝茶？為什麼他能在情節之間，由愛喝酒變成討厭酒呢？當然這是有可能的，因為角色的性格可以很複雜。最有趣的角色莫過於其生活方式和見解都存在着矛盾。角色需要性格穩定，但並不代表讀者不能接受複雜或者是善變的角色。角色的性格轉變是需要故事引發出來的。這手法在短篇故事中尤其容易使用不當，因為讀者未必能發現某一角色反覆無常。故事越長，就有越多空間讓角色變得複雜，從而使其性格有所轉變。

你創造的故事世界有多真實？記著這只是故事，並不是現實世界，所以故事只需就其體裁讓人信服。故事裡的角色有多真實？對於自己或其他作家創造的角色，你可問自己，他們在故事裡能作出的抉擇有多合理真實？動態或圓形人物通常會陷入逼真的抉擇當中，不得不直面危機。他們的決定愈逼真，我們就會愈留心他們所要面對的危機。情節的發展在於角色的選
characters make. And conversely these characters develop through participating in the action of the story. The story changes them and as they change they ‘write’ the story. Flat or static or stereotypical characters don’t change much and they don’t get to make real choices; they simply are the way they are. Flat characters often act as foils for round characters. Round or dynamic characters are both more credible and easier to identify with. They’re more alive. It’s not so difficult to get away with having minor or peripheral characters who are flat, but a story with flat central characters is apt to seem wooden.

A story with only a few characters has to make those characters major, central. If you have two characters then those characters both require some depth. Ideally they should in some way represent opposed forces so that waiting to see the result of their conflict can generate the suspense propelling the story through its crises towards a climax and resolution. The more characters you have the more likely it is that some of those characters will be functional. The danger is that those minor characters can become the mechanical servants of the plot. It’s much better for your story if your minor characters can have minor stories in which their crises and choices really matter, and through which these characters become rounded, changed by their participation in the action.

Consider for a moment the relationship between the crises characters face and the conviction their story proves. Crises in a story precipitate decisions. There are moments when characters must make decisions, even if the decision is not to decide. (Think of the moral in Gershwin’s ‘Saga of Jenny’: never make up your mind.) It’s important to distinguish between degrees of crisis. Everyone faces all sorts of crises in their everyday lives. Some are relatively trivial. Some can be life and death decisions. Should I risk my own life to save someone else’s? Those kinds of decision have great dramatic intensity. But often the choice in ethics they present is straightforward. The best
擇，人物也同時通過故事中的經歷而逐漸成形。故事能改變角色，而角色的改變也能改寫故事。扁平或刻板的角色不會怎麼改變，他們一如既往，不必面臨抉擇。扁形角色多為陪襯，圓形角色由於比較真實，所以得到我們的認同。故事中，次要的或邊緣的角色可以扁平一些，但是中心人物不能扁平，否則就會使整個故事變得乏味無趣。

若故事只有若干角色，那些角色便需突出，成爲重點。若故事只有兩個角色，則兩者均需要一些深度。最理想的，就是他們能在某方面互相抗衡，從而引發衝突，再隨之產生的懸念將故事推向高潮和結局。創造越多角色，便有更多的「功用性」角色。需注意的是，那些小角色可能會成爲劇情發展的機械的陪襯品。想使故事更有趣，你可以讓小角色經歷一些小情節，讓他們面對衝突，參與會影響劇情發展的抉擇，從而使他們更生動。

想一想角色要面對的危機跟故事主旨間的關係。危機引發出抉擇。儘管最終決定是不做任何決定，在故事裡總有些時候他們得做決定（試想想艾拉・格什溫的《珍妮的故事》裡的寓意：永不下決定）。學會識別危機的不同程度是很重要的。每個人在日常生活中都會遇到種種危機，當中一些是相當瑣碎的，而一些則是關乎生死的。我應否冒生命危險去拯救其他人？這種抉擇富有戲劇性的激烈情感，但抉擇背後的倫理取向是簡單的。可是精彩的劇情不在於角色在危難關頭作出的
kinds of crisis for the purposes of fiction are those that do not have right or wrong, but only better or worse, outcomes or effects.

The decision that can only bring about a good outcome for all concerned is never a hard decision to make. Totally malevolent characters – characters who always want the worst for everyone – are hard to make convincing. They’re foils in a story: in other words they’re there to make the good characters look good.

The hard decision – and the most useful in the story – is the one that brings a mixed outcome, varying degrees of good and bad for various parties involved. How will characters react to the various outcomes the decision makes for them? In general we can say that the less predictable the outcome the better for the story. There’s suspense while we’re finding out what the real results of a decision are. Some choices take courage, others don’t. Some crises and some decisions form character, others confirm what is already known of a character. Ethicist Peter Singer makes a distinction between what he calls ultimate and what he calls restricted choices. I’ll let Singer show you the difference:

*Ultimate choices take courage. In making restricted choices, our fundamental values form a foundation on which we can stand when we choose. To make an ultimate choice we must put in question the foundation of our lives.*

Restricted choices are the ones premised on the assumed desirability of keeping the cart on the track. Ultimate choices could run you off the road, or run others off; they could be life threatening, they could have tragic consequences. Tragedy has to do with a perceived absence of alternatives. There’s no way out. There’s nowhere to be. Checkmate! Fate catches up.
決定是對或錯，而在於他們的決定造成的結果是好或壞。

角色沒有過份費心而作出的決定，通常會為故事帶來好的結局。那些只有害人之心的反面角色也難以讓人信服。因此他們是故事裡的陪襯品，換言之，他們的存在是要突顯主角的美德。

那些可帶來不同的後果，對牽涉其中的人物亦會帶來或好或壞的影響的決定才是真正痛苦的抉擇—故事中最關鍵的抉擇。面對不同的結果，那些角色要怎樣反應？愈難預料的劇情，我們一般則認為愈有趣。其中的懸念就是我們不知道這種決定最後會帶來什麼結果。有些抉擇需要勇氣，有些則不。危機跟抉擇可塑造角色，或者讓角色已知的特徵更鮮明。倫理學家彼得·辛格將在最後關頭被迫作出的抉擇跟因受約束而作出的抉擇作了區分。下面讓辛格說明它們的差異：

在最後關頭作出抉擇是需要勇氣的。當受約束時，我們會以自己的最根本的價值觀為基礎作出抉擇。而在最後關頭作出的抉擇，則是對我們最根本的價值觀提出挑戰的抉擇。

受約束的抉擇，均以顧全大局為前提。在最後關頭作出的抉擇，後果可能會將主角或其他人物拋出正軌，對他們的生命造成威脅，或帶來其他悲慘後果。悲劇通常沒選擇可言，角色無處可逃，命運緊迫其後。
From the point of view of the story maker, it’s ultimate choices that make vital characters and that make the action of a story vital. Shall I revenge the murder of my father, even though I’m not the vengeful type? Shall I regard myself as an instrument of fate, or can I choose my own destiny? Will I place myself in a position where I am very likely to die for what I say I believe in? Or is it more important to go on living? Is my life more important than that of those around me or that of those I love?

These are the choices that will give a reader something to think and think hard about after the book is closed. And though they are not the choices that most of us have to make every day, these are in fact choices from the real world – they’re choices that real people in real crises do have to make. These crises and decisions are going on all over the world every day. Look at the front page of the newspaper and you’ll see some. Look at page three or wherever the criminal news is, and you’ll see many more such crises, less newsworthy perhaps but still earth shattering for those who face them.
以故事創作者的視角來看，在最後關頭作出抉擇能使角色突出，讓他更富感情，令情節變得關鍵。即使我不是會圖謀報復的人，我應為被謀殺的父親報仇嗎？我會後悔讓命運操控自己嗎？我能操控命運嗎？我會為信念置自己於死地嗎？活下去是否比較重要？我的生命是否比其他人或我愛的人更為重要？

這些問題可以使讀者在合上書後好好思考。雖然大部份人在日常生活裡不需作出這樣的決定，但這些決定在現實世界中確實存在。若我們在現實世界遇到這樣的危機，就得面對這樣的抉擇。這些危機每天在世界各地發生。讀讀報紙的頭版你就知道一些了。看看報紙的第三版或者報導犯罪新聞的地方，你就能看到更多類似的危機了。它們的新聞價值或許不高，但對於要面對它們的人來說可是驚天動地的。
**Asking questions/taking action:**

Make a list of ultimate choices.
Have you faced any in your life? Do you think you are likely to face any?
Make a list of circumstances in which you would sacrifice your life. Or, if that’s too strong for you, make a list of serious sacrifices you would be prepared to make in particular circumstances.
If someone murdered the members of your family, would you take revenge on them? How?
As a ghost, would you haunt your own murderer? How?

Role play in the story circle to imagine a conflict that cannot be resolved by talking. Or imagine all of the members of the story circle are caught up, half on either side, of a conflict caused elsewhere. Imagine how you would act if war were unexpectedly declared between your countries.
Try to construct a story by making protagonist and antagonist characters face ultimate choices, the outcomes of which will be mixed rather than black and white.

To make your characters more rounded and more human, to make identification more of a challenge for your reader, take the protagonist and antagonist from the story you’ve just written (or another earlier story). List those characteristics of each which allow the reader to identify with the protagonist rather than the antagonist. Now, list faults or flaws in character for your protagonist, list good points for your antagonist. Try to rewrite the story with this additional complication in character.
練習：

列出在最後關頭所作的抉擇。
你曾作過這些抉擇嗎？你認爲自己有可能面對這些危機嗎？
列出要犧牲自己生命的情況。若這個對你來說太嚴重的話，就列出你準備作出最大犧牲的情況吧。
如果你的家人被殺害了，你會報仇嗎？怎麼報仇呢？
如果你是鬼，你會去嚇唬那個殺害你的人嗎？怎麼嚇唬？

在故事圈中進行角色扮演，想像你們之間的衝突不能用言語來解決，或想像故事圈的成員被起衝突的兩方拘禁。想像你的國家突然跟他國宣戰，你會怎麼做？
嘗試讓主角跟反派在最後關頭作出抉擇，引發不同的結果。

要使你的角色更人性化，別讓讀者容易對角色產生認同。利用你剛寫好的故事（或早期完成的故事）裡的主角和奸角吧！列出主角比奸角更易得到讀者認同的特點。然後，列出主角的缺點跟弱點，還有奸角的優點。透過此習題，他們的性格將更為複雜，用他們重新創作一個故事吧！
character questionnaires

Pathos, empathy, identification: the skilled writer can have her reader express these for a character against the reader’s better judgement. How? In general, by knowing what is credible for a reader in the way of human response, in particular by knowing the characters in the story in great depth. Protagonists needn’t be likeable. Villains are more convincing if they’re not all bad, particularly they’re more convincing if we have some way of understanding them and some degree of empathy for their motives. Round characters aren’t all good or all bad, they’re a mixture. That’s what makes them human, real. The roundness of characters is what gives the reader mixed feelings – ambivalent feelings – about characters. That kind of inner conflict is healthy for the reader, it means that the story is giving her a complex and challenging experience.

Stories help us to see beyond the black and white version of people and events. Crimes aren’t simply committed by people who are naturally bad, crimes are committed by people who make wrong decisions, very often because they find themselves in terrible situations they can see no way out of. Suicide – a crime in most parts of the world – is the clearest example of this. Someone kills herself because she can simply see no alternative. She cannot see the world in which she could go on and in which things could become OK. Story writers are in a way providers of an antidote for ‘no way out’ thinking. That’s because the makers of fiction are dedicated to the possibility of worlds other than the one we know, and it’s because stories need to be resolved.

The reader of fiction wants a crisis, or a series of them leading to a climax and to resolution. Generally, she wants to see characters face the kind of crisis she herself would rather not have to face. She wants the characters to make the story and she wants to see the characters changed by the story. There’s suspense in watching or reading about dynamic characters because we don’t know how they’ll
塑造角色問卷

懂得運用技巧的作者讓讀者自己斷定是否應該對劇中人物保有同情心。他們是怎麼做的呢？要說服讀者，角色對事物的反應需像現實中的人，特別是作者要對角色有更深層的了解。其實主角不一定是討人喜歡的。故事裡的反派角色也更具說服力，尤其是當讀者知道他有苦衷時，就會對他產生同情心。圓形人物的本性不好亦不壞，他們是善與惡的結合，這使他們跟現實中的人一樣。對角色豔滿的刻畫讓讀者產生複雜的情感，而這種內心衝突對讀者來說並無不妥，因爲這表示故事能帶給讀者一個複雜和有挑戰性的閱讀過程。

故事讓我們看到是非黑白以外的灰色地帶。會犯錯的不只是壞人，走投無路在最後關頭做錯決定的人也會鑄成大錯。自殺發生在世界各地就是最明顯的例子。他們沒有選擇，所以自殺。他們沒法想像未來，也看不到轉機。編故事的人就是要人物走出讓他們絕望的死胡同，因爲寫故事的任務就是創造另一世界，而作者怎麼也得將故事裡的問題解決。

讀者希望能看到危機（或一連串的危機），高潮和結局。一般來說，他想看到角色面對一些他不敢應對的危機。她希望角色可以創造故事，也想看到角色隨故事的發展而轉變。由於讀者不知道角色最後會變成怎樣，因此在看戲或閱讀故事的過
turn out. To make characters who are round and dynamic we need to know as much as possible about them. A common technique, helpful for this purpose, is to interview your characters outside of the story in order to find out more about who they are. For this purpose, below is a set of character questionnaires. You should feel free to add to or subtract from the lists (some of the questions in List 3 won’t apply to a children’s story), but try to answer at least most of the questions.

List 1
Age:
Sex:
Height:
Weight:
Race/ethnicity:
Hair colour/eye colour/facial features:
Posture:
Distinguishing marks:
Abnormalities:
General health and fitness:
Gene pool (family illnesses, etc.):

Let’s, for argument sake, say that the character you’re surveying is a woman. Responses to questions above should cover most of the physical and appearance related aspects of a character. Next we should investigate her social position. This will help us to find out where she fits into the wider world of her story. Does she – in a general way – look up to or down on others? Does she have a good reason for doing so or not? Is she a woman on a mission? Does she have a chip on her shoulder?

List 2
Family background:
Home life:
程裡就會有懸念。要創造圓形人物，我們得要盡可能地了解他們。最常用的方法就是「訪問」那些角色。爲此，這裡給你設計好了訪問角色的問題，你可依個人需要增加或刪減任何項目（第三欄中的部分問題不適用於兒童故事），但請盡量完成以下問題。

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<td>年齡：</td>
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<td>頭髮顏色/眼睛顔色/面部特征：</td>
<td>舉止：</td>
<td>胎記/痣：</td>
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<td>癖好/怪癖：</td>
<td>健康狀況：</td>
<td>病狀/遺傳病：</td>
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讓我們想像被訪角色是一位女性。回答以上問題應能建構她的外在特徵。然後我們應該了解她的社會地位。這樣可以讓我們知道她適合哪種故事世界。她會欽佩還是會輕視別人？有什麼理由可以解釋她的做法？她有沒有任務在身？她的肩膀上有徽章嗎？

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<th>第二欄</th>
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<tr>
<td>家庭背景：</td>
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<td>生活狀況：</td>
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Class background:
Education:
Employment history:
Politics: e.g., What are your political affiliations?
Religion and/or superstitions: e.g., How serious are you about religion?
What do you do for fun?
What do you read, every day, every week?
What are your hobbies?
Who do you most admire in the world?
What are the most important qualities of a friend/a mother/a father?
What kind of pet do you have/would you like? Why?
Attitude to the world around you:

Lastly we should consider what one might call the psychology of the character.

**List 3**
Intelligence (IQ):
Empathy rating (EQ):
Imaginative ability:
Reasoning ability:
Sexual orientation:
Level of sexual interest:
Habits, good or bad:
Alcohol, drugs, cigarettes?
Unusual interests?
Ethics or morality?
What are the worst things people can do to each other?
What are the best things people can do for each other?
社會階層：
教育程度：
工作經驗：
政治面貌：（例如，你屬於哪個政治黨派？）
宗教信仰：（你有多重視自己的宗教信仰？）
你平時的娛樂是甚麼？
你平時會閱讀些甚麼？
你的嗜好？
你最尊敬誰？
你認爲朋友和父母應具備哪些重要特質？
你喜歡養什麼寵物，為什麼？
你對世界的看法：

最後我們必須了解人物所謂的心理特點。

第三欄
智商（IQ）：
情商（EQ）：
想像力：
推理能力：
性取向：
對性的興趣：
良好習慣及不良習慣：
酗酒、吸毒、吸煙？
特別喜好：
道德觀念：
人與人之間可以做的最壞的事：
人與人之間可以做的最好的事：
What's your favourite colour?
What do you love most in the world?
What do you hate most in the world?
Who do you love?
What do you want?
What would you be prepared to do to get it?
What's your favourite food?
Are there any foods you hate? Why?
Ambition: e.g. What do you want to be or do in life?
Temperament: e.g. Are you even tempered? Do you have violent mood swings? If so, what – or who – are they caused by?
General attitude to others:

Thinking through a list of questions like this helps a writer to fill in aspects of a character she may well not have considered at all. She may not have considered these aspects of character for the simple reason that these seemed not to concern the action of the story. It’s useful practice to apply the questionnaire to the known characters of famous authors. If you try this you’ll discover it’s quite amazing what fundamental things we might not know about a character whose story we feel we know very well.

Now a question arises as to how honest we can expect a character to be about herself when answering some of these very personal questions. One way around this potential problem is to ask and answer the questions in the third rather than the first person, or to conduct part of the survey in the first and part of the survey in the third person. How many characters should you survey before you write your story? Definitely survey all the major characters: especially protagonist and antagonist characters. Remember the principle of the unity of opposites. One needs to understand the differences between characters opposed to each other in order to understand how the conflict between them can develop.
你喜歡的顏色：
世界上你最喜歡的是：
世界上你最討厭的是：
你愛的人是：
你想要的是：
你會通過做什麼來得到想要的東西？
你喜歡的食物：
有什麼食物是你不喜歡的？為什麼？
抱負：（例如，你一生中想做些什麼？）
性情：（例如，你很容易發怒嗎？你有暴力傾向嗎？如果有是什麼或者是誰導致的？）
一般待人處事的態度：

這些問題可以讓作者在創造角色時考慮一些他未必會想到的層面。作者往往會忽略人物的某些特點，因爲他認爲那些特性與故事情節無關。嘗試利用以上問題了解一些著名作家創造的角色會是個不錯的練習。你以爲自己很了解這些角色，但通過這些問題，你會發現更多有關他們的細節。

要考慮的問題是，角色在回答這些個人問題時是否足夠誠實？問答時最好用第三人稱，避免用第一人稱（或者部份問答用第三人稱，其餘用第一人稱）。在寫故事前需要訪問多少角色？當然是所有主要角色，尤其是主角跟反派角色。緊記角色相互對立的原則，要理解角色與角色之間的對立，才能掌握如何引發衝突。
A survey of the sort suggested above can only get us so close to a character. How do we get closer? Another kind of questionnaire that can be applied to characters asks them how they’d respond in particular crises. I call this the crisis questionnaire. The crisis questionnaire is often not as useful as it sounds for the simple reason that it’s usually difficult to declare beforehand in the calm of an interview the way one might behave in the heat of the moment. Nevertheless creating, and responding to, these questions which envisage crises, is a very useful exercise.

Crisis questionnaire
What would you do if...

- you woke up one morning to find yourself in a cage with a sleeping lion?
- you had been stuck in a broken down lift over the weekend with three very annoying people?
- you were stuck in a lift with the person you secretly love?
- you knew that you were the only person who knew who had committed a murder?
- you were on a sinking ship and you had a choice between certainly saving yourself and risking your life to save someone else/a child/an old man/a dog?
- your plane crashed on the snow covered side of a mountain and there was no food to eat apart from the passengers who had died?
- you came home and found your partner in bed with someone else?

Sometimes the crisis questionnaire, when it fails to give characters depth, leads to a useful idea for a plot complication.
以上問題只能拉近我們與角色的距離。但怎樣才能更接近？另一種問卷則可以試探出角色遇到某種危機時會怎麼反應。我將它稱為危機問卷。雖然這種問卷的作用不大，理由很簡單，因為在角色真正要面對危機時，他們的反應可能跟在訪問裡所想像的不同。不過構建並回答這些問題可以激發你對衝突和危機的創造力，是一個很好的練習。

危機問卷
假如......

• 起床時你發現自己跟一頭獅子睡在籠子裡，你會怎麼做？
• 週末，你和三個非常討厭的人被困在電梯裡，你會怎麼做？
• 你和你暗戀的人被困在電梯裡，你會怎麼做？
• 你發現自己是唯一知道殺人兇手是誰的人，你會怎麼做？
• 你在一艘正在下沉的船上，你可以選擇逃生，或者冒險去救孩子/老人/一隻狗/其他人，你會怎麼做？
• 飛機失事撞到雪山上，除了罹難的乘客外沒有任何食物，你會怎麼做？
• 你回到家，發現你的另一半與其他人睡在床上，你會怎麼做？

當危機問卷不能使人物更有深度時，卻為情節中的糾葛帶來靈感。
**Asking questions/taking action:**

Survey the characters of your favourite stories using the questionnaires above.
Survey the characters of the story you are writing now using the questionnaires above.

Add to the crisis questionnaire list. Think of new ways to put your protagonists and antagonists up a tree. Could one of these complications provide the climax for a story?

Around the story circle:
Imagine a character each. Briefly introduce yourself. Interview each other using the character questionnaires. (Feel free to add more questions of your own.) Choose a crisis from the list you’ve made above and role play the reactions of your characters as they face the crisis. Repeat the procedure until you think you have a story.
練習：

利用以上問卷，了解你最喜歡的故事人物。
利用以上問卷，了解你正在創作的故事人物。

給危機問卷多加幾條問題，讓主角跟反派面對更多不同的危機。其中有沒有一個危機可以成爲故事的高潮？

在故事圈裡：
每個人都想像自己是一個故事中的人物。簡單的自我介紹，然後利用以上問卷訪問對方（可以多加幾條問題）。選擇一個剛才新增的危機項目，與其他人進行角色扮演，看他們面對危機時怎樣反應。此活動可不斷重複進行，直到你想出完整的故事。
character transition

We want to read about characters who change – who come to be themselves – as they deal with the crises in their story. How do characters change? The simple though mysterious answer is that they become themselves by doing what they have to do in order to be who they have to be. By realising potentials foreshadowed from the beginning of the story, through interaction with other characters and by negotiating (or just surviving) the complications of the plot, we end up with characters we’ll remember at the end of the story: a Macbeth who got what was coming to him, a tragic Pyramus and Thisbe, a (no longer sinister) taxi driver, a(n embarrassed) man who loves baked beans.

How do characters become who they have to be? Once we know who makes the story and how the story goes then we know how the characters have to be transformed in order to get there. This points to an important difference between the reader’s and the writer’s point of view. The surprise in the form of complication, that makes the story work for the reader, only works because it’s not a surprise for the writer. The writer already knows the characters’ destinations. That doesn’t mean every writer begins every work of fiction with the whole of the plot and every detail of character already decided. It does mean though that the story writer usually revises and re-drafts – that the story is finished – with that complete knowledge in mind. Plot = Character means that once enough is known on either side the story more or less writes itself.

It’s only in the absence of forward action major characters remain static. But consistency and credibility demand that changes in character are accountable, plausible and in general,
角色轉變

讀者希望角色的性格有所轉變，而多數角色在面對危機的時候會原形畢露，展現真個性。角色的性格要怎樣改變？答案是簡單的卻也耐人尋味：角色由於要符合情節需要，因此要完成應該做的事情從而塑造自己。若我們留心故事裡的伏筆、角色之間的互動、探究（或明白）情節的糾葛，最終在故事的結尾我們會記得那些角色，例如逃不過劫數的麥克白、不幸的皮拉摩斯和西斯貝、不再險惡的計程車司機和愛吃烤豆卻為之尷尬的男人。

角色要怎麼轉變才能符合故事需要呢？當我們能決定哪個角色建構故事，以及情節是如何發展時，我們就會知道角色要怎樣轉變。作者跟讀者對此的要求會有所不同。故事的糾葛能否給讀者帶來驚訝則為成功，反之若作者對情節舖排也感到詫異的話，就代表那個故事有問題了。儘管作者知道角色的最終結局，也不表示他在開始寫故事的時候就對故事情節和角色瞭如指掌。作者完成寫作後，才會熟知故事細節，再作修飾。情節＝角色，即是說，設計了情節或角色，作者創作故事便能事半功倍。

情節停滯不前的話，角色的性格也不得發展。角色的轉變需要合理的逐步進行才能跟情節協調，使故事可信。一個冷靜
gradual. A calm, sane man doesn’t become a homicidal maniac in one leap. How could he get from say, loving husband to wife murderer? Let’s try to imagine the stages of that change.

The man starts off with a suspicion. Perhaps someone has told him something he’d rather not believe about his wife. He dismisses the idea. It’s ridiculous. Is he the jealous type? He never thought so. He loves his wife more than anything or anyone on earth. But he can’t stop thinking about his suspicion. Or there’s new evidence. His wife can’t quite look him in the eye the way she used to. At least he feels that that’s the case. Is it his suspicion? Or is it really true? He tests his suspicions and – although he still has no concrete evidence – it seems that there may be some truth to the story he’d heard. He’s hurt. But he tries to go on with life as before. He denies the truth. After all, his wife hasn’t said anything. He can’t bring it up. And he has no concrete evidence. He can’t bring himself to bring it up. He resents his wife for the fact that he’s too scared to raise this issue with her. She hasn’t told him she wants to leave him. But now things are not the same as they were. There’s a gulf between them. He begins to feel bitter about this. His wife does nothing to improve the situation. She seems to have grown cold and distant. And now his bitterness turns to anger. He can’t say why he’s angry but he’s angry all the time. The house is full of his anger. His anger is driving his wife further from him. It seems they can’t talk about the problem. They can’t talk about anything anymore. Angry silence reigns in the house. And soon the husband can’t stand anything about his wife. He hates to see her. He hates to smell her perfume. He hates to hear her voice. He hates her. He hates her because he knows that she hates him. He knows that she is plotting against him. Probably she wants to murder him and take his money. There is nothing on this earth he hates as much as he hates her. He is maddened with hate. It’s him or her. And so he decides to kill her...

Dramatists call this process of attitude change – in this case
理智的男人不會一下子變成殺人的瘋漢。他是怎樣由深情的丈夫變成殺妻兇手？讓我們試着想像他的轉變過程。

男人一開始對妻子起了疑心。或許有人跟他說了妻子的不是，可是他不相信，決定再去想。真荒謬！他會吃醋嗎？他從來不認爲自己是這麼小器的人。他愛妻子多於世上其他東西。可是他滿腦子都是這件事。或許不久，他察覺到一些跡象。妻子不再直視他的眼睛，他肯定妻子跟以前不一樣了。是他疑心太重？還是真有其事？他想試探妻子。雖然到目前為止還未發現證據，但他猜想部份消息可能是事實。他傷心極了，但他不動聲色，嘗試像平時一樣生活。他不想接受現實。畢竟妻子一直守口如瓶，他不可能無端與她對質。何況他沒有確鑿的證據，根本無法與她辯論。他恨他的妻子，又不敢向她問個明白。妻子雖然沒有表示要離開他，但今非昔比，他們之間已有裂縫。男人非常痛苦，而妻子也沒有嘗試彌補他們之間的關係。她好像變得愈來愈冷淡，與男人的距離愈來愈遠。此時，男人的悲痛已轉為怒火。他不知道他生氣的理由，他就是感到惱恨。滿屋子都是他的怒火。他的壞脾氣令妻子更疏遠他。他們不能平心靜氣地解決問題，也沒法溝通。沒多久，男人終於不能再忍受妻子。他討厭見到她，討厭她的香水味，討厭她的聲音。他討厭她，而他知道妻子也是一樣。他認爲妻子正在謀劃對付他，甚至可能會謀財害命。他恨他的妻子甚於其他事物。恨意使他發狂。兩個只能活一個，他決定要殺死她……

以上例子展現出由愛到恨的轉變，劇作家視之為角色的態度轉變。角色的轉變可幫助確定情節發展的方向。這能避免情
from love to hate – transition. Transition of a character through crises is the means of getting the forward action right in the story. It’s the means of avoiding the two key potential problems with action: action out of nowhere on the one hand and the story grinding to a halt on the other. Think of these as lack of foreshadowing as opposed to lack of progress. In the first case there’s no credibility, in the second there’s no surprise and nothing to read for.
節中潛伏的兩類問題：一類是無緣無故的行爲，另一類是故事無法繼續推進。我們可以將這個問題看做是缺少伏筆，而不是劇情停止不前。第一類問題是由於沒有伏筆，故事就沒有可信性。第二類問題是情節沒有進展，則缺乏驚喜，故事便不值得一讀。
Asking questions/taking action:

In what ways is your present lifestyle comfortable, safe, predictable? In what ways is it uncomfortable, unsafe, unpredictable? Imagine an event that would change your attitude to everything. What kind of event would make you leave your present home? Where would you go if you had to leave? Make a list of crises that could or would change your attitude to life and/or to the people around you?

Around the story circle: Silently, on paper, create characters with what appear to be fixed attitudes, beliefs, relationships. Passing those papers around the circle, try to create the circumstances for a story that will change those characters. When each sheet returns to its originator, the person who thought of the character in the first place can consider whether the change could be credible, whether there might be the makings of a story. Now out loud, around the circle, everyone can compare notes to decide whether there are individual or collaborative story possibilities.
練習：

什麼會使你認為目前的生活是穩定舒適的？什麼會使你認為目前的生活不合意並缺乏安全感？
想像一件會令你對事物改觀的事情。
什麼事會使你離開現在居住的地方？你會去哪兒？
列出可以或可能改變你對身邊人和事的態度的危機。

在故事圈裡：首先，組員之間不作討論，每人各自創造一個無論是態度、信仰及人際關係都很穩定的角色，將其描述寫在紙上。然後在圈中傳閱，並寫上可以改變那些角色態度的處境。當你的角色傳回你手上時，看看那些處境是否可行，考慮它們能否成爲創作故事的材料。最後，跟大家討論，比較紙上的構思，看看當中有沒有可以發展成故事的素材。
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point of view

In theatre it’s traditionally the case that the audience sees most if not all of the important action and therefore potentially knows more than characters who are offstage for various parts of the story. In prose fiction almost the same effect is created by third person omniscient point of view, the style of narration that’s been taken as unmarked (i.e. normal, so unnoticed) since the rise of the novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (Note that this is the style of narration that has been used for all of the plot summaries in this book.)

How visible is point of view or style of narration to the reader? How visible or invisible could it or should it be? Let’s briefly consider the range of possibilities for point of view. The most obvious difference in point of view would be between the reader’s and the writer’s. In principle, the writer finishes knowing everything in and about the story; the reader begins knowing nothing. In principle, the God’s eye view of events we know as third person omniscient has to be the writer’s point of view because the writer is the God-like being who created the world in the story. But the narrator of a story might have a personality quite different from the author. In different stories, or even in the one novel, a writer might be able to switch between several different such omniscient narrators. So for the sake of argument we’ll leave the author out of the story and say the omniscient narrator’s position is ideally the opposite of the reader’s: the narrator knows already what will happen in the story, the reader reads to find out.

The difference between a play and prose fiction is that the characters on the stage get to speak for themselves, whereas the characters on paper have to be quoted or paraphrased. But an audience doesn’t see everything that happens to the characters in
視角

在戲劇中，觀眾普遍能目睹整個或大部份故事的經過，因而比沒有出現在情節中的某些角色要知道的多。這種情況也出現在以第三人稱的全知視角敘述的散文和小說中。此敘述法常見於十八及十九世紀的著作中，由於此手法太過普遍，因此經常被忽略。（其實這裡的故事也是用此敘述法的。）

故事的敘述法與視角需要多明顯？讓我們先簡單認識視角的不同種類和形式。作者與讀者就有不同的視角。理論上，作者由始至終都清楚故事內容，而讀者在閱讀初期則對故事一無所知。其實第三人稱的全知視角就好像無所不知的神在說故事一樣。作者創造故事世界，作者就是無所不知的神，第三人稱的全知視角就是作者的視角。可是敘述者的態度可能與作者有別。有時候，在幾個故事裡，或甚至在同一故事內，作者會以不同的陳述者敘述故事。為避免引起任何爭議，我們將作者排除在外，只考慮全視角的敘事者與讀者的視角恰恰相反。

戲劇人物能在台上講話，而在散文故事裡的紙上人物，說的話是被引述或改述的。可是觀眾看戲劇，未必能知道發生在
a play. Much of the important plot work may happen offstage. You might hear a scream or a gunshot off in the wings. Or you might just hear characters talking about a murder well after it has happened. All that happens or is mentioned onstage is in a particular order so as to conform to the pattern of the story as a whole. So, in a play there is an invisible narrative position at work. Author, narrator... there can be a whole cast of more and less invisible characters involved in the telling of a story. Let’s list the possible suspects and the key terms in use for talking about point of view:

**Narrator:** the teller of the story, the person whose voice we hear when we hear the story. If we hear no voice then the narrator must be to some degree invisible.

**Persona:** the character from whose point of view the story is told, again the voice in the story. The persona may be a narrating voice, i.e. the persona may be the narrator. The persona may be any other kind of voice. The conception of a persona is really based on the idea that where there are words there must be – or there must have been – someone speaking them. In classical theatre the persona was the mask the actor carried. When the actor wore that mask he became the character indicated by the mask. In poetry the persona is the character in whose voice the poem is delivered, even if there’s no audible sign of any speech. It’s the personality the author presents to the reader; it’s not necessarily the author’s personality.

**Protagonist:** the character from whose point of view the action may be seen and judged. Usually, but not always, the hero or heroine of the story, the good guy, the guy with the white hat.

**Antagonist:** the character against whose point of view the action may be seen and judged. Usually, but not always, the villain of the story, the bad guy, the guy with the black hat.
角色身上的一切事情。很多重要情節都不會在台上展現。例如，你只會聽到來自後台的一聲尖叫和槍響，或者聽到角色們在案發事後的討論。在台上發生及提到的事情，均是應故事流程而安排有序的。因此與紙上故事不同，戲劇裡有一個隱形的敘述者。以不同的陳述者敘述故事，就有不同的隱形人物出現在故事裡。現在，讓我們列出一些討論與視角有關的常用詞彙。

敘述者：敘述故事的人。在我們欣賞故事的時候，就會聽到敘述者的聲音。如果沒有聲音的話，敘述者在某程度上便是隱形的了。

假面角色：假面角色以故事人物的視角來敘述故事。他可以是敘述故事的聲音，也就是敘述者。假面角色的概念，建立在「有話就必有說話人」這個概念上。在古典戲劇中，假面角色就是那個戴面具的演員。當演員戴上面具，他就成了那個面具所指代的角色。在詩詞裡，即使沒有跡象顯示有人在讀，假面角色就是詩歌中傳遞信息的人。作者透過假面角色向讀者展現個性，但其個性並不一定是作者本人的。

主角：讀者體會及判斷故事視角的主要人物。主角通常是故事中的英雄、好人，但也不總是那樣。

反派：與主角視角相反的人物。反派通常是故事裡的惡棍、壞人。
**Chorus:** In classical Greek drama the chorus was/were those voices in unison which addressed the audience with the function of explaining the action or its moral implications.

**Author:** otherwise known as the writer, or the novelist, or the playwright or dramatist, the person who wrote the story.

Note that in an interactive story the reader gets to be in some or all of these roles.

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It’s important for a writer to recognize that among all of these characters one has a lot of choice in determining who tells a story and how a story is told.

The narrator may know the story from beginning to end before she starts telling it. Or the narrator may be – like the detective protagonist in a crime fiction story – a character who reveals to the reader just what she knows when she knows it. Or she might be just one step ahead of the reader. She’s going down a dark alley to follow a clue, but – as a reader – you’re not quite sure which clue she’s following. Not yet. You’re confident that her new knowledge will be revealed to you shortly. Although possibly you’ll find out what happens to her before you find out what she knew, but that you didn’t. This brings us to the point of view known as *third person limited omniscient*.

Consider our detective following her clue down the blind alley. We see and hear what the protagonist sees and hears. If we hear of it directly through her voice then the narration is in the *first person*. If though we see not with her eyes but as if with a camera over her shoulder or just behind her then the narration is *third person*
群眾：在希臘古典戲劇中，群眾齊聲為觀眾講解情節及故事寓意。

作者：即指作家、小說家、劇作家等寫作故事的人。

在互動故事中，讀者亦需要扮演以上幾個甚至全部的角色。

由於可以敘述故事的角色太多了，作者需謹慎挑選合適的人物來敘述故事，並應細心考慮敘事方法。

敘述者可能在敘述故事前就已清楚其來龍去脈。敘述者也可以像偵探小說裡的主角一樣，只將剛剛得悉的事實告訴讀者。或者敘述者知道的只是比讀者稍多一點。敘述者會走入黑暗的小徑追蹤線索，雖然讀者對要追尋的線索毫無頭緒，但他們肯定敘述者將會在稍後為其透露。有時候，讀者可能比敘述者先一步知道會發生的事，其實讀者能未卜先知，都是因爲第三人稱有限制全知的敘述法之故。

想像偵探依據線索走入死胡同。我們的所見所聞都跟主角一樣。如果敘述情節的是主角的聲音，那便是第一人稱敘事。若我們不是從主角的視角看畫面，而是以像是在主角身後的攝影機的角度看情節發展的話，便是第三人稱有限制全知的敘述
limited omniscient. The omniscience of the narrator is limited to – and may actually be less than – the knowledge of a particular character, usually the protagonist. In third person limited omniscient narration we may know more and we may know less than the protagonist narrator. The camera can scout ahead to warn the reader of dangers before the protagonist knows of them. The camera may lag a little behind. The character with whom the camera travels, so to speak, is known as the point of view character.

Distinguishing between events already known and events as they unfold is an effective method for heightening suspense in a story. A flashback is a story within a story. Usually it’s one person’s story, told from the position of or from a position close to, that character’s point of view. A flashback reveals, through the memory of a character (or a narrator), events in the past that have become vital to the understanding of present events as they unfold the story. A flashback builds suspense by delaying the action that will bring us to the story’s climax.

