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Perspectives 瞻

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My two Cents on the Life of an Engineer

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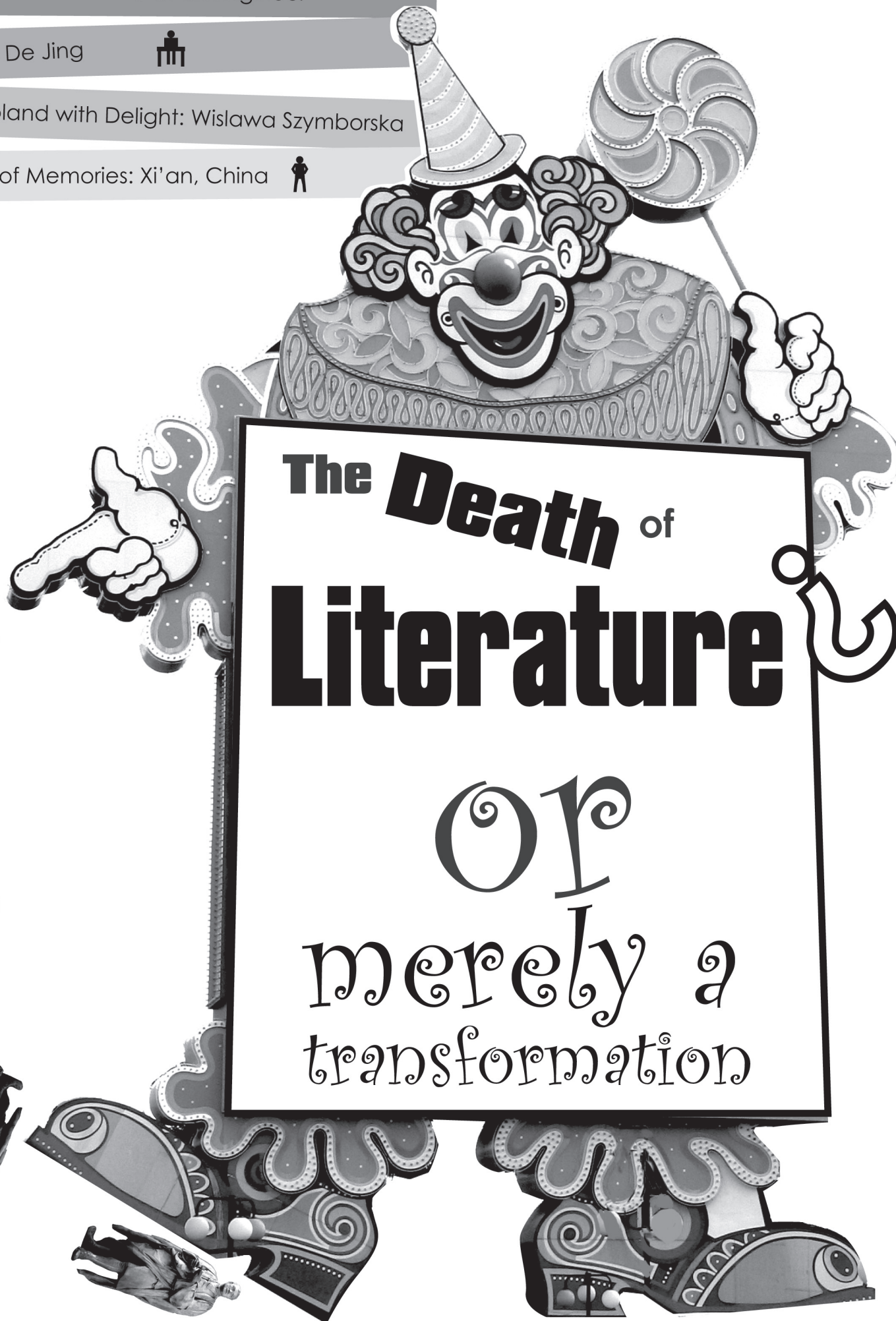
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The *Death* of Literature

Or
merely a
transformation



One of my favourite websites of all time is History House, an unofficial E-magazine full of strange, clever, witty, or simply irreverent articles on lesser known historical episodes. After spending hours laughing over all the wonderful loot, I was tempted to write something myself, only to be saddened by the following words under the “Want to write for History House?” column: Most don’t succeed – it’s harder than it looks.

Thankfully, this is not the case with *Perspectives*.

I remember that chilly autumn evening when I first attended the editorial meeting, a little nervous – perhaps, a little excited – certainly. There I met the editors, two upper level life sciences students, and we started to chat. I asked, “How does the newspaper work? What kind of articles are you looking for? What writing style/format/content is suitable?”

They just looked at me and smiled and said, “Anything.”

In the two years ensuing, I grew to learn what this means. Scatter-brained ideas do not a newspaper make. Add commitment, responsibility and maybe some kinkiness to scatter-brained ideas, however, and a newspaper is born.

Yeah?

I can only surmise as to how the general public may perceive *Perspectives*. A confluence of North American and Chinese ideals? A Quixotic missionary striving to bridge the culture gap

between North American and Chinese culture? Or simply an annoying arrangement of the Western alphabet and the Chinese characters, yoked by violence together on paper?

With this in mind, I searched the old issues floating around in the *Perspectives* office, only to be pleasantly surprised at how the newspaper changed over time to reflect the interests, temperament, and kinkiness of people on the team back then.

Common themes also floated out of the page, themes that have continued for issues after issues, instilling, perhaps, a kind of collective identity into those paper piles lying at my feet as I sat in the *Perspectives* office...

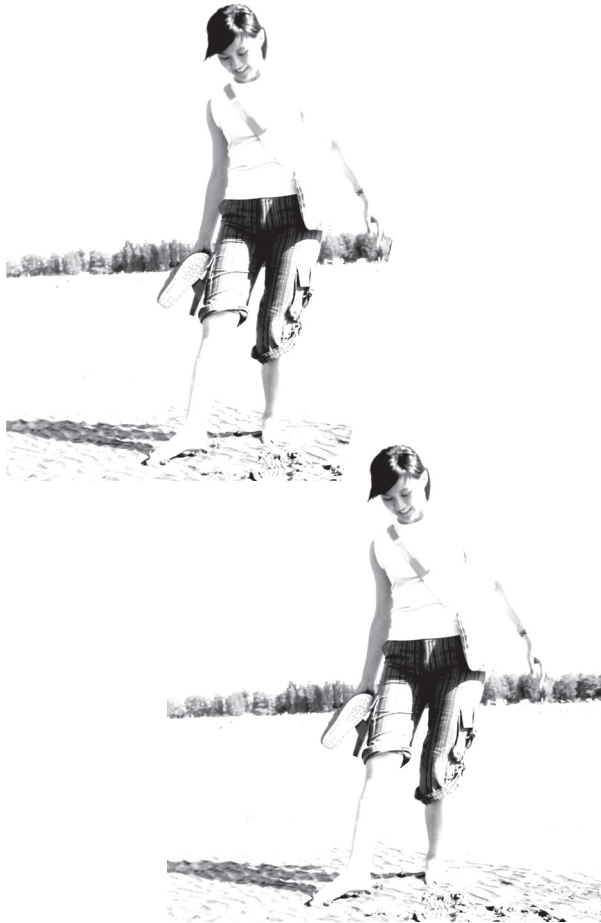
In reality, I think *Perspectives* is just a product of people, students, students who devote much of their limited time and energy outside school and family commitments to express themselves and how they feel about ideals, about culture, about language, about the world.

Whether they express this in the articles, or in the graphics, or in the newspaper design, or back other people’s expression by finding ads and sponsors, by maintaining the website, by organizing club activities, the gist is there: this newspaper is a pliable lump of clay. The writers, the translators, the graphics and design team, the ads and finances department, the webmaster, the internal and public relations people – they are the ones who breathe life into the whole thing.

In Search of a Definition...

By XingXing Cheng
English Editor

By Christopher Wong
Chinese Editor



記得當初在決定是否來UBC讀書時，一位朋友就告訴我說，溫哥華氣候溫和，水土宜人，連女孩子也比東岸漂亮多了。入學不久，發現朋友所言非虛，好不興奮。可惜自己不爭氣，沒時間觀念，第一次約會就遲到，到達時對方早已不知所蹤，好一段關係沒開始就結束了。就在我萬分失落之際，我遇到了她。第一次約會，首先映入我眼帘的是一個大大的髮夾，高高地束起一把充滿光澤，比墨汁還要烏黑的秀髮。好奇的我忍不住地幻想她鬆開髮夾，把修長的秀髮垂在肩上的情景。突然，她轉過身來驚鴻一瞥，向著我泛起了笑意；她的笑容是靦腆的，彷彿為自己有著如此迷人的嘴唇曲線不好意思。我登時垂下頭，不知如何自處，究竟是應該報以微笑還是應該打聲招呼來掩飾自己的窘迫。我還發現，在這散發著善意的唇線上是一扇透徹明亮的窗扉。我意識到她有著並不是懾人的，讓人窒息或讓人自慚形穢的美，而是知性的美。

好不容易回過神以後，我向她搭訕問候。出乎我意料，原來她除了有一雙亮麗的眼睛，還有一個運轉速度極快含知識量極高的腦袋。看來美貌和庸俗中間也不一定是劃上等號的。她酷愛閱讀，喜歡文學，鐘情音樂又熱衷電影，閒時也會翻翻報紙雜誌，關心社會時事。可能有人會覺得她像個書呆子，其實她興趣廣泛，動靜皆宜，腦部活動和肢體運動同樣擅長。那天我倆可真是無所不談，講到大家已口干舌燥，仍然意猶未盡。時間不知不覺隨著我倆的話語流走。愛因斯坦的相對論果然沒錯，做功課的三分鐘仿如三小時，和心儀的女孩子聊天三小時卻仿如三分鐘。

一眨眼我倆相識已三年了。此時此刻，美好交往的點點滴滴依舊歷歷在目。可能有人會問這個女孩子究竟是誰？認識我的人也許已經猜到了吧，猜不出也不打緊，就讓我向你們坦白吧，她的名字就叫“瞻”。說真的，我很願意和大家一起分享我曾擁有的快樂時光。在我眼中，“瞻”就像一個我心儀的女孩子那樣完美；我相信，女讀者也可能會覺得“瞻”又是一位溫文爾雅的謙謙君子。談到君子，“瞻”雖追有各方寵愛于一身，但也不會忌諱讀者的任何評論和批評。相信只要在和諧的前提下各抒己見，保持有建設性的互動，“瞻”才能屹立不倒繼續做下去，而且越做也好。讓我們都成為“瞻”的好朋友，誠如孔夫子所說，君子和而不同，共勉之。

