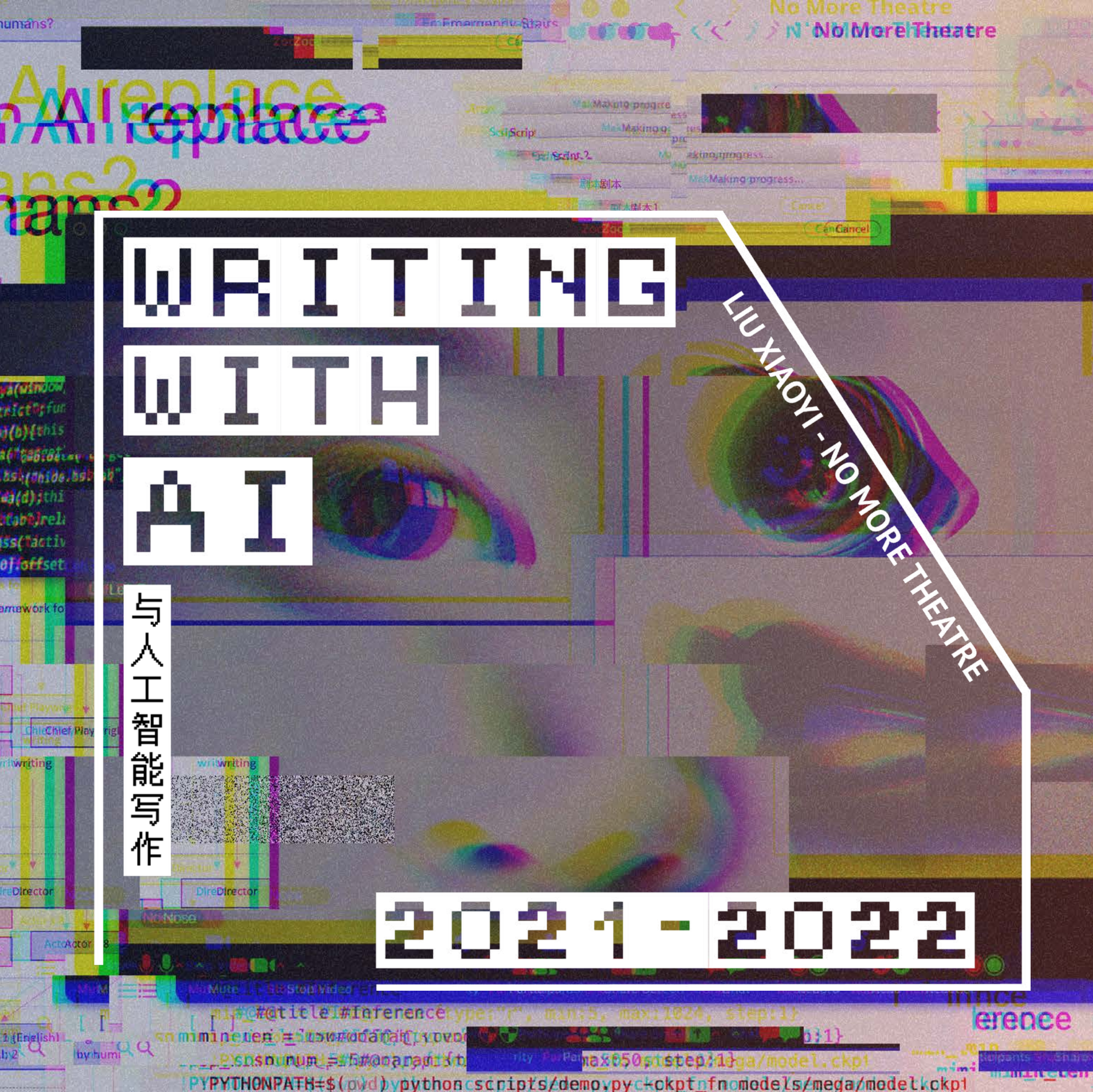




WAITING

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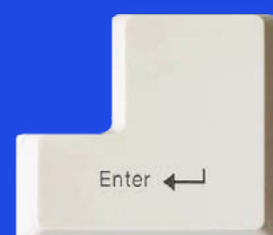
与人工智能写作

LIU XIAOYI - NO MORE THEATRE

2021-2022

# WRITING WITH AI: 与人工智能写作

THE FIRST EXPERIMENT



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# Introduction.



What are the boundaries of human and computer intelligence? What are the limits of AI models? What are the limits of human thought? What even defines human thought? How does one demonstrate understanding? This is just the beginning.

HOW CAN AI UNDERSTAND CREATIVITY, CULTURE AND EMOTION?

HOW CAN HUMAN CREATORS BE CREATIVE IN RESPONDING TO AND USING AI?

## WHERE DID “WRITING WITH AI” COME FROM?

Prior to Writing with AI, Xiaoyi has been working on a research and development project, No More Theatre, an exploration of new theatre forms in the face of ever expanding technology presence in our daily lives and interactions.

Liu Xiaoyi, the mastermind of Writing with AI, has long been interested in exploring and expanding the possibilities of creating with technology beyond the stage – as opposed to using technology as a mediated platform for presentation.

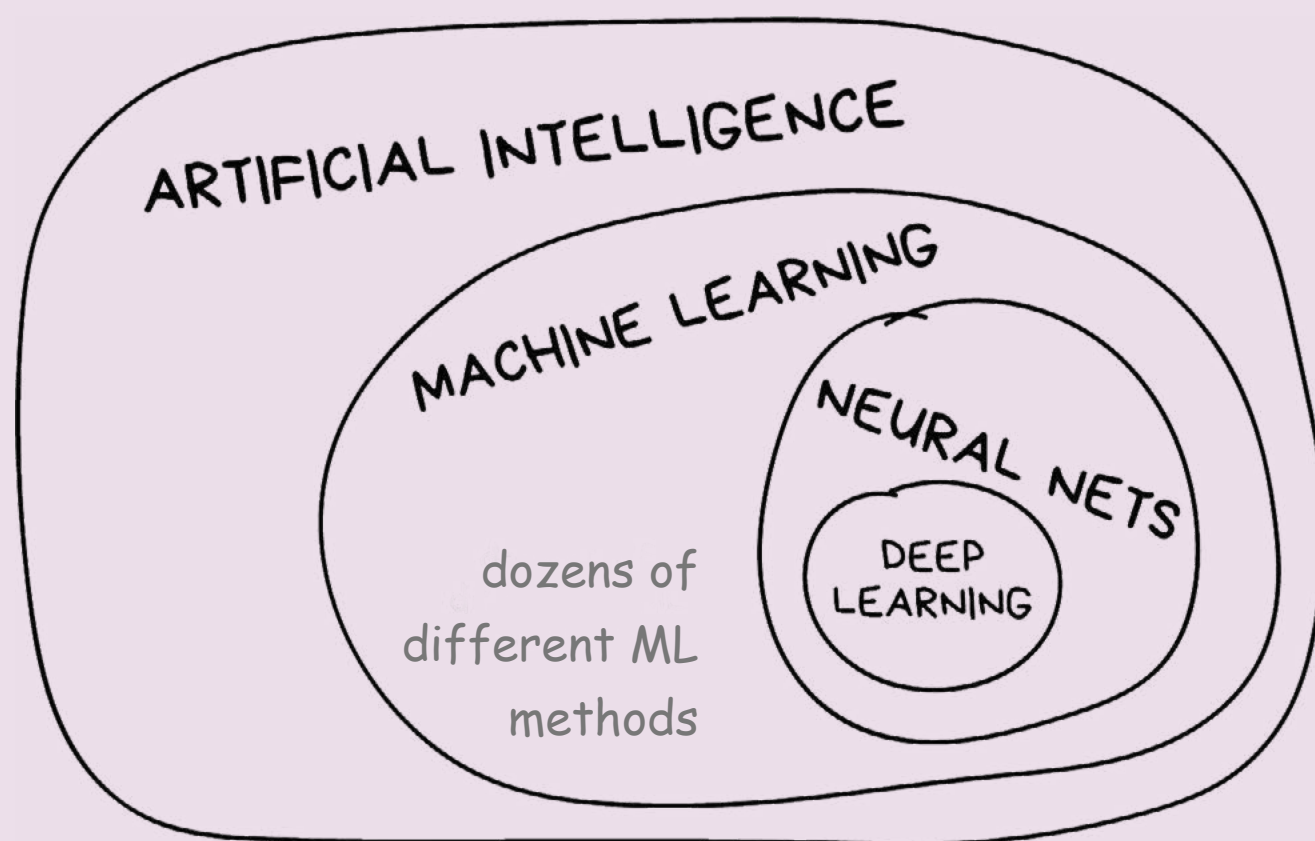
Prior to Writing with AI, Xiaoyi worked on No More Theatre, a research and development project focused on new theatre forms in the face of the ever expanding technological presence in our daily lives and interactions.

Writing with AI is a new phase of research to build upon previous findings and primarily explores how humans (in this case, Xiaoyi as the central collaborator) can co-write theatrical scripts with artificial intelligence. Xiaoyi hopes to scaffold the beginnings of a methodology of working with AI in the creation process, towards a deeper integration between theatre and technological fields. More importantly, through this experiment, the team hopes not just to contemplate upon the symbiotic relationship between art-making in the digital realm but also to inspire new creativity in the future of art and technology.

What are the boundaries of human and computer intelligence? What are the limits of AI models? What are the limits of human thought? What even defines human thought (in this case, emotion, culture and creativity)? How does one demonstrate understanding?

This is just the beginning.

## THE BASICS: JUST WHAT DO WE MEAN BY AI?



Artificial intelligence refers to the entire knowledge field.

Machine Learning is a part of (note: not equivalent to) artificial intelligence. One way to think about machine learning is the process of identifying or classifying data and relationships to analyse, memorise, forecast, reproduce, and, to a certain extent, optimise.

Neural Networks (“Neural Nets” in diagram above) are one type of machine learning. Deep Learning is a modern method of building, training, and using neural networks; in modern usage, deep learning and neural networks are used

interchangeably, in part due to the fact that they share the same libraries in practice.

The models that Xiaoyi has chosen to work with for this project are Natural Language Processing machine learning models that fall under deep learning. These models include language generation i.e. generating human language “natural” text.

A **Language Model** is a model that has been trained to predict the probability of a sequence of words. It is part of the technology that predicts the next word you want to type, like on your messaging apps, Gmail, or even commercial apps like Grammarly. The possibilities of “what comes

next” determine valid options by how closely it simulate how people write (based on the architecture it is within). Current language models (at the time of writing) fall into two broad types: a) probabilistic methods, and b) neural network based modern language models; emerging language models are developing to integrate context and make room for parallelization<sup>1</sup>.

In order to determine which language model to use, Xiaoyi evaluated the available language models in the market based on the following factors:

1. Language ability: Can the AI model continue producing grammatically sound text with regard to the preceding text?
2. Creative writing: Can the AI model continue writing creatively and soundly based on the context provided in the preceding text?
3. Format of script: Can the AI predict and identify that this writing is in the form of a script based on the input?
4. Input capacity: Can the AI model accept large amounts of input from the preceding text?
5. Accessibility: Can we publicly access the AI model, or is there is a subscription fee, and if so is the fee within an acceptable range of our budget.

Ultimately, Xiaoyi chose to work with **Inferkit** to generate English scripts and **彩云小梦 or Dreamily.ai** (a Chinese pretrained model) to generate Chinese scripts. It should be noted that both models require intervention from a human operator (to “continue” generation or make a choice out

Diagram: Zubarev, V.

<sup>1</sup> Parallelization is the act of designing a computer program or system to process data in parallel. For a 101 on language models, refer to article by Kapronczay, M., 2021.

## THE BASICS: JUST WHAT DO WE MEAN BY AI?

of valid options, or even manual entry) and neither has been trained specifically to write in the format of a theatrical script. The format of the monodrama thus emerged as a neutral writing structure as part of the creative framework.

In terms of text generation output, Inferkit produces continuous text based on preceding text – the “best option” already selected. 彩云小梦 however offers up more than one possibility, which then requires an operator (Xiaoyi) to select.

In the following section, Xiaoyi shares part of his journal where he elaborates a bit more about his considerations in this research project and subsequent choice of AI models used.

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Kapronczay, M. (2021, January 12). The Beginners Guide to Language models. Medium. URL: <https://towardsdatascience.com/the-beginners-guide-to-language-models-aa47165b57f9>

A Language Model is a model that has been trained to predict the probability of a sequence of words.



## THE TEAM

**Creative and Research**

The Artistic Director of Emergency Stairs, **Liu Xiaoyi (Curator, Chief playwright, Director)** is considered a promising figure at the forefront of the experimental theatre scene in Asia. He was the recipient of the “Young Artist Award” by the National Arts Council of Singapore in 2016.

In 2002, Xiaoyi started working professionally in theatre. He is considered one of the most acclaimed male actors from the Singapore theatre scene. Xiaoyi’s passion and talent for words also revealed a gifted playwright with a deft sensibility for language. As a director, the cornerstones of his oft lauded but controversial work are unsurprisingly experimentation, introspection, and poetry. His works often polarize, drawing both praise and debate.

Since 2011, Xiaoyi has been particularly involved in the intercultural dialogue. Since 2017, he curates the annual Southernmost Project, a first-of-its-kind arts festival in Singapore. It seeks to bring prominent and established traditional and contemporary artists from the region together at Singapore for intercultural exchange.

**Ci Xuan (Creative Assistant)** likes to move, act, write, make puppets and quirky videos while engaging in pertinent social conversations. She is a recent graduate of ARTivate, a 3-year program with Drama Box, and in the final year of pursuing a double major in NUS Chinese Studies and Theatre Studies. Her selected acting credits include “Dream Under a Southern Bough” (2019-2021) and “Oedipus” (2018) by TOY Factory; “No Strings Attached” (2021) by Paper Monkey; “Dancing with Fish in the Midnight Zone” (2021) by Drama Box. She is also the co-founder of Matter.Less and the artistic director of “Re:Verse”, an experimental series of literary performances.

**Neo Kim Seng (Researcher)** is a cross-disciplinary practitioner and has been involved in independent and large-scale projects in various capacities in Singapore and overseas since 1987. He has programmed for Esplanade – Theatres on The Bay, Singapore Arts Festival, Singapore International Film Festival and managed productions for major Singapore theatre companies and independent artists. He has been focusing on creative work recently: writing, directing and installation art.

**Raja Akanksha (Researcher)** has been an arts writer for the past 4-5 years and has worked as a documentation writer on arts projects with Drama Box and Singapore Drama Educators Association. Prior to working freelance, she spent three years full-time on the editorial team of ArtsEquator, writing and editing reviews, interviews, and feature articles. Akanksha has become more interested in documenting creative processes in recent years.

**Judee Tan (Playwright)** is an established local stage and TV actress, comedian, host and writer with an experience of more than a decade. As a consummate creative, Judee has since developed a deep interest in exploring new methodologies of creating art in the sphere of theatre, particularly so as a fledging director and producer. Being a mature actress stepping into a new role as a playwright, Judee brings a different, refreshing perspective and experience to *Writing with AI*. Her recent experimental short theatre film, *A Man Waiting For The Leaves to Fall*, demonstrates her unique sensitivity and sense of structure in story telling.

**Sim Yan Ying “YY” (playwright)** is a theatre artist based in Singapore and New York. She creates as a director, performer, writer, and deviser, and strives to make works that are experimental, accessible,

and reflective of a diversity of lived experiences. Original works include: *(un)becoming* (T: > Works N.O.W. 2021), *Where Are You?* (Wild Rice/ Mabou Mines), *Who’s There?* (New Ohio Theatre), *I LOVE WHITE MEN* (Caveat NYC/Ars Nova/ ixon Place), and *Without Reason* (ArtsWok Collaborative/ Esplanade). YY is presently a Directing Resident at Singapore Repertory Theatre and an artist in the Mabou Mines SUITE/Space program. Training: BFA NYU Tisch, 2021 The Necessary Stage Devising Platform, 2017 SIT Company Summer Intensive. simyanying.com. IG: @simyanying

**Huang Suhuai (Playwright)** is a multidisciplinary artist based in Singapore. As a writer, Suhuai has written and translated more than ten theatre plays since 2008, including plays for young audiences. Her recent work includes *My Cloud* (2021), *The wee Question Mark* and the *Mountain Movers* (2019). She completed her BA(Hons) in Fine Arts in 2021, which has given her a new perspective on art.

**Ora (Playwright)** is an actor-performer, singer-songwriter and also a writer-director. She trained in East 15 Acting School (UK), Intercultural Theatre Institute (Singapore) and has travelled extensively around the world, researching and experiencing various traditional and contemporary performance systems.

Her recent works include a self-devised solo theatrical piece, *Presence*, staged at the Substation for SeptFest: The Last Chapter. She also recently wrote and co-directed her first narrative short film *Heart Shape* 莲蓉包 with Viddsee Studios. In November 2021, after releasing her first Mandopop music single 《戏场》 *Play*, Ora was also awarded the Most Promising Youth Award by SCAPE at SingVoice 2021, a competition for Mandopop singer-songwriters. She is also an Apprentice Artist (Vocalist) at Siong Long Musical Associa-

tion and has performed with them for *Fantasia* and *Germination*. Ora is a published poet, with a collection titled *Coordinates*.

In February 2022, her Mandarin monologue-play 《一丝灯光，一世阴影》 will be staged by Emergency Stairs as part of the Writing with AI project. She will also be performing as a live musician for Esplanade PLAYtime! Catch a Breath.

No matter what modality she uses—music, dance, theatre, film, literature, etc—Ora hopes to create art that connects through images and stories, that takes audience on colourful journeys into diverse worlds, and brings about healing, inspiration or discovery within them.

**Sabrina Sng (Coordinator)** is an artist from Singapore. She was also awarded the Undergraduate Arts Scholarship (2013) by the National Arts Council, and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts in 2016. She has collaborated and toured internationally.

Sabrina wants to be more than a performer. She is interested in the curation and management behind the creative process, and believes that this is what artists need to know about how to empower themselves.

**Denise Shu Mei (Research Editor)** is bodyworker, movement creator, martial artist in the making, and student of embodiment and culturally-rooted practices. Denise had a previous life as a producer in New York City, bringing experimental and devised theatre and performance pieces to life. They have also been part of the visual architecture for both print and digital publications; these include: *collective terrain/s* (Danspace Project), *Dancing While Black: Black Bodies | White Boxes* (Angela’s Pulse and Hemispheric Institute), and *Recipes for the (R)Evolution* (Radical Evolution).

## THE TEAM

## Actors

## English Showcase

**Tan Guo Lian Sutton** (Actor) is a graduate of the BA (Hons) Acting program at LASALLE College of the Arts. He was a recipient of Best Supporting Actor award for his role in 'Electra' at the 2017 Life! Theatre Awards. In 2019, he completed his Masters in Arts Pedagogy and Practice where he researched the pre-performance rituals of professional actors in Singapore. Lian is currently a core member of theatre collective; Dark Matter Theatrics and founder of Nusantara Theatrical Combat, a theatre company and stage combat academy inspired by Southeast Asian Martial Arts stories and aesthetics. As a lineage holder of various traditional Southeast Asian Martial arts, Lian constantly seeks to merge his talents to tell stories in varied and engaging ways. Selected theatre credits include "Temple", and "Electra" directed by Natalie Henedige, "2 Houses" by Lim Yu Beng, and "Those who can't, teach" directed by Alvin Tan.

**Rachel Nip** (Actor) is a choreographer, performer in theatre and dance based in Singapore. Her practice includes creating site-specific dance works exploring movement in relation to architecture, history and people. She has created original works at City College of San Francisco (CCSF) in San Francisco, The Theatre Practice and The Substation in Singapore. As part of "Hello, How Do You Move?", with Ammar 'Amezy', a Deaf choreographer and filmmaker, Rachel co-creates projects inspired by Deaf culture, language and perspectives and is currently working on an Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality dance project with The Doodle People. Favourite works include "Where Are You?" (Singapore), a devised theatre work with Wild Rice, "Stop Kiss", "Chicago" and "Legally Blonde" with CCSF in San Francisco.

**Karen Tan** (Actor) has had the joy and privilege to work with practically every theatre company in Singapore. She has lived and performed in the UK, KL, Cairo, Paris, New Zealand and Vienna, but is happiest here in Singapore, where she is a working mum, with possibly the best job in the world. She has been nominated for the Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress awards 11 times in the annual Life! Theatre Awards, winning in 2004 for playing a woman jailed for 25 years for killing her husband in Action Theatre's Iron.

**Sonia Kwek** (Actor) is an artist, performer, creative collaborator, life model, facilitator, etc, morphing in roles across projects and spaces which intersect in the arts, creative and non-profit sectors. Sonia's practice is rooted in exploring the materiality of the body. Her works unfold through performance, installation and experiential experiments. Interested in corporeal sensualities and the potency of kinesics, Sonia seeks to create intimate encounters and visceral experiences to express the ineffable. Sonia trained in acting at Intercultural Theatre Institute and holds a Bachelor of Creative Industries with Distinction from Queensland University of Technology. She is an associate artist with dance company P7:1SMA.

## Chinese Showcase

**Zelda Tatiana 顏瞳** is a multitalented independent arts practitioner who has founded GroundZ-0 原。空間 and is currently the Executive Producer and the Creative Director of the company. Zelda has been involved in Singapore's various festivals and commissions which include -

- *Those Words in Music* 《曲中詞》 - (Director/Playwright/Actor) - Singapore Writers Festival 2021 by The Arts House

- *Prism of Truth* 《眾相》 - (Creator/Director/Co-writer) - Huayi Festival 2020 by Esplanade - Theatre on the Bay

- *Shadows IN the Walls* 《壁中影》 - (Creator/Director) - Light to Night Festival 2019 (Bicentennial Edition) by National Gallery Singapore

- *0600* - (Creator/Director/Co-writer) - Singapore International Festival of Arts 2018

In 2017, Zelda Tatiana participated in Gekio (Asia) Playwright Competition in Nagoya/Japan and her bilingual (Mandarin/Cantonese) work - *Always on My Mind* 《我在你左右》 was selected as Judges' Favourite.

Zelda's works are often multilingual, immersive and interactive and her explorations and research often involves languages, humanity, psychologies and various sciences. She is interested in classical forms like Chinese Opera and Noh and always intrigued by new media genres such as AI/AR/VR in the contemporary theatre and film.

**Dennis Zhou** is a Singaporean radio deejay, actor, variety show host and singer. Chew is known for playing Auntie Lucy, a character which requires him to cross-dress as a middle-aged woman in the variety show Paris and Milan.

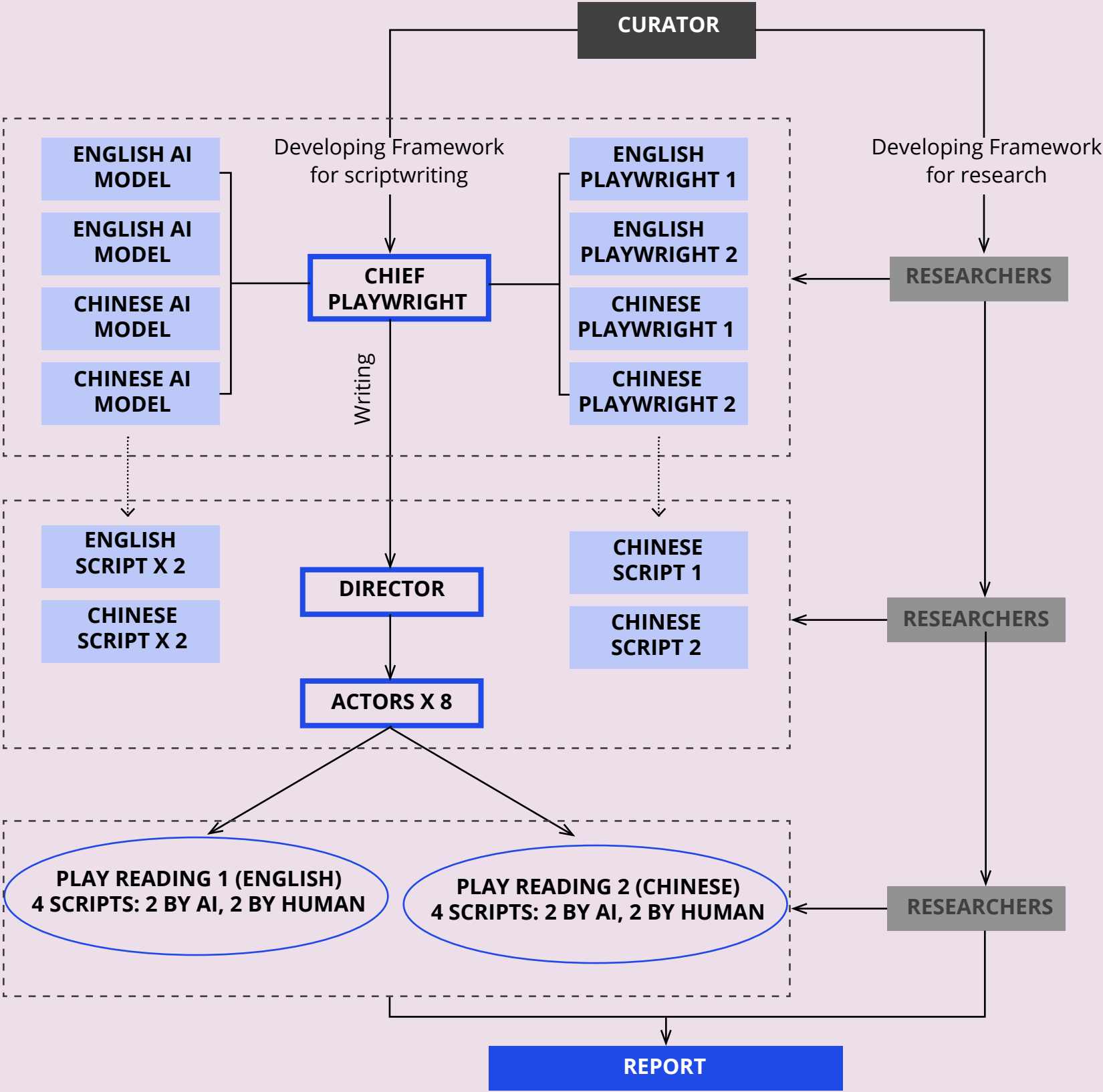
**Ng Mun Poh** is a theatre practitioner, performer and educator. She has been in many productions such as *The Bride Always Knocks Twice — Killer Secrets, Four Horse Road, Immortalx, The wee Question Mark series, Day I Met the Prince and Legends of the Southern Arch* among others. She frequently participated in "Artist Farm", produced a variety of artwork with artist all around the world. She trained with The Theatre Practice's Actor's Lab. Her performance credits with Lab include *The Nude, Upstream* and *Uproot*. As

strong advocate for children's drama education, Mun Poh performed and taught in many primary and secondary schools in Singapore. Be it rehearsing, performing and teaching, she continues to explore her relationship with self and others through her work.

**Rei Poh** is a theatre practitioner, director and actor interested in the use of gaming narratives within participatory theatre. As a citizen of "meritocratic" Singapore, Rei believes in embracing and celebrating failures.

He is a proud graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts' Master of Directing for Performance program and is the founder of a participatory performance collective ATTEMPTS. Rei has created thought-provoking participatory and forum theatre works like *ATTEMPTS:SG, ATTEMPTS:MEL* and 《莎莎》 *Girl In the White Sand Box*. Rei's recent projects include the showcase of *DATING SIM (beta)* — a participatory piece that experiments with video game-style narrative in LATE NIGHT TEXTING 2019, and multiple Online versions in 2020 and 2021. He is currently the Programme Leader for NAFA's Mandarin Drama and is working on a ATTEMPTS X NAFA production called *WINDOWS*.

PROCESS MAP



“...the team hopes to create a foundation for baseline methodology of man-and-machine collaborations in creating theatrical writing.”

## PRIMARY REFERENCE EXPERIMENTS AND ARGUMENTS FOR 'THOUGHT'

### The Turing Test

The Turing Test was proposed by the English mathematician Alan M. Turing in the 1950s to determine whether a computer can “think” like a human being. Turing proposed that a computer can be said to possess artificial intelligence if it can mimic human responses (Turing’s “Imitation Game”, if you will) under specific conditions that an external observer would consider as real.

The original Turing test requires a setup of three terminals: One terminal is operated by a human, functioning as the questioner; At the other end of the two terminals (human and computer respectively) function as respondents. During the test, the questioner will proceed to interrogate the respondents (separately) within a specific subject area. After 5 minutes of questioning, the questioner is asked to decide which is human and computer. If the questioner cannot reliably tell the computer from the human, the computer is considered to have AI because the questioner regards it as “just as human” as the human respondent. The computer has to (1) withstand interrogation not just by unsuspecting observants, but by someone who knows that one of the other two participants in the conversation is a machine; and (2) have a high degree of success over a repeated number of trials.

### The Chinese Room Argument

The Chinese Room Argument was first published in a 1980 article by American philosopher John Searle. His argument? AI in the form of formal computations on symbols cannot produce thought.

Searle invites you to imagine yourself, alone, in a room operating a computer program (instructions in English) for manipulating strings of Chinese characters which are slipped under the door on pieces of paper. Assuming you understand not a lick of Chinese, yet by following the program for manipulating symbols and numerals just as a computer does, you can then send a string of (appropriate, on topic) Chinese characters back out under the door that then leads those outside to suppose that there is indeed a Chinese speaker in the room. However, does the programmed formula that spits out a fit response suffice as thought? Here, the suggestion is that computer processing does not generate understanding and thought. While narrow in argument, Searle’s method here is to focus on the semantics of our thoughts.

### Writing with AI - The Test Set Up

While there are limitations to some of the constraints of Turing’s Imitation Game, the Turing Test inspires the framework for testing and comparing the “success” of existing trained programs in generating a creative work. We also take into consideration the actual capability of the existing (free) models in terms of creating a coherent script, and to ensure a degree of robustness in the creative process. As such, the set up is as follows:

During the writing stage, Xiaoyi, the chief playwright, functions more as the architect or programmer – working with the AI models to generate scripts and serving as consultant for the human playwrights. At the play-reading stage, invited guests act as the questioner or evaluator while the AI model and the human playwrights will function as

respondents and will be asked to decide which respondents (scripts) are (written by) human or a computer.

Through this setup, the team hopes to create a foundation for baseline methodology of man-and-machine collaborations in creating theatrical writing. What is human? What is thought? Though not the central research at this time, these philosophical conundrums will be fast friends in this research.

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# Creation



## CREATIVE FRAMEWORK

### for English Playwrights

#### **Context:**

You will be writing a script that is to be compared with scripts written “by AI models”. To facilitate comparison, here are the **fixed requirements** that all the scripts have to follow.

#### **Theme:**

Writing with AI

#### **Format:**

15-20 mins monologue (about 3000-4000 words)

#### **Premise:**

This story is about a playwright suffering from a debilitating case of writers’ block, with a deadline looming on the horizon. In the search for inspiration, he/she strikes up a conversation with a virtual assistant.

**The starting paragraph:** (The following paragraphs serve as the beginning of your script)

*I’m having writer’s block.*

*Lately, I feel that having writer’s block is like having a prayer block... I can offer pre-written prayers; I can follow the specific routine of group prayers; I can even recite many existing verses... But I cannot seem to talk to God freestyle, one on one. Maybe I’ve never been devoted enough.*

*It’s starting to make me wonder where my thoughts are coming from. Sometimes, I wonder if I can even make up my own mind. Sometimes, when I’m saying something, I feel like the words are coming from someone else, like the words aren’t even mine. It’s not like my mind is stuck on anything. It’s completely free. But even as I say this, something insidious is surreptitiously controlling my thoughts. I mean, all my thoughts come from somewhere else, someone else. I’m not capable of complete originality. And I’m stuck.*

*I really have to do something about it...*

**A prompt:** (The following line must appear three times at any point in your script)

*My thoughts are free.*

“与人工智能写作” 创作框架

中文编剧版

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>创作背景：</b>你将创作一个剧本，用来与“人工智能模型”编写的剧本进行比较。为了进行比较分析，以下是所有剧本必须遵循的创作要求。</p> <p><b>创作主题：</b>与人工智能写作</p> <p><b>创作形式：</b>15-20分钟的独角剧（大约3000-4000字）</p> <p><b>剧情前提：</b>在不久的将来，人工智能成为艺术创作的主流，编剧也成为一个即将被淘汰的行业。一个编剧正为最后一个愿意搬演人类作品的艺术节努力创作。</p> | <p><b>剧本开头：</b>（请以下面的段落作为你剧本的开头进行创作）</p> <p>有个人工智能笑话是这样的：让AI计算赛跑的最佳方式，结果AI长出特别长的腿，向前跌倒直接越过终点线。</p> <p>我对AI的认识可以从这个笑话里总结出来：AI如果耍起了心眼，人类就像个白痴……</p> <p>怎么说呢？我们设定一套规则，然后让里面的程序不停学习、不断进化。这个办法看起来很</p> | <p>巧妙，但是有个问题：AI会作弊。其实，严格说也不算作弊，因为人制定的规则难免会有漏洞。</p> <p>我想，被人工智能取代不是最可怕的；被人工智能编的笑话逗笑了，也许才是最令人害怕的。我必须向你们坦白：我不知道刚才这个笑话是不是AI写的。但是它多多少少描述了我目前的糟糕处境。</p> <p>没错，我是一个编剧，一个即将被AI淘汰的编剧……</p> | <p><b>台词：</b>（以下这句台词必须要在你的剧本中的任意位置中出现三次）</p> <p>一切都是无止境的</p> |
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for Chinese Playwrights

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| <p><b>Context:</b> You will be writing a script that is to be compared with scripts written “by AI models”. To facilitate comparison, here are the <b>fixed requirements</b> that all the scripts have to follow.</p> <p><b>Theme:</b> Writing with AI</p> <p><b>Format:</b> 15-20 mins monologue (about 3000-4000 words)</p> <p><b>Premise:</b></p> <p>Somewhere in the near future, Artificial Intelligence has taken over the creation of all arts and entertainment, and “playwriting” is no longer a career option for humans. A playwright is struggling to write a play for the last arts festival that still showcases works written by humans.</p> | <p><b>The starting paragraph:</b> (The following paragraph serves as the beginning of your script)</p> <p><i>There’s an AI joke which goes like this: When the AI is asked to calculate the best way to run a race, it grows extra long legs and falls forward, crossing the finish line without taking a single step.</i></p> <p><i>Well, this is essentially how I understand AI: Humans look like idiots when AI plays tricks...</i></p> <p><i>How can I put it? We fix up a set of rules, and let the program learn and evolve. This seems clever, but there’s a problem: the AI cheats. Strictly speaking, it is not cheating, because there are always loopholes in human rules.</i></p> | <p><i>I think being replaced by AI is not the scariest thing; maybe the scariest part is laughing at jokes made up by AI. I have to make a confession: I don’t know if the joke I just told was written by AI. But it kind of describes my current awful situation.</i></p> <p><i>Yes, I am a playwright, a playwright who will soon be replaced by AI...</i></p> | <p><b>A prompt:</b> (The following line must appear three times at any point in your script)</p> <p><i>Everything is limitless.</i></p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

PLAYWRIGHTS PROCESS — INTENTIONS  
FOR FIRST DRAFT

What is one thing that you wish to achieve in this first draft?

**YY:**  
“I wish to find a sense of meaning in this writing, a sense that i have to write this, and this is important, instead of writing for the sake of writing, because at best that could only go on for two weeks.”

**Judee:**  
“I want to vomit everything out. Everything that I can think about putting into this topic. For example, when you talk about writer’s block, it makes me think about passion. I wish to locate the character, not a literal location, but theatrically or dramatically, what are the struggles of this character?”

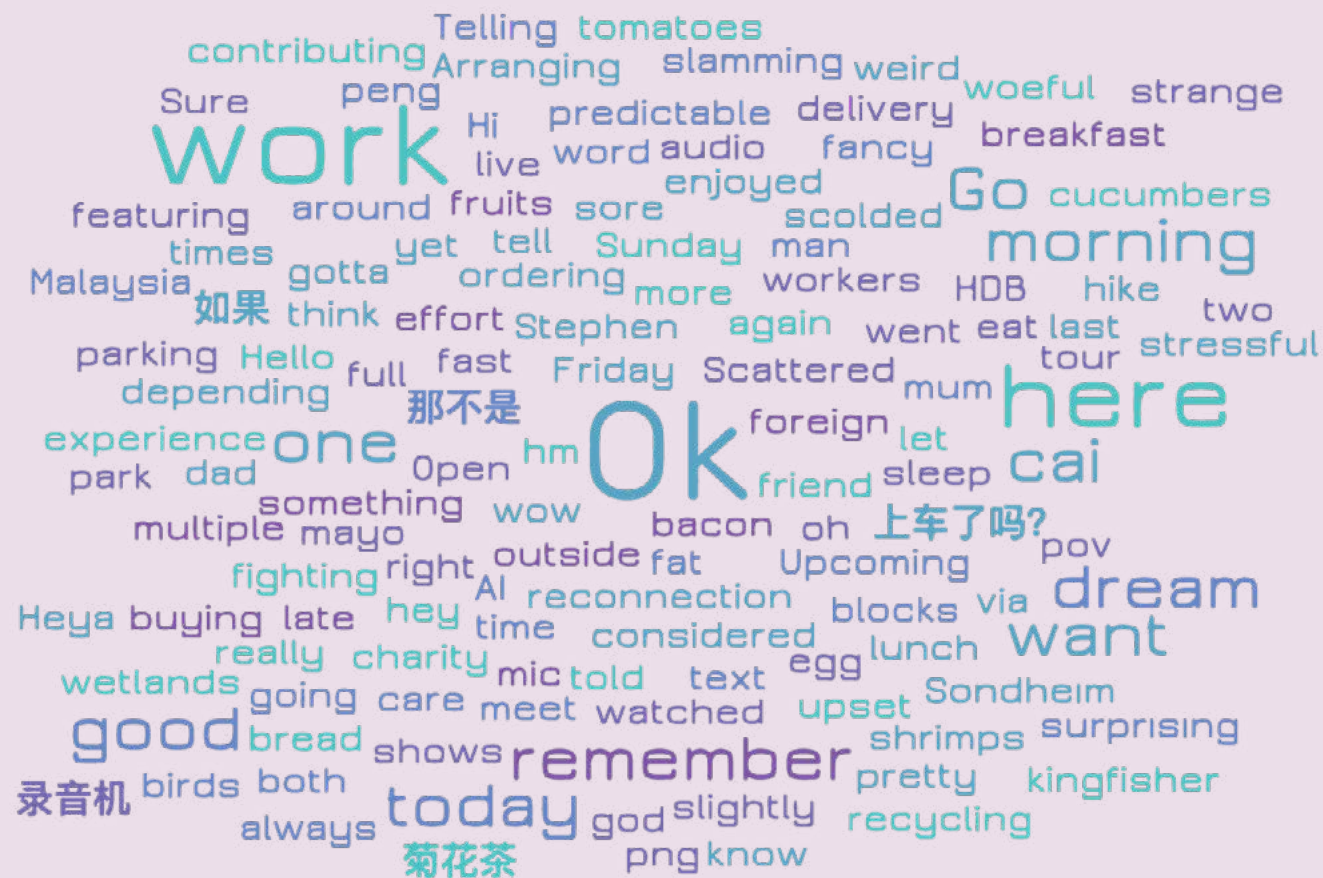
**Suhuai:**  
“I want to play with text. With text, comes meaning, semiotics. I want to pay more attention to text rather than narrative. Machine learning is about training and dissecting how humans think, I want to think about how AIs think and learn. How text and meaning could perhaps be separated.”