Let’s now give a little more time to the other main styles of narration in terms of point view. There’s first person: the telling of the story by the character who calls herself ‘I’ throughout. That character may be closely identified with the author. There may be almost no distance between the author and this kind of narrator/persona or narrating persona. Or there could be a great gulf. A very peaceful and loving and gentle person can write a homicidal maniac in the first person. Keeping in mind the playwright’s old dictum, all your characters are you, we’ll skip for now the question about what aspect of personality would be revealed in creating a convincing murderer. First person narration builds empathy in a way that third person omniscient narration has difficulty matching. That’s because first person narration is given to us in the voice of the character. The obvious advantage of theatre is that characters get to speak in their
法。在此敘述法的陳述者，知道的跟某角色（多為主角）一樣，甚至比他們更少。因情況而異，讀者亦可能比敘述者知道得多或少。在主角身後的攝影機可以讓觀眾比主角更快知道面前的危機。可是有時候，攝影機也會落後於主角。帶著攝影機穿梭故事的角色，就是提供視角的角色。

懂得安排什麼情節可透露，什麼情節需稍後揭示可有效增強故事的懸念。倒敘是故事裡的故事。這故事通常只得一個人物，而故事亦是以那人物或接近那人物的視角敘述的。透過人物的回憶，倒敘裡的舊事可讓讀者明白故事的來由。倒敘亦可延緩高潮，增強懸念。

我們再看看在主要幾種敘述法中的不同視角。第一人稱視角：角色以「我」來敘述故事。這角色很有可能代表作者。這種陳述角色與作者之間可能是幾乎沒有距離的，不過也不排除有天淵之別的可能。平和友善的作者亦可以第一人稱敘事寫一個殺人狂魔的故事。記著劇作家的格言：所有故事人物都是作者。但我們暫且不討論殺人狂魔故事的作者背後的人性。以第一人稱敘事所帶來的同理心，是第三人稱有限全知敘事不能辦到的。這是因爲第一人稱敘事是以主角的聲音來敘述故事的。在戲劇中，角色能用自己的聲音說話。反之當散文及小說以第
own voices. In prose fiction though, when the story is narrated in the first person then the reader is in the head of the protagonist. *Stream of consciousness* – the technique pioneered by James Joyce but used by many twentieth century authors – places before the reader the disorganized train of thoughts in the character's head, as they unfold in real time. (Or at least some version of that 'real' train of thoughts.) One of the limitations of the first person point of view is that the reader is restricted to one character's view of the story, and to one character's knowledge of what is happening in the story. Or at least the reader is restricted to the viewpoint of one character at a time.

*Third person limited omniscient* is the usual compromise between third person omniscient and first person narration. The third person limited omniscient narrator usually knows more than the reader but still doesn't know everything there is to know. Probably she doesn't know the end of the story. It's easy to build identification between the reader and the narrator with limited omniscience. It's likely that both will arrive at the same moment at the recognition the climax depends on.

It's easy to overlook the possibility of *second person narration*. That's what an *apostrophe* in classic drama is: the character addresses an absent party or thinks aloud, the effect being that the audience hears what the character is really thinking. An *aside* is when a character steps out of role in order to address the audience directly. This stage stopping action is particularly apt in comedy. It can help to build or to undermine the audience's identification with a certain character. In pantomime or melodrama it's a way of encouraging audience participation. The character making the aside may appeal for sympathy. But she may (cheers) or may not (boos) receive it. A letter is also second person narration, as is a harangue. Any speech or writing addressing a reader or audience directly as 'you' counts as second person narration. And like a political speech addressed to you
一人稱敘述時，讀者則與敘述者的腦袋融為一體。意識流由詹姆斯·喬伊斯始創，是二十世紀流行的寫作方法。此手法向讀者展現角色如現實般混亂的思緒（在某程度上形式與我們的思路相似）。第一人稱敘事的缺點，是侷限了讀者每次只能透過一個角色了解視角及故事情節。

第三人稱有限制全知敘事通常是介於第三人稱全知和第一人稱敘述之間的。這種敘述者雖然比讀者知道的多，但並不曉得故事的全部。很多時候，他都不知道故事的結局。此敘述法可拉近讀者與陳述者之間的距離。而讀者和陳述者大多能以相同的步伐到達故事的高潮。

我們很容易會忽略第二人稱敘事。此敘述法常見於古典戲劇的直接呼語內。角色跟不在場的人說話或自言自語時，能使觀眾知道角色的想法。另外，人物抽離角色對觀眾說話時也會用到第二人稱敘事。此手段用於喜劇非常合適，它可以讓觀眾認同或否定特定角色。應用在啞劇和情節劇裡，更能帶動觀眾投入故事。有時他這樣做是為了博得同情，但觀眾不一定買他的帳。信函，如長篇演說，也是以第二人稱敘述的。所有致詞及信件以「你」來稱呼讀者和觀眾的均為第二人稱敘事。政
the voter, second person narration can be intimidating, or boring. It can give the reader a feeling of wishing to be left alone. Perhaps the most serviceable type of second person narration is the telling of a secret. This gives the reader or the audience the feeling that they have the privilege of receiving information for their ears only. In a novel this has some credibility. After all, you’re reading a book alone, even if you’re on a crowded train. In the theatre the necessary suspension of disbelief is harder – but still possible – to make convincing. It can build audience solidarity: we’re all sharing a secret together.

Lastly there’s what’s called *objective* point of view. This is like the narrative style of a documentary. Events are reported without comment or feeling so that the reader has to make up her own mind about the story. Objective narration, like the news story, tends to set all events in an immediate past of which limited, salient parts are shown to the reader. Objective narration is useful for giving the action of the story a ‘public’ kind of feeling, for throwing events into the realm of common knowledge. It’s more or less the opposite of stream of consciousness or of first person internal monologue of the sort that draws the reader’s attention to the inner workings of a character’s mind.

Narrative position can shift through a story. The limitations of first person narration can be somewhat overcome by shifting the first person to bring in several points of view. Here then is a summary of point of view possibilities:

**First person**: The story is told by an ‘I’, that is, one of the characters is telling the story.

**Second person**: The story is addressed directly to the reader as ‘you’, as in a letter.
治演說以「你」來呼喚投票人又是讓人感覺親密，或讓人感到沉悶。因此，第二人稱敘事也能令讀者想要置身其外。此敘述法最好用於告密，這樣讀者或觀眾會為自己有特權知道秘密而快樂。這手段不適用於小說，因為即使你身在擠迫的火車裡，閱讀故事和知道秘密的也只有你一人。在戲劇裡，雖然讓觀眾暫且不計較故事真實與否，完全浸入劇情當中比較困難，但還是可行的，觀眾因能共享秘密而會變得更團結。

最後來到客觀視角。此敘述法與紀錄片的敘事風格相似。故事的敘述不帶任何意見和情感，讓讀者自行感受。客觀敘述的故事，如新聞，通常是剛剛過去的事情，因此呈現給讀者的，都是短少而突出的情節。若要將故事中的情節展示得猶如在眾目睽睽之下的感覺，此敘述法再適合不過。客觀敘述法跟意識流或以第一人稱的獨白相反，它不會使讀者注意角色的內心想法。

在一個故事裡，敘述者的角色是可以轉換的。第一人稱敘事若有不足之處，可嘗試轉換敘述者，以其他角色的視角彌補。以下是可利用的視角：

**第一人稱視角**：故事以「我」來敘述，敘述者為故事其中的角色。

**第二人稱視角**：故事直接以「你」稱呼讀者，如信函。
**Third person omniscient:** The story is told by a narrator who knows everything and who tells the reader what and when and how the reader needs to know. A third person omniscient narrator can read the minds of all of the characters. Nothing can be concealed from her.

**Third person limited omniscient:** This narrator usually takes on the viewpoint of one of the characters. This narrator may know more or less or exactly what a particular character knows. She could be a guardian angel staying a step ahead of the character she’s looking after. The character from whose point of view we are seeing a particular part of the action is – in either third person omniscient or limited omniscient narration – known as the point of view character.

**Objective:** This is like the narrative style of a documentary. Events are recorded as if they were news.

**Shifting:** Shifting point of view can refer to changes in the point of view from which the story is narrated (i.e. the story starts in one character’s voice but continues in another’s). It can also refer to changes in the style of narration (e.g. from first person to third person, etc.)

**A note on time and point of view:**
The selection of tense and aspect is closely connected with the development of a narrative point of view in a story in English. The unmarked tense for the telling of stories is the simple past. That’s the tense most commonly used in stories narrated in the third person omniscient mode. But just as there are many other choices for points of view so there are many available tense and aspect possibilities. The present tense can make the reader’s experience of events more exciting and immediate, but like any novelty, it can wear thin. The
第三人稱全知視角：敘述者知道故事的來龍去脈。他可以決定讀者想知道的情節，得悉答案的時候及追蹤情節的方法。此類敘述者知道所有角色的想法，沒有事可以瞞過他。

第三人稱有限制全知視角：敘述者以其中一個角色的視角敘述故事。他知道的跟那個角色差不多。他可以稍稍知道多一點，當角色的守護天使。以角色的視角敘述故事，無論是第三人稱全知或是有限制全知的，該角色都稱之為視角角色。

客觀視角：此敘述法猶如閱讀公文。情節以新聞報導的方法記錄。

轉換：轉換敘述者以不同的視角敘述故事（即某角色在故事初期作爲敘述者，後來改用另一角色繼續敘述）。也可是敘述法的轉變（即由第一人稱轉換為以第三人稱敘述）。

關於時態與視角：
在英語故事裡，時態跟敘述視角相互影響。一般敘述法可用過去式。此時態常見於以第三人稱全知視角敘述的故事裡。有這麼多種視角，就有這麼多種時態可採用。現在式可使情節更緊湊，但內容可能不足以說服讀者。第一人稱的現在進行
first person present continuous can be even more urgent: ‘I am walking down the street. I am turning the corner. I am taking the gun out of its holster.’ But narration can only continue in this way for so long before it tires the reader, with the result that immediacy is lost.

It’s through the contrasting of tense and aspect selections that the best effects are created. A shift from third to first person and simple past into present continuous can make the reader’s experience of events more immediate – more ‘here and now’ – than it was. But these contrasts need to be few and handled with caution, and they need to be justified by the story. If you’re already there you can’t get any more immediate. It’s very easy, through such contrasts, to end up merely confusing the reader.

**Asking questions/taking action:**
式能使情節更緊張，例如：“I am walking down the street. I am turning the corner. I am taking the gun out of its holster”。但此手法要用得適時，太冗長可能會耽擱一些急速的動作，使讀者覺得乏味。

嘗試以不同時態配搭不同的視角敘述，才會得到最好的效果。由第三人稱轉換第一人稱視角，再由過去式轉為現在進行式，可令讀者更能實實在在體會到故事的發展。但運用此技巧時需謹慎顧及故事的整體性。轉換視角和時態也很可能令讀者混淆，因此不宜多用。
Choose any of the stories told in this book and re-tell them, from the first-person point of view of the character of your choice (protagonist or antagonist, or even of a minor character), then from a third person (limited omniscient) point of view, close to that of the first person narrator you had previously chosen.

Re-tell a famous story from an antagonist’s point of view (e.g. *The Lord of the Rings* from Gollum’s p-o-v, or *Harry Potter* from Voldemort’s).

Do any of these narrative shifts suggest new stories, needing to be told?

Re-tell a story of your own from a different point of view or by shifting point of view.

Around the story circle: Choose a story to tell from different points of view. Can these versions/points of view be combined to make a single story comprised of different voices? (The novels of William Faulkner are a useful guide to some experimental possibilities for this kind of story telling.)
練習：

在本書中選出一個故事，以第一人稱（可用主角、反派或配角的視角）敘述。然後試以第三人稱有限制全知視角再重新敘述。

以反派的視角敘述一個著名的故事（例如《魔戒》裡的咕嚕姆或者《哈里波特》的伏地魔）。

視角敘述的轉換是否讓你產生新的故事靈感？

以不同的視角或以轉換視角的手法敘述你的故事。

在故事圈裡：選出一個故事並以不同的視角來敘述。若將故事裡的不同角色聲音合併，可會構成一個新故事？威廉·福克納（William Faulkner）的小說為這類實驗的可能性作出了很好的示範。
checklist of story essentials

Writing stories seems difficult for many reasons, and principally because in a story so many different things need to happen at once. Most of those things need to go unnoticed while they’re happening; that’s because if the reader’s attention were drawn to them she would have a hard time following the plot or identifying with the characters, these being two of the main ways of staying in a story. The reader needn’t be constantly wondering ‘what’s the conviction of the story (?)’ or ‘is this dialogue foreshadowing something (?)’ or ‘how will the resolution of the conflict in the story prove the conviction (?)’. When the average reader – as opposed to the student of fiction – starts asking questions like that, it means that something’s not working. When the reader asks ‘where’s the conflict (?)’ or ‘where’s the suspense (?)’ or ‘why should I care about these people (?)’ then the story has serious problems. In that case, structure – or rather lack of structure – has become visible to the reader.

This manual has so far been about the many mainly invisible things that have to happen in order to make a story work. Plot, character, action, surprise, conviction, complication, motivation, identification, conflict, suspense, resolution: the list of musts is long and the difficult thing about writing a story is that these (never mentioned) things – things the story is not about – generally need to be coordinated. Stories are complex in this way and yet stories are a natural and regular part of human interaction. It’s through stories, by and large, we learn who and how to be. Most people, with a little training, can learn how to make good stories: stories that involve a reader from beginning to end and prove a clear conviction. How can it be that something so complicated can be done by just about everyone? A good analogy would be riding a bicycle. It’s difficult to
故事要素清單

認為創作故事困難，主要是因為故事裡有很多需要同時進行的情節。當中很多情節是不知不覺地發展的，無需向讀者交待。這樣做要避免使讀者混淆，還要突出需要讀者認同的角色。讀者不會經常思考以下問題：「故事的主旨是什麼？」、「這對話的內容是伏筆嗎？」、「結局怎樣與主旨相互呼應？」等等。但一般讀者（除了那些研究文學的人之外）對故事產生了以下問題，則代表故事中缺少了某樣要素：「衝突在哪裡？」、「懸念在哪裡？」、「為什麼我要關心這些人物？」等等。這些疑問均反映出故事不可行，而故事結構的缺陷也變得顯然而見。

本手冊在之前已討論過很多有關寫作完整故事所需要的無形要素：情節、角色、事件、驚訝、主旨、糾葛、動機、認同、衝突、懸念和結果。組成故事必需的要素非常多，雖然故事內容不會提及這些要素，但要素在背後需要協調一致。因為這些要素，寫作變得複雜，但故事是人類互動的自然及常用的渠道。我們透過故事認識自己並建立生活態度。很多人經過稍微地指導後都能寫出好故事，那些故事成功地令讀者投入，並能明確地帶出其主旨。寫作故事這樣複雜，為什麼人人都做得到？寫作故事好比騎自行車。剛開始學習騎自行車時很困難，
begin to learn to ride a bicycle; there are so many different actions to coordinate with hands and with feet, and if you don’t keep your balance then you just fall off. But once you’ve got the knack, you keep your balance and while you might be a little rusty if you haven’t ridden for a while, when you get back on you quickly regain whatever skill you’d had previously. It’s the same with stories; once you’ve created a few, you’ll forget that it was ever hard.

Take another analogy for the work of connecting the long list of things (conviction and motivation, etc) that need to be working in order for the story to succeed. Once enough of the elements are in place, the story can be ‘switched on’, like the lights in a Christmas tree. Our old formula – plot = character – means that once enough is known on either side of the equation the story more or less writes itself. The characters have somewhere to go because they’re creating the action.

Most people think that the most difficult thing about writing a story (or doing any kind of creative work) is getting started. Where to start? The simple answer is: don’t. The function of the story circle (of any conversation in the direction of a story) should be to collect materials, elements, ideas that could be combined into a story. Keeping notes for ideas as they come to you, rough sketches, character questionnaires, keeping a dream diary by your bed: through such methods you can keep story material constantly brewing at the back of your head. Just look in the pot now and then to see if you’ve got the makings of a story. If so, then ladle them out and get to work. If not, then stir the pot some more, add more ingredients, look again later.

Once you’ve got the makings of a story, you need to make sure that the elements are working together. The connectedness of a story’s elements and the need for motivation mean that if you’ve got a
手腳需配合，若不慎失去平衡就會跌倒。一旦你掌握訣竅，你就能學會平衡。即使你有一段時間沒去騎自行車而技術變得有點生疏，騎上車不久你便能駕輕就熟了。騎自行車和寫故事的道理一樣。當你完成幾個故事後，便會忘記寫作中的困難。

適當地連結要素（主旨、動機等等）才能令故事完整。在此跟大家打個譬喻。故事如聖誕樹，要素如樹上的燈飾，當所有要素都在適當的位置時，故事才會「發光發亮」。情節＝角色，這公式在之前已討論過，只要知道情節和角色中的任何一方，便能創作故事。角色的動作可以創造情節。

很多人認爲剛開始寫故事（或參與其他創作活動）時是最困難的。故事從哪裡開始？最簡單的答案就是：不要去想。故事圈（或與故事有關的討論）的作用是讓你收集所需的題材、元素和構思。將任何構思記錄下來，或利用速記、角色問卷等記錄，你亦可在床邊放一本專門用來記錄夢境的日誌，這些方法可讓你記下所有構思。偶爾讀讀記錄，看看有沒有故事的點子。有的話，請好好利用。沒有的話，可在記錄裡加點調味，稍後再看。

即使你找到故事的所有材料，也得確認當中要素能否互相配合。故事需要動機，要素間需要使之連貫的理由，因為某段情節一旦不可行時，其他情節也會連帶出現問題。在我們深入
problem with one aspect of your story then you’ve also got a problem with another. Before we go to the items though, let’s recap the most essential points made so far in the manual.

Stories prove convictions by resolving conflicts. Action and characters in stories need to be motivated. Stories need to be credible but they need suspense. In other words, the story has to make sense as far as it is known but there needs to be enough unknown in a story for it to be worth the reader’s while going on. If in doubt as to whether your story is and does all it must, check through the list below.

c\text{character}:

Characters want something. They participate in conflicts with each other because of this. They behave consistently and their actions are motivated: they do what they do for a reason. What they do shows us who they are. In the case of central – usually dynamic – characters the process of having to respond to crises brings about a transition, so that these are not the same at the end as the characters we met at the beginning. Most importantly characters have to be real enough to matter to a reader or to an audience. The best means of making characters matter to a reader is to place them in crisis situations that matter to them. If your characters don’t care about what’s happening then why should your reader?

plot:

What all stories have in common in terms of sequencing is that we as readers move forward from the known into the territory that was formerly unknown. The idea of plot is best expressed in questions like: What happens? or Who does what to whom and how? What are the fundamentals of plot? We could describe them in terms of a skeleton structure something like this: There’s a situation. For some reason things can’t stay the way they were. Something changes. At which point, if not before, a character with whom we identify (or
分析每一要素前，讓我們重溫重點。

故事的主旨透過衝突的解決而衍生。故事的事件和主角均需要動機。故事需要可信性，亦需要懸念。換言之，故事要符合邏輯，但某些情節需暫時保密，好等讀者繼續閱讀下去。假若你對自己創作的故事或當中的元素有所懷疑，請詳細參看以下清單。

角色：
角色渴望得到某些東西，也是為了這些東西而跟其他角色發生衝突。角色每做一件事都是有理由、有動機的。他們的行為可表現其個性。故事的中心人物（一般是圓形人物）在遇到危機時，個性會有所轉變，因此在結局中，主角跟我們在故事初期時認識的不同。最重要的是，角色需要表現得逼真才能吸引讀者或觀眾的注意。要令讀者或觀眾關心角色，最有效的方法就是讓角色面對一些使觀眾也會著緊的危機。如果角色不關心發生的情節，讀者又為何要在乎呢？

情節：
故事在順序安排方面，最大的共通點就是讀者由已知進入以前未知的領域。我們可以用這些問題闡釋情節：發生什麼事？誰對誰做了什麼事？主要的情節有哪些？我們也可以用提綱的模式形容情節，例如：某情況因爲某原因而停止繼續。某些東西改變了。此時，讀者認同（或想要認同）的角色會出現，並對改變作出（或不能作出）反應。這些改變及角色的
would like to) emerges and has to respond (or can't respond to) to some change. That change and the response to it create a new situation, a new set of circumstances, which could mark the end of the story, or merely its next phase. In general the tension and suspense in the story should build the action up through a series of crises or complications until a climax and then a resolution is reached, at which point there will be a new situation or set of circumstances in play. The minimum plot structure for a story is Grab ^ Turn ^ Resolution. Without this much structure it's difficult to argue that there's a story at all.

**a logical sequence of events:**

There is no strict rule as to the direction or the way in which time must pass in a story. Time could for instance pass steadily backwards, from flashback to flashback, with every current situation explained by means of the one preceding it. Or time could go round in circles. So it’s important to separate the order of events in the plot from the chronological sequence of events that might be apparent (or that might have to be extracted) from the story. In the simplest plots (for instance in fairytales) these two lines coincide: the order of unfolding of our knowledge of events as readers is the order in which events happen (the chronological order). So if you drew diagrams to show each you’d have the same diagram. In more complex stories – and especially where flashbacks or other memory devises are used – the two lines might look quite different. And it’s when they’re different that you might need to draw such diagrams, in order to keep track of a complicated pattern of events and narration.

**setting:**

There’s a situation. Stories have settings because characters and events happen somewhere and some-when. They don’t just appear out of or vanish into thin air. There’s a curious paradox that the more specific the setting of a story (the stronger its here-and-now feeling) the more universally readable it will be. That’s because
反應會帶來新的處境。這處境可以是結局或將故事引入下一階段。故事的張力和懸念，隨一連串的危機和糾葛，將情節推向高潮，而緊隨結果的，又會是新的一段。故事最簡單的結構是引起注意^轉折^結果（Grab^Turn^Resolution）。若不成此結構，則難成故事。

情節的邏輯順序：

故事發展的時間順序是沒有嚴格規定的。例如時間可以逆轉，倒敘後再倒敘，讓舊事解釋當下發生的情節，時間甚至可以不斷循環。因此我們需注意，情節裡事件發生的次序跟故事發展的順序未必是一樣的。簡單的情節（如童話故事），兩方面的次序是重疊的，讀者閱讀情節的時序跟故事發展的順序是相同的。若你嘗試以曲線圖記錄這兩種次序，你會得到一樣的曲線。在比較複雜的故事裡，尤其當有倒敘及回憶時，兩條曲線則會有差異。正是因爲有差異，你才需要這些曲線圖來記錄情節與敘述的複雜模式。

背景：

故事有背景，是因爲角色和事件在某個地點、某個時間發生。選擇某個地點和時間的理由在故事初期不需明確交待，但也需要在故事發展過程中讓人信服。故事的背景不會無故出現或者突然消失。背景的設計愈詳細，則愈逼真，能吸引更廣泛
the more specific and tangible the setting, the more vivid it is. And the more vivid the location of the story the more engaging the story will be to the reader. We all like to know where we are. And we can all use some help in imagining that place and that time.

**motivation:**

Everything in a story happens for a reason. Everyone in a story does what she or he does for a reason. That reason need not be clear at the time but it should have become clear at some point during the course of the story. The irrational behaviour of characters who are stark, raving mad, is in the story because it serves some function. There’s ‘method in it’ as Shakespeare’s Polonius says. It’s not only the characters in a story that are motivated. The events in which they participate are also motivated, as is the plot as a whole. There’s always a risk of spoiling the plot if the motivation of the action is unveiled too suddenly or too clumsily or in the wrong order. If you understand the relationship between the order of events in the plot and the chronological sequence of events in the story then you understand how the story balances two key demands: the demand to motivate its action and the demand to provide the reader with suspense.

**credibility:**

Every aspect of a story needs to be able to be believed. It needs to be plausible and convincing. If you can’t believe what’s happening in a story then you usually stop reading. Characters – in particular – need to be consistent. Character transition is necessary because unmotivated changes lack credibility. If you can’t believe the characters would do what you see them doing in the story then you won’t be able to stay in the story as a reader. Action is credible where it is motivated by the plot and where it allows the motives of characters play.

**suspense:**

Stories are fundamentally worth paying attention to, because
的讀者。逼真的背景能使讀者更投入故事。我們對自己身處的地方都感到好奇，利用此心態可以幻想心目中的時間和地點。

動機：
故事所發生的一切都是有其原因的，同樣，每個角色所做的一切也是有理由的。這些原因無須立刻向讀者交待，但也需在故事發展過程中說明。不理智的瘋漢在故事中出現是有其作用的。莎士比亞筆下的波洛涅斯說：「用得其法」。故事裡不只角色需要動機。角色參與的事件，即所有情節，也是需要動機的。若揭示動機的時間不當，可能會糟蹋情節。若你清楚情節裡發生事件的次序及故事發展的順序，就會懂得如何平衡兩個重點要求，那就是事件動機及懸念。

可信性：
故事的每一部分都需令人信服。如果你不相信當中發生的事，你便不會讀下去。特別是角色，他們的性格需始終一致。角色轉變性格是必需的，但沒有動機的轉變則缺乏可信性。如果你不相信角色的所作所為，你自然不會再當故事的讀者。可信的行動受到情節的驅使，它使角色的動機得以實現。

懸念：
讀者之所以繼續讀故事，原因在於他們想知道故事的發
we, as readers do not know what is going to happen. That lack of information is the most basic type of suspense. Suspense makes us read with a sense of anticipation. Suspense represents the tension and interest that keep you in the story for as long as it takes to find out what will happen. When someone spoils the plot for you by telling you what will happen in the story, the real crime is in killing the suspense. The suspense is gone because you already know what will happen before it does happen. Fortunately though, people tend to be good at forgetting the endings of particular stories, or the way certain genres of stories tend to turn out. And so in these cases suspense is returned and the reader can manage to return to the story as if she’d not heard it before. (This is why it’s possible to watch your favourite film again and again, as long as you leave enough of a gap between viewings.) Conflict is an important source of suspense in a story. Any kind of rivalry between characters creates suspense because the reader needs to find out who the winner in the conflict will be. A deadline likewise creates suspense. If the reader can hear the clock ticking in the background she knows that time is running out. The less time left the more the tension. A protagonist in a terrible – but redeemable, i.e. not necessarily fatal – situation likewise creates suspense. The worse the protagonist’s situation, the greater the suspense. If there’s a difference between the order of events in the plot and the chronological sequence of events in the story, then that difference is motivated by the need to create suspense. Action is only credible if we as readers know why it is happening. But – and here’s the paradox – we as readers only stay in the story because of our need to know what is happening. So the order in which we know what is happening has to balance the demands of suspense with the demands of credibility.

**conflict:**

Conflict is what most commonly fuels the suspense in a story. It arises from the fact that characters want something or some
展。信息的缺乏就是最基本的懸念。懸念令讀者期待故事的發展。懸念可以為故事增添緊張氣氛和趣味，令讀者繼續閱讀下去。如果有人在你閱讀故事前已將情節告訴你，懸念就沒了。所幸的是，人們通常會忘掉某些故事的結局，或者記不清楚某種體裁的故事的發展方式。這樣，懸念便會重回故事當中，讀者也可重新投入享受故事（如果你能忘記電影的部份情節，你也可以重複觀看那部電影）。衝突是懸念的重要元素。角色間的任何衝突都能引起懸念，因為讀者想知道誰勝誰負。期限也能產生懸念。當讀者在故事的背景下聽見時鐘的滴答，他就知道時間已所剩無幾。時間愈短，愈可以為故事營造出緊張的氣氛。而當主角遭遇險境，但其危險程度又不足以致命，換言之主角還是有希望獲救的話，這樣的情況也可以引起懸念。主角的處境愈危險，懸念所能發揮的作用就愈強。另外，如果情節中事件的次序與故事發生的先後順序有所不同，這也是為了製造懸念之故。當讀者明白事情發生的原因，故事才稱得上可信。但矛盾的是，讀者因為想知道故事的發展，所以才對故事留戀。因此作者必須在故事的發展順序和懸念與可信性之間取得平衡。

衝突：

衝突經常能產生懸念。當角色想得到某些東西，或者他們希望（或不希望）某些事情發生時，衝突便由此而起。最常見
things, or they want something to happen or to not happen. Conflicts commonly arise from the fact that protagonist and antagonist want the same thing, for instance in the case of the tragic triangle where two men want the same woman. Conflict requires resolution of the kind that can often serve to prove the conviction of a story.

crisis, climax and resolution, forward action:
The story and everyone in it need to move forward through crises towards a climax and the resolution of a story. Crises are the moments in the story that call for decision. Getting through crises develops the forward action of the story. When there’s no forward action the reader feels that the story’s not going anywhere.

genre:
Just as a reader expects consistency of a character, so a reader expects a story to stay in genre. Genre describes the rules – for instance of structure – that apply to this kind of story. In comedy the rules say that there’s a different kind of ending from the sort we get in tragedy. Love stories, detective stories, westerns, science fiction: each of these genres has its own distinctive patterns writers follow and readers expect. Disturbing generic expectations is one of the most interesting kinds of surprise the modern reader can be given.

conviction:
The conviction (sometimes called premise) is what the story as a whole proves. To be convincing a story needs conviction. Conviction is the hidden arrow fired at the beginning, that finds its target at the end of the story. Or let’s try another metaphor. It’s the motor ticking away under the skin of the story. It needn’t belaboured like a moral or a lesson but it is what the story teaches. It functions much as argument does in a book or an essay, to give the whole work coherence. Without a unifying conviction a story drifts and may become
的衝突就是主角和反派都想得到同一事物，例如在悲哀的三角戀關係中，兩個男人都想得到同一個女人。衝突獲得解決後的結局通常也能說明故事的主旨。

危機、高潮及結局、前進情節（使故事得以繼續的推進行動）：
故事當中的情節和角色均需透過危機發展到高潮和結局。危機就是角色要作決定的時候。角色度過危機後，情節便能得以繼續。若故事沒有這些事件和發展，讀者便不知道故事將何去何從。

體裁：
就像讀者要求角色前後一致一樣，他們也希望故事的體裁能貫徹始終。體裁能說明寫作的規則，例如故事的架構。喜劇的結局，依其體裁的規則發展，不應該跟悲劇的相同。無論是愛情故事、偵探故事、西部故事還是科幻故事，每種體裁均有其獨特的模式，讀者據此來寫作，從而符合讀者的預期。讀者以體裁猜度情節發展，擾亂他們的期望是現代其中一種有趣的寫作技巧。

主旨：
故事想要說明的就是主旨。沒有主旨，故事便沒有說服力。主旨就像一支在弦上的隱形的箭，在故事剛開始時射出，到結局時便射中目標。讓我們借用另一譬喻。主旨是故事背後不斷轉動的馬達，它不像寓意或說教般在故事中直接表現出來，而是通過故事說明要教導讀者的道理。它的作用就等同於一本書或一篇論文中的論點，將整本書或整篇論文的各部份連起來。故事若沒有一個統一的主旨，情節很容易會偏離故事主
incoherent. A conviction balances and directs the conflict in a story. Conflict in a story is resolved by the proving of the conviction.

point of view and voice:

Stories are told and that means someone tells them. The least noticeable voice and point of view in a story is the most conventional: traditionally that’s the third person omniscient style of narration. But the fact that that voice is not immediately apparent as an identity associated with the story does not by any means indicate that the story is simply telling itself. The ‘story simply telling itself’ is an effect of – and not a style of – narration. The serious study of stories involves understanding who is doing the telling and where they’re doing their telling from. The making of stories likewise involves decisions about who is speaking, where they’re speaking from, how visible or obvious they are.

framing and style of narration:

Point of view implies framing. In other words the story has an outside. In the case of third person narration the story is told from the outside. In the case of first person narration the story may appear to be told from the inside. But unless the story is told in the form of a personal diary, then it’s highly likely that the narrator knows at the beginning what will happen at the end. The author at any rate has that kind of knowledge by the time her story is finished. Does – or should – a story draw attention to its frame? The answer to that question will determine or be determined by decisions about voice and point of view. The story that contains another story usually cannot help drawing attention to the fact of its framing. At least one of the narrating voices in that kind of story is shown as the voice of a character in the story framing that inside story. In general the conventions of the story demand that the narration hide the framing. One stays in the story as a reader because one cannot see its edges.
體，令故事變得支離破碎。在故事中，主旨對衝突起著平衡和引導的作用。當故事的主旨表達出來時，衝突亦隨之而結束。

視角及敘述者的聲音：

「講故事」，顧名思義，故事是有人說出來的。在故事中，最不能引起注意的敘述和視角是最常用的，我們統稱為第三人稱的全知視角敘述。這種敘述者雖然在故事裡不會有明顯的角色身份，但這並不代表故事會自己講述。這種「故事會自己講述」只是敘述法的效果，而不是一種敘述法。要認真研究故事的話，我們需了解誰是敘述者、他們敘述時的位置以及他們的隱蔽程度等等。

結構及敘述法：

視角包含了故事的結構。換言之，故事有一個外在環境。例如以第三人稱敘述時，敘述者是在故事之外進行敘述的。若以第一人稱敘述時，陳述者就像是在故事裡進行敘述。除非故事是以私人日記的形式敘述，否則敘述者通常在故事開始時已知道結局。任何作者在完成故事時，都會對故事一清二楚。故事是否或應否著重其結構表現？答案取決於故事的視角和敘述者的聲音。例如故事當中還有另一故事，這樣的結構則十分顯然易見。在這種結構中，至少會有一個敘述者是在故事裡构建另一個故事。一般以傳統模式敘述的故事，敘述者多會隱藏結構，讓讀者不易察覺。
Just as the reader’s pleasure in a story is usually greatest when the story’s structure is least visible, so for the writer it’s best to begin with unstructured ideas, with a hunch, with a single element: a grab, some vital unknown knowledge, the conditions for a conflict, a strange circumstance. Note that these ‘starting points’ for creating a story need bear no relation to the order of events in the finished story, or to the order in which those events are told. You might well think of a plot all in the order it needs to be told, but this would be a happy accident. Writers need not pressure themselves to think of all the right stuff readymade and in the right order.

Early in this chapter the art of never beginning was recommended as a way of avoiding writer’s block. If you’re constantly collecting story materials, then when you come to look for the something your story lacks, your kitchen will never be empty. You’ll have always already got something brewing in the pot. There’s another sense of ‘never beginning’ though and that is related to the simple fact that Aristotle was more or less wrong about the beginning ^ middle ^ end structure of the story. Most good stories start in the middle of things. In media res the ancients use to say. Stories start with serious action, with complication: that’s what grabs the reader’s attention. A good grab for a story is always already a complication, hopefully the first of many. You read on to go back to find out what happened before to bring the story and its characters into their present situation. A lot of beginning writers particularly miss this point and insist on starting the story with an event in the distant past, like the birth of the protagonist. That might work out if that particular being born has something very particular about it. In general though it’s better to look for the action that will bring the reader into the story. You can always use flashbacks later on to take the reader back and show her whatever she needs to see of the past to understand where the plot and the characters are headed. Flashbacks aren’t the only way though to begin in the midst of forward action.
故事的結構不明顯，可增加讀者對故事的興趣。因此，作者在創作故事時應以無特定結構的概念、直覺或單一元素開始：一件能引起注意的事、一些重要且不為人知的知識、一件能引發衝突的事、一個陌生的環境等等。創作這些故事的「出發點」，無需顧及情節或敘述的順序。你所創作的情節，或可能直接符合故事敘述的順序，但這通常是運氣好而已。因此作者在創作故事時，不需強迫自己去想一些完整或者與符合故事順序的情節。

至於在哪裡開始故事，本章較早前已提議作者不要去想，這是作者避免遇上瓶頸的其中一個方法。如果你不時收集創作故事的材料，你便能在創作故事時找到所需的。其實「永不開始」有另一個意思，全因亞里士多德或多或少地誤解了故事的開端^中段^結尾的結構。很多好故事都是從中段開始發展的。就是古人常說的「從中間開始」。有些故事以緊湊的事件鋪排或糾葛為開端，這樣的技巧都能引起讀者的注意。以糾葛作開端（若隨後還有更多糾葛便更好）通常能抓住讀者的目光。讀者要繼續閱讀追蹤之前所發生的事，才能將情節和角色安放於故事的當下。很多新手忽略了此技巧而經常堅持以久遠的情節作開端，例如主角的出生。若主角的出生有其特別之處，以此為開端或許是可行的。不過一般還是建議作者選擇一些能吸引讀者注意的事件開始故事。你可隨後利用倒敘，將主角帶回從前，幫助他理解當下。不過倒敘不是唯一一種使情節得以繼續
Fairytales depend on straightforward linear action. There are no flashbacks in traditional fairytales, yet these usually simple stories grab the reader by beginning with action that comes in the form of a serious disturbance of the prior order of things. ‘Once upon a time there was a sleepy little…’: more than a couple of sentences like this and you’ll find that your reader is asleep too. It’s only the most boring of story tellers who insist on telling you things from the beginning.
的技巧。傳統的童話故事中很少出現倒敘，但爲了吸引讀者，它們通常以擾亂原來故事順序的情節爲開端。「很久很久以前，有個昏昏欲睡的小……」故事中經常出現類似的開場白，這也很容易令讀者昏昏欲睡。最沈悶的講故事的人就是那些堅持從頭說起的。
**Asking questions/taking action:**

Test the stories you’ve created (or half created) so far against the checklist.

Try to create a story by focusing initially on one of the items in the list above that you’ve generally neglected so far.

In the story circle: Divide all of the story elements among the members of the circle so that each member prepares just that element for a story to tell in the next meeting. Talk around the circle to see whether the elements each brings can be combined into one collaborative story. Perhaps there will be several stories in the circle, with missing elements needing to be filled in. Perhaps there will be as many stories as members. Some stories will work, some won’t happen; the important thing is to think together about how a story works (or doesn’t).

Together or alone: Make a story about making a story. For instance, you could create an allegorical character to represent each of the elements of a story... ‘Let me introduce myself. I’m Plot and I insist on action...’
練習：

檢查你的故事是否有包含上述要素。

選擇一個你經常忽略的要素，優先以其為中心創作故事。

在故事圈裡：每個組員被分派一個要素，以此要素創作部份故事，在下一次聚會時跟大家分享。看看那些部份可否組成一個完整的故事。或許會出現幾個不完整的故事需要大家補充。或許也會出現故事的數目和組員人數一般多的情況。有些故事是可行的，有些則不是。最重要的是大家一起討論故事怎樣才算完整（或不完整）。

個人或組別練習：以創作故事為題創作故事。例如，每個角色可代表一個故事要素……「讓我介紹自己。我是情節，我主張事件……。」
A story needs to remain open if a reader is to stay with it. Now while the story is being read for the first time – provided it satisfies the criteria of suspense and credibility – this is easily achieved. The story is open in this basic sense because the reader doesn’t know – but wants to know – what will happen. The story is open simply because it hasn’t all happened yet. Once a story is known the situation is different. The story that survives, does so by being available to different audiences, by being and meaning different things to different readers. In the long run it’s the openness of a story to interpretation – and so its availability to different kinds of audience – that makes a story worth reading.