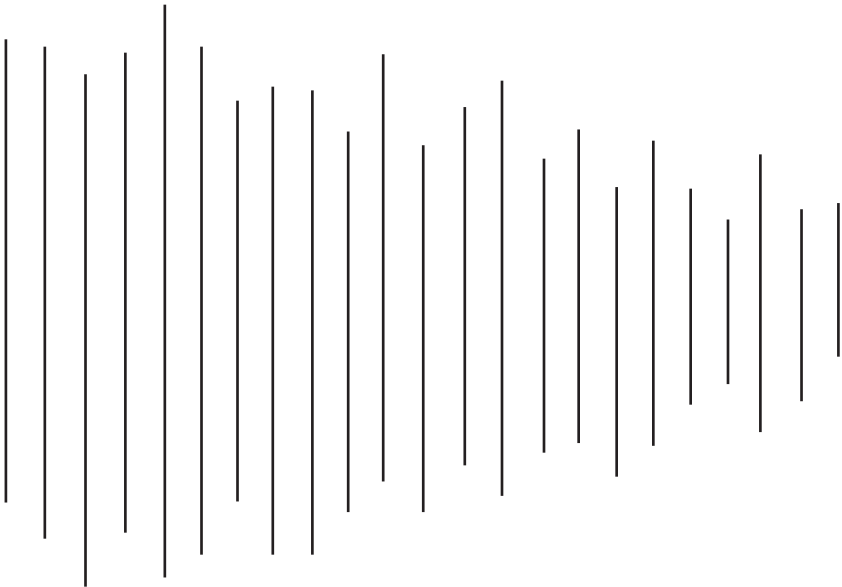
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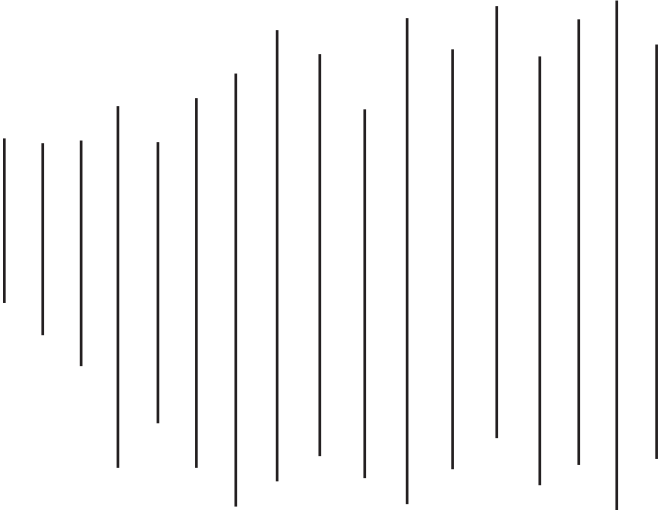
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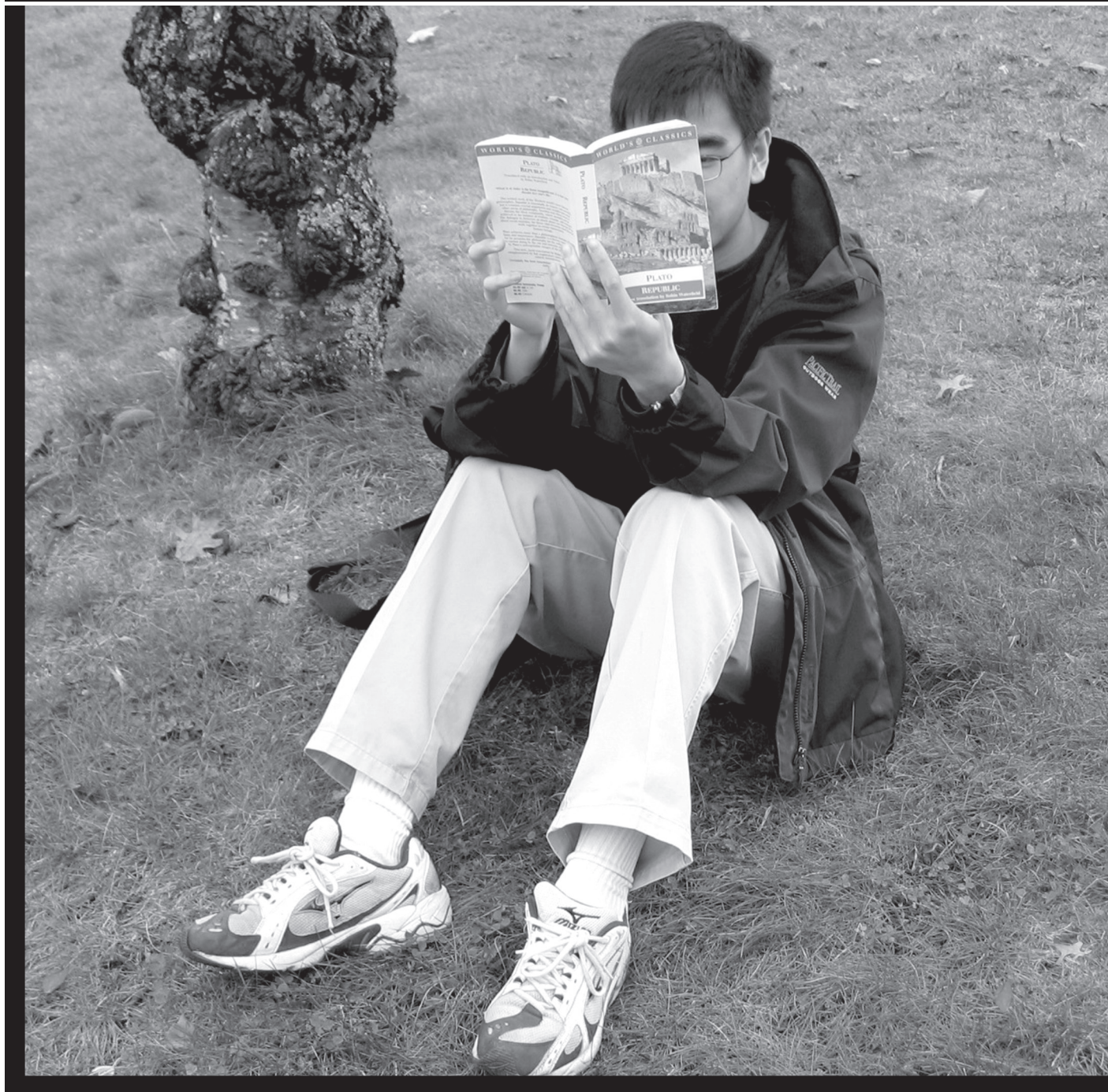
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THE DEATH OF LITERATURE?

or merely a transformation?



I What Is “Literature” Anyway? Entertainment or Enlightenment?

The word “literature” conjures up images of John Milton, William Shakespeare, Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ivan Turgenev, or even J.R. Tolkien. Yet Shakespeare wrote plays as much for commoners as he did for nobles; Austen’s works were considered simple novels for women in her own lifetime; and Tolkien’s epic masterpiece *The Lord of the Rings* was scoffed at by serious scholars when first released as being too formulaic and drawing too much on existing myths and legends.

Whether they admit it or not, people do read. And some of them love it. Statistics tell us that never before have so many books been sold. In our glossy world of twenty-minute TV episodes, three minute-long hit songs and half-hour long lunch breaks, literature appears to no longer serve any great purpose beyond alleviating boredom on the bus or the subway – or worse – it might not have any higher ambition beyond being transformed into television or movie scripts. In other words, as many academics have increasingly concurred: Literature has gone light. Literary critics like George Steiner have come

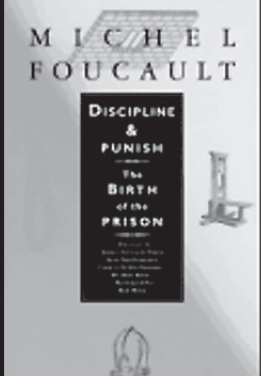
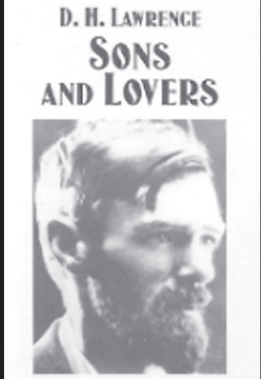
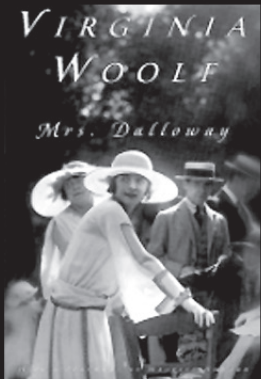
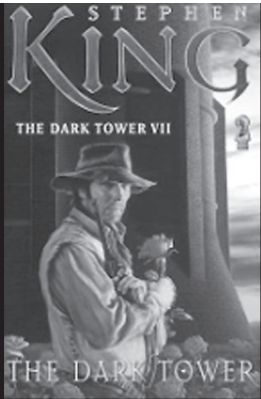
Written by Lang Foo, Chris Wong, Allan Cho

to believe literature is already dead. In fact, writers such as Nobel Laureate author V.C. Naipaul (*The Middle Passage*, *The Mimic Men*) have come to proclaim that they will not write another novel because the genre now fills them with disgust. It is apparent that all of these views suggest that there is a distinction between literary fiction (i.e. *The Iliad*) and popular fiction (i.e. *Harry Potter*). From the Chapters Indigo chain monopoly to even the local cornerstore, one realizes that bookstores are increasingly embracing the distinction that fictional books must be categorized: labelled either as “Literature/Fiction” or separated into the “Popular Fiction” section.

II

From Popular Fiction to Literary Classic?

What, then, will our grandchildren think of the books we read for pleasure? Will Stephen King’s *Dark Tower* or Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* – not considered intellectual or artistic works by most standards – one day be measured as “literature,” read and analyzed by



academics? So the questions is: What is literature and how do we define it? As Mario Vargas Llosa so exquisitely muses in his *With Pens Drawn*, literature should address itself to the problems of its time. It should depict the “human/cosmic condition” by raising fundamental questions about human existence, though it might not provide us with answers. Authors must write with the conviction that what they are writing can help others become more free, more sensitive, more clear-sighted, more aware of human nature as well as their own identity in relation to society. Without ceasing to be entertaining, literature must immerse itself in the life of the streets, in the unravelling of history. As Llosa puts it, this is the only way in which a writer can help his or her contemporaries and save literature from the flimsy state to which it sometimes seems condemned.

III

The True Meaning of Reading: Of Humanists and Structuralists

One school of thought, Humanism, (Llosa included) believes that literary fiction holds us captive for life. Humanist literary studies actually originated in

units and files them according to rules. For structuralists, the order that we perceive in the world is not innate – but is merely a product of our minds. It doesn’t mean that there is no existence of reality, beyond human perception, but rather there is too much “reality” to be perceived rationally without some kind of “grammar” or system to organize and regulate them.

So structuralism sees itself as a science of humankind. It tries to uncover all the structures that underlie all the things that humans do, think, perceive, and feel. It doesn’t limit itself to literature; it spills into other disciplines as architecture, biology, linguistics, religion, psychology, and mathematics.

IV

The Other Meaning of Reading: Those Crazy Postmodernists

Then there is the opposite end of the spectrum: the postmodernists. Postmodernism is a complex term – or set of concepts – one that has only emerged as an area of academic study only recently (1980s), and is still often treated with hostility and suspicion. Postmodernism is hard to define, because it is a concept that appears in a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study, including art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology, communications, fashion, and technology.

Unlike the more serious humanists and structuralists – who firmly believe literature has a higher calling – postmodernism rejects boundaries between high and low forms of art, refuses rigid genre distinctions. Instead, it emphasizes imitation, parody, irony, and playfulness. Not only do postmodern art, thought, (and of course literature) favour reflexivity, fragmentation and discontinuity (particularly playing with narrative structures), it also celebrates ambiguity, simultaneity, while emphasizing the destructured, decentered, dehumanized subject.

Britain in the 1840s, with the rationale that it would free people from their own age, in addition to the noble idea that it would secure middle-class values, to transmit them to all classes (working class as well as aristocracy) so that those values would indeed become universal. To say that the works of authors such as Honore Balzac, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Franz Kafka are entertaining would be to insult them. While they are usually read in a state of high excitement, the most important effect of a good book is in the aftermath, its ability to fire memory over time. The afterglow is still alive within you because without the books you have read, you would not be who you are, for better or worse, nor would you believe what you believe, with all the doubts and certainties that keep you going. In those books you learned about human nature and that the world is in bad shape and that it will always be so. This school of thought argues that literature teaches you that in all our diversity of culture, races, and beliefs, as fellow actors in the human comedy, we deserve equal respect.