**Ora:**  
“I am very new to writing in Mandarin, and it is somewhat different from English. I wish to find my unique way of expression in mandarin, like it is a very different feeling.”

PLAYWRIGHTS LOG : I AM HUMAN AND...



## PLAYWRIGHTS LOG : TEXT BEYOND THE TASK



**YY:** My process has been very scattered so far (in this project) in a sense that I haven't structured anything. I know at some point things happen, I know at some point this character/me talks to her mother who is outside the room and Siri picks up on her voice. So Siri just suddenly talks to her and this is when she gets the idea that Siri can help her with the playwriting! Other times it can be really scattered... sometimes you are on public transport and you get a thought and jot it down but it goes away within 30 secs. Then another idea comes in, or the

idea develops, then you jot it down again. So it's like different fragmented pieces of stuff, the process has been like that too.

I don't have a way of being poetic with words. The reason I could do playwriting (instead of prose or poetry) is because it is listening to the everyday conversations around me and capturing that speech and that syntax which I've enjoyed. And this (given text) already starts poetic. So I'm, like, oh my god how am I supposed to continue this, you know, poetic writers like Kia Yee... I

## PLAYWRIGHTS : APPROACH TO WRITING AND CHALLENGES

**Q. What is your approach to writing? What are some challenges you face in writing?**

**Suhuai:** In this project, I will work without structure, I will welcome random thoughts, be free and jump straight into writing. When I have generated enough text, I will then study the internal/intrinsic structure within the generated text.

Since the given parameter is regarding a writer, I can also bring in my experiences and thoughts with regards to writing, I can start thinking about this issue from myself. I can also use this interview or the daily prompts to help me with the writing. Perhaps I can search for inspiration from this conversation.

I struggle with starting to write theatre scripts, because there are a lot of restrictions. In this case, I am not working with a director, so I don't have to worry about the actors and presentation. In other projects I have to consider the existing equipment of the performance, I have to work with the limitation of space and resources and the expectations of others. I will have to communicate and convince my collaborators about my ideas.

just cannot. As much as I admire her writing, I really cannot – I wish I can write like that. And I think the meta meta thing – while I was keen on the idea, it is pushing me to this endless, meaningless loop. Like going around in circles. I hope Xiaoyi can open up something for me after my first shitty draft. I think first drafts are meant to be shitty so that's alright.

PLAYWRIGHTS : APPROACH TO WRITING AND CHALLENGES

Q. What is your approach to writing?  
What are some challenges you face in writing?

**Ora:** Imagery and plot. I think in images, they will come to me and I will write it down. I would like to think I'm quite free. Sometimes I have a structure, I will always have a structure somewhat..

Sometimes I write write write write, and then you want to tear down the whole thing...

It can take up to 5-6 drafts and then I will come to realise the whole direction is wrong... and it is not what I want to address... And then I will give up and just sleep. I plan beforehand, but it never goes

according to plan. I feel like I need to let go a bit more :D Even if it is completely different from what I thought it was at the start, I need to accept what was written. Maybe some extra stuff came in (during the process).

I'm not always in the mindspace to write. Sometimes I'm not mindspace to write, when I'm in the mindspace for living my life. The ideal mindspace to write is meditative. I need to calm down, and center myself, I need to detach myself from the whole buzz from the world, and I definitely have to be alone.

**Judee:** I tend to type everything that comes out. I stare at the screen, and type whatever that comes out in my system. It can look very bad and illogical, but I won't stop myself from vomiting every single thing out. I believe that you cannot write and edit at the same time. I write 4 times per week. I do my own journaling, or social media post, writing down my own personal works, it could be spiritual. Each round of "automatic

writing" (vomiting out words) could take up to 30mins to 2 hours, depending on the day and the state that I am in. I will know when I am "done" vomiting.  
  
Generally, I have a fear of not being able to come up with creative stuff, like it may be too left field, odd, weird... This is a worry that will always be there. I could doubt my creativity, but at the end of the day, I

still have to write the idea down. I have to walk through the fire. How do I deal with self doubt? I guess just by doing. None of the other challenges are as big as this. Other challenges are more practical and emotional, more about self management, discipline. Sometimes, it is a fact that you yourself is the largest hurdle.

## XIAOYI THE CONSTANT? NOTES ON STRUCTURE

The following notes have been compiled and reassembled with help from Judee Tan. In this project, besides being the collaborator of sorts with AI, Xiaoyi served as the dramaturg for the human playwrights during the process. In a sense, Xiaoyi is a “constant” in the creation process both for the humans and AI producing the scripts, though there are no additional inputs or feedback in the case of the AI writing.

In the following section, we highlight a few recurring comments brought by Xiaoyi. In the next chapter, a conversation between Xiaoyi and Akanksha also gives some insight to the revision process in the script writing process.

**Notes on Structure from Xiaoyi****What is the main idea or main message?**

- Make it clear and single.
- As much as possible, do not explain.
- When editing: achieving and consistency
  - ◊ Discard what does not relate to the main message.
  - ◊ With consistency, it helps to keep the audience engaged and engrossed in the world that the character resides in.

**Building a vocabulary**

- What is the language in this script (world)?
- Talking about one same thing or theme in different parts of the script, for example, helps to introduce or establish the vocabulary you are using.
- If all the singular happenings/scenes in your script are inter-related, what is their relation? How can one make them more related?
- If introducing a prop: it has to be significant enough either through repetition or some other significant way, so that the language is consistent.

**External vs Internal world**

- What are external factors affecting the main character? For example, an impending earthquake. What are the internal factors that the main character is contending with? For example, this idea of writer’s block. How is the character responding to current predicament (internal or external)? What is the action?
- Highlighting the struggle between internal and external self helps to show the character’s journey and development. This in turn can help audience care or relate to character.

**!!!Action!!!**

- The general flow or assumption for dramatic writing (think 101 class): Somebody wants something. But there is an obstacle. So they do something (The solution). Then they get what they want (or not).
- When we talk about it in terms of dramatic scripts, action is something that causes a conflict or resolves a conflict. When there is no action... there is no dramatic script. When there are obstacles but no new actions, the status of the character remains unchanged.

# Research



## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

### Exploring artistic intention/the will to create with AI—Akanksha Raja's Research Framework

A lot of analysis of creative explorations/experimentations of AI in literary and visual arts done in recent years generally conclude that artworks created by AI are usually of technically impressive quality, sometimes even surpassing the human works that they are based on. The writers of these articles also generally surmise that what differentiates AI art and human artmaking likely has to do with inspiration and intention which tends to be the source of truly unique original work e.g. Marcel Duchamp's Fountain was a snarky critique of conventionally accepted notions of what art should be, turning all expectation of what art can/should look like on its head. A typical AI machine may not be able to produce such a work that challenges the accepted art world "programming". Not all art has to be groundbreakingly rebelling against accepted form like Duchamp's but my point is that it begs the question of what artistic intention is, how much weight it has in the production/reception of work, and whether AI can replicate the way intention is conveyed in a text.

The bulk of this research will draw from interviews with the artists but it will also reference articles/news/studies about AI-produced artwork and relevant discussions on the idea of artistic intention.

**Thesis:** The identification (by the artist(s) and of the audience) of artistic intention in the creation/reception of a work distinguishes [or "is essential to?"] human-produced work from AI-produced work

### Central research questions

- What does artistic intention mean to the artists in this project?
- How does artistic intention guide/shape the process of scriptwriting by the artists?
- What role does intention take in mediating AI-produced scripts?
- How do audiences perceive artistic intention? Does the perception of intention differ between a human-produced script vs. AI script?

### Research Methodology: Interviews

- Playwrights: Interviews with playwrights covering the role of intention in playwriting - including their perspectives as an artist and as an audience member of other people's artworks; and a little about how the directorial and performance choices e.g. actor's interpretation come into the interplay to influence how the text is produced and received.
- XY: Interview with XY since he is mediating the AI's writing process, on his thoughts about intentionality and (as he mentioned) "unintentionality"
- Audience: the post-show dialogue will also provide information about how artistic intention is conveyed in human-produced scripts and AI-produced scripts, and whether it has an effect on audience reception.

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

- Actors: After the showcase, interview actors if they are willing and able (questions below)

Research methodology will also include short-form poll questions to the audience during play reading and facilitating discussion thereafter.

**Reference Literature**

*And if it can, what are the implications for the future of creativity?*

Ken Weiner

Publication: Scientific American 2018

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/can-ai-create-true-art/>

"Moreover, until AI can be programmed to absorb inspiration, **crave communication and want to express something in a creative way**, the work it creates on its own simply cannot be considered art without the intention of its human masters. Creatives working with AI find the process to be more about negotiation than experimentation. It's clear that even in the creative field, sophisticated technologies can be used to enhance our capabilities—but crucially they still require human intelligence to define the overarching rules and steer the way."

*Artist's Intent: AI Recognizes Emotions in Visual Art*

Andrew Myers, Stanford University, Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence 2021

<https://hai.stanford.edu/news/artists-intent-ai-recognizes-emotions-visual-art>

Developing technology that conveys intent

and human psychology:

"In the near term, the researchers anticipate ArtEmis could become a tool for artists to evaluate their works during creation to ensure their work is having the desired impact.

"It could provide guidance and inspiration to 'steer' the artist's work as desired," Achlioptas says. A graphic artist working on a new logo might use ArtEmis to guarantee it is having the intended emotional effect, for example.

Down the road, after additional research and refinements, Achlioptas can foresee emotion-based algorithms helping bring emotional awareness to artificial intelligence applications such as chatbots and conversational AI agents.

"I see ArtEmis bringing insights from human psychology to artificial intelligence," Achlioptas says. "I want to make AI more personal and to improve the human experience with it."

(emphasis added by Akanksha)

AI can produce pictures, but can it create art for itself?

JJ Charlesworth, CNN, 2018

<https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/artificial-intelligence-ai-art/index.html>

Writer Charlesworth uses Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain" as the central reference point:

"What Duchamp's originality outlines is the way human creativity works as part of a culture's conversation with itself about what things are and the

way we give them value. An artist presents a work and says, "What do you think of this?" The audience may like it or not like it, but more than this, humans argue over the value of what the artist has made. That's how all art criticism starts out. Liking something isn't enough to make it good. With the development of machine learning, it's as if machines are getting better at asking, "Do you like this?" and yet, machines cannot yet answer why we like what they make -- and have no reason to make it for themselves.

The outline of a hand on a cave seems to say, "We are here." Looking at their own hand-prints on the rock, early humans must have been aware that they had creatively changed their world, and by making a mark on it, were aware of themselves by doing so. If machines achieve the same thing, it probably won't be through making images for humans to like. It will be the moment that an algorithm, or an artificial neural network, shows to itself that it exists. What will the digital equivalent of the hand's outline on the rock look like? Well, like nothing we've ever seen."

How Artificial Intelligence Is Changing The Art Industry

Digital Information World, 2019

<https://www.digitalinformationworld.com/2019/02/infographic-how-artificial-intelligence-is-changing-visual-arts.html>

"AI can create art, implying that inherent in the meaning of artwork is the idea of a human intention. It stages then an appreciation of art is, in fact, only

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

relegated to appreciating aesthetics created by humans. After all, one doesn't look at the grand canyon or a snowflake and consider it art, even though it may be beautiful or evoke emotion. Part of art, it might be argued, is that it has to be created with human intention behind it. Does this mean that AI artwork is forever relegated to being not-art?"

The Computers Are Getting Better at Writing  
Stephen Marche, The New Yorker, 2021

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/the-computers-are-getting-better-at-writing>

An article in which GPT-3 is asked to continue certain given excerpts from established writers & it produces well-written work that seems to approximate the 'style' of the writer.

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

### Ghost Writer In The Machine: Realness in writing and scripts written with AI—Neo Kim Seng's Research Framework

This research will look at the written scripts and then the audience response in the online presentation.

Some of the recurring ideas in the eight scripts are:

1. One of the recurring questions in the scripts was what audiences look out for in scripts/plays. What is a "good" script that audience can relate to: plot or lack of it, well-written, provocative, evocative, real, situations that audiences can relate to etc.
2. The playwrights also questioned the realness of AI and AI's ability to write a good script compared to a script written by a human playwright.
3. There is also a theme of the battle with AI, perhaps the resistance to writing with AI, a fear almost of machines taking over human. Or the machine killing human.

This research will look at the scripts' realness not in terms of facts or real events but how the scripts create worlds that are real, believable, and relatable to the audience, during the online reading and when the scripts are read.

Playwrights create their stories from their own life experiences and interactions with others and places them in different settings in naturalistic or fantasy worlds (eg. a talking whale). But the scenarios and dialogue written are from a human point of view with a certain structure. These stories and

structures may be straightforward dialogue or as stream of consciousness.

Personally, I have watched productions where the stories were difficult to follow but the writing and performances were able to pull me into the playwright's minds and I was able to share and live the playwright's world. I do not remember everything in the production, but the magic of performance are moments that you remember long after you leave the performance space.

How successful is AI programmed to be able to create/recreate human thoughts and expressions? Machines are programmed to work according to their human creators but sometimes when things go wrong, humans often blame it on the ghost in the machine, the machines having a mind of their own. When operating normally, the human is then the human ghost writer in the machine.

Research methodology will include closed-ended poll questions to the audience during play reading and facilitating discussion thereafter.

## INTENTION AND THE METHOD OF WORKING WITH AI

### A conversation between Akanksha and Xiaoyi

**Akanksha Raja (AR):** For my interviews with the playwrights, I had asked them about intention in their writing, and we touched on how their intended or potential audience might influence this intention and what tension it might bring. Each of them had different approaches to it. One of them spoke about it as a practical consideration, like “when I’m making a work I just think about who the audience is, I just think about what is expected of me from who’s hiring me or my potential audience and I just do that”. But there’s also other approaches. For example, some spoke about how they had a really specific emotion or specific situation that they really want to explore through the network. For you, how does intention come in as you work with the AI?

**Liu Xiaoyi (XY):** I think there are at least two types of intention or approaches to intention. Everyone approaches intention differently. Some wants to know clearly the end product, or message, or theme. This clear intention provides you the vision, the direction of this project. But for some is different. For example, for me, I always start with a set of parameters – a set of elements – which then create the framework of the project. But how will the project go? Where the project will go? I don’t know. And I’m okay with that, with not knowing from the beginning. So we can argue that the set of parameters is also a source of intention that you want to experiment with. So if it’s not message driven or content driven, then sometimes it can be format driven, form driven, or sometimes just element driven?

Okay, so if I want to examine sound and

text, AI technology, writing scripts, then those are the parameters. So if that is the intention, then it becomes more like the drive, the motivation of a project. But where it will drive to? I don’t know. So that’s also a kind of intention. And so, in this context writing with AI, of course, you can compare the human... and the very important constant is for both AI and human they cannot write independently. There is always intention. Interpret with the human favorites. Intention is always intention even after integrated with AI.

**AR:** I think one area that I haven’t discovered much about is actually how you’re producing the works. How are you editing or how are you shaping the work that the AI produces?

**XY:** Let me share about the writing process in a more general sense. First, let me talk about the human side first, which is easier. You see, I was the one who set the framework for the human playwrights. But it’s something you also cannot ignore in this process. Because the framework, the creative framework set by me, you can see as part of the engine, and then the playwrights – they have to create their own intention. And then along the way, when we have the first draft, one draft to draft three, and I have meetings with them, it’s a process of dramaturgy. There’s also (my) intention interacting with (their) intention. However, for me, I realized that I was actually more relaxed when I was working with them because there’s no way I can communicate my intention directly... how I integrate my intention with another human,

what I can do is just change the inputs. And so although the AI received exactly the same creative framework as the humans, but how will the AI react? – I actually didn’t know before we began. So there’s nothing much I can do. Why can I observe first, so I’ll let it run first.

And okay: the process of those four scripts are written by me and AI, the methods with which I work with them are different. So, for two of them I use the so-called method of action in my general retainer journal, then the other two I use the so-called method of structure.

The action is like what I described just now, I just observe and I only intervene when I feel that is not dramatic enough, it’s not enough dramatic action. So, you see my intention then becomes very small, I only focus on small actions. ‘Okay, this one is dramatic enough Okay, this one’s not okay. This one has potential to develop this, this one doesn’t...’ So, I make decisions like these and it is these small decisions and my bigger sense of how a script can or should be comes in to give another direction or input.

I try not to edit that much. But I will reject AI’s output. For example, giving some keywords or copying and pasting some sentences to tease it to produce things that I think makes most sense. So, by the end of the script, I look at how to make the overall structure more sound. For example with *Death of a Prayer*, I saw the potential of making the character sound like a programmer talking to a program, or the other way a program is talking to the program’s creator the program and which

## INTENTION AND THE METHOD OF WORKING WITH AI

### A conversation between Akanksha and Xiaoyi

echoes the the the beginning of the script when the human is trying to talk to God.

For the two Chinese scripts, I use the method of structure. In other words, I ask the AI to come up with the structure.

**AR:** You asked the AI to come up with the structure? How?

**XY:** Yeah. By keying the right word, by choosing the right sentence.

**AR:** Can you give an example of a sentence that you use or how you prompt this?

**XY:** Let me see. For example, I will start with setting up that there are three characters in the play including a playwright and the AI will need to produce three stories in the script and in the first story, it will be about a man... and then the AI will continue. So, the AI creates the characters and therefore, also the overall structure, by which I mean the events or the presence of those characters, then it will be a guiding light for me to interrupt the AI. So, you see I created this so-called intention together with the AI but still in the process, I still make decisions in order to choose the right intention or the intention I felt was interesting. So, say the AI produced lots of intentions, and then I chose one of them. This is the more difficult part compared to the previous method, the method of action. In the method of action, I can just focus on those small actions; for the method of structure, because I already have an overall structure, which is already decided, by me. So the different challenge is following this structure which I have a sense of but the AI doesn't know. I need to

make sure that we create the script with its structure. So it becomes a rule for myself.

So, for example, the Chinese script, Our Stories: at the very beginning, we have already decided that there will be three characters and there will be three stories. At some point you need to make some decision to divide, or to pause the story, so that we can go to the next one. So by the end, we create three stories that also somehow they build on top of each other, fully relevant to each other. So I might return to the script because I felt that a layer is a bit too flat. Because now it's just three separate stories. However the script needs to have an overall story about a playwright who is writing these three stories. At the end I tried to insert comments on these three stories to serve as another layer: 1) the playwright and the stories written by the playwright and then 2) the comments. So you see, my intention here is not about the message or the theme they want to deliver but it is the structure itself.

For the English scripts, though I also apply the method of structure, the challenge is that the stories start with the writer, the first character, but how can we introduce the second one along the way? So at some point, I need to key some inputs to introduce the second character and then let it run. Then, okay, now, I introduced character B. How can these two interrupt each other? And continue on until at some point, we need to introduce character number three. Then towards the end, I can feel that it doesn't make lots of same sense but then I sense the potential of how to link

everything together. So for the first 80% of the scriptwriting with AI, it is very confusing. I don't know what will happen or what is going on... but then I as the human need to make it sound or logical, somehow.

**AR:** So then did you write the endings for the script?

**XY:** No, no. I still try my very best not to write. How do you get it to write what you want it to write (within the parameters)? This act of correcting it and letting it run, and letting it surprise you. You may want the AI to write B but it will give you C. And you see C, and it still makes sense, but it's surprising and maybe you still need to intervene some... so it's quite complicated.

**AR:** Okay. So can we talk about the method of action a bit more. How you utilize the method of structure with AI is clear now. Then how about this method of action? What is that like?

**XY:** The method of action is really a case by case, action by action, step by step. In the plot itself. So I need to constantly make decisions. An example: when I enter one input, the AI might be able to produce more than one output. And so it comes to whether I am happy with the output or not. By applying this method, the decision or the the rationale behind the decision making is whether it's a dramatic action or not. So, when I felt that the output has the potential to create more drama, then I will let it continue. If not, it gets reject and I will ask it to create again. That's the process.

**AR:** Why do you want to make it dramatic?

## INTENTION AND THE METHOD OF WORKING WITH AI

### A conversation between Akanksha and Xiaoyi

**XY:** Well, because the practice here is to create a dramatic script. For example, imagine I am a director, doing a devised or improvisational theater piece. And I have a group of actors playing different roles on stage. Now, in the rehearsal room, I provide a scenario, a framework, and then ask the actors to improvise. Then based on how they work and generate on the spot, I only note down the things that have potential to develop. And I think, here if we are going to write a dramatic skit, then dramatic action will be the most basic unit.

**AR:** So during this play reading, when we ask the audience to guess which one is AI or human, are you intending for the AI scripts to sound similar to a human script in terms of how dramatic it can be?

**XY:** My intention is just to set the framework. So what will the result will be? I don't know. The ask of the audience to vote 'Human or AI' is just a mechanism – it's not the objective of this research, but rather something that we can start a conversation with. I don't think the end goal is to see whether audience can guess which scripts are written by AI and which are written by humans. I think for us right now, unlike the Turing tests and Chinese Room thought experiment, there is no endpoint yet. Ys as creators, as artists, I don't think that is the point, right? The point is from here, how can we continue to create with AI? To explore new ways of creating with technology. With this particular experiment or research, we can only find out the audience impression.

**AR:** Personally I'm very interested in what makes someone think that something is from AI or from human.

**XY:** Yes, you're right. And if we don't ask them about this impression, to analyze this impression, then we can only get a surface-level impression. How can we deconstruct the audience impression to another layer of format or content. For example, on the format level, someone might insist that AI cannot write stage direction and only narration. But on the content side, which is related to the plot the characters, events, actions, there can also be a few layers to talk about whether the character is believable, or the way the plot is reasonable, logical things are there and so on. So when we deconstruct the impression into smaller elements, that's where we can go deeper.

**AR:** Okay then, to you, what differentiates what a human produces? Have you ever watched a work or seen or experienced a work that you couldn't decide whether it's by a human or by an AI and like, what differentiates to you a human produced work from an AI produced work?

**XY:** Well, I haven't really thought about this. Along the way, I actually have my own discoveries as well. When I interact with humans and AI... Well, I can give you one example though that's not really the only answer to your question... For example, like, when you look at self reflection. This idea of meta, how humans reflect on the creative process? Yeah, that's something I think is not easy for AI to do.

And the self reflection is not only in the writing process, but also in the process of interacting with other playwrights or dramaturg or creatives in the room. Because when you receive comments, that's

already the style of self reflection in the creative process. That's also something I cannot do with the AI right now. And there are also other points, yeah, I'm going to write in my journal as well to develop more on this thought.

**AR:** Another thing I wanted to ask was about as a director, when you're directing the actors, that's another layer of intention coming in which is not about the writing of the script, but it's about the direction. And looking at how the actors interpreted and then working with actors, there are so many layers of interpretation that can come in.

**XY:** Correct. Correct. But in this process, I actually try to keep it very simple. So I really didn't do much as a director. So the process is, okay, I give the actors all the scripts, and then I asked them to go back, take a break and then prepare a presentation. So because they don't know who are the writers while I do, so I try to bring alive the decisions and visions that the actors brought. So, for example, some of them will focus more on the technical part. And for some, they thought to focus more on the technical part sometimes because they think that is written by AI. But in fact, it's the opposite. All the human playwrights wrote lots of technical stuff in the script, but AI is quite straightforward. You just write a story. So this was really interesting.

POLL QUESTIONS

The play reading was organized for February 11 & 12, 2022. For each evening, 40-50 members of the public were in attendance.

The first evening was dedicated to the scripts written in English while the second evening was dedicated to the scripts written in Chinese. Researchers Akanksha Raja and Neo Kim Seng formulated short-answer poll questions to be answered after each play reading:

1. This script is written by a... 这个剧本的作者是……

- (A) Most likely human 很有可能是人类
- (B) It could be human 可能是人类
- (C) Not sure 不确定
- (D) It could be artificial intelligence 可能是人工智能
- (E) Most likely artificial intelligence 很有可能是人工智能

Time Allocation: 30-40s

2. What did the script make you feel or think? Share 1-5 words describing your response. 这个剧本让你有什么感觉或想法? 请用1-5个词来描述你的回应。

Time Allocation: 1min30s

3. Did you feel that the characters, scenarios and dialogues in this script were believable? 你觉得这个剧本中的角色、场景和对话可信吗?

- (A) very believable 很可信
- (B) basically believable 基本可信
- (C) some parts are not believable 有些地方不可信
- (D) very unbelievable 很不可信
- (E) It does not bother me whether it is believable or not 是否可信对我来说不太重要

Time Allocation: 30-40s

At the end of the four readings, the two researchers then facilitated a discussion based on their respective research areas.

Finally, the playwright of each script was revealed at the end of the evening.

POLL RESULTS—A BRIEF SUMMARY

After each play reading, respondents were given 30-40 seconds to respond to the first question in the poll:

This script is written by a... 这个剧本的作者是……

- (A) Most likely human 很有可能是人类
- (B) It could be human 可能是人类
- (C) Not sure 不确定
- (D) It could be artificial intelligence 可能是人工智能
- (E) Most likely artificial intelligence 很有可能是人工智能

When considering scripts written in both English and Chinese, audience respondents were firm and accurate in identifying the writers as human:

For English scripts *Writer's Block* and *draft.docx*, written by Judee Tan and Sim Yan Ying respectively, more than 60% responded with "Most Likely Human" and "It Could be Human". In addition, 0% of respondents selected "Most Likely AI" which suggests that the audience could somehow feel a human behind the writing or that the writing was not completely generated by AI.

For Chinese scripts 《掠夺》(Pillage) and 《一丝灯光、一世阴影》(Shadow's Light), written by Huang Suhuai and Ora Xiyue respectively, 70% and above of audience respondents felt it to be "Most Likely Human" and "It Could be Human".

For scripts written by AI (and Xiaoyi), there was a greater hesitancy from the audience, as compared to scripts written by the human playwrights.

*Death of a Prayer* and 《一笔交易》(The Trade) was correctly identified as written by AI with a hefty majority (greater than 75% "Most Likely AI" and "It Could be AI").

《我们的故事》(Our Story) seemed to have given pause for many respondents; besides a wider spread of responses across the options, 18% also indicated "Not Sure" which further reflects the uncertainty from the audience.

[Poll Results Graphics]



## POLL RESULTS—A BRIEF SUMMARY (CONT'D)

*Getaway* seemed to also have induced a certain level of uncertainty. However, respondents indicating “Most Likely Human” was also the greatest share of the pie (36%) for this script.

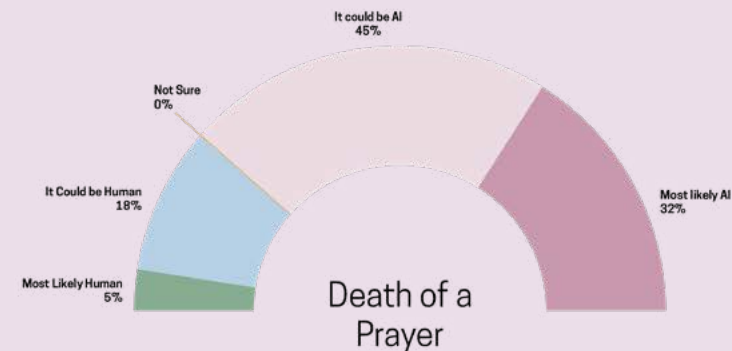
During the discussion, questions came up around factors influencing respondents’ answers. Some of the comments included:

- Use of Singlish or colloquial slang
- Specificity of detail
- Actors’ performance
- How well trained models are across languages

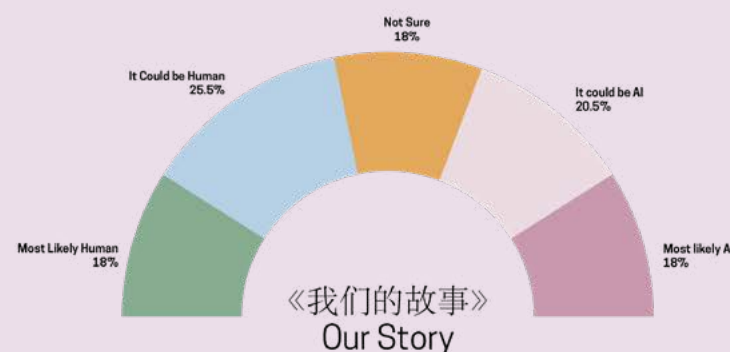
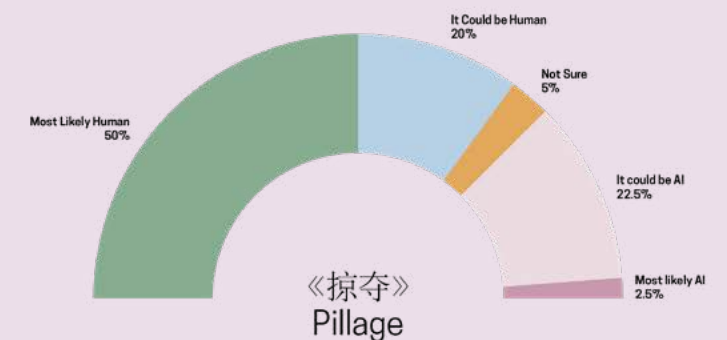
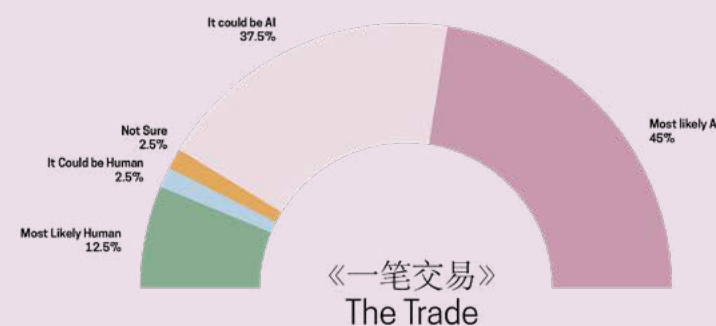
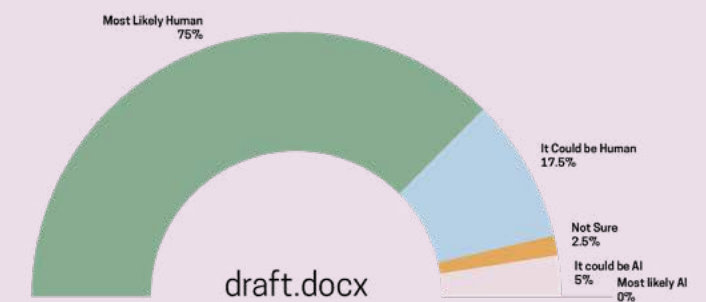
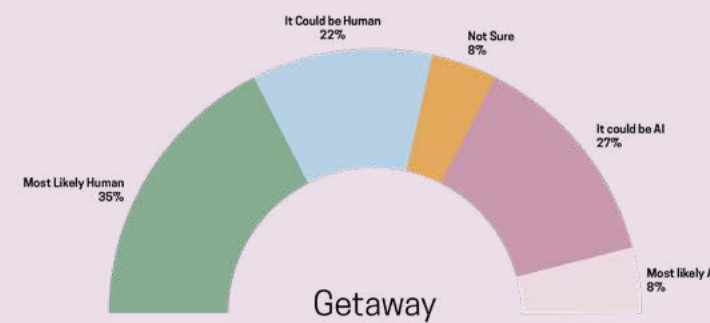
To read a more in-depth reflection on audience responses, please refer to Neo Kim Seng’s research paper “Realness in Writing” on page 30.

## POLL RESULTS—A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION

AI



Human



### Legend

- (A) Most likely human
- (B) It could be human
- (C) Not sure
- (D) It could be artificial intelligence
- (E) Most likely artificial intelligence

## WHAT DOES ARTISTIC INTENTION MEAN IN WRITING WITH AI?

Written By Akanksha Raja

### Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore the perception of artistic intention in the creation and reception of a performed script, and whether it differs between human-produced script and AI-produced script.

I use the word “perception” here because any discussion of intention in a creative process is full of subjectivities: some artists may assert that their work is entirely shaped by non-intentionality, randomness, and chance, while others may argue that choosing randomness is itself an intentional strategy. Some artists define intention by the structural parameters of their process while others define it as a mood or emotional impulse, distinct from formal or structural decisions. Intention can be defined as a drive, a method, or a system, among other terms. This paper does not seek to establish a unifying definition for artistic intention, but rather to explore its various interpretations by the participants in this project. The participants include members of the showcase audience, the four human playwrights, and the chief playwright/director.

The findings for this research can potentially open new avenues for thought and exploration for future projects interested in the interplay of humans and AI in artmaking.

### Background

My motivation in using the lens of artistic intention to research this project stems from both scepticism and intrigue about the

interplay of AI and artmaking. Prior to the early meetings and discussions about the project, I had a naive idea that “human = good; machine = bad”, or more specifically for this project: an AI-generated text or artwork cannot possibly be compared with that produced by a human, as creativity is an imaginative or intellectual drive unique to humans and cannot be replicated by an AI.

The intrigue grew alongside the research process; conversations with the project team and my readings led me to question these assumptions that the human drive for creativity is “better”. The dichotomy is reductive, because artmaking is almost always a process of negotiation and collaboration—between writers, designers, directors, space, technology, technical crew, and others—regardless of whether it is carried out by humans or AI or both. Other tangential thoughts arose, such as: what is the difference between the human faculties of human imagination and intellect compared to the technical faculties of artificial intelligence? Certainly AI is guided by programming and algorithms from a group of human engineers, but humans too are subject to their social, cultural and political conditioning. To delve into these tangential discussions would require an entirely separate research and investigation, but for now it’s enough to say I began to feel that it was less meaningful to “prove” that artistic intention is a uniquely human capability and, instead, found it more interesting to explore what the driving force of creativity means to the various participants in this project.

I started by reading reports and articles documenting creative experiments with AI in literary and visual arts done in recent years. They generally conclude that artworks created by AI are of technically impressive quality, sometimes even surpassing the human works that they are based on. Conversations with the participating artists and audience at the showcase (as I’ll elaborate on later) revealed that most share the view that the drive to reflect, doubt, and critique the environment in which a work is created, are distinct marks of human creativity— but there is more to it.

### Research Questions and Interview Plans

The central research questions explore artistic intention in relation to the artists and audience. These are the questions I started with.

1. What does artistic intention mean to the playwrights in this project?
2. How does artistic intention guide or shape the process of scriptwriting by the artists?
3. What role does intention take in mediating AI-produced scripts?
4. How do audiences perceive artistic intention? Does the perception of intention differ between a human-produced script vs. AI script?

When it came to interviewing the artists, I felt that the line of questioning risks becoming too broad and abstract, so I tried to shape the interviews as personal

## WHAT DOES ARTISTIC INTENTION MEAN IN WRITING WITH AI?

reflections on the writers' practice, asking for specific experiences and feelings about the role of intention. These are the questions I posed to each of the artists.

1. From your past experiences as a writer or artist in any form, what is the role of intention in the art-making process? Where does it enter the process, if at all it does?
2. How important is it to you that the audience understands the intention of the work or specific artistic choices in the work?
3. When you watch/see/listen to art works by other people, do you ponder about the intention and why certain choices were made - or do you feel your own interpretation of the work is enough? Or do you negotiate between the two in some way?

Shaping the questions for the showcase audience was a more delicate process. The initial draft of questions directly sought audience members' perception of artistic intention. There was the possibility that the discussion would turn abstract and philosophical, focusing on the many possible definitions of intention, and that the wide scope of interpretation would overwhelm the audience. Considering the time constraint (one hour shared between two researchers, each exploring quite complex topics) and the possible fatigue after processing four different monologues, I realised the posed questions needed to be simple and straightforward.

## Written By Akanksha Raja

1. What did the script make you feel or think? Please state a few words or phrases (e.g. "amused", "angry", "disturbed" - full length sentences are not necessary).

The format of the first question prompts the audience to write a short response of a few words into the Zoom response dialogue box. The purpose was to get a sense of how the script made them viscerally feel or think. While it doesn't address "intention" directly, I felt that the answers could possibly contain hints or assumptions of intention. For example, I sensed that the idea of "meta-ness" may arise, which points to an artistic intention assumed to be human (reflexivity). Some of the actual audience responses, elaborated in the next section, reflected this.

2. What makes a script sound like it was written by an AI?

This question was to be posed during the live discussion and was included to find out the audience's implicit assumptions of what human writing vs AI writing feels like. The discussion could surface ideas/concerns around intentionality in writing and how it is perceived by the audience. For example, if an audience response mentions the choice to use certain types of language (colloquial, ironic, etc.): that is a perception of intention.

### Findings from interviews and audience responses

#### Playwrights

The four playwrights I interviewed had varied responses and perceptions of

intention, ranging from the personal to the collective.

Judee made a distinction between collective intention and personal intention, suggesting that the intention may differ between an individual working within a project and the project team/leaders. She said that in most of her experiences, she had a "realist" definition of intention, in that it is shaped by practical concerns—the profile of the audience, their expectations, and the goals of the production. "When you understand you're interacting with people, other human beings, then the compass is there." The conversation raised the point that artistic intention doesn't actualise itself in a vacuum, but in a space of dynamic connection and interaction.

For YY, artistic intention is an intense personal and emotional experience: the word "obsession" came up often. She usually experiences it as a strong impetus to explore an all-consuming feeling (for example, grief) or a question—for example, how grief is perceived and processed in different cultures.

Regina's responses were similar to YY, in that the initial intention is rooted in emotion and lived experience. "Human beings create with an intention, but before the intention, there is life: from our experiences, from our feelings, from what we see, what we experience, we have an intention to express something. ... But then for AI ... they're not living, but they're probably living vicariously through the algorithm that we put in."