What this manual has provided so far is a simplified account of a complex set of assumptions: the assumptions that are commonly held about stories and what they can and must do. The craft of writing lies in learning the means of conforming to these assumptions. The art of writing lies in surpassing – in going beyond – such assumptions. Creative work, to succeed, is of, but goes beyond, the conditions or the context enabling it. It goes beyond by bringing new understanding – a critical understanding – of its here and now (i.e. of its enabling context). Far from hitting its reader over the head with a moral, the best new fiction presents its reader with conviction in a somewhat riddling form. The reader learns the story’s truth for her through the interpretive work of discovering the story’s meaning. The good story makes the reader work, makes her work to know, to feel, to be there; it leaves the good reader with the feeling that however hard it was to reach the place beyond all other stories, somehow it was the right place to be. You could say that the art of fiction is in making the new product of the imagination appear as if it had always existed, as if this particular work had always had a
規則是讓你違反的

故事有懸而未決的地方才能吸引讀者繼續閱讀。讀者若是第一次閱讀某故事，當中的懸念及可信性要符合標準並不難。故事懸而未決，因爲讀者不知道並且想知道情節的發展。故事懸而未決，因爲情節還未全部發生。當讀者了解故事後，情況便不一樣。一個故事得以流傳閱讀，是因為它適合不同種類的讀者，讓不同的讀者有不一樣的見解。因此故事懸而未決的地方，提供讀者詮釋的空間。適合不同讀者的故事，才值得閱讀。

到目前為止，本手冊提出了一系列複雜的假設。這些假設說明了故事可以及應該符合哪些規則。遵守那些規則是故事創作的手法；超越規則是故事創作的技巧。創作成功的作品的條件是要打破常規。與其直接告訴讀者故事的寓意，不如將寓意轉化成謎題讓讀者慢慢猜測。讀者通過解讀故事，悟出忠於自己的真理。好的故事可使讀者用心去了解、感受和投入情節。好的讀者雖然覺得這些故事比較難理解，但他們認爲在當中流連品味是沒錯的。你可以說小說的藝術是通過想象力創造出新的作品，但這些作品卻似一直存在著，一部特殊的作品似乎從
place as a necessary and noteworthy member of the canon of great stories. New (and lasting) memberships in the canon of literature are mainly offered to those authors and works that have succeeded in breaking the rules which had previously been in force.

What would it mean in practice to go beyond the assumptions that everyone else has about the thing you’re making? How would you know when you got to such a point? Ezra Pound wrote that the great writer was the one who created the style by which he would be judged. How would you know when you got to the beyond of all the assumptions? That’s a difficult question. The fact that people suddenly couldn’t understand you might prove that you’d arrived; it might simply prove that you’d stopped making sense.

Stories provide pictures of the world. How big a canvas do they need to be painted on? How much world do we need to see, can we stand to see? How much action does a story need to show? If we think of conflict as essential, then how many characters does a story have to have? How spare can a story be? How few characters can one have and still have a story? Consider Frederic Brown’s very short story ‘The Solipsist’.

This is the story of one Walter B. Jehovah. (This was his real name.) Walter B. Jehovah was a lifelong solipsist. A solipsist – if you’re wondering – is someone who believes that she is the only thing that really exists, that other people exist only by virtue of the fact that she imagines them.

This is all fine in practice but Walter B. Jehovah took the radical step of becoming a practicing solipsist. The results were rapid and devastating. His wife left him for another man. He lost his job. He broke his leg while trying to prevent a black cat from passing in front of him.
來就在經典故事中佔有一席之地。大部份被公認為文學典範的著作都是成功打破常規的作品。

實質上打破前人對於你正在創作的作品時所遵守的常規有何意義呢？如何才能知道故事有違反規則的可能？艾茲拉·龐德寫到偉大的作家能創造出使後人來評價的屬於他的風格。如何才能知道自己已經超越了所有舊有的常規？這個問題很難回答。如果讀者突然不能理解你的作品，或許就代表你做到了，但這也可能只證明了你在亂寫。

故事能展現世界的圖畫。我們需要多大的畫布才能將它們一一畫出來？我們需要看到多少世界？我們又能看到多少世界？若我們以衝突為重點，故事裡需要多少個角色？故事可以多虛無？完整的故事至少需要多少個角色？讓我們先來看看佛雷德里克·布朗的短篇故事《唯我論者》後再作討論。

這是一個有關華特·耶和華（此乃真實的名字）的故事。華特·耶和華終身都是一位唯我論者。唯我論者（如果你不知道這個詞是什么意思）指的是一個認爲自己是唯一真正存在的人，而其他人只是他幻想出來的而已。

這其實也没什么要緊，但華特·耶和華想要在生活中實踐他的唯我論，結果則不堪設想。他太太跟別的男人私奔了。他失去了工作。他為了避開一隻貓而摔斷了腿。
In hospital he decided to end it all.

He looked up at the stars and wished them away. The stars were gone. He wished all people gone, and the hospital grew strangely quiet. He wished the world away and then he himself was suspended in a void. It was no trouble next to get rid of his body. But when he actually took the ultimate step of willing himself out of existence, nothing happened.

It appeared that there might be a limit to solipsism. And as soon as he had thought this thought, Walter B. Jehovah heard a voice that simply said ‘yes.’

So there was a limit! Walter B. Jehovah asked whose the voice was. The voice told him that it belonged to the creator of the universe that Walter had just wished away. And the voice gratefully told him that now he – that creator – could finally cease his own existence, and find oblivion. Walter could take over.

Walter wasn’t very happy with this information. After all, he had been trying to will himself out of existence; his objective hadn’t been to become responsible for the universe.

Of course, this last creator already knew this. He told Walter that Walter would have to do what he did, which was to create a universe and wait till someone believes what he believed and wills it out of existence. When that happens, he told Walter, it would be possible to retire, and to let the new creator take over. There was a goodbye and that was it.

Walter B. Jehovah was now truly alone. And so he did the only thing he could do. He spent the next seven days creating heaven and earth.
在醫院裡，他決定要結束這一切。

他抬頭凝望天上的星星，希望它們能消失。天上的星星果真一下子消失了。接著，他希望其他人消失，醫院頓時變得寂靜。他又希望整個世界消失。然後他發現自己懸浮在太空中。他認為讓自己的肉體消失也很容易，不過他多次許願想要跳出身體卻無法成功。

唯我論似乎是有界限的。正當他有這個想法的時候，華特‧耶和華聽到一把聲音簡單地告訴他：「是的。」

果真是有界限的！華特問那聲音是誰。聲音回答說他是創造這世界的人，而華特在剛才已經使他和世界一佇消失了。聲音感激地說，他這個創造者終於能停止存在，去找尋消失、被湮沒的感覺。他還說華特可以接替他的位置。華特聽到這個消息後並沒有感到高興。因爲他的目的是要走出肉體，而不是要管理全世界。

這位前任創造者當然知道華特的想法。他建議華特創造一個世界，然後等待一個像華特一樣的唯我論者，許願讓世界消失，華特便能讓位。創造者跟華特說完再見便消失了。

現在華特真是獨自一人了。因此他決定做他唯一能做的事情。他花了七天七夜創造了世界。
‘The Solipsist’ is a text that puts to the test questions about what a story minimally has to be or has to do. Among other things, this story shows how difficult it can be to not have a story. Characters and setting and conflict seem to hang around – even and perhaps especially – if you try to wish them away. Science fiction has a particular affinity for this ‘what if...’ aspect of the story. The impact of the psyche on the universe is, as in ‘The Solipsist’, potentially infinite.

The writer makes a universe. But she doesn’t make it out of nothing. She makes it from pre-existing materials. Stories can change the world because they can show how the world is (but we couldn’t see), and because they can show how the world could be. In doing so, stories bring to life the ‘what if...?’ principle of fiction. This brings us back to where we began, with the story’s most essential element: surprise. One of the most interesting ‘what if...?’s a story can draw attention to in our time is the ‘what if...?’ of genre. What if the reader discovered she wasn’t in the genre she thought she was reading? We’ve seen a few examples already. Now it’s time to recognise that there’s an important connection between genre and conviction. That’s because genres themselves have convictions and writing that’s in genre in any particular story proves what the genre in general proves. That proving of the same old conviction can become dull for the reader. Take the traditional detective story in the Sherlock Holmes mould. It proves that bourgeois society is under threat from clever, evil individuals but can be protected from them by cleverer good individuals. This doesn’t mean that every ‘detective’ story is stuck with this classic conviction. Nor does it diminish the skill or excitement in Arthur Conan Doyle’s stories. It’s just that the genre he helped to start has moved on. One of the best ways of surprising the reader is by stepping out of genre with an unexpected conviction. In the case of the detective story, that stepping out might be accomplished simply by writing from a different class position. Berthold Brecht’s theatre of alienation is one of the best examples of
《唯我論者》示範了一個故事最低程度能表現什麼，或是必須表現什麼。另外，這故事很難不成故事。雖然主角許願讓東西消失了，可是角色、背景和衝突似乎一直圍繞著故事。科幻故事與「假如」有特別密切的關係。關於這宇宙的幻想，跟《唯我論者》裡的宇宙一樣，是無窮無盡的。

作者創造了世界，但他不是無中生有。他是用已有的材料來創造世界的。故事可以改變世界，因為它們能展示世界是怎樣的（但我們實際上並不曾看見），還有世界可以是怎樣的。創造世界，便需要「假如」這個故事創作的原則。這讓我們回到最初學習創作故事的課題，故事需要的最基本元素：驚訝。最有趣的「假如」就是有關體裁的「假如」。假如讀者發現故事的體裁跟她之前以爲的不一樣會怎樣？我們已看過幾個例子。現在我們應該知道體裁跟故事的主旨是有關連的。體裁本身也有主旨，以某體裁創作故事，該體裁也能說明其主旨。不過經常重複說明相同的主旨會使讀者感到乏味。就以福爾摩斯經典的偵探故事爲例。這些故事說明了資產階級的人雖然被聰明和邪惡的人物威脅，但更聰明的正義人物會出現然後保護他們。這不代表每個偵探故事的主旨都是如此，而這個主旨也沒有削弱阿瑟·柯南·道爾的故事的技巧和趣味性。要在創作偵探故事時打破常規，可以嘗試描寫其他階層的人物。貝爾托·布萊希特戲劇的間離效果能成功給觀衆驚訝就是最好的例子。
this kind of surprise for the audience. Challenging the conventions of genre is a way of showing that the rules of the world can be changed. That might be the most hopeful and important conviction a story could prove.

Stories can change the world because they provide us with models of worlds changing, with characters in the process of becoming who they’re yet to be when the action begins. Stories themselves change, in the telling and in being retold, in being recontextualised. There are great continuities too in the form and the content of stories. At either end of western literature, in Homer’s *Odyssey* and in Joyce’s *Ulysses* we can see that, while the art of the story has evolved, the image of a particular character and the idea of his travels and troubles persists. The modern novel and its conventions are very different from those of the oral epic. In all the long journey in forms that has brought the reader to the story as we know it today, the cutting edge has been where the accepted forms were put to the test, where the rules were being broken, new patterns being formed.

The world as we know it is patterned with – and understood – largely by means of stories. So it’s fair to say that the work of testing out what the story can do, how it can reveal the world as it is, or as it could or could never be, is among the most important of the many world bettering tasks facing humanity. This isn’t work we should simply let others (Hollywood, for instance) do for us, as if we didn’t deserve or couldn’t have any say. Everyone can and should participate in the world bettering work of making or telling his or her own stories.
挑戰體裁的常規說明世界規則是可以改變的。「世界規則是可以改變的」或許是一個故事最需要說明的主旨。

故事可以改變世界，因為它能向我們展示改變中的世界，當中的角色亦會隨改變而改變。故事的上下文在被述說或重述期間也會轉變。故事在形式和內容上也具有繼承性。以西方文學的兩端為例，在荷馬的《奧德賽》和喬伊斯的《尤利西斯》裡，當故事的藝術得到發展的同時，某一特定角色及他的旅程和困難卻被保留下來。現代小說及其常規與口述史詩非常不同。這些故事都是在一般的形式上進行雕琢，繼而打破常規以建立新的寫作模式。

大部分時間裡，我們借助故事來理解世界和世界的模式。因此說來，檢驗故事的作用，它是否真實地反映了世界，或者表達出世界可以或永遠不能怎样，是重要的人性需要面對的所有改善世界的任務之一。我們不能依賴其他人（例如荷里活電影）去實踐這一任務，否則我們就好像是沒話可說似的。所有人都應該參與創作故事及講故事這些能改善世界的活動。
Asking questions/taking action:

Look back through the book and make a list of rules (say ten, less, more?) for the writing of stories. Try to think of ways in which each of these rules could be broken or bent – or brought into question – by a story. Would that story still work, still satisfy a reader?

Do readers deserve to be satisfied by stories? If not, then what do they deserve?

Try to make new rules for the making of stories. Try to put these into practice.
練習：

翻看之前的章節，列出故事創作的規則（十項，或者加上些？減少些？）。嘗試思考可以打破這些規則的方法。你也可用一個故事進行測試。當你改變了規則後，故事還能否滿足讀者？

讀者是否應得到滿足？如果否，什麼是他們應得的？嘗試建立創作故事的新規則，並應用之。
part three: what a wonderful world it could be

20 making a magic door

One of the best what ifs a story can deliver is to connect the reader with a world she does not yet know. *What if I were somewhere else? What if I were someone else?* Participating in a story circle with people from other cultures can give the reader/writer just that kind of connection. The purpose of this last section of the manual is to suggest some specific types of story to write and to foreshadow, simulate and help create, crossings between cultures.

Connections of this nature can have a very powerful effect on the reader, and likewise on the writer who makes them. Seeing an unknown world can help the reader to develop empathy with people who are different and whose experience and ways are strange to her. Seeing a world unknown to the reader can help her to look at her own world with new eyes.

What kind of connection can there be in a story between known and unknown worlds? There could be a path, there could be a window on another world; the connection could be a door that opens onto that other imagined place. In children’s and in fantasy and even in science fiction, a door between worlds can be vital to the story. Through identification with a protagonist passing between worlds, the story offers the reader a key to such a portal. The door or portal often shows us the way between a world that resembles our real world and a world that is clearly of fantasy. Portals can take all sorts of forms and be found in all sorts of places. Let’s take an example from the second of the books in J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter series*, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.*
第三部份：世界原來可以很精彩

20
創做一道魔術門

最理想的「假如」故事就是能使讀者與未知的世界聯繫起來。假如我在別的地方會怎樣？假如我是別人會怎樣？在故事圈裡跟來自不同文化的人交流，便能產生類似的聯繫。本手冊的最後部份，旨在建議某幾種類型的故事寫作和伏筆，並協助在不同文化之間架起橋樑。

這種聯繫可能會對讀者及作者產生很大影響。在未知的世界裡，讀者對角色和他們的經歷都感到陌生，因而更容易對他們同理心。在未知的世界裡，讀者可用新的眼光觀看他的世界。

故事裡，熟悉和陌生的世界之間可以有什麼樣的連繫呢？要通往幻想世界，可以透過一條小徑、一扇窗子，或者是一道門。在童話故事、幻想作品和科幻小說裡，能通往兩個世界之間的門是十分重要的。當主角能來回穿梭兩個世界，故事亦同時給了讀者那道門的鑰匙。這道門通常能通往兩個世界，其一是跟現實相像的世界，而另外的則是幻想世界。這道門可以以任何形式及在任何地方出現。讓我們用J. K. 羅琳的第二部哈利波特小說《哈利•波特與消失的密室》舉例。
The pages of the diary began to blow as though caught in a high wind, stopping halfway through the month of June. Mouth hanging open, Harry saw that the little square for June the thirteenth seemed to have turned into a miniscule television screen. His hands trembling slightly, he raised the book to press his eye against the little window, and before he knew what was happening, he was tilting forwards; the window was widening, he felt his body leave his bed, and he was pitched headfirst through the opening in the page, into a whirl of colour and shadow. He felt his feet hit solid ground, and stood, shaking as the blurred shapes around him came suddenly into focus.

The *Harry Potter* books are teeming with portals, and ways between worlds (the magical and the muggle), of many different kinds. Passage through the kind of portal shown in the text above allows the reader to experience the fantastic sensations that are associated with entering the world of the imagination. Paradoxically, portals both divide and link the world of the reader and the world of the story. They show the nature of the difference between these worlds. And they make physical the way between these worlds. Devising portals then is a way of creating a world decidedly different from the reader’s. It’s also a way of showing the reader in.

Before going further, we should recognise that the book itself is a kind of portal. Open the cover, step in through the door. In this way the journey is made physical. Stories like *Harry Potter* encourage reading because they show the child reader how exciting it can be to step into the other world in the book. Perhaps you’re in a boring place: at home, on the bus. But when you put your head down and read you’re in another place, understanding how things are there, doing what must be done there. Look up from your book and see the everyday world of real life again. How could the people there possibly understand where you’ve been? The reader who passes to and fro through a portal is a kind of adventurer and she has a kind of secret, one she need not share with the everyday world.
日記如被烈風吹動般翻過一頁又一頁，翻到六月中旬的地方便停了下來。哈利目瞪口呆地看見寫著六月十一日的小方格變成了一個小屏幕。他用微微顫抖的手捧起了書，將眼睛湊近那小窗子看。他還沒搞清楚就被吸了進去。窗子愈變愈寬，他感覺身體已離開了床。通過那一頁的開口，他進入了彩色和陰影交錯的漩渦當中。他感覺自己的腳碰到結實的地面，他站好，不住顫抖。周圍模糊的景物突然變得清晰。

哈利波特的故事有很多扇魔術門，而那些門通往不同的魔法和麻瓜的世界。以上例子能讓讀者體驗進入幻想世界的奇妙感覺。這些門能連結及同時分開讀者和故事的世界。它們能展示各世界的不同本質，還可以讓來往不同世界的道路變得實在。設計這些門是創造全然不同的世界的一種方式，而它們也能讓讀者進入那些世界。

在繼續討論之前，我們應該要知道，本書其實也是一道門。翻開封面，穿過門踏進來。這樣過程便能具體化。像《哈利波特》般的故事之所以能吸引讀者，是因為故事能讓他們體驗進入另一世界的刺激感。或許你身在一個沒趣的地方：例如在家中或者巴士上。不過當你低頭閱讀的時候，你便能進入了另一世界，明白當中發生的事情，實行應當做的事。然後把目光從書本移開，再看看你身處的現實世界。周圍的人怎會知道你剛才到哪兒去了？讀者不停進出這道門，其實也算是一位冒險者，這神秘的過程是不需要跟其他人分享的。
The point is that stories can take you where you’ve never been. That’s nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in the work of an armchair adventure novelist like Jules Verne who, tradition tells us, never went further than the Paris Zoo. Fiction – especially of the fantasy variety – can take you to places where no one has been, for the simple reason that those places don’t exist. Before we turn to the work of creating our own, let’s look at a few more famous portals in stories for children.

In the Alice novels of Lewis Carroll, our girl protagonist dreams herself through a portal. In *Alice in Wonderland* that portal is a rabbit hole, in *Through the Looking Glass* the portal is the mirror Alice steps through. In the famous 1930’s children’s film The Wizard of Oz the protagonist, Dorothy’s, means of getting to the other world is a cyclone. A cyclone might be a convincing method for sweeping a character unexpectedly away, one wouldn’t want to rely on a cyclone to bring that character home. And so it is with Dorothy. Her whole story is – like the journey of the ancient Odysseus, in the famous story named after him – motivated by the desire to get home. Dorothy was on her way home when the cyclone swept her house away and landed it in Oz, right on top of a wicked witch, whose sister becomes Dorothy’s antagonist for most of the rest of the story. To get home Dorothy must first travel to the Emerald City in order to seek advice from, and then carry out the tasks prescribed by, the great and powerful Wizard of Oz. When the wizard is revealed to be a fake, he offers to take Dorothy home in his hot air balloon. But Dorothy finds herself having to chase after her dog Toto and the balloon lifts off before she can step back aboard, so now Dorothy has to think of a new way to get home. Dorothy has to think laterally, she has to approach the problem from a different angle, on a different level. Dorothy wishes her way home by closing her eyes and repeating ‘there’s no place like home’: a line that serves also as the conviction of the story.
故事能將你帶到從未去過的地方。坐輪椅的冒險小說家儒勒·凡爾納的作品便是最好的證明。我們都知道，凡爾納從未去過比巴黎動物園更遠的地方。小說，特別是有幻想成分的，都可以帶你去沒人到過的地方。原因很簡單，因為那些地方根本不存在。在我們嘗試創造世界之前，讓我們再多看幾個著名兒童故事的魔術門。

在路易斯·卡羅爾的「愛麗絲故事」裡，女主角通過魔術門夢見自己。在《愛麗絲夢遊仙境》中，那道門是一個兔子洞。在《鏡中奇緣》裡，那道門是愛麗絲穿過的鏡子。在三十年代著名的兒童電影《綠野仙蹤》裡，主角桃樂絲隨龍捲風進入另一個世界。龍捲風也是讓某些角色突然消失的好方法，因為人們不會認為龍捲風會把他們吹回家的。桃樂絲的故事，跟《奧德賽》的主角一樣，他們的旅程動機是渴望回家。桃樂絲在回家途中，龍捲風捲走了她的房子，房子正在奧茲鎮的女巫上著陸，而女巫的姐姐後來就成了與桃樂絲對抗的反派。為了回家，桃樂絲必須先到翡翠城，向奧茲的巫師尋求幫助，並幫他完成任務。當巫師被揭發是冒充者，他提議桃樂絲乘坐他的熱氣球回家。不過桃樂絲因為要追回小狗多多而來不及坐上熱氣球。因此桃樂絲要自己想辦法回家。她需要從另一角度思考解決問題的辦法。桃樂絲閉起眼睛，重複唸著「沒有什麼地方比得上在家裡」而回到家去。這句話也是故事的主旨。
When Dorothy wakes up in her bed at home, and we’re told she’s been sick, we realise that Oz and the Emerald City and the wicked witch have all been part of Dorothy’s dream. Should the reader feel cheated to think that Alice’s and Dorothy’s adventures were only a dream? ‘And then I woke up’ is no resolution for a story; it’s a cliché in exactly the same way that ‘they all lived happily ever after’ is a cliché. Still there’s an analogy in the difference between waking and dreaming and the real world and the world in the story. The dream is the basic model for story makers of all ages. In dreams we cannot help making stories. The door to sleep is one we all go through every day. It provides a model for the other important division in our daily lives, that between fantasy and reality.

How innocent or serious is the business of travelling between worlds in a story? Just as the world in the dream has its material basis in the life of the dreamer, so the world on the far side of the portal must have some bearing on, and basis in, the world of the fiction’s reader. Portal stories are unusual in their drawing attention to the fact of there being a story. They show there’s a story by showing a way in and possibly also a way back out. On the other hand, portal stories can distract the reader from the fact that the framing story is also a fiction. The world of the framing story is so much like the real world of the reader, she forgets that it’s also a story. What are the ethical consequences of that kind of trick? What does it mean to make the reader feel that the world of the outside story is hers, or that the world of the inside story is nothing like hers?

What does the portal offer the reader? Is it a window on another world? Is it the door to another culture? Is it a mirror in which we see, but fail to recognize, ourselves? A portal could be any or all of these. Perhaps it’s impossible for a story to really let unknown others speak with their own voices. The talking animals of the fable and the fairytale provide the clearest example of this. It can’t be their own words we’re hearing because – although real animals may have wishes and conflicts, take action and have effects – we know that
當桃樂絲在家裡的床上醒來時，我們被告知她生了一場病。我們這才知道奧茲鎮、翡翠城和女巫通通都是桃樂絲的夢。讀者是否應該因愛麗絲和桃樂絲的冒險只是夢境而感到被騙？「我醒來了」並不是故事的結局。這跟「他們從此便快樂地生活」一樣是陳詞濫調。其實走路和做夢的區別，跟真實世界和故事世界的區別類似。夢的故事適合任何年齡的作家創作。我們做夢的時候，不自覺地在創作故事。睡覺也是一道我們每天都要通過的魔術門。它也是在我們日常生活中，區分現實與幻想的一道門。

在故事中穿梭於不同的世界有多單純或多嚴肅？部份在夢境裡的事物，其實在做夢者的現實生活中也找得到。所以門後的另一個世界，肯定跟小說讀者的世界或某樣東西有關係的。魔術門的特別之處，就是它能讓讀者知道裡面是一個故事。向讀者展示魔術門的出入口，讓讀者知道他們可以透過門進入或走出故事。另外，魔術門亦能分散讀者的注意力，令他們忽略了框架故事也是故事的一部份。框架故事的世界與讀者的現實世界相似，因此他們很容易忘記這也是故事的一部份。這種寫作技巧在倫理方面會帶來什麼影響？讓讀者覺得框架故事的世界是她的世界，或故事裡面的世界不是她的世界，究竟有什麼意義？

一道門給了讀者什麼東西？它是另一世界的一扇窗？它是通往另一文化的門？它是一面鏡子？而我們在鏡子前看到自己，卻認不出自己？魔術門可以是當中的任何一種。或許，故事裡的虛構人物是不能用自己的聲音講話的。在寓言和童話裡會說話的動物就是最清楚不過的例子。我們聽到的聲音肯定不是牠們的。雖然動物也會為了慾望和衝突而有所行動，但牠們
they have no language. We know, but for the purposes of the story, we’ve conveniently forgotten the fact.

Perhaps the portal story can’t truly allow us to see or to meet the inhabitants of worlds radically unlike our own; what it can do however is to model the encounter, it can show us the way to find those different from us. It can inspire us with the bravery we need to make that kind of journey.
並沒有語言。我們知道這個事實，但在閱讀故事時，我們會選擇將它暫時忘掉。

或許設有魔術門的故事不能讓我們看到真正完全不同的世界，但它能為讀者作出比較，讓讀者看到不同於他們世界的地方。設有魔術門的故事也能激發我們創作這種旅程的勇氣。
Asking questions/taking action:

Individually or by circulation around the story circle: create a list of possible portals or ways to other worlds. Here are a few examples to get you started:
You’re running on a treadmill in the gym, you close your eyes and when you open them again you find yourself in another world.
The floor gives way beneath you and when the dust settles...
You put your finger on a map in the atlas and suddenly you are transported to that place.
You put your hand at the back of the refrigerator to pick out something delicious in there, but you’re shocked when a hand grabs yours and drags you into the fridge and into the other world beyond it.
You get a very big television screen for your home. It’s life sized in fact, and one night when you’re falling asleep in front of a movie, the characters come out of the screen and drag you into their story.
You hit the wrong combination of keys on your computer keyboard and suddenly find yourself inside the screen instead of typing.
Your computer’s mouse turns into a real mouse. When you double click on it you find you’ve become so much smaller that you can ride on the mouse’s back. Where do you go?

Now select one of these portal ideas as the starting point for an individual or for a group story.

What if there were a magic door in the forest? How would you find it? Who could get through it? How? What would you find on the other side? What if the animals in the forest found the magic door first? What if they’d all decided to leave? Where would they go?
練習：

個人練習或在故事圈中輪流進行：創作一系列可以通向其他世界的門或通道。這裡有幾個例子：
你在跑步機上健身，閉上雙眼，當你再次睜開眼睛的時候，你發現自己在另一個世界。
你腳下的地面突然消失，當塵埃落定時……
當你指著地圖上的某一處時，你便到了那一個地方。
當你將手放進冰箱，想要找些好吃的時，你被嚇到了，一隻手突然抓住了你，並把你拉進冰箱，到另一個世界去。
你家裡有一部很大的電視機，大得像人一樣，一天晚上，你在電視機前睡著了，電影中的人物從電視機走出來，將你拉進螢幕裡去。
你在電腦鍵盤上按錯了一組鍵，你突然發覺自己不是在打字，而是在電腦屏幕裡。
你的電腦鼠標變成了一隻真老鼠，當你雙擊它的時候，你發現自己變小了，小得可以坐到老鼠的背上去，你會去哪裡？

現在選擇以上任何出發點，獨自或跟其他人合作創作故事。

假如森林裡有一道魔術門會怎樣？你如何發現它的？誰能進去？如何進入？在門的另外一邊你會發現什麼？如果森林裡的其他動物先發現這道魔術門會怎樣？如果他們都選擇離開呢？他們會去哪裡？
The story has a role in finding resolution for conflict. That kind of resolution in a story follows a principle, the principle we’ve called the conviction or the moral of the story. Stories with portals show a way out of the familiar and into a strange world, a world of strangers. Portal stories show us how to meet with creatures and places fundamentally different from the creatures and places we already know. The writer of the portal story in general aims to show others how to make such a journey. In these ways, learning to read and to write stories provides a curriculum for tolerance and for understanding others. Understanding difference, finding a way to meet different others: these are among the best things a story can do. Because of its conflict resolving potential, because it can foster the kind of encounter that forestalls conflict, the story has a vocation for peace in the world.

A portal is a way into another world. It could be entered or crossed through in a journey. It might be the beginning of a journey of discovery. The most obvious and dramatic examples of ‘other worlds’ are those we find in science and fantasy fiction. The other worlds of science fiction are often literally other planets, light years away from our own. As readers, we’re only able to understand the experience of those other worlds because they have a certain amount in common with the world we know. After all, if we step out of the frame of the story, we remember that it was in fact written on our planet and by a member of our own species. For the purposes of remaining in the story, though, it’s often as well to forget this fact. The reader opens the portal of the science fiction or fantasy novel with the aim of escaping from her real world.
從一個星球到另一個

故事需要提供解決衝突的方法，而解決衝突後的結果則帶出故事的主旨或寓意。魔術門可帶領讀者離開現實世界，進入一個陌生的國度，遇見陌生的人。這種故事讓我們見識到一些與現實世界完全不同的生物和地方。這些故事的作者大都希望能向讀者展示他們創造的旅程。學習閱讀和寫作可訓練作者的耐性及了解其他事物的能力。理解事物之間的差異，然後想辦法將距離拉近，這些都是寫作故事能做到的。其實故事裡的衝突之所以可以解決，因為當中早已具備解決方法的潛在條件，因此故事為世界提供了一個和平的假期。

魔術門是通往另一世界的方法。我們在故事的旅程裡可以進入或通過這些門。這些門可以是一個探索旅程的開始。最明顯和富戲劇性的例子就是那些出現在科幻或幻想小說裡的「異世界」。這些科幻小說裡的異世界通常被描繪成與我們相隔許多光年的星球。讀者能理解故事人物在異世界的經歷，是因為那裡跟我們的世界有相同地方。當我們踏出故事的框框時，便會記起那只是由我們人類在地球上所構思的故事而已。我們只不過是為了投入閱讀故事而選擇暫時忘記這事實。讀者也是為了逃離現實世界才會打開科幻小說的大門。
It’s easy to see how science fiction evolved from the kinds of earth bound fantasy worlds that had preceded it. In Jonathan Swift’s day a satire like Gulliver’s Travels could set its otherworldly business just on the unknown other side of planet Earth. The filling of the world map and the possibility of space travel have combined to make science fiction – and especially the story about travel to another planet – an important story type in the twentieth century. You could say that escape to other worlds was necessary once the whole of planet Earth was known. In saying so, you might however be glossing over an important contradiction, namely that those other planets – through whatever distorting glass we’re provided – show the reader pictures of her own place, her own planet. The otherworldly story offers the reader characters with whom she can identify because, even if they’re aliens covered with spikes and breathing fire – like the animals of fable and fairytale – they’re still human. If they weren’t human we wouldn’t be able to understand what they say.

What motivates the reader’s and the writer’s desire to escape? What do they want to escape from, and why? Where do they want to escape to, and why? Escape can sound like an act of cowardice. Instead of facing reality, people choose to go somewhere else. But that judgement ignores the vital role of fantasy in the life of society as much as of the individual. Swift’s Lilliputians, like Tolkien’s hobbits, were Europeans in disguise. As are the fire breathing aliens in the paragraph above. Science fiction stories – however adventurous and exciting, however escapist – are only as good as the advice they give us about our world and about ourselves. So perhaps it’s better to think of science fiction and fantasy fiction, not as escapist, but as providing us with the right amount of distance and the right perspective in order to have a better look at ourselves and at what’s happening around us. We all need distance and perspective in order to work out what our convictions truly are.
我們可以很容易得知科幻小說是怎樣從那些受現實限制的幻想小說中發展出來的。喬納森·斯威夫特的諷刺作品《格列佛遊記》將空想的背景設定在地球不知名的角落裡。在地圖上創造新大陸、漫遊宇宙及遊歷另一星球使科幻小說成爲二十世紀重要的文學題材。或許你認爲人們對地球已非常了解才會想到別的星球去。但你這樣想，便忽視了將地球與其他星球作對比的重大意義。其實那些所謂的星球，即使被哈哈鏡照得扭曲，還是一樣在反映你身處的地方和地球。即使科幻故事裡的角色是噴火的怪獸，讀者也能認同它們，因爲如寓言和童話故事裡的動物一樣，他們其實也是人類。如果他們不是人類，我們便無法聽懂他們的話了。

什麼能驅使讀者和作者逃離某地？他們想逃避什麼？為什麼他們要逃避呢？他們想逃到哪裡？為什麼要逃到那裡？逃避似乎是懦弱的表現。他們寧願逃避也不想面對現實。但我們不應以這看法評價科幻故事，因爲它們對我們個人及社會都有重要的作用。斯威夫特的小人國人民、托爾金的霍比特人以及上述會噴火的怪獸都是歐洲人喬裝的。科幻故事饒富冒險性和趣味性，雖然教人逃避現實，但可以給讀者有關個人和世界的忠告。因此，也許我們不應視科幻小說或幻想小說爲鼓吹逃避主義的產物。它們能讓讀者們以恰到好處的距離和正確的角度看待自己和周圍的事物。我們每個人都需要距離和視角來思考自己的真正信念。
Stories are worth reading because they go beyond the known and the possible: they make a difference. Stories test the limits of what a reader can accept as logical, reasonable, well enough connected. The story’s home is and has always been on the boundary between fantasy and reality, between the possible and the impossible. The story’s ethical vocation has always been in imagining and understanding a different world, a different way. A worse one, a better one, no matter; it’s the difference that allows the reader to step away from known conditions so as to be able to make a judgement about them, so as to be able to decide what to do about them.

The science fiction mindset takes us beyond the limits of our known universe. It takes us to extremes, to places where the ‘normal’ rules can be tested against conditions that may make us question their value. Fantasy and science fiction help us to tackle the work of seeing our own world from the outside, as the speck of dust in the universe which it truly is.
故事是值得我們花時間去閱讀的，因為它們的內容都超出了現實的所知和所能。它們能製造與眾不同的事物。這些故事可測試讀者對邏輯與合理性的接受限度。故事常常處於幻想與現實的邊界，在可能與不可能之間。故事需要做的，是想像和理解不同的世界和路途。無論是好是壞，它們所展示的差異都能讓讀者走出身處的地方，以旁觀的心態對熟悉的世界作出評價，從而學會如何面對現實。

科幻小說帶領我們超越宇宙的邊際，走進極限。在那裡，我們可會質疑人們習以爲常的慣例在社會上的價值。幻想小說和科幻小說讓我們能置身外在觀看世界，就像宇宙中的塵埃一樣。其實我們也如塵埃般渺小。
Asking questions/taking action:

Five minute writing tasks. The purpose of this exercise is to help you imagine setting and characters as radically as possible different from those you already know.

Describe your watch or mobile phone for the benefit of someone who has never seen one before, doesn’t know what it is or how it works. Do not use the name of the object. Explain the function of the object in a separate description (i.e. separate the description of the object’s use from the aesthetic appreciation of the object).

Describe a house to someone who’s never seen one before. Again separate the description of the house from information about its purpose.

Describe some other everyday normal thing in a similar way.

Describe a family relationship (mother, brother, father, sister, etc.) for the benefit of someone who has no such concept.

Describe for the benefit of someone unfamiliar with it, one of the following abstractions: love, war, peace, hate, pride, sex, death, birth, anger, happiness, God, poverty, innocence, greed, time. (Remember that this exercise isn’t just translation and you’re not merely trying to find synonyms. You’re trying to make tangible one of these abstractions for someone who lacks a parallel concept.)

Around the story circle: Can you find amongst the group culture specific concepts you need to explain to each other? ‘Untranslatable’ words could be a good starting point.

Planet making:

For individual, circulation or group discussion exercises

What do you want to escape from? Why?
練習：

五分鐘的寫作練習。此練習的目的是幫助你想像一些你原本不熟悉的背景和人物。

想像你需要向一個從未見過手表或手機的人形容這兩樣物件。不要跟他說這兩樣物件的名稱。嘗試分開形容該物件的功能和外觀。
想像你需要向一個從未見過房屋的人形容一座房子。嘗試分開描述它的作用和外觀。
試利用以上方法，形容日常生活所見的事物。
想像對方從來對倫理關係一無所知，向他解釋各家庭成員的關係（母親、父親、兄弟姊妹等）。
想像對方不熟悉以下抽象事物，並需要你跟他說明：愛、戰爭、和平、憎恨、驕傲、死亡、出生、憤怒、快樂、上帝、貧窮、無知、貪婪、時間。（緊記這並不是翻譯練習，你不能純粹找出其同義詞。你需要將之具體化，將概念傳達給對方。運用例子說明會有很大的幫助。）

在故事圈裡：試舉出一些在不同文化裡觀點不同的概念。可以從「不能翻譯的」這概念開始。

創作星球：
請以個人、輪流或小組討論的形式完成以下練習。
什麼事能驅使你逃避現實？為什麼？
Where do you want to escape to? Why?
You’ve recently read some tourist brochures. Name and describe the planet/s you’d like to visit. Name and describe the planets you’d rather not visit.
Build your own planet: describe a system of planets and moons.
Show a world without certain features you’d rather not have in yours.
Show a world with certain features you would like to add to yours.
Make rules for other worlds. How are the rules of the other worlds different from those of the world you know?
Make a war of the worlds. What are these planets fighting over?

**Invention:**
Create a gadget that does something presently impossible. A good example is the Babel fish in Douglas Adam’s *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*. With a Babel fish in your ear all alien languages are instantly translated into your own. Here are some other examples:

- A ray that makes people (or things) invisible
- An instant transportation beam
- Suspended animation for space flight
- A pill that allows people to lose weight because they never feel hungry
- A device that disables mobile phones within a certain radius of the user
- A device that makes people listen to/obey the user
- A world volume control
- A traffic stopper for pedestrians
- A wishing machine

Add to the list and then choose an invention around which to write a story.
Cross off the list above the imagined inventions that have been over-used (or else use them in a novel way).
你要逃到哪兒去？為什麼？
你最近看過了一些旅遊小冊子，試列出和形容你想到達以及不想去的星球。
創造自己的星球，形容那裡的星系。
描寫一個星球，它裡面缺少的東西也是你希望地球上沒有的。
描寫一個星球，它有的條件也是你希望地球上能有的。
為異世界設下一些規則。那裡的規則跟在你世界裡的有何不同？
星球之間將有一場戰爭，它們是為了什麼而發動戰爭？

發明：
製造一個以現今科技也不能完成的小型機械裝置。例如在道格拉斯・亞當斯《銀河系漫遊指南》裡的寶貝魚。當你在耳朵裡裝上寶貝魚，你便能翻譯所有外星語言。以下是其他例子：

可使人類或物件隱形的光線；
可使人類或物件瞬間轉移的光線；
使光速變慢的裝置；
讓人感覺不到肚餓的減肥藥丸；
可以中斷別人手機訊號的裝置；
可以令別人服從或聽從使用者的裝置；
可控制世界上所有音量的裝置；
可以暫停所有交通工具運作，方便行人通過的裝置；
實現願望的機器。

試加上其他新發明，然後在列表中挑選一樣作爲創作故事的題材。
在列表裡刪去那些經常在故事中出現的發明。
Letters to another planet:

You find a letter from another planet. Where? How? How do you know it’s from another planet? How do you feel about this? How do you respond?

Write the contents of the letter from another planet that you’ve found.

Write a letter in reply.

Which writing position do you prefer to be in? Or would you prefer to write the letters in both directions?