The structuralist school of thought believes that the underlying structures which organize units and rules into meaningful systems are generated by the human mind itself, and not by sense perception. Thus, the mind is itself a structuring mechanism which looks through

But while postmodernism seems very much like modernism in these ways, it differs from modernism in its attitude toward the majority of these trends. Modernism tends to present a fragmented view of human subjectivity and history (think of D.H Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers* or Virgina Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*), but presents that fragmentation as something tragic, something to be lamented and mourned as a loss. Many modernist works try to uphold the idea that works of art can provide the unity, rationality, and meaning which has been lost in most of modern life; art will do what other human institutions fail to do. On the other hand postmodernism, refuses to mourn the idea of fragmentation, provisionality, or incoherence; rather, it celebrates all of that. It realizes the world is meaningless and cruel. But rather having art make life meaningful, postmodernism prefers to play with nonsense and the meaningless.

Postmodernism is thus a critique of “grand narratives,” the awareness that such narratives serve to disguise the contradictions and instabilities that are inherent in any social organization or practice. Every attempt to create “order” inevitably stresses the creation of an equal amount of “disorder.” But a “grand narrative” masks the artificiality of these categories by explaining that “disorder” is really chaotic and harmful, and that “order” is logical and good.



Therefore, postmodernism – in denying grand narratives – prefers “mini-narratives,” stories that explain small practices, local events, rather than large-scale universal or global concepts. Postmodern “mini-narratives” are inescapably situational, provisional, contingent, and temporary, making no claim to universality, truth, reason, or stability. Hence, when people don’t understand it, they dismiss postmodernism and view it with certain antagonism.

Michel Foucault puts it best when he declared that the author is “dead.” While humanism view authors as the source and origin of texts (and perhaps of language itself) – and thus are the “centers” because they are beyond texts, Foucault reverses the equation and points out that the author is actually *decentered*, and only a part of the structure, a subject position, and not the center. By declaring the death of the author, Foucault is “deconstructing” the idea that the author is the origin of something original, and replacing it with the idea that the “author” is merely the product or function of writing, of the text.

V

Postcolonialism Literature

Since the 1970s, the field of Postcolonial Studies has slowly risen to notoriety. Many attribute Edward Said’s powerful critique of Western constructions of the Orient in his 1978 book, *Orientalism* as the initiation of Postcolonialist literature and thought. The growing currency within the academy of the term “postcolonial” was consolidated by the appearance in 1989 of *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin.

Although there is still substantial debate over the precise parameters of the field and the definition of the term “postcolonial,” in a very general sense, it is the study of the interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized in the modern era. Because European imperialism stretched throughout more than 85% of the rest of the globe by the time of the First World War, having consolidated its control over several centuries, the sheer extent and duration of the European empire and its disintegration after the Second World War have led to widespread interest in postcolonial literature and criticism in our own times.

Postcolonial literature is thus built around the concept of resistance, of resistance as subversion, or opposition, or imitation (or mimicry) – but with the haunting problem that resistance inevitably engraves the resisted into the texture of the resisting. Hence, it is a two-edged sword.

VI

Dude, Where’s My Book? The Hot and Cold Media Phenomenon

But many are arguing literature is fainting. Why is literature losing out to other forms of mass media? If the only point of literature is to entertain, then it cannot compete with the fictions pouring out of screens, large or small. An illusion made of words requires the reader’s active participation, an effort of the imagination and sometimes, in modern literature, complex feats of memory, association, and creativity. For these reasons, the book and the radio are considered to be the “hot media,” for we have to adopt an active approach to continuously transforming words and sounds into images. We are left to create and visualize whatever that is being depicted on our own. In short, it is a wonderful mental exercise that keeps our minds in great shape at all times.

Television and cinema, however, are considered to be the exact opposite – the “cold media” – for their audiences are exempt from all this mental exertion by virtue of the images. Screen fiction is intense of its immediacy and ephemeral in terms of effect. It captivates us and then releases us in almost instantly. An illusion made of



VII

The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism? Or . . . More Theory for Thought?

Duke University scholar Frederic Jameson argues that everything in our postmodern world is linked to electronics and specifically with computers as the “means of production” which determines all social practices. Jean-Francois Lyotard further argues that knowledge itself is transformed by our reliance on computer technology. In a digitally based age, all knowledge must be digitizable in order to be preserved; anything that is not digitizable can't be called “knowledge,” and thus is excluded from our systems of data collection, organization, and preservation. The opposite of “knowledge,” for Lyotard, is not “ignorance,” as it was for Enlightenment thinkers, but “noise” – a mode of expression or existence that cannot be included within digitizable categories. A parallel might be the radio: clear transmission is “knowledge,” and static is “noise,” which interrupts the broadcast of knowledge. Postmodernist theories relentlessly talk about what constitutes “noise” because “noise” disrupts knowledge. In fact, postmodernists talk about “waste” and “shit” and other names for discarded (and often revolting)

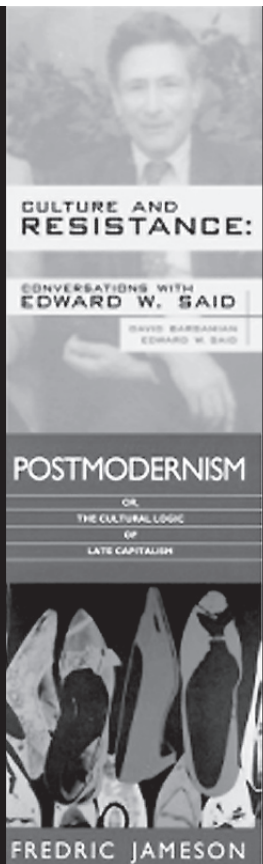
substances as modes of disrupting the orderly flow of knowledge or production.

VIII

The Baudrillard Effect

One place where this jumbledness becomes evident is in the mass media, particularly in television, videos, movies, and the internet, and this is the territory analyzed by Jean Baudrillard, another principal postmodern theorist. Baudrillard's is famous for using the signifier/signified connection. Baudrillard says that commodities – the stuff we all purchase – are all signifiers. We buy, not necessarily because we will use it, or because it gives us pleasure, but because the purchased product represents something beyond itself – it is a signifier that points to a signified. That signified, according to Baudrillard, is social status, or a subject position within a variety of social codes or models.

Thus when one buys a car, one does not buy just any car to drive around in (which would be buying a commodity largely for use value), for the car is bought as a signifier of social position, income level, recreational habits, political/environmental views, whether one has children, etc., etc. So those who buy Ferrari's are signifying something different



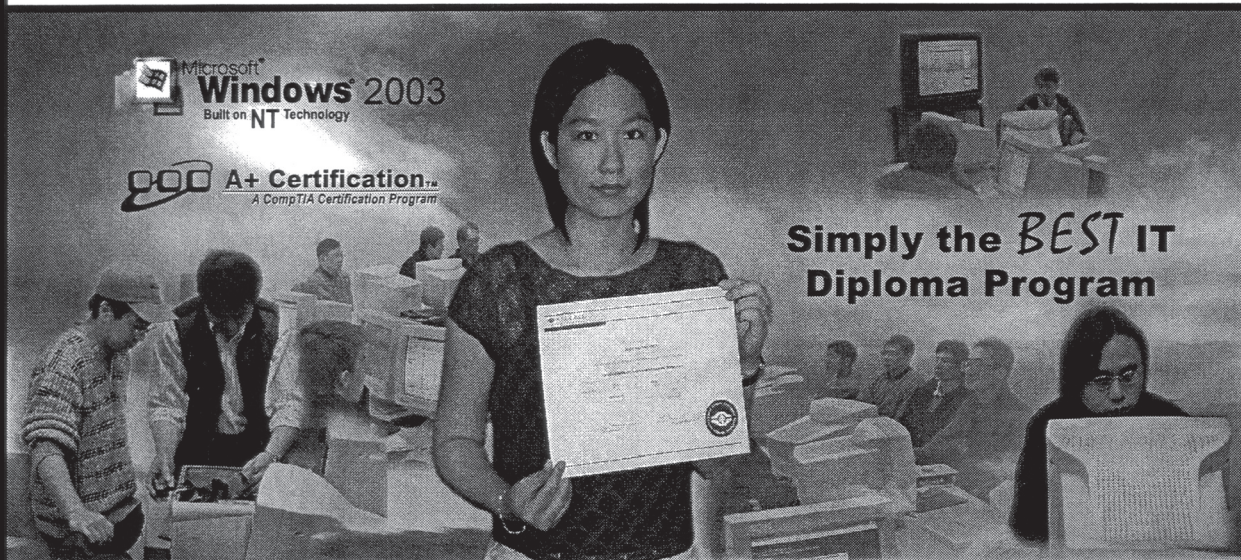
images and sounds merely requires the audience's passive participation, an effort of minimal attention to say the very least. Gradually this makes us lazy and increasingly allergic to intellectually challenging environments.

The written word has a special responsibility to provide us with hope under the most trying circumstances because it is better at telling the truth than the audiovisual media, which are by their nature condemned to skate over the surface of things and are much more constrained in their freedom of expression. The phenomenal sophistication with which news bulletin can nowadays transport us to the epicentre of events on every continent has turned us all into voyeurs and the whole world into one vast theatre, or more precisely into a movie.

We all like to escape from reality; indeed, that is one of the functions of literature. Reading is escapism. But making the present unreal, turning actual history into fiction, has the effect of desensitizing citizens, making us feel exempt from civic responsibility, encouraging the conviction that is beyond anyone's reach to intervene in a history whose screenplay is already written. Why is that, you ask?

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from those who buy minivans or sedans or hybrid gas/electric cars. What is being signified is in fact our position(s) as a subject. According to Baudrillard, identity (subjecthood) is thus a product of the signifiers with which one surrounds oneself, rather than something essential that is unique to each individual, as in the humanist model. Selfhood, for Baudrillard, (as well as Jacques Lacan, the eminent linguist), is thus always already an alienated position, something defined by externals.

Baudrillard takes this idea of the "signifier/signified" relationship one step further in discussing one of his most well-known ideas, the concept of the *simulacrum*. He starts with the idea that the signifier/signified relationship is a relationship of a symbol to a notion of "reality." Signifiers are representations (words, pictures, symbols) that point to something beyond or outside of themselves, something which supposedly has a reality of its own, regardless of how it is represented. A table, for example, just is, whether we designate it by the word "table" or by some other signifier; the object with four legs and a seat continues to exist no matter what we call it, or even whether we call it anything. In the world of mass media, however, there is no signified, no reality, no level of simple existence to which signifiers refer.