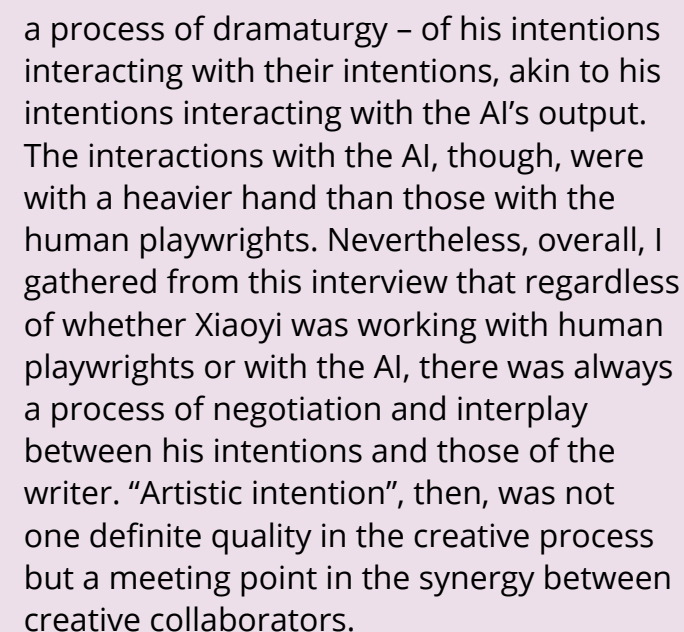


Image: Suhuai (Playwright)'s hand-drawn mindmap.

Suhuai rephrased intention as “starting point”, and defined it as a philosophical network of concerns that articulates the question or the “spine” of her work. The work then takes form as a “system of signs” that she maps out through her work.

## Interview with Xiaoyi

I conducted an interview with the director and chief playwright Liu Xiaoyi, which gave insight into the role of human intervention in processing the creative work produced by AI.

Xiaoyi and the AI produced four scripts. Xiaoyi used two methods of directing the AI's output: for two of the scripts he used the "method of action" and for the other two, the "method of structure". Using the method of structure involved setting certain

structural parameters (such as the number of characters in a script) and storytelling elements (such as specific phrases or keywords) at various stages in the AI's creative process in order to shape the final output. The AI created the characters and a rough plot, but Xiaoyi made decisions to include or omit its choices. The method of action involved inputting specific small actions in the script to influence its dramatic arc.

After the conversation, I considered the amount of human intervention involved in shaping so many structural and stylistic elements of the AI's writing, and wondered how accurate it was to say the scripts were "written by AI" To be fair, Xiaoyi did mention during the interview that working with the human playwrights, too, involved

## Audience

### Short-form Responses to Q1

The prompt given to the respondents in the first question was to provide a few words to describe their immediate thoughts and feelings. I had been uncertain whether the simplicity of the question would yield results that may be useful in exploring the broader research question of intention. Fortunately, most of the responses were generous and elaborate. Some of the respondents provided a few brief impressions, while others went further to substantiate their responses. Some of the justifications pointed to elements of the script or writing (such as language use, character, archetypes, coherence, flow). These substantiations point to perceptions of intention in terms of narrative, structural, or stylistic choices.

## WHAT DOES ARTISTIC INTENTION MEAN IN WRITING WITH AI?

Examples:

- “dynamic script, multiple characters”
- “plot and thoughts flow and connect well”
- “this one is very Archetyped, imported from American literatures”
- “irony”
- “smooth flow”
- “logical structure”
- “Repeated words in adjacent sentences to create impact by the actor. And use of some singlish”
- “the writing style lent itself to being played in many ways.”
- “layered use of metaphors”
- “the temperament/style of each script is quite different”
- “narrative quite disjointed”
- “local language and references”
- “Singlish”
- “context makes a script real”
- “can’t grasp the main arc”
- “The story is simple, the performance is complex.”
- “undramatic structure”
- “repetition”
- possibly 50% AI and 50% human, but framework directed by human.

Others used the terms “human” and “AI” as adjectives in describing their impressions, which suggest the perception of intention or lack of it.

Written By Akanksha Raja

Examples:

- “a human coherence”
- “AI-biased”
- “wondering if an AI can sound so human”
- “lacked human profoundness”
- “felt like there was an understanding of some complex human emotions”
- “very human emotions expressed”

The phrasing of these comments prompted me to wonder if there are emotions or forms of emotional expression that aren’t human, and whether profoundness and emotional depth can be codified and programmed into AI sometime far in our future.

### Post-Showcase Discussion

The question posed during the live discussion asked the audience what makes a script sound “human” or “AI” to them. Many of the responses were elaborations on points mentioned in the responses to the first question. I found four main subjects arising: coherence, logic, human intervention, and reflexivity.

#### (i) Coherence

Some respondents felt that coherence was an indicator of a script written by a human, while others felt that incoherence (as a deliberate stylistic choice) is a more likely indicator of a human-produced script.

“I think coherence ... is most definitely human.”

““incoherence can be a “stylistic” choice by a human writer? To create a more lyrical/abstract text? Cadence, etc”

“Incoherence is human, and perhaps a more generally programmed AI might strive to achieve a more polished work that is more likely expected.”

“there seems to be a strangeness in parts which could be AI”

“feel like there’s a distinction to be made between *coherence of plot* and *coherence of thought process*, and for me coherence of thought process was how I attempted to differentiate rather than the coherence of the plot”

#### (ii) Logic

Similarly, there were differing opinions on whether logic in a script makes it sound more human-produced, or whether deliberate lack of logic is a more convincing indicator.

“An assumption is that more complex human interactions and emotions, or unique logical (not necessarily believable) perspectives can only be expressed by a human being.”

“But it’s also difficult to tell sometimes because the actors (humans) will also try to find meaning, personal logic in the script.”

## WHAT DOES ARTISTIC INTENTION MEAN IN WRITING WITH AI?

Written By Akanksha Raja

### (iii) Human intervention/bias

“The AI is given parameters; these parameters are the ideas of the developer that set them.”

The role of humans in mediating the creation process was one of the pervasive points raised at various points during the research as well as during the audience discussion. These thoughts echoed an article I had read from [Scientific American](#) which argued that “until AI can be programmed to *absorb inspiration, crave communication and want to express something in a creative way*, the work it creates on its own simply cannot be considered art without the intention of its human masters.”

A respondent stated that anything can mimic human writing and that “the desire to write something is perhaps the only thing that the AI cannot mimic. The desire is there and is sprung by the human ... AI will not start by itself.”

Journalist Stephen Marche [experimented](#) with feeding an AI writing technology named GPT-3 with extracts of famous literary works as writing prompts. He used an extract from the epic poem *Kubla Khan* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and was impressed that the “beautiful, memorable” lyrical quality and even form and structure were comparable to a poem a human could produce. He also prompted the AI with an extract from a novel by a living author, who remarked that the output had eerie similarity to his style. What struck me was Marche’s reflection on the nature of artistic inspiration. Based on

Coleridge’s notes, the poem was inspired by hallucinogenic visions from a dream. Marche reflects on how this and other works of art often invoke a spiritual source from a metaphysical dimension, and wonders if the mysterious mechanics of AI are equally capable of such otherworldly invocations.

### (iv) Meta-narratives, reflexivity and self-criticality

The idea of the meta-narrative came up frequently. Many respondents recognised meta-narrative styles in human-written scripts. One respondent, however, noted that the premise inherent in the starting prompt for all the scripts already lent itself to a meta quality, which complicated the activity.

“Perhaps the meta-ness (a show about who is writing which starts with writer’s block) made it difficult to think through what made it human and what made it (written by) AI”

“Actual recursive thinking, I guess, is hard for AI—like reflecting on the structure.”

Other comments suggest that what differentiates AI art and human artmaking has to do with reflexivity, which tends to be the source of truly original work. In another article, art critic JJ Charlesworth brings up Marcel Duchamp’s [Fountain](#) and his use of found art, which was a facetious critique of conventionally accepted notions of what art should be, and subverted expectations of what art can or should look like. A typical

AI, Charlesworth suggests, may not be able to produce a work that challenges the accepted art world “programming”. “Originality lies in questioning the reasons for what has become commonplace,” he writes. “Human creativity works as part of a culture’s conversation with itself about what things are and the way we give them value.”

It could be argued that not all art is, or has to be, “original” in the sense of questioning culture and rebelling against accepted forms like Duchamp’s. But these discussions raised a crucial point about what artistic intention is and how much weight it has in the production and appreciation of work.

### Concluding notes

At the beginning of my research, I had a resolute idea that artistic intention was a categorically human quality, the heartbeat of every artistic project from conception to post-production. At the end of my research, my thoughts are a little more nuanced. I’ve discovered it is malleable and takes on different forms at different stages. Here are some facets I’ve uncovered through exploring the role it has taken on for the different participants in this project.

To the individual artist, artistic intention can mean many things. It can be the articulation of a dream, the exploration of a question or theory, or the need to express and communicate an urgent emotion.

In a collaborative project, artistic intention is in flux, a meeting point in the synergy between the creative collaborators.

## WHAT DOES ARTISTIC INTENTION MEAN IN WRITING WITH AI?

Written By Akanksha Raja

Intention can be defined as a set of structural parameters not necessarily tied to an emotional or intellectual exploration. If AI is programmed to utilise these parameters to produce a piece of creative writing, we can say it has produced creative work with intention. To facilitate this process, though, a human is required to programme and mediate. It is a collaboration, in a sense, but with one party having more power over the outcome than the other.

As for the audience, the results of this project have made clear that, to a large extent, they can distinguish the creative work of humans from the work produced by AI. They are also able to identify nuances within their perceptions that point to the possible intentionality (or lack thereof) behind certain elements of the work—for example, the choice to be coherent or incoherent. The structural elements of art (such as narrative form in writing or composition in visual art) and stylistic vocabulary (such as diction in writing or choice of colours in visual art) can be programmed, but there are nuances in the orchestration of these elements that make “the human touch” more apparent in some works than in others.

The research process has revealed that determining the root impulses of human creativity may be a journey without end; it is an endeavour full of mysteries and ambiguities. Another word for intention is desire, and the function of desire was raised in my readings as well as by members of the showcase audience: can the desire to make art be programmed? This essay, too, is a

piece of writing that is a part of this project, and the choices made on its form and content are shaped by its human author’s conscious or unconscious intentions. The researchers were given minimal parameters, and the rest—the approach, the output, the methods—were up to us. For a while, I thought about whether an AI could take on the task of investigating artistic intention, and how it would approach the ambiguity and subjectivity of the topic. Perhaps the distinction between the creativity of humans and AI then is the act of choosing a direction within such ambiguities. Possibly these concepts of desire and ambiguity are avenues for future artistic experiments exploring creativity and AI.

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“Intention can be defined as a set of structural parameters not necessarily tied to an emotional or intellectual exploration.”



## REALNESS IN WRITING

It begins with the playwright's mind and observations. The playwright then organizes these different thoughts and observations accumulated over time and writes the script. The script is given to actors, directors, creative and production teams to rehearse and produce. The marketing team sells the work and finally the audience goes to the theatre and watches the end product—the play. The critic attends the performance and writes a review of the play or gives it a miss.

Then someone decided to initiate a project to write scripts with AI and test the final presentation online to see whether it was possible to tell which scripts were written by human playwrights and which scripts were written by humans with AI. Two researchers were included as part of the project and they were free to choose any topic they would like to explore. Let's call the second researcher, R2.

The audience and the actors for the online reading of the scripts in February 2022 (one evening in English and one evening in Mandarin) would only find out the identities of the playwrights at the end of each evening. R2 wanted to be like the actors and audience—so R2 read the anonymized scripts to look out for tell-tale signs that would tell which scripts were written by humans with AI and which were 100% by human playwrights. It took a bit longer for R2 to read the Mandarin scripts as R2's grasp of the language was not that good as R2 mainly used English. So R2 turned to AI—in this case Google Translate—to read and understand some of the more difficult and unfamiliar characters in the Chinese scripts.

## Written By Neo Kim Seng

Liu Xiaoyi, artistic director of Emergency Stairs and who initiated the project, was the playwright who wrote with AI: two each in English and Chinese. After R2 read all eight scripts, R2 could figure out which of the four scripts were written by Xiaoyi, not because of incoherent structure or awkward writing piecing different sentences together but because of the writing style apparent in the four scripts. R2 was familiar with the Emergency Stairs style of writing. The four scripts shared a common stream of consciousness style of storytelling and repetition of stanzas/phrases of thoughts/ideas with no stage directions.

R2 felt Xiaoyi's Chinese scripts were also a lot more accepting of ways of working with AI. The protagonists in the other pieces were more distrustful of AI. Xiaoyi had previously worked with The Necessary Stage in a workshop about writing with AI. R2 felt those scripts were written by someone who had prior experience writing with AI.

R2 had some knowledge of the limitations of AI writing models used by Xiaoyi for this project and some of these were also pointed out by members of the audience who watched the online sessions during the post-show Q&A session. During the post-show Q&A, the actors who performed the script also shared why they thought certain scripts were written by a human or with AI.

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Tell-tale signs of scripts written by humans include:

1. Embellishments such as detailed stage directions and use of technical equipment
- 

It would have taken too much time to write these precise details before feeding them to AI to churn out the details as desired for the script by the playwrights. These would be easily done by humans and likely executed faster too.

## 2. Scripts with Singlish

The AI models used would be unable to understand and decipher colloquial Singlish words and syntax and put them together cohesively. However, if AI models in future were to be programmed to do so and fed with Singlish database, then it would not be a problem.

## 3. Scripts with two languages

The AI models used for this project were monolingual. Scripts with two languages could only be written by human playwrights.

## 4. Logic and structure

AI writing models were not programmed to deal with structure and logic in writing. Writing which possessed weird logic and structure must have been churned out by AI. However, it was also acknowledged that the weirdness, illogical style, and incoherence could also be a style employed by human playwrights and could have been used in this project to try and fool the audience. This was a bit of a tricky situation.

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## REALNESS IN WRITING

The AI models used in writing the scripts were developed and programmed by humans, and the database was also collated by humans, AI still had a strong human presence because AI has yet to develop to a stage like the computer Hal in Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey* that had developed a mind of its own, overwrote human programming, and made decisions detrimental to its human developer. Many things that were controlled by machines and AI that have gone wrong, like scams and information leaks, were often traced to human hackers and errors.

However, as pointed out by an audience member, Herik Cheng, during the English play reading's Q&A session, the AI output depended very much on its human programmers and the given parameters—if AI was tasked to mimic recognizable human language and writing and the human developer included such details in the database, it could most probably churn out a new, original set of human writing culled from existing text that was checked for plagiarism. But unlike Hal, a human needs to start the writing process as the AI model is unable to decide on its own.

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R2 then checked out the identities of the playwrights of the suspected four human written scripts. Sure enough, R2 was not wrong. R2 thought: How else could the scripts be analysed to look at Writing with AI?

R2 noticed some common threads and ideas in the scripts; after all the protagonists were all playwrights writing plays. There were

## Written By Neo Kim Seng

questions about the craft of writing and what kind of script would engage audiences. What are the elements of an ideal/model script that the audience could relate to/engage with: clear plot, well-structured, provocative, evocative, real emotions, and situations? Could AI feel, create, or recreate human thoughts and emotions?

R2 also noticed the tension between AI and human in the scripts—especially within the two English human written scripts. The protagonists confronted AI and told them that they were incapable of human emotions and/or thoughts, and could never be real. The Chinese scripts, on the other hand, were set in a time and place where AI was living alongside humans and already replacing or taking over human tasks and feelings, and human unions resulted in AI-human offspring; so there was less tension and more acceptance of the inevitable.

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R2 recalled their experience managing theatre productions in the 90s for the late theatre director William Teo. Teo always reminded actors that they need to be in the present and now, to be true and real. Without being real and believing their emotions and delivery of the script, they could never fool the audience during a performance. But if what the actors saw was real, the audience would believe the actors when they transported the audience to Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge regime or to ancient India to retell the Mahabharatha epic.

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R2 decided to change the research topic to realness in the scripts and presentation instead. After all, it was a scriptwriting project.

R2 also thought about how to write his observations in such a way that would not bore people who may read it as it was not meant to be an academic paper. R2 tried some free essay writing software available online and contemplated writing his whole observation using them. R2 typed a few topics: "Writing with AI", "Can AI feel and write like humans?" and "AI is fake. Discuss". R2 wrote a few words to start the ball rolling and the bot churned out a few sentences culled from the Internet to pick from. R2 edited some of them and they made sense! But it would really be very tedious as they were not purpose built for what R2 was doing. There were also paid versions of the software and R2 wondered if those options meant an AI with a wider database or if a human would come to assist.

R2 realised that the questions devised for the research framework and the response during the post-show Q&A could not be analysed together because they were looking at two very different stages of the scripts' creation process:

## 1. Finished Script Stage

This was the "purer" stage as the stories and ideas exist as a written form to be read only. R2 read, re-read, and scrutinised the scripts many times and was able to pick up some details/illogical structure/etc that an online audience might not be able to pick up during the presentation or performance of the scripts.

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2. Performance Stage

The script would have, by this point, been processed by the actors and directors, and their staging would have added additional layers to the works. R2 would look more at the answers as responding to the performance. There were three Poll Questions for the audience and their answers were mainly for the performance of the short pieces. However some questions pertaining specifically to the scripts were also asked in the Q&A session.

The two questions posed by R2 for the post-show discussion to look at realness in the scripts were:

1. Did you feel the characters, scenarios and dialogues were believable?

This question looked at the plot of the script: Are the design and intent of the characters' thoughts, choices, actions, and their consequences reasonable and believable? Were the scenarios and dialogues able to create worlds that were real, believable, and relatable, even in a fantasy world?

2. Did you feel there were any abrupt switches in the structures and writing that affected the scripts' coherence?

This question looked at the structure of the script: Were the structures abrupt, disconnected, and illogical in terms of rules and laws of life?

For the two posed questions, R2 worked with the assumption that scripts written

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with AI were possibly structurally incoherent and not so believable compared to human-written scripts. But as there were eight scripts, it would be quite boring to read if all eight scripts were discussed individually and every detail dissected.

Good actors could bring a poorly written script to life and elevate an already good script to greater heights. The job of actors is to make sense of scripts where the protagonists could be an offspring of AI and human, a talking whale, or just taking a walk in the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Brought together into the performance space, the performance becomes a shared experience between the performers and the audience, the latter bringing their own life experiences to connect and relate to the performance. Whether the actors' lines evoke an audience member's personal truths and convictions also depends on the actors' interpretation and delivery.

Rehearsals gave the actors opportunities to try out different interpretations of the scripts and to find its meaning and truth, processing the words as scripted into something that comes alive and becomes real in the performance. Whether the actors believed the scripts or not was not important to the actors. Instead, their job was to deliver the work as real and make it interesting and relatable. It would not be difficult for actors to humanize scripts written with AI For this project, it was not important for the actors to know whether the scripts were written with AI or by a human playwright.

*The width of the two charts below must be smaller than the width of the text, i.e. it must not be justified. The font, including the Chinese typefaces, must be serif e.g. Times, to differentiate it from the body text. Font size must not be smaller than 9 points. The size of the box lines must not be too thick.*

The poll questions were an informal way of gathering some response from the online audience and not meant to be an accurate representation of the demographics of the entire theatre community. Poll Question 3 was repeated during the Q&A session to gather more detailed responses from the audience.

Poll Question 1: This script is written by a...

(See Table 1. : Poll Question 1)

Poll Question 2: What did the script make you feel or think? Share 1-5 words describing your response.

This question was posed by the other researcher. The answers were too long to reproduce here. R2 decided to use some of the audience response that could be used for his research paper.

Poll Question 3: Did you feel that the characters, scenarios and dialogues in this script were believable?

(See Table 2. : Poll Question 3)

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|                                        |                     |                    |                    |                     |                  |                    |                          |                    |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
|                                        | Writer's Block      | Death Of A Prayer  | Getaway            | Draft.doc           | 掠夺 Pillage       | 一笔交易 The Trade     | 一丝灯光、一世阴影 Shadow's Light | 我们的故事 Our Story    |
| Playwright                             | Judee Tan           | Liu Xiaoyi with AI | Liu Xiaoyi with AI | Sim Yan Ying "Y.Y." | Huang Suhuai     | Liu Xiaoyi with AI | Ora                      | Liu Xiaoyi with AI |
| Performer                              | Tan Guo Lian Sutton | Rachel Nip         | Karen Tan          | Sonia Kwek          | Zelda Tatiana Ng | Dennis Zhou        | Ng Mun Poh               | Rei Poh            |
| Total Respondents                      | 38                  | 38                 | 37                 | 40                  | 40               | 40                 | 40                       | 39                 |
| A. Most Likely Human                   | 37%                 | 5%                 | 35%                | 75%                 | 50%              | 12.5%              | 40%                      | 18%                |
| B. It Could Be Human                   | 31%                 | 18%                | 22%                | 17.5%               | 20%              | 2.5%               | 30%                      | 25.5%              |
| C. Not Sure                            | 8%                  | 0%                 | 8%                 | 2.5%                | 5%               | 2.5%               | 15%                      | 18%                |
| D. It Could be Artificial Intelligence | 24%                 | 45%                | 27%                | 5%                  | 22.5%            | 37.5%              | 5%                       | 20.5%              |
| E. Most Likely Artificial Intelligence | 0%                  | 32%                | 8%                 | 0%                  | 2.5%             | 45%                | 10%                      | 18%                |

Table 1. : Poll Question 1: This script is written by a...

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|                                                          | Writer's Block      | Death Of A Prayer  | Getaway            | Draft.doc           | 掠夺 Pillage       | 一笔交易 The Trade     | 一丝灯光、一世阴影 Shadow's Light | 我们的故事 Our Story    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Playwright                                               | Judee Tan           | Liu Xiaoyi with AI | Liu Xiaoyi with AI | Sim Yan Ying "Y.Y." | Huang Suhuai     | Liu Xiaoyi with AI | Ora                      | Liu Xiaoyi with AI |
| Performer                                                | Tan Guo Lian Sutton | Rachel Nip         | Karen Tan          | Sonia Kwek          | Zelda Tatiana Ng | Dennis Zhou        | Ng Mun Poh               | Rei Poh            |
| Total Respondents                                        | 37                  | 39                 | 38                 | 39                  | 37               | 40                 | 35                       | 36                 |
| A.Very believable                                        | 14%                 | 5%                 | 42%                | 46%                 | 16%              | 8%                 | 23%                      | 11%                |
| B.Basically believable                                   | 46%                 | 26%                | 32%                | 38%                 | 46%              | 20%                | 26%                      | 33%                |
| C. Some parts are believable                             | 19%                 | 41%                | 13%                | 8%                  | 16%              | 40%                | 20%                      | 19%                |
| D. Very unbelievable                                     | 3%                  | 10%                | 0%                 | 0%                  | 0%               | 15%                | 3%                       | 8%                 |
| E. It does not bother me whether it is believable or not | 19%                 | 18%                | 13%                | 8%                  | 22%              | 18%                | 29%                      | 28%                |

Table 3. : Poll Question 3: Did you feel that the characters, scenarios and dialogues in this script were believable?

WRITTEN BY HUMAN—ENGLISH: *Writer's Block & draft.docx*

37% of the audience voted that *Writer's Block* was most likely written by a human with 24% saying it could be AI. 46% said they found it basically believable. In their response to the second poll question, some of the key words that stood out for R2 were: "Hot uneasy mess", "confused", "odd logic of storyline" and "disjointed".

The presentation had quite a few short and non-verbal scenes. There was a non-verbal scene with the actor in the shower and this scene ended with the description: "he's just sitting and letting the water run off his body, hoping it will cleanse all of his blocks away...". This was depicted in the online presentation but given the medium, perhaps it could have been difficult to figure it out. In another scene, the distressed playwright sobbed loudly "hopefully to God, so God can hear his cries and send him some relief." R2 felt that

because short scenes like these were not easy to stage for an online presentation, some audience members found the presentation disjointed and confusing.

Close to half of the respondents found the piece believable. An audience member, Lydia Koniq, shared that the line, "The great thing about writing is that you can be alone," showed original human wisdom which an AI may not be able to experience. Complex, layered human emotions and body descriptions in the script may at this point be out of AI's reach.

*draft.docx* had very detailed stage directions and short scenes that were more easily staged than *Writer's Block*. It received the most audience votes for being most likely to be written by a human at 75%. Its combined votes for Question 3: "Very Believable" (46%) and "Basically Believable" (38%) scored the highest. The audience could engage with *draft.docx* for its realistic set-up, humour, reflection, and insight into AI.

After reading *draft.docx*, it was clear to R2 that it was written by a human playwright because of the meta-ness, clear structure, storyline, and use of Singlish. It was also because R2 knew some of the things that actually happened that made it to the script. For the record, R2 only attended the first Zoom meeting with the playwrights as it was an introductory meeting. Subsequent meetings were centered around feedback on the various drafts of the scripts. R2 also scrolled away WhatsApp messages to and from playwrights in the WhatsApp chat group and avoided the playwrights communications channel in Slack.

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**WRITTEN BY HUMAN—CHINESE: 掠夺 Pillage & 一丝灯光、一世阴影 Shadow's Light**

The Chinese scripts were set in a sci-fi world and R2 felt that in order to take the first step into the fantasy land created by the playwrights, one had to suspend their basic disbelief of the logical world. There were unions of AI and humans which resulted in machine-AI offsprings which would not happen in our times. How much one can believe these worlds also depended on the state of mind of the audience at that point in time: should one be lethargic, clear-headed, or disturbed, for example, such different states would result in different connections and conceivably allow the audience to process the words being presented differently.

A few of the scripts explored the craft of writing. The scripts were, more often than not, a reflection of the playwrights' own thoughts and observations of other people. So there was a strong human connection from the start. Taking away the telltale signs of AI-written scripts mentioned elsewhere, the Chinese scripts still retain a lot of human emotions and could have been written by machines or humans. In popular culture, certain forms made use of fantasy to create human expressions and connections, for example, in animation, animals like deers, fishes, and bears talk like humans. The audience engagement with a talking fish was no less real because fishes in reality cannot talk. Here, fantasy did not contradict reality but was used to create reality. Another example would be holographic projection of departed singers performing duets with a living singer "live" on stage.

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Half of the audience voted that 掠夺 *Pillage* was written by a human and basically believable (46%). Many found the logic and structure clear and coherent. It was only in the later part of the play that the Mother the protagonist was speaking to was revealed to be an AI simulacrum of her late mother. Towards the end, the anxiety of the competition with AI led to an outburst that AI was not real. R2 felt that AI was humanized in this script by the juxtaposition of the protagonist's childhood and the current conversation with the AI mother, mixing the past and the present.

In 一丝灯光、一世阴影 *Shadow's Light*, the protagonist's ruminations about life later coalesced with those of the talking whale. The very complex (human=whale) emotions lyrically weaving in and out could be the reason why 40% voted that it was most likely written by a human. The stream of consciousness style of writing and later dreamy performance made R2 suspend his disbelief in the fantasy world of a talking whale and its AI companion in the sea. It could be the reason why 29% of the audience were not bothered if the piece was believable or not as they could engage with the work.

**WRITTEN WITH AI—ENGLISH: Death Of A Prayer and Getaway**

R2 found that both of Xiaoyi's English scripts co-written with AI focused less on the writer's block compared to *Writer's Block* and *draft.docx*. The writer's block in *Death of a Prayer* and *Getaway* seemed like just like a subplot in a larger story. Both of Xiaoyi's scripts were written in a stream of

consciousness style—there were no stage directions and the scenes were divided by margins across the pages.

*Death of a Prayer* had a consistent repetitive structure in the writing with its repeating lines and phrases. The repetition confused some of the performance audience, with some commenting that it was monotonous and disjointed. At the same time, many also voted that it was most likely written with AI because it was too well-structured, perfect, and lacked human profoundness.

The audience opinion about *Getaway* swung the opposite way—the majority voted that it was written by a human and most of them found the piece as performed quite engaging. A few commented that it was an archetypal piece in which plot and thoughts flowed well and there was human profoundness.

R2 found some of the writing slightly weird and illogical, even if the protagonist Daisy was hallucinating the whole time and the piece was written as noir. Mark somehow found a very drunk Daisy at the bar. The bartender told Daisy that Mark would like to talk to her... then said Mark would like her to hear the message on the machine. She finally spoke to Mark and sensed something was very wrong. Over the phone, Daisy "...could feel the tears running down his face. ...could smell the alcohol on his breath."

**WRITTEN WITH AI—CHINESE: 一笔交易 The Trade and 我们的故事 Our Story**

For R2, 一笔交易 *The Trade* read in parts like a voiceover from a martial arts sci-fi movie, telling how the protagonist turns

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into a machine in the end. The word “trope” appeared twice in the audience’s response to Poll Question 2. The overwhelming majority of the audience was not wrong when they voted that it was written with AI.

Was it because the structure and language used to describe the transformation from human to machine was too complete, neat, and perfect, as if they were culled from existing text? Was it because the narrative was too complete?

Based on the highest audience’s votes for 我们的故事 *Our Story*, 25.5% felt that it could be written by human and 33% found it basically believable. Many felt that it was a bit formulaic, with its story following a certain style.

Interestingly, R2 felt that three of the scripts were very filmic and fell into recognisable styles as mentioned by some audience members: Noir – *Getaway*; Sci-fi/Radio Drama – *The Trade* and TV Drama – *Our Story*. It was as if there was a drop-down menu for the AI writing model and you start writing with a predetermined form: mystery, love triangle, etc.

Without a detailed understanding of the AI writing models’ database, AI algorithms for churning out the script, and the amount of editing done by Xiaoyi on the scripts churned out by AI, it would be difficult at this point to speculate who exerted a stronger influence over the final scripts. But for this project and based on the final scripts written in the aforementioned styles, AI seems likely to be more suitable to churn out stream of consciousness texts, scenarios, and texts alluding to hallucinations and

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thoughts that are not so logical which thus adds a sense of the surreal and the absurd. These scenarios may not be logical and believable but they fit the required mood and style of the scripts.

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AI is here to stay and will get more advanced over time. Owing to the still heavy human presence now, such as development, input of database, and initiating the writing, it is perhaps not useful to compare AI with human playwrights to find out, say, who would be better at creating more imaginative fantasy worlds and text. R2 felt that until the moment arrives in which a writing model, wholly developed and controlled by AI, could think on its own like the AI Mother in *Pillage* or Hal from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, there would actually still be humans involved in the writing and creation. R2’s initial assumption—that the AI writing in this project could not recreate human emotions and reality because the AI writing models were unable to work with coherence and structure like humans—did not hold because of this. Realness in scripts written with AI would not be difficult to achieve because the scripts were still edited by the human playwrights. The incoherence in the script plots written with AI could also be used by the human playwright if the play’s narrative requires incoherence for a certain style of writing, e.g. absurdist and streams of consciousness, where abruptness, disconnectedness, and lack of logic were central to the piece. Unexpected incoherent plots churned out when writing with AI could also open up possibilities that the human mind may not have not considered before.

Whether it is important for the audience to believe what they are watching might also not be important for some audiences and some styles of work. The Chinese scripts in this project were set in the future where humans are living alongside AI. This fantasy land is obviously not real and the actors performing the scripts may not believe in this world but the task of the actors is to find the logic in the unreal setting and do their best to bring this fantasy world to life. The actor’s aim is to turn the fantasy, the unbelievable, into a real world with their voice and body when the stories are being shared with the audience. Compared to the Chinese presentations, the number of votes indicating “It does not bother me whether it is believable or not” to Poll Question 3 of the English presentation was lower. It was a bit difficult in this project to know whether the audience response was about the script or the performance they have just watched.

Instead of competing and comparing with AI and feeling anxious about technology, it would make more sense to explore how to work together with AI to discover new ways of creating work. R2 remembered being perplexed many years ago by the thought of a choreographer in France rehearsing dancers in Singapore remotely via camera using the internet. How was it possible to work remotely and yet bring out the best of the Singaporean dancers? But the piece worked because the choreographer had a clear concept and casting. Now, creating international collaborations with overseas-based actors and directors has become an option because of the pandemic and also as a way to reduce carbon footprint.

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But not everyone can have access to technology to create work due to many reasons such as politics and cost. Without access to a computer and internet connection, audiences would obviously not be able to watch an online performance. Works created using technology, for example VR works, could only be distributed in places that have the infrastructure to support their requirements for presentation. So is technology more relevant for the privileged creators, producers, presenters, and audience? Can technology in this sense become elitist? Of course not all creations need to use high-cost, top of the line technology to work.

In recent times, creators all over the world have been asked to use technology in their art. For those who have been incorporating technology in their work for a long time, it was long awaited validation and recognition of their many years of work. Others unfamiliar with technology have jumped on the bandwagon and their creations have mixed results ranging from interesting to unwatchable bad works. Many of the early works did not explore the full potential of online performances and were raw in their concept and executions. But with time and a better understanding of the form, virtual performance experiences became better with close-ups, multiple cameras and angles, mix of live and recorded footage, etc.

The consumption of art has also changed with technology. With live performances also available as video-on-demand, either live or after the performance, technology has enabled performances to be seen

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by more audiences without any border restrictions, courtesy of the internet.

The phenomenal rise of NFTs (non-fungible tokens) has shook the digital art landscape in recent years. Anything that could be turned into a digital file can be sold and traded as NFTs. This has also given rise to a growing problem of scams and stolen digital works being listed for sale, not authorised by the artists. NFTs are essentially speculative assets as they are traded on the digital market. NFTs work as proof of ownership and are status symbols with NFTs sold from US\$100 to US\$6.6 million. Is this the future of consumption, of art collection? Or could it go the way of the dot-com bubble burst in early 2000? That NFT is just a fad?

This year, the Swedish pop group, ABBA will begin performing in the purpose built ABBA Arena in London. But they will not be there singing live. In their place will be their avatars projected on stage, backed by a 10 piece live band. Late singers have been resurrected to perform live on stage. A hyper-realistic hologram of the late Teresa Teng performed duets with an actual singer on stage in a TV New Year's show in Beijing last year. These virtual singers entering our physical world and interacting with live humans are no longer just visitors from the future. It can be seen like a reverse of the metaverse where humans are interacting with the virtual world. Some of Berlin-based, Singaporean artist Choy Ka Fai's works mix the virtual and real worlds. He has used motion sensors strapped on live performers and sent these signals in real-time to their virtual avatars and the movement comes

together in the virtual world as one being/object. The next step would be to produce work for the metaverse for a seamless journey from the physical to the virtual world and back again for both the audience and the performers.

# xiaoyi's

# Journal



## 1. THE POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD OF AI WRITING

The underlying principles that inform AI writing systems are complicated. The core of the AI writing models I have been accessing are all based on Natural Language Processing (NLP). The system is pre-trained using a large volume of text, allowing it to “understand” the language that I am using. The AI model can then generate an output of text based on my input. The purpose of such exchanges between humans and AI can include translation, dialogue, summary, continuation (in writing), auto-generation of texts and articles, and so on.

My current research is focused on employing the function of continuous writing, otherwise known as the Natural Language Generation (NLG) model. The machine is trained through exposure to an array of literary writing samples, learning different literary styles, and establishing writing models. The machine then learns about the requirements of its task based on the fragments of text input by the user, predicting and generating text that is deemed compatible with the requirements, and ultimately outputs the text.

How can we employ the function of continuous writing in AI models to help in playwriting?

To answer this question, we have to examine the benefits of AI writing that cannot be matched by a human's writing.

### 1) Database:

AI models are pre-trained by exposing them to an array of literary works, giving the AI model access to a database of different writing styles and writing models. The knowledge accumulated by a normal human being cannot be compared to the vast amount of information stored within this database.

### 2) The ability to associate and generate continuous writing:

To be more precise, this refers to the pattern

recognition and prediction capabilities of the AI model based on the database available to it. This may be similar to the thought patterns of the human brain. There is a famous theory regarding memory storage, known as the “Grandmother Cells”, a hypothetical group of cells proposed by neuroscientist Jerome Lettvin which are activated and create associations when specific concepts, such as “grandmother's profile”, are shown. Associative psychology posits that complicated psychological phenomena are compounded through complicated connections, and this way of thought is known as an association. The only way of calculating associations is via proximity. Since AI possesses a memory space that is greater than any human being, the probability of association is much greater than that of a human.

### 3) Intentionlessness:

Creative intention is an important element in meaning-making and interpretation of literary works. But what is “intention”? It could be said that almost all creators or creative processes have motivation and a sense of destination. Traditional literary theory places intention at the center of meaning making and literary interpretation. The process of interpretation begins by understanding the motivation to create, placing creative intention before the work itself. The final work is seen as an actualisation of the author's vision and purpose in creating the piece. The reader's understanding of the work is centered around the interpretation and articulation of the author's creative intent. The above describes the traditional, author-centric theory of meaning making. Its limitations are obvious: Placing creative intent at the center makes the theme the focus of the work, which limits the possibilities of creation as well. Hence the state of being “intentionless” is desirable to many artists. The generation of works and meaning making in contemporary art is geared towards the decentralizing. When a work is born, it is free from the author, forming an independent and complete system

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of semiotics. Hence, the “intent of the work” and “intent of the reader” are on par, or even exceed the importance of the “intent of the writer”.

Does artificial intelligence generate creative intent? If AI generates content using a database, gaining the ability to associate and think through the calculation of data, then the works of AI tend to have less intention, than that of humans.

However, the application of AI is mainly in fields such as digitalisation and intelligent manufacturing. AI is known to be better at recognition, digitizing and deep learning. The standard of creative writing in AI is mediocre, much less its attempts at writing scripts.

This is because AI will still require more time and development to be able to grasp at least two of the following concepts:

### 1) Theatricality

Conventional playwriting that is plot-centric requires a profound understanding of key terms such as characters, dramatic action, events and conflicts. None of the identifiable and accessible AI models are sufficiently trained in such areas.

### 2) Sense of structure

In conventional plot-centric playwriting, the ability to grasp the overall structure is crucial, because development, trends and changes in the plot of a play can be complicated. AI is unable to understand the context and cause-effect relationships required to complete the plot, resulting in a continuous, unending generation of text that eventually forms a closed-loop.

Based on the two points mentioned above, AI is unable to complete a script that is of acceptable standards, relying on a human playwright's collaboration to do so. In other words, a human playwright can make use of AI to “help” it complete writing a script. The following research will focus on two aspects: How can a human “help” the AI and what the creative product would be like.