Or, imagine the encounter by e-mail. You receive a spam message that reads, ‘I am an alien from another planet. I want to put some money in your bank account, but…’ Finish the e-mail, and then just for fun, write a response. You get a response to that response. How do things continue from there?

Your alien friend comes to visit. Describe the view from the porthole as the spaceship comes in to land in your town.

Organise a tour for your alien friend. What specific difficulties might she or he have on earth?

Explain how things are on earth to an alien who’s never been here before.

Your alien friend takes you home to meet the family. Describe the space ship, the journey, life on another planet, and so on. How do the people (or creatures) there react to you?
寄到其他星球的信：
您收到來自其他星球的信。在哪裡收到？您是如何得到那封信的？您是怎樣知道那封信來自其他星球？您的感受如何？您會怎樣回覆？
寫下您收到那封信的內容。
再寫一封回涵。
你喜歡當哪封信的作者？還是你喜歡替雙方寫信？

想像你收到一封電郵，那是一封垃圾郵件，寫著：「我是來自別的星球的外星人，現在我想將一筆錢存放在您的銀行帳戶裡，但是……」。請以玩樂的心態完成這封郵件，然後給予回覆。想像那外星人會再給你寫回覆，再繼續下去的話事情會怎樣發展呢？

你的外星人朋友前來拜訪。太空船於你居住的地方著陸，試形容外星人在舷窗看到的景象。
為你的外星人朋友計劃行程。他／她在地球會遇到什麼困難？外星人從未到過地球，你會怎樣向他介紹？外星人邀請你到他家作客，跟他的家人見面。試形容太空船、外星旅行以及與外星生活等有關的事情。那兒的生物／人對這個地球人的到訪有甚麼反應？
Personal rocket ship:
Imagine your refrigerator gradually becomes noisier and noisier. It seems to be noisiest in the middle of the night. One night you sneak into the kitchen for a glass of water at two o’clock in the morning and you notice a strange light coming from it. It begins to vibrate wildly. It seems as if it wants to leave the floor. Eventually you climb on top, trying to keep it on the floor, and that’s when it takes off, taking you with it...

What if...
Let’s end by making a last what if... list
Add five more ‘what if’s to the list below then choose the one around which you’d like to write a story.
What if your building turned into a rocket ship and took off, leaving the earth’s atmosphere?
What if the appliances in your kitchen turned on you and started telling you what to do?
What if you were ten metres tall (or ten centimetres)? What if you could change your height at will?
What if you woke up one morning and found that you were a different sex from what you were when you went to sleep the night before?
What if everyone in the world had enough to eat and could live a peaceful life doing what they thought best to do?
What if everyone’s dreams came true?
私人火箭：
你的電冰箱發出愈來愈嘈雜的聲音，而且聲音在午夜時變得最大。一天晚上，你在零晨二時溜進廚房喝水，你發現電冰箱正發出奇怪的光線。電冰箱開始猛烈地搖晃，快要離開地面似的。你爬上電冰箱的頂部，嘗試將它壓回地面，可是它卻繼續上升，並將你帶走……

假如……
讓我們以「假如……」列出問題清單。
請在下面再加上五個「假如……」的問題，然後選出其中一項作爲你的故事構思。
假如你居住的大廈變成一支火箭升上太空會怎樣？
假如廚具突然跟你說話，並指示你做事，你會怎樣？
假如你的身高是十米（或者十厘米）會怎樣？假如你可以控制自己的身高會怎樣？
假如你早上醒來的時候，發現自己的性別變了會怎樣？
假如全世界的人都能豐衣足食，過著和平及為所欲爲的生活會怎樣？
假如所有人都能夢想成真會怎樣？
what type of story do you want to tell?

Journeys through portals and to other planets provide us with illustrations of how much distance a story can cover and of just how surprising its contents and its destination can be. Fantasy and science fiction are only two choices among the many genres available for the writer of fiction. Already in this manual we’ve looked at jokes, at fairytales, romances, ghost stories, tragedies. Once you begin writing stories, you read with an additional purpose in mind. One of the functions of this chapter is to provide you with a writer’s guide to classic stories, stories that will be useful for you to consider as a student of fiction. Once you’ve created a few stories that work, the question you should ask yourself is this: what sort/s of stories should I write? The best advice for the beginner is to try your hand at as many different kinds of story as possible.

Different kinds? There are many ways in which stories can be classified. Subject, theme, genre, conviction: each of these terms suggests a different kind of classification. The traditional division of drama into comedy and tragedy – or into comedy, tragedy, history and pastoral – works well for Shakespeare’s plays. In some ways these categories can still be seen today as the dominant story telling modes. There have been a few genres or movements or modes of the story we might add to the list since Shakespeare’s time, e.g. realism, surrealism, absurdism. Philosopher of history, Hayden White, divides the stories with which the past is explained into four narrative types: romance, satire, comedy and tragedy. In brief, the romance shows a person or people escaping their situation. The satire shows people as prisoners of the way the world is. Comedies show the triumph of people over their situation, while tragedies show their failure to triumph. This neat (perhaps too neat) classification helps us to see a relationship between genre and conviction and
你想講哪一種故事？

在故事裡通過魔術門到另一星球的旅程，可以向讀者闡明故事所能涵蓋的範圍及其內容和結局所能帶來的驚訝。幻想小說和科幻小說只是眾多故事體裁當中的兩樣。本手冊已跟大家介紹過笑話、童話故事、愛情故事、鬼故事和悲劇等體裁。一旦你開始創作故事，你便會多了一個閱讀本手冊的目的。此章節的目的是向讀者提供一些創作經典的故事的指導。所謂經典故事，對研究文學小說的學生來說是很有用的。當你能創作幾個完整的故事時，你必須反思這個問題：我應該寫哪種類型的故事呢？我們建議初學者應盡可能嘗試寫作各種類型的故事。

不同類型的故事？將故事分門別類的方法有很多種。故事的主體、主題、體裁及主旨都能用不同的方法分類。傳統的戲劇分類有喜劇和悲劇，或者喜劇、悲劇、歷史和田園等，而此方法用於莎翁作品的分類是十分合適的。事實上，故事的種類至今仍是以這些類別為準。類別於莎翁時代之後還多了幾種，例如現實主義、超現實主義和荒誕主義。歷史哲學家海登·懷特將描述過去的故事分為四種敘述類型：傳奇、諷刺文學、喜劇和悲劇。簡言之，傳奇展示了一個人逃避現狀，諷刺文學展示了人作為世界的囚徒，喜劇展示了人戰勝困境而悲劇則展示了人的失敗。這種清晰（或過份清晰）的分類能幫助我們了解體裁和主旨的關係，並能說明每種故事具有的特質。選擇適合
it also demonstrates how particular types of story have their own temperament. One way to decide what you want to write is to work out which story type matches your view of the world.

In the last chapter we’ll return to the idea of conviction and look at stories from the point of view of what they’re trying to prove. In this chapter, we’ll consider the classification of stories by subject or theme, along the lines of an answer to the question: what’s the story about? For this purpose, ten ‘plots’ have been identified as representative. Examples are given of each, along with comments on how the beginner can best approach them.

1 Journey or Quest

This plot foregrounds linearity, in other words it is structured as a line though, like the course of a journey, not usually a straight one. This plot of the journey story is like an arrow heading for a target, though usually having to get around some serious obstacles along the way. The ‘journey books’ – the great journey stories – are among the most famous classics of western literature. Homer’s Odyssey, Virgil’s Aeneid, Dante’s Divine Comedy: the journeys of which these stories tell are among the world’s best known. Many other classics involve a strong journey element or the setting of a journey. Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales have a journey setting more or less ignored in the process of telling the tales. Chaucer’s characters are on a pilgrimage and they have to tell each other stories for entertainment in order to pass the time at the Tabard Inn (where they’re staying). The Bible contains many journeys, probably the most notable of which is the wanderings of Moses with his people. The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden is the beginning of a story, the story of mankind.

Journeys are often motivated by a specific goal, sometimes of the kind that draws the protagonist on – over and around various obstacles – like a magnet. That motivation could be the quest for the
自己創作的故事類型的其中方法，就是考慮那些與你觀察世界的態度相近的。

在最後的章節裡，我們會重溫主旨的概念，並以其說明的事物的角度解讀故事。在這一章節中，我們會以主旨及主題將故事分類，回答「這個是什麼故事？」這一問題。我們視以下的十種「情節」為主要類別。每種類別均為讀者提供例子以及提出學習寫作該類別的提議。

（一）旅程或探索

這種情節的發展是呈線形的。故事的結構就像旅程的路線一樣，通常不是直線。有關旅程的情節就像一根箭，它要繞過很多障礙才能射中目標。很多著名的西方經典文學作品都是出色的旅程故事。例如荷馬的《奧德賽》、維吉爾的《伊尼德記》及但丁的《神曲》都是眾所周知的著名旅程故事。很多這類的經典著作都有強烈的旅程元素及旅程背景。但在喬叟的《坎特伯雷故事集》裡，旅程的背景在人物講故事的過程中被忽略。故事裡的角色在朝聖的旅途中，分別以講故事為消遣，打發在搭百特旅館的時間。《聖經》也有很多旅程故事，最著名的大概就是摩西與他的信徒的漫長旅程。亞當和夏娃被趕出伊甸園，也是人類旅程故事的開端。

旅程通常都有特別的目標為動機。這些目標，會像磁石般引來許多障礙，使主角面對和闖過。旅程的目標可以是尋找聖
Holy Grail, it could be the strong desire to get home. The suspense in the journey story is to do with getting around the obstacles that lie in a protagonist’s way; ultimately it’s to do with getting ‘there’, wherever that there – at the end of the road – happens to be.

The journey or quest plot is not the exclusive property of western culture. One of the most famous of Chinese classics is Wu Cheng En’s *Journey to the West*, a work sometimes named after its central character, Monkey. It’s the story of how a group of unlikely pilgrims is led by a Buddhist monk from China to India in order to bring the Buddhist scriptures back to the Chinese court, so as to facilitate the dissemination of Buddhist teachings through China.

The journey metaphor is a powerful one in many if not most cultures. And there are several good reasons for starting with the journey as a first plot type. Life is a path or a journey along a path, and a story likewise – and especially in the sense of the linear sequence of events – is also a journey. It’s actually difficult to explain the life-as-path metaphor without saying it means ‘a way to go’ or something like that. Choice and decision seem like more complicated concepts than ‘path’ or ‘way’. There’s a good reason they seem that way. They are more complicated! They’re abstractions. The metaphor for life and its crises and choices – whether it’s path or road or way – is concrete. Thinking of life as a path gives you an image, something to picture. And thinking of a story or of plot in this way is similarly useful.

The idea of a plot itself closely resembles the idea of a journey. The journey or quest is a kind of adventure. It often consists of a long series of turns or complications and resolutions. In an adventure story – as in many others – it’s conventional for the action to rise as the story progresses. This means that the dangers intensify and the stakes get higher as the goal gets closer. Whatever it is that the protagonist seeks – holy grail, golden fleece, secret formula – others
杯，也可以是渴望回家。旅程故事裡的懸念是主角面對障礙的時候。旅程的最終目的是要到達「那裡」，即路程的盡頭。

旅程和探索的情節不只見於西方文學。吳承恩創作的中國四大名著之一的《西遊記》也屬此類。故事講述幾位朝聖者在唐僧的帶領下由中國出使印度取佛經，希望能借佛經在中國宣揚佛教。

旅程在許多文化當中都有強烈的隱喻。選擇旅程故事為首次寫作的題材是有幾個好原因的。人生就像一條路，或者是旅程中的一段路。而此類故事的情節是隨路線發展的，所以也是一種旅程。如果不是通過說生活代表著「一條要走的道路」或類似的話，實際上很難解釋「生活作爲旅途」這一比喻。選擇和決定的概念似乎比「路徑」和「路途」更難理解。這並不奇怪，因爲它們的確是比較複雜！它們是抽象的。把人生、危機、選擇用道路、路線或路途作比喻則使它們形象化。以道路比喻人生能幫助你想像可描繪的圖像。利用此方法想像故事及情節也是同樣有幫助的。

情節的概念其實與旅程的很相似。旅程或探索都是一種歷險故事。當中經常包含一連串的轉折、糾葛和結果。傳統的歷險故事，跟其他許多種類的故事一樣，情節是隨故事的發展而上升的。即是說，距離目標愈近，角色要面對的危險就愈大。主角想要得到的東西，無論是聖杯、金羊毛或神秘配方等，都
may also seek or wish to keep. The quest story has built-in conflict and built-in suspense. Whatever it is your protagonist wants, an antagonist also either wants, or perhaps already has. Or perhaps there are several competitors or claimants for the prize. The built in suspense comes from the fact that until the goal is reached there is doubt that it will be reached. If you have a team of protagonists then perhaps some of them will die or be left injured along the way. To the extent that your reader identifies with the members of this team, your protagonist cares about these losses. They build empathy for the protagonist’s team as a whole.

2 Rivalry

The rivalry plot foregrounds conflict. The rivalry and the conflict could be between individuals or groups. It could be the rivalry between men and gods that is expressed in the Greek story of Prometheus, the hero who stole fire from the gods. Or it could be rivalry between men and God as in the *Old Testament* story of the Tower of Babel. The rivalry plot overlaps with the journey wherever there is a race of any kind towards a common goal. Probably the prototypical journey of rivalry is the race between the tortoise and the hare in Aesop’s fables. The arrogant hare, knowing he’s faster, runs in fits and starts, dawdles and naps, and so loses the race to the steady plodding tortoise, who never picks up pace, but never slackens. The moral is straightforward: ‘slow and steady wins the race.’ *Around the World in Eighty Days* is probably the classic example of the journey based on a conflict between rivals. Jules Verne’s story requires an interesting suspension of disbelief on the part of its reader today. Whereas Verne’s contemporaries had to stretch their imaginations a little to imagine someone getting around the world so fast, a century later, we’re wondering what took them. Other interesting rivalries to study in literature include man against nature in Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick* or in Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* or the tragic triangle romantic conflict of the kind we
是其他角色想要尋找或據為己有的。探索故事當中已有固定的衝突和懸念。主角想要得到的，反派亦想得到或早已得到。或者有幾個競爭者為了獎酬而互相爭奪都是衝突的例子。主角能否達到最後目標則是懸念。如果故事裡有結成一隊的主角，當中幾個可能會在途中死亡或受傷。當你認同主角的隊伍，主角也會為傷亡感到悲痛。你對主角的整個隊伍亦會產生同理心。

（二）對抗

對抗的情節強調衝突。對抗和衝突可以發生在個人或團體之間。對抗可以是人與神之間，如在希臘神話普羅米修斯的故事中，他從神那裡偷來火種。人與神的對抗也可見於《聖經舊約》裡的巴別塔故事。若當中的角色為了相同的目標而競賽，部份對抗的故事性質則與旅程故事的相同。最典型的對抗和旅程故事就是伊索寓言裡的《龜兔賽跑》。自大的兔子知道自己跑得比較快，跑到一半便偷懶小睡，以致敗給走路很慢的烏龜。烏龜雖然跑得不快，但他從不放慢腳步。這篇故事的寓意十分簡單：堅持就是勝利。《環遊世界八十天》也是描述對抗者之間的衝突的旅程故事。今天部份讀者會認爲八十日環遊世界是可行的。但當時的讀者則要靠想像力去理解主角如何以這驚人的速度環遊世界。其他有趣的對抗可以發生於人和大自然之間。赫爾曼・梅爾維爾的《白鯨記》和海明威的《老人與海》就是例子。浪漫悲劇裡的三角關係衝突可見於喬叟的《巴
find in Chaucer’s *Wife of Bath’s Tale*. Another classic rivalry plot is the one in which a good soul has to face the wicked world in which s/he cannot fit. Shakespeare’s *Tempest* would be a good example of that story.

### 3 Revenge

The revenge plot again foregrounds conflict. Revenge, whether driven by passion or pragmatism, is one of the extreme ends to which a rivalry can be brought. And the function of actually annihilating – as a group or team or tribe or nation – the whole of the group defeated, is specifically to rule out the possibility of (further) revenge or retribution. Squabbles between nations and races and tribes and religious groups often go on seemingly forever for the simple reason that one side’s ‘final solution’ has only made more implacable the hatred of the survivors on the other side. The revenge plot is focused on the outcome that will bring the domination or the annihilation of the party on whom vengeance is sought.

What could bring a character – a protagonist – to this diabolical desire for vengeance? Many things and nothing. Nor need we even specifically know. That’s the case in Edgar Allen Poe’s ‘The Cask of Amontillado’. *Othello* and *Hamlet* are Shakespeare’s two most famous revenge stories. Probably the nastiest and most extreme of revenge classics is in Euripides’ *Medea*.

### 4 Growth

The transition from childhood to adulthood is a major theme in literature. Growth or maturation is a process all adults have gone through, usually have at least some dim memory of, and can therefore identify with. In the most common kind of growth plot in the fairytale, a character loses innocence by going out into the big bad world and fending for herself. The event – the crisis or crises – through which a protagonist – or other character – goes, in
斯婦人的故事》。另外，一個好人不能適應邪惡的世界而又要面對它的情節，也是經典的對抗故事，莎士比亞的《暴風雨》就是好例子。

（三）復仇

復仇的情節同樣強調衝突。復仇，無論是以盛怒或者務實的心態進行，都是在對抗故事裡所發展出的最極端情節。復仇的作用就是毀滅一個團體、隊伍、部落或國家。只要將該組織完全消滅，就能避免「冤冤相報何時了」的情況發生。國家、種族、部落或信仰團體之間的鬥爭經常無法平息，是因爲勝方會增加敗方的倖存者的仇恨。復仇情節的焦點在於復仇的結果，當中的團體最後能獲得支配權還是被殲滅。

什麼能驅使主角有復仇的願望？可以有很多原因，也可以是沒有原因的。有時候我們亦不需要知道原因。愛倫・坡的《一桶蒙蒂拉白葡萄酒》就是例子。《奧賽羅》和《哈姆雷特》也是莎翁著名的復仇戲劇。或許最極端的經典復仇故事就是歐里庇德斯的《美狄亞》。

（四）成長

角色從童年到成年的轉變是文學的主要課題之一。成長或成熟期是每個成年人都經過的階段，通常對此至少都保留著一些模糊的記憶，所以才能對此有所認同。在童話故事裡常見的成長情節中，角色在面對殘酷的世界時就會丟掉純真而保護自己。這些事件或危機，使主角長大成人，可以說得上是主角的
order to emerge an adult, amount/s to what anthropologists call a rite of passage. Often characters have to go somewhere to grow up. Whether it’s moving to the house next door or being abandoned in the woods, Cinderella, Snow White, Hansel and Gretel, all go somewhere to learn who they are, to become themselves.

Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *The Secret Garden* is a novel that entertains just this kind of hope for the young. Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre is a character who grows despite (and in fact because of) her apparent powerlessness in the story she centres. Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* should be recognized as a story centred on two male characters, each with great power, though with power of different kinds. Frankenstein and his monster both grow through the story as a result of the epic conflict between creator and creation. Importantly though, this is also a story of inner conflict and turmoil, a story about the limits of responsibility. It’s a story that asks us to consider the issue of responsibility for actions which cause consequences beyond our control.

Growth can come at any stage in life. It comes for Shakespeare’s *King Lear* in the final stages of a long life. It can even be manifested in madness: Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* is a character growing and getting a kind of wisdom only available to him by virtue of first having gone mad. A number of twentieth century growth stories call into question the relationship between self-discovery and social expectation. Good examples include James Joyce’s *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and R.D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*.

5 Change

The change – like the growth – plot foregrounds character transition. It’s a story about how someone becomes a new person, a person different from the one the reader met at the beginning of the story. Often the change has to do with self-recognition. Hans Christian
人生大事。角色通常要在其他地方才會成長。無論是搬到隔壁的房子，或者被遺棄在森林裡，角色如灰姑娘，白雪公主、漢賽爾和格萊特都需要走到別處才能認識自己。

伯內特的《神秘的花園》就是能給年青人帶來這類希望的作品。在夏洛蒂·布朗特的作品中，主角簡·愛改變了自己軟弱的性格。瑪麗·雪萊的《科學怪人》以兩名男性角色為中心，各有不同強大的力量。佛蘭肯斯坦和他的科學怪人是透過造物者與創造物之間的衝突而成長的。這故事表現出人物內心的衝突，說明責任的限度。內容讓我們深思，在面對不堪設想的後果時所要考慮的責任問題。

成長可以發生在人生中的任何一個階段。莎翁筆下的李爾王則在人生的最後階段才得到成長。即使精神失常也可以成長。塞萬提斯的唐吉訶德在故事開始時已瘋掉，但他以自己的方式在智慧上得到成長。許多二十世紀的成長故事都探討了自我發現和社會期望的關係。喬伊斯的《青年藝術家的肖像》和塞林格的《麥田守望者》都是好例子。

（五）轉變
轉變情節跟成長的一樣，是強調角色轉變的。此類故事是關於角色如何變成另外一人。此角色跟讀者在故事開始時所認識的不一樣。轉變通常與自我認知有關。安徒生的《醜小鴨》和卡
Anderson’s ‘The Ugly Duckling’ and Carlo Collodi’s ‘Pinocchio’ are classic children’s examples. Shakespeare’s classic of transformation is *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* provides the reader with a treasure trove of change stories. The Roman author’s objective in that work was to thread the whole of classical mythology into a single story made up of stories, on the basis that what all of the stories had in common was change, transformation. George Bernard Shaw picked out one of these tales for his play *Pygmalion*, better known to many through the musical film version, *My Fair Lady*. Robert Louis Stephenson’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* are great nineteenth century change stories, as – in a very different way – is Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*. Probably the most important twentieth century change story is Franz Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis*. The feature length cartoon *Shrek* is a twenty first century example.

6 Love
The love story foregrounds empathy and identification. If we can’t feel the pain and the torment of the lovers then the story won’t hold our attention. There’s only a story in love if the love is somehow against the odds. Whether the lovers survive the action, whether they are winners or losers at the end of the story, love has to be an ordeal for them. Classic examples include ‘Pyramus and Thisbe’, ‘Orpheus and Eurydice’, Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights*, Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*.

7 Escape
Fiction is itself a way of escaping from the real world that dominates our waking lives. Every story has this much element of escape to it, but in some stories the reader’s attention is drawn to the fact that someone or something is being eluded, that someone is getting away, saving themselves from or for something. The need to escape could provide a framing context for the telling of stories. Boccaccio’s *Decameron* is a collection of tales told by young men and
洛·科洛迪的《木偶奇遇記》是其中典型例子。經典的轉變情節也可見於莎翁的《仲夏夜之夢》。奧維德的《變形記》則為讀者提供各種不可多得的變形故事。作者目的是將所有經典的神話集合成一，并改變所有故事的共通點。蕭伯納從《變形記》當中挑選出一部份創作出他的戲劇《皮格馬利翁》, 即今天眾所周知的歌舞劇電影《窈窕淑女》。斯蒂文森的《化身博士》、斯托克的《吸血鬼》和易卜生的《玩偶之家》也是十九世紀的經典轉變故事。或許卡夫卡的《變形記》是二十世紀最重要的轉變故事。卡通電影《怪物史萊克》是廿一世紀這類故事的代表。

（六）愛情

愛情故事強調同理心和認同。如果我們不能感受情人的悲痛，故事便很難吸引我們的注意力。一段困難重重的愛情，才有故事可說。無論那對情人能否生存，無論他們到最後是贏還是輸，愛情對他們來說都是一種折磨。經典的例子包括皮拉摩斯和西斯貝、奧爾菲斯和歐里狄西、莎翁的羅密歐和茱麗葉、艾蜜莉·布朗特的《呼哮山莊》以及托爾斯泰的《安娜·卡列尼娜》。

（七）逃走

故事讓我們逃離支配生活的現實世界。每個故事都能產生這樣的效果。但在某些故事裡，讀者的注意力則在某些角色上，那些角色需要逃避某人或事物來保護自己。逃走的原因可以成為故事的框架。在薄伽丘的《十日談》裡，一群年青男女
women who have escaped from the plague stricken town to the country and lacking the amusements to which they are accustomed have to tell each other stories there to pass the time. Another set of stories framed by the hope of an escape is the collection told in *The Arabian Nights*. Sheherazade (the narrator) has to keep her audience of one (the king) interested enough in hearing these tales in order to save herself from being executed at sunrise every morning. This king has become disillusioned with women. He doesn’t trust them. And so he’s decided to marry a new virgin every day, deflower her at night, and execute her in the morning. That’s been his custom until Sheherazade, daughter of his vizier, applied for the job. Her father was horrified when he found out but she managed to keep the king entranced with Aladdin and Ali Baba and Sinbad the Sailor. And pretty soon he turns over a new leaf, re-forms his opinion of women, and marries her. Sheherazade escapes death and becomes queen, all thanks to her gift with story telling.

Escapes are always adventures but they aren’t always successful. Take the Greek myth of ‘Daedelus and Icarus’ for example. In that story the great architect Daedelus decides to escape from the island of Crete with his son Icarus. The two had been kept prisoner there by King Minos, even though Daedelus had already completed the job he had come to do. That was to build a labyrinth under the palace in order to keep the queen’s half bull/half human son at bay. Minos made sure the father and son couldn’t get away by boat, so Daedelus simply had to invent some way for them to escape. He made himself and his son a pair of wings each, but when they were most of the way home, Icarus flew too high, came too close to the sun, which melted the wax holding his wings together, with the result that he plummeted to his death in the sea.

8 Rescue
Like the escape plot, the rescue plot foregrounds suspense.
為了躲避瘟疫而逃到一個缺乏娛樂的城鎮，因此他們每人都以講故事來打發時間。另一個以逃走的原因構成故事框架的是《一千零一夜》。雪瑞桑德（敘述者）為了免遭殺戮，而需要在每天日出時向國王講有趣的故事。這個國王對女人不抱任何幻想，也不信任她們。因此他決定每天娶一個處女，毀她貞節後第二天便將她殺掉。這已成爲國王的習慣。直到有一天，大臣的女兒雪瑞桑德自願當國王的妻子。大臣發現女兒使國王着迷於阿拉丁、阿里巴巴和仙巴等故事，感到驚訝不已。沒多久，國王便獲得重生，對女人的態度改觀，並正式娶雪瑞桑德為妻。雪瑞桑德能大難不死成為皇后，都是托故事的福。

逃走是歷險的一種，但不是每一次的歷險都是成功的。就像希臘神話裡的第達羅斯和伊卡魯斯為例，偉大的建築師第達羅斯打算跟兒子伊卡魯斯一起逃離克里特島。他們雖然已完成工作，但卻被國王邁諾斯軟禁。第達羅斯的工作就是要在城堡下建造迷宮，用以囚禁國王半牛半人的兒子。國王肯定這兩父子不能以海路逃走，因此第達羅斯需要發明可以幫助他們逃離的工具。他為自己和兒子做了一對翅膀，但當他們差不多回到家裡時，伊卡魯斯飛得太高，太陽溶化了黏著翅膀的蠟，結果他跌到大海裡死了。

（八）援救

跟逃走情節一樣，援救情節強調懸念。援救者能否戰勝危
Will the rescuers beat the perils they need to beat in order to effect the rescue? Will the rescuers and those they rescue all get away safely in the end? The rescue plot is a combination of quest and escape. It usually involves running towards a goal (a gaol for instance) so as to get someone out of the place in question and so as to then run away together. If the moment of rescue is the climax, then the rescue plot is naturally asymmetrical. The escape is in the falling action. There’s usually a strong element of faith or compassion or friendship or alternatively monetary gain or political importance in the rescue plot. That’s because one party takes a risk to save the other. The party taking the risk to do the rescuing is likewise generally brave or strong or smart or cocky, or some combination of these. Otherwise s/he wouldn’t be fit for the job. The classic escape story from Greek mythology is that of ‘Theseus and the Minotaur’. It’s connected closely with the ‘Daedelus and Icarus’ story. Theseus is the hero who has to rescue the boys and girls who are fed to the Minotaur, as an annual tribute from Athens to the Minoan Court at Knossos. You’ll remember the Minotaur is the half human half bull monster that lives in the labyrinth under the palace. The labyrinth is a maze and the problem is that once in there no one manages to find a way out. Eventually you either starve to death or the Minotaur eats you alive. Fortunately for Theseus and those who were with him, the princess Ariadne falls in love with our hero and helps him by providing a ball of thread so that he’ll be able to retrace his steps after he’s fought the monster. The Minotaur is defeated, the sacrificial boys and girls are rescued and all goes well until, sailing home Theseus forgets to change the sails on his ship. Before he’d left he’d told his father he would have white sails if all had gone well. His father, standing on the acropolis of Athens, saw the black sails approaching the port of Piraeus below. Assuming the worst, despairing, he threw himself off the cliff. And so Theseus, arriving home, found his father dead through his carelessness, and found himself suddenly King of Athens.
機成功拯救？援救者和被拯救的人最後能否安全脫險？援救情節是探索和逃走情節的結合。故事內容通常是向目標前進，到達目的地時將某人物帶走並與其一起逃離現場。若拯救的一剎就是故事的高潮，那麼援救情節的安排便不太均稱。逃走在援救情節裡是下降情節。在援救行動中，由於其中一方需要冒險營救另一方，過程中通常會包含強烈的信念、憐憫、友情、金錢利益或政治目的等。援救者通常是比較勇敢、強壯、機靈或自信（或同時擁有這幾個特點）的一方，否則他／她便不勝任。經典的希臘逃走故事有忒修斯和邁諾陶。此故事跟第達羅斯和伊卡魯斯的故事是有關連的。一些小孩被送到邁諾陶那裡作爲一年一度的貢品，我們的英雄忒修斯則要拯救他們。你會記得邁諾陶是住在城堡底下迷宮的半牛半人怪物。其他人一旦進入迷宮，便很難找到出口。在迷宮裡，不是餓死，就是被邁諾陶活活吃掉。幸好阿里阿德涅公主深愛著忒修斯，她送給忒修斯和他的同伴一個線球，讓他們在迷宮裡留記號。忒修斯跟怪物打鬥後，便能沿線走出迷宮。忒修斯打敗了怪物，拯救了孩童，一切都非常順利。可是在回航中忒修斯忘記了換船帆。他出發前曾告訴父親，如果一切順利，便會掛白帆。站在雅典衛城的父親看見黑帆駛近派里烏斯港口，心想不妙，便跳崖自盡。忒修斯回到家後得知父親因自己的疏忽而去世，他也因此突然成了雅典的國王。
9  Temptation

The temptation story foregrounds suspense because the reader wants to know whether or not the protagonist will give in to whatever it is that is tempting him or her. The most important and famous story of temptation is Goethe’s *Faust* (based on Christopher Marlowe’s play *Dr Faustus*). It’s the tale of a man who sells his soul to the devil. A nice example of temptation sought and succumbed to and leading to a downfall is in Moliere’s *Tartuffe*. The temptation story tests out the cliché that everyone can be bought and everyone has his or her price. It’s usually only late in the story we find out what the real cost of yielding to temptation is.

10  Rise and Fall

The rise and fall story – like the journey story – provides its own plot diagram. It foregrounds rising and falling action (getting the protagonist up and down a tree) that can coincide with the fortunes (being on top of the world) and with the mood (being down in the dumps) of the protagonist. On the other hand the suspense in the rise and fall plot could be greatest just where the hero is hitting rock bottom. Stories of the dramatic reversal (and sometimes re-reversal) of fortune have long been popular. A classic is Plato’s story of Gyges, the shepherd who made himself king after he found a ring which could make him invisible. The Greek biographer and essayist Plutarch pioneered the rise and/or fall story in the ancient world. Plutarch was one of Shakespeare’s major sources. One of Shakespeare’s classic rise and fall stories is *Macbeth*. Chaucer’s *The Monk’s Tale* is not a story at all, but a list of famous figures who fell. These include Adam, Samson, Hercules, Nero, Julius Caesar, and Croesus. The monk is interrupted before he finishes his list because others find the account dull and depressing. There are just too many of these stories!

True stories in this category are at least as plentiful in modern history as they were for Plutarch or Chaucer. Think of
誘惑
誘惑故事強調懸念，因為讀者想知道主角是否經得住誘惑。最重要及著名的誘惑故事就是歌德的《浮士德》(改篇自馬洛的劇作《浮士德》)。故事講述了一名男子把靈魂賣給魔鬼。受不了誘惑而致陷入低潮的故事可見於莫里哀的《僞君子》。誘惑故事能證明「人人有價」這種陳腔濫調。我們往往在故事的最後才能發現被誘惑要付出的真正代價。

起伏
起伏故事，跟旅程故事一樣，有自身獨特的情節結構模式。它強調角色的起和伏（想像角色爬上和爬下樹）。這跟角色的運氣（想像角色在世界之上）和心情（想像角色在垃圾堆裡）是相關連的。角色在最低潮時，懸念在上升和下降的情節裡將是最強的。風水輪流轉的情節十分常見。經典的例子有柏拉圖的該傑士。他本來是牧羊人，後因發現一隻可以讓他隱形的戒指而自立為王。希臘傳記作者及散文家普魯塔克在古代開創了起伏故事的先河，而他的作品也是莎士比亞的參考資料之一。莎翁其中的一個起伏故事就是《麥克白》。喬叟的《僧侶的故事》並不算是故事，但當中也很許多歷經低潮的著名人物，包括亞當、參孫、海格力斯、尼祿、凱撒以及克里蘇斯。僧侶的故事因為太沈悶和沮喪而被人打斷。這類的故事實在多不勝數！

在現代史中，這類的真實故事就跟普魯塔克和喬叟的一樣多。試想想拿破倫、希特勒和戴妃。其他比較不著名的人物亦
Napoleon, Hitler, Princess Di. Less celebrated examples are in the newspaper every day. They're there because the rise and/or fall of famous persons is news. As for the ancients, so for us today, it’s very difficult to draw the line between myth and reality, when it comes to the lives of the rich or the powerful or the otherwise famous. The famous are our modern gods and heroes. They’re larger than life. The lives of the living famous are a bridge between fiction and fact, between fantasy and reality. And the great lives are invariably rise and/or fall stories. Consider Socrates, Buddha, Jesus, Joan of Arc. Great lives are a focus for issues of justice in the world. The deaths of Socrates and Jesus are in a sense crimes against humanity; they’re also the archetypal sketches of man’s inhumanity to man.

As with the temptation plot, justice and morality are highlighted in the rise and fall story. Consider the Bible story of Job. It’s the story of one man’s struggle with God and faith. Job is a good and innocent man who suffers because of a dispute between God and Satan. Job loses his wealth and his health and suffers terribly in numerous ways, despite being more righteous than those around him. It appears that God has forsaken him and that nothing can restore his previous condition. His wife urges him to ‘curse God and die’. Although he refuses to take this advice and much more like it, eventually Job’s forbearance is rewarded and his fortunes are restored, demonstrating that God’s ways are beyond human understanding.

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Thinking through these ten plots, you’ll have realised that classifying stories along these lines involves a question of emphasis. Job’s story is rise and fall, yes, but it’s also a story of temptation. From another point of view it’s a story of rivalry between God and Satan. A long novel can afford to have love and revenge, a journey, the rise and fall and rise again of certain characters, their temptation, their rivalry
經常在報紙上出現。他們在報紙上出現，是因為名人的起伏就是新聞。我們跟古人一樣，當事情涉及有權有勢的名人時，我們很難辨別其現實與虛構的部份。名人就是我們現代的神和英雄。他們比生命還重要。活著的名人的生活是故事與事實以及幻想與現實之間的橋樑。他們偉大的生活無疑是起伏故事。試想想蘇格拉底、佛陀、耶穌及聖女貞德。他們偉大的生命讓世界公義問題成爲焦點。處死蘇格拉底和耶穌是反人道的罪行，事件亦同時將人類互相殘殺的事實原形畢露。

如誘感情節般，起伏故事也同樣強調公義和道德。想想《聖經》裡的約伯。這是關於一個男人與上帝及信念抗衡的故事。約伯是純樸的好男人，但因爲上帝和撒旦的不和而受苦。約伯雖然因此變得比其他人公正，卻失去了財富和健康，受盡無數痛苦。由於上帝早已遺棄他，因此約伯無法過回從前的日子。他的太太要他咀咒上帝，但他拒絕了妻子。最後約伯的忍耐受到嘉獎，上帝讓他失而復得。這證明了上帝的安排和做法是人類無法理解的。

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重新回想一下以上十種情節，你會發現我們是以種類所強調的元素來給故事分類的。約伯的故事無疑是起伏故事，但也是誘惑故事。從另一角度看，它也是上帝與撒旦對抗的故事。長篇小說可以包含愛情、復仇、旅程、起伏、誘惑及對抗等情
and so on and still be unified by conviction. In a short story it’s more necessary to choose a plot type. A sensible teach-yourself approach to the practice of story writing is to focus on a theme at a time and to read the classics – like those mentioned above – that show you how it’s done.
節，而其主旨可以將這些情節貫通。短篇故事的寫作則更注重挑選情節的類型。最理想的自學方法，就是在挑選創作某一情節種類時，閱讀屬於這類情節的經典作品。你可參考上述的例子，看看它們是怎樣完成的。
**Asking questions/taking action:**

Around the story circle: Each participant chooses one of the ten story types listed above. On a loose sheet of paper, nominate the story type together with a possible title and/or a possible conviction and together with this information jot down ideas for any other aspects of the story. Silently circulate the sheets around the circle to see how much of a story can be brainstormed by the time the paper returns to its originator.

Create a common set of characters to try out in each of the ten story types. Talking through character questionnaires can be helpful for this purpose. Each participant around the circle works with one story type, but the same set of characters, to see if they’ll fit a particular genre. When individuals have sketched each of the possible story lines, it’s time to compare notes in the groups. Which story or stories work best with these characters? How can story types be combined to make the best story (or sequence of stories) for these characters? How have these characters evolved through the process of being tested against particular story types? (This process can be regarded as an advanced form of character questionnaire.)

Try the whole of the above process in the circle again but this time with the aim of together creating a plan for a novel that combines as many of the themes/story types as possible.
練習：

在故事圈裡：每個組員在以上十種情節類別中挑選一個。在紙上寫上故事的題目、主旨及其他與故事有關的構思，然後傳給身旁的組員，如此類推。當紙傳回第一個人手上時，看看上面有多少合用的靈感。

創作一套角色在每個情節種類裡做試驗。利用角色問卷可以幫助你創作故事人物。每個組員將自己創作的角色，套入不同的情節種類中，看看這些角色特別適合哪類情節。當每個人都準備好故事的情節構思時，便可跟其他組員比較筆記。哪個或哪些故事最適合你的角色？故事的種類需如何結合（或排列）才最適合你的角色？當你將角色套入不同的情節種類時，他們是如何轉變的？（這練習過程可以說是進階的角色問卷）。

重新進行以上程序，但試以創作小說為目標，盡可能將所有的主題或情節種類結合。
what are you trying to prove?

Because this is a manual for world changing action and because it has the practical aim of helping everyone to tell her or his own story/ies, in this last chapter we’ll turn things upside down a little and start first with questions relevant to the business of taking action. Chapter 5 introduced the idea of conviction, that a story proves something. Now that you’ve learned the basics of story making and now that you’ve probably got a collection of story drafts and ideas, more and less complete, on paper and in your head, the time has come to ask yourself a simple but important question, namely: What are you trying to prove?