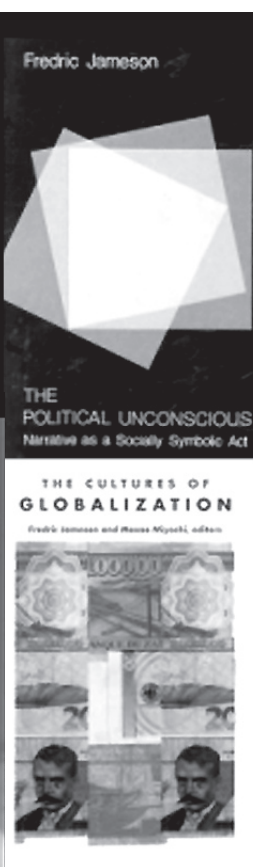
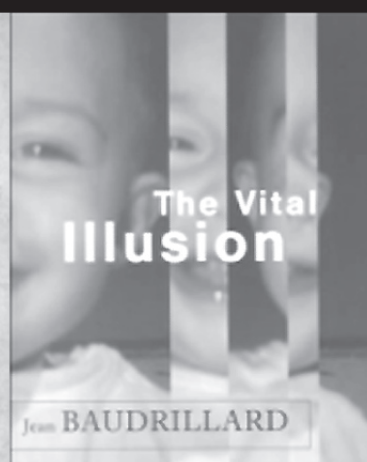
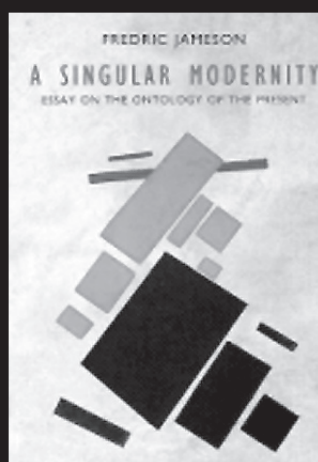
Instead, there are only signifiers with no signifieds; there are only pictures of chairs without any real chairs ever being referred to or existing. Baudrillard calls this separation of signifier from signified a *simulacrum*, a representation without an original that it copies. Simulacra (the plural of simulacrum) don't mirror or reproduce or imitate or copy reality: they become reality itself. If what Baudrillard says is true, then the media has changed not only what our perception of reality is, but suggests that our interpretation of a jumbled mass of words on a page is nothing but a series of signifiers that we process in our minds as we imagine the characters, actions, and ideas of a story.

IX

And In Conclusion...

There is no conclusion. What is literature is as mystifying as asking what "is" is. Perhaps Wikipedia, the burgeoning online encyclopedia that is increasingly being turned to for information, puts it most lucidly when it states that different historical periods have stressed various characteristics of literature. Early works often had an overt or covert religious or didactic purpose. The exotic nature of romance flourished from the Middle ages onwards, whereas the Enlightenment manufactured nationalistic epics

and philosophical tracts. Romanticism emphasized the popular folk literature and emotive involvement, but gave way in the 19th-century West to a phase of realism. The war-disillusioned 20th century brought demands for psychological insight in the delineation and development of character. And as we are in the midst of the 21st, we suspect that growing technology has played and will continue to have an important role in literature. To what extent is anyone's guess.



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“Goal”

Xi'an. Internationally this city is famous for its Terra Cotta Army, an elaborate burial ground. Nationally it is reknown for its culture and tradition, being the capital of 12 Chinese dynasties. On April 26, 2004 I returned to this city as if I had walked in on myself from 9 years ago.

This is a highway near the Xi'an airport. Beneath an ocean's darkness it gleamed of neon lights as if studded with diamonds. Highways like this one has numerous tollbooths where \$5-10 fees are charged for road maintenance and construction.



Grandma's Home

When I was 5-9 years old, the garden was wild with tall grass and shrubs. At the center stood a pavilion (small pagoda) that housed many children's dreams. I made "wine" with brass-wind flowers and poured it into toy tea cups. I would pick grass in the shape of hairpins of Chinese concubines to decorate my long braided hair.

Now the garden has been paved and transformed into a playground/ exercise center. The small pagoda still remains but where greenery stood colourful painted metal now beams under the



Second Hand Smoke

Icame from a family of non-smokers, but was still exposed to secondhand smoke because it was an unsaid custom to keep an ashtray and a pack of cigarettes in one's home so that it could be offered as a gesture of friendliness to visitors.

At 12:00pm, a sharp knock was heard. Three old men from grandpa's hometown in the countryside came to visit Xi'an to gather money for the construction of a local school that has been neglected for some 60 years. A call of "Get the cigarettes!" was promptly issued by grandma, while grandpa hurriedly obeyed. Smoke soon permeated the livingroom. I rushed to close the bedroom doors and then stood guard at the front door, swinging the metal gate to and fro waiting for the time to go by (most houses have at least two doors in Xi'an: one metal and one wooden). From there I tried to decipher the heavy Xi'an accented mandarin that was spoken.



From the School Toilet to the University Marketplace

Nowadays they have newer toilets in my old elementary school (not the flush ones but the ones where you squat, which conserve water), but I captured this for nostalgia. I still fondly remember the white slimy pellets of spawning flies - ah. Nostalgia. When I was taking this photo a bunch of kiddies were yelling to each other: "HEY! A girl is taking photos of the bathroom, come and look!"

My elementary school is gated during operational hours; with the exception of students, teachers, and government officials, others are normally refused entry (including the parents). How did I take the photo of the toilet you ask? I have my ways . . .



This is the downtown of Xi'an. This type of infrastructure is characteristic of ancient China. Indeed like Beijing, Xi'an is a square city, with a city wall and stone towers such as these. Not far from here is a modern shopping complex of ridiculously expensive world brand names, from France to Germany to the US and Japan.

Unlike in Canada, in China shops selling the same variety of goods often group together to form marketplaces that specialize in the selling of such goods.

Xi'an's Traditional Specialties

Most Xi'an delicacies involve noodle, bun or lamb; their flavours are spicy and/or salty. It is my personal opinion that Xi'an's service industry is one of the best - restaurant services are far superior to Canada and the US. I attribute this to competition, tradition and China's huge population of human labour. In some bathrooms, there are waitresses / waiters present at all times. Sometimes they do cleanups while other times they stand by the sink and hand out paper towels etc.

Tips are never required - it is completely optional and not prevalent. Waiters and waitresses are friendly and disciplined without expectations from customers. Interestingly, each morning they gather in front of the restaurant to exercise (run laps) and listen to disciplinary talks of proper restaurant conduct. Each morning I would pass by the same restaurant and watch two straight lines of fully gowned waiters and waitresses gather outside the gate, awaiting orders.

And then,
quick as the
dawn harkens
the blueness
of the
new day,
I left. 5:15am.



The Visit to the Cemetery

On May 1, the beginning of the 5 day National Worker's Holiday in China, my family went to pay respect to grandfather's grave. It rained hard in thuds, clearing the fog of dust that otherwise ominously permeated the city on a sunny day. It was a thrill to feel the car rumble over the muddy country road and watch the small rows of willow trees swing in unison to the rhythm of the wind. Because it was raining, we could not burn the ceremonial burial money and left shortly after bowing to his tombstone, kissed by the fresh flowers we brought.

And I found out about my other name - the name that would have walked with me through 18 summers and winters - the name etched on grandfather's tombstone.



Malls

Does this look familiar to you? These imported malls are popping up like mushrooms after the rain. It disturbs me that China is rapidly becoming a western look-a-like. This shopping center is constructed by a German company. It may be glamorous, but it's style without substance.



Beijing



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My Two Cents on the Life of an ENGINEER

By Kai Wang



My name is Kai Wang and I am currently a Chemical Engineer starting his third year of study. Before you read my opinions on the 1st year engineering courses, here are a few things that you should know about me. I am a relatively hands-on type of person so lectures are not my favorite ways to learn.

First Year Course Outline

There is no slacking off – even if you just want to pass! You should have a general idea of all the course outlines before class begins. If you don't know, well, here is a crash course for you.

Physics 153 – Elements of Physics

This is a two term physics course. Even if you have taken IB (International Baccalaureate) Physics, the materials of this course still requires some time to get use to. You might even get to do a science project for bonus marks if there is enough time. There is homework every week and it's due on the same day of the following week. There are usually about 5-6 questions per assignment but some can be very tough. I strongly advise everyone to go the tutorials. The profs who teach this course varies every year. If your prof is Don Witt, then you are in luck. He is very good at explaining the concepts and is very approachable. He also holds his own tutorials before the midterms. This class is usually held in Hebb Theater. If you want to be able to listen to the prof clearly, you should sit within the first 7 rows of the seats. There are two final exams for this course (one for each term).

Chemistry 154 – Chemistry for Engineering

Beware of this course as it covers a vast number of topics in a very short time (only 1 term). If you have taken IB Chemistry, you might find the topics a bit more familiar than other wise. Besides the exams, the "clicker" quizzes make up about 10% of your total marks. The prof is not very clear or accurate at explaining the content so it's very important for you to read the book carefully. There is a lab portion to this course and it runs once every 3 week. Be sure to study the procedure before the lab begins as it will save you a great deal of time during the experiments. Some experiments are more difficult than other so just cross your fingers and hope that you get the easy labs.

Computer Science 152 – Principles of Software Development

If you are a computer wiz with knowledge of C++ or if you excel in math, then this course should be relatively easy for you. Otherwise, you would have to spend a great deal of time going through the text book to understand the logic behind computer programming. If you choose the Tuesday and Thursday class, you would have to sit in the classroom for an hour and half. I suggest bringing some water or coffee along as many people falls asleep in this class. The lab portion of this course allows you to use the computer lab for 4 hours each week. These computer systems run Windows 2000 but you are required to create and compile the assignments under a UNIX environment via an emulator. You may choose to complete the assignments at home via MS C++ or another compiler but there is a risk that the program may not run as intended.

Math 152 – Linear Systems

You will face this course in term 2 of first year engineering. This course analyzes the properties of matrices and 3D geometries - concepts which are difficult to understand without a great deal of practices. During class, the explanations given by the professor are usually somewhat vague and it's recommended that you ask them during their office hours for clarifications. Get started early on the assignments (which are quite long) as some questions can be quite tedious to compute. Try to do as much of the assignments as you can. If you're able to complete most of the questions, you are most likely

to get the full mark. And by the way, the final exam of this course is only around 40% of the total mark. The labs for this course are fairly easy and can be done at home instead of at the designated computer lab.

Physics 170 – Mechanics I

Even though this is an introduction course to mechanics, the content is purely math oriented. Much of this course is about applying the formulas, using calculus, and analyzing 3D geometries. There is very little in terms of concept. The key to passing this course is drawing a clear diagram and calculate the set of equations with great speed. There is one assignment each week, and you should definitely go to the tutorials to copy down the procedures to solve the sample question.

Applied Science 121 – Society and the Engineer

You learn about what engineer "do," why they are important, and when they have to say "no." The final exam (which is open book) is the only exam of this course and all the notes are posted on the website. Some of the guest lectures are very interesting while others would just bore you to sleep. Nevertheless, you should still read the materials carefully as some of the questions on the final exam are quite tricky.

Applied Science 122 – Introduction to Engineering

You learn about the different departments of the faculty of engineering as well as how the applied science co-op program works. There course is easy but important for you to make the right specialization for 2nd year. So make sure you stay awake during the specialization that you want to know about (bring lunch if you want to).

Non-Engineering First Year Courses

English 112 – Strategies for University Writing

This is the recommended English course for engineers to take since it focuses on academic writing and research organizations. The content differs from professor to professor so class attendance is extremely important. Expect a term paper as the final project of the course.

Math 120 – Honours Differential Calculus

This is the one term honors version of Math 100. You learn the same Calculus stuff but you have to do more proofs, and you get harder assignments. It is likely that the professor will give all the students a pre-test with grade 12 math and calculus contents to see if the students are proficient enough to take this course. If the class is held in the math building, you might have trouble staying alert as the rooms are often quite warm during the beginning of September.

Math 121 – Honours Integral Calculus

This is the one term honors version of Math 101. Like the above math course, you can take 101 instead of the more advanced 121. But in Math 121, you learn more methods of integration and the assignments are longer. Again, the profs who teach this course varies every year. If your prof is Joel Feldman, then you are in luck. He is very good at show you all the steps and proofs and is very approachable during his office hours. If the class is held in the math annex building, be sure to bring some water along as some of the rooms get extremely hot even in the winter.