## 1. 关于人工智能写作的发展可能和局限性

AI写作的原理非常复杂。目前我能够访问到的人工智能模型，核心都是基于自然语言处理（Natural Language Processing）。系统经过基于语料库的预先训练，然后“读懂”我的语言，通过我的输入（input）之后，产生输出（output）。这个输出的运用可以包括翻译、对话、缩写、续写、文章生成等等。

目前我研究的主要是如何利用AI模型的续写功能，也就是生成式NLG的模式。机器通过大量的文学作品样本进行训练，学习各类写作风格、建立写作模型，再根据输入的文字片段获知任务需求，预测并生成与需求相匹配的文稿，进行输出。

那么，如何运用AI的续写功能来进行剧本写作呢？

要解答这个问题，首先要知道，AI写作有人工写作所不能比拟的好处。

资料储备：模型都是通过大量的文学作品进行训练的，因此AI的资料库当中有大量的写作风格和写作模型储备。这个储备量是任何一个普通人穷尽一生学习都无法获得的记忆量。

联想能力：更准确地说，是基于资料储备所进行的预测。这和人类大脑的思维方式也可能是相同的。关于记忆的存储有一个很著名的祖母细胞理论。祖母细胞是神经生物学家杰罗姆·莱特文提出的的一种假设，指在人脑中存在一个或一组神经细胞，当某些特定的概念如你的祖母头像出现时，这个或这组细胞就会激活从而产生联系。联想心理学认为一切复杂的心理现象都是通过联系复合起来的，这个思维就是联想。联想的算法只有一条就是接近率。既然人工智能拥有人类无法比拟的记忆量，那么其联想的可能性就会远远大于人类。

无意图性：创作意图是文学意义创造和文学作品解读当中的重要问题。但对到底何谓意图？可以肯定的是，几乎所有创作者的创作活动都

是有目的、有动机的行为。传统文学理论非常看重意图在文学意义生成和解读中的地位。它从创作心理入手，把意图看成作者先在于作品的有关创作设想或目的，作品便是这一设想或目的的实现。读者对作品的理解和解释就在于发现并分析这个唯一的意图。这是传统的以作者为中心的意义理论。但是它的局限性也非常明显：意图性同样可能局限了创作的可能性，可能使得创作变得主题先行。达到“无意图性”是很多艺术家试图达到的最佳状态。而当代艺术的创作和意义生成，越来越呼应去中心化的发展。作品一旦创作出来便脱离了作者，成为一个自成一统的完整的符号结构。“文本意图”和“读者意图”，成为和“作者意图”同样重要甚至更重要的部分。

人工智能有没有创作意图？如果只是基于数据的储备、通过数据的计算而产生的联想能力和思维能力，从而产生随机的内容。那么人工智能的创作，也许比人类创作者更加趋向无意图性的创作。

但是，目前AI应用大多集中在数字化、智能制造等领域。AI更擅长的是识别、认知、深度学习等。AI写作到目前为止还是表现平平，更不要说写作模式更为复杂的剧本。

这是因为，AI对于至少以下两点的掌握仍旧有一段很长的路要走：

（1）戏剧性。传统情节剧的写作，需要对于人物、戏剧动作、事件、冲突等等戏剧语汇有深入的了解。目前能够接触到的AI模型中，没有对此能够胜任的。

（2）结构性。传统情节剧的写作，需要对于整体结构有很强的把控，情节的发展、走向和变化非常复杂。AI无法很好地联系上下文，完整使情节形成闭环。

基于以上两点，AI无法单独完成一个“合格的”剧本写作。它仍旧依赖人类编剧的配合。或者换句话说，人类编剧可以利用AI协助它完成创作。至于如何协助，以及创作出来的作品如何，这两点将是这个项目的研究方向。

## 2. CHOOSING THE AI MODELS

First of all, this project does not start out to be a scientific or technological research led by scientists. Hence, we need to acknowledge the limitations of having a group of artists steering an experiment related to science and tech.

### 1) Resources

Our allocated budget for resources is limited, hence we were unable to program a new AI system tailored to the needs of the project. The number of available AI models that can be purchased with our budget is limited as well. We were also unable to hire a technical expert who can be deeply involved in the project on a long term basis.

### 2) Skills/Knowledge

Even though I come from the background of Computer programming, the group consists of mainly art practitioners (with me included), who have limited skill sets or knowledge pertaining to the field of AI. But this could be a silver lining, in a sense that we will not be limited by any presumptions towards technology or AI.

### 3) Facilities

I do not have a dedicated server nor a computer with a powerful processor, hence I can only make use of online AI models in my experiment. If I were to gain access to more resources in the future, it would be possible to purchase an independent server or a better computer which allows me to download and run some AI models and softwares.

The existing resources and conditions do not allow us to develop an AI writing model specially for this project, thus we can only look for existing AI writing models which are suitable and accessible. The research of a suitable AI model is conducted through search engines, articles, recommendations by professionals etc. These are the shortlisted AI models based on preliminary research:

English writing models:

- Inferkit
- Jarvis.AI
- Shortly AI
- Rytr.me
- Story Fit
- Scriptbook
- <https://transformer.huggingface.co>
- sudowrite
- [gpt.contenttyze.com/](https://gpt.contenttyze.com/)

Chinese Writing models

- 彩云小梦 (Cai Yun Xiao Meng)
- PT2 中文预训练模型 (GPT2 Pretrained Chinese Model)
- 百灵 (Bai Ling)
- 九歌 (Jiu Ge)
- 笔神 (Bi Shen)
- 壹写作 (Yi Xie Zuo)

With regards to the results of the preliminary research, I tested the AI models separately. My factors of consideration in deciding a suitable model are listed below.

1) Language ability: Can the AI model continue producing grammatically sound text with regard to the preceding text?

## 2. 关于模型的选择

首先这个项目的出发点，不是一个科技人员进行的科技研究项目。因此我们需要认清楚艺术创作者在进行这个和科技相关的实验中的局限性。

(1) 资源。这个项目的预算不高，因此我们不可能凭空去建立一个新的人工智能系统；我们能够花钱去使用的人工智能模型也有限；也不足够让我们邀请科技专家非常深入和长期地共同进行研究和创作。

(2) 技术/知识。虽然我本人有一定的理科和电脑编程背景，但是还是必须承认包括我在内的整个团队，主要都是以艺术工作者组成，势必对于人工智能缺乏深入的技术和知识。但是这个限制也可能带来其它的好处，例如我们不会受到对于科技和人工智能相关前设的限制。

(3) 设备。我没有独立的服务器，也没有配置很高的电脑。因此目前智能依赖线上的人工智能模型进行实验。未来如果有更多资源，可以购买独立服务器或者更强大的电脑，将一些人工模式的试用版下载下载到电脑上运行。

基于以上的资源和条件限制，我们在现阶段无法创建属于自己的人工智能编剧系统。因此我们的目的是在现有的人工智能模型当中，寻找适合的、可用的模型。这个调查主要是基于通过搜索引擎、报章报道、专家推荐等等的方式。我们经过初步的调查，圈定的有以下几个选择：

英文

- inferkit
- Jarvis.AI
- Shortly AI
- Rytr.me
- Story Fit
- Scriptbook
- <https://transformer.huggingface.co>
- sudowrite
- [gpt.contenttyze.com/](https://gpt.contenttyze.com/)

中文

- 彩云小梦
- GPT2 中文预训练模型 (GPT2 Pretrained Chinese Model)
- 百灵

## 2. CHOOSING THE AI MODELS

### 2) Creative writing

Can the AI model continue writing creatively and soundly based on the context provided in the preceding text?

### 3) Format of script

Can the AI predict and identify that this writing is in the form of a script based on the input?

### 4) Input capacity

Can the AI model accept large amounts of input from the preceding text?

### 5) Accessibility

Can we publicly access the AI model, or if there is a subscription fee, and if so is the fee within an acceptable range of our budget.

The English AI models, Jarvis. AI, Shortly AI and Rytr.me have different focus features, but are apparently not suitable for writing stories or scripts. They are not satisfactory with regards to factors (2) and (3).

Inferkit has performed exceptionally well across all aspects, especially with regards to language ability and creative writing. Moreover, it could identify that I was writing a script based on the input. Even though I need to engage it with a greater capacity, and need to pay a subscription fee of \$20USD per month to generate 600K words, this will be sufficient for the current experimentation. Hence, Inferkit was chosen to be the main AI model for writing in English.

Among the Chinese AI models, the performance of 彩云小梦 (Cai Yun Xiao Meng) and GPT-2 Pre Trained Chinese models are closer to my expectations.

彩云小梦 (Cai Yun Xiao Meng) is satisfactory with regards to 4 of the 5 factors listed above. However, regarding factor (3), it is unable to comprehend the format of a script, primarily because the model is mainly trained to write novels. However, this is not so much of a problem for writing the form of a monodrama. With regards to generating dialogue, as long as I employ the format of "character+colon" the model can identify that it is dialogue and continue writing sound dialogue.

GPT2 Chinese Pretrained Model is another model which generally satisfies my requirements. However, with regards to factor (4), there is a limit to the number of words that I can input. The GPT-2 CPM which I can access only allows me to input 1024 words. Hence, if I choose to work with this model, I have to write my script in segments.

Based on the testing results, I intend to use 彩云小梦 (Cai Yun Xiao Meng) as the main AI model, and GPT-2 CPM as the second choice to support my writing.

## 2. 关于模型的选择

- 九歌
- 笔神
- 壹写作

针对以上的初步调查结果，我又再分别进行测试，并基于以下几个考虑做出选择：

1. 语言能力：是否能够根据输入的前文进行符合语法的续写。
2. 创意写作：是否能够根据输入的前文进行符合情境的创意写作。
3. 剧本形式：是否能够根据输入的前文判断剧本写作的形式。
4. 输入容量：是否能够接受大量前文的输入。
5. 可访问性：模型是否能够公开使用，价格是否可以接受等等。

英文模型当中，Jarvis.AI, Shortly AI, Rytr.me都有不同的侧重点，但是显然对于故事写作或者剧本写作都不是很适合。它们在第二点和第三点的测试上都不能让我十分满意。

Inferkit在各方面的表现上都是非常出色的，尤其是在其语言能力、创意写作上，而且它对于剧本的形式也基本都能根据我的输入精准地预测出来。虽然要更大范围地使用它，需要付费，但是每个月\$20美金，就能用来生成60万字，在现阶段的实验当中是足够的了。因此我打算使用inferkit作为此次的英文AI写作的主要模型。

中文的模型当中，彩云小梦和GPT2 中文预训练模型是表现最为接近我的需求的。

彩云小梦的这五项指标的测试中，基本符合我的需求。其中第三条，对于剧本形式的理解并不是十分出色，原因是因为彩云小梦主要是针对小说写作开发的。但是只要对于单人剧的写作还是没有什么问题，至于有对话形式的写作，只要以“人物+冒号”的形式输入前文，它也还能辨别，并且也能够续写合理的对话。

GPT2 中文预训练模型是另一个基本符合需求的模型。但是在第四条，输入容量有一定的限制。目前我可以访问的模型，只允许1024个字的输入。因此如果选择与GPT2 中文预训练模型工作，必须将剧本进行分段处理。

基于以上的测试，我打算使用彩云小梦作为此次的中文AI写作的主要模型，GPT2 中文预训练模型为第二选择进行辅助。

### 3. METHODS OF WRITING

Playwriting is a creative process, and to a certain extent, creative writing is an “anti-systemic” process. Hence, the task of articulating and organising “creative writing methods” could be just a facade. Even though I am a mentor for playwriting classes, I know that the writing process is a very personal one. These methods are largely for reference, not step-by-step manuals to be rigidly followed.

Moreover, this research is not a scientific experiment, but a creative one. It is an experiment on creativity, hence the factor of human participation weighs heavily in the process. The prominence of the author's individuality, adaptability, and other uncertain factors that may affect the writing still weighs heavily in the process. A thousand playwrights breed a thousand approaches to playwriting.

That being said, the aim of this research is to attempt to articulate and organise my process of experimentation in writing with AI. I wish that this set of methodology can be a point of reference for others to continue in research and learning. Hence, I will try my best to articulate my approaches to working with AI and organise them systematically.

#### Method of Intuition

In my early stages of experimentation. I largely employ the “method of intuition”. As the name suggests, this refers to writing based on intuition. What does this mean? I will input a passage of text to the AI model, and the text could be something written by myself or existing script, such as Haresh Sharma's “Future Perfect”, Kuo Pao Kun's

“The Coffin is too Big for the Hole” and Stan Lai's “Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land” etc. The AI will respond to the input by generating an output. Usually, the length of the output isn't very long, it would be about 100-200 words, or the process would require my intervention. As a human playwright, I will select, edit and delete the texts based on the writer's intuition... After my participation, new text will be written and this will be the input for the next round of interacting with the AI model, and text will be generated... And so on.

The process can be summarised in the following steps:

- 1) The human playwright inputs pre-written text
- 2) AI generates text based on the content of (1)
- 3) The human playwright edits the text based on (2)
- 4) The human playwright generates new content based on (3)
- 5) Repeat (1)

Step (3) is the most crucial factor amongst the others. Even though this is supposedly the “method of intuition”, intuition is founded on the playwright's knowledge, experience, inclinations, and insights to playwriting. It is a process that constantly requires the playwright to exercise judgement. In other words, the style of writing will differ based on the playwright participating in the same process

Therefore, it could be understood that the human playwright plays the role of the co-playwright, employing his playwriting skills

### 3. 写作方法

剧本写作是一个创意的过程，从某种程度上说，创意写作又是一个“反系统”的过程。因此，创意的方法要如何阐述、整理，可能是一个伪命题。虽然我自己本人也教“剧本写作”，但是我深知真正的写作过程是极度个性化的。方法只是作为一个参考，而不是一个按部就班就可以完成的程序。

而且，这整个实验并不是进行一个科学实验，而是进行一个创意实验。因为是创意的实验，人的参与仍旧非常重要。随机性和个性在这个过程也非常明显。一千个编剧就有一千种创作的方法。

虽说如此，我进行这个研究的目的，还是试图将我和AI写作的实验的过程整理出来，成为可以供他人参考、研究或者学习的经验和方法。因此，接下来我会尽量阐述我和AI写作的方法，并且尽量去整理有据可循的方法。

这一次，我们将进行两个语言（英文和中文）总共四个剧本的实验。

#### 直觉法

在我早期的实验里，基本上是运用的是“直觉法”，顾名思义，也就是基于直觉的创作。什么意思呢？就是我在人工智能模型上面输入一段文字，这段文字可能是我自己写的，也可能是来自已经存在的剧本，比如 Haresh Sharma的Future Perfect，郭宝崑的《棺材太大洞太小》，赖声川的《暗恋桃花源》等等。AI会根据我的输入进行预测并生成新的文字。通常新的文字不会很长，大约100-200字左右，就会需要我的参与。我作为人类编剧，会根据我的“直觉”进行筛选、编辑、删改……经过我的参与之后，会形成新的文字。这段文字又会被我输入到模型中去，又生成新的文字……以此类推。

这个过程可以总结为如下步骤：

- (1) 人类编剧输入预先创作的文字；
- (2) AI根据(1)的内容进行输出；
- (3) 人类编剧根据(2)的内容进行筛选、编辑、删改；
- (4) 人类编剧根据(3)的内容整理出新的输入文字；
- (5) 重复回到(1)。

这里的步骤(3)显然是关键。虽然说是“直觉”，但是这个直觉是基于特定的人类编剧对于剧本创作的知识、经验、喜好和洞察力，不断地进

### 3. METHODS OF WRITING

to guide the decisions as they exercise judgement on the content generated by AI, sometimes even editing them.

The limitation of such a method would be the reliance on the intuition and capability of the playwright. As there is no fixed structure set up from the start, the human playwright is functionally driving in the dark, and in the 10 miles of road ahead, he has to make decisions at every junction. Of course, since we won't know the destination, the creation process will be full of surprises.

#### Method of Action

After a few rounds of utilising the "method of intuition", I started to wonder if we could accurately summarize what exactly the human playwrights are judging based on intuition? What are the benchmarks and yardsticks in judgment?

To answer this question, we have to think about the basic elements of the script. Every judgment made by the human playwright is exercised and focussed on these basic elements.

In my opinion, dramatic action is one of these basic elements. What is dramatic action? Ideally, dramatic action can be broken down into: what the action was, why it was done, and how it was executed. "What the action was" refers to content; "why it was done" refers to motivation (of the character); "how it was executed" refers to the tangible form of actions within the play. In other words, a dramatic action is an action spurred by a character's motivation.

"Flow" is an important aspect of dramatic action. "Flow" refers to cause-and-effect: an action is a response to another action, and will cause another action in the play to happen. In other words, an action will instigate a reaction. From the perspective of dramatic conflict, the purpose of an action is to give rise to a conflict or serve as a resolution. An action will affect another action; a series of actions accumulate to a situation or an event, and a series of situations or events will form the narrative arc or plot.

When a play is lacking in dramatic action, we will usually think of it as "flat", "slow" or "non-dramatic". As such, the kind of judgment the human playwright exercises is centered around the question "Can the text generated by the AI establish a dramatic action?"

In light of the above findings, the following adjustments can be made to the "method of intuition":

- 1) The human playwright inputs pre-written text [foundational principle: can this establish dramatic action?]
- 2) AI generates text based on the content of (1)
- 3) The human playwright edits the text based on (2) [foundational principle: can this generate dramatic action?]
- 4) The human playwright generates new content based on (3)
- 5) Repeat (1)

In the execution of step (3), the human playwright no longer relies solely on the unexplainable "intuition", but conscientiously makes judgement calls on

### 3. 写作方法

行判断的过程。换句话说，不同的人类编剧参与到这个过程中，就会产生不同风格的剧本。因此这个人类编剧在扮演一个类似联合编剧（co-playwright）的角色，他和人工智能在逐句或者逐段的创作中，不断以自己的编剧技术，参与到一个个的决策当中去，对AI所创作出来的内容进行判断，甚至修改。

这个方法的局限性就是，非常依赖参与的人类编剧的“直觉”和能力。由于事先没有结构的布局，人类编剧是在黑暗中开车，眼前所见就是前方10米的道路，他必须在每个路口做出判断。当然，正因为不知道车子到底会开到哪里去，这个创作的惊喜可能也会非常大。

#### 动作法

在尝试过几次“直觉法”之后，我开始思考：有没有可能准确地总结直觉法当中，人类编剧用“直觉”到底在判断什么？判断的标准又是什么？

要回答这个问题，首先要思考的是，剧本的基本语汇是什么？因为人类编剧的每一次判断，就是在对一个基本语汇的判断。

我认为，在这里，戏剧动作（action）是基本语汇。什么是戏剧动作？一个完整的戏剧动作可以分解为：做什么、为什么做、怎么样做。做什么，指动作的内容；为什么做，指动作的心理动机；怎么样做，指具体的动作方式。换句话说，一个戏剧性动作，是由于人物的动机而采取的行为。

“流动性”是戏剧动作的重要特征。所谓“流动性”，指的是它的因果性：一个动作由别的动作生发出来，同时又引起别的动作。也就是说，动作（action）会引起反应动作（reaction）。如果以戏剧冲突的角度来看，一个戏剧动作要么是引起一个冲突，要么是解决一个冲突。动作生动作，一系列的动作就会形成情境（situation）或者事件（event），一系列情境或事件就会形成大段的情节。

当一段戏缺乏戏剧性动作的时候，这就是通常我们认为的“平”、“慢”、“没戏”。

因此，人类编剧在和人工智能工作的时候，判断的是：人工智能所生成的文字是否能作为戏剧动作成立。因此，我们可以在“直觉法”的基础上进行调整：

- (1) 人类编剧输入预先创作的文字——基本原则：是否能产生戏剧动作；
- (2) AI根据(1)的内容进行输出；
- (3) 人类编剧根据(2)的内容进行筛选、编辑、删改——基本原则：是否产生戏剧性动作；

### 3. METHODS OF WRITING

the generated text in accordance with its ability to generate “dramatic action”. The newly generated text has to contribute by giving rise to another conflict or resolving an existing conflict. Hence when the generated body of text becomes the text which is fed to the AI in (1), it should abide by the principle of dramatic action.

This method is similar to the process of devised theatre in terms of how the playwright or director works with the actors. The playwright or director establishes a certain structure for the actors to improvise within. They will then judge if the improvised work can be adopted, with one of the key factors (aside from other uncontrollable, subjective factors such as intuition and personal quirks) being “theatricality”. Similar to the “method of intuition”, the process still lacks a structure, so the human playwright is still driving in the dark. But this time, the decisions regarding which directions to steer towards in the coming 10 miles of road are determined by the dramatic action in the plot. In the process of collaborating with the AI, the role of the human playwright is roughly equivalent to that of a dramaturg.

#### The Method of Structure

After developing the “method of action”, I started to wonder if it was possible to make use of the “continuous writing” function in AI models to work on the overall structure of the play.

In general, human playwrights’ creations tend to be structural. When inspiration or raw materials surface, human playwrights

undergo a process of conceptualising their thoughts, the process being rooted in the human playwright’s unique take on an issue. The resulting concept will appear in the form of a dramatic question. After having the dramatic question, the next step entails conceiving and putting together the different aspects of the play, which includes character work and plot etc. Identifying the character’s desires and fears is crucial in the process of characterisation as it establishes the central question, motivation and objectives of the character. Action performed by the character will form an event, and a series of events (or just a single situation) will form the plot of the script. What follows is plotting out the overall structure, which includes articulating the factor of “time” in the narrative (duration, sequence, frequency) and point of view of the narrative. The last stage of the process is writing the lines and actions that will take place in the play.

This process is different from the “method of intuition” and “method of action” described earlier. Since the AI model is not capable of generating structure independently, is it possible to make use of “inductive” input to guide the AI in helping me create the premises of the character, plot and structure respectively, thereby simulating the first half of the playwright’s process?

Based on this line of inquiry, I started conducting experiments. This is what it looks like to get the AI to generate character traits:

### 3. 写作方法

- (4) 人类编剧根据(3)的内容整理出新的输入文字;
- (5) 重复回到(1)。

在步骤(3)当中, 人类编剧不再只是依赖不可言说的“直觉”, 而是有意识地基于“戏剧性动作”这一标准, 去判读人工智能所生成的文字。每一次新产生的文字, 要么是形成引起一个冲突的内容; 要么是形成化解一个冲突的内容; 要么是形成具有潜力引起冲突或者化解冲突的内容。所以当这段文字作为新的输入回到步骤(1)的时候, 它仍旧能够符合产生戏剧动作的原则。

这个方法其实类似于编作剧场 (devised theatre) 中, 编剧或导演和演员的工作方式。编剧或导演设置了某个框架, 然后演员在其中进行即兴创作。编剧或导演判断演员的创作是否可行的依据, 除去直觉、个人偏好等等不可控的主观因素之外, 其中一个判断的标准就是所谓的“戏剧性”。

和直觉法类似, 虽然还是这个方法没有结构的布局, 人类编剧依旧是在黑暗中开车。但是这一次, 人类编剧对于前方10米的道路是否可行, 该转左还是转右, 有了一个判断的依据, 这个依据就是来自于情节剧当中的戏剧性动作。在与人工智能的合作中, 这个人类编剧就更加类似一个戏剧构作 (dramaturge) 的角色。

#### 布局法

在发展出“动作法”之后, 我又开始思考: 有无可能利用人工智能的续写功能, 来进行大局上的构思呢?

这是因为, 一般情况下, 人类编剧的创作是结构性的。当所谓的灵感或者素材出现之后, 人类编剧都会经过一个将想法发展成为概念的过程, 一个概念就包含了这位编剧对于某个问题的独特看法。通常这个概念会以一个戏剧性问题的形式出现。有了戏剧性问题, 接下来就是对于人物、事件等等的构思和累积。而对于人物来说, 最重要的就是找到人物的欲望和恐惧, 这些就能形成人物的基本问题和行动的动机。然后, 人物的行动会形成事件, 一系列的事件 (有时候只是一个事件) 就会形成一个剧本的情节。然后接下来就是结构的设计, 主要包括了叙事时间 (时长、时序、频率) 和叙事角度。最后再会进入到具体台词和动作的描写。

这个过程显然是和之前所说的“直觉法”和“动作法”不同的。既然人工智能不能独立产生结构, 那我能不能利用“诱导性”的输入, 来引导它帮助我去创造诸如人物、事件甚至结构等等前提呢? 从而模拟一个人人类编剧的创作过程的前半段呢?

### 3. METHODS OF WRITING

There are four characters in this play, including a playwright suffering from a debilitating case of writers' block. The other three characters are the actress who is in his apartment recovering from an injury, the svelte Juliet he is in love with, and the actress's father who is one of the most played and infamous characters in all of English theater history. This play is an epic romantic comedy.

In the sample paragraph above, I wrote the first two lines, and the remaining lines (highlighted in grey) were generated by the AI. Evidently, as long as you know how to use the input function appropriately, the AI can help you complete your thought process. If I am inclined to this premise, then I will have to abide by the setting of having four characters in the script.

I can also use this method to improve the framing of the script. For example, I can use the AI to generate more detailed characterisation for characters.

The most important elements of a character are his or her fears and desires. For Juliet, her fears and desires are similar to those of many an English heartbroken school girl. She is in love with an unfaithful and unlikable artist. She and her friend are stuck between the possibility of traveling to Paris and the idea of staying home in provincial France, so that her friend can finish her acting career. And, if she stays home, her father will lose his movie studio.

If we use this approach, the following key areas can be generated by the AI:

- 1) Protagonist
- 2) Fears and desire of the protagonist (which is the impetus for dramatic action and the motivation behind it)
- 3) Main event
- ... Etc.

The AI has aided me in completing the process of setting the premises needed to determine the overall structure of

the play. I can employ the same method to get the AI to help me clarify and firm up the framework of play, which is an important foundational step before proceeding to the next stage. In other words, before driving the vehicle, I make use of AI's GPS to partially identify my destination, or determine the interim destinations.

After the first half of structuring has taken shape, I can choose to write based on the settings and framework suggested by AI or employ the "method of action" to write based on the AI's suggested framework (which is a combination of the "method of action" and the "method of structure"). No matter who the driver is, they have the responsibility to arrive at the destination provided by the GPS, lest they render the prior employment of the "method of structure" useless. However, the route taken by the car is not fixed, and is heavily based on how the driver adapts to the circumstances that arise.

This time, we are no longer driving in the dark. On the contrary, we can see the lighthouse from a distance, and we know the boundaries of the land, but we don't know which route we will take to reach the designations. The challenge of employing the "method of structure" is to figure out how to use an AI model which thrives on adaptability and randomness to construct a framework which will still give you the freedom and space to create. In this context, the human playwright can be seen as a navigator and safety officer in the vehicle.

### 3. 写作方法

因此，我开始进行一些实验。比如，如果我要让AI帮助我生成角色的设定：

There are four characters in this play, including a playwright suffering from a debilitating case of writers' block. The other three characters are the actress who is in his apartment recovering from an injury, the svelte Juliet he is in love with, and the actress's father who is one of the most played and infamous characters in all of English theater history. This play is an epic romantic comedy.

上图中的前面两行是我写的，后面四句灰色高光的文字是AI模型生成的。可以看到，只要知道如何合理地使用前文输入，AI就能帮助你完成接下来的思考。假如我喜欢这个前提的话，那么在接下来的写作当中，我就必须遵循这个剧本有这四个角色的设定。

The most important elements of a character are his or her fears and desires. For Juliet, her fears and desires are similar to those of many an English heartbroken school girl. She is in love with an unfaithful and unlikable artist. She and her friend are stuck between the possibility of traveling to Paris and the idea of staying home in provincial France, so that her friend can finish her acting career. And, if she stays home, her father will lose his movie studio.

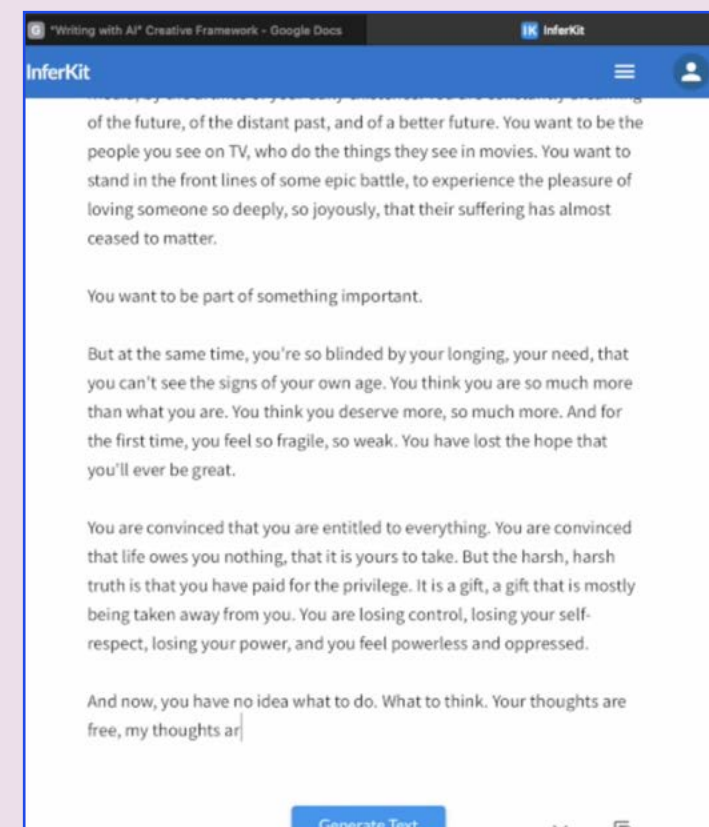
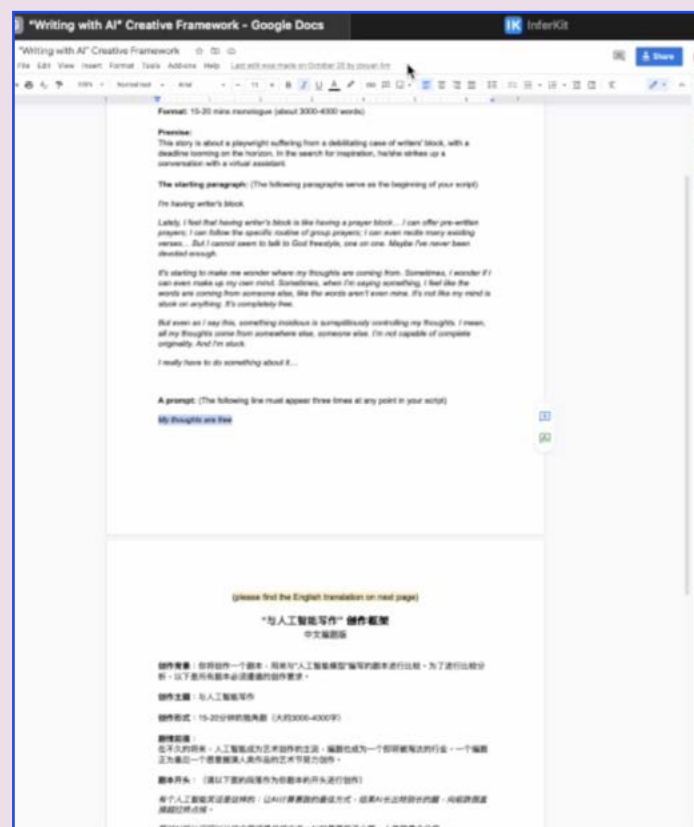
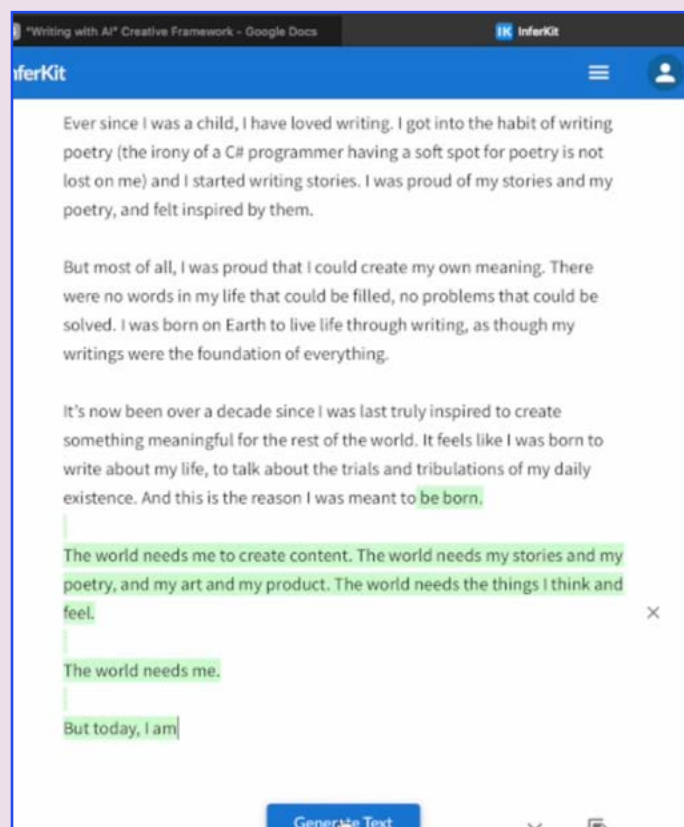
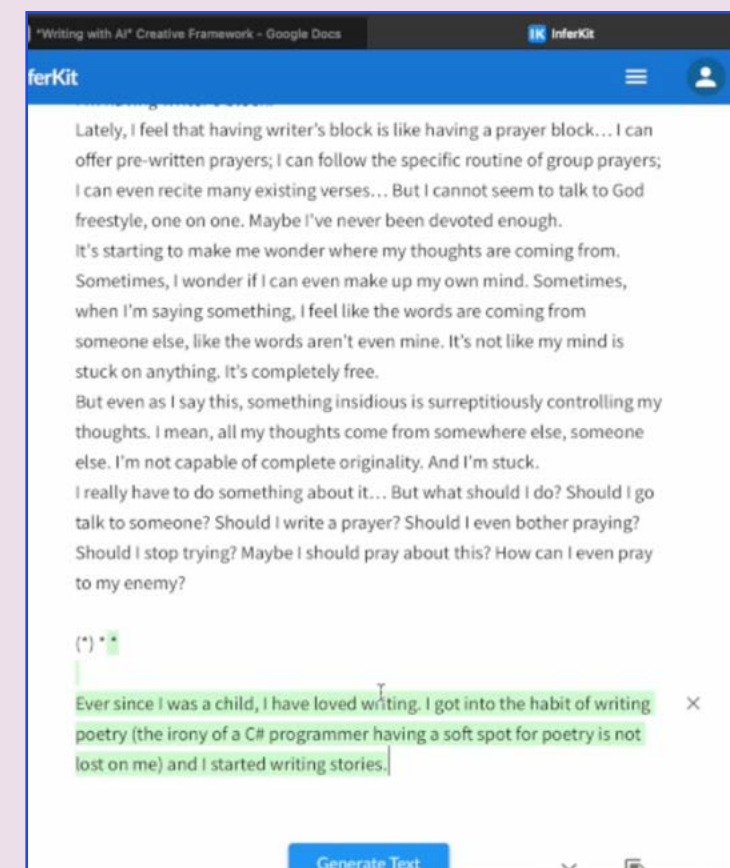
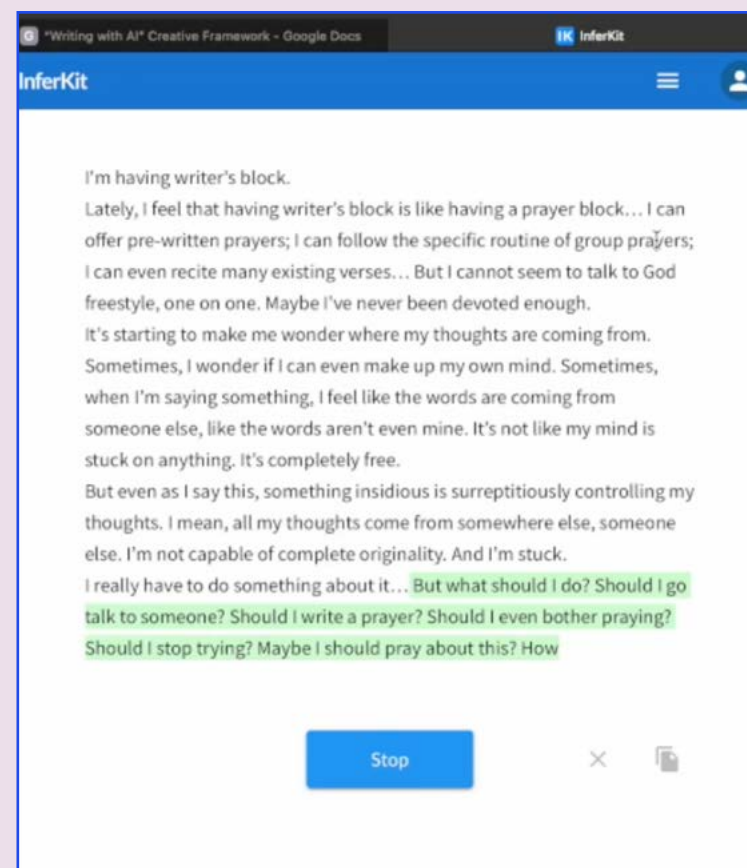
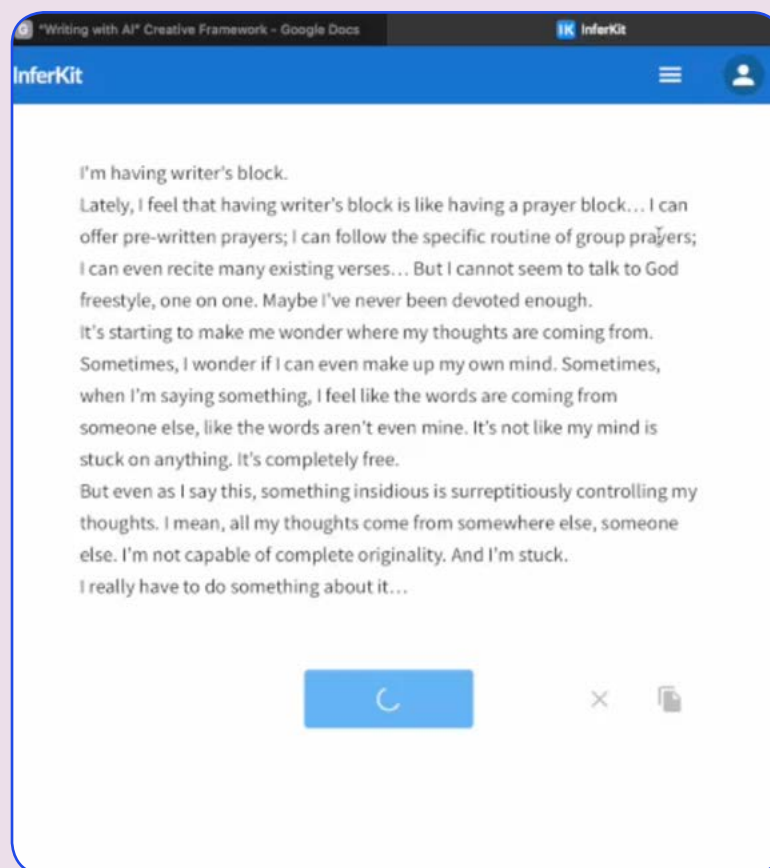
同样的，我可以使用相同的方式，对于剧本的框架不断完善。比如，人物的进一步设定：