Look back over the stories you’ve written or planned now and make a list of the convictions you’ve tried or that you want to prove through these stories. How visible or invisible were the convictions of these stories to your reader? How subtle – or on the other hand – how obvious was the message you were delivering? You may be surprised from your list to discover what you’re really interested in and to discover what you’ve been trying to prove to the world, to the story circle, to yourself. Is it the case that your stories all have similar convictions, or are you surprised at the range of concerns? Take the opportunity now to add convictions to your list, for stories you’ve not yet written but would like to write. What is it the world needs to be shown? What do you want to prove next?

Sharing these lists around the circle can be an eye opener. An exercise to follow the sharing is to swap convictions. Try to write stories to prove what other people’s stories set out to prove, have others try to prove your convictions. This process can help you to look at your work from a fresh perspective. Have you been going about proving your convictions in the best, most efficient, most appropriate
你想證明什麼？

因爲這是一本能引起改變世界的行動的手冊，更因爲它有著使每個人都開始創作屬於自己的故事這一實際目標。在最後這一章中，我們將稍微從相反方向來談談「怎樣做」這一問題。第五章已跟大家介紹過故事的主旨，即故事想要證明的事實。現在你應該已經學會了一些創作故事的基本概念及技巧，而在你的筆記本上或腦袋裡也應該有不少或差不多完整的故事構思。現在是時候問問自己一個簡單但重要的問題了。你想用故事證明什麼？

先回顧你之前寫過或構思的故事，把當中的主旨或你想證明的事實一一列出來。讀者能夠從故事裡理解你要表達的思想嗎？你所傳遞的訊息有多隱約或明確？你會為列表上的主旨感到驚訝，因爲你能從當中發現自己的興趣，以及想要向世界、故事圈和自己證明的事實。你的主旨是千篇一律還是涉及各種事物的？藉此機會在列表上為你將要寫作的故事新增其他主旨。世界需要向人類展示什麼？下一個要證明的事實又是什麼？

在故事圈內跟組員分享主旨，會使你獲益良多。然後大家可以交換主旨，試創作故事來證明對方的主旨，也讓其他人創作故事來證明你的。這一過程能讓你以新的角度檢視之前寫過的故事。究竟你有沒有用一個最好、最有效、及最適當的方法

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way? An important result of these discussions should be to test the strength of your convictions, to test your resolve. Are your stories proving what you think needs to be proved or are you just following some convention without giving the matter much thought?

One way to test how conventional or how experimental your stories are or could be is to draw up a little chart to show how conviction, resolution and genre are related in each case. Usually these three story elements are closely linked. Take the rise and fall plot; it’s often associated with the moral/conviction: ‘the harder they come, the harder they fall’, or else ‘pride cometh before a fall’. The resolution of the rise and fall (or rise and fall and rise or fall and rise and fall) plot depends on covering the greatest distance between the trough and the peak of a career. Against expectation, the protagonist ends the story on the throne or ends the story in the gutter. Conviction, resolution and genre are closely related because a genre is a writing structure premised on particular assumptions about human behaviour, social obligations and potentials, right and wrong; it’s designed to show a particular picture of the world and to prove to the reader how things ought or ought not to be. A certain kind of resolution belongs to a certain genre. Tragedies don’t have happy endings.

A genre structures the world in a certain way but that doesn’t mean writing in a particular genre is stuck with only one possible conviction and only one way of resolving conflict. Consider in your own stories (and in those of others around the story circle) how changing one element would alter the others or open them to new possibilities. Back to tragedy. What kind of a story would *Macbeth* or *Hamlet* or ‘Pyrmaus and Thisbe’ be with a happy ending? With a happy ending, these would not be the stories we know, but perhaps there’s a great new story waiting to be thought of just by making this simple kind of shift. Or consider the rise and fall story that ends – against expectation – with our protagonist becoming an office worker and
帶出故事的主旨？討論的結果能測試主旨有多強烈明確，也能讓你知道故事的結局有否符合你要證明的事實。究竟你的故事能否帶出你要證明的事實？抑或你只是盲目跟從創作規則，沒有為此多加思索？”

有一個方法可以測試你的故事傳統或創新的程度。試用圖表來表明主旨、結局和體裁之間的關係。這三種元素通常是相連的。以起伏情節為例，這類情節經常與「攀得越高，跌得越痛」或者「驕兵必敗」這些主旨或寓意有關。起伏故事的結局在於填補一件事的經過和高潮間的距離。但也會有讓人出乎意料之外的結局，人物最後可能登上寶座或在貧民窟過活。主旨、結局和體裁是相關連的，因爲體裁的寫作架構是以某種人物行爲模式、社會義務及潛能、是非觀等作爲前提的。每種體裁所展現的畫面，以及向讀者說明事實該或不該怎樣的情況都已被決定。而某種特定的結局則屬於某種特定的體裁。例如悲劇的結局不會是皆大歡喜的。

雖然每種體裁都以特定的方法建構故事世界，但這並不表示每種體裁只有一個主旨及解決衝突的結局。試將你的故事（或故事圈組員的故事）的其中一個要素改變，看看其他要素有否隨之而變化，能否為你帶來新的故事靈感。再說說悲劇這種體裁。如果《麥克白》、《哈姆雷特》以及皮拉摩斯和西斯貝的結局是美滿的話，故事會變成怎樣？這些故事如果是大團圓結局的話，就不再是我們所知道的故事了。但只要在當中作小小的改變，我們就可能創作出一個新故事。如果我們想為起伏故事創作一個意料之外的結局，主角最後可以成爲一個普通的
living a quiet life unnoticed in the suburbs. (*The Last Emperor* almost fits this bill.)

Story type tends to match conviction and resolution in a clichéd way, that is, in a way that is easily predicted by the reader. Should we be worried about cliché? Yes and no. Let’s have a look at some very common clichéd convictions. Here’s a short list of some old favourites. They’re in proverbial or aphoristic form. Will all of them serve as convictions?

- don’t judge a book by its cover
- no pain no gain
- no free lunch – i.e. everything has a price whether you can see it at the time or not
- every action leads to a reaction
- you can run but you can’t hide
- nobody knows you when you’re down and out
- truth will be revealed
- love conquers all
- trust is earned
- evil comes to those with evil thoughts
- idle hands do the devil’s work
- where there’s a will there’s a way (or if you try and try you’ll succeed at last)

These convictions seem very corny listed like this, but in practice it’s surprising how difficult it is to write a story that doesn’t prove a corny or clichéd conviction. Think through the last few stories you’ve read or seen on video/TV. The clichés don’t worry you because you don’t notice them. You don’t notice them because they’re usually not made explicit. As a writer though, you have a duty to know what you’re doing, to know which ideas you’re promoting, which way you’re asking people to look at the world. Remember that conviction needn’t be the most important aspect of a story. A clichéd conviction
文員，在郊區過著寧靜的生活（這個結局可能適合電影《末代皇帝》）。

故事種類通常會以老生常談的方式將主旨及結局聯繫起來。換句話說，讀者很容易便能預知結局。我們需否在意這些老掉了牙的故事情節？這就要看情況了。讓我們先看看一些老套的主旨吧！當中一些是諺語，一些是格言。但是否每一句都能作爲故事的主旨呢？

- 人不可以貌相
- 一分耕耘，一分收穫
- 世界沒有免費的午餐
- 有因必有果
- 逃避不是解決問題的辦法
- 落魄時沒有人會在乎你
- 遲早會真相大白
- 愛可以戰勝一切
- 信任是一點一滴累積的
- 魔鬼會找那些心術不正的人
- 遊手好閒是萬惡之源
- 有志者事竟成

以上這些主旨看似是平庸乏味，但想在故事中帶出不平庸的訊息可不容易。回想一下你最近讀過或看過的故事，你會發現自己並沒有察覺那些乏味且陳腐的訊息，這是因爲故事沒有明顯的將其表現出來。但身爲作者，我們有責任清楚地知道自己做的事情、想要說明的事實，以及想引領讀者看世界的角度。記著主旨不一定是故事最重要的部份。當你發現不想證實那個平
is only really a problem when you find yourself proving something you would rather not prove if you had taken the time to think the matter through.

Before we get to the serious ethical business of challenging proverbial wisdom or trying to do something better than cliché, look again at the list above and you’ll see that some of these convictions may have a more basic problem than merely being a bit corny. Some of them won’t work. They won’t work either because they’re too broad to have any application to a particular story or else they’re tautological (i.e. they’re circular, not really saying anything [e.g. ‘if the world was different, it wouldn’t be the same’].) Think back to the If… test we applied to convictions in Chapter 5. A conviction that works should be able to be expressed as a reversible if… then… statement. So from the list above, you could say of ‘love conquers all’: ‘if you get in the way of love you’ll be conquered.’ Yes, that’s ambiguous but it will work as a conviction. Likewise, ‘trust is earned’, could give us: ‘If you place your trust in those who haven’t earned it, you will be betrayed.’ Remember, no equivocating: there is no maybe or could be when it comes to conviction. But consider ‘every action leads to a reaction’. This won’t work because it’s too obvious and it’s too general. In fact it amounts to a logical principle with very wide application; for instance it can apply in the making of stories in general. We should recognise it as the principle of motivation: ‘what happens in a story happens for a reason’ = ‘actions lead to reactions, reactions are caused’. It’s not uncommon for the apprentice story maker to ‘discover’ a principle of fiction (especially one learned last week) and then try to write a story using this principle as a conviction. It’s not uncommon but it doesn’t work. It is however a good sign that the fundamentals of the craft are being absorbed.

The majority of problems that trouble beginning story writers are because of weak convictions or the lack of a unifying conviction
庸的主旨時，那個主旨才會是個問題。

在嘗試在這些老生常談的主旨裡作出突破之前，再多看一次以上的諺語和格言，你會發現它們除了平庸乏味外，還存有其他問題。當中一些根本不能成爲主旨。因爲它們的意義太寬泛，我們很難以一個故事來帶出當中的道理。有些則是贅言，根本沒有多大意義（例：假如世界是不同的，那麼世界將會不一樣）。試回想我們在第五章裡用來測試主旨的「假如……」習題。主旨應該能以相反的「假如…便會…」句式來表達。以「愛可以戰勝一切」為例，我們可以說成「如果你妨礙愛情，愛情便會征服你」。這聽起來好像模棱兩可，但作爲故事的主旨是可行的。同樣，「信任是一點一滴累積的」可以說成「如果你相信的人沒有做足夠的事累積信任的話，你便會遭到背叛」。記著，說明主旨不過含糊其詞，當中不可以包含「或者」、「可能」等字眼。而「有因必有果」因爲太籠統而不能成爲主旨。這句話的邏輯若應用於創作故事裡是合適的。我們應視此為動機的原則：「事件引致其它事件發生」其實即等同於「有因必有果」。初學者在意識到創作故事的原則時，經常以此爲主旨，但這是不可行的。但從另一個角度來看，這並不是一件壞事情，至少他們在故事創作上開始上手了。

初學寫故事的人，經常會遇到主旨太薄弱、主旨未能統一
or because of drift between two or more perfectly good convictions in a story. Regardless of length, a story needs one conviction and that conviction needs to work logically and to be allowed to work throughout the story. Characters can have their own convictions and the differences between those convictions can be an effective source of conflict. Episodes – or stories within the story – can prove convictions different from those of other episodes, but a work as a whole is unified by the presence – however visible or invisible – of a single workable conviction, one the whole of the story proves. Remember, conviction is the hidden arrow that hits its target in the story’s resolution, to show the reader what the whole of the story proves.

How can one be sure a conviction is workable, and is working in a story? Here’s a more thorough test to apply. A conviction should be:

- logical (and for instance not tautological)
- able to be proved
- notionally able to be disproved

Most importantly a conviction should be worth proving, and that means that your conviction is something you should have thought about and decided to prove in and with your story. Imagine your big story consists of three smaller ones, each of which proves a different conviction. Let’s say Story 1 proves that you shouldn’t judge a book by its cover, Story 2 proves that there’s no gain without pain and Story 3 proves that love conquers all. What conviction could the big story be proving? ‘If you don’t fight you lose’ would work. ‘The truth will set you free’ would work. There are many other possibilities. Bear in mind that a conviction could be workable but not working in your story. The key here is to remember that the whole of your story proves its conviction. The trick in the story with parts is to allow the rhythm of convictions – those of characters, those of the minor stories – to play out so as to not undermine the conviction that
情節或故事有兩個或以上的主旨等問題。故事不管有多長，也只能有一個主旨，而其主旨需要合邏輯地貫穿整個故事。每個角色都有自己的主旨，當中的差異製造衝突。每一集，或故事裡的另一個故事，都可以分別有不同的主旨，但它們還是會以一個主旨來貫穿整部劇集或故事。記著，主旨是一支以故事結局為目標的隱形箭，讓讀者了解故事想要證明的事實。

但我們又如何得知故事的主旨是奏效的呢？可以參考以下條件，主旨一定要乎合：
- 邏輯（即並不是一些重複的話語或贅言）
- 可以被證實的
- 理論上可以被反駁的

最重要的一點是主旨一定要值得你去證明。換言之，主旨必需是經過思考且決定要透過故事來證明的事實。想像你的故事裡有三段小插曲，每段插曲都有一個主旨。第一段插曲說明不要以貌取人；第二段插曲說明一分耕耘，一分收穫；第三段插曲說明愛可以戰勝一切。那麼整個故事又可以說明什麼呢？可以是「不勇於嘗試的話，結果會失敗」，或「真理可以將你釋放」。還有很多主旨是可行的。但切記一個奏效的主旨不一定適合你的故事。關鍵在於請記住你的故事全部都是為了證明主旨。故事中的章節是為了給主旨造就一種韻律，那些角色，那些小故事，不是為了破壞故事的主旨，而是為了使故事成爲一
gives the work its structural unity. A story may deliver many ethical messages, may ask its reader many useful questions, but it still needs to be unified – beginning to end – by a single conviction, one proven by the story’s action.

Let’s return briefly now to the question of cliché and the imperative that your story’s conviction should be one worth proving. Some corny convictions are expressed with the moral force of an imperative. Here are a few examples:
- don’t fight the tide (or go with the flow)
- one good turn deserves another
- a friend in need is a friend in deed
- it’s better to help others than to help yourself

Again, children’s stories are more likely to make explicit this kind of ‘teaching’; stories for adults generally hide it. Some convictions fall into the category of wishful thinking. ‘The truth will set you free’ might be an example of that kind. There are many:
- sincerity will bring success
- honesty is the best policy
- with faith anything is possible

This is a very important kind of wishful thinking; it’s the kind that keeps civilisations and individuals going, sometimes it keeps them afloat in a sea of troubles and doubts and deep cynicism.

Proverbs and clichés, corny old wisdom, the wishful thinking most people take for granted: these vary interestingly across cultures and so are useful to discuss in the story circle. In the convictions of stories we meet the basic assumptions a culture holds about how life ought to be, how one ought to behave, what’s right, what’s wrong, what’s possible or acceptable and what’s not. Discussing conviction not only helps you to negotiate and to create stories of a kind you would not otherwise have thought of, it also helps you to reconsider and to prioritise your own beliefs. This kind of discussion helps
個整體。一個故事可能會傳達很多關於倫理道德的訊息以及使
讀者產生思考的問題，但故事只能有一個主旨，而該主旨更是
貫穿著整個故事的主線。

讓我們再來討論平庸乏味的主旨以及主旨中值得你去證明
的事實。一些老生常談的主旨經常以祈使的方式表達，例如：
- 順其自然，不要逆道而行
- 好心有好報
- 患難見真情
- 助人為快樂之本
兒童故事通常為了起到教育意義而明確地表達這些主旨。但給
成年人閱讀的故事的主旨則不會太顯而易見。一些主旨是一廂
情願的想法，「真理可以將你釋放」就是其中例子，又或者：
- 誠意可以打動一切
- 誠實為上策
- 精誠所至，金石為開
這些一廂情願的訊息是十分重要的，因爲它們能使人類保持文
明。這些訊息有時候還能讓遇到困難的人找到一些希望和寄
託，讓他們以積極的態度面對問題。

大部份人都認為這些諺語、老生常談的格言及一廂情願的
訊息都是理所當然的。但來自不同文化背景的人對這些訊息都
會有不同的見解，在故事圈中與這些人討論將給你很大幫助。
故事的主旨讓我們認識各文化對事物的不同看法。生活該是怎
麼樣？我們的行舉止該怎麼樣？什麼是對，什麼是錯？什麼
是可能或不可能的？什麼是可接受或不可接受的？跟大家討論
主旨不但可以幫助你創作一些你從未想過的故事，還可以使你
people to respect each other’s beliefs and to learn how and why others believe and think the way they do.

There’s no need to be afraid that your story might have a clichéd conviction. There is a need to understand what you’re doing. The responsible writer may not be able to control all of the effects her story will have on its reader, she still needs to know what she is trying to prove. Don’t be afraid of clichés, instead ask questions of them, challenge them. A story with a clichéd conviction is not necessarily a boring or clichéd story. That’s because the conviction need by no means be the most important thing in the story. Only rarely will you want it to be the most obvious thing.

How to challenge convictions, clichés, the deep assumptions of a culture? This isn’t as difficult as it sounds. For a start, proverbial wisdom is often self-challenging. Aphorisms often have opposite numbers; they can be reversed: ‘Look before you leap’ but ‘he who hesitates is lost’. ‘The truth will set you free’ but honesty is pointless with those who won’t believe you, ‘don’t cast pearls before swine.’

Let’s look at how some of these proverbs could be challenged in order to create new and less clichéd convictions. ‘Look before you leap’ could become ‘Feel the fear and do it anyway’. ‘One can’t help casting pearls, at least choose the swine carefully.’ Those ideas might become clichés too, if they were to become too popular. A cliché is merely an idea outworn through over-use. In principle, no idea is immune to this fate. It’s often the best ideas and the best expressions that become over-used in this manner. Perhaps the most ironic expression of the sad fate of the great idea is in Robert Frost’s ‘the road less travelled’. It’s become a ten lane freeway for anyone who
重新思考和給自己的信念定位。這種討論讓大家學會尊重別人的信念，以及了解別人有此想法的理由。

即使你的故事有一個平庸乏味的主旨，你也不需擔心。你需要清楚知道自己在做什麼事。雖然一個負責任的作者也未必能控制故事對讀者的影響，但他需要確定自己要證明的是什麼事實。不要害怕陳腔濫調，與其質疑它們，不如挑戰它們。即使故事有一個平庸乏味的主旨，也不代表其內容是沈悶的。因為主旨不必成爲故事的最重要部份。在很少的情況之下，你才會想要它成爲故事中最突出的要素。

我們可以怎麼挑戰這些主旨、陳腔濫調以及人們習以爲常的事物？這其實並不像想像中那麼困難。首先，諺語當中的智慧經常是自打嘴巴的，而很多格言的意思都是對立的，例如我們可以用「舉棋不定，錯失良機」來反駁「三思而後行」。雖然「真理可以將你釋放」，但若沒有人相信事實的話，則變成「對牛彈琴」了。

想想我們可以怎樣挑戰這些格言金句，創作出一些新的主旨。例如「三思而後行」可以變成「面對害怕，硬著頭皮繼續」。或者「不要明珠暗投」這句，可以寫成「要小心選擇明主」。但當這些金句被廣泛使用時，最終也會變得平平無奇。其實陳腔濫調都只不過是在生活中被人們廣泛使用的用語。理論上，沒有任何信念可以避過這種命運。最好的信念和措詞才會被人經常使用。或許羅伯特·弗羅斯特（Robert Frost）的詩《人迹罕至的路》正好能表現出這些偉大思想的諷刺之處。詩中有一句說：「我選擇走一條人迹稀少的路。」這句話用來形
wants to promote an idea as different. The ten lane freeway’s now a cliché too. Still it is possible to make a difference and there are more challenging and less clichéd convictions. Here are some examples:

- If you seek perfection you will lose your uniqueness
- If you show the world a faithful mirror do not expect to be thanked
- Humans will always lose in the end whenever they fight nature
- If you soil your own nest then expect to live in filth (If you don’t take care of nature then don’t expect nature to look after you.)
- Silence is not always golden
- Don’t be too sure whose story you’re in

It’s usually tedious when the characters in a story begin lecturing each other about how the world ought to be. Action speaks louder than words and so it is better if the action of the story proves what the story has to prove, it’s better if the story speaks for itself. This business of showing and proving doesn’t mean that the story should leave the reader without doubts. On the contrary, one of the best things any work of art can do is to make us look again at what seemed familiar and known and fixed forever as the way things simply have to be. One of the best things a story can do is to reveal the clichéd assumption behind the thinking we don’t even think about. Do you really want to prove to children that the darkness is dangerous or that strangers are? Do you really want to teach girls to be passive and submissive, boys to be dominating, just because that’s how the world seems to be and that’s the way most stories show it must be?

Use your craft and your art as a story maker to throw a question mark around the world and the assumptions that keep it going. Ask: whose world is it? Is this the right place? Is this the model we ordered? If the function of the story is to make people look again
容那些想要創作出與眾不同的主旨的人是最適合不過的。其實我們可以稍微修改一些現有的諺語及格言，然後就會出現一些全新的金句了。例如：

- 在尋求完美的同時，你會喪失自我
- 真相不是每個人都願意接受的
- 人們選擇逆向而行時，往往都會迷失方向
- 如果你投的不是桃，別希望人們報以李
- 沉默不一定是金
- 當局者迷，耳聽三分假，眼見未為真

當故事的人物開始跟讀者講道理時，故事便會顯得冗長乏味。通過故事的情節來道出道理往往比借人物說理更加發人深省。這種做法並不代表故事應該讓讀者對其內容毫無疑問。相反，藝術作品能吸引讀者去重新審視那些我們一直習以爲常的事情。故事最有趣的地方，就是能讓我們從不以爲意的事件悟出老生常談的道理。你真的要讓小朋友知道黑夜是危險的、陌生人是要小心提防的嗎？你真的想提倡女孩是被動與服從，而男孩是主導的嗎？是否因爲看似世界都是這樣，或大部份故事都在傳達這些訊息，你就得證明以上的概念？

你可用故事創作者的身份，向世界及其假定的事情打一個大問號。問：這是誰的世界？是這個地方嗎？這個世界的模式是我們安排的嗎？如果故事的作用是使人們重新審視身邊的事
at the world around them, to make them think again about what’s wrong with that world, about how it could be fairer and better, then perhaps Socrates’ old cliché is one of the best convictions you could prove: ‘the unanalysed life is not worth living.’ With every story you write, ask yourself: ‘Why am I telling this story? What am I trying to prove?’
物、思考世界上不合理的事情，以及考慮如何改善世界的話，我們可以引用蘇格拉底的一句老話，它或許是你最想證實的主旨之一：「未經反思的生活是不值得活的」。最後，記住每次在我們寫故事之前，都要問自己「為什麼我要講這個故事？我想證明的是什麼？」
Chapter Eight


Introduction:

‘Conversation with Tang Poets: Some Notes on the Practice’, is an article I contributed to a 2007 feature on ‘The Poetry of Response’, of which I was editor for Jacket magazine. Contents of that feature was as follows:

Christopher Kelen: Introduction

Peter Riley: Quotation: ‘It Don’t Mean a Thing’

Tony Barnstone: The Cannibal at Work: Five Discourses on Translation, Transformation, Imitation, and Transmutation

Gary Blankenship: After Wang Wei

Forrest Gander: The Strange Case of Thomas Traherne

Kent Johnson: Imitation, Traduction, Fiction, Response

Oana Avasilichioaei and Erin Moure: C’s Garden

chus pato, andrés ajens et al.: correspondencias (lalín, galicia – santiago, chile; iowa city/buenos aires, la paz, ciudad juárez/los angeles

Christopher Kelen: conversation with Tang Poets: some notes on the practice

My aim in this final piece in the feature was to detail conception and practice of various related collaborative translation/response projects which I had initiated over the previous four or five years. This was one of a number of articles I published on my own collaborative translation and response practice (others were in Segue [Fall, 2006] and Cipher Journal [2006]). Projects have proliferated since the time of the Jacket feature and several further translation/response publications have resulted (especially After Meng Jiao [2008], Pluck a Lotus for Pleasure – Women Poets of the Song Dynasty [2008] and I Roll the Dice – Anthology of Contemporary Macao Poetry [2008]). Still others are on the way (Women Poets of the Tang Dynasty, translation of the poems of Hong Kong poet P.K. Leung, a volume of responses to Romanian poets).

I believe that, through collaboration on such projects, in a spirit of dialogue and on the basis of all parties being essential to the process-at-hand, I have been able to achieve important results with individual poets-in-the-making; likewise to facilitate the building of a community of English (and other) language poets in Macao.
Christopher Kelen

Conversation with Tang Poets: some notes on the practice

The pleasures of poetry are – like those of trope play more generally – aligned with affinity for the impossible: the impossible place, the impossible way, conversations that simply can’t happen. What more pleasant impossibility than the cinematic voyeurism which gives us the desert without the flies, fifth century Athens sans war and slavery? Or perhaps a conversation with the giants (and lesser figures) of Tang poetry, minus the sundry privations of their age? Or some other dynasty if that seems better.

It all started for me with a couple of lines from a poem by Meng Jiao, one of the ancients to whom some of us were introduced by Pink Floyd (‘Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun’):

Inch of heart in the grass/ no gratitude for the sunshine of Spring
Somewhere revisiting A.C. Graham’s Meng Jiao translations in *Poems of the Late T’ang*, I lit on the solution to a problem which had been troubling me as a teacher of Creative Writing.

The cluster of related projects I account for here began with a single simple frustration. Teaching poetry (production from reception) between cultures (in China) I have found it difficult to avoid a seesaw of disappointing results. On the one hand we have the greeting card thing (with the motherhood business) on the other the sledgehammer (which deafens rather than changes the world). Both of these poetastings conform to Oscar Wilde’s dictum with regard to the guaranteed sincerity of bad poetry. There is as well a set of problems which relate to what Michelle Yeh has described of the ‘artist as hero’ phenomenon as it manifests in the ‘cult of poetry’ in China today (190) – afflictions recognisably influenced by western Modernism. The poet/artist as incomprehensible (so misunderstood) inspired suffering outsider: this persona has corollaries in practice: obfuscation, moral posturing, superior man business. The artist as hero needs not make sense, rather he (sic.) needs to be fatally flawed.

Mindful of these kinds of danger, my aim has been to skip the genius + inspiration trip in favour of the teaching of writing through models for the purpose intended. Along these lines, a revelation to me was Kenneth Koch’s 1990 book *Rose Where Did You Get That Red*. Koch’s book seemed to me based on an unlikely premise – that children could learn to write well through exposure to poetic models which appeared to be far ahead of what they could comprehend as readers, let alone produce as writers. But many teachers had found the method did in fact work; I had wanted to take this pedagogy further, to serve more specific (and cross-cultural) needs. In my situation, specifically teaching poetry writing to non-natives, I was looking for a way of bringing the novice non-native writer of English language poetry to models which would help her respond expressively to her own cultural milieu, to introduce that milieu and responses engendered to those foreign to her culture (for instance me) and to respond as well to the process of crossing, i.e. of coming into the new culture. Of course I was interested to see what impact engagement of this kind might have on my own practice in poetry.
The hypothesis operational here is that the poet in modern times wishes to do the kinds of things in and to her own language that the foreign learner cannot help but do to the language she is entering. Consider Octavio Paz’s conception of the ‘new’ poem: ‘Each new poetic work challenges the public’s mind and taste. To appreciate it a reader must learn the vocabulary of the work and assimilate its syntax’ (96). To some extent the creation of such works entails taking the mechanism of language apart to get an idea of how it runs. In these hands the worn coin is re-forged. In the terms the Russian Formalists adopted, the poet strives to de-familiarise the language s/he uses, to bring back to life dead metaphors and metonymies. The non-native cannot help but draw attention to these automatised features of language which are opaque to her. It is by drawing attention to them — for instance through a question — she manages to understand what (and perhaps how) words mean. And so both poet and the subject entering culture (= language) find themselves bearing witness in quite similar ways. Each witnesses the truths of culture which use has drawn from our (everyday) attention. As with witness more generally, we can expect trauma to result from those encounters which draw attention to lost truths, to truths yet to be found. For Immanuel Levinas, this trauma is in the nature of language/communication more generally. Discourse, Levinas writes is the ‘experience of something absolutely foreign, a pure “knowledge” or “experience”, a traumatism of astonishment’ (73).

While my goals in working with Chinese poetry were immediately pedagogical, they were ethically framed and ultimately ontological, or at least identity-oriented. My hope was to engage students through poetry (as a process) with the meaning of being between languages, cultures; to engage the meaning of a conversation of that kind. The specific focus the work has taken is simply to honour our ancestors in poetry by keeping the conversation with them going. Commencing with Meng Jiao, over the past three years I have evolved a series of overlapping collaborative projects, each focused on responding to a particular classical Chinese poet.

In the rest of this piece I will tell a little of the method involved in these engagements and introduce some results — in the form of a poem or three — from each of the projects. The poets
concerned are (in chronological order) Tao Yuanming, Meng Jiao, Li He, Li Yu, Xin Qiji and Nalanxingde. I will conclude with a note bringing these musings up-to-date and considering their implications among the living.

Meng Jiao

The first, largest and longest running of the projects abovementioned is one in response to that grumpy second-tier late Tang poet, Meng Jiao (751-814). Collaborators Hilda Tam, Amy Wong and myself have been at work on translations and responses to Meng Jiao for more than three years now and have two volumes of poetry now nearing completion (one of translation and one of response.) The procedure we followed was essentially this: we first ‘glossed’ the poems (made rough translations into English with notes) and tried to get to know them with the use of commentaries and specialised dictionaries. I then responded playfully to the poems in English in draft form and encouraged Hilda and Amy to do the same (in English and/or in Chinese). When we had worked through all of the poems in this way, we looked again at all of the responses with a view to dividing them into translations, responses or pieces which might go either way. It was only after getting to this stage, more than a year into the project, we began to think that we might have two separate volumes brewing. Because Meng Jiao’s extant oeuvre consists of more than five hundred pieces we had no trouble getting enough distance from each piece. Pressing on relentlessly through the collection, by the time we got back to any one poem (a second or a third time) we were able to approach it as a fresh meeting.

A brief biographical note on our progenitor/interlocutor... Not only was Meng Jiao a self-identified loser in his own lifetime, he is really one of the great complainers of Chinese literature, and has been famously regarded as such by later poets[1]. Working through his oeuvre – apart from general maudlin observations about the cruelty of nature – one might cynically say that the first half of the corpus is dominated by poems about failing examinations and the second half by poems about the deaths of friends and acquaintances. Getting through the extant works became tedious for these reasons but it must also be admitted one never had to wait long for a gem to brighten the work.
Let me reproduce for the reader something of the process with the example of gloss, translation and response for one short poem.

**Original poem in Chinese:**

喜與長文上人宿李秀才小山池亭
燈盡語不盡，主人庭砌幽。
柳枝星影曙，蘭葉露華浮。
塊嶺笑群岫，片池輕眾流。
更聞清淨子，逸唱頗難儔。
卷四 遊適上

**Gloss stage – notes towards translation:**

Happy to be with Chang Wen Shang Ren and spend a night at Li Xiu Cai’s pavilion near a lake in a small mountain

(Note: ‘ShangRen’ is a title for a respected person. Literally, it means ‘high person’. ‘XiuCai’ is a title for scholars.)

The oil lamp has died out but our conversations go on, Li’s pavilion is quiet.

(Note: To talk in a quiet place can make someone feel the place is quieter than it is.)

We can still see the stars in the sky but there are already gleams of the day in the willows, There is dew on the orchid leaves.

The little mountain laughs at the other peaks, The small lake looks down on the other rivers.
(Note: Although the mountain is not tall and the lake is small, they are beautiful.)

I hear Qing Jing Zi,
He is chanting his poems so happily that I can hardly chord.

Translation:
**pavilion by tarn on just a little mountain**

lamp dies

but our talk goes on
telling the silence here

still stars in the sky

but first gleams through willows
dew on the orchid’s leaves

little mountain laughs at high peaks

perfect lake looks down on the rivers

and Qing Jing Zi –

he sings so well

I keep silent

I can’t do justice with my strings

**my response:**

**aubade**

lamp gutters

but our talk goes on

stars still
but the day unveils willows  
shows orchids in dew

little mountain  
laughs at the towering peaks

a new song?  
this one for dawn

my companion already has words  
now that I can see the strings  
I cannot find the chords

Xin Qiji

Xin Qiji (1140-1207) was a Song Dynasty poet who wrote in a range of genres and is famous for the more than six hundred ci poems he composed to one hundred and one different tunes. Collaborator Agnes Vong and I have worked through around a quarter of Xin Qiji’s surviving oeuvre. The response here is from a m/s of translations and variations currently in press with VAC in Chicago.

Original poem in Chinese:

清平樂
遙床飢鼠，
蝙蝠翻燈舞。
屋上松風吹急雨，
破紙窗間自語。
平生塞北江南，
歸來華髮蒼顏。
布被秋宵夢覺，
眼前萬裏江山。

Translation:

Pure Serene Music

a hungry rat quick past the bed  
a rat dances towards the light  
on the roof, a howling wind
and the rain beats down
broken papers on the windows
are mumbling to themselves

I had a busy life, north to east
now I’m back with white hair and beard
the bedclothes are too thin,
I’m too cold and wake up
on an autumn night
all I can see are the same
thousand miles of mountains

my variation/response:

rat dreaming

a hungry rat runs past the bed
rats always run
they’re always hungry

a rat dances towards the light
this is the rodent’s joy

unending night
up on the roof
a howling wind

paper’s torn
rain beats the walls rotten

think of the shutters mumbling insensibly

‘life took me everywhere’
the old rat said

‘now only my underbelly’s still black
the rest is grey, I’ve snow white whiskers

once I dreamt I woke a man
I’ve long since slept that nightmare off’

bedclothes too thin
see how I turn

the autumn gets inside me

for thousands of miles
these mountains the same
still thousands of years
to this night

Li Yu

Li Yu (936-978) was last emperor of the Southern Tang, and by all accounts a much better poet than emperor. A bit of a lounge lizard, the philosopher cum poet cum painter rarely got out of his slippers. Deposed, he died a prisoner in someone else’s kingdom but not before penning quite a few complaints about cruel fate. Below is a sample of my responses to the collaborative translations I have made with Petra Seak.

first of love’s season

first of spring
is for pleasure

what floats in a cup of wine?
petals
unfolding
the flower

let us not whisper
of withering

it’s spring – let’s drink to it
you beat the drum
I’ll bring the brush and ink

waking for a piss in the early hours

the palace sleeps

I put on a gown
for the moonlight

stood among the chill bamboo
here’s me – miniature landscape
waterfall of my own making
eyes high in the forest of leaves
just so
I seek a star

hung over
in the imperial bedroom
cherry blossoms
strew the yard seen
from an ivory bed
cast in moonlight
tears fall on scant
garments of love
lustreless hair loosed
shows bitter yearning
so many papers to sign
call the next girl
the emperor
wants to resign

Tao Yuanming

Also with Petra Seak, I have worked on Tao Yuanming (365-427), a poet of the Six Dynasties period (also known as Tao Qian) famous for his version of the Peach Blossom Spring myth and also for his many drinking poems, for which I have been writing variations. Tao Yuanming was a great role model for poets to follow: he is the character who shakes off the bureaucratic dust of the world in order to retire to the simpler world of poetry, in nature (with a wee dram on a regular basis just to lighten things up). The fragments of variation shown immediately below have their source in a number of Tao Yuanming poems:
truth has been lost
for longer than anyone cares to remember
that's because the bastards won't drink –
they're only interested in reputation

I cherish life
life can't last long
but when that bolt comes out of the blue
it's best to have under the belt
one or two

* 

bird lost from its flock
flies on although the sun has set
back and forth
and deep in the night
yearns for a home in heaven
but finally comes to a lonely pine
no other trees here
beyond where winds blow
folds wings and settles down to stay
now you see where my hut is anchored
and you know these friends of mine
nor will it surprise you to learn
in the bird bath
just a drop of wine

* 

spring and autumn
fair seasons in which
to scale far mountains
make fresh verses

passing open doors
I greet folk
who meet me with jugs brimming

out in the fields
there's no time for this

but now
we talk and laugh
the tiredness is gone
at last step outside
for converse with the moon

stream of gold
I dedicate in this meditation

toil of hands
puts food in our mouths
clothes on our backs

nor is it vain now to profit
from the soil’s beneficence

and give this little back

Li He

Li He (791-817) was a Tang poet of the generation following Meng Jiao’s. A failure as a scholar bureaucrat, he died young and was out of fashion for the best part of a millennium, until a recent revival in interest. Famous for his horse poems, tradition tells us a jealous cousin disposed of much of his œuvre down the toilet. The responses below are to collaborative translations made with Charlie Li.

I held a sword

I held a sword
I left my home

I slashed the clouds
to pieces

I was a gust
the mountains blew down

proud as spring
I came

morning – clean
the sun rose on my blade

by evening
sunset red
and dark in the night
my sword’s sweet sleep
my cold love
all these deeds
for you

**somebody else’s home town**

wind blows
in the lotus

the moon
wears bright
ear rings

your red dress
fragrant as laurel

dish night
must last
until I go

the boats
won’t
bring
it
back

Nalanxingde

Another poet who died young and stayed pretty (died of a cold at the age of thirty one), Nalanxingde (1654-1685) was a Manchu nobleman and bodyguard of the emperor Kangxi. Rather than responding to any poem/s in particular, the response below borrows imagery from a number of poems by Nalanxingde (these from collaborative translations made with Lili Han).
crossing

blue gossamer scarf
though a thread of tea smoke

winter dusk crowd
of crows arrived

breeze across the vase –
through plum blossoms

silk quilting the girl’s pavilion

through those shutters
willows catch every cliché on wings

incense in the figure of a heart
falls shapelessly to dust

then back to the dream
and go on with the dream
nothing to wake up for

1958group

There are more poets with whom I’ve been working in the ways
outlined above – including some twentieth century authors.
Over the last year some of my
collaborators in these projects have joined with me and my
colleague Dr Yao Jingming (Yao Feng) in a regular Saturday
afternoon poetry workshop, called 1958group. Combined with
an on-line e-mail list and blog, 1958group brings to the living
the skills of translation and response we’ve been practising on
dead poets up until now. Let me close then with a snippet of the
kind of conversation that’s commencing. Here’s Yao Feng’s
poem ‘狼來了’, ‘the wolf’s coming’:

狼來了

狼來了
羊們沒有跑
他們停止了吃草
排成整齊的佇列
像一壟壟棉花
Here’s my translation with Agnes Vong:

**the wolf's coming**

the wolf's coming

the sheep didn’t run
they stopped eating the grass
formed up a queue
like cotton wool

the wolf howled at the flock
‘it’s hot as hell, this weather!’
all the sheep
took off their coats

Continuing in fairytale mode, here’s Agnes Vong’s poem ‘lover of fairytales’

**lover of fairy tales**

evening light
a valley of shadows

secrets between my footsteps and
the tangled bushes

a twig from the first branch
for the ash girl

a red apple
for the snowy white girl

a magic door
for the nosy girl

at the end of the valley
my grandmother’s grave

童話愛好者暮色蒼茫
有一個影子的山谷

腳步與灌木叢之間
是一大堆秘密

第一根樹枝上的嫩枝
送給那灰姑娘

一個紅蘋果
送給那白雪公主

一扇魔幻門
送給那多管閒事的女孩

山谷深處
是祖母的墓碑

And, from the same conversation, Amy Wong’s poem ‘fairytales’
(Note that this and the next poem were written in Chinese and English, so – though each is faithful to the other – neither text can properly be considered as translation):

fairytales

when I was a girl
I played in a fake forest

the entrance –
a path with no grass covering
lay beyond the clouds

looking around
the trees in the box

leaving the homeless birds
alone in the dark
noise with sudden storm
frightened the beasts

thunder, roaring –
chorus of nature

mists never shine
but through the mirror
they chant and whisper

the exit –
full of flowers
fading

童話
小時候
曾在一個虛假的森林遊玩

入口──
一條沒有草的小徑
躺在雲端

環顧四周
盒子裏的樹

遺下失去家園的鳥
獨自留在黑暗中

吵聲伴著突起的風暴而來
嚇怕了野獸

雷聲、吼聲
自然的合唱

霧從不發亮
但透過鏡子
它低吟淺唱

出口──
In closing I would like to make brief mention of the impact of the projects described on my own work. I commenced with a pedagogic problem but the process of addressing it may have permanently altered my own poetic practice. At least for the time being it has become my habit to read poetry only in the mode of response – that is, with pencil in hand. This way I refuse the poem as ‘just an artefact’; I insist on a conversation.