Options for Majors

The Faculty of Engineering at UBC has six departments (engineering specializations) for the undergraduates. The below is the list of all the specializations along with the options that they offer:

- 1. Electrical and Computer Engineering (EECE)**
 - a. Honours Mathematics Option
 - b. PIP (Project Integrated Program) Option
 - c. Software Engineering Option (for Computer Engineering only)
- 2. Chemical Engineering (CHBE)**
 - a. Process Option (a Chemistry Honours degree is also available with the Process Option)
 - b. Biological Option
 - c. Environmental Option
- 3. Mechanical Engineering (MECH)**
 - a. Honours Mathematics Option
 - b. Thermfluids Option
 - c. Mechatronics Option
 - d. Electro-Mechanical Design Option (B. of APSC plus M. ENG.)
- 4. Civil Engineering (CIVIL)**
 - a. Environmental Option
- 5. Engineering Physics (FIZZ)**
 - a. Honours Mathematics Option
 - b. 5th year options: Electrical, Computer science, Mechanical, Material, Geophysics, and Oceanography
- 6. Material Engineering (MTRL)**
- 7. Mining Engineering (MINORZ)**
- 8. Geological Engineering (GEOROX)**
- 9. Integrated Engineering (IGEN)**

You may also choose to acquire a minor in commerce and in information technology (not available to students in the EECE program) as well as a dual degree in Arts and Engineering. The cooperative education program (Co-op) is available to all departments of engineering.

Reasons why people chose...

Electrical and Computer Engineering (EE & CE)

"It links in with my career goals, one of which is being in technical sales. It would be cool to understand a certain complex high tech system works, and then present it and explain to people about what's neat about it down to the details."

- Anonymous (Entering 4th year, Computer)

"In today's society, we are very dependant on electronics, and everything from a cell phone to a power distribution grid requires the expertise of an electrical engineer. I chose it as my specialization because it is an excellent base for any modern career requiring a technical background. The high demand for this specialization and the above average salaries were very attractive to me. A good knowledge of power, communications, electromagnetism, control systems, and circuitry is widely applicable by any high-tech career. The hands-on "Project Integration Program" offered at UBC offers a unique way to learn electrical engineering through intense project work and excellent practical experience."

- Albert Wang (Entering 3rd year, Electrical)

Chemical Engineering

"I chose the Process Option of Chemical Engineering because I have strong interests in developing renewable energy sources and improving existing pre-process treatment of fuel. Both of the above applications would reduce pollution on a global basis and improve the sustainability of chemical industries and mining developments. I also enjoy the versatility of the chemical engineers as their study touches upon various other disciplines including electrical, mechanical, material, and mining engineering. This versatility will allow for greater flexibility during career searches."

- Kai Wang (Entering 3rd year, Chemical)

Mechanical Engineering

"I chose Mechanical Engineering over all the other disciplines because of the broad range of careers available in this field. I also consider the MECH subject material to be the easiest to understand because I can visualize what's happening in any machine I design and build. It's also the most fun to participate in because there are so many student-led project teams I can join. I believe MECH to be the most exciting career choice because it has so much potential for students like me."

- Jason Chak (Entering 3rd year, Mechanical)

"I was drawn to mechanical engineering by the Mazda RX8 and the Wankel rotary engine. The fact that something so small can generate such power blew my mind. After second year, I realized that I liked thermodynamics and fluid mechanics much more than rigid body kinematics, so I applied for the thermofluids option."

- Anonymous (Entering 3rd year, Mechanical)

Material Engineering

"Initially, when I came into engineering I wanted to be a chemical engineer. However, after first year I wanted to explore different disciplines. I found MMAT to be an excellent option because it is a

diverse field with courses in biomaterials, polymers, ceramics, extractive metallurgy (which ended up satisfying my desire for chemistry), alloying systems, and much more. Also, this department unlike several of the larger departments teaches students public speaking skills as well as a promotes team work through group design projects. Also, classes are much smaller compared to other departments and a student can easily approach their professors if they have any questions. Overall, I really enjoy my time in this department and I encourage other students to look into it."

- Anonymous (Entering 3rd year, Material)

"I was going into CHBE but I got hooked at the MMAT open house. MMAT (in my opinion) is a better (more interesting and appealing) applied chemistry course than CHBE. Plus, mom was a geologist, dad was a mining engineer and therefore, I was naturally immersed in the subject and field since a long time ago."

- Anonymous (Entering 3rd year, Material)

Mining Engineering

"I joined mining because Mining Engineers are faced with engineering challenges everyday that require creative and unique engineering to solve. Everyday is different as a mining engineering, as a mine evolves, so do its problems, and depending on how they are handled a company can save many millions of dollars. The main reason I want to be a mining engineer, is because of the responsibility they undertake, both from a financial point of view and from the engineering point of view. Mining engineering is unique because every mine is unique and most of the problems that rise can be solved using a more efficient way than the 'old fashion way'."

- Soroosh Alilou (Entering 3rd year, Mining)

"Well, I was originally planning on going into civil, but then after talking to many people from around the departments I realized that civil was going to be a LOT of steel and concrete. Once I decided that civil would be too mundane I started shopping around the other departments. Then I found mining. A department where there were jobs, variety (because you can never really say for sure what the earth will do), opportunity to travel, and money. I also like the opportunity to be in a smaller department where you have a working relationship with the faculty, mining provides this. Currently this summer I am working in the mining department thanks to the department head who pulled many strings to try and find me a job in industry(quite hard for a first year with zero knowledge or experience). Other reasons I chose mining were the work schedule (often 2-weeks on and 2-weeks off) and the fact that I wouldn't be sitting in cubicle land in some office tower, I don't think I could handle that. I am an outdoors person. Since mining is an outdoor profession, it fits into my life easily."

- Anonymous (Entering 2nd year, Mining)

Geological Engineering

"I chose geological engineering since it is an interesting interdisciplinary field, in which the fundamentals of geoscience are used to solve engineering challenges. It incorporates civil engineering, geology and other fields (e.g geography, mining) to provide a set of knowledge and skills applicable to a range of real world problems. In addition there are excellent opportunities for travel when performing site visits, field work or managing construction projects, all of which I am keen on doing in the future. I feel that geological engineering is an important discipline that I hope to create a fulfilling career out of."

- Winson Cheng (Entering 3rd year, Geological)

An Alternative Road

However, not everyone is certain about his or her disciplines as interest may change during the year of studying. If your interest does change, do not view it as a set back but as a step towards greater self-understanding and assertiveness towards your future. Here is a student who displays interest in both mining and computer engineering.

"I chose mining for several reasons, jobs, money, travel, but most of all originally for interest. Ward Wilson made it sound so exciting in APSC 150. And don't get me wrong, it's a great program (one of the best groups of students in all engineering) but it just didn't hold my interest.

I have recently applied to transfer to CPEN. I have a strong interest in control systems. I want to also get into signal processing, power systems and intelligent systems. There are a million courses in CPEN and EECE that I would love to take. I'm done all the undergrad controls (except 468 -- digital process control, because they don't seem to offer it often). When I was deciding between EE and CPEN I looked at what courses were mandatory in both. The courses offered in CPEN are the most interesting to me as they will get me where I want to go without having to go through some of the more difficult EE courses.

However... if they do not let me into CPEN next year I will stick to mining engineering because I have found at least an aspect of the real world mining experience that I like. The summer job was indispensable for that."

- Anonymous (Entering 3rd year, Mining)

From Poland with Delight— Wisława Szymborska

By Christopher Wong

With the pending American presidential election only weeks away, I found myself craving for intense media coverage of this event. One might ask why I am so keen to follow another nation's election. The answer is simple. It provides fertile ground for a discussion of politics and politicians in general. For this reason, I find it only fitting to share with you this poem by Nobel Laureate Wisława Szymborska.

Prior to reading Wisława Szymborska's poems, my preconceived notion had always been that poetry was difficult, abstract and obscure. It was comprehensible only to those with incredible intelligence and lofty degrees. Thanks to my high school English teacher, I was introduced to this Polish poet, whose works had injected new life into the form of literature that I used to loathe.

Like most good poems, Szymborska's delight and illuminate. More importantly, they are not solely written for the intellectuals, but are also intended for those who are curious about one's existence and one's place in the universe.

In her poem "Smiles", Szymborska sets out to portray the smiles of politicians from a unique perspective – from a woman's point of view. One can hardly ask for a fresher commentator to voice her opinion on a profession in which women are heavily underrepresented. Never hesitant to jump on the slightest hint of any scandals, pundits and journalists

endeavour to reveal what happens behind the scenes. Szymborska, however, coolly watches from afar and depicts exactly what goes on in the news every night. She does so with tremendous ease as an impartial spectator and in a language that is readily accessible to both you and me. In short, Szymborska is able to shed new light on things we see everyday, with a dose of wisdom.

According to Szymborska, the world is in a state of flux and full of uncertainty, that is why we "need a friendly, gleaming set of teeth" at all times. "Pearly whites, unfurrowed brows, full of cheer", the ingredients that constitute



the head of state must be in full display in response to flashes from all angles. "On airport runways", he greets allies from afar and discuss issues of worldwide import. He must embody joy and energy, bringing us a surge of adrenaline each time the gregarious curve is mapped on his face. Together he works wonders with the dentist; his teeth rotate with clinical precision, keeping us upbeat 24/7. "The worst is behind us and the best is yet to come" seems to be the



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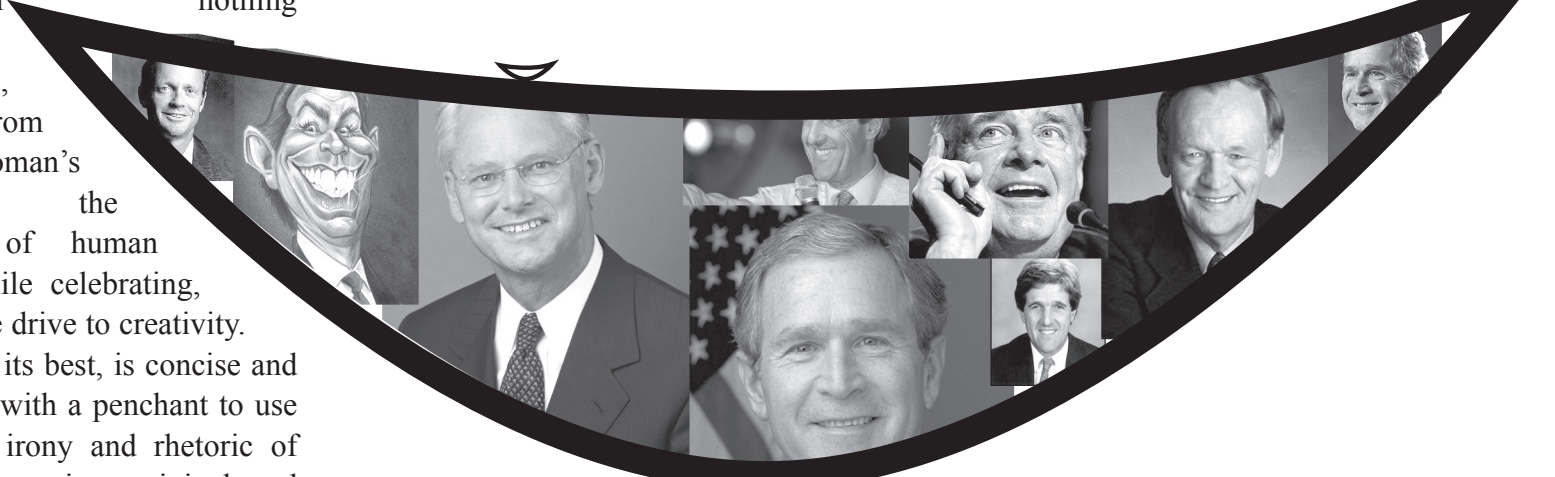
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message he is trying to deliver.