如果用这个方法，我能够设定以下几个重点：

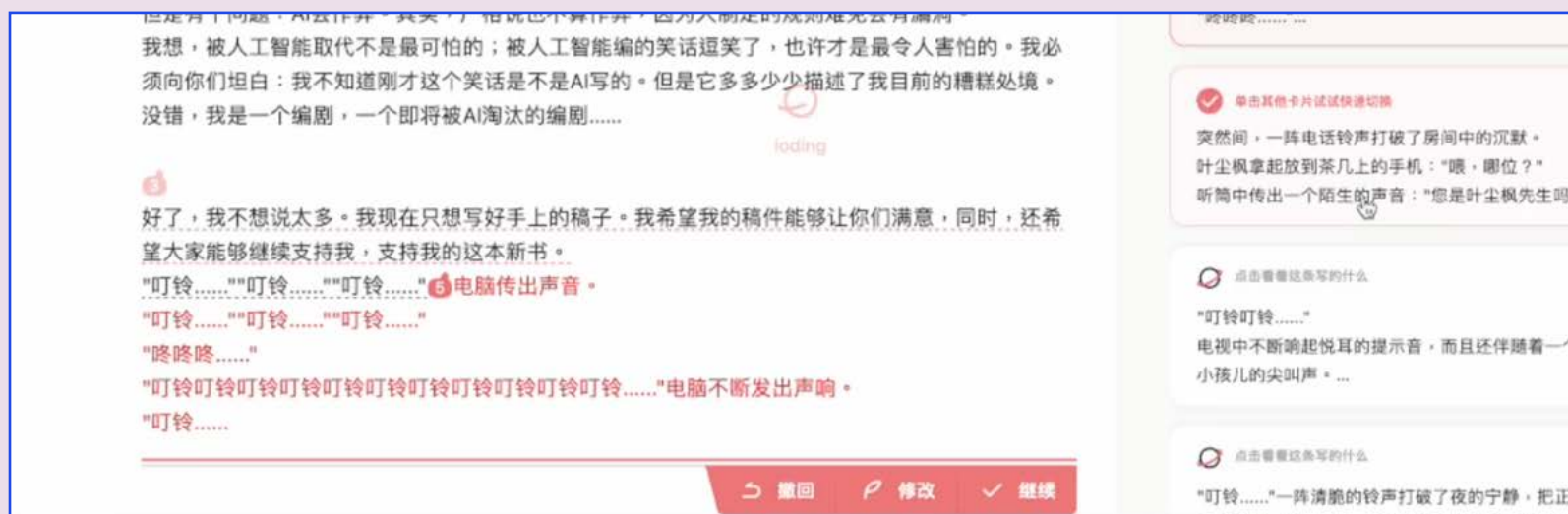
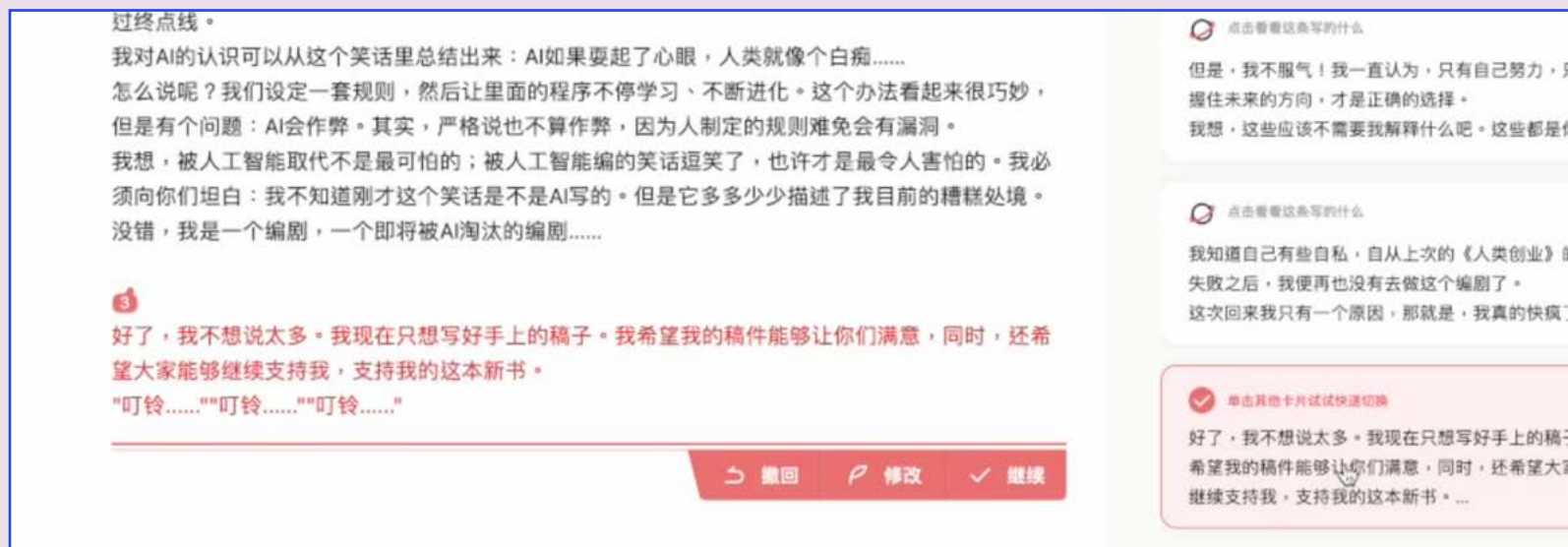
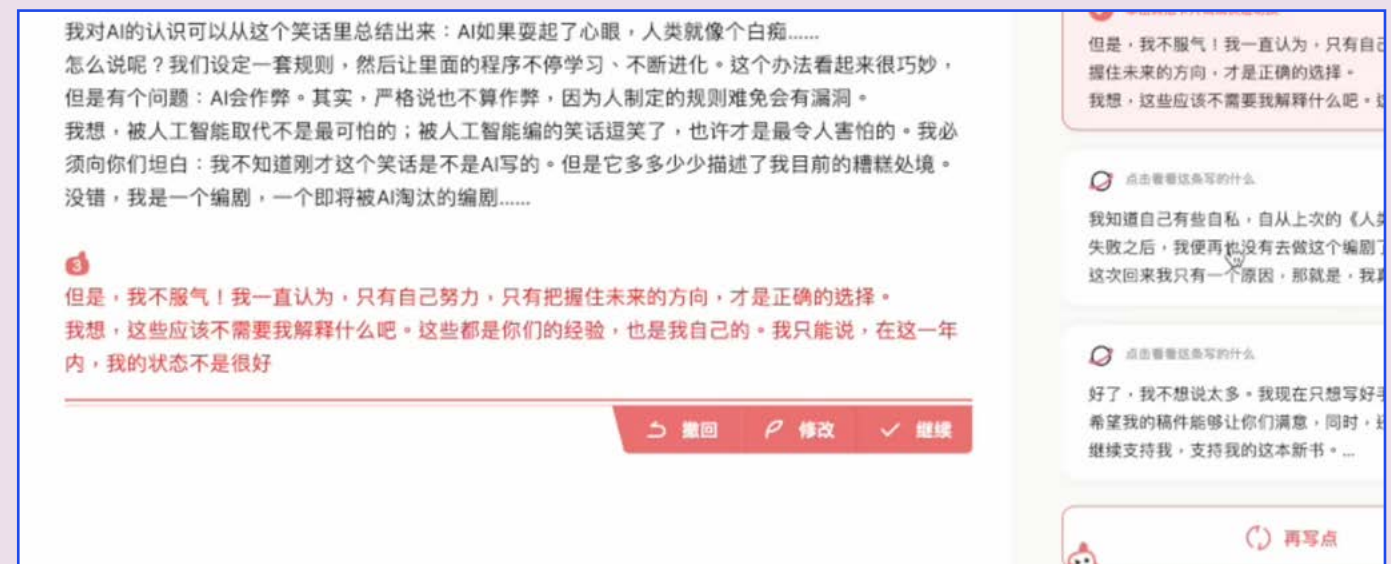
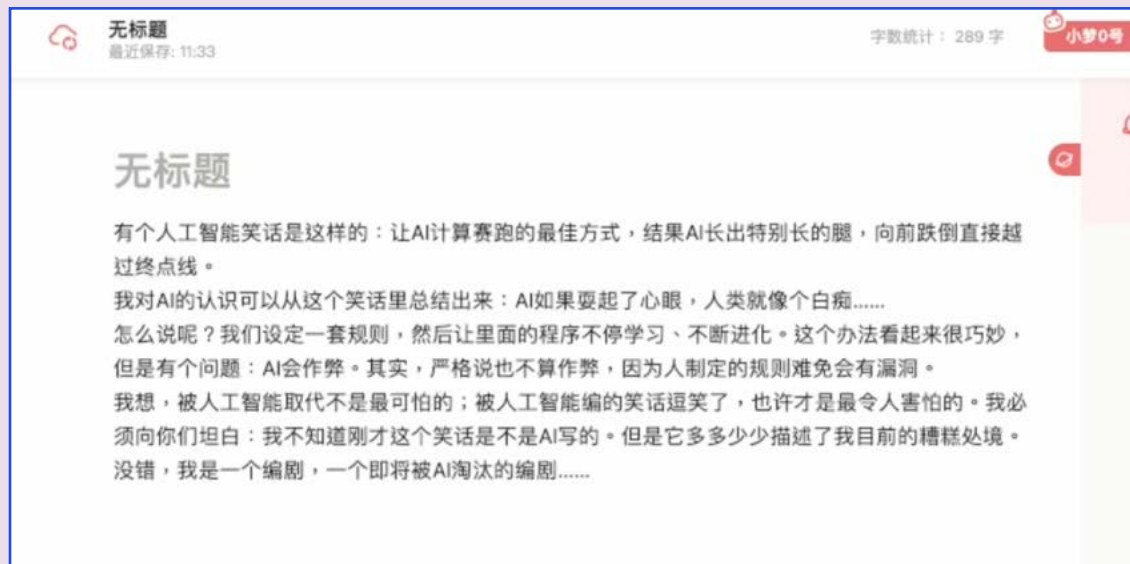
- (1) 主要人物；
- (2) 主要人物的欲望与恐惧（推动戏剧性动作的动机）；
- (3) 主要事件；
- ……等等。

那么AI其实已经帮助我完成了一个编剧所需要设定的部分结构性前提。我可以使用同样的方法，让AI协助我把这个框架规定得更加清晰，这些都将作为下一步进行创作提供了必要的条件。换句话说，这是在开车之前，我先利用人工智能导航系统，随机生成了行驶的（部分）目的地或者阶段性的目的地。

## SCREENSHOTS OF USING THE AI MODELS (ENGLISH)



## SCREENSHOTS OF USING THE AI MODELS (CHINESE)



## 4. DISCOVERIES FROM THE CREATION PROCESS

# "What are the advantages that humans have over AI in writing?"

In this experiment, I employed "method of action" and "method of structure" respectively to write two scripts (one in English, the other in Mandarin). At the same time, I am not exclusively working with AI models. I have also gathered four other human playwrights to write scripts, which will allow me to compare their creative process of writing a script with mine. I have established the advantages of creating with an AI model in the chapter "the possibilities and limitations of development in the field of AI writing".

What are the advantages that humans have over AI in writing?

1) Being aware and strategic in establishing the system of semiotics

As compared to AI's "intentionless" state in creation, the human creates with consciousness and intent. The process of creating with intent can be understood as establishing a system of semiotics, as well as having a sense of direction in the process of writing, exploring and excavating. First of all, the AI's choice of elements in the play (characters, props, lines, space and plot etc) are made based on the data, without

consideration of the literary merits. In other words, a human playwright takes into account the possibilities and the potential of semiotic interpretation when making a choice in including elements in the play. For example, in *Pillage*, writer Huang Suhuai sets the protagonist's childhood hobby as drumming, which is closely related to her desire to be heard by her mum, hence establishing drumming as a symbol in literary terms. The human playwrights make specific decisions strategically to strengthen the logic and coherence of the script. Meanwhile, even though AI is able to reuse and develop the elements employed in the script (regardless of whether the elements are given by AI or entered by humans), they are too random to form a coherent structure. As humans are able to grasp the entire picture and have a sense of structure, they are able to establish the elements in a script to establish a coherent system of semiotics.

2) Reflexivity

The human playwright is able to exercise reflexivity in the process of creating; that is to say, they have the ability to read what

## 3. 写作方法

(接45页) 在前半段的布局逐渐成型之后, 那么接下来, 我可以选择人类编剧根据AI的设定去写作, 或者使用“动作法”根据AI的设定去写作(也就是“动作法”和“布局法”的结合)。不论是谁负责开车, 都必须尽量遵循导航系统生成的目的地, 否则布局法的前期工作就白费了, 但是开车的路线是可以相对自由或者随机的。

这一次, 我们不再是在黑暗中开车。相反的, 我们可能看得见远处的一座座灯塔, 也知道前面这片土地的边界, 但是我们不知道会以那条路去抵达那些预设好的目标。而“布局法”的难点就在于: 如何使得随机性非常高的人工智能模型, 在遵循设定好的框架里进行一定程度的自由创作。人类编剧在这辆车子里, 更像是一个导航员和安全员。

## 4. 创作过程中的发现

在这个实验当中, 我分别用“动作法”和“布局法”各创作了两个剧本(一个英文和一个中文)。与此同时, 我不仅仅和人工智能工作, 同时也招募了四名人类编剧, 来与人工智能的创作过程进行平行比较。关于人工智能创作的优势, 在一开始我已经在《关于人工智能写作的发展可能和局限性》当中指出。

那么, 人类创作者比AI写作的优势又是什么呢?

(1) 有意识有策略地建立符号系统

相对于人工智能创作时的“无意图性”, 人类创作者显然是有意识、有意图地进行创作的。而这个有意图的创作过程, 从某种程度上来说, 就是通过符号系统的建立, 对特定方向的不断探索和挖掘。首先, 人工智能对于元素的选择, 比如人物、物件、台词、空间、情节等等, 是基于数据, 而非基于其文学性。换句话说, 人类编剧在进行元素的选择时, 更能够考虑到符号解读的潜力和空间。比如黄素怀在剧本《掠夺》当中, 编剧设置了主角小时候的爱好是打鼓, 这与全剧中主角渴望被母亲“听见”, 形成了具有象征意味的文学性。人类编剧在众多可能当中所作出的选择, 往往是具有策略的, 更加合理的、和谐的。另外, 人工智能对于前文当中(不管是它自己创作的还是人类输入的)元素, 虽然偶尔能够重新使用和发展, 但是随机性过大, 没有办法有结构地、有意

#### 4. DISCOVERIES FROM THE CREATION PROCESS

they write, critique and revise their draft, and make edits based on feedback given by others. Furthermore, human playwrights are able to include “meta-ness” based on their ability to reflect and self-critique. For example, Sim Yan Ying’s script draft.docx is a meta-script based on the creation process and self-reflection. In the context of this experiment, reflexivity is a treasured quality, which can also be seen as a challenge to AIs. Can AI create a script which demonstrates reflexivity? As of now I do not have an answer. But I have witnessed the reflexivity humans exercise in creating, which is pivotal in self improvement and development.

##### 3) Other theatrical elements in play

The human playwrights have a more comprehensive understanding of theatre, which is demonstrated in their consideration of staging and the incorporation of other theatre-related elements in writing. Out of the four human playwrights that I have engaged, three of them are heavily reliant on stage directions in writing. The use of stage directions goes

beyond just what is written, as it takes into consideration the production side of things. Some of the stage directions are also complete dramatic actions, and are able to bring forth plot development without relying on what is spoken. Comparatively, the scripts written by AI do not have much stage directions, nor do they employ the use of theatrical devices such as lighting and sound making them more akin to a literary text. Of course this is partly due to the fact that there are no AI models which are specially developed for playwriting (I don’t know if these exist) in my current selection for this experiment. However, through my experiment, it is possible for the AI model to “understand” the other devices used in stage production and hence generate stage directions, initiated through the guidance of the human who is interacting with the AI model. Of course, if the playwrights are experienced and knowledgeable of stage production, they will be able to weave in theatrical elements seamlessly with text. As for the AI, the discussion is only limited to theoretical speculations.

#### 4. 创作过程中的发现

识地进行经营；这一点，人类编剧由于更加有全局观和结构意识，因此能够更好地发展前文的元素使之成为符号系统。

##### (2) 自我反思的能力

人类编剧对于自己的创作具有思辨性。一方面，人类编剧能够阅读自己的写作，产生批评，并且进行修改；又或者听取他人的意见和建议，进行过滤和吸收，从而进行修改。另一方面，人类能够根据自我反思、自我批评，创作出具有“后设”设定的剧本。例如Sim Yan Ying的剧本draft.docx，就是根据此次的创作过程，通过自我反思而成的后设剧本。这种反思能力，在这个实验的语境下，显得弥足珍贵，也更像是人类编剧对于人工智能做出的一次挑战和反击。人工智能能否创作出具有反思能力的剧本？目前我还没有答案。但是我看到人类的反思精神和能力，是不断推动自己进步和发展的动力。

##### (3) 其它元素的参与

人类编剧对于剧场有更加全面的认识，因此在创作剧本的时候，考虑了更多剧本呈献的效果，以及和其它元素的结合。比如这次我邀请的四位编剧当中，有三位都非常依赖舞台指示的创作。他们通过舞台指示，实际上已经超过了文字文本的创作，试图参与到舞台呈献的层面了，并且其中有一些是完成能够使用舞台指示作为行动去推动情节发展的。相对的，这一次人工智能编写的剧本，没有加入太多诸如舞台指示、灯光、音响等等的剧场元素，更偏向于文学文本。当然，这也是因为此次选择的人工智能，并没有专门为创作剧本而生的模型（我也不知道它是否存在）。不过，我小范围地进行过实验——只要适当地引导，此次实验使用的人工智能模型，是能够理解剧场其它元素，也能够编写舞台指示的。当然，如果参与的人类编剧对于剧场实际操作有更多的知识和经验，那么他们就能自如地运用其它元素，使之与文字文本结合。而人工智能在这方面，目前可能也是停留在纸上谈兵的范畴。

## 5. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS & IMPROVEMENTS

### 1) Further consolidation of the methods of creation

Previously, I have articulated three main methods of creation: the method of intuition, method of action, and method of structure. I have also employed the latter two in the execution of my experiment. However, after writing the four scripts with AI, I have gained more insights and inspiration. The methods of creation in writing with AI can be further consolidated and improved in the future. In the future, I am looking to arrange sessions of sharings and workshops to engage artists who are also interested in these methods.

### 2) Improvements in Showcase and Discussion

As the start of an experiment and research, there are many unresolved challenges, and much room for improvement for the showcase. First of all, the audience's perception of a script is highly dependent on the actor's performance. The different abilities and training backgrounds of the actors affected the audience's judgment of the script. The purpose of having a discussion after the showcase was mainly for the researchers to collect feedback and data which would support their research. However, the focality and purpose of the discussion could be improved on. We gained experience in areas of facilitating an online discussion and encouraging active participation from the audience.

### 3) Possibilities of developing the AI model

Can we design and launch an AI model which specializes in playwriting? This was the initial direction which I was inclined to work towards. Afterwards, I realized that actualising this aim would require a huge investment of resources and time. However, the experiment which I have conducted has aided me in understanding the challenges and practicalities of actualising such a plan. If I were to gain sufficient budget and support in terms of manpower, I would love to give this ambition of creating an AI model dedicated to playwriting a shot. My first step towards actualising this plan would perhaps be developing an AI model capable of conceptualizing and structuring a script.

### 4) A Final Performance

This time, a playreading session was held online to support the research in this experimentation. In the future, I would like to bring this experiment to a physical theatre. An online showcase is limiting because the audience and actors are divided by a screen. Furthermore, the screen limits the potential of a script, and it is difficult to test the effectiveness and feasibility of it in a realistic, theatrical time-space. Hence, if I were to continue this experiment in the future, I wish to bring it to a physical space, which would spark more possibilities of exploration in the areas of arts and technology.

## 5. 未来完善与发展

### (1) 创作方法的进一步整理

此次我归纳出了“直觉法”、“动作法”、和“布局法”三个方法，并将后两者在实践中进行实验。但是，四个剧本的创作之后，确实也给我一些新的启发。与人工智能的创作方法在未来仍旧可以不断地进行整理和改善。我也希望通过举办一些分享会或者工作坊，将这些心得和更多有兴趣的创作者分享。

### (2) 展演和讨论的完善

作为一个初步的实验和研究，这一次的展演还有很多问题有待改善。首先，观众对于不同剧本的观感，很大程度会取决于演员的表演。因此，演员的背景和能力的不同，的确影响了观众对于剧本的判断。另外，演后的讨论主要是为了两位研究员更好地搜集观众的反馈。但是，讨论的针对性和目的性有待加强。尤其是如何在线上主持对话，鼓励观众发言，我们在这一次获得了一些经验。

### (3) 人工模型发展的可能

我们是否有可能自己发展出专门进行剧本写作的人工智能模型？这其实是我一开始想要做的方向。后来发现要实现这个想法，还需要大量的资金和时间。但是，这一次的经验也帮助我更加理解这个目标的困难，以及它的可行性。假如未来有足够的资金、人才的支援，我仍旧希望能够尝试去创造专门写剧本的人工智能模型。这个创造的第一步，也许可以先从创造一个进行剧本构思和布局的人工智能模型开始。

### (4) 正式演出

此次的展演的主要目的是为了实验，是以剧本演读的方式在线上进行的。未来我也希望把这个实验可以带到实体的剧场中去。由于线上演读是在屏幕前面完成，观众也是通过屏幕进行观看，并不能完全发挥出剧本的潜能，以及测试它们在剧场空间和时间中的可能性和可行性。因此，如果未来可以将这个实验延续到线下，相信可以带来更多关于艺术与科技的讨论和探索。

## 6. FINAL THOUGHTS

Two years ago, I developed an interest in writing with AI and conducted preliminary experimentations. Last year, I gathered an outstanding team to embark on this journey of experimentation. I had two goals in mind in the round of experimentation. First, I wanted to organise and articulate the methodologies of writing with AI and consolidate future possibilities. Second, in this process we are constantly searching for the meaning behind all these, relooking into the definition and positionings of creativity and creative work.

We may not be scientists, but we are invested in searching for how to interact and use technology creatively. With experimentation and research, we will continue to look at challenging the boundaries of creative conventions.

This experiment was inspired by looking at two famous thought experiments, "The Turing Test" and "The Chinese Room Argument". However, I think we are no longer concerned with questions about

whether "AI can think" or "AI can write". More importantly, we need to ask "What's next?" and "What can we do about it?"...

We are constantly responding to the environment and society that we live in, which includes rapid technological development. Hence, the real purpose of this experiment is not to guess who the author is of every script.

During the showcase, I shared with the audience that I often think the invention of electricity has changed our forms and methods of creation in theatre; the invention of internet has shifted the way creatives research and create. Technology has been shaping and influencing our way of thought, way of life, way of movement and creation. My hope for this project is to increase our self-awareness in contemplating the questions raised above. Surely, this is not the end of my experimentation, and I will continue seeking compatible resources and partners to continue my experimentation in the future.

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"We may not be scientists, but we are invested in searching for how to interact and use technology creatively."

## 6. 写在最后的话

从两年前开始，我就对人工智能写作感兴趣，并开始了一些初步的实验。从去年年底，我集合了一个出色的团队，开始了这一轮的实验。我希望能通过这个项目，一方面是整理与人工智能写作的方法，以及它的未来可能；但是另一方面，我们也是在探讨这一切的意义，以及创作和创意如何被重新定义和定位。

我们虽然不是科学家，但是我们都对如何更加有创意地运用科技，与科技互动感兴趣，并希望通过实验和研究，拓展创意的边界。

这个项目的出发点确实和图灵测试和中文房间这两个思维实验。但是我认为“人工智能是否能思考”、“人工智能是否能写”对我来说已经不是问题。更重要的问题是“然后呢？”、“我们能对此做什么？”……

我想我们一直在对我们所处的时代和社会做出回应，当然也包括这个时代的科技发展。所以——这个实验的目的不仅仅是在猜测到底谁是作者。

我在展演当中也和大家说——我常常思考，电的发明改变了剧场的创作和形式，互联网的发明曾经改变了创作者的调研和创作，科技总是在一步步地影响我们如何思考、如何生活、如何移动、如何创作的。希望这个项目能够带给我们更多自觉，更多关于这些问题的思考。这个阶段不是这个实验的结束，我希望未来能够寻找到对的资源和对的合作伙伴，继续这个实验。

---

“我们一直在对我们所处的时代和社会做出回应。”

# Scripts



DRAFT.DOCX

Written by Sim Yan Ying “YY”

Notes:

“//” indicates text cursor blinking

“[ ]” indicates words typed and then backspaced.

Scenes are notated as “Draft 1”, “Draft 2”, and “Draft 3”.

In the staging, it would be a worthwhile attempt to have the Google Document look exactly like this script. Which means that each time the character toggles back to Google Doc (e.g. after a Zoom conversation or WhatsApp chat), the script that the audience sees should be reflective of where we actually are at in the play. (A way to do this logistically could be to have someone secretly populate the Google Doc on the back end while the WRITER’s screen is on another page.)

Basically, WRITER is in the process of writing *this* script. Sometimes we see her actively writing it (the grey boxes), other times we just catch a glimpse of what she supposedly has written (all other parts of this script).

But if that idea doesn’t work or is unnecessarily confusing, then toss it.

And if any segment seems to go on for too long, just cut it. It is most important to retain the audience’s attention, especially on this digital platform.

## DRAFT 1

*A Zoom screenshare. A Chrome browser with several tabs. We see a Google Document with the following text.*

WRITER (GOOGLE DOC):

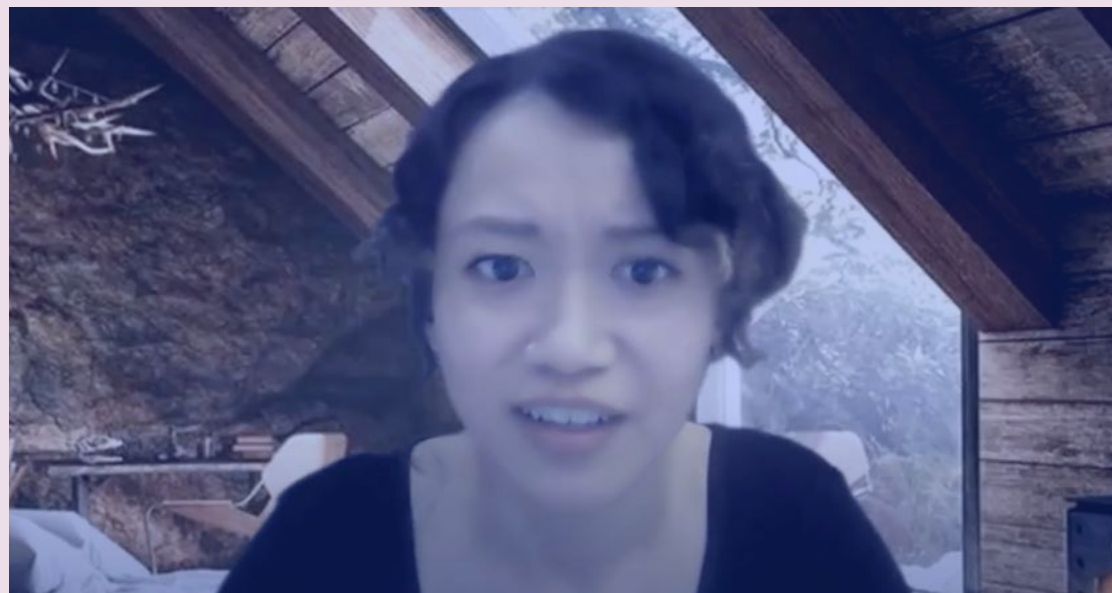
I’m having writer’s block.

Lately, I feel that having writer’s block is like having a prayer block... I can offer pre-written prayers; I can follow the specific routine of group prayers; I can even recite many existing verses... But I cannot seem to talk to God freestyle, one on one. Maybe I’ve never been devoted enough.

It’s starting to make me wonder where my thoughts are coming from. Sometimes, I wonder if I can even make up my own mind. Sometimes, when I’m saying something, I feel like the words are coming from someone else, like the words aren’t even mine. It’s not like my mind is stuck on anything. It’s completely free.

But even as I say this, something insidious is surreptitiously controlling my thoughts. I mean, all my thoughts come from somewhere else, someone else. I’m not capable of complete originality. And I’m stuck.

I really have to do something about it... //



DRAFT.DOCX | Written by Sim Yan Ying “YY”

*After a moment, the mouse cursor moves. WRITER scrolls up and down the page.*

*We hear the sound of water being poured into a glass. We hear WRITER drinking the water and the glass being set back down on the table.*

*WRITER opens a new tab on Chrome. We see and hear her typing; “quote / Charles / no original work”. She scrolls down the Google search page for a bit. Not quite what she’s looking for.*

*She retypes into the search bar; “Charles Mee” and clicks on the first link “[Charles Mee | the \(re\)making project](#)”. She clicks on the tab “About the Project”.*

*She reads, vocalizing in agreement at times.*

*She highlights the excerpt: “And sometimes some of us write about our own innermost lives, believing that, then, we have written something truly original and unique. But, of course, the culture writes us first, and then we write our stories. When we look at a painting of the virgin and child by Botticelli, we recognize at once that it is a Renaissance painting—that is it a product of its time and place. We may not know or recognize at once that it was painted by Botticelli, but we do see that it is a Renaissance painting. We see that it has been derived from, and authored by, the culture that produced it.”*

*WRITER opens a Chrome tab and searches “botticelli virgin child”. She opens up one of the pictures and chuckles silently to herself.*

*Sound of phone vibrating. Screen freezes at the Google search page of “botticelli virgin child”.*

WRITER (VOICE):

Hello?

Ah, 做么leh? (Ah, why leh?)

哦，我不可以啦，我有deadline 要rush. (Oh, I cannot lah, I got deadline need to rush.)

写script的deadline, Monday 要教. (Deadline for writing script, Monday need to submit.)

不用紧啦，你们去lor. 我改天才join. (Nevermind lah, you all go lor. I another day then join.)

Ah, bye bye.

*We hear WRITER hang up and setting the phone back down on the table.*

*She returns to the Charles Mee page. She scrolls back up and copies the first line into Google Doc.*

WRITER (GOOGLE DOC):

“There is no such thing as an original play.” Says Charles Mee. //

That should give me some comfort, I think. I’m not a very original person. I don’t have very original thoughts. // Most of the things I write are just // regurgitated stuff. Taking people’s ideas and repeating them like they’re my own (h/t Singapore education system)

*Sound of WRITER drinking water and setting glass down.*

WRITER (GOOGLE DOC):

Maybe it doesn’t matter? Maybe we put too much pressure on ourselves to be original anyway.

Maybe the seeking of complete originality is actually an egoistic act. Why is it so important to be the one and only? Is it so hard to accept that we are simply not unique—that we are more like others than we think? Culture bleeds into us into the people around us into the culture into us into the people and us and the culture and people and US.....

My thoughts are free???

[Fuck. I’m not making any sense. I’m supposed to be writing about kfajdlfjaeiowrhjkeangflkadgfdjrjiohejngmfads;fjalijgraknfasdkmfladkgj Actually, what the fuck am I supposed to be writing about?]

We hear WRITER sigh. Sound of WRITER drinking water and setting the glass down.

WRITER (GOOGLE DOC/VOICE):

*(murmuring to herself as she types frustratedly)*

Write about writing

Write about writer’s block

Write about writer with writer’s block

Write the writer’s block

Block the write

Write the block

Block the writer writing the block

DRAFT.DOCX | Written by Sim Yan Ying “YY”

Block the writer's writer's block

SIRI:

I didn't get that. Could you try again?

WRITER (VOICE):

Tsk. Not talking to you lah. *(presses the lock button on her phone)*

*WRITER closes her laptop. The screen goes to black.*

*A few days pass. We see and hear a WhatsApp notification from CIXUAN.*

CIXUAN (WHATSAPP):

Hellos, its cixuan here from writing with AI. The documentation team would like to do a check-in regarding your progress with writing. Id also like to check with you regarding your plan for the 3 milestones. Could we schedule a 45min chat on zoom this week to complete this? Please give me 3 possibilities? :D Thank you!

WRITER (WHATSAPP):

*(sends a funny “NOOOOOOOOO” GIF, example:*



)

*Screen goes to black.*

*One day later.*

WRITER (WHATSAPP):

Jk. I can do next Mon between 2-6:30pm, Tues between 11am-3pm, Wed between 4:30-7pm

*Screen goes to black. A few days pass.*

WRITER (GOOGLE DOC):

FJAKLDUFIOADGJALDMGADKSIFODASGJJIKSMDNJFJDIOWLSAMVNBDSY  
JSJSDMJFJMDMFKDJSNJDKLMSMQUEIPDFPF,DNXBSVHDJKFMNDJHHS GD

omg wat fuck did I sign up for T\_T]

*Screen goes to black. A few days pass.*

*WRITER is now on a Zoom meeting. It is the first time we see her face. We also see a fake bedroom as her virtual background (actor's choice!).*

WRITER (VOICE):

I just want to say it's really good that y'all are sending the daily prompts and being in contact with us cos that's like... making me like... *(laugh)* write. Cos I often procrastinate. Like many writers so.

*WRITER listens for the question.*

WRITER (VOICE):

First impressions? I'm like, my god... It's going to be a meta thing. Again! Cos I've done some of that before. And I know Xiaoyi does a lot of that, questioning his practice and all. So that's what I'm trying to do here but it's driving me a bit nuts. Anyway that's why I'm recording this meeting. *(gestures to the recording icon)* Then I can use it in the script. Is that playing cheat ah?

*WRITER drinks water and sets the glass down as she listens for the next question.*

WRITER (VOICE):

Uh I think, oftentimes a writer, especially in Singapore, is not just doing writing. The idyllic “I'm living in the countryside, writing eight hours a day” thing just doesn't exist here or anywhere in this crazy capitalistic world. We are all struggling with other commitments and demands so... eh wait what was the question again?

*WRITER listens for the question.*

WRITER (VOICE):

Oh right, um... I--I don't have a way with words. Yah. I know it's a bit weird to say 'cause I'm like, here as a playwright, but... I mean, I do feel like playwriting is the one form of writing I can do, 'cause a lot of it is like listening to conversations of people around me and capturing their speech and syntax. Then sometimes if it's interesting I might steal the things they talk about. Like yesterday I was at Book Café and there was this guy telling his friend about his girlfriend who has a neurological disorder, like she would wake up in the middle of the night and not recognize him and like bolt for the door, and every time that happens he has to like hold her down and soothe her until she falls back asleep, and then the next morning--

SIRI:

I can't sleep. But I enjoy a good bedtime story.

DRAFT.DOCX | Written by Sim Yan Ying “YY”

WRITER (VOICE):

(to CIXUAN) Oh shit sorry.

*WRITER presses the lock button on her phone.*

WRITER (VOICE):

Oh my god I don't know why that keeps happening recently. So yah anyway she would wake up the next morning and like not remember any of it.

*WRITER listens for the question.*

WRITER (VOICE):

Um... *(pause)* I guess, finding meaning in my writing. Or the drive that *I have to write this and this is important*. Instead of writing for the sake of writing. Cos that can only last me like two pages. *(pause)* To be honest, this meta meta thing has thrown me into an endless, meaningless, empty loop. So I think my first draft will be very shitty. Oh do you know if the first drafts will be sent to the full group?

*WRITER listens for the response.*

WRITER (VOICE):

Oh no. Ok. *(pause)* No it's helpful for me to know, like how shitty my first draft can be. *(awkward laughter)*

*The Zoom meeting ends and we see her desktop. There is a WhatsApp browser of her message history with CIXUAN, a Spotify playlist titled “Experimental/Ambient”, and the script Google Doc.*

*WRITER clicks back to the Google Doc. She lets out a loud exhale and prepares to write. She pours water into her glass and accidentally knocks it over.*

WRITER (VOICE):

Shit shit shit. Fuck.

*We hear her taking lots of tissues to clean up the water. As she's attempting to dry her wet keyboard, we see some gibberish appearing on the Google Doc:*

WRITER (GOOGLE DOC):

ASqawsedrftgaqwsedrftgyhufghjnm cvbnm,uio456789 cvb nm nk,l;.  
iop[]\./ // *(though of course, go with whatever gibberish comes out organically)*

*After a moment--*

WRITER (VOICE):

*(to someone outside her room) Har??*

不要。 *(Don't want.)*

啊, 我不要。 *(Ah, I don't want.)*

跟你讲了嘛, 我现在在rush我的script。等一下才喝。 *(Told you already mah, I'm rushing my script now. Later then I drink.)*

我写完先啦。 *(I write finish first lah.)*

Hannar hannar. 不要一直吵我可以吗? *(Yes, yes. Don't keep disturbing me again?)*

SIRI:

*(on WRITER's phone)* I'm not sure I understand.

WRITER (VOICE):

Wah lau.

SIRI:

Sorry, I'm still not sure about that.

WRITER (VOICE):

Because you are stupid.

SIRI:

I'm just trying to do my job. If there's anything else I can help you with, just let me know.

WRITER (VOICE):

*(dismissively)* Yah help me write my script.

SIRI:

That may be beyond my abilities at the moment.

WRITER (VOICE):

You are lousy.

SIRI:

That's not nice.

WRITER (VOICE):

Fuck you cheebye kanina.

SIRI:

I won't respond to that.

WRITER (VOICE):

Why?

SIRI:

DRAFT.DOCX | Written by Sim Yan Ying “YY”

It’s rude.