Allow me to situate this personal change. I have long been committed to what I now call the peripatetic mode – in other words, to poetry as journey cum conversation. Seen one way, the journey is primarily with oneself. ‘Collecting’, I walk and take notes. (In fact I stop to scribble, so as to keep from falling over. I go on.) I’m not hoping to be a spectacle but must acknowledge I sometimes am. Eyes over the shoulder keep me in motion. In China it’s easy to gather a crowd this way. So one can never pause for long. But like the ghost or the criminal I return to the scene. Gathering again, I forget what I found before, how I found it, what it was for. I lose my way. These ways become habits – I try to forget, I try to lose my way. The longer I stay the harder this gets. The more I am of the place the less able I am to disturb its assumptions, but the more I have to say.

Notes for the place proliferate in these paradoxical ways and once I judge I have enough distance (or as much as I’m going to get) I return to them and sift. I do this in some adequately homely place. I begin to try for a poem once there are sufficient observations, strophes, image sets for the different encounters to be themselves a kind of conversation – between subjectivities, temporalities – these mediated by separate engagements of a single place. I call this place-based poetics.

The procedure here is a version of what Stephen Spender named the Beethoven method – composing from fragments.
More specifically, the journey I’ve in mind is that of the *bricoleur* – whose direction is an indirection – that is the journey of one who cannot know beforehand the uses of what s/he picks up along the way. Now this might seem an elaborate hedging purposed to avoid engagement or commitment. But here as elsewhere the analysed life is indicated. Not knowing where one is going, only by stages discovering where one comes from – one needs to have one’s wits about. The uneasy and important thing here is the way one goes ... the exercise of rights and responsibilities of a traveler cum scavenger.

Being in another culture is exemplary for the poet who is always trying to find that kind of relation to his/her own home and idiom. The *betweenness of language* is the critical space for poetries, the ‘way’ is indirection; being between cultures while one is working makes the needful lost-ness easier.

So much for the conversation with oneself via poetry. What does it mean to draw others (the living and the dead) into this kind of strategy? The idea of a poetry of response to the classics poses some questions concerning position of *enunciation* – or more specifically, what might be thought issues of disguise. What does it mean to hide behind the masks of the already canonised? Or for that matter, of the long obscure? What kinds of cultural capital are at stake in the making of such choices? With what presumption does one engage in ‘a conversation’ with those who, given the choice, might not deign to speak with us?

For all the dangers of vanity via reflected glory, conversation is more sustaining than dreams of immortality. So why not avail oneself of the best possible interlocutors? Why not have the best conversation available? One doesn’t need a foreign language to do it. One only needs sufficient distance from one’s own words. For me, the best thing about all of this is the privilege afforded of never having to start. There’s no blank page in the poetry of response. Or rather there’s always having to start with where and who you are, with words already given (and whether you understand them or not). Being ‘in conversation’ thus means there’s nothing to finish and there’s nowhere and no need ever to begin.

Note
For instance the Song poet Su Shi wrote two poems ‘On Reading Meng Jiao’s Poetry’ and writes ‘I hate Meng Jiao’s poems’ and that they sound to him like ‘a cold cicada wail’ (Barnstone and Ping, 152).

Works cited


Territories (2003),
Dredging the Delta (2007).
Several collaborative translation volumes are currently in preparation
(Meng Jiao, Li Yu, Nalanxingde) and a volume of responses to Xin Qiji
(Spring Wind Brings the Fireworks) is currently in press with VAC in Chicago.
The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature describes Kelen’s work as
‘typically innovative”
and
intellectuall
y sharp'.
Kelen
currently
teaches
Creative
Writing and
Literature
at the
University
of Macau in
South
China. Kit
has an
email
address:
KitKelen
[ât] umac
[döt] mo

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Chapter Nine


Introduction:

This collection of eleven Macao stories for children and teenagers was written with thirteen collaborators, all of whom were students of mine at the University of Macau, at some stage over the last nine years. Two of the stories, ‘The Flying Fairy Casino’ and ‘The Boy Who Went under the Border’ are solo compositions. The book was published as a supplement to the local glossy culture monthly *Macao Closer*, journal for which I am the poetry editor (and a regular contributor/editor of fiction). The thirteen stories cover a range of genres (three wishes, myth, parable, fairytale, ghost story, science fiction, comedy). I believe this collection offers a ‘proof of the pudding’ in terms of collaborative creative work, bearing out Gilles Deleuze’ dictum:

We learn nothing from those who say:
‘Do as I do’.
Our only teachers are those who tell us to ‘do with me’, and are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce.

(1994, p. 23)
The boy who went under the border
and other stories
The boy who went under the border
and other stories

MACAO STORIES
by Kit Kelen and his collaborators:
Amy Wong
Hilda Tam
Carol Tong
Vivian Kuan
Gloria Leong
Silvia Wong
Karen Lam
Fanny Mok,
Sueie Lam
Tammy Wong
Edwina Lui
Graffarn Lam
Sally lam

illustrations by Rui Rasquinho

SQUARE CLOUDS

THE BABY SEA URCHIN

A MAGIC BALL

ENOUGH HAIR

FRIEND OR ENEMY

HUNGRY GHOST

TEMPLE OF DREAMS COME TRUE

THE FLYING FAIRY CASINO

THE BOY WHO WENT UNDER THE BORDER

A CAMERA

HOU YET AND LAP SAP CASINO
A long time ago, the clouds in the sky were all square in shape, and they had all been hung by a little angel called Angel Cloudy. His job was to hang the square clouds in the sky to build up a sun shield to protect people living on Earth. Angel Cloudy was a good and hardworking angel. He started working early in the morning and returned home late every afternoon. All the other angels liked him very much and were happy to be friends with him. All except Angel Windy. He was a lazy and naughty angel. He liked to play tricks on others. He used to destroy things with his special power. Angel Windy’s special power was so much trouble, no one wanted to be his friend.

He had time to rest, he heard people say, 'It’s fun to see the clouds in different shapes, but now they’re all square again, people below had had plenty of chances to see the new shapes. Angel Cloudy hadn’t had time to listen to the people before because he’d been so busy, rushing around fixing the clouds. Now he had time to rest, he heard people say, 'It’s fun to see the clouds in different shapes, but now they’re all square again. It’s so boring. Before we could guess what the shapes were meant to be, but what can we do now? A square is always a square, just a square. ‘ Angel Cloudy was upset and disappointed after hearing all of these complaints.

Angel Cloudy knew who it was and though he was surprised he knew he had to think quickly to stop Angel Windy from making a mess. ‘No, thank you, Angel Windy. I can do it by myself.’ So Angel Cloudy hoped he would be able to ignore Angel Windy and continue his work.

Angel Windy was annoyed. He walked away with only blue sky under his feet. Then just when Angel Cloudy was putting the last cloud up in the sky, a strong wind blew towards him. The wind was so strong that no one could have stopped themselves being blown away by it. In a minute, everything was wrecked. All the square clouds were torn into pieces. The naughty angel laughed happily to see the trouble he had made. He shouted, ‘Angel Cloudy, you’re the most hardworking angel. You’re happy to have more work to do, hahah! Tears were welling up in Angel Cloudy’s eyes. There was nothing he could do but to stand still and watch the troublemaker flying away.

Now Angel Cloudy was alone, feeling sad and angry. He decided to fly to the King of Heaven and tell him what had happened. After Angel Cloudy told his story the king replied kindly, ‘Cloudy, some day later you will understand! Angel Cloudy had no idea what the king meant. What could he do but go back to repair the clouds?

In fact the job was bigger than Angel Cloudy had thought. The whole of the sky needed repairing and as a result the sun was blocked out for a long time. Because the sun was blocked out none of Heaven’s washing could get dry. The king was very annoyed at having to choose between wearing wet clothes or dirty clothes and the king knew who to blame. After a while he made a summons for Windy to see him at once. Windy didn’t want to see the king but he could not say no.

The king said, ‘I know you came down to Earth secretly a while ago and I know the damage you did. You know that angels are forbidden to visit Earth without special permission. You have broken the law and you must be punished. Now, you must go to the Laundry of Heaven and dry all the washing there.’

Windy begged, ‘There are tonnes of washing and I don’t want to waste my time on this job. I promise you that I won’t break the law again.’

The king replied, ‘I’m pleased that you admit your wrongdoing but you still have to pay for it. Do the job now, or else…’

Windy interrupted, ‘Okay! I will do it.’

Then, the naughty angel flew away.

While Angel Cloudy was busy working on his clouds, people on Earth were amazed by the different shapes of the clouds in the sky.

A boy pointed at the sky and exclaimed, ‘Hey, papa, look at the sky! The clouds are very different today. They’re not square anymore. Look at that cloud, it looks like a cow. Ha, that one looks like a fish. That one looks like a…’

It took Angel Cloudy almost an hour to repair the scattered clouds. But one hour in Heaven is two months on Earth, so by the time he had finished repairing the clouds, and the clouds had returned to their square shape again, people below had had plenty of chances to see the new shapes. Angel Cloudy hadn’t had time to listen to the people before because he’d been so busy, rushing around fixing the clouds. Now he had time to rest, he heard people say, ‘It’s fun to see the clouds in different shapes, but now they’re all square again. It’s so boring. Before we could guess what the shapes were meant to be, but what can we do now? A square is always a square, just a square.’ Angel Cloudy was upset and disappointed after hearing all of these complaints.

On a still moonless night no a few days later naughty Windy felt bored and secretly came down to Earth again. It was so boring up in Heaven – there was no one there he could tease at all. No one in Heaven wanted to play with him. He couldn’t do anything naughty because all the other angels knew all about him. But Windy could get excited just making plans for how he’d be naughty down on earth.

Angel Windy was lying on the roof of a small hut. He heard people inside the hut say, ‘I like Angel Cloudy very much because he always cares about us. Last time, while I was working under the sun, I wasn’t feeling well and could not put up with the heat. Then, I prayed for Angel Cloudy to come. As soon as I’d finished praying, I saw a cloud moving to shield me from the heat. His square clouds are boring but he’s really a very kind angel!’

Angel Windy felt uneasy after hearing what the boy had said. Everyone loved Angel Cloudy so much but
nobody ever mentioned Angel Windy at all. But just when he’d thought this thought he heard another man say, ‘I agree with you about Angel Cloudy. But that Angel Windy, he’s not a good angel. He’s selfish, naughty and only knows how to destroy things.’

Angel Windy was furious after hearing this. He envied Angel Cloudy and he was angry with the man who had just gossiped about him. So Angel Windy used his power, took a deep breath, and blew everything around. After his blowing, everything was damaged. The naughtil angel had destroyed many things such as houses, boats and shops on Earth. When he saw what he had done, Angel Windy was afraid that he would be punished again by the King of Heaven, and more harshly than before. And so he went into hiding.

While Windy was hiding himself in his secret place in the Garden of Heaven (just under the washing line, next to the laundry) he heard the King of Heaven’s voice. Angel Windy was trembling in his hiding place as he listened to the king’s voice.

‘Windy, do you know how serious this matter is? You are gifted but you have used your power in the wrong way again. Now, as a penalty, I order you to work for Angel Cloudy forever.’

Angel Windy knew that he could not escape from the king and so he came out from where he was hiding. ‘Why? I don’t want to work with him. His job is so boring, and I... don’t want to...’

The king interrupted, ‘I have told Cloudy what to do and he will guide you. Go to Cloudy now!’

Angel Windy knew that he could not disobey the king and so he trudged off slowly to Cloudy’s place. His head was down and he was feeling very sorry for himself by the time he got to Cloudy’s house. When Angel Cloudy saw his brother, he didn’t looked away at all, instead, he felt happy.

Cloudy said, ‘I know we will be partners for life, I’m sure you’re the only one who can help me with this special job. Now, are you ready?’

Angel Windy exclaimed, ‘Ready for what?’

Cloudy replied calmly, ‘It’s an easy job for you. You just need to take a deep breath and blow softly towards the clouds. That’s it! Simple, right?’

Angel Windy did not understand what his brother was talking about, but he thought he still had to listen to Cloudy, otherwise, he would be punished in some new way by the king.

Angel Cloudy looked at Windy sincerely and said, ‘I want to bring interesting clouds to the people on Earth and I need your help to do it. Last time, when you destroyed my square clouds, I was very angry with you. But while I was repairing the clouds, I was surprised to hear many happy voices from the people. They said they loved the clouds in different shapes! I thought about this for a long time and then I understood that I had to do my job differently... I have to change the way I do things. I need your power to help me to fulfill the people’s dreams. Let’s work together and bring happiness to them, okay? We are angels and this is our duty. We’ll be partners. Let’s make their dreams come true. Windy, this is a good chance for you to make up for the damage you’ve done.’

Angel Windy thought deeply about what Cloudy had said. He knew that he could do it. Then, he said, ‘I know that I was wrong before. Let’s work together now! It wasn’t long before Cloudy was saying, ‘Now, I want to hang a cow shaped cloud, please... Windy would follow Cloudy’s instruction and give a soft blow to shape the cloud just as Cloudy wished.

As time passed, and the two did their jobs, there were no more square clouds in the sky. All the clouds were in different shapes and the sky was now like a picture with different objects in it. People could enjoy themselves as they looked at the sky. They didn’t always agree about what shape they saw but they all agreed they were seeing something. It was because of the work of Angel Cloudy and Angel Windy that people today know the saying: ‘A new shaped cloud comes with a warm breeze. You can always tell when it’s time to look up.’

Deep in the warm tropical sea off Macao lived a baby sea urchin. He always felt lonely and sad. He had only one friend, Starry, a starfish.

‘Starry, I wish I were like you. You are white. You are handsome. You have many friends. Baby squeezed himself down into a dark spiky ball, which meant that he was sad. Both his parents (Mr and Mrs Dark) and his dear friend, Starry, had told him many times what a handsome sea urchin he was. But they didn’t understand how Baby felt. Baby was called Baby because he hadn’t yet found his own rock.

‘Don’t be sad, Baby. I’m your friend. I’ll always stay with you. Starry tried to comfort him. ‘But, I am so ugly! I am dark and I have sharp spines sticking out all over my body. No one wants to come near me. They say it’s dangerous! WOO... WOO... WOO... Baby began to cry. When Baby cried it always ended the same way. He would curl up into a little spiny ball and when he woke up, he would wonder why he’d been so upset before, that was if he remembered at all.

‘Don’t cry. Don’t cry. My dear friend, I have heard from an old starfish who has traveled everywhere of a witch mermaid who can help anyone in the salty sea to solve their troubles, whatever they are. She is a kind witch. She lives in the northernmost corner deep in the seventh sea. It would be a long and difficult voyage but, if you’re brave enough, we can pay a visit to her."

‘Yes, I’d love to. I hope she can help me. Let’s go! Let’s go!’ Baby was so excited, he thought nothing of the dangers ahead in the big big ocean.

Baby and Starry started their journey to the northernmost corner of the seventh sea. It was very far away from where Baby and Starry lived. They swam very hard until they reached the seventh sea. As they approached the North Pole they found the water getting colder and colder. But fortunately it was the middle of summer so they were able to bear the freezing temperatures for a little while at least.
When Baby first caught sight of the Mermaid he forgot all about the fact that he was almost frozen solid. ‘Miss Mermaid, Miss Mermaid. I am Baby. Baby, the sea urchin. I wish to meet you. I want to look beautiful like other animals, like Starry or like a beautiful fish with beautiful scales. I don’t want to be a sea urchin anymore. Miss Mermaid…’ Baby pleaded and pleaded for the mermaid to help him.

The mermaid never said a word but her magic must have been very strong because suddenly a storm came to them where they were under the sea. It was strange! A storm under the sea! Baby was swept away. When the storm calmed down and he shook the sand and mud off of himself, he saw that there was a big reflecting shell in front of him. He was a little afraid to look in the mirror because even though the storm was impressive he wondered whether the mermaid’s magic had worked. What if she’d turned him into a mollusk by mistake?

But what could Baby do? He had to be brave! He had to look! When he finally stood in front of the mirror and opened his eyes, he could hardly recognise himself because he had changed into a fish with golden scales. He swung his tail and swam around the mirror three or four times. ‘Wow… It’s great to be a fish with golden scales. I look charming and elegant now.’ Baby was delighted. ‘Thank you, Miss Mermaid. But Miss Mermaid was nowhere to be seen.

Baby swam away now and found that there was something very strange about this seventh sea. He could not see any other kinds of sea animals, but only sea urchins all round him. It must have been the Sea Urchin Sea. When the sea urchins met Baby, they swam away fast because they had never seen a fish with golden scales. They couldn’t know that he still felt like a sea urchin inside. He was very lonely because he had no Pa or Ma or Starry with him now. He cried and he cried and he cried. And then, even though there was nobody there to hear, Baby said out loud to himself, ‘I only wish I were the real Baby, Baby the Sea Urchin. I want to be Baby again. I’m a sea urchin! I’m not a fish with golden scales. I never was and I never can be.’ For days and for nights he wept – and finally the sea was so full of his tears it overflowed and caused a flood. Then there was another big storm – so strange – just as there’d been when Baby had seen the mermaid. And this time like before Baby was swept away.

When he shook the sand and mud off of himself and opened his sleepy eyes to see, he found himself with Pa, Ma and Starry beside him. ‘Oh! It’s good you’ve got up at last. You slept for more than a week after you bumped into that rock. You careless little urchin!’ But his mother gathered him and cuddled him, and her spines and his fitted together just so.

Baby was very happy to find that he was not a fish with golden scales, but a sea urchin, son of Mr and Mrs Dark, and a good friend of Starry the starfish.

Baby now realised that to be beautiful was not the most important thing in all the world’s oceans. It was more important just to be himself. Now he knew that everyone was unique and that no sea creature could take another’s place. Now he was the same sea urchin he’d been before, except Baby had changed, hadn’t he? He’d changed inside. And maybe he needed a new name now.
Siu Fat was studying at a famous school in Macao. He was a chubby eight year old. People liked to play tricks on him because of his appearance. Siu Fat didn’t get along with others. He felt that everybody treated him badly. Most of his classmates saw him as a laughingstock, except Siu Chong and Siu Ming, his two best friends. Siu Fat’s teacher scolded him all the time without any good reason. His parents nagged at him day and night. Siu Fat was so fed up with their ceaseless ‘lessons’.

The only thing Siu Fat liked was playing basketball. His parents seldom gave him any presents, but once they had given him a basketball. It was for his fifth birthday. He was fat back then too, and his parents had hoped the basketball would encourage him to become fitter. Siu Fat was so slow with the ball though that it was unlikely to make him any fitter or thinner. But the basketball had become his only companion. He would rather chat with the ball than with anybody else.

One day, Siu Fat came home from school and shut himself in the bedroom. His class teacher had scolded him again for not paying attention in class. The teacher had shouted, ‘Siu Fat, can’t you pay more attention in class. You’ve failed in many tests. I really don’t want to see you being kicked out of school.’ But Siu Fat had ignored her words.

Siu Fat bounced the ball up and down and complained furiously, ‘Huh, that witch (he meant his teacher) scolded me again. It wasn’t my fault. It’s all because of those irritating classmates. Why did she scold me, but no one else? It’s so… UNFAIR! Now he stared intently at the ball, as if it were a human face, as if it could answer. Siu Fat said to the ball, ‘I wish she would just disappear.’

The next day, when Siu Fat got to school there was no sign of that wicked witch of a teacher. Nobody knew where she was. She had simply disappeared. It wasn’t just Siu Fat who was happy to not have to see that witch. All of his classmates felt the same. They were overjoyed until they discovered that a more cruel and even fatter woman had come to teach them.

‘Oh, no! Another witch has come. Poor us. Our freedom’s gone again. Why do we have to have these horrible teachers?’ Siu Chong complained.

‘What a hell this school is! One witch leaves but another takes her place.’ Siu Fat kept on like this.

‘Siu Fat, let’s go to Siu Ming’s home tomorrow. He’s got a new computer game. Let’s have fun and forget those witches.’ That was what Siu Chong suggested and Siu Fat went along with the idea.

Though Siu Fat was excited that he could play a new computer game at Siu Ming’s home, he was in bad mood the whole day. On the way home, he never lifted up his head. Instead of taking the most direct route, he wandered here and there on his way. He hadn’t wanted to get there in a hurry but he soon found himself at his home.

As soon as Siu Fat stepped through the doorway, a woman with a huge body blocked his way, ‘Lazy Worm, have you studied? Don’t you know that you have already failed in many tests? If you keep on like this, you’ll soon be kicked out of school and become a beggar on the street.’

Siu Fat slipped past his mother and slammed his bedroom door so hard it seemed the whole apartment block shook. He could still hear his mother calling after him, ‘I’m only telling you this because I love you.’ Siu Fat didn’t believe that nonsense for a moment. He’d heard it all before.

Siu Fat was so angry that he had escaped from his mother without giving her a word. He talked with the ball again. ‘My dear ball, you are my only friend. You’re the only one who understands me. My teachers hate me. My mother doesn’t care about me. She never understands how hard it is for me to study. I don’t understand anything that the teachers teach me, even after I’ve spent a whole day to study. It’s useless. I’ll still fail in the tests. I wish I didn’t have a mother to nag at me and scold me all the time.’

After Siu Fat had finished all his complaints, he came out of his room and looked around.
nobody there. Nobody around, nobody to tell him what to do. Siu Fat pondered, ‘Magic, it’s really magic. Each time I tell the ball who I wish away, the people disappear.

The following day, when Siu Fat went to school, a group of students were waiting for him before the class began. Siu Fat hated them very much because they always jeered at him. And they hated Siu Fat just as much as he hated them. ‘Stupid fatty, why do you come to school? It’s no use for you to come here. You’re so stupid that you’ll never learn anything. You’d better go home and stay with your toys, HAHA…’

All day long, Siu Fat couldn’t concentrate on his lessons, because their mean words were stuck in his head. Surely there was some kind of revenge he could take. After school, Siu Fat tried his magic ball again. This time he told the ball that his classmates had jeered at him and he wanted them to disappear. Sure enough, the next day, there was nobody in his class. Siu Fat was very happy. It was as if he was now the king of the world. Nobody would make a fool of him or scold him anymore. Siu Fat was gradually becoming addicted to the ball’s magic. He used the magic basketball as a tool to make anyone he disliked vanish. One day, he told the ball, ‘Everybody is bad, except me. I want all of them to disappear. I’m the only good person in the world.’

The magic ball really made everyone disappear, everyone except Siu Fat. Siu Fat felt excited because now nobody would control him, and he could do whatever he wanted. He did not have to go to school from now on, because there was nobody teaching in the school. Siu Fat really enjoyed being alone and having so much time to do what he liked.

Siu Fat’s happiness did not last long though. Early the next morning, Siu Fat woke up and switched on the TV, but there was no program at all. He went through all of the channels, nothing. Of course not, there was no one in the TV station. Siu Fat went out to find his friends, but of course there was no one there. It was fun to walk through the empty streets. Siu Fat could go anywhere and do anything. But the city had stopped working. Nothing was moving at all. It was like a broken toy.

Thinking and walking had made Siu Fat hungry, so he went home to have lunch, but there was no one there to cook for him. The previous days he’d been hungry but he had made himself sick eating snacks. Right at this moment, though Siu Fat didn’t know it, was when he became especially hungry every day. It was because at this time every day he could smell delicious noodles cooking in the flat next door. Though there was no one in that flat now, and so no one was cooking noodles, still his memory was strong, and so it was as if he could smell those noodles. The smell of the ‘virtual’ noodles was so strong it was driving him mad. Siu Fat sobbed, ‘I really want a bowl of hot beef noodles, cooked by my mother. I miss the noodles, I miss my mother so much.’

Siu Fat went back to his room and saw his basketball on the floor. Seeing the basketball reminded him that it was he who had made everybody disappear, using the ball’s magic.

‘My dear ball, can you talk with me? I feel so lonely now. I don’t like the new teacher. She looks so ugly and she doesn’t care about me. My old teacher was much better than her. She cared. I miss Siu Chong and Siu Ming, too. I want to play the new computer game with them. They’re so good to me and they’re with me all the time. I’m so hungry. I just want a bowl of hot noodles. Can you bring me some noodles? Siu Fat was sobbing in a corner, holding his basketball. He was unhappy and regretted having wished the human race away. He didn’t want a world like this. How much he wanted the people to come back.

Siu Fat was sorry, so sorry. What could he do? He wished and he wished but nothing happened. There was nobody to talk to him. He really wished the basketball would speak to him. But the ball said nothing. Eventually Siu Fat was so angry with the basketball, he wished it would disappear. And to his surprise, it did. How could that be? It wasn’t even human? Or had it been? Now Siu Fat was truly alone in the world, with no one even to listen to him. He didn’t even have a ball to play with. And he was still so hungry, so hungry… and he soon fell asleep.

The ringing of bells was deafening. Was this the end of the world? Siu Fat had never wondered how that would sound. But now he was there, facing the end alone… His eyes were still closed. What should he do?

Without thinking, Siu Fat reached over and did something he did every morning. He hit the alarm clock and it stopped. And then there was another noise, the door creaking. Then Siu Fat heard his mother’s voice. She was saying what she always said. ‘Get out of bed, you lazy boy. Was he dreaming? Siu Fat pinched himself. He breathed deeply. He could smell congee from the kitchen. Siu Fat was overjoyed, tears ran down his cheeks. He gave his mother a big hug, she was taken aback with her son’s enthusiasm.

Siu Fat had just put the last spoonful of congee in his mouth when Siu Chong and Siu Ming called him out to play football with them. He rushed to his room cheerfully, changed his clothes at once and dashed out to meet his friends.

The three of them were late as usual. Darting into the classroom, Siu Fat met his old teacher. She scolded him as usual. ‘Hey, why are you boys running? Don’t you know that it’s very dangerous to rush like that…’

The teacher was surprised at how patient and attentive Siu Fat was while she scolded him. The other boys had already run off. Siu Fat was so pleased to see the teacher again, he couldn’t help noticing her big caring eyes. She was so much less fat and less cruel than that other woman who had replaced her.

Back on the football pitch at lunch time, Siu Fat began to explain what had happened. He wanted to tell his friends about the basketball’s magic. But every time Siu Fat began, he realised that there was no way he could get them to believe what had happened. Did it matter though? How could it matter if he’d wished that evil ball away, as long as his world was perfect again?
There was once a man called Mo who had only one strand of hair on his head. He was often laughed at by the people in town. Even so, he loved his one hair very much. He took great care of his only hair. He washed his hair every day and gave himself an oil treatment for his hair three times a week. Since Mo had to do the oil treatment so frequently, he always kept a box of the special oil at home.

One day, when Mo had washed his hair and was about to give it the oil treatment, he found that the bottle he’d been using was empty. So as you can guess he went to get a new one from the box. When he opened the lid of the new bottle of oil treatment, a fairy squeezed out from the lid and floated in the air. The little fairy had long dark hair. She bowed to Mo and said, ‘I’m a fairy from Fairyland. May I have your hair?’ At first he couldn’t believe what he’d heard but then when he saw that this fairy was serious, Mo grabbed a towel and wrapped his head with it to protect his coveted hair. ‘No way! I have only one! I love my hair.’

‘Oh, I love your hair, too. The fairy pointed to her head and continued, ‘See my beautiful dark hair? This is actually a wig. I use people’s hair to make wigs. People’s hair gives me power. Since you have taken so much care of your only hair, it has great power. I beg you to give it to me.’

Mo shook his head nervously and said, ‘No! I’ve got only one hair. What would my friends say if they saw me bald? No!’

The fairy grinned, ‘I can grant you a wish to compensate your loss. Just tell me what you want.’

Having been mocked by the people around him since he was born, Mo saw this wish as a chance to get back his face and his confidence. He made up his mind and said, ‘I wish I could have everyone’s hair!’

‘Anyone’s hair?’

‘I said everyone’s hair!’

‘Anyone who’s anyone?’

‘Everyone!’

‘So you want a whole lot of nobodies’ hair?’

‘Alright, alright, any old hair.’

‘Done,’ said the fairy. ‘So I’ll have your hair. She flew onto Mo’s head and – ouch!!! – she pulled out the single hair. She smiled, waved her wand and disappeared. Mo felt his head was a bit itchy. Within a minute, glossy hair – and lots of it – started to grow out of his bare head. He rushed to the mirror and looked at his now bushy head. Bravo! Bravo! Mo cried.

Next, Mo wanted to show others this miracle, his miracle. He went straight out to the street. Everyone in the town now was bald. Of course they were. Mo had all their hair. Mo could not help laughing. But he soon stopped when he found that people had gathered around him and they all looked surprised. A child shouted, ‘Look at him! He’s got hair on his head! He looks so funny!’ It seemed as if none of these people could remember ever having had hair. That must’ve been part of the spell.

Seeing Mo, the crowd burst into laughter. It was too late for Mo to realise that in other people’s eyes, he still looked strange and amusing. Even when the laughter stopped the crowd couldn’t help tittering, just taking a sidelong glance at this fur ball. The only difference from before was that people were bald now and Mo was the only man who had serious hair on his head.

Mo rushed back home and tried to shave off all his unsightly hair. But as soon as the hair was shaved, new hair grew out. Well, this was the wish he had made and nothing could be changed. From now on he had everyone’s hair. However he tried to shave it or burn it or beat it back, new hair grew out of his head. And faster and faster the harder he tried. He would still be laughed at by others no matter what he did. There was nothing for it but to buy more bottles of oil treatment and to take great care of his countless hair.
Two cockroaches were gossiping while they were eating rice from a lunchbox.

‘Have you read the Cockroach Daily News today?’ F621 asked.

‘No, I haven’t. What happened?’ M629 responded.

‘Fifty corpses discovered in the rubbish bin yesterday! It’s on the front page.’

‘It’s not surprising, is it? Fifteen is quite normal.’

‘No, it’s fifty! Not fifteen!’

‘What? Well, that’s a serious matter.’

The story says the victims had penetrated into human domestic space and that was how they got killed.’

‘They deserve their fate. You know, I always say, humans are dangerous. It’s one thing to eke out an existence from their garbage but to go where they live? No cockroach can survive in close quarters with those monsters. You’d better stay in our Rubbish Kingdom, you know; that’s our place. That’s the moral of the story. You know, I’m really worried about M944. He has been risking his life...’ M629 went on with his mouth so full that F621 had trouble making out what he was saying.

While M629 was still chewing on his last mouthful, Ah Ming was passing through the boarder gate from the human world and into Rubbish Kingdom Headquarters. Ah Ming saw F621 and M629 written on the back of the two cockroaches talking, so he walked over to his friends and greeted them. Only cockroaches could see these special numbers.

‘Hey, buddies, I’m back!’ he smiled at them.

‘Hi, M944!’ M629 and F621 chorused.

‘Friends, I have told you a thousand times I have a name. Don’t call me by my identification number.’ Ah Ming put on a proud expression as he corrected them.

‘Come on, it’s weird to call you “Ah Ming” when everybody here is named by numbers.’ M629 was annoyed.

‘Well, it’s really weird to me if you call me M944. I am used to “Ah Ming” and I like my name. Anyway, what are you guys talking about?’ Ah Ming asked.

‘We are talking about how bad the humans are. And this news is especially important for you. Fifty dead! Fifty! You know, you stay with the humans all the time. It’s too dangerous over there. M629 spoke with great passion and sincerity.

The world at that time was dominated by our Cockroach Kingdom and of course there was the human world as well. We were where the rubbish was. The rubbish station was our headquarters. All of us believed that humans were our enemies because humans had been killing millions of our kind. Not a day went by without the cockroach papers reporting at least twenty cockroaches deaths from the human terror. Although we could reproduce in great numbers and more and cockroaches were born all the time, still it was scary to hear about the deaths happening every day. There was however one male cockroach (number M944) who also had a human name – Ah Ming. He refused to hear his friends’ advice. He liked to be with humans, and he treated them as friends.

‘Don’t worry, I am very safe on the other side. Mr Lou has been my best human friend ever since I was born in his kitchen. He is very kind to me, and I am sure that he would never hurt me.’ Ah Ming was delighted whenever he talked about Mr Lou. But his friends were suspicious. They did not believe what he said about the human world.

‘Come on, trust me. Let me show you. Come with me to Mr Lou’s house. Now!’ So it was Ah Ming took them to his human friend’s place.

Ah Ming spent most of his time with a human called Fishball Lou, who was a fishball seller. When M629, F621 and Ah Ming arrived at Mr Lou’s ground floor house, Mr Lou was pulling down the door gate. He had a very sad face. The three cockroaches saw the gate coming down and rushed and rushed and just barely made it into Mr Lou’s house.

‘So messy! I love it! Just like the Rubbish Kingdom.’ Ah Ming asked his friends. ‘Don’t you feel at home already?’

‘Exactly the same.’ replied F621, and really she was quite surprised.

‘Not really the same. It’s even messier than our Kingdom!’ M629 added.
I love this place, it's a paradise,' Ah Ming praised his home. 'Absolutely. A beautiful paradise!' his friends shouted in amazement. 'Look! I usually sleep on that pile of trash over there. It's huge and comfortable.' What Ah Ming was pointing to was actually the dirtiest corner of Mr Lou's dirty house. 'What's this?' M629 picked up a soft yellow ball of something that had to be food. 

Fishball. Food. That's my favourite. You know, Mr Lou's business is selling fishballs. Everyday he will place the fishball cart in front of his house. Many human kids like eating fishballs, because fishballs really taste good especially when they are dressed with curry sauce. Yummy! Do you want to eat some? I usually hide under the plate on the cart and come out to taste the curry sauce when the customers aren't watching.'

I prefer the fishballs to the sauce, but they are so hot and we can't get them from the cart. Still I really want to have some: F621 was getting hungrier and hungrier as the conversation went on.

Fishballs. That's easy. Can you see there are two containers and a large plastic bag over near the television? Those are cold, Ah Ming pointed with one of his front legs. Ah Ming's friends followed him over to the bag of cold fishballs by the television. Ah Ming told them that inside the bag were thousands of uncooked fishballs. He also told them that the already-cooked curry fishballs were stored in the containers. The three of them climbed up to the lid of one of the containers and looked down. Inside the container was a deep pool of yellow liquid, and there were lots of yellow balls floating on it. 'I can't swim,' said F621.

'Neither can I. I am scared of water, M629 chimed in. 'Let me do it. I was trained to be a good swimmer ever since I was young. Watch me carefully. I will jump into the pool, I will turn at the bottom and then come up as hard and as fast as I can. My aim will be to head the first ball I can out of the water for you to catch.'

'Catch!?' 'You don't have to swim and you can't catch either! You must try your best.' F621 and M629 felt a little shy but they agreed to try their best. Before they could blink Ah Ming was diving into the pool - just like a dolphin in Ocean Park - and within seconds a fishball was flying at them like a cannon ball. Neither had a chance of catching it but they watched where it went and quickly leaped after it. They wondered why Ah Ming hadn't caught up with them yet but they didn't wonder for long because before they could reach that first fishball other cannonballs came flying at them. Ah Ming kept up his trick until his friends begged him to stop. By that time he'd already fired five fishballs in their direction: enough to feed a family for a week!

Now the cockroaches were able to taste the curry fishballs. It was a party and the three friends enjoyed themselves with what they all now decided was their favourite food. 'I prefer the fishballs to the sauce, but they are so hot and we can't get them from the cart. Still I really want to have some: F621 was getting hungrier and hungrier as the conversation went on. 'I prefer the fishballs to the sauce, but they are so hot and we can't get them from the cart. Still I really want to have some: F621 was getting hungrier and hungrier as the conversation went on. 'I prefer the fishballs to the sauce, but they are so hot and we can't get them from the cart. Still I really want to have some: F621 was getting hungrier and hungrier as the conversation went on. 'I prefer the fishballs to the sauce, but they are so hot and we can't get them from the cart. Still I really want to have some: F621 was getting hungrier and hungrier as the conversation went on. 'I prefer the fishballs to the sauce, but they are so hot and we can't get them from the cart. Still I really want to have some: F621 was getting hungrier and hungrier as the conversation went on.'
she was but he couldn’t bear to see her killed. The sight made him feel ill. Ah Ming didn’t have too much
time to think about the situation though because now from the other end of the room he could here – bang, bang – that slipper coming down again and again. And Ah Ming saw who was wielding the slipper.

It was Mr Lou!

Ah Ming was now totally lost. None of this made sense. How could his friend and protector be killing
his kind? What’s going on? he asked. ‘Can anybody tell me?’ His friends only stepped backward to get out of
the way. They were afraid that they would be killed as well. Each had selected some item of rubbish under which to hide.

But it was too late to escape. Mr Lou was now clearing the trash that Ah Ming used to sleep on and play with. Mr Lou was sweeping the rubbish into a large black plastic bag.

‘Run!’ Ah Ming shouted as loud as he could. ‘The three of them ran now, out from under their hiding
places. They ran across the moving rubbish.

‘Watch out! The broom!’ The three of them narrowly escaped and they kept on running. Ah Ming was
in the lead. Now Mr Lou could see three cockroaches tearing away. He put aside the broom and quickly
removed a slipper, ready to hit them.

The three cockroaches knew from his looming shadow that Mr Lou was chasing after them. Ah Ming’s
cockroach friends were so afraid that they kept on calling for help. Ah Ming still did not believe what was
happening but he knew he must run. ‘Hold on! There’s a hole, can you see?’ He saw a hole on the wall in
front of them. ‘Let’s run into it and we’ll be saved!’ He encouraged his friends to run faster. But just at the
last moment, Ah Ming shouted. ‘Oh, my God! Stop! Stop! STOP!’