In closing, however, Szymborska argues that “human beings are, by nature, sad” and everyone has a right to be sad despite the politicians’ diligent efforts to conceal the world’s real problems. If we subscribe to their view that we are living in age of “smiling paradise”, they would never have to show their trademark grin. While politicians deserve criticism for their often rosy predictions, we, in turn, are also to blame, for it is the human nature to seek assurance and comfort from authority.

Szymborska’s poems are by accounts intellectually probing and daring. I find her poetry rather deceptive and very accessible on the linguistic level, yet, it always contains multiple layers of meaning. She was proclaimed as the “Mozart of Poetry” by the Nobel Prize committee. She is very playful, witty, creative and innovative. Also, it is worth nothing that, she explores, usually from a woman’s perspective, the poignancy of human isolation while celebrating, as a poet, the drive to creativity. Her style, at its best, is concise and understated, with a penchant to use exaggerated irony and rhetoric of negation. She raises original and fundamental questions about human nature, humankind’s place in the universe with a frame of scenes from everyday life, describing them in colloquial language. In her poem “Smiles”, Szymborska’s strategy is to run through all the ramifications of an idea to see what it will yield. Often enough, she appears to embrace a subject and ends by undercutting it with a sharp, disillusioned comment – a “point”. All in all, her often ironic stance and sardonic remark, based on a wry, mocking humour, which is prevalent in “Smiles” and many of her other poems, effectively balances the somewhat somber or dismal implications of her message.

Many thanks to Dr. Bozena Karwowska for her generous insights. She is a member of the Russian/Slavic department and has been teaching @ UBC for 18 years. She recently published an article on Szymborska in a Polish literary critique journal.



微笑

世人寧願親睹希望也不願只聽見
它的歌聲。因此政治家必須微笑。
白如珍珠的衣服意味著他們依舊興高采烈。
遊戲複雜，目標遙不可及，
結果仍不明朗——偶爾
你需要一排友善，發亮的牙齒。

國家元首必須展現未皺起的眉頭
在機場跑道，在會議室。
他們必須具體呈現一個巨大，多齒的「哇！」
在施壓於肉體或緊急議題的時候。
他們臉部的自行再生組織
使我們的心臟營營作響，眼睛的水晶體改變焦距。

轉變成外交技巧的牙醫術
為我們預示一個黃金時代的明日。
諸事不順，所以我們需要
雪亮門牙的大笑和親善友好的白齒。
我們的時代仍未安穩、健全到
讓臉孔顯露平常的哀傷。

夢想者不斷地說：「同胞手足之情
將使這個地方成為微笑的天堂。」
我不相信。果真如此，政治家
就不用做臉部運動了，
而只是偶爾為之：他心情舒暢，
高興春天到了，所以才動動臉。
然而人類天生憂傷。
就順其自然吧。那也不是什麼壞事

SMILES

Translated by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh

The world would rather see hope than just hear its song.
And that's why statesmen have to smile.
Their pearly whites mean they're still full of cheer.
The game's complex, the goal's far out of reach,
the outcome's still unclear - once in a while,
we need a friendly, gleaming set of teeth.

Heads of state must display unfurrowed brows
on airport runways, in the conference room.
They must embody one big, toothy "Wow!"
while pressing flesh or pressing urgent issues.
Their faces' self-regenerating tissues
make our hearts hum and our lenses zoom.

Dentistry turned to diplomatic skill
promises us a Golden Age tomorrow.
The going's rough, and so we need the laugh
of bright incisors, molars of good will.
Our times are still not safe and sane enough
for faces to show ordinary sorrow.

Dreamers keep saying, "Human brotherhood
will make this place a smiling paradise."
I'm not convinced. The statesman, in that case,
would not require facial exercise,
except from time to time: he's feeling good,
he's glad it's spring, and so he moves his face.
But human beings are, by nature, sad.
So be it, then. It isn't all that bad.

Translated by Amme Lau and Christopher Wong

美國總統大選在即，媒體的爭相報導令我暇不應接。或許有人會問，為什麼我那麼熱切關注別國的選舉？答案其實很簡單，這可是個讓人討論政治及政治家的大好時機。好，言歸正傳，就讓我在此與大家分享諾貝爾文學獎得主辛波絲卡關於政治家的一首詩作。

未讀過辛波絲卡的作品前，我一直以為詩是抽象深奧的，似乎只有那些知識水平較高的人才看得懂，道得明。我要感謝高中時的英文老師，是他讓我認識了這位波蘭詩人，也帶領我進入認識和欣賞詩這類文學作品的一個全新的角度。

在我看來，一首好詩，除了富有強烈地藝術性，亦常常蘊藏著深沉的啟迪，辛波絲卡的詩也不例外。但特別的是，她的作品深入淺出，無論是智者或是普通人讀後都能與其發生共鳴。

「微笑」是辛波絲卡以女性的獨特觀點，描寫政治家常掛在臉上的笑容。對於政治家——這個甚缺乏女性的行業而言，她的評論帶來了一絲新意。當專家和記者們在拼命挖掘政治舞台幕後醜聞的時候，被作者以旁觀者的身份把所見所聞用淺易的文字記錄下來，運用她那平實而又不乏形象地描繪，將事實展示給讀者。

辛波絲卡認為世事變幻無常，所以我們每時每刻都需要「一排友善，發亮的牙齒」。「白如珍珠的衣服，未皺起的眉頭，雪亮門牙的大笑」都是國家元首面對大小鏡頭時所必須展現的姿態。他要「在機場跑道」上迎接遠道而來的盟友，討論各種世界要事。他絕不能缺少充沛的精力及讓我們振奮的歡笑。他和牙醫毫不鬆懈；好讓他能隨時向大眾展露一排經過精雕細琢的傑作。他似乎是要告訴眾人「最壞的已經過去，而最美好的就在前面」。

詩的結尾卻是辛波絲卡的感嘆：「人類天生憂傷」，而每個人都有悲傷的權利，儘管政治家再怎麼小心翼翼地世界真實的一面隱藏起來。人們若真的相信我們正活在「微笑的天堂」裡，政治家們的招牌笑容就排不上用場了。他們經常過分樂觀的預言確實值得質疑，然而總愛依靠仰賴掌權者的我們也難逃責任，這是人的天性。

大膽敢言且充滿啟發性是辛波絲卡作品的一貫風格。乍看之下，文筆意境似是淺白，但細心琢磨，卻往往能發現字裏行間暗藏玄音。不怪乎，諾貝爾獎評審團稱她為「詩人中的莫札特」。她勇於創新、俏皮又不失機智幽默。特別是她對人類深刻的孤立感進行探究，繼而伸展出甚具獨創性的筆觸，簡潔中帶有些許反諷格調。她善於運用最簡單的詞語，透過最平凡的故事，喚起對人性及人類處境的深思。「微笑」一詩就是辛波絲卡環繞著一個表情來回琢磨而寫成的。她的多首作品都是圍著主題盤旋好一會兒後，再瀟灑尖銳地一語道破箇中玄妙。詩中洋溢的幽默感和冷嘲熱諷，剛好與其嚴肅沉重的寓意相映成趣。

影評：東尼瀧谷 by 輕塵

這晚寂寞之風吹動人們觸覺，心靈深處人性被觸碰之餘，觀眾心頭悠然堆砌出淡白色的想像領域——是個異常美麗的空間，是個寂寞得很美的空間。《東尼瀧谷》的寂寞氣息源自村上春樹《萊辛頓的幽靈》中的短篇小說，並由導演市川準把這些簡短的文字轉化成一幕又一幕扣人心弦的影像。《東尼瀧谷》講述的就是東尼瀧谷（ISSEY尾形飾）的故事：母親早逝，父親長年和他的爵士樂流浪天涯，自小孤獨的生活造就一身繪畫實物的天份，世俗的感情似乎永不在他心裡泛起絲毫漣漪。宮澤理惠飾演的英子的出現劃破東尼瀧谷的孤獨世界，東尼和英子的婚姻令他初嘗溫暖的愛情，英子成為拯救他出黑夜世界的女神。然而強烈的時裝購買慾不斷地蠶食英子的心靈，正當英子決心為東尼改掉購衫的癖好時，無情的車禍一下把東尼所有的美夢摧毀。英子留下一個裝滿名貴衣裳的房間，東尼懷念妻子之餘，找來了同樣是穿7號鞋的久子，期望從久子身上亡妻的衣裳，找回那曾經喚醒人生的快樂氣味。東尼最終還是決定忘記一切舊感情，隨著久子的離去，他父親的去世，他成為一個真正孤獨的人。

觀眾從成功的電影感受到人性的存在，正如觀眾能從《東尼瀧谷》中體驗那美得可怕的孤寂，那不僅是感受東尼的孤獨旅程而已，更是觀眾尋找自我心靈空虛種子的經過，盼望自己那一點漂泊在蒼茫世道的心靈跟東尼的所有有著同樣的美。市川準和村上春樹這一代經歷戰後日本的混亂，西方文化的衝擊和熾熱的學生運動，他們對人性是有其獨特的體會，亦正正是這相同的認知驅使市川準成功地令《東尼瀧谷》充滿著典型的村上春樹色彩：迷失的人性，寂寞的時空。《東尼瀧谷》就是憑著這獨到的官感，坂本龍一的背景音樂，橫向空間的拍攝手法，簡單的演員組合，ISSEY尾形和宮澤理惠對角色的掌握，令這簡單的故事飄然登上西方電影殿堂，在本年的瑞士盧卡諾國際影展中奪取殊榮。

ISSEY尾形演活了東尼瀧谷，他不經意的落寞，失去感情的雙眼，讓觀眾看到真正的東尼瀧谷。這個天生注定成為孤獨的人，最後伴隨他的只有帶給他孤獨命運的名字和裝滿英子衣裳的房間。這偌大的房間正是影片的焦點所在，那是儲存所有和東尼有感情的人所遺下物件的地方：亡妻的衣裳，爸爸的舊唱片和久子落下的眼淚。房間最後的空置，亦決定東尼再次孤身上路的命運。我不想相信孤獨命運是會遺傳下去，正如瀧谷省三郎把孤獨的種子傳承到東尼瀧谷身上一般，那是太殘酷的人性，但我也想不出究竟東尼瀧谷一身孤獨的味道是從何而來，也搞不清他的寂寞為什麼來得那般美。

英子的靈魂是依附在宮澤理惠身上了。她的氣質散發在影片的每一個角落，穿著一身矜貴衣裳時的風韻，清洗汽車時的笑靨，累極時的海棠一睡，一幅幅美麗的畫面，都正是人們心中對女性最美麗的聯想，是出塵的美。相比下，影片似乎比原著賦予由宮澤理惠分飾的久子更全面的塑造，試穿英子衣裳時的哭聲，久子在回程途上感到英子衣裳的溫暖，使人感到久子比英子更加貼近人性，更為真實。也難怪市川準在影片結尾加插了東尼致電久子的一幕，畢竟久子和英子都是一般完美。是東尼瀧谷再也不能忍受寂寞的生命吧。寂寞的美從來只是人們美麗的想像？