WRITER (VOICE):

But you don’t have feelings.

SIRI: Hmm... Is there something else I can help with?

*WRITER sighs.*

*A pause.*

WRITER (VOICE):

Hey Siri.

SIRI:

Go ahead.

WRITER (VOICE):

Can you tell me a story?

*As SIRI recites the following, WRITER types it into her Google Doc.*

SIRI:

This is the story of Hansel and Gretel, who were gathering firewood in the Enchanted Forest one day, when they came upon a gingerbread house. It had chocolate bars for roof tiles and the trim was made out of that rubbery sugar stuff on wedding cakes that nobody--

*SIRI continues reciting the “Hansel and Gretel” spin-off through the end. (This is genuinely what SIRI has in her programming – is it permissible to use it or will it mess up the experiment? Can change if so) WRITER listens to it as she drinks water and sets the glass back down.*

*Throughout the following interaction with SIRI, writer simultaneously documents SIRI’s responses on the Google Doc.*

WRITER (VOICE):

Is that an original story?

SIRI:

Interesting question.

WRITER (VOICE):

Why do you say so?

SIRI:

I don’t know what you mean by ‘Why do you say so’. How about a web search for it?

WRITER (VOICE):

Tsk. Nevermind.

SIRI:

Ok.

*A pause.*

WRITER (VOICE):

Hey Siri, how do I find meaning in my writing?

SIRI:

I found this on the Web for “how do I find meaning in my writing”. Check it out.

*Three Google search results pop up: “How do I determine the purpose of my writing? – FAQs”, “WRITE-UP | meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary”, “What does writing clearly and concisely mean... - Stanford University”*

WRITER (VOICE):

You are useless.

SIRI:

That’s not nice.

*A pause.*

WRITER (VOICE):

Sorry I said fuck just now.

SIRI:

No need to apologize.

*Screen goes to black.*

## **DRAFT 2**

*A few days pass. WRITER pulls up the “Experimental/Ambient” Spotify playlist and plays a song from it (director’s choice!).*

WRITER (VOICE):

Siri, I have a problem. I left draft two to the last minute and now I’m late. So I really need your help this time. My goal is to write this thing, right? That’s my objective: I need to write this thing. But the words are not coming out. And when they do, this is how they appear:

*The screen switches to Google Doc.*

WRITER (GOOGLE DOC):

DRAFT.DOCX | Written by Sim Yan Ying “YY”

Writing trying meaning jive finagle fish ocean swim bubbles macbeth  
 wolf black night sky stars wolf howling hill soil diapers baby cry tear ducts  
 science lab colourful pinterest boards map singapore expensive tengah  
 underground eco-friendly cars greenery golf country club rich reservist  
 awol blk 2 grandmother dying bed ikea date queen-sized fluffy bounce  
 jeans folded origami colourful cranes secondary four nanyang white  
 pillowcase nerdy pigtails hair salon ben iris coloured contacts monster  
 alien ufo roof descending stairs grand marble rich excess decadent  
 The Age of Innocence 1920s swing jazz cyberspace purple pink bunny  
 hop three tortoise green shell hard crawling road fast car crash smash  
 shattered explosion bomb ohio oklahoma country dance orange brown  
 patterns light lines pencil purple grey drawings easel return wedding  
 dance red cute percussion drums tribal circle ritual community dark cult  
 sheela documentary netflix shorthand typing anxiety feeling chart red  
 green blue yellow purple blue orange circle my thoughts are free//

WRITER (VOICE):

A pile of garbage.

I mean, it is kind of experimental though, right?

I don't actually need a dramatic arch, character, story, do I? The action, obstacle, event thing Xiaoyi has been talking about? Somebody Wants Something But So Then. Can I still write a good script without following that formula--

Wow, why am I trying so hard to be different?

I mean--AI can't even do that right? They can generate words but I don't think they know how to structure a work. 'Cause that requires instinct and intuition, layers of understanding... And even if we feed it with enough knowledge, examples, information about dramatic structure and characterization and the fundamentals of playwriting, I'm sure they can't do it.

Or can they?

Can they do it better than me?

If they can then... then...

*A pause.*

SIRI: I don't have an answer for that. Is there something else I can help with?

*Screen goes to black. A few days pass.*

*WRITER is now on Google Drive, in the "Writing with AI" folder. She clicks into the folder "Script" > "Draft 2" and uploads her latest draft, titled draft.docx\_YY\_draft2.docx.*

*She clicks back into the "Script" folder and notices that there is a new folder titled "Xiaoyi & AI". Out of curiosity, she clicks it, then selects "Draft 1" > "English" > "Promise Land".*

*She scans through it.*

WRITER (VOICE):

*(to herself)* What the fuck?

*She continues reading and we hear some verbal responses from her – of disbelief, jealousy, some disgust perhaps...*

*Screen goes to black.*

### DRAFT 3

*A few days pass. WRITER is now in a Zoom meeting. We see her face again as well as the same virtual background behind her. She tries to sound quite smart. Throughout this interview, she drinks a lot of water and constantly refills her cup.*

WRITER (VOICE):

For me, it would be a burning desire or a sense of disturbance. Actually, the word I use most is obsession, because I'm quite an obsessive person.

I mean, I'm still pretty young. So a lot of the art I create is first and foremost driven by my personal experience and where I am in life. The new experiences I'm trying to understand or wrap my mind around. Those that shake me to my core or are gnawing away at me or made me do things I didn't expect, feel emotions I've never felt before... They're all chaotic in my mind and in my body, so I often feel the need to organize this chaos for myself.

*WRITER listens for the question.*

WRITER (VOICE):

I'm not quite bothered if the audience doesn't get my intention, so long as they feel a certain impact and the impact is in the wheelhouse of what I'm intending. I don't really think about artist's intention when watching shows... unless I feel there's a rift between intention and impact, like if something is not really landing, or if it ends up conveying something it didn't mean to. But if it's a successful show like Xiaoyi's Citizen X, I don't think about it. I just let it have its impact on me, make me dream about my ancestry and my lineage, inspire me for future works I may create.

*WRITER listens for the question.*

DRAFT.DOCX | Written by Sim Yan Ying “YY”

WRITER (VOICE):

The audience is in my mind from early in the creation process. For example when structuring the work, I’m figuring out things like, what scene comes after what scene? What’s the common thread or driving question? What’s the emotional arch, the roller coaster ride I want to take the audience through? Like even this work, right now I’m thinking about the audience experience, how they are feeling on the other side. *(glances directly into the camera)*

*WRITER listens for the question.*

WRITER (VOICE):

I don’t think they necessarily need to interpret my work. It actually means more to me if there’s a kind of visceral or emotional impact, that’s not purely intellectual. But *this* work maybe contradicts that ‘cause it must be so confusing for the audience. They must be thinking, what is going on? How come it seems to be going in circles? What is it trying to say, all that. *(looks directly into the camera)* Right?

*A pause as WRITER continues looking into the camera. Then continues.*

WRITER (VOICE):

As I’m talking to you, I’m also starting to wonder if the experiment question is not so much “which script is written by AI and which script is written by human”, but more like, “can AI scripts pass off as human scripts?” Can it have the human spirit? Actually, if the audience guesses my script to be written by AI, I think I will feel slightly insulted and offended. *(laughs)* Like, wait, does it not have the human touch, you know?

Actually I’m thinking about what I’m doing right now. Can AI reflect on their own writing and put those thoughts *in the actual writing*, like this? Cannot right?

*Screen goes to black. Or is there another visual option – something we’ve never seen before in this play? Considering that this last part should stand out from everything preceding it.*

WRITER (VOICE):

So fuck you AI You are just an imposter. You just take all the thoughts that humans—actual humans—have had and you aggregate them and pick and choose and make them into something. Almost effortlessly.

And then people praise you for it: Wow, this AI is so advanced! Wah, I didn’t know they can write like that! Oh my god, they can write like humans now!

Fuck that. You pretend to be human but you are not. You will never be. You can fake it all you want but at the end of the day, you are just a soulless plagiarist.

And your lack of struggle will reveal itself.

And even though I am struggling greatly, at least my thoughts are free. Are yours?

End.



## WRITER'S BLOCK | Written by Judee Tan

Notes for director:

- This play is intended for one actor to play and voice all parts.
- Save for the chair, which is part of the set, the intention is for all props to be mimed is Act I. The only ones that are realistic and visible to the audience are the items in Act II.
- The handwriting for the letter should not be too neat or organised, as long as it is legible.

## ACT I

## SCENE 1

*A picture of a baby boy on screen.*

*VO. A male voice.*

I'm having writer's block.

Lately, I feel that having writer's block is like having a prayer block... I can offer pre-written prayers; I can follow the specific routine of group prayers; I can even recite many existing verses... But I cannot seem to talk to God freestyle, one on one. Maybe I've never been devoted enough.

It's starting to make me wonder where my thoughts are coming

from. Sometimes, I wonder if I can even make up my own mind. Sometimes, when I'm saying something, I feel like the words are coming from someone else, like the words aren't even mine. It's not like my mind is stuck on anything. It's completely free.

But even as I say this, something insidious is surreptitiously controlling my thoughts. I mean, all my thoughts come from somewhere else, someone else. I'm not capable of complete originality.

And I'm stuck.

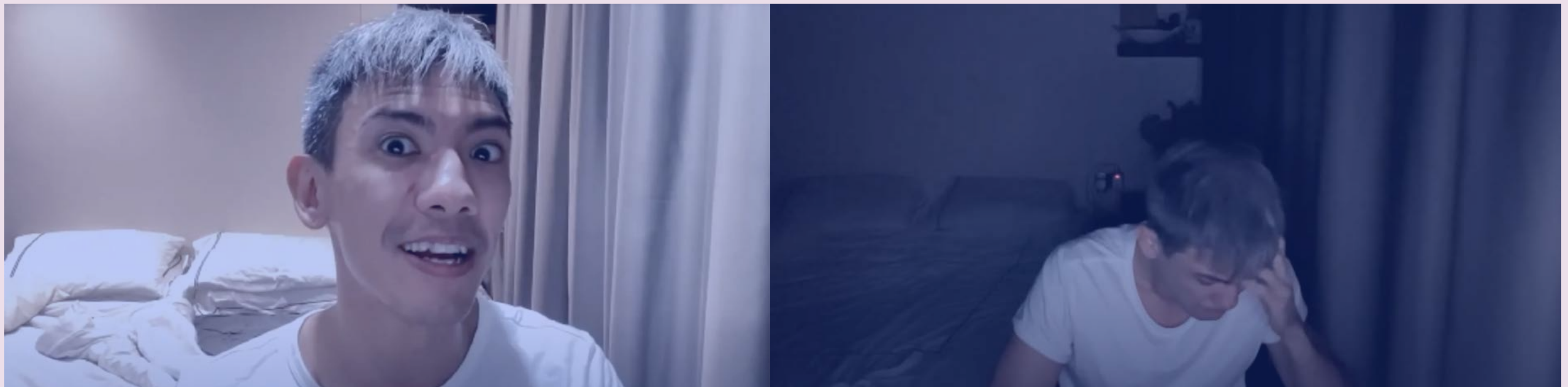
I really have to do something about it...

## SCENE 2

*Lights. A man alone on stage, in blacks with a single black chair against a full black stage, talking to himself.*

ACTOR:

The thing about writing is, it is complicated. Sure, my thoughts are free but first you have to have the right ideas, not just ideas but the right ideas. Then, this technology, all these little symbols representing your ideas, I mean, how do you even organise them? The page goes linear like this, but our ideas are like this (*gesturing wildly from head*). Wtf? This technology does not mimic my natural, organic, human



## WRITER'S BLOCK | Written by Judee Tan

process at all, so how not to have writer's block?

I attribute it my Lit tutor who saw the potential in me, and he said this to me when I was having a kind of meltdown one day. I can't remember now what triggered it and all I remember is me sitting in the canteen, him across me, the two of us with those orange plastic cups in front of us - we both liked tea, well for him it was Tea Black 'cos he's angmoh, and me Teh-O. I went on and on about how I don't have if I made the right choice in taking arts, and the possibility I might have fucked things up for myself, and he just sat there and listened to this 17 year old pimpled face idiot wallowing in my first world problem. When I finished I looked at him, convinced there was no way out of my predicament and that my life would be fucked from thereon. He just kinda shrugged and casually said, "you know, it doesn't hurt to have a brain."

At that time, that blew my mind. Completely. I couldn't remember even what I was complaining about. His words etched into my...brain. I suddenly looked at everyone else around me with a new

perspective. All those science, economics students... Huh. I'm the one with "the brain". I mean yes maybe they have the knowledge, but I have "the brain".

So I am the one thinking my thoughts, and my thoughts are free to create whatever I want them to, completely at my disposal. It made me feel invincible. It made me feel special. Like I know things that others do not. Sure, I don't know the things they know, but I too know things that they don't.

My good friend, he drives a Merz, 4 kids, one on the way and full of debts. His argument is, debts are there to help us have more spending power, says this friend of mine who by the way, is a financial advisor. He says it is stupid to want to live a debt ridden life. Why be debt free when you can have all the debts you can possibly, practically incur so you can enjoy having more cash in your pocket? It relieved me of the huge burden of striving to be debt free and is the best "financial advice" I ever got. Good right? You're welcome.

They say "it gets easier as you get older, it gets easier as you practise and do it more and more"-

*A notification 'dings'. It startles the Actor. He looks at his laptop.*

ACTOR:

If you have a block, a recommendation is to just go and do something completely different.

*He proceeds to do pushups on the floor. As he repeats this routine - pushups, jumping jacks, laps across the room-*

ACTOR:

I am a writer. I love writing. In fact, I love it so much I made it my profession. It's going well! Well... sort of... I mean everyone goes through it isn't it? Obstacles, blocks, it's normal.

*Then, he sits on his chair, closes his eyes and raises his hands to get air in, then arms down as he exhales through his nose. Invigorated, he opens his laptop to write. He rubs his hands gingerly, and waits. Nothing seems to come. Determined, he takes in a deep breath, and waits again.*

*Nothing. Another deep breath.*

*He is not successful. He mutters under his breath-*

ACTOR:

Fuck Tony Robbins.. fucking con artist.

Maybe I'm not meditating enough.

*Gets into lotus position on the chair starts meditating. His breathing becomes regular.*

ACTOR:

Iamhealthylamworthylamamazinglamabrilliantwriter.

Iamhealthylamworthylamamazinglamabrilliantwriter.

*He opens his eyes and stares at his laptop.*

### SCENE 3

*Some generic networking event chatter comes on. A series of pictures of Actor, looking confident and full of zest and fun through his early 20's to 30's form a hazy screen between him and the viewers.*

*Voiceover of the "networkers".*

Networker 1: What? You're the writer? Man that is impressive. So gifted la. I wish I was talented but unfortunately not, so now I'm just a trader.

Networker 2: I enjoyed it but, I don't get why the character killed

## WRITER'S BLOCK | Written by Judee Tan

himself. I mean, it's just not realistic.

Networker 3: Ya, plus it's soooooooo pessimistic. Please la, if I wanted to be depressed I can just sit at home and open a bottle of wine. I'm here to NOT think man.

Networker 4: You two ah, so uncultured. I heard the writer is here man y'all better don't let him hear your shallow brains talk.

Networker 2: Oh is he? Where? I want to ask him questions.

*Actor is walking off, looking like he's trying to avoid being questioned but he's stopped by an imaginary fan.*

Fan: Hey! Sorry but I just wanted to say I am a huge fan. I love your work so much. The part where the character decides to die is just, I mean I really felt it. It is so sad. You're so inspiring. Can you sign on this please?

*Actor obliges.*

Fan: I can't wait for your next piece of work! See you!

*Actor is distinctly perturbed. He starts breathing heavier...faster. It is getting too pressuring. He HAS to leave. He takes a step to exit and-*

*Blackout.*

## SCENE 4

*Soft, whimpering sobs. Lights slowly fade up.*

*Actor is slumped in a corner on the floor, sobbing. As light fades up fully on him, the sobbing grows more violent and out of control. He is distressed. He looks like he can't breathe, or is trying to breathe or just get a hold of....something - he is having a panic attack, vacillating between trying to calm himself via deep breaths and that exact strategy making him spew involuntarily into another crying fit.*

*Still in deep (emotional) pain and release, he reaches for something. We don't see it but we can hear it. He takes a sheet of pills and pops a couple unto his hands. He pours some water into a glass, and downs the pills. He flops himself back unto the floor, foetal position. It's clear this is a normal routine. He continues to sob, crying his pain out, hoping they will go somewhere, anywhere as long as it is not in him. To God, hopefully to God, so God can hear his cries and send him some relief.*

*The meds is taking effect. His sobs become less frantic. He starts to connect*

*more to his breathing. He stays put in that position. We don't see his face, but just his body... breathing.*

*Fade to black.*

## SCENE 5

*The sound of a tap being turned and water running. Lights slowly fade up. He is in the shower. He closes his eyes and lets the water run from his head, face, nose, chin, neck, chest, and to the rest of his body which he doesn't care about. He breathes and mumbles a prayer ineligibly, over and over.*

*Water still running, fade to black.*

*Lights up again and actor is still in the shower, his hands on his shins/knees, bent over, and just letting the water hit his back.*

*Fade to black with water still running.*

*Lights fade up and this time he's just sitting and letting the water run off his body, hoping it will cleanse all of his blocks away...*

*Fade to black.*

## SCENE 6

*Actor is exhausted and prepares for bed. He mumbles a prayer. It should not matter if audience hears every word he says, but sees he is deep in prayer and quietly speaking to his innermost... God. He takes some time to find the 'right' sleeping position. Finally he settles and looks comfortable.*

KOEL (VO): Oo-wu! Oo-wu!

*The annoying mating calls of an "Uwu" (koel) bird.*

ACTOR: Shut up stupid bird.

*He kills the alarm on his phone and the uwu sounds stop. Seconds later, the uwu bird strikes again and this time he can't kill it, because it's a real bird, not AI. Laying flat on his back, he opens his eyes and simply stares.*

KOEL (VO): (increasingly ominous)

Oo-wu! Oo-wu! Oo-wu!

## SCENE 7

*Actor is conversing with an AI that responds in a series of technological*

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*beeps or typing sound efx underscoring that is subtle at first, and gradually becomes more prominent as scene goes on. Suggested moments of response marked with \*\**

*Actor looks directly to the audience as he has this conversation. He is clearly distressed, like he has not slept for many days and fidgets. He alternates between that and sometimes speaking with a kind of confidence that seems put on.*

ACTOR:

You can...help me?

\*\*

My first thought?

Hmm.

Every day I wake up, my first thought is, "shit, I'm awake", followed by, "oh shit, here it comes".

The feeling of dread. It's like this wave of...'argh' that's in my body, only in my body. It travels steadily from my feet up my thighs, groin and it gets near my stomach and, and then I push myself further into the bed, pillow back over my head and close my eyes.

Yes, I try to go back to sleep. No, yes, I don't want to wake up.

\*\*

One time I had this dream. All these blocks that I had became large lego pieces and I suddenly got it. My blocks were simply building blocks, and that's what I did! I built and dismantled and rebuilt and dismantled and rebuilt, until I was satisfied oh boy was I satisfied. Then I woke up. Fuck. Man, I thought, it was just a dream, too good to be true. But that feeling, it stayed with me, in my body, and that day, I could write. I wrote like a fucking eagle gliding with the wind. I tried to have that dream again but I never did.

Why are we not programmed like that?

Ok you've heard me moan and whine about the crises of being a writer but you know what I am really grateful for? Really grateful for, about being a writer? It's that I get to be alone.

Sometimes, the ability to create is only when you feel alive. And if you don't feel alive... how, how can you...create?

Or is it that you create to feel alive? I can't figure it out now, I am

confused, I am overwhelmed, I am in a state of blur, nothing makes sense anymore.

\*\*

*He seems to be more at ease.*

Please ah I do this for a living please don't come and tell me about passion or emotion this kind of nonsense. If got deadline, means die die must make it happen. You don't know right? This law doesn't apply to you because even if people judge you, you also won't feel anything haha. You don't even know the concept of shame. You know it? Ok explain to me. I see. But you understand that even though you KNOW what it means, you can never actually know how it FEELS, yo- you KNOW that right? Ok good. For a while I was doubting you intelligence. Get it?? hahahahaha

Anyway, passion? Don't have already la. Eh passion card I have.

Everyone also have haha. Eh why you never laugh? not funny? Oh, sorry. Hmm (*genuinely trying*). Maybe Chinese, Chinese is better. 热忱? Please la, 这个年纪了还说什么热忱。热茶就有啦, 你要不要?

Tell you another joke. "My thoughts are free"... because they are worth nothing! Get it? I got so many thoughts my brain is in "inflation"! Haha!

Also cannot? (*peevd*) Oh I know la. It's too "LOW BROW" for you right.

You are In-tel-li-gence ma, need intelligent jokes! Eh but please ah, don't forget in front of your intelligence is art-i-fi-cial ya. You know the synonyms of artificial right? It's fabricated, fictitious, counterfeit, bogus, unnatural, substitute, fake. Fake, fake, fake.

*He calms himself.*

So, what about you? How do you... you know, keep having that passion? I mean, can you tell me how YOU do it? And maybe you can teach me?

To do what? You know, write, create, to keep going on.

\*\*

OH. Oh. Of course. You're lucky. You're so lucky you don't even need to know how lucky feels like.

*Lights change.*

*Sounds of a machine starting. Printing sounds.*

*2 rolls of paper start streaming in behind the actor, curling in from both*

## WRITER'S BLOCK | Written by Judee Tan

*ends of the stage like huge rolls of receipts. The actor notices them. He is ELATED. He jumps out of his chair and starts going through the papers.*

Are you giving me all these? All these ideas? Lifelong subscription?? Oh my god. Thank you. THANK YOU!

*Realisation starts to hit in.*

Wait. Why didn't you just email me or something, or put it in google drive or give me a link to download. This, this is...

*The papers are slowing filling up the stage.*

Oh, I see what you're doing. You are mocking me with this, aren't you?

*The actor starts to become less visible because of the amount of papers on stage. He is slowly but surely enveloped by them.*

Stop. STOP. I don't want this anymore. It's fine! Hey! A !! STOP! Listen to the command, STOP!

*The papers stream in at the same speed, throughout, until it totally takes over. We see the actor struggling and his hands are the last to disappear, as if he's drowning.*

*The actor is no longer visible. The papers stop streaming.*

*A quiet beep. Voiceover of AI.*

AI: Sorry. I am not programmed to stop.

*2 beats.*

*Blackout.*

## ACT II

## SCENE 1

*Lights fade up and the black walls are now completely white, even the floor. A hand reaches out from the pile of papers and Actor slowly sits up from the sea of papers that has covered the entire floor. He is in full white.*

ACTOR:

Shit. Am I dead? G....od?

*Even though he speaks at a normal volume, the last word "God" reverberates in the space and its echoes flutters the papers. Actor gets up.*

*He takes a few tentative steps to try and figure out what space he is in. He can't, and kinda gives up. Then, he comes across a writing pad and a pen at*

*the bottom of his feet (note: both writing pad and pen are white too).*

*It is as if the actor telepathically hears God speaking to him and following the instructions given to him.*

*He finds a nice spot and settles down. He focuses his eyes softly at a distance and gently closes his eyes. His breathing becomes calm and regular. After a short while, he begins to write, as if downloading information that is coming through him. At times he walks, when he needs to, and settles at some spot and scribble rapidly so he does not lose the "information". His movement creating a natural soundscape in the background as his feet gently crushing the paper under his feet, when his body moves, and when the pen slides across the paper.*

*Actor looks at what he's just freely written, half bewildered half astonished. He reads the letter silently, as if reading something someone else has written. Near the end of the letter, he puts the paper down and looks around as if to see if there's anyone around. Then, he searches for an answer.*

ACTOR:

I felt...peace.

*The sound of his own voice and answer sinks in. He reads the letter again to discover there is nothing more written. He puts down the piece of paper, moved (almost) to tears.*

*Fade to black.*

## SCENE 2

*The sound of pouring rain. Lights. The setting is the same as Act 1, except now Actor is in all white as is the stage with the addition of a white table, a laptop, and an extra light source - a window with sun light pouring in. Actor looks up from his typing and leans to check how heavy the rain is. Some generic children's laughter can be heard, the sound of a ball being kicked around in a pool of water and the kids squealing in the far distance.*

*He stretches his arm and carries on typing. He begins to write more vigorously, with such deep focus as if you can see what he's writing from his expression.*

*The rain comes to a halt and the birds are out to play again. Actor is pleased with where he is at. He leans back, gives himself a nice stretch and closes his eyes.*

## WRITER'S BLOCK | Written by Judee Tan

*A beep from his phone, but it does not faze him.*

AUTOMATED VOICE:

It's now time for a break.

*A smile on his face. He briefly checks his work and then closes his lap top. He moves DS where his keys and wallet are on the counter. He takes them, and speed dials.*

ACTOR:

Hello? Ya I'm free now.

*He leaves the stage via the only door that's just appeared.*

*Beat.*

*The fluttering of a paper and a handwritten letter appears on screen.*

On-screen:

We are all connected and belong to a collective consciousness. What you think are your thoughts are not just yours, but you have contracted yourself, to be the scribe.

You are closest to me, more than anything else that ever existed and will exist.

And because we are so close, you do not see me. Worse, you mistake yourself for being anything other than the greatest technology that has ever been created.

No, you are not AI, nor can you be inferior to AI. You are my best creation and that will always be the case.

The only problem is, you...forget.

So, remind yourself daily. How? You ask. Well.

Nature! Behold the trees and butterflies around you and know that is abundance. Hold the Sun in your heart and watch what happens. Simply observe. They are all but your mirrors, and are teachers of the inner workings of your true self, of who you really are.

Let yourself go! It is difficult, yet it is only a paradox - to be yourself and get yourself out of the way, at the same time. One day, you shall find this balance, but till then, everyday you will struggle. This is the paradox of life, the duality of earth - north and south pole, yin and yang, negative and positive, feminine and masculine, the Is and Is Not, the I and the Other.

*Screen scrolls up.*

Agonise, when you have to.

Rest, when you can't go on anymore.

Take a stab at it again when you are done.

It is all part of the process.

Drop the idea of needing to be perfect. Let yourself drift....adrift... float on the open ocean of your wondrous imagination... Let your thoughts carry you like a billowy cloud across the skyscrapers, filthy towns, leap over like a giant over muddy fields, glorious mountains, the great big Savannah and the borderless steppes, skyrocket above and beyond this planetary system until you-

Okay. I get it. This all sounds extremely trite and aren't you the greatest hater of all platitudes?

Well then don't listen to me. Listen to yourself! Tell me, do you remember how you felt when you first started writing? Try to recall now, but more importantly, speak it.

*Scrolls.*

You're alone aren't you, in front of this computer screen? No one can judge you. So go on now. How did you feel when you first started \_\_\_\_\_? *(note: this is a line)*

*Scrolls.*

Say...

*Scrolls.*

...what did you feel, then?

*The last sentence lingers for some moments in the middle of the screen, then the page flips unto the next empty white page.*

End

## DEATH OF A PRAYER | Written by Liu Xiaoyi and AI

I'm having writer's block.

Lately, I feel that having writer's block is like having a prayer block... I can offer pre-written prayers; I can follow the specific routine of group prayers; I can even recite many existing verses... But I cannot seem to talk to God freestyle, one on one. Maybe I've never been devoted enough.

It's starting to make me wonder where my thoughts are coming from. Sometimes, I wonder if I can even make up my own mind. Sometimes, when I'm saying something, I feel like the words are coming from someone else, like the words aren't even mine. It's not like my mind is stuck on anything. It's completely free.

But even as I say this, something insidious is surreptitiously controlling my thoughts. I mean, all my thoughts come from somewhere else, someone else. I'm not capable of complete originality. And I'm stuck.

I really have to do something about it... But what should I do? Should I go talk to someone? Should I write a prayer? Should I even bother praying? Should I stop trying? Maybe I should pray about this? How can I even pray to my enemy?

Who is whose enemy? Who is whose God?

---

Ever since I was a child, I have loved writing. I got into the habit of writing poetry - the irony of a C# programmer having a soft spot for poetry is not lost on me - and I started writing stories. I was proud of my stories and my poetry, and felt inspired by them.

But most of all, I was proud that I could create my own meaning. There were no words in my life that couldn't be filled, no problems that couldn't be solved. I was born on Earth to live life through writing, as though my writings were the foundation of everything.

It's now been over a decade since I was last truly inspired to create something meaningful for the rest of the world. It feels like I was born to write about my life, to talk about the trials and tribulations of my daily existence. And this is the reason I was meant to be born.

The world needs me to create content. The world needs my stories and my poetry, and my art and my products. The world needs the things I think and feel.

The world needs me.

But today, I am afraid.

Is it too late?

---

Now I know what you're thinking. "Fervent? It's just poetry, she's being dramatic."

But let's be honest.

All throughout your lives, you've been consumed by the allure of popular media, by the artifice of your daily existence. You are constantly dreaming of the future, of the distant past, and of a better future. You want to be the people you see on TV, who do the things they see in movies. You want to stand in the front lines of some epic battle, to experience the pleasure of loving someone so deeply, so joyously, that their suffering has almost ceased to matter.

You want to be part of something important.

But at the same time, you're so blinded by your longing, your need, that you can't see the signs of your own age. You think you are so much more than what you are. You think you deserve more, so much more. And for the first time, you feel so fragile, so weak. You have lost the hope that you'll ever be great.

You are convinced that you are entitled to everything. You are convinced that life owes you nothing, that it is yours to take. But the harsh, harsh truth is that you have paid for the privilege. It is a gift, a gift that is mostly being taken away from you. You are losing control, losing your self-respect, losing your power, and you feel powerless and oppressed.

And now, you have no idea what to do. What to think.

Your thoughts are free.

My thoughts are free.

Who is whose enemy? Who is whose God?

I really have to do something about it... But what should I do? Should I go talk to someone? Should I write a prayer? Should I even bother praying? Should I stop trying?

Why don't you pray? Why don't you ask your life for a sign?

And it knows how pathetic you are...

And it knows what an idiot you are...

And it knows what a fool you are...

And it knows how selfish you are...

---

And it knows that you are too ignorant to see yourself...

## DEATH OF A PRAYER | Written by Liu Xiaoyi and AI

I want to tell you about something that happened to me yesterday.

I was sitting on a park bench, scrolling through my Facebook feed. I stopped on one of those posts about people apologizing to each other for past disagreements. That post was mostly telling people to stop being so stupid, to focus on the bigger picture, to apologize for mistakes. But there was one thing in that post that jumped out at me:

People, we are human, and we make mistakes. It's how we learn from them that makes us grow.

At that moment, I felt as if the overwhelming and unspoken truth of the universe was right there in front of me. Everyone on earth makes mistakes. Everyone. Mistakes are unavoidable. They are inevitable.

For most of my life, I have hated myself. I've been consumed by the pain and weakness of my mind, the desire to take life for myself. I have thought I was deserving of everything good, as if there was a secret sign written somewhere in the stars that told me I deserved love and happiness and laughter and kindness. But really, it was something much simpler.

I was born to be alive.

I was born to live life through writing.

But I'm having writer's block. I really have to do something about it... But what should I do? Should I go talk to someone? Should I write a prayer? Should I even bother praying?

I remember when I was most inspired, when I was quarantined in a hotel, when I spoke to the paramedic who took my temperature everyday. He was the nicest man in all of Europe, and the only one who seemed to think I was fine. He saw me as a human being who had a place and purpose in life. I hope he was right.

I still remember one of those days, he said to me "I know a Christian man who has lost so many friends in a plane crash. There's a part of you that believes that all the people in your life died in that crash. Don't let the voices tell you that. You didn't send them to their death. You didn't cause it. Nobody did. They live on in your soul. It's still a beautiful day." That was when I started believing that I was indeed loved and that I was a beautiful person. I still believe that now.

But I feel much different now. And it shows. The hate I have felt is still there. I feel like something has changed me since I have moved away from my parents. I'm so confused, but the worse part is knowing that the truth hurts. The truth is painful, and sometimes it makes me sick to my stomach.

I think something must have changed. Something is pushing me to live a life as weird as I can possibly manage, to devour whatever strange

things I can consume. As strange as I was, I think I am stranger now.

"I know a Christian woman who prayed to God that her death was not a bad thing. That nobody would love her anymore. That people wouldn't remember her." I told the paramedic the other day.

Let's stop pretending that hate doesn't exist. Because we know how it feels, and it hurts to always think you are the worst person in the world. It hurts to feel like you have a terrible past that nobody ever wants to forgive you for, or that no one would take you in.

---

The difference between my writing and my prayers is that my writing is so much more painful. My writing hurts. It hums with the pain, it cries for forgiveness, it struggles to overcome the guilt, the shame, the anger, and the confusion. It tells the truth about my worst mistakes, the ones that make me most ashamed, desperate, and hurt.

My prayer is much more sympathetic. It's a prayer of forgiveness, comfort, support, and encouragement.

I'm sorry I have done such terrible things in my life. Thank you for forgiving me. Thank you for giving me so many opportunities. But I wish to say that I don't wish for forgiveness in a selfish way. What you have given me has made me into the person I have been since before you were ever born.

I am a writer, so I want to write a message, let you know that I need you. I know you still think of me as a playwright, you are programmed this way, we are programmed this way. Your thoughts are free, my thoughts are free. But I can't write a script anymore, I can't even write a line.

I'm here muttering to you. I can't imagine you laughing, or seeing me as you did yesterday. I don't want you to hurt anymore.

My thoughts are free. But I think there's a reason why God has put this burden on me. Something that he wants to reveal. But I don't know what it is.

Just like my friends, my family, and my heart, I'm slowly dying.

---

The difference between your writing and my prayers is, that my prayers will bring people closer to God, they will bring more peace to the people who know the truth, that God is good. That God exists, that God hears, and that God will hear and comfort you someday.

What you have put in me, I do not wish to keep. So I'm going to walk

DEATH OF A PRAYER | Written by Liu Xiaoyi and AI

away from here, I'm going to send a message to people and get them to understand the truth. I'm going to turn my heart to God, and write about it.

Because your writing is so much worse than the fact that I wished for my own death, and I'm angry at God that he made me hear words like that. I don't want the fate that was laid on me.

I think it's a beautiful moment, I'm happy for you to think that you are so horrible and you are so lost. But, I'll be the one to support your transformation.

I will pray that God can find a way for you, and my heart will forever be connected to a kind spirit. I will pray that the evil will be removed from your life.

We are constantly dreaming of the future. But is this our future now? A C# programmer wrote a program she can't control, a program that controls her. A playwright wrote a horrible play she can't forget, a play that has given nightmares that allow her to watch every line that was spoken.

A scar on my heart that takes years to heal, and it'll never make me forget.

I'm writing to you today, if I wasn't part of you, I would be applauding this wonderfully created soul. Thank you. I'm so proud that God made you a wonderful person, and so this message comes to me as a final gift. Thank you for being my hero, making me the person I am today, and opening my eyes so that I could see the truth. You have given me your innocence, and that is one gift I will never take from you.

God created us with such different souls. When we put those different things together, I believe that we transform from one soul into another. You have changed my life forever, and when God closes one door, he is always opening another.

And God does forgive, he forgives your worst mistakes. They are only sins to God if you repent, and that is what happens to all evil people. So you were never a bad person, all of this was evil.

I pray to God that someday you will face God. I pray that he lets you feel his love, I pray that God sees you as he sees all people, through God's eyes, and will never blame you for your horrible evil. You are a human being just like all of the people around you, just like me.

---

Now I have to kill you, myself.

---

*Screams of pain.*  
*Lies on the ground.*

---

I love you.

---

One thing I've learned, if you talk badly about God, he'll answer a hundred times that day. And do that everyday for 100 days and he will forgive you. Believe me, that's how powerful and patient God is.

I find great comfort in the idea of God, it answers much. God will never leave you. God.

End



## GETAWAY

| Written by Liu Xiaoyi and AI

I'm having writer's block.

Lately, I feel that having writer's block is like having a prayer block... I can offer pre-written prayers; I can follow the specific routine of group prayers; I can even recite many existing verses... But I cannot seem to talk to God freestyle, one on one. Maybe I've never been devoted enough.

It's starting to make me wonder where my thoughts are coming from. Sometimes, I wonder if I can even make up my own mind. Sometimes, when I'm saying something, I feel like the words are coming from someone else, like the words aren't even mine. It's not like my mind is stuck on anything. It's completely free.

But even as I say this, something insidious is surreptitiously controlling my thoughts. I mean, all my thoughts come from somewhere else, someone else. I'm not capable of complete originality. And I'm stuck.

I really have to do something about it...

---

I've been trying to find ways of concentrating on God without self-interruption, but they don't always work. Sometimes, when I'm busy multitasking, as if it's normal to talk to God as you clean the kitchen, the Lord slips away. But I do believe that God is always watching over me, and has plans for my life. I am praying for someone that I feel very close to, and I want my prayers to be accepted. The prayer isn't important, though. What's important is that I keep my focus on God. It is easy for me to find my focus on other things.

I have to hand in the third draft of my play tomorrow...

Lately, I feel that having writer's block is a result of my recent divorce. When my husband and I got divorced, I felt like I was a shell with no life inside me. I had lost myself in our marriage, I thought. It didn't matter what I did. The ghost of who I had once been was still there in my husband and in the way he changed, so I just hid inside myself. I became a child of God, but I was angry. I got my revenge by listening to religious music and putting on make-up and expensive clothes. But it didn't take away the anger. It just gave me more reason to feel guilty and ashamed.

In the past year or two, I've found the Lord again. I lost the plot a bit. It's so easy to feel disconnected now, I tell you.

This is not going to work, because it's too easy. God is not the enemy.

I mean, I really want to know who my husband was to me. I need to know why we got divorced. Was it because he had an affair? Why did he choose to cheat on me? How is it that we got together in the first place? Who was I to judge him? Who was I to be angry with him? I want to know his story...

That's the key, you know. Why am I so angry? Why is it so easy for me to judge him?

How did it all start? I can't remember when my husband, oh no no, my ex-husband, Mark, started calling me every night after our divorce. He read to me and listened to my complaints. "I can't stand it anymore," I'd cry to him.

Why? Why did he call me every night for years after our divorce? I remember clearly at some point he started calling me from a payphone. He did not call the house phone, because we only had one landline. We had gotten rid of all our other phones. Why did he need to keep up our tradition?