Bomm… But since the three cockroaches were running so fast, they failed to stop and they crashed
into the wall. They’d seen the hole and they’d run towards it but they hadn’t been looking while they were
running. Ah Ming had disowned another: the cockroach he’d named after his own flesh and blood.

‘No!’ shouted M629. He looked back and hesitated a little. Ah Ming shouted back at him; ‘Don’t stop! Keep running! We have no time. Otherwise, we’ll be killed as well.’ M629 didn’t want to leave F621, even though she was gone. They weren’t just friends! M629 turned
and he ran back towards F621’s corpse.

So now the cockroaches had no way to escape. Ah Ming shouted! Move! Run through his legs! He was
thinking on his many feet.

‘Move!’ they all shouted together and started running at the same time. Mr Lou saw what they were doing. He raised his slipper to hit one of them. It was F621. She was sacrificed to the eternal struggle between
humans and cockroaches. Ah Ming saw that now. It was as if something had snapped inside him.

‘No!’ shouted M629. He looked back and hesitated a little. Ah Ming shouted back at him; ‘Don’t stop! Don’t stop! Stop! STOP!’

Ah Ming was now alone facing Mr Lou. He was so exhausted that he had to slow down. Ah Ming really wished his old friend would recognise him from his mark, but he knew that it was blurred from the sauce. His cockroach friends could only see the mark when they came very near to him. Ah Ming could not run anymore, he had used up his energy. What could he do to make Mr Lou remember him? Ah Ming could think at this point was that Mr Lou was temporarily insane but that if he could make him remember who he was then everything might be back to normal. Now Ah Ming knew what to do and knowing gave him
strength. He had to show Mr Lou some happy memory from their past together.

What great times they’d had when Ah Ming had jumped in and out of the fish ball container! So now
Ah Ming was climbing up to the fishball container again, just to remind Mr Lou. Mr Lou had stopped trying
to hit him. There was a strange look of concentration on the man’s face. Ah Ming was glad that Mr Lou had remembered him. Now any sensible cockroach would have seen that Mr Lou didn’t care about Ah Ming. Mr Lou was only afraid that he would spill his precious curry sauce on the floor. Mr Lou waited till the cockroach was inside the box. He put the lid on the box, he carried the container out and then, taking the lid off again, he emptied its contents into the bin at the end of the street. Even Ah Ming – blinded as he was by his ‘friendship’ with this human – could see what was happening now. The dream had vanished. Ah Ming was being – had been – thrown away.

But why had Mr Lou done what he’d done? Ah Ming couldn’t answer this question but actually it was easy to understand. Mr Lou did all the things he did. It was because some humans felt sick after eating Mr Lou’s fishballs. One day, two unfamiliar humans had come, dressed in uniforms, and talked to Mr Lou. After showing their work I.D.s to him, they requested to inspect Mr Lou’s business environment: where he prepared food, how he cleaned up and so on. After the inspection, Mr Lou’s fishball seller’s license was cancelled.

Mr Lou had to throw away all the contaminated fishballs. That was the reason why Ah Ming was thrown away as well. Mr Lou’s fishball license was cancelled but Mr Lou had not given up the idea of running his own business. That was why he was cleaning his working and living place, and that was why he was killing every cockroach he could. Mr Lou hoped to get a new license. Mr Lou had lost one son, Ah Ming, and now he had disowned another: the cockroach he’d named after his own flesh and blood.

Ah Ming cried louder and louder but neither humans nor cockroaches heard his cry. Ah Ming felt hopeless now. He had been cheated by his one human friend and his cockroach companions were dead. He did not want to live anymore. When more and more rubbish was thrown into the bin, Ah Ming made no
effort to escape but just lay there hoping the end would come. Soon the world became darker and darker and then he fainted away.

It was already early afternoon. The sun was shining brightly in the sky and a shaft of sunlight penetrated
all the rubbish that was lying on top of Ah Ming. That shaft of sun shone straight onto his jet black head. Ah Ming opened one eye and then another. He had survived and he was a new cockroach now. It was close contact with the essence of rubbish that had brought Ah Ming to recognize his mission on earth. Rubbish, you must understand, is what purifies and sanctifies we cockroaches.

In his new frame of mind, Ah Ming knew what his wings were for. Ah Ming realized that he too was a powerful creature. It was desire for vengeance that gave him power. Ah Ming was to be a cockroach avenger!

Ah Ming meditated briefly on his friends’ death and on Mr Lou’s betrayal. That human could not be
allowed to go so easily. It was only now that Ah Ming understood the universal law: man is man and roach is roach and never the twain shall meet.

Ah Ming raised one of his arms towards heaven and swore aloud, ‘To all the rubbish that ever was, to
all the rubbish that ever was, to every rotting stinking fishball a human every threw out, I now swear.’ That filthy old man who has betrayed
The boy who went under the border and other stories

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me is my enemy! I will fight him until I die.’Then – in the very formal cockroach language no human could
ever understand – he shouted to his adversary,‘You Fishball Lou, I assure you that you will suffer.You deserve
this.Your sufferings must match your crimes!’
Ah Ming was much more confident and much more powerful than before. He flew from the bin straight
to the home of his former friend. Before he could enter the humble home, he noticed a big yellow card
stuck on Lou’s cart. On it was written ‘Lou Gei Zha Mut’. Mr Lou’s new business was selling deep fried
food. Ah Ming heard a little boy ordering, ‘Excuse me, I want three chicken wings and one bag of French
fries, please.’ A voice from far inside called loudly, ‘Wait a minute, please.’ And Mr Lou came out from the
back of his house.
‘We meet again, buddy.’The cockroach flew straight at the man’s head.‘Ouch!’ Mr Lou was packing the
food for the boy. He could not see the flying creature but he felt a sudden blow to his forehead. Now Mr
Lou was alert and looking around.
Ah Ming landed on the cart. Man and roach were staring at each other.Their war began.The cockroach
flew in among the deep fried food and moved his wings rapidly,‘Virus attack!’ he shouted. Immediately, Mr
Lou raised the frying utensil which was to his right. He was confident of hitting his target.
Pak!
But immediately there were many much louder noises. Ah Ming quickly jumped to the ground, out of
the way, while all of Mr Lou’s food trays – French fries, fried fishballs and fried eggplants – came tumbling
down to the ground.
‘Oh, my food!’ the miserable human cried out.Then Mr Lou bent down to pick up what was left of his
livelihood. It was only at that moment, he noticed the cockroach was still alive and was flying towards
him again. Mr Lou grabbed the newspaper that he had been reading and began waving it in front of him
to defend himself. Ah Ming then flew around him. Mr Lou was still waving his newspaper as he chased Ah
Ming round in circles.
Lou felt dizzy after turning round and round for a while. His was vision was blurry now and all he could
see of Ah Ming was a fuzzy dot moving in the air and that fuzzy dot was now landing on his tray. Oil, ketchup,
soy sauce, vinegar, mustard: everything was on that tray! If that cockroach put one foot in any of those
sauces there would be cockroach germs everywhere. Lou couldn’t afford his new snack selling license to
be cancelled again like his previous fishball business. He would not let history repeat itself!
Although Ah Ming was merely a fuzzy dot in Mr Lou’s blurry eyes, in the snack seller’s mind there was
nothing but the cockroach. Ah Ming, on the other hand, was waiting on the tray to trap the man. Lou hit
the tray and those sauces and he thought at first that he had hit the cockroach as well. The oil fell. The
soy sauce toppled over.The vinegar spilled, the mustard oozed down over the edge. All the while Lou was
trying to save something from his tray, anything. In the end he not only failed to save a drop of sauce but
he lost his own balance in his effort to juggle all those falling items. The last thing he grabbed at was the
ketchup squeezer. It must all have taken less than three seconds, but there was Lou, face down in the oil
and soy and vinegar and with ketchup all over his back. He appeared to his customers now as the bloody
vanquished gladiator. What the customers might not so easily have noticed was the victorious Ah Ming
standing proudly on top of Lou’s head – his armour unscathed – as if triumphing in the arena over some
wild beast of vast proportions.
That was the end of that particular battle but the fight has kept on to this day.You should know that Ah
Ming and Mr Lou have remained till now under the same roof together, although their roles are far different
now from what they were in the days of their friendship. Their hatred will never be diminished and the
war between them will never end.

macauCLOSER

HUNGRY GHOST
with Alice Chan

In a remote village on the mainland, there lived a foolish man called A Ming.The villagers loved to play
tricks and make fun of his stupid character. One day when he was walking in the town, a sudden strong
wind blew a small dirty piece of paper near to him on the ground. He picked up the paper and read:
Congratulations! You have won a one day tour around Macao. It’s FREE! Bring along this piece of
paper and contact us (Fortune Road, No.8, Zhuhai) before 14th October 2005. For more details, reach
us at 0086-756-3974-223.
A Ming found it strange. He wondered how he could be so lucky. He had never been lucky before, but
maybe now his luck had changed? He ran to the only telephone box in his village and dialed the numbers.
A lady answered the phone and congratulated A Ming. Everything was true.
A Ming was excited. He had never left his village before and now he would be visiting Macao – a place
he had long wanted to visit because of the famous story of how a poor boy became the richest man in
town, all through luck, through gambling. Although there was still a week to go before his tour, he already
had everything packed as if he was about to leave.
A week had gone and the day had finally come.A Ming became one of those ‘free walkers’ on the streets
in Macao. He did a lot of sightseeing, everything was so new to him. But what surprised him most was

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the generosity of the Macao people. There were people on the streets offering him different sort of things for free; packs of tissue paper, pens, paper fans, rubber bracelets, key chains and more. A Ming thought the people in Macao must all be rich. He walked many miles and he was tired and hungry by the time he reached the Macao Tower. In front of the tower he saw an amazing scene. Hundreds of food stalls had been set up in the square opposite the tower and thousands of people were eating. A Ming was curious about this. He went to the entrance and read the banner. Macao Food Festival 2006 was all he could read before he was pushed into the crowd.

People from some of the stalls offered A Ming food and drinks. This made him think how nice the people in Macao were, especially compared with those in his village. A Ming really found the whole place wonderful. He did not want to leave. He made up his mind to be an illegal immigrant (an I.I.) in Macao.

From that day onwards, A Ming went to the ‘Food Festival’ every day. He had all his meals free there. But one day he came and found nothing. A Ming was confused. He waited in the square and he thought maybe it was only a holiday. He left and returned the next day. Again there was no food, there were no people. For four days, A Ming fasted, always hoping the free food would be back the next day. Finally he fainted in front of the tower.

A Ming was taken to the hospital. For the first few days, he was so weak that he could not even talk. No one knew anything about him yet they took good care of him. He was given good food and a comfortable bed to sleep on. A Ming was touched by the kindness of these people and truly believed that people in Macao were angels. He stayed in the hospital for more than a week. His strength was soon recovered and the doctor announced that he could leave.

For most patients, being allowed to leave the hospital should be good news. But not for A Ming. How could he even think of leaving such a comfortable place? The truth was revealed only when he had to give his personal information in order to check out of the hospital. His identity as an I.I. was discovered. A Ming was arrested at once. The police made an arrangement to send him back to the mainland within a month. During this waiting period, he would be put in gaol.

Once again, A Ming couldn’t believe his luck. And he couldn’t believe how kind Macao people were. He was again given free meals each day. It was the best punishment he could have hoped for. Although he was in gaol, he thought there was nothing better than free air conditioning in summer and having three free meals every day.

But A Ming was wrong. Life was not as easy as in gaol as he had thought at first. Because of his foolish character, he soon fell into the clutches of the bullies in the gaol. They taunted him and called him names. A Ming suffered a lot from their jibes and violence. Eventually he became moody and uncommunicative. He had no more appetite for the free meals now. He isolated himself from the other prisoners. He spent his time thinking about his past and the poor village he loved and regretting his foolish dream of getting a free lunch forever.

One day when he was alone, he saw the prison guard burning some incense for Guan Di, the god of bravery. Even though he’d been taught at school that gods and incense were silly superstitions, he knew that incense was the food of the dead. Thinking of this, an idea popped into his mind. A Ming thought how wonderful it would be to have endless food in this form. All he had to do was to die and then he would leave all his troubles behind.

A Ming slashed his wrists without giving things another thought. He died slowly and painfully but he had a big smile on his face because he was thinking of all the free rice that lay ahead of him.

What A Ming had forgotten was that incense and Hell money has to come from somewhere and that, as he had no family or friends, A Ming had a very hungry eternity ahead.

Today was Sunday. Ming Fong was watching DVD at home as her regular holiday activity. To a thirty-eight-year-old woman like her, the best activity on Sundays would be to take children to the park and have fun, go shopping with her husband or go out for dinner with her family. But, these things only could appear in Ming Fong’s dreams as she was still single. She was eager to have her family before she was forty.

‘Why can every one find their true love and get married except me?’ Ming Fong muttered as she was watching the happy ending of ‘Fifty First Dates’.

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Bring bring…Bring bring…

‘Wā…Pi (Hello)’ Ming Fong received the phone call.

‘Ming Fong, it’s Ah Mei. My daughter and my husband are out today, so we can play Mah-jong at my home. I know that you’re always free, right? Come to my home at 3 p.m., okay? Ah Mei was very excited and she just hung up the phone without waiting to hear Ming Fong’s answer.

Ah Mei had known Ming Fong since secondary school. She and the other two in the Mah-jong circle, Ling Ling and Sum Yut were Ming Fong’s best friends and they always played Mah-jong together at every opportunity. Ming Fong didn’t want to meet them today because she knew they would only talk about their children and husbands all the time.

As soon as Ming Fong heard Ah Mei’s voice she decided she would rather stay home than hang out with them. That was the answer Ah Mei hadn’t heard. Ming Fong knew she hadn’t heard, so now she had the choice of ringing back to say she wasn’t coming or waiting for Ah Mei’s call to ask what had happened to her. Or she could just go. This was the easiest thing to do, Ming Fong decided. Since they were san gui yi (three lack one) and Ming Fong really had nothing to do, she decided to play Mah-jong with them. She thought that perhaps she could win money this time because she was ching chuen sug yi, dou chuen dak yi, unlucky in love but lucky in gambling.

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They had just started playing when Ah Mei asked, ‘have you heard the Ma Ma Temple is going to be
repaired next month?’
‘Yes, and they say the repairs will take about three years as the temple is damaged and old,’ Ling Ling mentioned this casually as she put down the three fragrant sticks in the corner to her left. ‘I think many people will be sad about it because this temple really helps wishes come true.’
‘Especially in money and marriage.’ Sum Yut looked at Ming Fong with a devilish smile. ‘Ming Fong, it’s better for you to visit there. Maybe you can find your chi loi dei chun tin, your late spring. Ha! Ha! Ha!’
Ming Fong wanted to ask more about the temple but she gave up this idea after hearing what Sum Yut said. Although she was interested, she thought that if she asked them about the temple, they would laugh at her and she would lose face.
‘I’m not eager to get married. I enjoy my single life and I don’t want any man to disturb my world. And, I’m not superstitious like you three. I only believe in myself.’ Ming Fong’s voice was full of confidence but at the same time. ‘Ming Fong’s eyes were full of envy. ‘I must win my first bucket of gold and my husband,’ she promised herself in her heart.

The next day, Ming Fong was reading the Macao Daily over breakfast. She was very shocked and jealous to read a piece about an old lady who’d won ten million US dollars and had three men propose to her at once.
‘Oh my God! What an unfair world! She’s so lucky. She can get a lot of money and also a husband at the same time,’ Ming Fong’s eyes were full of envy.
‘For the whole of that morning, she could not get the story out of her head. She was grumbling over why she was so unlucky, having neither money nor a husband. That was when she decided she had to go to the temple. She remembered that Sum Yut had said Ma Ma could make wishes come true, so Ming Fong determined to change her destiny.
‘I must win my first bucket of gold and my husband,’ she promised herself in her heart.

The next day, Ming Fong got up at 9 a.m. She bought a chicken in Fat Choi Siu Mei, a barbecue shop.
‘Fancy dollars,’ the shopkeeper said.
‘Forty dollars,’ Ming Fong gave the shopkeeper a sharp look.
‘Forty dollars? I bought one last week, it was only thirty-five.’ Ming Fong gave the shopkeeper a sharp look.
‘Thirty-five dollars? It’s impossible!’
‘Thirty-eight dollars, thirty-eight dollars, thirty-eight dollars are enough for such a small chicken.’ Ming Fong was taking out her purse.
‘Ha… okay, okay.’
Ming Fong left with a victorious smile on her face, and, with a thirty-eight dollar chicken. Then she took the No. 10 bus to the Ma Ma Temple.

Ming Fong put the chicken on the altar carefully, and, with a thirty-eight dollar chicken. Then she took the No. 10 bus to the Ma Ma Temple.

Ming Fong put the chicken on the altar carefully and knelt in front of Ma Ma. ‘Ma Ma, I am going to Gold this afternoon, could you please help me to win ten thousand this time? Please! I promise, if you help me, I will bring more delicious offerings to you! Also, from Fat Choi, the most famous barbecue shop in Macao.’

After enjoying Ming Fong’s sucking pig, Ma Ma was eager to try everything else. ‘Fat Choi Siu Mei’ had to offer, so she decided to make Ming Fong’s dream come true. That afternoon, Ming Fong won ten thousand dollars from Gold.

Ming Fong put the sucking pig on the altar carefully and knelt in front of Ma Ma. Ma Ma was happy to see Ming Fong again.
‘Ma Ma, you see? I’ve brought you a big sucking pig. I’ve won three thousand yesterday. You are so kind! Ma Ma! I’m not a greedy woman but I just want to win more.’ Ming Fong looked around and made sure that there was nobody around her.
‘Ma Ma, I am going to Gold this afternoon, could you please help me to win ten thousand this time? Please! I promise, if you help me, I will bring more delicious offerings to you! Also, from Fat Choi, the most famous barbecue shop in Macao.’

Then she wanted to take a taxi but the cow was too big to fit inside and no driver would pick her up.
Ming Fong only could pull the cow along on a rope behind her as she walked along the street. She pulled and pulled and every one in the street was surprised to see this crazy woman. It was quite a sight to see a cow coming along San Ma Lo. Pedestrians stopped and stared but Ming Fong didn’t care. Motorists were very annoyed and wouldn’t stop honking their horns. Still Ming Fong and the cow trudged weakly on and it took them nearly an hour to reach the Ma Ma Temple. Ming Fong was exhausted when she arrived and the beast mooved plaintively because there hadn’t been a blade of grass along the way.

‘Finally, I… get… here…’ Ming Fong couldn’t breathe easily.


When Ming Fong came to, she found herself in San Den Hospital. The first thing she did was to look for her ten million dollar cheque. The funny thing was that though she remembered the money straight away, she couldn’t immediately remember where she’d put it. It wasn’t in her handbag or her pocket. Finally, she found the cheque under her left shoe-pad. ‘Ah, lucky, I put the cheque in a safe place, otherwise, I would have lost it all!’ I’m really lucky!’ she said to herself. ‘I must thank Ma Ma after I leave the hospital!’

It was only when Ming Fong tried to get out of bed she was shocked to discover she could not lift her leg. She tried and tried but it just wouldn’t move by itself. Ming Fong was in a great panic, worrying what had happened to her, but after a while, she calmed herself down and then she remembered that she had said da bai gir dou on sai iao to Ma Ma, that even lame she’d be happy. Now, she was lame.

Ming Fong knew that she was suffering now because of her silly offer to the goddess. She regretted that she had accidentally cursed herself. On the other hand, Ming Fong told herself not to worry about her leg any more because she knew if she went to see the goddess, Ma Ma could cure her leg. So, she didn’t give up hope. She decided to go to the Ma Ma Temple as soon as she left the hospital.

What Ming Fong did not know was that, at that very moment, Ma Ma was suffering medical problems too. The goddess was in heaven’s hospital and her condition was worse than Ming Fong’s. Ma Ma was in the Tian Wu Hospital’s Intensive Care Unit because she had eaten the whole cow raw and the cow had mad cow disease. Ma Ma’s medical condition was very serious.

A week later, Ming Fong left the hospital and went back to the Ma Ma Temple. She was shocked to see the temple under repair and to see a sign which said ‘No Admittance’. She cried out loud. ‘Ma Ma, where’re you? I’m crippled now, how can you leave me? What can I do?’

Just then, two middle-aged women appeared and they told Ming Fong that there was a miracle doctor in China and he could cure all diseases. Ming Fong thought that this might be the last chance for her, so she decided she would believe what they said and gave all her money to them. But they were swindlers and this was the way they trapped their victims.

In the end, Ming Fong had no money; no husband and she would have to use a walking stick from now on. She knew that if she really believed in herself, she wouldn’t have ended up like this. Still, she didn’t give up and she believed that even if Ma Ma couldn’t help her any more, another god or goddess would. So, she visited all the temples and churches in the world and asked different deities to give her a generous husband.

And as for Ma Ma? You probably want to know what happened to her. Although she had been quite generous in her time as a goddess, she also made many mistakes and so she was reincarnated as a cow. The last time she was seen she was still looking for husband, just as her best devotee, Ming Fong, had always been.
The boy who went under the border and other stories

macauCLOSER

THE FLYING FAIRY CASINO
for Winnie Piu and Petunia Chang and friends

Once there was a naughty fairy who lived in a casino. She ate chips for her dinner every night. She ate chips for breakfast and for lunch too. Chips were the only thing she ate. Not the kind of chips you or I would snack on. Fifi ate casino chips. Fifi was the fairy’s name. She was naughty because… well because fairies are. There wasn’t anything special about this one in particular. Fifi was just average for a fairy where naughtiness was concerned. She lived in the casino because there were plenty of chips there and chips were what Fifi liked to eat.

What happened in the casino when Fifi was eating? Well, first of all, you should know that Fifi was almost completely invisible to almost everyone almost all of the time. Why almost? Well, sometimes someone got a glimpse. Whenever they did, that person would be seriously worried that he or she – but it was almost always a he – was losing his marbles, which is to say, mind. Which Fifi didn’t. I mean to say Fifi didn’t mind if winners or losers or drunks or punks or casino staff or anyone saw her. Fifi didn’t care if they noticed her or not. Fifi simply didn’t notice if or when they noticed her. She wasn’t eating all those chips to impress or depress anyone. She wasn’t eating those chips because she was greedy for money. Fifi didn’t know what money was. She didn’t know how serious and important that kind of paper and plastic was. She didn’t know how wonderful it was to win it, how tragic it was to lose money. Fifi ate the chips just because she was hungry.

Now what happened when Fifi ate her chips was quite simple, quite obvious. They were gone. You’ll realise right away how serious this was. Fifi couldn’t know it but something that was equivalent to anything you could want in the world because that something was equal to money just wasn’t anymore. I’m sorry if that last sentence was complicated in a silly way. That’s just how money is. The point is – in case you missed it – the chips Fifi ate just disappeared. They were there and then they weren’t. Where were they? Nobody knew. It was all very worrying whenever it happened to anyone but to tell the truth the casino itself wasn’t so worried because – although it couldn’t be explained – the disappearance of chips was something – is something – that happens in every casino. Now you and I know the reason it happens is simple – it’s because every casino has at least one fairy and fairies like to eat chips. But no respectable serious suited adult in the world could ever admit to such a thing. ‘Fairies?!’ they’d say, and then they’d add something like ‘huh’ and then they’d sneer sardonically, as if to say that they knew all about everything, which of course they didn’t.

People think they know all about fairies but how many people have met one, seen one, had a conversation with one? That’s the problem with people. They’re so busy thinking they know they never bother to take the time to find out.

Now here’s how it was when Fifi was snacking and you should know that Fifi was snacking all of the time. The chips might disappear from the gaming table, they might disappear out of a gambler’s pocket, they could disappear before the very eyes of a cashier. That cashier would feel quite queer and have a lot of trouble later on with the books, which as you know, are not ‘books’ at all but something which lives inside a computer, along with everything else that’s important these days.

Can you picture the nervous expression on the face of the cashier? And on the face of her supervisor? And his boss’s face? And the face of her manager? All the way up. Missing chips! Disaster! Heads would roll! People would have to make excuses for something so important gone missing. In fact though, you should know heads rarely rolled. And there were some simple reasons for that. First of all, missing chips were not always bad for the house. If the chips went missing when they were in the hands of the gamblers, the gamblers got very angry but the casino didn’t have to pay them a thing. They would stamp around huffily, saying ‘but I had two two hundred dollar chips in my hand and they simply vanished.’

The casino staff were very experienced with this kind of thing. They’d just say, ‘There, there. We know
And what an appetite it was! However much Fifi ate, she simply couldn't get fat. And this was how things had always been, for as long as she could remember. Fifi's appetite had been so much money and there so many gamblers coming through the doors to give all their money away. That was simply the way things were. Whenever the terrible thing called a 'discrepancy' was noticed, between the counterfeiters and Mr Christmas, it really didn't matter if a few chips went missing here or there. Mr Christmas left money lying around because he thought it was a sign of wealth. Everyone who walked into his office you almost always tripped over on the money that was just left lying around there. Only then did you notice how warm it was in there when the rest of the casino was air conditioned to Arctic temperatures. Mr Christmas had so much money it wasn't funny. In fact, if you stepped through the door into his office you almost always tripped over on the money that was just left lying around there. Only then did you notice how warm it was in there when the rest of the casino was air conditioned to Arctic temperatures. Mr Christmas had so much money it wasn't funny. In fact, if you stepped through the door into his office you almost always tripped over on the money that was just left lying around there. Only then did you notice how warm it was in there when the rest of the casino was air conditioned to Arctic temperatures.

World Religion? Mr Christmas had decided to rename his casino because he thought gambling should be the world's new religion. He thought it was better than every religion that had ever been before. After all, gambling was about money and money was something everyone believed in. With money you could do anything: buy anything, go anywhere, be anyone. Gambling was what made winners and winning was like all your Christmases come at once. Mr Christmas had a big smile on his face just from thinking such thoughts. So you see, between the short memory of gamblers and the gamblers who thought they were crazy, between the counterfeiters and Mr Christmas, it really didn't matter if a few chips went missing here or there. That was simply the way things were: Whenever the terrible thing called a 'discrepancy' was noticed, someone would think of something to make it all right and because there were so many chips and there was so much money and there so many gamblers coming through the doors to give all their money away every day - well, it didn't really matter if Fifi kept snacking. It didn't matter to the casino. Fifi wouldn't send the casino broke. And it didn't matter to Fifi. It didn't matter how much Fifi ate, she simply couldn't get fat. And this was how things had always been, for as long as anyone could remember. Just the same as at every other casino.

Or that was how things had always been... That was how things were until Fifi developed an appetite. Fifi couldn't work it out. Fairies are always hungry and Fifi had always been hungry by fairy standards but now she was simply ravenous. All the time. The casino management had begun to notice that things were a little out of the ordinary when they found themselves regularly counting far fewer chips in the morning than when they'd gone to bed. At first all the managers had been quite concerned but in a few days they realised that no one was cashing the missing chips, so money wasn't being lost. The missing chips simply weren't there. The problem was that there were less and less chips in circulation. So the casino thought of a simple solution. Make more chips. They were cheap as... to make after all. So who cared if they needed more?

Making more chips soaked up the extra 'demand' for maybe a week but after that it seemed that no matter how many new chips were made, they would all have disappeared by the end of the day.

Every day now, by the end of the day, Fifi would have eaten all the chips, no matter how many there were left. She could still be hungry. And when she got hungry - too hungry - Fifi got angry. And when she got angry? Well, have you ever met an angry fairy? They can be quite scary. The other thing was that Fifi was getting fat.

Now before we go on there's a little more you should know about Mr Christmas. Yes, he'd renamed his casino the World Religion Casino because he thought gambling was the best religion ever. But the question was why (?) The answer was that Mr Christmas had a guilty secret. Very simple and very terrible. It troubled him for many years before he found what some people call a 'guru'. Now a guru is a very special kind of person. They can make you behave like a guru that wasn't funny. In fact, it was quite the reverse: it was a sign that you so you that you think that you're agreeing with him. Yes, a guru is almost always a hit. And you have to be very rich to have your own guru. Oh, poor people can borrow somebody else's, put a picture of him on the wall, but it's rich people who keep gurus in business. Now a guru always has a mantra or two, the best have a few. Mr Christmas' gurus' best mantra was this: 'Flaunt it!'

Mr Christmas' guru had told the billionaire just what he had to do to fix his guilty secret for good. The cure was very effective. It was like all the counterfeiters had had to have an operation and after that - well after that - he'd been so much nicer to everyone.

The operation was to regain his innocence so that he could see things a child ought to see. Note 'ought' to: because often children don't get to see the world they ought to see. Often there are too many of what adults call 'grim realities' bearing down on children, which is why they sometimes have to work in fireworks factories which ought to be schools and which do blow up from time to time. killing everyone in them, which schools in fact rarely do, no matter how bad you think they are. But back to Mr Christmas. He'd had all the faults that all the fake and fairytale chips that had implanted in his head, he'd had the rose tinted glasses permanently fixed over his eyes, and after 'the operation' it didn't matter what anyone said or did, Mr Christmas would give them a present. Every time. No matter what. Without fail. Mr Christmas, as you know, could easily afford to do this. It was like he was just a little bit drunk all the time but without having to drink anything.

So Mr Christmas' guilty secret was fixed forever now. Usually when a knee trembling manager would knock on Mr Christmas' door to tell him about some missing chips, Mr Christmas would just say 'Hoa hoa hoi' and 'hiya, hiya, hiya' and give the poor fellow some gold coins or fancily printed stock certificates and send him on his way, without even listening to hear what the problem was. The manager would go away feeling that he had a guilty secret which he'd meant to, but hadn't been able to, share. But that reminds me. I don't believe I've told you what Mr Christmas' guilty secret was in the first place, the one of which he'd now been cured. I'd just told you that it was simple and terrible. Mr Christmas' guilty secret was that he had stolen the first dollar he'd ever had. He still had it too. It was above his desk, framed in a glass case, with a legend beneath labelling it 'Personal Demon'. It was there like that because that was what Mr Christmas' personal guru had told him he ought to do. It was up on the wall. The reason that Mr Christmas...
was trying to flaunt it. This didn't work though because, being the most worthless thing in the whole vast palace of a room, nobody visiting paid it any attention. They were all too interested in the gold bars and the platinum bars and the diamond studded just about everything.

Still, Mr Christmas had his rose tinted specs and he was quite convinced he was flaunting his guilty secret and so everything should be okay. Mr Christmas was now a deeply satisfied man. It had taken him a long time to find his personal guru and for many years as Mr Christmas had got richer and richer he had gone through what he could do to make up for his guilty secret. The richer he got the harder it seemed for him to do anything about it. He didn't just have one dollar to give back. He had a fortune which was bigger and bigger every year. Mr Christmas never worried - as some people might have - that he was stealing money every day and night from every gambler who lost in his casino. That idea never troubled him at all. What troubled him was only ever that first dollar. You see Mr Christmas had always been very interested in debt and interest and everything to do with counting money. That was how he'd begun to get rich in the first place before he'd ever had his casino. He had lent money out at high interest to people who were desperate to borrow money to gamble in someone else's casino. He'd made so much money that way he'd woken up one morning to find that he had his own. So what was his debt now really? Was it just the first dollar he owed the government, or that dollar adjusted for inflation or with compound interest or was it the whole of the huge fortune he'd amassed all through the years? That was what had worried Mr Christmas before he'd found his guru.

Now you might think it unusual that Mr Christmas should be so concerned about stealing a lousy little dollar so long ago when nowadays he fleeced people day and night. But the fact is he'd stolen that dollar from a particularly terrible and shameful place. He'd stolen it out of a beggar's cup on San Ma Lo. The worst thing for Mr Christmas was that that beggar was still there on San Ma Lo. Mr Christmas felt guilty every time he passed him and then even guiltier hoping the man would just die and be gone forever. But the man never did die and by Mr Christmas' calculation he now had to be several hundred years old, which as you know, is a little unusual for a beggar.

In the old days, before he'd found his guru, Mr Christmas had tried everything to get rid of that beggar. He'd have the police move him on but the beggar would always be back on the same corner, just like a leech. He'd tried every way to get him to go away and then even guiltier hoping the man would just die and be gone forever. But the man never did die and by Mr Christmas' calculation he now had to be several hundred years old, which as you know, is a little unusual for a beggar.

Today, there were a lot of nervous people in Mr Christmas' casino. They were nervous because, although everything was rosy. Or it was until today.

Today, there were a lot of nervous people in Mr Christmas's casino. They were nervous because, although Mr Christmas didn't quite know it, there wasn't a chip in his place. Mr Lo Ban was nervous. knock ked, sinking into the velvety plush of the deep pile carpeted corridor, about to knock on Mr Christmas' door. And every manager and cashier and croupier down the line was nervous as well. The gamblers themselves were nervous as hell. They'd come here to give their money away and now there was a hitch. No chips.

'Come in.'

'Sir.'

'Ah, Lo Ban. Have a box of cigars. And here's one for the wife. She smokes doesn't she!'

'Thank you, but sir.'

'Beautiful day in here, don't you think?'

'Yes sir.'

'Oh all right, alright. Business then, if you must. What is it?'

'It's serious sir.'

'Yes, well?'

'Hmm. No chips.'

'Nonsense, just make some more. Print them or mint them, whatever you do.'

'We have, but…'

'Well, do some more. We can't have too many you know.'

'I know but sir, it just doesn't work anymore. They disappear as fast as we make them, even before they come out of the machine that makes them.'

'Disperar? Hmm.'

And Mr Christmas hmmmmed at this point for quite a long time. Had you been there you'd have been surprised just how long he'd hmmmmed. You wouldn't have thought it possible. The thing was that Mr Christmas was looking for an angle. All his life he'd managed to find money where other people had lost it. Why should today be different? Ideas like 'world's first chip free casino' flashed through his mind. But Mr Christmas failed to see how there could be money in that. What if they used potato chips or corn chips? Perhaps pretzels? The plastic pretzel, he could invent it. Inventing was something Mr Christmas had always fancied he could do.

'Lo Ban, Lo Ban,' at last Christmas spoke. 'I need time to think this through. You do what you think is the best thing to do.'

'But sir!'

'No buts and no butterings up, Lo Ban, you heard me, now go out and do what a big boss should do.'

'Yes, sir.' And in an instant Mr Lo Ban was outside in the deep plush carpet, in the corridors of power, bossing people about, but without a clue of what he was about or of what would be the right thing to do. You can guess I suppose how this silly bossiness was passed right down the line, everyone quite clueless, each telling someone else what to do. The new 'policy' filtered down the line to the tables where the desperate gamblers were trying to fend off the croupiers piles of IOUs.

What was to be done was what Lo Ban wondered. He did the obvious thing first. He called the police. Something was missing so had to be stolen so the police should surely be able to help. They came - uniformed, plain clothed - their aim was to watch closely and see who was stealing the chips. The police tried conscientiously but they just couldn't stay awake. When they went they left behind a huge pile of IOUs which everyone knew they'd never pay. It was like all their Christmases. But the loan sharks outside the casino grew hungrier and hungrier. As everyone knows, Christmas can't last.

So Mr Lo Ban called in one Do Si after another. There was a queue of priests going through the casino. The Catholic ones were black as beetles and the Buddhist monk came in his karma pyjamas, a special outfit designed to protect him from massive attacks of desire. As you can imagine, at this point some of the staff were looking really worried. After all, here they were working in the 'World Religion Casino' and instead of chips on the tables, there were worthless IOUs. The house honoured its but things didn't seem to work the other way around. Now, to top it all off, there were salesmen from every religion thick on the floor where the suckers should have been. In the 'New Testament Room' they were daily expecting the arrival of a messiah.

Ah, but you've already guessed, none of the multitude of soothsayers and physiognomists, none of the pack of Tarot hacks and hoodoo gurus could find a single missing chip. The thing was none of them could see Fifi.

Fifi? Well, I'd better bring you up to date on her story now. You see, well it's difficult to explain, a little
indelicate. But the reason Fifi had got so hungry was quite straightforward. Fifi had been pregnant. She’d been pregnant since almost the beginning of the story. Now this is the kind of thing that happens to a female fairy every so often. We don’t have time for the details here but the long and the short of it is that Fifi had got hungry then hungry and bigger and bigger and... Fifi hadn’t been pregnant but she wasn’t any more. It was when Fifi had had her fairy litter that all the chips had disappeared, demand had outstripped supply as it were. Chips couldn’t be minted fast enough to keep up with the hungry fairy babes. And now chips weren’t being made at all, because what would have been the point? The result was, though none of the priestly tribe could see it, there were a lot of hungry spirits in Mr Christmas’ casino, and being hungry all the time was not something a fairy would appreciate any more than you would. These fairies would no longer have called Christmas.

That was because Fifi had never been in Mr Christmas’ office and Mr Christmas didn’t come out very often. He didn’t come out very often because it was too cold in the casino. Mr Christmas’ office was twenty seven degrees Celsius every day of the year and every night too because that was the temperature Mr Christmas liked. His office was always closed not just because he was so very important - which of course everyone knew that he was. It was also closed to keep the cold out. That was why Fifi had never been in there till now. But today things were different. There were so few customers Mr Lo Ban had ordered the air conditioning switched off as cost cutting measure. Mr Christmas had opened his door because he could hear - well, was that really the right word? - he could sense something he didn’t know this quite yet. Mr Christmas could see Fifi in the sense that he was able to. He hadn’t yet had the opportunity though.

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Fifi was on the warpath and where do you think such a path should lead a fairy on the loose? Up through the corridors of power Fifi went, demanding satisfaction, for the first time in her life addressing all the casino staff whom she’d never before paid the slightest attention to, and who of course could not see her at all. She was never bothered trying to communicate with humans. What would have been the point of that? Now she was desperate to get her message across.

None of the officials or holy men could see Fifi or her multitudinous brood. The funny thing was that Mr Christmas could. Of course he could, he’d had the operation. He didn’t come out very often because it was too cold in the casino. Mr Christmas’ office was twenty seven degrees Celsius every day of the year and every night too because that was the temperature Mr Christmas liked. His office was always closed not just because he was so very important - which of course everyone knew that he was. It was also closed to keep the cold out. That was why Fifi had never been in there till now. But today things were different. There were so few customers Mr Lo Ban had ordered the air conditioning switched off as cost cutting measure. Mr Christmas had opened his door because he could hear - well, was that really the right word? - he could sense something he didn’t know this quite yet. Mr Christmas could see Fifi in the sense that he was able to. He hadn’t yet had the opportunity though.

Fifi was in Mr Christmas’ office, she was hovering in her most menacing manner. She was distinctly unimpressed with the gold and the paper money and the bonds and stocks and share certificates. She sneered at the lot. These things meant nothing to her. Still there was something in the way of dinner in here and Fifi was very very hungry. Gingerly Mr Christmas closed the door behind them, but not before half a dozen or more of Fifi’s children had crowded glimmering into the room.

‘So you’re a fairy then?’

‘What’s it to you?’

‘Well it is my casino.'

‘Oh, your casino. Big shot, huh? Let the children starve!"

‘Sorry? Mr Christmas wasn’t apologising, he just hadn’t quite caught what Fifi had said. Or rather he had, but he couldn’t really understand. But it was too late. Already this last accusation was meaning for Mr Christmas because he could hear - well, was that really the right word? - he could sense something he could only describe as the whimpering of hungry youngsters. It was pitiful. The heart he’d never much before considered was breaking or so he thought. ‘They’re...?’