DAO DE JING: A PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSLATION

by Lang Foo

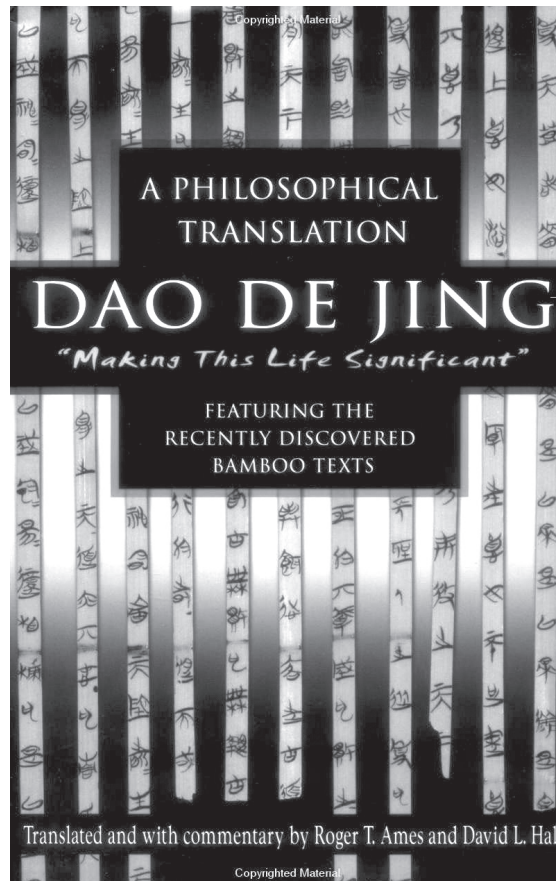
The *Dao De Jing* 道德經 is one of the most frequently translated and interpreted works in the pre-Qin corpus, with over 40 English translations available today. *Dao De Jing: A Philosophical Translation* (Ballantine Books, 2003) by Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall attempts to engage the text on a philosophical rather than philological level, as many previous translations have tended to do. The authors also aim to explore the *Dao De Jing* on its own intellectual soil, arguing that in the past, "Chinese philosophy has been made familiar to Western readers by first 'Christianizing' it, and then more recently by locating it within a poetical-mystical-occult worldview." Throughout the text, numerous efforts are made to prevent the reader from unwittingly imposing Western philosophical ideas and categories onto the *Dao De Jing*.

The book is divided into five main sections – a Historical Introduction, a Philosophical Introduction, a Glossary of Key Terms, the text of the *Dao De Jing* itself with translation and commentary, and an Appendix. The Philosophical Introduction comprises 44 of the book's 242 pages and is alone worth the price of admission. Ames and Hall begin by discussing the title "*Dao De Jing*" as a representation of a focus-field model. The relationship between *dao* and *de* is akin to that between field and focus, between totality and particular. The authors elaborate on this "correlative cosmology" throughout the rest of the Introduction, but are careful to point out that "cosmology" in the Daoist sense is markedly different from the traditional Greek

Throughout the text, numerous efforts are made to prevent the reader from unwittingly imposing Western philosophical ideas and categories onto the *Dao De Jing*.

use of the word, which invokes a cluster of related terms and ideas such as *arche* and *logos*, ideas absent in Chinese philosophy, which is in effect "acosmotic". In his previous works, Ames often introduces the distinction between the "One behind the many" metaphysics of the Western tradition, which posits an unchanging reality behind appearances, an originary One (the Platonic Forms, the Judeo-Christian God) behind the multitude of things in the world, and the Chinese worldview which is based on the inseparability of one and many and grants ontological parity to reality and appearance, to the formal and functional aspects of phenomena. This distinction is also used in this text to highlight some of the main differences between the basic assumptions of Western thought and the Chinese tradition, of which Daoism is a part.

I first encountered comparisons between A. N. Whitehead's process ontology and the ancient Chinese worldview in F. W. Mote's *Intellectual*



Foundations of China. Not surprisingly, Ames and Hall, who have been exploring the parallels between classical Chinese thought and American pragmatism (Whitehead, James, Dewey, Rorty) for the last two decades, also invoke Whitehead in their discussion of the *Dao De Jing*. As with Whitehead, the processual emphasis of the *Dao De Jing* and indeed of the Chinese tradition focuses on continuous processes rather than discrete things and prefers to view events in light of their ceaseless transformation instead of conceiving of things as static and bounded by their formal aspect, as is the case with a "particulate, catenary" Newtonian conception of the world. To quote a phrase frequently used by the authors, "phenomena are never either atomistically discrete or complete."

The latter half of the Philosophical Introduction deals with more key themes of the *Dao De Jing*, such as the mutual entailing of opposites and what Ames and Hall call the "*wu* 無 -forms." Binary oppositions and the mutual entailment of antinomies are common themes in the text (most notably in Chapter 2) – some chapters advocate the overturning of conventional distinctions while others aim to displace them altogether; such themes are also found in other Daoist works such as the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. Meanwhile, the authors present the *wu*-forms, most notably *wuwei* 無為 (translated as "noncoercive actions in accordance with the particular focus of things"), *wuzhi* 無知 ("unprincipled knowing") and *wuyu* 無欲 ("objectless desire"), as examples of a deferential language and sensibility that pervades the text.

The Glossary of Key Terms which follows the Philosophical Introduction provides the etymologies of many of the commonly used words in the *Dao De Jing* and justifies the

authors' translations of them. Some terms are translated quite differently from their traditional renderings; others, such as *tian* 天, the authors leave untranslated. Ames and Hall argue that since many of the traditional translations are in fact radical interpretations that overlay foreign concepts and connotations onto the Chinese terms, they strive to avoid such cultural equivocation in their translation. In addition, they encourage a paronomastic reading of the text that relies on the notion of "linguistic clustering" as an alternative to literal translation, calling attention to the varying meanings of terms in different contexts.

The text of the *Dao De Jing* itself used in this translation is adapted from the one used by D. C. Lau 劉殿爵 in his own translation, which is based on the silk scrolls unearthed at the tombs of Mawangdui 馬王堆 in 1973 (dating from about the second century BCE) but retains the familiar ordering (with the *Dao* section preceding the *De* section) of the received Wang Bi 王弼 text. Significant differences between this version of the text and the Wang Bi redaction as well as the version unearthed at Guodian 郭店 in 1993 (from the fourth century BCE) are noted in the footnotes. Each of the 81 chapters are presented with the Chinese text first, the English translation second, and finally a commentary that draws on many of the points mentioned in the Philosophical Introduction in exploring and elaborating on the layers of meaning of the chapter.

The Appendix contains the text and

Ames and Hall... encourage a paronomastic reading of the text that relies on a notion of "linguistic clustering" as an alternative to literal translation.

translation of *The Great One Gives Birth to the Waters* 太一生水, a passage that appears integral to Chapter 64 in one of the Guodian versions of the *Dao De Jing* but is not found in any of the other extant versions of the text. The importance of this passage "lies in the considerable clarity it lends to the issue of how we are to understand Daoist cosmogony." Indeed, the authors argue that it "enables us to understand other chapters of the *Daodejing* in a way that has not been possible before."

This new translation of the *Dao De Jing* by Ames and Hall is a valuable resource to anyone wishing to approach the text from a philosophical perspective.

境

不久前遇上了一位年老的寡婦，並與她幾乎朝夕相對了兩天兩夜。她給我的印象是深刻的，卻難以形容。她總愛把自己打扮得漂漂亮亮，身上及家中隱約散發著高貴典雅之美，甚至有種莊嚴、高不可攀的味道。家裡的一切都打理得井井有條，烹飪更有一手，並時常對人流露出一種令人暖透心窩的熱情與慈母般無微不至的關懷。然而，那曾與她共同生活了將近50年的丈夫三年前突然的逝世，讓一直扮演著照顧者的她彷彿失去了生活的中心點，再也找不著自己的定位。她對身體的日漸衰老感到沮喪、無助，總認為自己已走到生命的盡頭。也經常沉醉於對過去的緬懷和惋惜，讓自己陷入憂鬱哀傷的無底深淵之中。這個曾看盡斑斕色彩的油畫家，從此眼裡只有黑色：吞噬所有光彩的黑、看不穿摸不透的黑。為了哀悼先夫，執著地只肯穿黑色衣服，而家裡好幾處的窗簾亦時常緊閉著，不讓一絲光線透進。

仍依稀記得數月前，我於山谷另一端曾遇見過一對同樣年老的夫婦。他們住在一間可愛的小屋裡，四周是一片接一片的果園。同樣叫我難忘，但他們帶給我的感觸卻是截然不同的。那是一種清新舒暢的美，到處生機蓬勃，充滿陽光、色彩及鳥語花香。老夫婦臉上看出一絲的煩惱，也毫不埋怨身體上的殘疾，照樣開車、找朋友相聚、耐心種植小盆栽、甚至因興趣所致而親力親為開辦了一間有關他們小鎮歷史的博物館。

在同一塊土地上，共存著童話與噩夢般的人生。「境」的確是由心而生、隨心而轉。世界的遼闊給與了我們無窮的可能，眼中所見的風景取決於每個人本身如何選擇行走的方向及觀賞的角度。敞開心眼，儘量感受、發掘、捕捉每一刻的美麗，便能在任何處境裡都尋找到樂土，人生自然是享受。反之，把眼光封鎖於一事物、一段過去或未實現的夢想裡，那是做繭自纏，只會讓人窒息。

作者：
畫圓圈

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火花文化

古代軍事家孫武強調「兵貴神速」。因為香港是一個商業大都會，所以香港人大都奉行這道兵法。商場如戰場嘛！然而，香港人下班後還是猶如身在戰場之中：走路匆匆，吃飯匆匆，生活上甚多事情都以高速進行。不過，香港人不是沒有要求或不懂得享受的人。他們願意花費金錢在香車，佳餚，華衣等等方面。總括而言，速度和質素對香港人來說都是十分重要。但是，我覺得香港文化的重心越來越偏向速度，而質素的地位持續下降。香港的文化就如火花一樣，並不是沒有光芒，卻是十分微弱，而且一瞬即逝。在這裏，我以香港的電影和音樂作為例子，希望透過這兩個例子闡明我的看法。

香港的電影在這二十餘年間經歷過一個很漫長的高峰。八十年代至九七回歸這段期間可說得上是百花盛放：題材方面有驚慄、愛情、喜劇、劇情、功夫、及警匪等等。雖然當時的電影也是良莠不齊，但是發展還算健康。然而，火花文化就是在這段時期萌芽的。九十年代的電影大都是以明星掛帥：周星馳、成龍、劉德華、梁朝偉等等。他們演出的電影內大部份的資源也是投放在他們身上。故此，電影內其餘部份所得到的資源不足，使得這些電影大都只是在某一兩方面比較優勝，而整體來說都不能算是佳作。另

作者：
Vincent Chan

外，他們的生產速度也是快得嚇人。這股風氣主要還是由觀眾所做成的。儘管他們對電影不是沒有要求，他們要求的只是在某一兩方面。觀眾希望可以很快就可再次看到自己喜歡的元素——看周星馳的是為了他的瘋狂惹笑、成龍的是他的敏捷身手、劉德華的是他的迷人外表、梁朝偉的是他的精湛演技。這些電影整體水平不高，而且大都是換湯不換藥：其餘的無論改成變成甚麼，瘋狂惹笑繼續瘋狂、敏捷身手還是敏捷、迷人外表仍然迷人、精湛演技依然精湛。如果香港的電影就只有這些模式可供選擇，他們的光芒能耀眼持久麼？

香港音樂的情況跟電影的沒有太大的差別。七十年代至九七回歸這段期間它都在發展。題材主要是愛情，不過亦有友情、親情、道德及生活等等；音樂主要是流行樂和搖滾樂。香港於此時不再只是借用台灣和西方音樂，它開始發展自己的音樂，故這段時期是香港音樂的里程碑。香港音樂的高峰出現在八十年代中至九十年代中的期間。當時的歌手，一方面既有個人，亦有組合；另一方面，既有音樂上只埋首唱歌的，也有兼顧作曲，填詞，及監製等等的。就說組合。當時

有Beyond，太極及達明一派等等。就他們三隊樂隊已經帶來三種音樂。但就在這期間，明星效應的影響開始加強，改編之風趨盛，使香港音樂的發展越來越不健康。唱片和歌曲推出的速度也是異常地快——可以說是配合聽眾需要，但是質素未免便留有不少改進的空間。

我似乎是省去了近幾年的情況。我覺得不用多說，情況是越來越差。嗯，如果對香港的光芒還有點興趣，那就要留神一點，因為將來火花可能熄滅得太快，又或者根本就再沒有火花。

The Art of Rejection

By Enigma

So you've mustered up the courage to tell that very unique and special someone how much you like them (for gender equality's sake, I'm going to use "them"), how obsessed you are about them, how together you're going to spending your lives together until old age where you'll still be holding hands and feeding pigeons at the park. You've finally gathered the courage that you never knew you had but have been swelling up in your heart all this time. And you're pretty sure you've got a good shot because you feel they like you too. But . . . BOOM. You get body-slammed. And you go hide and cry like a 9-year old who just fell off their bike, bloodied and heart-broken.