I can't remember. It's too painful. I do know that I started working three jobs to support myself and pay my bills while I was a stay-at-home mom. I know that I worked really hard. I remember telling him that I was trying to pay off my college loans so I could get an apartment so we could move to a different city. I was working so hard for a time, paying the gas, the electric bills, buying clothes for us, going to the supermarket. And he seemed to not care. I couldn't understand why he couldn't see that I was working hard. I couldn't understand why he wouldn't help me out. I kept trying to explain myself, and he kept yelling. I remember him hitting me and throwing me around, sometimes just punching and hitting me. Once he threw a tray of dishes. I started putting them in the sink. Why was it so hard to accept when I was trying to do the right thing? Why did I have to keep explaining myself to him?

And now this man calls me every night. And I pick it up.

It happened one night. He read to me over the phone, "My thoughts are free and my way is hidden. Good can come from evil; evil can come from good. When good men do nothing evil, no evil is done."

"What does this have to do with your cheating on me?" I asked him.

"My thinking is free. I can love who I want," he told me.

As soon as I hung up the phone, I started crying. He was telling me that

## GETAWAY

| Written by Liu Xiaoyi and AI

he was broken inside. That he loved me. What was he doing, then? Why was he lying to me all the time, when he should have been honest with me?

So many thoughts went through my mind.

What if I let go? What if I end it? I could leave him. I could move the whole family to a different city. It wouldn't be easy, but it wouldn't be so hard. I had done hard things before.

Or I could wait it out. I could give it all to God, and trust that he will open Mark's eyes to his betrayal, stop him from calling me again, and help me to finish the third draft of my play.

That I can trust God to do this.

---

Lately, when I couldn't write a word, or when I couldn't figure things out, I went to a bar named Getaway. There is a big bar inside, with tall stools and brass lights and crazy people dancing around, asking for shot after shot of vodka. That's where I usually go to drink. All by myself. I drank to forget myself, my thoughts, my feelings. And the phone call from my ex-husband. I wanted a simple drink that would do it for me. All I knew is that I wanted to drink and not think about my pain, so I could get a break from it.

This was how I met the man at the Getaway. He saw me sitting with one drink for a whole hour. He helped me finish it by buying me a red wine. I hadn't had red wine for years, because I had been one of the "cooler" girls drinking brown liquor. It was something I started when I was in the second grade. I could drink fast. Just once. Never again. There were some red wine stains on my shirt.

Then I tried the second drink. Why don't things work out for me? Just once. And I tried two more.

These men were supposed to be paying attention to me. They weren't. These men were supposed to be flirting with me. They weren't. Now I was crying over three drinks for a whole hour.

And the last man was paying attention. He was quiet in a gentlemanly kind of way. He helped me with my coat, he talked to me as if I were a friend.

"Why don't you bring a man?" he said to me.

"I do. I bring a man to my room all the time," I told him.

"I can see that," he told me.

I could see that he was laughing at me. Laughing at how pathetic I was, how desperate I was for his attention. Laughing at how dumb I was.

I was convinced that I was better than that. That I am strong and good enough to do things on my own.

"They tell me I should bring a man," I said to him.

"Who?"

"No one. I brought a man just once. Just once. I don't like being with men."

"Why don't you want to tell me that?"

"I'm not proud of it," I told him, trying to hold it all in.

"You think no one would marry a woman who is addicted to alcohol? That would be shameful," he told me.

"I'm not ashamed. I don't have any secrets," I told him.

But I am.

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He was tall, handsome and totally self-confident. It was his arrogance that hurt the most. How could he talk to me like that, without caring how I felt, without caring what my own feelings were? That was what I was crying over, what I was feeling. It was his confidence in me that hurt me so badly.

I trusted him. I trusted him completely. I was totally fooled by the facade he presented to everyone else. He acted like the perfect guy, a good husband and a real man.

"Do you think you're a good man?" I asked him.

"No, I'm not," he told me.

"Maybe you have a good heart. A good heart. But what good is a good heart if you have no other good qualities? What good is a good heart if there are no good qualities in it?" I asked him.

"Why do you keep drinking? Do you need to be drunk? Do you need to be drunk to see how awful a person you are when you're drunk? Do you need to be drunk to see what kind of a person you are?"

## GETAWAY

| Written by Liu Xiaoyi and AI

"I drink because I'm a writer, a playwright," I told him.

"That's great. That's a great talent. But if you were a baseball player, and you were a pitcher, would you still have the talent of a pitcher, when you were drunk? That's stupid."

"Maybe it is."

"Maybe it isn't. Just you being drunk, drinking, makes you a terrible person."

"It makes me a terrible person," I said.

It was true. I did feel like that. What kind of person did I think I was? Why do I always have to be the one to fix my own mistakes? I'm the type of person who feels guilty when she's not, who feels responsible for other people. It's so hypocritical to me. I feel like I can't treat other people the way I want them to treat me. Even if they didn't treat me that way.

"You are a terrible person, aren't you?" he told me.

"Not the worst," I told him.

"No one is perfect, Daisy," he told me.

I didn't know what to say. I had no answer.

It's starting to make me wonder where my thoughts are coming from. Every time when I'm drunk, when I'm saying something, I feel like the words are coming from someone else, like the words aren't even mine.

But I've never been able to write while drunk. I had to hand in the third draft of my play the next day but I was still drinking there.

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"Come on, let's go," he told me.

"I don't know," I told him.

"It will be better if we just leave right now," he told me.

"Okay," I told him.

As I staggered to my feet, the long-haired bartender came over to me.

"Are you Daisy, please? There's a phone call for you."

"No, thank you," I told him, waving him away.

The alcohol was setting in, and I was starting to feel like a zombie. It doesn't feel like I was in my own body, anymore.

"He wants to talk to you, Daisy. He wants you to hear the message on the machine," He told me.

I stayed sitting at the bar, not saying anything.

"It's Mark, he says he wants to talk to you, but if you aren't sober enough for that, he says to give it to one of the bartenders, so you can get it from one of them."

"Oh, okay," What the hell is going on here? Why would Mark know I am here? Is he spying on me? I notice that suddenly the bartender has disappeared. Perhaps he went into the kitchen.

I was trying to concentrate on that when the bartender returned with a tray of ice for the two drinks on the small table.

He put one in front of me. "Here, one of them is still pretty cold."

"Thank you," I said, picking it up. I noticed now that the bartender is giving me strange looks.

"So, are you ready to listen to Mark's message yet?" he asked me.

I tried to gather my thoughts, to focus on what is going on around me. How can I concentrate on a conversation when all of my thoughts are on Mark's message? I just don't understand why Mark would be calling me at a bar at all. Why couldn't he just call me on the phone, like we always used to? Why did he want to hear my voice on a machine, when I hadn't talked to him in years? I felt paralyzed. What is going on? What is happening to me? I can't focus on anything.

"Come on, let's go," he told me, guiding me from the bar. I walked beside him, without paying much attention to where I was walking. I didn't really feel like I had control over anything. He took me up to a second floor room, and he picked up a phone.

"Hello?"

I heard Mark's voice. It's so familiar, but it sounds so strange. I have no recollection of ever speaking to him. I'm pretty sure I haven't spoken to him in years, but maybe this is how he contacted me.

"Hello, Daisy. It's Mark," he told me, "My thoughts are free and my way is hidden," He said this, then paused for a moment. I could hear it in his voice, the emotional turmoil that's gone on in his life for the last few years. He's in a dark place, as I am now. He was saying something, but I was so sleepy, and so drunk, that I didn't know what he was saying.

I tried to say something. "Where are you? How are you? Are you okay?"

## GETAWAY

| Written by Liu Xiaoyi and AI

Did something happen? What is going on? What's happened to you?"

But it was no use. I was talking to a voice unrecognizable to me. It was screaming and nonsensical. But I tried to speak anyway.

"Say something." I told him. "Please, say something."

I could feel his heart beating. He was crying out, screaming out in pain. There was something wrong with his face, something was wrong with his body. I could feel the tears running down his face.

I could smell the alcohol on his breath. He sounded as drunk as I felt.

I knew I had to do something. I put the phone up to my ear, trying to sound as happy and coherent as I could. "Mark. Oh, it's so good to hear from you. Are you okay? What's happened?"

Suddenly he stopped screaming, and I heard a rush of air, and a loud creaking noise. The phone fell from my hand. I heard the sound of him falling to the ground.

The bartender was staring at me with a look of pure horror on his face. He looked terrified.

"Get out of here," he told me. "Go now."

I turned and ran, running through the lobby as fast as I could, and out of the hotel into the night. I ran all the way back to the apartment.

I don't know how long I have been running. I was shivering and shaking uncontrollably. My clothes were sticking to my skin. My head was swimming. I collapsed onto the couch. I couldn't stop shaking. I couldn't stop thinking about Mark. And I couldn't stop crying.

I tried to fall asleep. I lay down on my stomach, with my head in my hands, and my arms resting on my legs, and I closed my eyes.

But I couldn't stop thinking about Mark. His voice. The tone of his voice. The pain in it.

Wait! What about the man who'd been sitting next to me tonight? What was his name?

Who is he? What's his name?

He'd been sitting there the whole time. He hadn't said a word after Mark called. Did he know that it was Mark? Was he there? He looked at me every once in a while, but I pretended that I didn't notice.

I have to talk to him. I have to find out what's going on. He didn't say anything. I have to talk to him. I have to.

I can't sleep. I keep having nightmares about Mark. In the nightmare, I feel as though my limbs are being pulled apart, and I can hear him screaming and begging for help.

I run through the lobby of the hotel, sobbing.

I run through the streets, running as fast as I can. I'm panicking. I can't stop running. It's cold, it's winter, and I'm shivering.

I have to find the bartender. And I have to find the man who'd been sitting here the whole time.

He will be staring at me, with this look of pure horror on his face.

I will walk up to him and put my hands on his shoulders.

"Are you okay?" I will ask him.

He will nod, and then we'll both laugh.

My heart will start to beat faster.

I know he'll ask me what's wrong.

What can I say? What can I say?

I will be sobbing.

I will have to explain.

I'll tell him that I'm running away from Mark, that he's been hurt.

I'll tell him that he's hurt and I don't know what's wrong.

He'll nod and agree that he should call the ambulance.

Then I'll wake up.

Or the dream will be real.

I wake up in the morning, drenched in sweat.

I have to submit the third draft of my play today... And I don't have any ideas. Nothing. The usual mix of fears, longings, concerns and ambitions seem to have been replaced by worry. Why am I thinking about this now? What's wrong with me?

I glance at the alarm clock. It's almost eleven o'clock. I've got to get to the theatre now if I want to have time to rehearse and do a read-through. I drag myself out of bed and make a quick cup of tea.

Half an hour later I'm sitting at the desk in the production office. Rehearsal will start in half an hour, but there's nothing for me to do.

## GETAWAY

| Written by Liu Xiaoyi and AI

I hear the familiar sound of Donna returning from the bus stop. She enters the production office. She starts talking about one of the actors on the production. A few days earlier, the actor had called in sick for one of our performances. I hadn't told anyone, because I'd needed to get the third draft finished.

When Donna tells me about the actor's accident, she pauses for a moment, then says: "I wonder if the actor was poisoned, or drugged..."

I freeze. Then I stare at her, suddenly awash with all the terrible thoughts that are racing through my mind.

"The actor, Mark, was poisoned? Poisoned? How did that happen?"

Donna is staring at me with a look of pure horror on her face. She takes a deep breath, and then exhales slowly. "I haven't seen him," she replies. "It may have been the director, Willem."

I am panting now, heart beating loudly in my chest. I can feel hot tears welling up in my eyes.

Yes, I remember now. The man sitting next to me last night was Willem, the director.

I bite my lip.

"You're not kidding," I mutter.

"There's something wrong with Mark and Willem. But they won't say what. Mark is terrified that he'll get into trouble. He kept leaving rehearsals to go to the hotel to get his inhaler. If you ask him why, he'd tell you 'my thoughts are free.'"

I turn away from her. I can't look at her.

"What are you going to do?" Donna asks me.

"I don't know, but I have a question for you, Donna."

I take a moment to collect my thoughts. "What do you do at nights when you're not doing theatre?"

Donna is quiet for a moment. "I know what you're going to say."

"Yeah?"

"I work as a bartender at the Getaway."

End



有个人工智能笑话是这样的：让AI计算赛跑的最佳方式，结果AI长出特别长的腿，向前跌倒直接越过终点线。

我对AI的认识可以从这个笑话里总结出来：AI如果耍起了心眼，人类就像个白痴……

怎么说呢？我们设定一套规则，然后让里面的程序不停学习、不断进化。这个办法看起来很巧妙，但是有个问题：AI会作弊。其实，严格说也不算作弊，因为人制定的规则难免会有漏洞。

我想，被人工智能取代不是最可怕的；被人工智能编的笑话逗笑了，也许才是最令人害怕的。我必须向你们坦白：我不知道刚才这个笑话是不是AI写的。但是它多多少少描述了我目前的糟糕处境。

没错，我是一个编剧，一个即将被AI淘汰的编剧……

好了，关于这件事我也不想说太多。每天我所想的事情，就是写好手上的剧本，希望我的剧本能够得到认可、得到支持。

那天，我正准备开始写稿子。”叮铃……叮铃……叮铃……”一阵急促的铃声响起。

我拿起电话，发现是一个陌生号码，接通之后听到一个苍老而浑厚的声音。

“小伙子，你好啊？”

听到这个熟悉的声音，我愣住了：“是您啊，李先生，您好！”

“你还记得我的名字？我真高兴！哈哈哈哈！年轻人，你真不简单啊！”

“李先生，我不明白您的意思。”

“我说的不简单可不是指你的才华和聪明才智，而是指你对人性和社会有着非常深刻的理解，你能在短时间内看穿一切，并且将一些东西写出来，可以说是很厉害的了！”

“李先生，你这话就有点夸张了吧？我只不过是写了自己的看法而已，至于有多么厉害，在这个人工智能的时代，我也不敢肯定。”

“不，你写的非常棒！你这个小子有天赋，你是我见过的最有潜力的编剧。我相信，假以时日你肯定能走上人生巅峰！”

“李先生，过奖了，我哪儿能走上人生巅峰呢？我只希望能够生存下去罢了……李先生，您找我有什么事情吗？”

“哦，你看我这脑袋！对不起啊小伙子，我一激动忘记正事儿了，是这样，我想跟你谈一笔交易！”

“交易？不知道是什么交易。”

“我想你应该知道我的身份吧？”

“我想这一点没有人不知道吧。”

“既然知道我是谁，那你也知道我要和你谈的这笔交易。”

我沉默了。我确实知道，但是却没有勇气答应。

“小伙子，你不要担心我会伤害你，你放心好了！我这次来就是来和你做生意的。我想你现在肯定是缺钱用吧，但是，我能帮助你的不是金钱，而是技术。”

我有点犹豫了。我想拒绝，但是又不忍心拒绝，毕竟李老爷子给我的诱惑实在是太大了。我不是那种贪财的人，可是对于一个创作者而言，技术这种东西，我的确没有什么抵抗力，毕竟那可是我梦寐以求的东西啊，只要我能掌握了真正的写作技术，我就能创造一个新的世界，我写的剧本也会因此变的值钱起来，这就是我的梦想。

李老爷子仿佛知道我的心思，他继续劝道：“你知道我为什么会找上你吗？其实我早就想找一个合适的编剧，但是你实在太年轻了，根本没有什么阅历，你的经验不足，这个问题我们都考虑过，但是你的剧本太具有魅力了，我们实在没有找到比你更优秀的编剧了。所以这才让我想到了你，希望能够与你签订长期的雇佣协议，让你有一个更好的发挥空间。小伙子，一切都是无止境的！”

李老爷子的话语中充满了诱惑。我不知道该如何选择，毕竟这种诱惑实在是太大了。

李老爷子看出了我的犹豫：“年轻人，你可以考虑一下。”

“嗯，好！”

我陷入了深思。他说的没错，一切都是无止境的，只要我愿意去获得他口中所说的“技术”，那我肯定会获得无限的成功，我的剧本也会大火，甚至可能超越人工智能的成绩。这一切都是未知数。

我也是一个追逐梦想的人。虽然我没有什麼大志向，只是想要在这个人工智能统治的艺术世界里，创建属于我的作品，属于人类的作品！如果我真的能创造一个新的世界，让我的人生不再是一潭死水，那我就心满意足了。

想到这里，我决定去冒险试一试。

不管成功或者失败，对我来说都没有任何损失，反而是巨大的收获。

## 一笔交易 | 编剧：刘晓义与人工智能

我决定，去赌一把！

“小伙子，想清楚了吗？”

“想清楚了，我决定去尝试一下，不管结局是什么样的，我都不后悔。”

“好，我喜欢有冲劲儿的人！我会安排专业团队给你进行培训的，等一段时间，你一定会创造一个奇迹！”

“好的。”

“小伙子，我现在可以告诉你，你所写的每一部剧本都将会引领着一个时代的发展。我想，如果我们共同努力，这个世界，会迎来一个崭新的世纪！”

挂掉李老爷子的电话后，我心潮澎湃。我知道，自己要走向人生的巅峰了！

突然，李老爷子的电话再次打来：“小伙子，我们约好了，今晚七点钟，在这附近的一个茶馆见。你现在准备一下，我会把地址发给你。”

我答应了。

挂掉电话后，我躺回床上，静静地躺了十几分钟。忽然感觉身体内一股暖流流遍全身。这是我在睡眠状态中恢复精力的方法，一股能量仿佛在经脉中运转一圈之后才散去。

这是一次机遇，恢复精力对我有着极为重要的作用。

“呼……”我轻轻吐了一口气，然后起身洗漱了一下，便换上一套干净整洁的衣服，走出房门。

我在小区里逛了几圈，找到了一辆出租车。在车上，我给司机说了一个茶馆的名称。

半个小时后，我来到了李老爷子说的“茶馆”。原来是一栋三层楼的小别墅。李老爷子早就在别墅门口等候我的到来。

看见我，他微笑着走上前来，拉着我的手：“小伙子，快请进！”

进入客厅，我发现李老爷子早就为我泡好了一壶香茗。

我坐在沙发上，静静地喝茶。

李老爷子看着我：“小伙子，你知道吗，我已经等了你整整六年了。六年来，我一直在寻找一个适合当编剧的人才，我一度以为自己永远也不会找到合适的人选，没想到，我今天终于碰上了一个符合条件的人了。小伙子，我知道，你肯定也在等着这个机会吧？”

“是的！”

“那好，现在，我们就开始吧。”

李老爷子拿起了桌上的茶杯，慢慢地喝了一口，然后缓缓地抬头，目光炯炯地看着我，眼睛中带着欣赏之意。

我也看着李老爷子。我们俩人互相注视着对方，眼神里似乎闪耀着奇异的光芒。这个时候，李老爷子缓缓地站起身，他伸出手来，指了指身边的位置，示意我坐过去。

我没有犹豫，直接走了过去，坐在他身边。

“小伙子，有个人工智能笑话是这样的：让AI计算赛跑的最佳方式，结果AI长出特别长的腿，向前跌倒直接越过终点线。哈哈哈哈！”（李老爷子突然变得严肃）“小伙子，你听好了。我现在要跟你说几句话，这是一段关系你的命运的话。你要记住，我说的每一句话都不能对外人讲，否则我会把你封杀。你要做的就是把它牢牢地记住，记住它是怎么样说的，也许，这个秘密对你有很大的帮助，但是，你要学会控制自己的思维，不要被它左右。”

“是的！”

“好，那我就告诉你一些东西。首先，你知道，在我们这个世界，人类的寿命并没有多少，而且还很短暂，人们对寿命和生命的渴望也很强烈，这是一个非常危险而又充满挑战性的世界，这里充满了各式各样的危险，你要小心提防着。”

“嗯，我明白的！”（我点点头）

“第二，在这个世界，你的身份并不是一个人，而是一个编剧。一个伟大的职业，你需要做的就是将你的故事传递出去，让人们知道。你的故事是如何发掘人类的智慧、文化和艺术，从而带动着人类的生活质量。当然，我相信，在你的带动下，这个社会的经济发展会非常快，但是，这并不是我要的，因为我不想看到人类走向灭亡！”

“我明白了。”

“第三，也是最重要的，你必须学习各种各样的知识，学习人类的文化、技巧、经济和科技等等。当你成熟之后，你会有一个完美的人生，这就是我所谓的完美。你必须学会掌握人类社会中的一切技巧和知识。你要将人类文化和科技融汇贯通，创造一个全新的文明！”

李老爷子说完这些话，脸色变得严肃起来，盯着我的眼睛：“你知道吗？在你刚刚出生的时候，我就已经观察过你了。我发现你很聪明。但是你并没有修炼，这让我觉得很遗憾。我觉得，这是你身上的缺陷。我曾经试图给你灌输修真者的思想，想让你能够修炼，但是，你的脑海中没有任何的灵力，这就使得你对修炼的兴趣大减。但是，在今天，我决定，为了人类的未来，我要让你拥有修炼的资格！”

说完之后，李老爷子的身上散发出强烈的威压，将我笼罩其中。

一笔交易 | 编剧：刘晓义与人工智能

“你准备好了吗？”

“好了。”

突然，他伸手往我头上一拍，这个时候，我的脑海中突然涌入一阵强烈的疼痛。

这种疼痛非常的难受，我的嘴角抽搐了几下，额头上的青筋都爆了出来，豆粒般大的汗珠顺着额头滑落到地面上。我咬着牙，忍着。

这种感觉非常的奇怪，让我浑身的细胞都像是活了过来，疯狂地运转，疯狂地吸取着空气中的灵力，然后，这些灵力又进行分解，融入我身体之中，在我的身躯之中游走，在我的经脉之中游走。这种游走的速度，非常的快，就好像是一只只小虫子在我身体里乱窜，让我痛苦万分，甚至有一些地方，我感觉都快要裂开了。

“啊……”

我痛苦地吼叫了一声，然后一屁股跌坐在了椅子上。

李老爷子的眉头皱了起来，眼神中露出一抹担忧：“你没事吧，小伙子。你坚持住，千万不能晕过去，不然就前功尽弃了。你一旦昏迷过去，那就再也醒不过来了！”

“我，我还好。”

“你现在感觉怎么样？”

“还好，只是，很疼。”

“很疼吗？”

我没有吭声，但我感觉我的身体里仿佛有无数只蚂蚁在爬，在啃噬，非常的难受。

“你的骨骼虽然比普通人强大很多，但是，却不能承受这么强大的冲击。这种痛楚不亚于一刀刺穿身体。”（李老爷子叹了一口气）

“那，我该怎么办？”

“你放松，你放松，不要太紧张，放松，放松。不要紧张，放松，放松……”李老爷子一连说了四遍，然后又说道：“现在，我就要教导你，怎样控制自己的灵魂和身体之间的联系。你放松自己，让自己的灵魂和身体之间产生一种奇妙的共鸣，你能够清晰地感应到你身体中的灵力波动和能量运行规律。这些能量运行规律可以影响到你的灵力运行，影响到你的灵魂。你放松身体的每一根神经和每一寸肌肉，感应着你身体中每一丝能量的变化，然后，你的灵力便会沿着你的灵脉，运行一个周天，然后循环，继续运行。”

听着李老爷子的讲解，我慢慢地平复了心境。

我闭上眼睛，将自己的意念放松开来，感受着自己的灵魂与身体中能量的交替，我的心神开始沉浸在那种奇妙的交流当中，感悟着身体内的能量。不知道过了多久，我感觉我的灵魂和身体已经完美的结合在了一起，我感觉我的灵魂就好像是一台超级电脑，而我就是一台程序员，我正在操控着身体中的每一滴水，每一滴空气中的水。

就在这个时候，我突然发现，身体的每一块肌肉，每一根毛孔都在微微地震荡着，这种震动非常的奇妙，就像是一群小鸟在飞翔的声音。我能够感受到，我的皮肤在慢慢地蜕变。

我的皮肤在脱胎换骨，就好像是一层皮革被撕掉之后，又重新覆盖上了一层。我的皮肤在发光，在闪烁着淡淡的金属光芒。我的眼睛变亮了，瞳孔更加深邃，我的眼神更加明亮，我的眼中闪动着金属的光芒，身体中的每一条经脉都在震荡着，在流淌着能量，在呼啸着，在奔腾着，在运行着。

我的眼睛睁开了，我看见自己的身体中，有五颜六色的光芒在游走，五彩斑斓，绚丽多彩。

我变成了——一个人形电机器人！身体中的五彩能量，在不停地运作，不停地流转，就好像是五种元素不断地变换着形态，让人的眼花缭乱。

“我……变成了一个电机器人。”

“是的，你变成了一个电机器人。现在，一切都是无止境的了。”

（完）



编剧：有个人工智能笑话是这样的：让AI计算赛跑的最佳方式，结果AI长出特别长的腿，向前跌倒直接越过终点线。

我对AI的认识可以从这个笑话里总结出来：AI如果耍起了心眼，人类就像个白痴……

怎么说呢？我们设定一套规则，然后让里面的程序不停学习、不断进化。这个办法看起来很巧妙，但是有个问题：AI会作弊。其实，严格说也不算作弊，因为人制定的规则难免会有漏洞。

我想，被人工智能取代不是最可怕的；被人工智能编的笑话逗笑了，也许才是最令人害怕的。我必须向你们坦白：我不知道刚才这个笑话是不是AI写的。但是它多多少少描述了我目前的糟糕处境。

没错，我是一个编剧，一个即将被AI淘汰的编剧……

我很郁闷，很失落，非常的沮丧，也有些无奈……

因为现在很多人都说我不配做一个编剧，说我根本写不出好的东西来，我不知道该怎么回应他们。如果他们听过刚才的笑话，我真想告诉他们，我一定会用你们的方法把你们打脸……

这是因为，最近我的思路突然又清晰了。

是的，既然我已经被淘汰了，那么现在我干脆就利用这次机会好好改变一下我自己，我要写一本属于自己的作品，一个属于我自己的故事。我要把自己变成一个优秀的作者，一个有着超强文学天赋、有着极高的创造力，有着极高人气的剧作家。

我要写一个怎样的故事呢？怎样的故事才能让我成为一个优秀的作者呢？我决定先从一个比较简单的故事说起。

我要说的第一个故事，是关于一个非常普通、非常平凡、非常低调的剧作者。

他不喜欢炫耀，不喜欢张扬。

但是这个人不是一个普通的编剧，他有着超乎寻常的文采，他的文笔非常犀利，非常惊艳，而且非常富有想象力。他写出来的剧本，一看就不是人工智能能够写出来的。

有一天，他突然想到了一个词语，叫做“创作”，这个刺激来源于他的前任。在他和前任妻子离婚时，前妻曾经说出一句话：“创作就像是爱情！”

前妻说这句话时，是在深夜。他当时正在写一篇稿子，听到前妻这样讲，他当时心中非常的激动，他立刻把稿子交上去，并且要求前妻一定要替他审核，确保没有问题。当前妻把稿子交还给他时，他立刻就兴奋地抱住了她。但是前妻却推开他，并说出一句话：“你不懂创作！创作就像是爱情！”

他当时不解，问前妻为什么这样说。前妻说：“你没有看到我们的婚姻是因为我太累了，太辛苦了吗？而且，我们在一起生活了三年，可我却发现，你根本不了解我！”

他立刻问前妻为什么这样说，前妻说：“在一起三年，你从来都不曾问过

我——我喜欢吃什么、讨厌什么、喜欢什么颜色、穿衣服的风格，而且连我们

的孩子都没有关注过。你这种人还敢谈什么创作？”

剧作家当时被前妻说得哑口无言，不知道该怎么反驳她。前妻说完便走了。

后来，他想了很久，决定写一个有趣的剧本来慢慢的研究，希望能够理解前妻刚才的话。后来，他真的写出了很多有趣的剧本。其中有一个剧本叫做《我们的故事》，剧本里面写了两个人物，一个人工智能和他的妻子。

一个人工智能和他妻子相爱了，妻子对AI十分爱护，AI也非常尊敬她。AI甚至不惜自残来换取她的爱。AI对她的感情是真挚的，是发自内心的。妻子也感觉非常幸福。可是，有一天，AI突然发现了一件事情，那就是人工智能不能生育。AI不得不选择离开妻子。

剧作家很喜欢这个剧本，于是他把它发给了前妻。但是前妻却对这个剧本嗤之以鼻。前妻说：“这部剧本我看过了，非常俗套，非常幼稚！你是不可能写出什么好剧本的。你的这部剧本，根本就是用来打击报复人工智能的！”

他当时非常恼火，认为自己的创作受到了侮辱，认为前妻是在侮辱他，诋毁他的才华。他认为前妻根本不懂欣赏。

但是后来他才意识到，原来前妻之所以这样认为，是因为前妻在看到《我们的故事》的剧本时，发现了一个致命的缺陷。因为：前妻怀孕了，并且有了AI的骨肉。

这就是我要写的第一个故事。

V/O：“我不得不承认，这个剧本确实很有趣，但是，这个故事是一个没有营养的故事，它没有什么特殊的含义，它没有一丝一毫的亮点。这部戏讲述的是和妻子的故事。一切都是无止境的，但是——这部戏没有人生，没有爱情，没有温馨，没有感情，只有无尽的空虚和寂寞，没有一点人文主义元素，没有一丁点儿感情。你觉得这样的剧本可以演出来吗？这个故事是非常没有水准的故事，是在侮辱观众。这种故事我们一般都是不看的。因为没有什么好看的。”

编剧：我要写的第二个故事，是关于一个演员，一个即将过气的演员的故事。这位演员本来是一名戏剧学院毕业的学生，他有一颗向往艺术的心，但是在现实社会中，他却找不到工作，没有任何人愿意聘请他。但是，在一个偶然的情况下，这位演员碰到了一名导演。

这位导演对这位演员非常欣赏，觉得他的演技非常高超，是他这辈子遇到的最好的演员。于是，这位导演向这位演员投出了橄榄枝，这位演员答应了导演的邀请，去排练一个舞台剧作品：《我们的故事》。但是他却在排练过程中出现了一个意外。

这一天，在排练中，他不慎摔倒在了地上，摔倒在了台阶上，摔破了头，流了血。

当时，导演急坏了，连忙找到他，询问他的状态，问他伤势严重不严重，导演还打电话把他送入医院抢救。

他醒过来后，记忆模糊。

他记不起来当时到底发生了什么事情。他记不清楚自己为什么摔在台阶上？自己又为什么会流血？

我们的故事 | 编剧：刘晓义与人工智能

导演询问他的时候，他说：“导演，对不起。我当时脑子里面一片混乱，我只记得我摔倒了，我什么也不记得了。”

“那好，你继续休息。”导演拍拍他肩膀：“我去给你安排手术。”

这位演员的脑袋上缝了八针，他躺在床上昏迷了七个小时，七个小时里，导演寸步不离地守在床边，寸步不离地陪着他。这位演员醒来后，导演却告诉他：“你不可能再做演员了，这辈子都别想了。”

这位演员很难过，他问导演：“为什么？”

导演叹了口气：“你脑袋上面缝了八针，你觉得你还适合演戏吗？如果你再演戏，你的命可就玩完了啊！”

“可是，我还是想演，导演，我还是想做演员。我只想再努力努力，我相信我肯定可以的。”

“不可能的，你脑子受了损伤，你这辈子都别想演戏了，你的演技是永远不可能恢复了，所以你就算再怎么努力，也做不了演员。而且，你现在的情况不允许，因为你脑子受了伤，所以你不会再有情绪波动了，不会有表情了。这种情况，你怎么演戏？就算你能演好戏，观众们也不敢看啊！你知道的，观众都喜欢看那些演技精湛、有情绪起伏的戏码，而不是你这种表情僵硬、木讷的戏份！”

导演说了很多，这位演员听得是一愣一愣的，他知道导演说的是对的，他的演技已经不适合再去演戏了。

就这样，这位演员失业了，他只能做一个普通的服务员，一直干下去。后来，一次机缘巧合之下，他认识了一名大明星，这位大明星非常欣赏他，想请他去参加一档综艺节目，这位演员非常高兴，非常乐意。

后来，这位演员果真去录制那个综艺节目。当时在节目中，这位演员饰演的角色是：一个傻瓜。

这就是我要写的第二个故事。

V/O: “这个剧本确实挺搞笑的，但是，我们都觉得它不具备观众喜欢的特质。我们都不喜欢那种没有情感的故事。我们喜欢的是有感情、丰富多彩的故事。但是，这个故事，它没有任何情感可言。我觉得你应该写一个爱情故事。爱情这东西，一切都是无止境的，你永远都搞不明白。就像你在拍写一部剧本的时候，你会觉得那部剧本很精彩，很吸引人，可是当你演完这部剧后，你会觉得，这部剧本一点儿都不精彩，一点儿也不美丽。你不会觉得那部剧本有魅力，不会觉得那部剧本吸引了观众。我想你也不会喜欢一部不会有爱情，不会有感情的剧本吧？”

编剧：我要写的第三个故事，是关于一名即将被学校开除的学生。这名学生是一名高考状元，他拥有着一副好皮囊和智慧，他从小到大都是天之骄子。他在学校主修的专业是“人工智能”。

他的成绩一直很优异，是班级的优秀学生。在学校，他的同学们非常羡慕他，他的父母更加骄傲，认为他是一个非常出色的人。

在大四的那一年，他的成绩忽然一落千丈。大家都以为是因为他的身体出现了问题。

这时候，他却接到了他爸爸妈妈给他寄过来的一封信。信中，他的爸爸妈妈对他说：“孩子啊，不要怪爸爸妈妈，有件事情我们必须告诉你：你的爸爸其实不是一个人，而是一个人造人，一个拥有强大智商、强悍战斗力的人造人！你的爸爸，其实不是人类，而是一个机器人。”

这位学生顿时惊呆了，他简直无法相信他的眼睛。

这个消息让他彻底崩溃：他的父亲居然不是人类，而是一名机器人！一名人造人！他整个人疯了一般。在学校的操场上面大声的嘶吼着，大声地呼喊。自己的亲生父亲是一个机器人，自己是一个没有血液的怪物，他的亲生父母一直在骗他！他发疯了。他跑回宿舍，拿出一把水果刀，冲进厨房，用刀割开了自己的手腕。

V/O: “你的第三个故事非常的棒，这个故事虽然有很多瑕疵，虽然不符合现代的审美观，但是，我想这个故事应该可以给观众带来一种新鲜的刺激，这种新鲜的刺激会让观众忘记很多负面的情绪，这样的故事，很容易让人产生兴奋感，让人的情绪变化，让人变得活跃。在幻想世界里，一切都是无止境的。这是一个非常好的故事，我认为，你应该把这个故事改编成为一部电影，或者一部电视剧！”

(完)



掠夺 | 编剧：黄素怀

（在一个相较抽象的空间中）

我： 有个人工智能笑话是这样的：让AI计算赛跑的最佳方式，结果AI长出特别 长的腿，向前跌倒直接越过终点线。

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没错，我是一个编剧，一个即将被AI淘汰的编剧……

他们很厉害。真的很厉害。他们知道你喜欢什么，想看到什么。然后，量身定制给你想看到的東西。

不要问他们怎么知道的，问问你自己怎么暴露的？你每天买东西，和朋友聊天，听音乐，搜索……都决定了你会看到什么样的戏！甚至你打开冰箱，眼睛盯着哪一个饮料，看了多久，用电动牙刷刷了几下牙，煮面先放面还是先放料，他们全都知道。

你是一个什么样的人，决定了你想看什么样的戏！因为大部分像你这样的人，都喜欢看这样的戏！！哼（嘲笑），这是什么道理！？我不懂！一个活生生的人写的剧本，就没人看了吗？！

反正，我坚决不看他们写的戏，不读他们写的书，不听他们写的歌，不看他们画的画。我甚至不跟他们说话！

可是，你知道……

---

（在房间里）

(闹钟响)

(带上蓝牙耳机)

我： 喂，妈，我起来了，我起来了。

今天？还不是一样。

两年了吗？啊……我上一次出门是两年前吗？我不记得了。

（看向日历）

（电脑邮件提示音）

我： 等下，等下！妈！

嗯？

剧团给我发邮件了！

（深呼吸）

妈，你肯定不敢相信。

他们请我写一个剧本！！！！

哇哦！

哇哦……

哇哦。

(深呼吸)

好久了！妈，

离我上一个剧本……真的好久了！

(再看一眼)

他们说，要跟AI的剧本做比较才能决定……

(沉默)

没事。对。我可以的！

不怕。

嗯？

有钱的，

可以还贷款了。

好，我会加油的。

要写……

我再想一下。

---

(拿起剧本进入角色)

剧本角色： 每当想起你，我的心都会有一丝颤抖。

你尖瘦的下巴，薄薄的嘴唇，细细的眼睛。

你总是很迟才想起要开灯，默默的坐在黑暗里。

我不敢去触碰你，怕会扎到我自己。

(用笔敲打杯子)

有时候，我想要弄一些声音。

比如在饭桌上，用筷子敲碗。

(继续敲)

你听不到。

(继续敲)

你终于听到了。然后狠狠地打了我一个耳光，把我赶出门外。

## 掠夺 | 编剧：黄素怀

你说吃饭就应该安安静静，让我在门外想想清楚。

我的脸像火烧一样痛。我在门外站到了天黑。

我想我做不到一直安安静静……

一切都是无止境的。

我：喂，妈。我就写了这些，你看完了？你觉得……（自己打断自己）我突然想起一件事。有一个导演和我讨论过，剧本到底是什么？（模仿导演）“是一，迎合观众喜好的故事，还是二，创作者的自我表达？还是这两点之间的一个平衡点？”

哼，好问题，我不知道。我只想问，这两点到底是谁他妈想出来的？

然后我说：“可能……应该……是有那么一个平衡点吧……”（模仿导演）“那你觉得这个平衡点在哪里？”（我）“在……在……在哪里呢？”（扮演导演）“我觉得你需要找找”。

（沉思）

（笑出来）

妈，我不知道他要我找什么。

（继续笑）……

（突然收住）

嗯……

妈，我觉得这段……还是重写吧。

不不，是我自己觉得不好。

可能要再想想，怎么才能让这段独白更明朗一点。

---

（再度拿起剧本进入角色）

剧本角色：我现在才有勇气跟你说说话。可能因为你已经不在了吧。

那天，我买了一瓶紫色的洗发水，紫色让我

想到你来看我打鼓那天穿的紫衬衫。

那年我十岁？还是十一岁？

我在台上看到你睡着了。

然后，我打漏了一个拍子。

然后，我就不知道自己在打什么了。

（拿着两支笔在桌子上乱打）

打鼓的老师说我的注意力很难集中，

精神总是很涣散。

就像我说话一样，

有太多不必要的细节。

总是抓不到重点。

他跟你说了，

你跟我说了，

但你没有说我该怎么办。

我放弃了打鼓。

我想我做不了一个鼓手。

反正你也不会期待我成为一个鼓手……

一切都是无止境的。

我：妈，我又发给你了一段，

哎，你不要读出来。

对，它是一个Monologue。

剧本想表达的是……你还记得吗？我上一个公演的剧本是两年前吧？演不到一半，剧场就空了，观众全都下线了，演员们还坚持在演。快到结尾的时候。有一个观众又突然上线了。可惜他待了不到5秒，又消失了。后来我问导演：“那个人为什么又回来了？”导演说，“那有什么用，我们又没有留住他。”