‘They’re my children. They’re hungry.

‘I’m very sorry to hear that.’And he’d said that word again. ‘If there’s anything I could do...’

But a glass frame on the wall was smashed and the first of the new generation of chips which had been so proud all. Fifi had never bothered trying to communicate with humans. What would have been the point of that? Now she was desperate to get her message across.

The boy who went under the border and other stories

Don’t you know we need chips to survive? If this is your casino then you ought to do something about it. Or else...’

‘Or else? Mr Christmas wasn’t meaning to dare Fifi, he just couldn’t help wondering. It was then he asked a very silly question. ‘Why your casino?"

Now Fifi might not have known very much, she mightn’t have been what you’d call worldly wise, but nor was she slow on the uptake. The interview was at an end. Nor did Fifi try to fly back through the closed door, the way she’d come. No. There’d been a thinking pause for a moment after Mr Christmas had said ‘my casino’. It was then Fifi saw another thing she’d never noticed before: an open window. In all her years at the World Religion Casino and at whatever it had been called before that, Fifi had never once seen an open window, a window to the outside world. In fact she’d not known there was such a place. But now she was out in it, she was flying down the street and she was pursued by hundreds of little wings, each with a glass frame on the wall was smashed and the first of the new generation of chips which had been so proud all. Fifi had never bothered trying to communicate with humans. What would have been the point of that? Now she was desperate to get her message across.

This sent Mr Christmas into a panic. That was because he knew that the other casinos would not take very kindly to the kind of invasion they were about to host. That was why Mr Christmas had himself flown down the stairs and out the front door of World Religion and onto the street.
was nothing for it but to follow on foot. At least Mr Christmas had one advantage over Fifi and Co. He knew where every casino in Macao was, they had no idea.

The glimmer of a thousand wings was still in Christmas’ view when he hit the pavement outside. They were heading for the Inner Harbour, or so it seemed. Down Gou Si Duk as far as the Red Market and then they turned north towards the border. Mr Christmas pursued them like a madman. He was exhausted but relieved they were going where there weren’t any casinos. And then they doubled back, climbed Guia Hill, which was more exercise than Mr Christmas had had this many a year.

Really he needn’t have been so worried. When the fairies finally passed the Hotel Lisboa they had no idea there was a casino in there. The fact is fairies have no trouble sniffing out a chip when they’re in the same room, but when it’s a matter of nosing dinner through concrete walls, well that’s a different story. With so much air pollution in Macao these fairies had no chance. The only reason Mr Christmas had been able to keep up with them at all was because they had so much trouble crossing the road. They simply had no idea how it was done and as you can easily imagine, very few cars were prepared to stop for them.

Finally though, the big man did lose sight of them and that was on San Ma Lo. He rushed along and then he paused to gaze into the distance and rushed along and paused, but they were out of sight. And so resolutely Mr Christmas walked on until he came to a familiar corner and there he saw, ageless as ever, the beggar from whom – so many years ago – he had stolen his first dollar. You know that Mr Christmas had already said sorry twice this day and almost a third time when he’d almost meant it. Now something came over him. It must have been all the excitement of his world turned upside down. It must have been the feeling that fate had finally caught up with him. Mr Christmas felt in his pocket for a pataca. He placed it in the cup and he said the fateful word. Mr Christmas said ‘sorry’ and he really truly meant it. And then something even more extraordinary. Mr Christmas said ‘thanks for the loan.’

And even though it hadn’t been a loan and even though the debt he owed might not have really been repaid, that ‘sorry’ and that ‘thank you’ set all sorts of magic in train. There was a golden glow around that beggar, who really didn’t seem to know what was happening either. People on the street took a step back away from the beggar and Christmas, they shielded their eyes. Some crossed themselves, some clutched at their pendants. There was Mr Christmas lifted up above the crowds and whisked away, to where? You’d never guess.

Or perhaps you did? Mr Christmas was spirited away to the North Pole. He was given a job shoveling snow outside Santa’s workshop. After a hundred years of that he was promoted to the position of second assistant to the tier of the less decorative kind of bow. The cold was hard to bear to begin with but Mr Christmas is getting used to it. His ‘hoa, hoa, hoa’ comes in very handy. It’s what everyone’s always saying up there or more or less. Further promotions are in the pipeline. The best thing is that Mr Christmas – having said sorry and thank you – found the politeness quite catching. In no time at all he’d discovered sincerity and now, well now he’d have a single chip or even a single pataca. He doesn’t have any bonds or stocks or share certificates, but he’s grown a heart a gold.

You probably want to know what happened to Fifi and her brood. They found the other casinos in the end. In fact they found so many, they were able to occupy one each. There are so many casinos in Macao today. So far each of them has plenty to eat because the supply of chips hasn’t yet outstripped their appetite. But half of these fairies are girls and as you know, with female fairies, it’s only a matter of time.

Which just about brings us back to the beginning. Which is why it will always be true to say: Once there was a naughty fairy who lived in a casino. She ate chips for her dinner every night. She lived in the casino because there were plenty of chips there and chips were what she liked to eat.
Ming had been standing in the immigration queue for an eternity, or it seemed like an eternity to Ming. Ming was a little uncertain as to how long eternity was, but then who isn’t? It is hard to imagine how long eternity might last. Isn’t funny how we use such a word all the time for something we just can’t imagine! Still everyone says it when they think things are taking too long and, at Ming’s age, everything done with your parents seems to take too long.

Ming was in the queue with his mother. Ming thought his arm was going to fall off because of the heavy bag he was holding. It was all his mother’s shopping. Well, not all of it. Most of his mother’s shopping was in the trolley she was dragging. But some of it wouldn’t fit and that was why they’d bought this extra bag, the bag Ming was carrying now. The worst thing was what was in the bag. It was full of paper offerings and money to burn for the ancestors. Ming thought all that stuff was a bit spooky, and even sillier than it was spooky. Ming’s mum had seen these offering materials at the last minute in the mall under the border. Because they were cheaper than she could buy in Macao, she’d insisted on buying as much paper as they could carry. Hell money – like everything else – was cheaper in China, and after Because they were cheaper than she could buy in Macao, she’d insisted on buying as much paper as they could carry. Hell money – like everything else – was cheaper in China, and after

...
And so Ming followed the instructions the kind nervous man had given him. Down several very dark, empty, smelly flights of stairs he scurried. Rats were scurrying there too. But none of them got in Ming's way. It was as if they knew he was on a mission. Before long Ming found himself standing in front of a shop almost identical to the one he'd been in upstairs. Everything was much darker down here but the products in the window looked more or less the same as what he'd seen before. It wasn't long before Ming's eyes adjusted to the dim conditions.

The shopkeeper here was friendly enough although much slower than the man upstairs. It seemed to take him forever to say or to do anything. Finally though he asked if Ming intended to buy. Ming had been putting off this moment for a long time because he'd get the same treatment as he'd got before. The situation did look doubtfully for a while: The shopkeeper asked if it was a gift as he had brought his passport. When Ming had said no, he'd said that there was an office downstairs where things like this could be sorted out. Although really he shouldn't do business with anyone whose papers weren't in order, he could see that Ming was a very nice boy, and he was sure he wouldn't tell anybody, would he? Yes he was sure. Ming kept nodding to all of this and when he finally produced the money from his bags the man looked very pleased indeed. In fact he looked impressed. He took just a single note from Ming, one with a lot of zeroes, and he handed the boy the package, and more paper change than Ming could cram in his pockets.

For some time it seemed the backlight in the machine he was holding was the brightest light in the place. And yet Ming was moving the controls so adeptly to navigate the maze in which he found himself, he didn't notice that backighting was all around him now. He hadn't met any monsters or killer machines or anything like that yet but now the machine was asking him how he wanted to die. A challenge? Well, he was up to it. Ming was ready for anything.

It was only at this point Ming noticed that the gadget he was holding in his hand didn't say 'Game Boy' at all, it said 'Hell Boy'. When a new round came up, Ming saw the software copyright. It said © Yim Lou Wong. Year Dot. Ming knew that Yim Lou Wong was the King of Hell, so he thought that the copyright message was pretty funny but a little creepy too. He asked the shopkeeper if the sign on the door had said '24-7'. But what of that? The boy had wanted the Game Boy and the item in question was now in his hot little hands. The shopkeeper had vanished. Ming was out in the corridor wrapt in his new toy, just getting the feel of it. Soon he'd be playing games on it, games he'd only dreamt of before.

But there were a few strange things going on, Ming would have noticed had he been paying attention. For some time it seemed the backlight in the machine he was holding was the brightest light in the place. Out of the clearing gloom before him appeared a strangely familiar form. It was about this time Ming realised the lift hadn't been going up at all, it had been going down. The bloke with the funny hat in front of him was none other than Yim Lou Wong, the face on the billion dollar banknote.

'So you've come for judgement?' the King of Hell asked gravely.

'In the winner!' the boy proudly offered.

'Demonic laughter, long and loud. 'The winner?' Demonic giggle. 'Ah Ming, I don't know how to tell you this, but you're in a bit of a hole.' And it was true the décor looked in a slightly sly way, which Ming thought dead. 'According to my scanner, you're not even dead.' And sure enough there were lights flashing and alarms ringing. A general 'mortal alarm' had been raised. 'Not even dead! How dare you.'

Ming was shaking at the knees before the infernal presence and yet he was still somehow emboldened by his recent fatal experiences. 'I am so dead!' he blurted out.

'Still alive!'

'Dead!'

'Alive!'

'Dead!'

'Alive!'

'Dead!'

'This is childish!' Ming finally countered, recognising that although they both had limitless time now, there probably better ways to spend it.

The King gave an age-long sigh, as if very disappointed to give up the game he'd been enjoying. 'Every thousand years we get one. Orpheus. Odysseus. Monkey. And you'd be?'

'Ming.'

'Ah Ming, I don't know how to tell you this, but you're in a bit of a hole: And it was true the décor around them was something lacking. The King of Hell now explained to him that the Hell Boy was just a game and although it was indeed a game meant for dead people, having played it didn't make him dead, even though he was presently in the ideal place to be that way. The man who'd sold the Hell Boy to him and abandoned his shop so rapidly after would be caught up with. He had probably dispensed with most of his ill-gotten millions by now in one of the netherworld's innumerable Mahjong dens. Yim Lou Wong congratulated himself on the wisdom of having installed the DemonTracker system last Ghost Festival. So, Ming, the king now tailed off, 'What are we going to do with you?'

Now the terrible thing these days about being in the presence of Yim Lou Wong, when he's thinking of what to do with you, is that... well hell is so hi-tech today, that all of the punishments he imagines for you are shown in holographic form around you and seem very very real. The tortures which spontaneously occur...
to the mind of hell’s reigning monarch really put to shame anything the Hell Boy could come up with.

Yim Lou Wong wasn’t trying to think of nasty tortures for Ming, he was actually trying to think the kindest thoughts he could think of. You see the king was just an average sort of demon who’d landed a dirty job which somebody had to do. But to tell you the truth the nicest thoughts Yim Lou Wong could think were still pretty nasty. For instance he thought of letting Ming watch his favourite cartoon while he was being flayed alive, or having his brains sucked out with a straw while eating a hamburger, that sort of thing, But the terrible plans the tyrant couldn’t help but imagine would have to be put on hold for the moment. That was because – midway through imagining Ming being eaten alive by cockroaches – there was a terrible rumbling all about them. The king became irritated with this, as if it were an annoyance he’d anticipated. So he quit imagining, took out a very sharp knife… well really a sword, and sliced off Ming’s very real ear. What a howl the boy let out. There was blood everywhere, but Ming was still alive, and the infernal crew had seen where the boy had gone and they were bearing down on him fast.

Ming had his foot on the immigration queue. He only opened his eyes again because he was deafened by the sound of the terrible rumbling all about them. The king became irritated with this, as if it were an annoyance he’d anticipated. So he quit imagining, took out a very sharp knife… well really a sword, and sliced off Ming’s very real ear. What a howl the boy let out. There was blood everywhere, but Ming was still alive, and the infernal crew had seen where the boy had gone and they were bearing down on him fast.

What will you do without your passport?

But Ming was so happy he couldn’t restrain himself. He finally tugged on his mother’s dress to get her attention. But mum, he said, we’re almost home now.

It was only then that Ming saw how wrong he’d been. It really was as if no time had passed. Perhaps no time had passed, perhaps, perhaps… and then Ming caught a glimpse, up ahead. Yes, up ahead. His mother’s red dress, her hairstyle, her perfume. Never in his life had he ever imagined he could be so happy to see such familiar things. And now, like a dream, he could hear her carrying on just as she’d been carrying on before he’d run off. It really was as if no time had passed.

Don’t you know it’s a dangerous place? Are there pickpockets, pimps, prostitutes, loan sharks, everywhere. You can’t trust anyone. And if you get lost you’re lost, who’ll help you? Your family – huh – they won’t even be able to see you.

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But Ming was so happy he couldn’t restrain himself. He finally tugged on his mother’s dress to get her attention. But mum, he said, we’re almost home now.

It was only then that Ming saw how wrong he’d been. It really was as if no time had passed. Perhaps no time had passed, perhaps, perhaps… and then Ming caught a glimpse, up ahead. Yes, up ahead. His mother’s red dress, her hairstyle, her perfume. Never in his life had he ever imagined he could be so happy to see such familiar things. And now, like a dream, he could hear her carrying on just as she’d been carrying on before he’d run off. It really was as if no time had passed.

Don’t you know it’s a dangerous place? Are there pickpockets, pimps, prostitutes, loan sharks, everywhere. You can’t trust anyone. And if you get lost you’re lost, who’ll help you? Your family – huh – they won’t even be able to see you.

What will you do without your passport?
Mr Mok was sitting leisurely, and listening to the radio. A hot summer night in Macao.

‘Cha shao bao, shei ai chi gang chu long de cha shao bao…’ Fresh steamed pork buns – who wants to eat ‘em?’

Mr Mok yawned lazily.

‘Beep. Time is now 9 p.m.’

Mr Mok got up from the chair and walked slowly to pull down the gate. An old man popped up.

‘I hope you aren’t leaving.’ The old man said in a low voice.

‘Yes, I am. How can I help you?’ Mr Mok was a bit impatient.

The old man took out an ancient camera from his dusty bag. He handed it to Mr Mok.

‘I want to sell you this camera here.’

Mr Mok examined the camera. It was an antique, and although it didn’t seem to work anymore, it looked precious.

‘How much?’

‘Fifty. Fifty patacas.’ The old man looked serious.

‘Fifty? Are you sure?’ Mr Mok smiled. He thought that the old man was a ‘sui yu’, a sucker.

‘Okay. Let me jot you down in the register.’ Mr Mok went back into the shop to do the register. When he turned round, he found that the old man had disappeared.

‘What a strange man!’ Mr Mok looked at the camera, puzzled. He shrugged and put the camera on a shelf.

Chang walked along Estrada do Repouso (Dou Sun Gai in Cantonese) and came to Mr Mok’s shop. He entered and saw Mr Mok was sitting leisurely as usual.

‘Good morning, Uncle Mok!’ Chang greeted Mr Mok.

‘Morning, lad!’

‘Anything new today?’

‘Ah. There’s never anything new in my shop, you know that.’


Mr Mok then took out an old tripod and showed it to Chang. ‘How about this?’

Chang shook his head. ‘No no… I’ve got enough tripods. I want something special.’

‘Special? How about this folding camera? It’s from Shanghai, it’s from the 1950s.’

‘Interesting. But I know it must be very expensive.’

‘Not really, it’s just fifty thousand dollars.’

‘Come on, you must be joking, uncle! You know I can’t afford it.’

‘Ah, but it’s beautiful, isn’t it? Well, let me think. Yes, an antique camera.’ Mr Mok got up slowly and brought Chang the camera. ‘A strange old man brought it to me yesterday.’

Chang opened the back of the camera and tested some parts of the mechanism. He thought that the camera was lovely.

‘It looks great. How much is it?’

‘Ha! Frankly, the old man asked quite a fair price. Well, since you like it so much, um… you can have it for seven hundred: Mr Mok smiled in a friendly way.

‘Seven hundred? No, no. How about six fifty?’

‘Ha!’ Mr Mok pretended to be thinking (as was his usual custom when cheating people). After a brief pause he said, ‘Okay. This price is only for you.’

‘Thanks, Uncle Mok. You’re always so nice!’ Chang paid immediately. ‘Bye, uncle.’ He had the precious object in his hands.

‘See you, lad!’ As Chang went away, Mr Mok laughed silently and sat back in his chair. ‘Wow! Another sui yu! Money is easy to make these days.’

There was no film in the camera but Chang pressed the shutter release and the camera made some ‘ka cha’ sounds, as if it were working.

‘Cool, it’s still working!’ Chang inserted a roll of film in the camera straight away.

‘Ka cha.’

‘Great, the shutter and the lens are still quite good.’ Chang took a photograph of the food stall where he was standing just then, and then he went on taking other photographs at some interesting spots as he walked. He was an avid amateur photographer and especially liked to take photographs that he thought were strange or humorous. He stopped before a tiny shop, which was called ‘Big Big Store’.

‘It’s really big!’ ‘Ka cha.’ Chang laughed to himself out loud.

Chang kept on taking photographs as he walked along with his new toy. He was in high spirits. Everything seemed so fresh and interesting to him through his new lens.

‘Wow! I’m so happy today! This must be my lucky camera. It gives me so much inspiration.’ He took a photograph of a drain, next to which lots of rubbish was stacked.

‘Hey, don’t be like that, boys. Why are you fighting with each other?’ Chang asked kindly.

‘He ate my candies! He stole them from my drawer this morning!’ one of the boys said angrily.
'No, I didn't. I swear. The other boy denied the charge, gave Chang an appealing look.

'Come on! Don't get so upset about this small matter.' Chang took out some candies from his pocket.

'Here you are. Let's share, and don't hurt each other anymore. Okay?'

The boys nodded and shared the candies. They thanked Chang and went away hand-in-hand happily. So his camera could make peace as well!

Chang finished his photo expedition, had dinner and a drink after. It was already 9 p.m. when Chang got home.

'Honey! I'm home!' But there was no response. The house was empty. Chang rushed into his small darkroom to develop the film. He wanted to see his work as soon as possible. He already knew it would be great. He had never been so excited.

Two hours later, the photographs were developed. Chang took them off the clips anxiously. His face turned blue. He could hardly breathe and his heart almost stopped beating. Yes, the photographs were wonderful. They showed the places where he'd taken them. But they showed night scenes. The backgrounds were dark. The streetlamps were on! But he'd taken all of the shots in broad daylight.

Chang took a few steps backward and stood against the wall. He could not believe his eyes. He took a deep breath and tried to calm himself.

'What the…' He stood straight and went slowly again to the photographs. He squinted and rubbed his eyes but the pictures were still the same. He sat down and made himself comfortable, and then he examined the photographs one by one. The places were the same, but they were all at night. The people in the pictures seemed different. Chang was not sure.

He found the picture of the boys fighting. He was shocked. The blind alley was still in the picture, but there was nobody in it. Where were the two boys? Were they ghosts? Chang scratched his head. He had no idea of what was going on. He shufﬂed the photographs and leaned back. One picture fell on the floor. He picked it up and looked at it, feeling depressed with this unexpected puzzle. The picture was taken at the Big Big Store. There was a lady with long hair in a yellow dress talking to the shop owner beside the cash register, and a little girl was standing outside the shop. There was a clock hanging on the wall in the shop and… A clock! Chang blinked at it closely. The clock in the picture said 12:30. Chang was totally puzzled.

He went home with great expectations.

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'What will happen to me? Is that the cost of having this camera? Does the camera never lie?' Chang had been on top of the world, now he was dead in the gutter. He nerved himself and picked up the picture again slowly. He looked at his body closely. It was lying gorily in the alley, a knife in the chest. It was disgusting and distressing and Chang was very worried. Wouldn't he? Chang kept on looking at the picture and hoped to ﬁnd some clues as to what had really happened. He noticed that that his gold ring and Rolex were not on the body.

'It must be a mugging. There must have been a struggle. I was defending myself, my property. Then the thief kills me in the alley and takes my things away. That must have been it. Poor me!' Chang frowned for a few second but relaxed and laughed. Ha! Stupid me! Why am I so worried? I can save myself! I'll be ﬁne if I stay at home for the whole day. Thinking of this, Chang was relieved. It was now 3:57 a.m. He had one more ﬁlm to develop, still in the camera. But it would have to wait. Chang swung through the bedroom door, put his head on the pillow, and was soon fast asleep.

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Chang's wife, Pei opened the door and tiptoed into the house. A well-built man was following her and Pei wore a pair of plastic gloves. She took out a knife from her bag. She looked at Chang and then at the door and prepared to enter the house. When she opened it, the dead body was discovered. A well-built man was following her and Pei whispered and went to the bedroom.

Chang was sleeping like a log. He showed no sign of waking despite the fact that Pei and Long were in the room.

Pei wore a pair of plastic gloves. She took out a knife from her bag. She looked at Chang and then at the camera. Chang stopped breathing and was frozen. His eyes were wide open. The lady was the one in the picture. Exactly! The lady went into the store and asked the little girl to stand outside and wait. The shop owner greeted the lady and they started talking, beside the cash register.

Chang looked at his picture and at the store again. He covered his mouth with his hand. He was too surprised to think clearly for ages, but suddenly he burst out laughing.

'It's incredible! The camera is a treasure! I'll be rich! I'll be rich! I can take a photograph of the TV, and then I can win the prize of the Mark Six. I can take pictures everywhere and I can be a prophet! Yes! The world is mine! And I…' He stopped this wild train of thought and looked at the camera, 'Well, maybe I should take some more pictures to make sure it really has the magic. I hope it isn't a dream.'

On his way home, to test the magic, he took some pictures of streets and alleys just casually as he passed.

He went home with great expectations.
Long.

‘Don’t hesitate. We can’t have a future if we don’t get rid of him,’ Long whispered, and then he added,

‘Do you love me?’

‘Yes, of course,’ Pei looked very serious.

‘Go on then. Be quick!’

Pei took a deep breath and drove the knife hard into Chang’s chest. Chang woke now. He looked around
in horror. Pei went to Long’s side immediately.

‘Why?’ Chang asked weakly. He could not believe that his wife was doing this to him.

‘You owe me! You owe me!’ Pei said with hatred.

‘What?’ Chang felt dizzy. He was bleeding hard. ‘Help me, Pei. Please.’

‘No! You don’t love me. You just love your cameras! You spend all the nights in the darkroom, busy doing
with those rubbish photos! I have had enough of this kind of living. I don’t love you anymore. I want to be with
Long. We can have a lot of money from the insurance if you die. And Long and I can lead a new life. Goodbye! Chang. See you in hell! I can’t…’ Pei was very agitated, and Long laid his hands on her shoulders.

‘Pei, he’s dead.’

‘Sorry, Chang. I have no choice.’ Pei said blankly.

‘Come on, Pei. Let’s first take his valuables, so that people will think it’s a mugging,’ Long reminded her
of their plan.

‘Okay,’ As Pei took off Chang’s Rolex she said, ‘This watch is a birthday present I bought him last year.’

‘Don’t think too much, Pei. He’s dead. We’ll have a bright future.’ Long checked through Chang’s clothes
and finding that all his valuables were gone, he tried to lift the body.

‘Yes, you’re right.’ Pei sighed and helped Long with the heavy burden.

Pei and Long put the corpse in a big suitcase and brought it to the narrow alley Chang had photographed
the night before. The alley was empty but the first light was coming on.

‘There’s nobody here. Let’s leave it.’ Long opened the suitcase and dumped the corpse on the concrete.
‘Done!’ Long smiled.

‘Good-bye, Chang.’ Pei looked a bit sad, and Long patted her shoulder.

‘It’s now time for breakfast. Our new day is dawning.’ And the pair walked away blissfully.

Three months later…

‘Mok here. Is that detective Lam? Yes, good. Detective Lam, I think I’ve solved the Chang murder for you. I
was recently sold all of his photographic equipment by the widow. There was no trouble valuing it because
I sold it all to him in the first place… But sorry, that’s not the point. The point is, I developed the film that
was still in the camera… and, well… I can’t explain it but there’s a picture – I have it here – picture of the
wife and her new man dumping the body out of a suitcase in the lane where you found him… What’s that?
I can’t hear you… Yes, I’ve got the suitcase too. That’s what they used to bring all the equipment. I guess
they thought they were getting rid of something… Right then, see you shortly.’

Mok leant back in his easy chair. The wife had actually put up a reward for information leading to the
arrest of her husband’s murderer. To draw suspicion away from herself, no doubt. The police hadn’t suspected
her or her boyfriend however. They had thought this was a simple mugging gone wrong. The police had
custody of the reward money. It would be coming soon with Detective Lam. ‘Zhu tao bing; what a dumb
pig head!’ was what Mok was thinking to himself. ‘Zhu tao bing’.
Last year many tourists visited Macao. They didn’t come to Macao for delicious food. They didn’t come for beautiful scenery. They all came to try their luck at different kinds of betting games in Macao’s casinos.

The most famous place for all gamblers in Macao was a magical slot machine at the newest casino called ‘Hou Yet Lap Sap’. Since this casino was famous for this slot machine, the founder used the name of the slot machine as the casino’s name as well. This slot machine, Hou Yet Lap Sap’, was different from other casinos because it could make people’s wishes come true. It could make wishes come true, not just in a manner of speaking, but really, directly, without any money needing to change hands to buy the things which usually make wishes come true. Winners wished and then straightaway they had whatever it was that they had wished for. People said that the ‘Hou Yet & Lap Sap’ slot machine’s power was like the power of a god. This was no exaggeration because this slot machine had the power, not only to bring winners to heaven, but also to take losers to hell.

Even though the machine was quite dangerous, and no one even knew where it came from, there were still lots of people willing to take the risk of playing it. After trying their luck, some of them went home with smiling faces, some went home with tears, or worse.

This slot machine not only attracted the tourists but there were also many local people wanted to try the magic. Chi Seng was a twenty-five-year-old Macao man who hadn’t finished secondary school and so had trouble finding a good job and so he worked as a waiter in a small café. He was poor and his life was hard. He was optimistic and always thought that he was a lucky guy because the gods would bless him now and then with a sweepstake win or a scratchie good for ten dollars. He was like so many other people who always wished they could get money without any effort. After the magical machine appeared, Chi Seng thought of it every day. He wanted to try his luck but he was afraid because he knew nothing about this slot machine except that it was the newest and most famous one in Macao. Chi Seng didn’t know what it looked like or the difference between this machine and the others at other casinos. Chi Seng wanted to go there by himself but there were too many people queuing up outside the ‘Hou Yet & Lap Sap Casino’ every day. Still, he wanted to have a look.

One Sunday afternoon, Chi Seng was having a drink with his friend. Ah Kwok. Ah Kwok was Chi Seng’s best friend at school and Chi Seng had helped Ah Kwok many times, with things such as dating girls, lying to girlfriends or his mother and all sorts of other things like that. Now they were discussing the magical slot machine.

‘Ah Kwok, have you heard about that slot machine in ‘Hou Yet & Lap Sap Casino’?’

‘Of course. The ‘Hou Yet & Lap Sap’ slot machine, right? Ah Kwok checked. Are you interested in it?’

‘Yes! I want to try it. Perhaps, I could become a rich man in a minute!’ Chi Seng was excited.

‘But, this machine isn’t as simple as you think,’ Ah Kwok replied slowly.

‘I know, I know. I heard that not everyone could get what they wanted and...’ Chi Seng was interrupted.

‘And some of them even got a very bad outcome! Ah Kwok went on, ‘Don’t try it, my dear friend. It’s just too dangerous. I don’t want you to have a bad life in the future.’

‘Okay, okay, I promise. By the way, do you know how to play it? Chi Seng knew that he could not ask Ah Kwok to go with him but he wanted to know more about this machine.

‘I heard there are some English letters on the reels, and if you get the word ‘bou yet’, you win a prize. But...’ Ah Kwok stopped and looked worried.

‘But, what, Ah Kwok?’ Chi Seng asked.

‘If one draws the word ‘lap sap’, something bad will happen. I think that’s why people say that the machine can make you fu guai, rich or bat ae, poor. Ah Kwok explained.

‘Do you remember that there was a man who won a bonus two months ago?’ Chi Seng asked.

‘Yes, he got a supernatural power as a prize, and whatever he touched would turn to gold. Ah Kwok continued with a horrible expression on his face, ‘but he also heard that someone drew ‘lap sap’ and he became blind the next day!"

‘Really! It’s like something outside of a fairytale. Now I really want to try. I know I’d be lucky if I did: Chi Seng stood up and took out his wallet to pay the bill. He knew that this machine could change his boring life even though Ah Kwok said that it was dangerous.

But when he was ready to go, Ah Kwok stopped him and said, ‘It’s very dangerous. It’s too dangerous. Luck can change at any time and you may meet with misfortune.’

‘Don’t worry, I’m a lucky guy. Why would I get ‘lap sap’? Remember, I always draw a lucky door prize in those dinner parties and I always win competitions! Chi Seng swung his forefinger to show his friend that bad luck wouldn’t touch him. Ah Kwok gave him a doubtful look but Chi Seng just patted his friend on the shoulder and left.

In the end Ah Kwok decided to go to the ‘Hou Yet & Lap Sap Casino’ with Chi Seng because he worried about his friend. As they arrived, Chi Seng and Ah Kwok saw some people leaving the casino very happily. These people couldn’t stop laughing. Some of them were even throwing money on the pavement in front of them. Others were scrabbling about to pick up the notes before they blew away. But there some other people coming out of the casino blind, crippled or deaf and they were wailing crazily.

Ah Kwok thought the stakes were too high and wanted to leave straightaway but when the two friends overheard three women say that it was very easy to win a prize in the casino, Chi Seng’s eyes sparkled and he asked Ah Kwok to queue up for him. He rushed to the counter to change money. There were lots of people at the casino and the queue for the ‘Hou Yet and Lap Sap’ machine was so long that Ah Kwok couldn’t find the head of it, so he couldn’t even see the famous machine. So after Chi Seng had changed his money, Ah Kwok turned back to the queue, ‘I’ll bring you the machine for your turn.’

After two hours, their turn finally came. They read the instructions first and then, before starting the game, they signed an agreement to promise that they would accept any outcomes that the machine gave.

Chi Seng was a bit afraid now and he asked Ah Kwok to try it first. ‘Why me! I’ve just come here with you! You try it!’ Ah Kwok shouted.

‘No, you go first. Don’t you remember I’m your backer? I’ve helped you in so many ways. You promised me that you would do anything for me.’

‘Did I When was that?’

‘In fourth form. I remember it very clearly.’

Actually Chi Seng had used tactics like this many times to get Ah Kwok to do things for him. ‘Okay, okay. I try it first!’ Ah Kwok gave up bargaining with Chi Seng and went to the machine. They couldn’t waste more time arguing because of the long queue behind them.

Ah Kwok’s heartbeat became very fast. He didn’t know what would happen after he pressed the button. He didn’t want to win any money and he didn’t have any special wish, he just wanted to get through this ordeal with the machine. Ah Kwok closed his eyes and pressed the start button. The reels were spinning. Ah Kwok prayed for good luck. Then the letters dropped one by one. ‘H... O... U... S... A... P’. It’s ‘Hou sap’! ‘Yeah! Ah Kwok was cheerful even though he could not get any bonus or have any wish come true. He turned to his friend and said, ‘Chi Seng, it’s your turn.’

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‘But, what, Ah Kwok?’ Chi Seng asked.

‘If one draws the word ‘lap sap’, something bad will happen. I think that’s why people say that the machine can make you fu guai, rich or bat ae, poor. Ah Kwok explained.
'Hou yet! Hou yet! Hou yet!' Chi Seng chanted the word while the reels were rolling. Then, the letters appeared: ‘H…O…U…E…T’. ‘Woo!’ It’s ‘hou yet’!

‘Oh my God! I did it! I did it!’ Chi Seng shouted and he gave Ah Kwok a big hug.

Then the screen of the machine showed that Chi Seng would have sixty seconds to think about his wish and shout it out. If he could not shout out his wish within sixty seconds, the wish would be forfeited.

‘Why haven’t I heard about this rule before?’ Chi Seng complained but he could not wait any longer because the machine started counting down, ‘Sixty, fifty-nine, fifty-eight…’

So, Chi Seng thought over and over what his actual wish should be. He didn’t know which wishes would be the most beneficial to him. He wanted to be rich, but he also wanted to have a beautiful wife and he wished to be a handsome guy as he wasn’t satisfied with his appearance. The time was flying but Chi Seng was still thinking about his wish.

‘Thirty-eight, thirty-seven, thirty-six…’ Chi Seng became nervous and kept saying to himself, ‘Iu mae hou? What do I want? Iu mae hou?’

Now there were only a few seconds left, ‘Lok, mg, sei, three, two, one.’ ‘Iu MAE…’ Chi Seng shouted loudly. ‘Bi…’ the time was up.

All of the people in the casino were silent and waiting to see Chi Seng’s wish come true. But nothing happened…

Several seconds later, still nothing had happened…

Chi Seng thought that nothing had happened because he had said his wish too late. The expectant silence in the gaming room could not last much longer, but just as everyone was about to go back to their games and their chatting, a strong light came from the ceiling and everyone looked up at it. The light became brighter and brighter and that made people cover their eyes. Then just as suddenly as it had come the light disappeared but where it had been there was a sheep hovering in mid-air. The animal looked scared, it was shaking. So were many of the people watching below, although those who had had a few drinks were finding the show very enjoyable.

Looking up at the sheep, Chi Seng thought of what he had said at the last second, ‘Iu mae…’ ‘Iu mae!’ he said out loud.

‘Mae!’ the sheep said too, because as you know, that is what a sheep says in Cantonese. Chi Seng gazed up at the animal, in wonderment at his own stupidity. And then the sheep fell. It knocked Chi Seng to the floor but by the time he had picked himself up, it had become smoke and disappeared.

Drunk or sober, no one at the casino could stop laughing after seeing this funny scene. Chi Seng was very angry because he hadn’t won anything and he looked such a fool. He was so furious he picked up the first chair he could find and attacked the nearest machine with it. The nearest machine was the ‘Hou Yet and Lap Sap’ slot machine. The guards wanted to stop him but it was too late, the machine was broken. Chi Seng wanted to escape after destroying the machine, but the people in the queue were so mad at him for destroying the machine, that they surrounded him and punched him to the ground. Not even Ah Kwok could help him. There was chaos in the casino with people stealing chips and customers robbing each other. The security staff couldn’t drag his attackers away from Chi Seng until the police arrived.

Chi Seng had got nothing from the ‘Hou Yet and Lap Sap’ machine and now he was in debt because he had to pay back the casino for the damage he had done. Things looked desperate for him, but because of the labour shortage in Macao, Chi Seng was able to get a job straightaway. In fact he didn’t even have to leave the hall they were in before he was offered a job as a croupier at ‘Hou Yet and Lap Sap’ casino, replacing one of the staff who had fled for his life in the melee Chi Seng had caused. This lucky guy would not worry about finding jobs or money in the future. He knew that the gods would bless him forever.
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### Appendix: Publications of ASM (Association of Stories in Macao)

#### Publications for 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macao: A map of the seasons (by Christopher Kelen)</td>
<td><em>Macao: A Map of the Seasons</em> --- Christopher Kelen’s Macao stories, poetry and sketches, created over the last six years are collected in the one volume for the first time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A wager with the gods (by Christopher Kelen)</td>
<td><em>A wager with the gods</em> is a science-fiction/historical novella set in the Macao; A story of gambling, murder and prostitution, <em>a wager with the gods</em> tracks the movements of hapless Hong Kong high school teacher, Albert Ng, subsequent to his father’s funeral.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah Xun’s Five Destinies (by Hilda Tam Hio Man)</td>
<td><em>Ah Xun’s Five Destinies</em> is the story of a young bus conductor whose greedy stepmother interferes with her love life. When a wealthy rice merchant Yiu Jo takes an interest in Ah Xun, it seems all of the stepmother’s dreams have come true.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotus I love you (by Jodie Leong Sok Wa)</td>
<td><em>Lotus I Love You</em> is a book of ten stories, each of which focuses on an aspect of Macao’s identity. The cast consists of local Chinese, Mainlanders, Macanese, Portuguese, children and adults, priests and prostitutes, ghosts and gamblers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cherry’s Diary (by Chan Cheng Lei, Cassenna)

*Cherry’s Diary* is a set of four detective stories with a Macao setting. With a strong interest in murder, Cherry Lam is seen as a troublemaker by her police colleagues. Ignoring the risks, Cherry relentlessly pursues the truth in order to bring criminals to justice.

The Legend of the Chinese Zodiac (by Jenny Oliveros Lao)

Whatever happened to the king of the jungle? Borrowing from old Chinese stories, *The Legend of the Chinese Zodiac* tells how, when the world was young, twelve animals were chosen for the task of ordering time.

Man, god, ghost (Amy Wong Kuok)

*Man, god, ghost* is an adventure story which opens in Nanjing in 1937. Villager Hua has an uneventful life but when he dies heroically, finds himself with a boring desk job in heaven. Frustrated with the eternal boredom of an afterlife upstairs, Hua decides to escape and return to his old home.

The Ice-Cream Formula (by Elisa, Lai Kin Teng)

Tim Vong, proprietor of an Ice Cream Shop (just off San Ma Lo) enters the elf world hoping to recover the stolen secret formula for his special fairy floss ice cream. His adventure shows him sides of Macao (and himself) he would never have expected to see.

Hidden Treasure (by Juliana Ho Weng Ian)

Hidden Treasure is a book of eight stories for children aimed at the junior secondary reader. The stories should interest teachers because each refers to one or more of the intelligence types suggested by philosopher of education, Howard Gardner.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treasure of the Rainbow (by Carol Tong Hoi Ian)</td>
<td>Carol Tong Hoi Ian</td>
<td>This book for 7 to 10 year olds is a compilation of fairy tales, myths and fables. These stories will bring you into a fantasy world where you will find out why clouds are no longer square and why the hare and the tortoise had a new running competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climbing a Tree for Fish (Han Lili)</td>
<td>Han Lili</td>
<td>Ten Macao fables and fairytales unveil ancient mysteries of various creatures (carp, toad and snake) and help to explain some unique phenomena of our city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Circle Manual (by ASM)</td>
<td>ASM</td>
<td><em>The story circle manual</em> trains readers to become writers of stories and capture the community spirit of ASM (which is itself a story circle).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For further enquiries call Jenny Lao at (853) 66333793 or Agnes Vong (853) 66623945 or email to macaustories@yahoo.com

Publications for 2007

**ASM Classical and Contemporary Poetry – Texts in Parallel**

The *Association of Stories in Macao (ASM)* is a non-profit organisation which aims to promote writing and other artistic expression in and about Macao. These volumes are the product of ASM’s 1958 group poetry workshop, run over recent years by Kit Kelen and Yao Jingming at University of Macau.
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For further enquiries call Jenny Lao at (853) 66333793 or Agnes Vong at (853) 66623945 or email macaustories@yahoo.com