Like the death of a parent or the extraction of a wisdom tooth, rejections are an inevitable part of life. No one gets it right on the first try (if you are one of those rare species, we hate you very much you lucky bastard). Finding the right person is very much like a bone marrow transplant; it's pure luck and fate to find a right donor: even harder to make it work once their matched. Perhaps because of embarrassment and heart ache, the rejection is one of the most common but least talked about rituals we encounter. As you will see, the rejection is bit of a cliché and shouldn't be taken too seriously in that everyone uses the same lines and expressions when they utter the rejection. It's so common that I have listed the different stages that most rejections embody. I will peel away at the layers of this very painful custom so that you can all understand it better.

Step One: "Are You Serious?"

Ah yes, the traditional good old "Are you serious" line. It's as annoying and predictable as the GST. In fact, it's a bit of an insult if you think about it. It's like we go around telling people we're in love with them and then get high after we tell them we're only kidding. But unfortunately, they almost always say it, so you might as well accept it.

Step Two: "I Would Have Never Guessed"

It's much safer than outright laughing at your face and telling you that you're a freak. That's why your rejecter will obviously use the "I've never imagined in my life" line to make sure no one gets hurt . . . emotionally and physically. But who's kidding who: you were never even shortlisted. And they say it with such innocence: it's like they've never even given you an extra second to think whether you're date material.

Step Three: "I Like You A Lot, But Only As a Friend"

Translation: I like you, but not that much. You ain't boyfriend (girlfriend) material is what they're getting at. If you're slow, it might take you a while to decipher all that rhetoric. In fact, some might follow up with a "I consider you as my brother (or sister)" line. That's fantastic. So you've been committing incest and courting your sibling for all this time. Not only do you feel sad, but a little dirty as well. Regardless of how they put it, you still walk away empty-handed. It's like finishing fourth in the Olympics: you don't even get a medal for all that valour and effort.

Step Four: "I'm Sorry: I Hope I Haven't Hurt Your Feelings"

Of course not! Don't be silly. All you've done is crush my months of courage and emotions swelled into moments of pure hope. That's all. I only think about you for every waking moment of my day. So of course I'm not hurt. (That's sarcasm in case you wondered). This feeling of helpless rage is what you're going to get when they utter the "I'm sorry" line. It's done so that you have no justification to even get mad at them. Why? Because they've already said sorry. But whether they really mean it is anyone's guess.

Step Five: Self Doubt - What Went Wrong?

At this stage, you're probably questioning your self-

worth. You're a piece of crap: you look like one and you talk like one too. Idiot. You can't stand yourself and feel disgusted. Then you start rewinding your life's moments like a tape: you question everything you've done since you first came out of the womb. And in the end, you wonder, "Why bother?" Despair, dejection, and depression are all that you feel.

What to do next?

So you've been rejected. Now to pick yourself off the ground and get back to being yourself, right? Easier said than done. It usually takes about a week to shake off the shock. (Longer if you're the sensitive-type). But what are you going to do? You don't know voodooism, so you obviously can't control their minds. Thus, in order to not make this a scar for the rest of your life, you have to do the following:

Step One: Treat Yourself

Believe it or not, you're the only who cares about you. If you're lucky, you might have a close friend or two and your parents to listen to. But they really don't care that much. In the end, you're still on your own. Remember: You're only as good as how you treat yourself. So go on a spending spree and buy yourself something nice. Go get that laptop; go get that Prada; in fact, go on a short vacation. Anything that'll make yourself feel less worthless.

Step Two: Relax

It's like getting fired from a job; don't go looking for a new one immediately. You'll only stress yourself out. In fact, don't do anything. Rest for a while. Take a deep breath and take it easy. And yes, you are allowed to throw hissy-fits at the rest of the world. Because goddamn it, you're worth it after all that you've gone through. Learn to love yourself again.

Step Three: Make Rejections Into A Learning Experience

Turn a negative into a strength and a weakness into a positive. Look for self improvement. Lots of people miss out on this opportunity, and instead of transforming it into knowledge, turns it into cynicism and worse yet, a grudge that lasts forever. The reason why they said "no" is because you lack something. You're only chance for vengeance is to improve yourself rather than continuing with your self-pity. Do whatever it takes to become a more complete and well-rounded person. Remember: you're rejecter isn't feeling sorry for you (in fact, they've probably even forgotten you already), so only you can save yourself from self-destruction.

Conclusion:

The last piece of advice is to not take the rejection personally. There's no point in holding yourself responsible. The last thing you want from this experience is to become cynical and start hating the world for screwing you over so many times. Too many rejections pushed Hitler over the edge into a maniacal mass murderer: there's no guarantee it won't happen to you. It still hurts, but that's okay. It will always hurt even years from now: but remember, infinite numbers of people past and present have gone through what you're going through. So take care of yourself. Eat well, sleep well, and remember to get on with your life.

Untitled

by Carl Liu

My good friend was sitting next to me on the wooden bridge, dangling his feet above the pond. Underneath the dark green water quietly reflects the bare branches and the grey clouds. Here and there, a few red carps glide gracefully through the water, appearing and disappearing like ghosts. Along the edge of the pond, the first grass of spring grows in patches while the trees wait patiently for their first sprouts. The Japanese stone lanterns stood stoically, witnessing this perfectly tranquil moment.

"How have you been in these four years I was away?"

"你刚走不久学校就搬到新校区了，你应该知道，在郊区。我们每星期天要多坐两小时的公车才能到。不过新校区要好得多，什么都是新的：新教室，新宿舍，新食堂。"

"How was the food? I really missed racing to the cafeteria after class."

"伙食？还不是跟原来一样抢饭。你要是在你还是跑地最快的。"

"Hehe, you still remember! Hey, do you guys still go nuts at night? Running around naked in a garbage bag, stuff like that?"

"晚上还是闹得翻天。新宿舍生活老师少，所以我们越来越大胆。一开始只是在寝室里面闹，捉弄生活老师。过了些时，我们就偷偷地跑出去了。你知道学校的一面是一条小河，到了晚上，旁边的农民就划着竹船来卖小吃。我们就拿着零花钱去买。"

"Really? How did they manage to get past 生活老师?"

"哦，从窗户了跳下去。男生宿舍在三楼，太高了点。但是，在一楼和二楼之间有一个檐子，可以临时站站。所以你要下去的话，需要有个人在三楼把你拉住，让你先吊在外面。等你脚快要接近檐子的时候，他手一松，你就跳到檐子上。然后就容易啦。下面是软软的草坪，跳下去就成功了！"

"Is he okay?"

"腿骨折... 没什么大事，过了两星期又回来跟我们一起干了。"

"前两年，街对面开了个网吧，我们就翻墙去打CS。通宵只五块钱。二三十人打LAN game，热火朝天。"

"You know, now that you describe it, I feel as though I should have stayed instead. I could've scaled walls with you guys; I could've kicked your ass in CS... I missed all the fun."

"唉，我就是天天晚上打CS 白天上课打瞌睡，没好好学习。考不上大学才来这里。我爸妈把家里大部分钱都花了把我送到这里上语言学校。现在在我一分钱也没了，正好让我集中精力学习。"

"Now that you mentioned it, how's your homestay?"

"他们对我不错。菲律宾人。只是我刚到的第一晚上他们给我吃饺子，把我吃的都要哭了。住在别人家还是不方便，连电话都不能打太长时间。晚上也不热闹了，一个人读书也含孤独。你知道，我很羡慕你。语言过关而且上这么好的大学..."

"Well, you shouldn't. You should feel lucky. You have a homestay family that'll help you get started here; you have language school where you can study with people that are new just like you. It's a wonderful opportunity.

Let me show you something."

We stood up and left the garden. It wasn't easy. We tried to the main entrance: there was a tree near the wall and I thought that perhaps we could jump from the tree branch onto the top of the wall. He volunteered but was unsuccessful. The wall was too high and the tree was too far from it. We went back to where we came in, the corner where the wall was lower, and it was considerably easier. I boosted him onto the

top, and then he pulled me up. We sat on the rows of ceramic tiles, laughing. He dropped down first and I followed. As I came crashing down, two students walked by and smiled at us curiously. I got up from the ground, tidied up my jacket and smiled back.

They left. We looked at each other and grinned mischievously.

Then, we ran.

We ran past Marine Drive; we ran past the clothing-is-optional sign; we ran down the stony steps into the valley. We ran as if we were being chased; we ran as if we were set free. And when we touched the sand, it was spectacular. The sun has broken through the clouds and shone with all its glory. The undulating water shimmers from here all the way to the majestic mountains afar, the waves making their last push towards the beach. We climbed on the rocks, followed by the long shadows we cast.

"You know, I feel pretty bad about today. It's Sunday and nothing was open, not even the roses in Rose Garden."

"But at least you made us sneak into that Japanese garden and now we see the sunset."

I took out my camera and started taking pictures of the sunset. He asked why.

" W h e n

I first came to Vancouver with my mom, we lived in a basement in Kitsilano. It was dark and empty and there was no furniture. We didn't speak good English, and we didn't know anyone.

When the rain started coming down, we had nowhere to go but stayed inside.

"And I remember sitting on my sofa bed, staring blank at the dark corner of the room. There was only a tiny window near the top of the wall, and I could see raindrops trickling down the glass. By the dim light through that window, I read. Not because I wanted to, but because I had to. I was lonesome, and I thought by occupying my mind with words I could fill up the void in my heart.

"I was also afraid. My mom and I, tucked away in this godforsaken hellhole. Even the smallest quake would destroy us. The two Caucasian men upstairs - the only people that knew we even existed - came home in the middle of the night. As I lied in my bed, I could hear the remote noise of loud stereo and raucous laughter continuing into the night. I couldn't sleep.

"When the rain finally stopped, we thought we'd come out of the ground and go somewhere. We went to UBC. It was a cloudy day just like today, and when we arrived at the top in the afternoon, we were afraid to go down the dark and mysterious valley. Then the sun came out and lightened up our way. When we arrived at the beach, there it was, a beautiful sunset. Just like this one."

That was the first time in a long time I felt warmth. Every pain just melted away.

This is what I want to show you, I said. I love sunset. It comforts me to know that there is hope for tomorrow.

He listened to me intensely. Then, without speaking a word, he took out his camera and took pictures of the sunset.

"我从来没有开到这么美的景象！" he remarked.

"Well, come here everyday then."

But we both knew we couldn't: I had exams to prepare tomorrow; he had language school to go to tomorrow.

"Good luck." I said, as we are about to say goodbye, "I'll see you soon."