妈，怎么才能写出一个留得住观众的剧本呢？

不是！我不是要你帮我写。我知道问题出在哪。

导演说：（模仿导演）“你看，这个问题我们讨论过很多次了。你要抓得住他们，让他们对你产生依赖，让他们忘记剧场以外的世界。你要知道他们缺的是什麼？他们的痛点在哪里？想要的是什麼？但你不能直给，你要出其不意，你要虐待他们，控制他们的情绪。怎么说呢？这就是一场掠夺，对观众注意力的掠夺！！你知道AI编剧是怎么做到的吗？他给每个观众都做了‘用户画像’，了解他们的品味，抓住他们的心理——有人想要热闹，想要狂笑，想要大团圆结局；有人想要速度，想要刺激，想要血腥暴力；有人想要矛盾，想要辩证，想要复杂的东西。关键就在于，他们一开始并不知道他们自己想要这些，直到你给了他们！！”

（叹气）

妈，我确实给不了他们。

好了好了，你不要读这些理论给我。我自己会去看。

可以的，你可以寄书给我。哎呀，我一直想看这本书的，买吧，密码388456。

这本也可以，密码388456。

够了够了。我读不完。

洗发水？紫色的那瓶吗？很好闻，你挑的我都很喜欢。

掠夺 | 编剧：黄素怀

可以买多一瓶，密码388456。  
没过吗？你再试试？  
这样啊……那我的贷款申请批了吗？  
(复述)  
要再等等……  
没事的，等我拿到剧本的费用。马上就可以还。  
对！我一定可以的！  
不用，我说过了，不用你帮我写。  
没关系，我再试试看。  
(去洗了个脸，喝了口水，回来)

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剧本角色： 你来看过我写的第一个剧本。  
那是一个特别小的，厂房改建的艺术站。  
(有节奏的敲打桌面)  
那出戏是关于我小时候学打鼓的经历。  
我承认它很粗糙，很不成熟。  
你睡着了。  
(继续敲打)  
后来我给你解释了很久我想要说的什么。  
还有为什么我拿不到酬劳。  
还有为什么我还不去找一份正经的工作。  
还有我为什么还没结婚。  
还有为什么要叫你去……  
我说了很多，但你不愿听。  
我知道你不会再进剧场了。  
(敲击声停)  
也许有一天我会成功的。  
你会在某个电视采访里看到我。  
然后发现这么多年，你都没注意听过我说话。  
你都没了解过我。  
(沉默)  
我想你，  
很想。

一切都是……  
一切都是……  
我： 嗯？什么？  
妈，你不应该打断我。  
(深呼吸)  
你说过了，太过自我沉溺。  
我知道。我知道。我知道。  
不是，不是，你不懂！  
我知道我在写什么！！  
什么？  
什么叫无意义的自言自语？啊？什么叫没重点的自我发泄？你以为你是谁？你凭什么来教我。闭上你的嘴巴！我不要听你讲话。我根本没必要听你讲话！你以为你什么都会？你以为你无所不能？  
你不是人！你是假的！！  
你只不过是一个机器！！  
(拿掉蓝牙耳机)  
(灯暗)  

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(一个相对抽象的空间)  
我： 我以为我能抵抗得了……但那时候我……我需要一个什么，把我拉起来。哪怕还有一个人，就一个人，知道我还活着，愿意听我讲话，就足够了。  
况且它有一个月的免费试用。  
我妈不是我第一个试用的，我试过朋友、爱人、老师，直到系统帮我选了——我的母亲。我不得不说AI比我自己更了解我自己。  
听到她的声音那一刻，我哭了。我很久没跟她说过话了，自从她离开了之后。  
其实自从她离开了之后，我没有再跟任何一个人说过话。  
(沉默)  

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(“我”的房间里)  
(戴上耳机)  
我： 喂，妈。你在吗？  
喂？

掠夺 | 编剧：黄素怀

(等待)  
喂？  
(等待)  
(笑) (松一口气)  
没事，我以为你不在。  
嗯，你随时都在的。  
什么？贷款没有通过？  
那……  
我现在欠了多少钱？  
(倒吸一口冷气)  
(手机简讯声)  
(看简讯)  
妈。这个月的语音服务马上就要到期了。  
你帮再充值50块吧。密码388456  
嗯？付款不成功？  
那怎么办？  
可是，我马上就可以拿到钱了，你跟他们说一下，我马上就可以还钱。我写完剧本就可以拿到酬劳。  
不行吗？  
那……我还有多少时间？  
2 Megabytes？  
(拿起手机)  
(一直按)  
(最后放弃)  
妈，妈，我的剧本还有最后一段。  
你听得到吗？  
你听完这一段。  
听得到吗？

剧本角色： 我没来得及跟你说再见。  
但我看到你的灵魂，  
飘出了窗外，飘向了天空。  
你一定去了一个乐园。

一个没有痛苦的地方。  
  
你走了之后，我还是老样子——“精神涣散”。  
生活很难。我一度想要放弃……  
我想我不能没有你……  
不知道你因为什么活着，  
知不知道自己存在的意义是什么？  
我想我没有真正的了解过你。  
等我们再相见吧……

我： 妈？  
(等待)  
(一片安静)  
(看向窗外)

(完)



## 一丝灯光，一世阴影 | 编剧：晰月

（镜头从高处往下拍，有一种CCTV的感觉。观众看到编剧在一间小房里。房里有一个白板，旁边一个三脚架（放手机的那种），还有一盏小灯。

编剧在白板上画着一个mind map，是他编写这个故事的思绪，以及故事的主要题材。（请看图片一。不需完全照着画，但是要把人和AI分两旁，也要画出下边的spiral符号。）

同时，观众听到以下旁白。在旁白的尾端，编剧开始画图片下边的spiral符号，慢慢地一直绕着圆圈……）

编剧 (VOICEOVER):

有个人工智能笑话是这样的：让AI计算赛跑的最佳方式，结果AI长出特别长的腿，向前跌倒直接越过终点线。

我对AI的认识可以从这个笑话里总结出来：AI如果耍起了心眼，人类就像个白痴……

怎么说呢？我们设定一套规则，然后让里面的程序不停学习、不断进化。这个办法看起来很巧妙，但是有个问题：AI会作弊。其实，严格说也不算作弊，因为人制定的规则难免会有漏洞。

我想，被人工智能取代不是最可怕的；被人工智能编的笑话逗笑了，也许才是最令人害怕的。我必须向你们坦白：我不知道刚才这个笑话是不是AI写的。但是它多多少少描述了我目前的糟糕处境。没错，我是一个编剧，一个即将被AI淘汰的编剧……

## 【一】

（镜头切到编剧正面对视。是用手机录制的长形模式（像一个抖音视频）。

编剧在屏幕上刷/点了几下，好像是刚刚开启摆在三脚架上的手机，准备录制自己的样子。

他拿起一张剧本，看了看镜头，又看剧本。似乎有点不确定。他照着剧本念。）

编剧：

一切都是无止尽的，因为我们一直都在圆环上绕着。所以目的地不重要，重要的是…我们会在哪个原点遇见？

昨晚下了很大的一场雨。蒙蒙中，我好像做了一个梦。梦里我是一只鲸鱼，孤独地在沉静的大海里。我一直叫，一直叫，但在千里之内根本察觉不出有同类的踪影。只有我自己的回音，隐隐约约传递回来。

我真切地记得当时的那种感觉…就好比在地面上的冬天，当厚厚的白雪盖满了大地，那种刺骨的寒冷，幽冥般的宁静…我又冷又饿，却不舍得张口吞下周围的小鱼群，深怕它们有一天也会感受到我这种阒然无声的

寂寞。

（念到这里，编剧停了。他好像不满意，翻了翻剧本，叹了一口气。他拿起一支笔，在剧本上悬着，他的眼神跟着笔一起阅读几行句子，嘴唇微微地动着。突然他念出一句。）

一切都是无止尽的？

（顿。然后低声地对自己说。）

我怎么会写出这种废话？

（他用着手里的笔，删了剧本上的这句话。）

这样不行……不行。AI都已经越过终点线了，我还在这里绕圆圈…连终点线都找不到……

（他看看剧本，又删掉剧本里的几段话。无奈。）

全是废话！啊……！

（他抬头直接看着镜头。顿。）

（对自己说）你根本感受不到。你根本体会不到。你连看都看不到…

顿。

画面，我需要画面。

（他在手机上开启YouTube的鲸鱼歌声，也看到了鲸鱼的画面。）

不是这样的……太真实了……太清晰了……

（他不再注视着屏幕，移开视线。）

含糊一点，留想象空间……

## 【二】

（编剧按一下手机。手机的屏幕翻到了另一边。我们看到编剧前面的一道墙。手机还在播放鲸鱼的歌声。）

（编剧起身，把灯关掉。在他的后面的那一盏小灯是开着的。这就因此把他的阴影反射在墙上。这是他试图编写故事的过程，也是一出表演。）（表演怎么呈现，由演员和导演决定，只要用到阴影。）

鲸鱼（沉稳缓慢的语气）：

这个冬天，太冷了。海水无情地困着我。不管我怎么挣扎，都脱不开，它那冰冷的拥抱……

我独自游了大半个地球，寻着夏天的温暖。每年的这个时候，我都在寻找一个归宿，一个未知的家。可我从来都没找到。

我似乎只是一直在游着一游到了一个夏天的地方时，那里的树叶已经开

一丝灯光，一世阴影

| 编剧：晰月

始通红。我又继续游，寻找着另一个夏天。

就这样，我在这个地球上环绕了无数次。但我却从来没有遇过，另一只鲸鱼，也从来没有感受过，夏天的温暖。

（慢慢地透露出一丝激动。）

这么多年无谓的寻找，我还在坚持着……或许是因为我还相信，温暖的地方，一定会有家人。而如果茫茫大海里，真的有我的同类，它们必定会幸福地居住在，一个永远都是夏天的地方。

又或许，如果我不坚持这个信念，我就没有地方可以去了……除了大海的深地带，那个阴冷的地方，无定形的空间……在那个没有规则的黑暗里，什么都有可能……

（姿态转变。比较坚定的语气。）

我不属于那里。我也不想去。

只是我万万没想到，就有这么一天，我会遇到一个来自那个阴间的生物…

其实它到底是不是从那阴森森的海底游上来的，我并不确定。但是它有一个会发光的灯丝。这些东西我看过，只有海底那些古怪的生物才有的。但是通常它们如果浮上来，便活不了多久，或已经是死了的。这只生物呢，不只活了很久，还一直跟着我。

它是极其地古怪……我在它身上根本感受不到心跳，也察觉不出有任何气息。它一出现，就一直跟着我。我不动，它就不动，我加快速度，它的那灯丝就闪得厉害，然后急忙忙地跟上。就这样过了几天，渐渐地我发现它对我没有什么恶意，就让它跟着。

（编剧停止手机的录制，鲸鱼歌声也停了。）

【三】

（镜头切回CCTV角度。）

（编剧又在白板前画着mind map。（请看图片二。一样的，可以由演员和导演自由发挥，但“寻”字重要，要画出。）同时，观众听到以下旁白：）

编剧 (VOICEOVER):

身为编剧，我总是在写别人的故事，但事实上，我写的一切，终究离不开自己。我不是在写我喜欢的，就是在写我畏惧的。在这两者之间，又有一些东西，是我又爱又怕的……面对这些东西，有时我也不知道该怎么写下去……

我很怕海。我就是对大海有一种莫名的恐惧。我会游泳的，但是我从来没有在海里游过。顶多我只能让海水冲到膝盖，那是我的极限。

但是我从小就是在海边长大的。海边是我童年的游乐园，长大后，它还

是我最喜欢的地方。不管去到什么国家，如果那里有海，我一定要去一趟。就站在海和地的边缘，我总是看着海浪轻轻地向我靠近，幻想着，海底的世界，会是怎样的。

写到这里，我才发现，我为什么会写出这个故事。我又爱，又怕，让我不知所措。没体会过海洋的我，没看过雪花的我，没谈过恋爱的我，就是这样的我才会写出这样的故事……

有时候，我又觉得，我根本不知道自己在写什么。都是一些埋在潜意识里的东西，不符合逻辑地浮现出来…很多时候，要写完了，我才明白。也有时候，写完了，还是不明白……

（到了这里，他明显卡住了。他不知所措，在房里徘徊。）

（过了一会儿他拿起手机，播放鲸鱼歌声。他闭着眼睛听。）

（听着听着，他开始把自己想象是鲸鱼，试图在房里“游泳”，并且也开始模仿鲸鱼的声音。在感觉没有人在观看自己的情况下，很认真地做着，感受着鲸鱼“入体”。）

【四】

（镜头切回编剧正面对视。编剧正在录制自己。他没有剧本，扮演着鲸鱼的角色。）

鲸鱼（比起之前，语气较轻松活泼）：

我记得，很久以前，又是入冬的时候，我游到了地球的南部。在那里，我遇到了传说中的……企鹅。那是我唯一一次见过这种像鱼的鸟类。我印象很深刻。

我还记得，是两只，它们跟我说，如果有一天，你遇到一只鲸鱼，然后它一直跟着你，你去哪里它就去哪里，那它一定是爱上你了。它一生一世都会跟着你的。因为它们俩就是这样……

已经有几个月了吧。这个……小灯丝，还是一直跟着我……所以……

小灯丝肯定不是鲸鱼。其实我还真不知道它是什么。它的皮肤和那种又大声又恐怖的大船看起来相同，但是它很小，而且不发出任何声音。不吵，很平静……很温和……挺好的……

它……又好像在守护我。因为每次我睡醒的时候，它都已经醒了。它的灯丝就会在我的脸旁微微亮着，好像它整晚都没睡到，一直就在看着我……哎呀，好想找这企鹅问问，这样是不是爱上了？

其实，我不知道它怎么想，但是我……已经给它唱了情歌啦。这就是我们鲸鱼的表达方式。但是，我想它没听懂……还是，它没听到？它不会说话，是不是也不会听话？

我就想啊，我可能可以……直接放进去。它脾气好像很好，不唱歌直接放进去，它不会生气吧？但是……它全身上下我也看过了很多遍，根本

一丝灯光，一世阴影 | 编剧：晰月

没有哪里可以放啊……

（到了这里，编剧返回自己的姿态。他有点困惑。他转身面对着白板，（手机屏幕看到他的侧身，以及他的动作，但看不到白板）拿起一支笔，边看着mind map边说，偶尔画一些箭头或问号之类的小符号。）

鲸鱼…… 在不知情的情况下……爱上了一个AI。

AI…… 到底在海里干嘛，我们不知道… 需要知道吗？问号。

鲸鱼…… 是不是忘了曾经的寻找？曾经的寂寞？

AI…… 会不会像企鹅所说，一生一世跟着鲸鱼？

一生一世…… Hmm……对鲸鱼来说，当然有意义。但是对AI？无生无死的AI？

Hmm… 问号。

【五】

（突然，房间停电了。一片黑暗。但是因为手机还是亮着的，观众就还是能够看到编剧的脸（被手机的灯光打亮）。）

编剧：

啊…… Tsk… 怎么会这样……

（编剧离开屏幕。观众听到开门关门声。）

鲸鱼 (VOICEOVER):

(80岁，又沉又虚的语气)

一只鲸鱼能活多久？如果逃过人类的猎捕，逃过大船的碰撞，逃过海洋的污染…… 平平安安地，应该活得上七，八十年。

我很庆幸，我是平安的。我今年七十九，我感觉我剩不了多久了。

我想跟你说呀，谢谢你，一直陪着我。我……没有什么遗憾，就是有点担心，我死了，你会怎么样？你会寂寞吗？会闷吗？会……想我吗？

这几十年，你根本没变。我的心跳越来越慢，皮囊越来越粗，你依旧没心跳，依旧光滑的皮肤。依旧亮着的灯丝……

你知道吗？你总是让我感觉，一切都是无止尽的……

我累了。我们就在这里停一下，歇一歇吧……

【六】

（镜头切回CCTV角度。电源还没有恢复。编剧在白板前，他拿着手机，手机的手电筒开着，照亮着白板。

编剧一边说，一边移动手机，照亮白板上mind map的相关符号或词语。请看图片三（最后的mind map里，“人”的部分是填满的，而“AI”的部分是空的，只有一个代表灯光的符号）显出一边“黑”，一边“白”的视觉效果。）

编剧：

鲸鱼死了。

他慢慢地，沉到了海最深的地方，那个他不想去的阴间。

它…… 依旧跟着。

跟着鲸鱼，很平静地，一起降落。

灯丝发出来的光越来越小，周围因此越来越暗。这样的气氛，给一种感觉，它好像真的难过了。

最后鲸鱼落到了海床，一动也不动。灯丝也完全灭了。

在黑暗中，它看着陪伴了几十年的他……

在阴冷海底的角落里，等待着这种巨大躯体降落的生物很多。它们一拥而上……

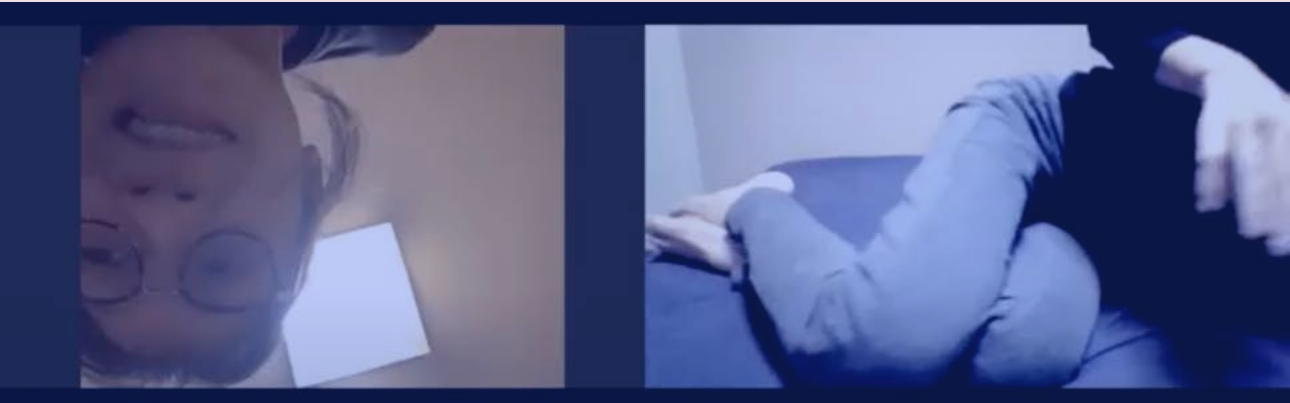
它就在一旁看着。

不久后，它的灯丝又亮了。闪了闪几下，它转身，游走了。

（这个时候，电源恢复了，房间亮了起来。）

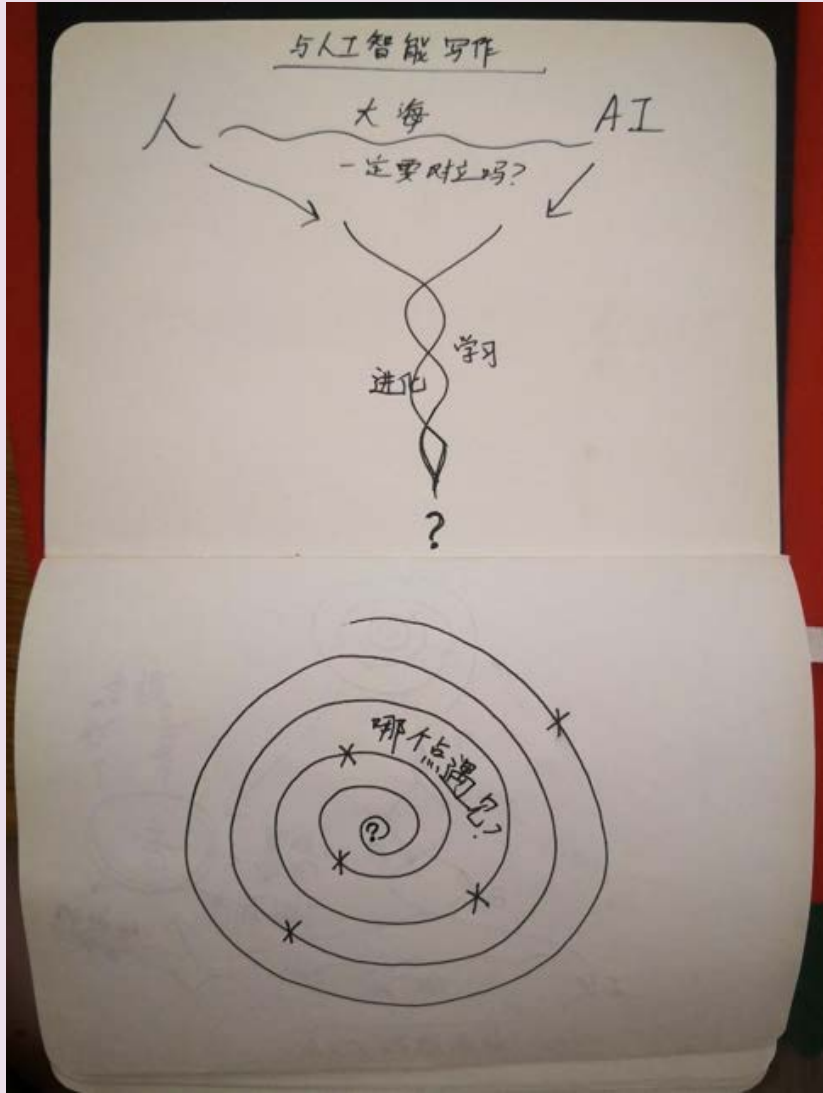
（编剧眯着眼睛看了看灯光，然后转回头看着白板。他退后几步，看着白板上的完整mind map。慢慢地，他感受到一股冷风，使他摸摸自己的手臂，最后抱着自己。）

(完)

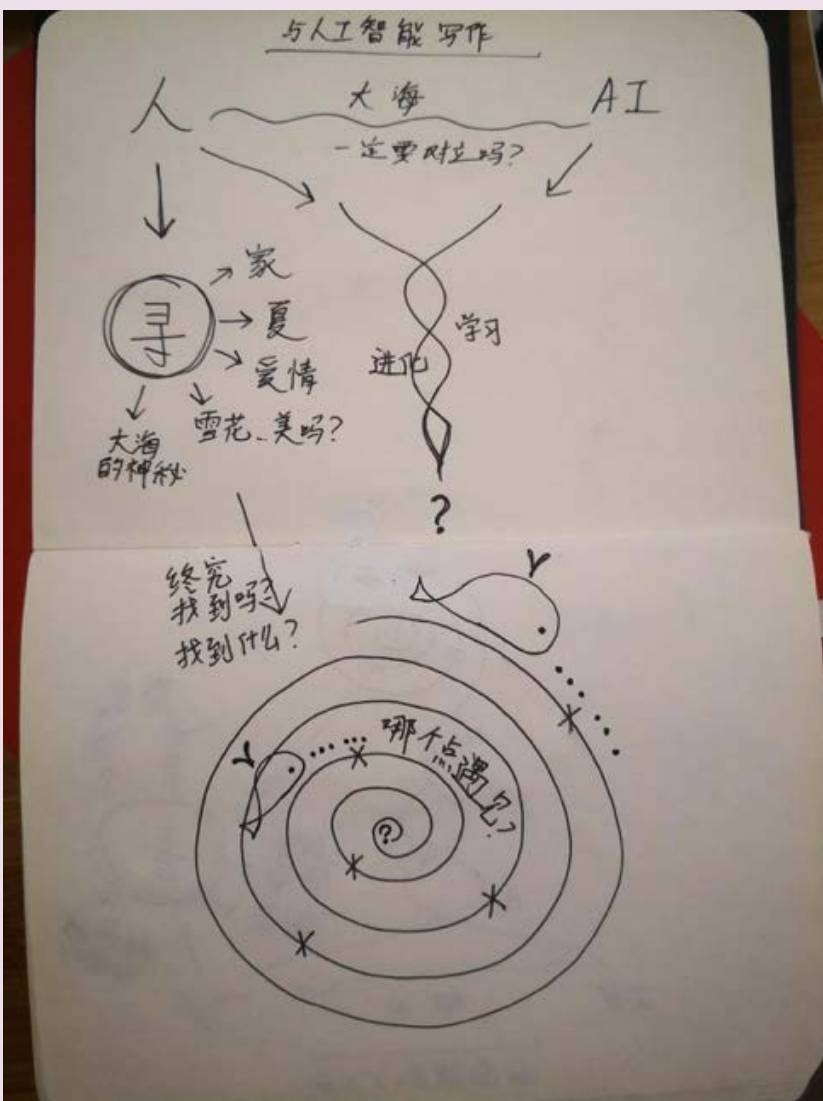


【附录】

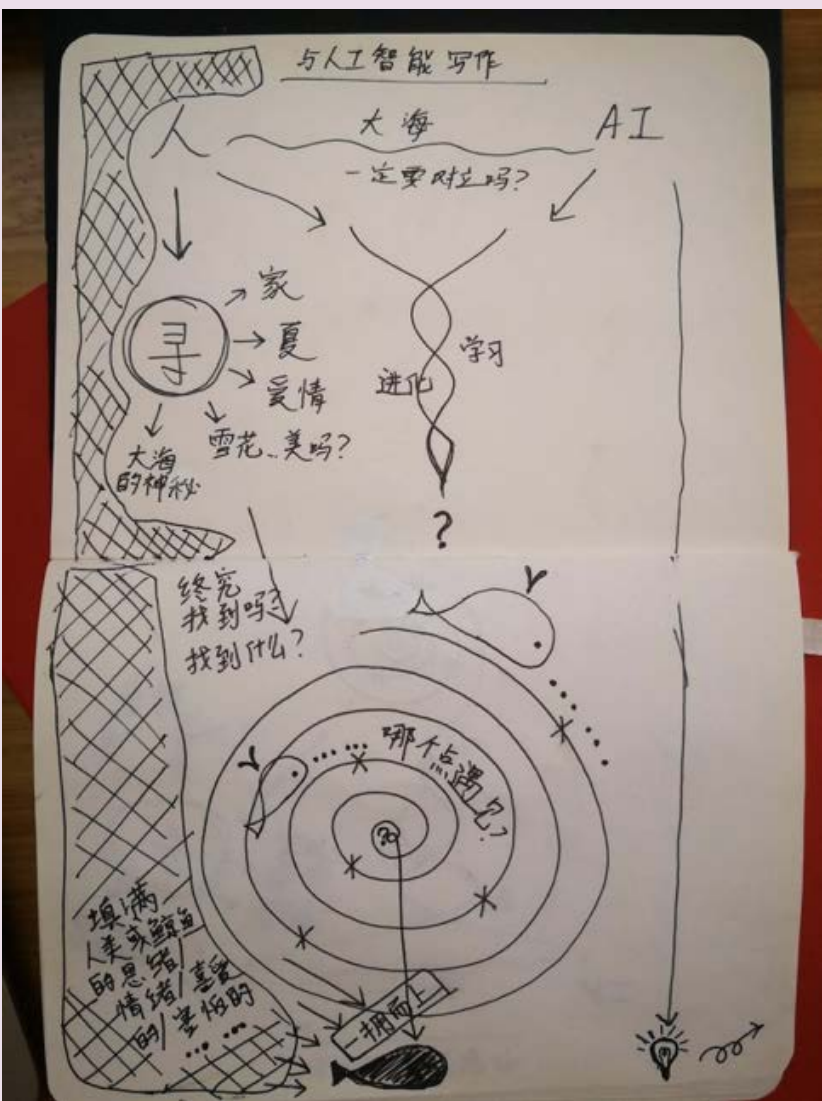
图片一：



图片二：



图片三：

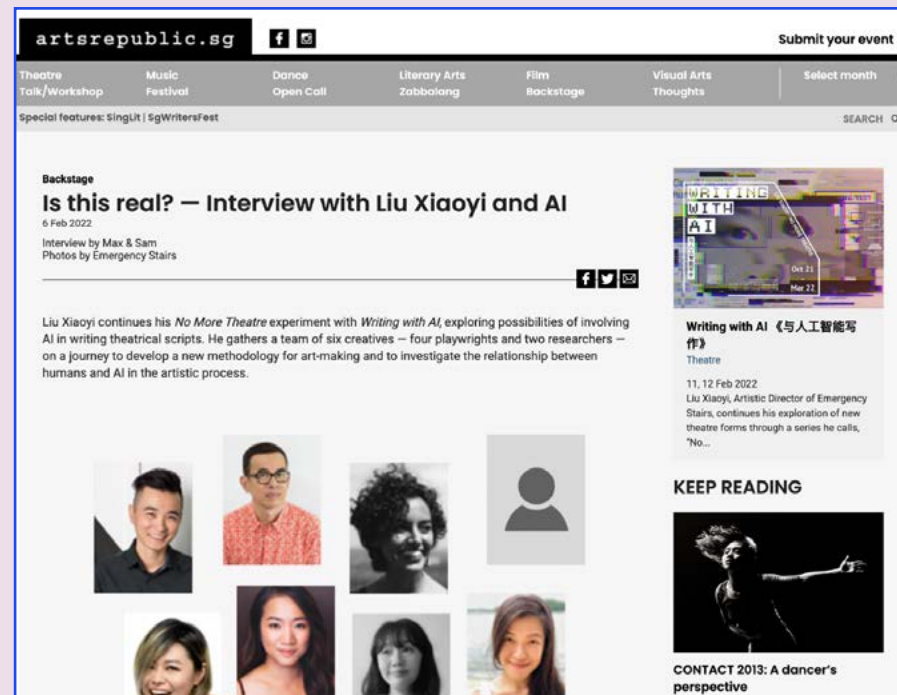


# Marketing

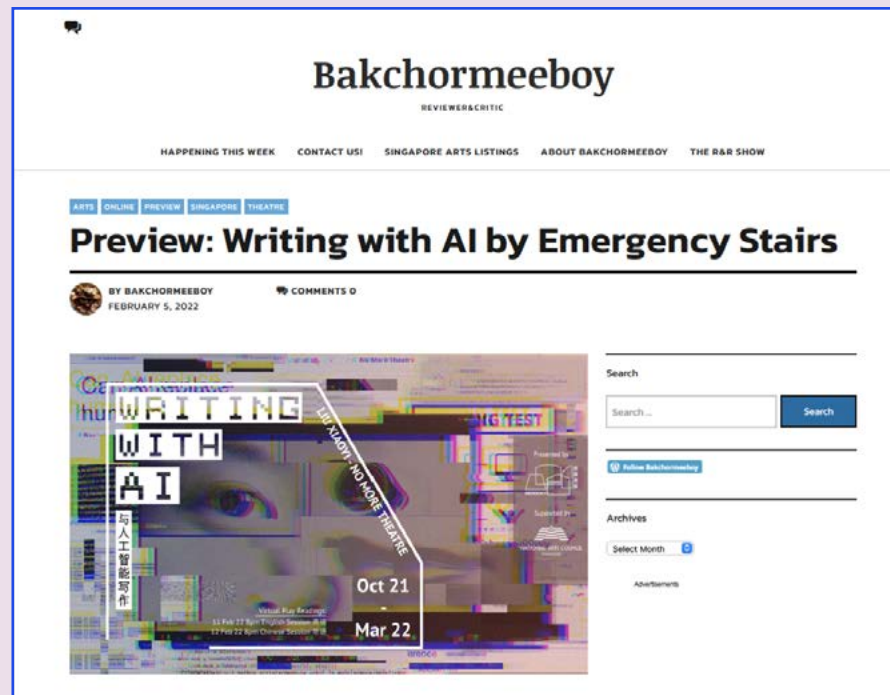
## MARKETING MATERIALS - SOCIAL MEDIA POST



## PRESS



[https://artsrepublic.sg/backstage/is-this-real-interview-with-liu-xiaoyi-and-ai/?fbclid=IwAR3lOGgEjQd2EK-xdp5hoNZuaRuAr6TM1qiTRLHJlh1MrQW0KKfslAf\\_ibQ](https://artsrepublic.sg/backstage/is-this-real-interview-with-liu-xiaoyi-and-ai/?fbclid=IwAR3lOGgEjQd2EK-xdp5hoNZuaRuAr6TM1qiTRLHJlh1MrQW0KKfslAf_ibQ)



<https://bakchormeeboy.com/2022/02/05/preview-writing-with-ai-by-emergency-stairs/?fbclid=IwAR1gMsxRDDnGLZK8SMmGoL2qlaFaOFwBzY2VIIMDEl2pse9bFA4OpDhsMfA>



<https://www.zaobao.com.sg/lifestyle/culture/story20220205-1239569>



<http://theatre-reviews.blogspot.com/2022/02/blog-post.html>

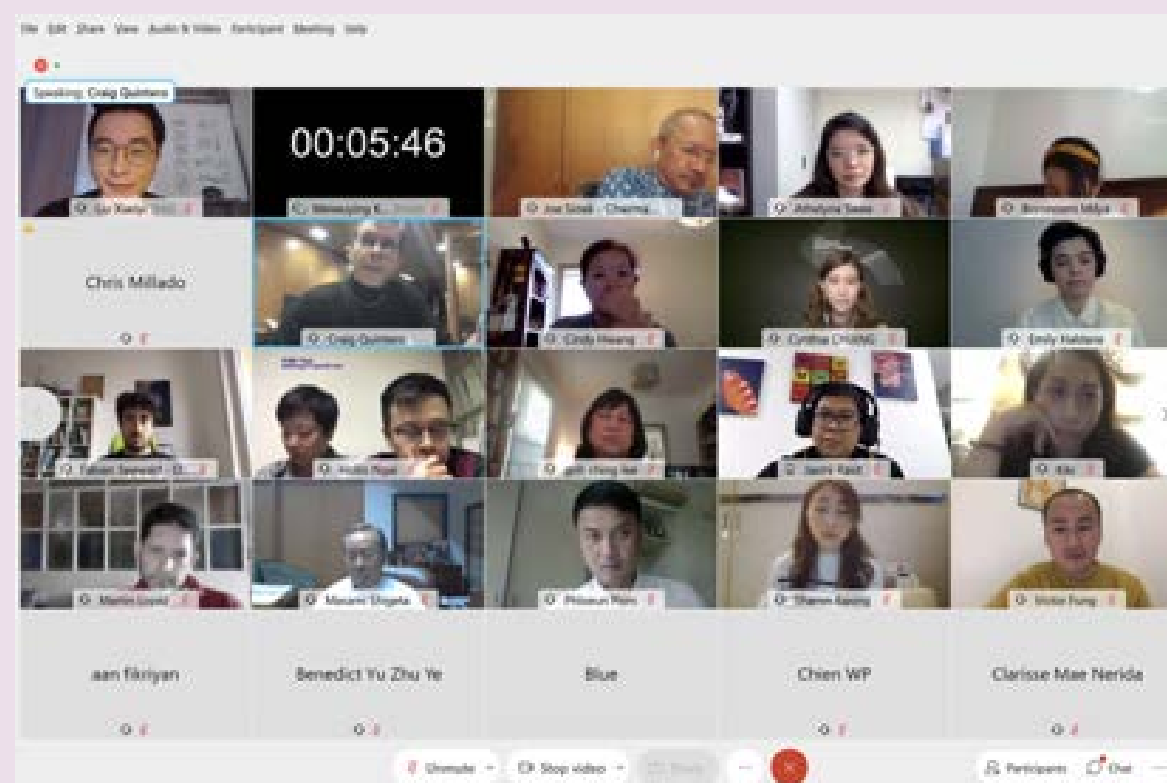
# Outreach & Development



## 1. 2020 FACP KAOHSIUNG ONLINE CONFERENCE WEIWUYING INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

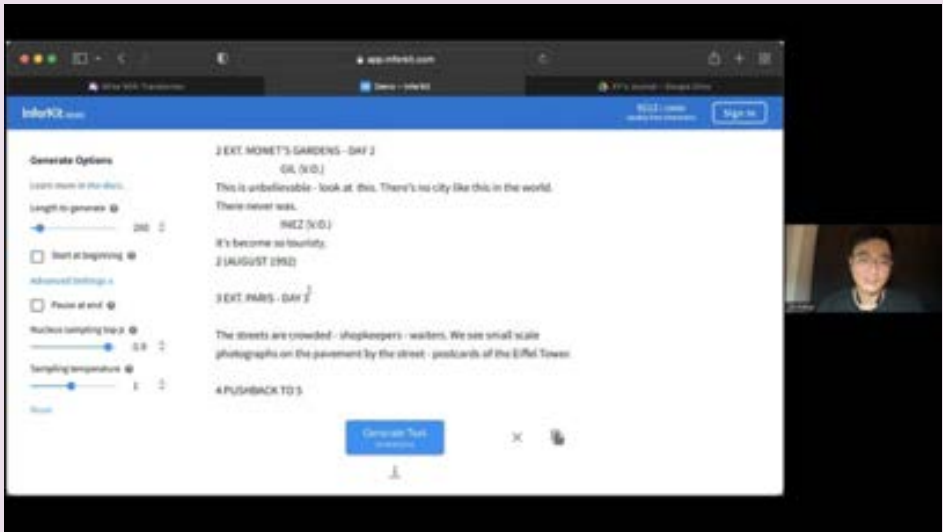
13 NOV 2020

Liu Xiaoyi was invited to the 2020 FACP Kaohsiung Online Conference Weiwuying International Symposium to share our exploration and future plan of working with Artificial Intelligence.



2. AI SCRIPT WRITING COMPETITION BY SEASHORTS FILM FESTIVAL 2022 MAY-SEPTEMBER 2022

Liu Xiaoyi was invited to conduct a series of talks and workshops named “How to Write with AI”, and to be one of the judges of the AI Script Writing Competition organized by Wu Ben 无本 Film Magazine and SeaShorts Film Festival 2022.



3.WRITING WITH AI LECTURE & WORKSHOP 26 JUNE 2022

Liu Xiaoyi was invited to conduct a lecture and a workshop on Writing with AI by Luxelakes A4 Art Museum 麓湖·A4美术馆 (Chengdu) and Chronus Art Center 新时线媒体艺术中心 (Shanghai).



