

BACK TO THE ROOTS

GLAD TO BE SAD

Alessio Arbustini

We are haunted by memories. The bad ones, mostly. The day that girl broke our heart. The other one when we did that poor and shameful figure. That time we were mean and hurt someone. Losses, defeats, bad thoughts and all (saying that with the good old Caulfield).

Everyone has his own way to exorcise those memories, but one of the most efficient, interesting and kind of fun way to achieve the exorcism surely is to put them into a story. Feels like the pain is not just useless pain, but something fertile. Right, Peter Cameron?

If you are a writer – good one or bad one, amateur or professional, it doesn't matter – if you sometimes feel the urge to sit and spit out words, you'll probably have been there: something very bad just happened to you and the only thought that makes you feel better is "Hey, this could be a good story".

I believe that one of storytelling's most important roots lies here.

Not just because while doing this, while putting our miseries on the pages, we actually feel better, but because we are probably giving life to a really good story. The reader loves to feel pain. The act of reading itself is a way to feel pains we never suffered (yet), and suit up for the day we will (or maybe is just a way to be aware that such pain exists). Yes, this is quite close to psychology. In fact lots of school of thoughts in psychology tell us that to heal is to build a solid storytelling of our life. About that I'd like to read an extract from James Hillman's *Healing Fiction*.

Of course, in order to please the reader we have not to commiserate ourselves. That is really annoying. No, actually we have to hurt ourselves once more, we have to be ruthless. Done it right, eventually we will enjoy our pain, we will be waiting for bad things to come, we will feast into the filth, and we will be glad to be sad.

Does it sound masochistic? Yes, but this may be healthy masochism. And when is not, who cares!

Telling stories is a risky business.

TELLING WARTIME MEMORIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Vincenzo Cascone

From the letters written by the soldiers in the trenches during World War I – even poems, like the ones by the Italian poet Giuseppe Ungaretti – to the fictional transposition of the experience like in some novels by Ernest Hemingway, is clear the human need to not be silent during and after a tragedy. To share new awarenesses with our fellows. To find every time the right space to express our feelings and report our memories – this could be a way of thinking about non-fiction storytelling: find the right space for our memories.

The medium can change, but the core values of our stories travel on the same routes, even nowadays, even if they are wartime memories of a distant past. In these years, digital devices and interactive experiences make possible to tell the same stories in new, engaging ways: the former “just a reader” is now a co-creator who interacts with narrative substances, connecting to them in a more intimate way.

As in *Facebook 1914*, for example, the social media project realized by Musée de la Grand Guerre: one year of history told as a human story – as if Facebook existed during the war! – has been a great engaging hook for the audience, who desired to keep the story going visiting the museum (+45% of visitors during the project).

Or as in *Valiant Hearts: The Great War* (Ubisoft, 2014), a 2D videogame where the gamer enters in the lives of five different fictional characters and in their stories of love and revenge during the war.

The main inspiration for this game? Some letters written from the trenches by the producer’s great-grandfather. We have more immersive storytelling choices, but we are not far away from Ungaretti’s poems, after all...

WHERE TO FIND COMMON ROOTS FOR A SEQUEL

Dario Honnorat

In this lecture I start from the questions: “What do we have in common?”, “Which are our common roots?”. Another activity of this annual conference is called *Europe, the Sequel*; maybe to understand if Europe has to have a sequel, we have to understand before where *we* come from and who *we* are. In EU we have 24 official languages, and each European country inside its borders has several regional tongues. One thing we share is this richness. I will give some example of the favorite words of some Italian writers, such as some words that Primo Levi liked (used only in the Turin Jewish community).

Even if we love our languages so much, and even if we love to learn more and more from each other, there can be some disadvantages. When I say some words from the city I was born, Florence, I may be misunderstood even between Italians. If I say “Marmato” probably none understands me. So again, what we have in common? Maybe if I talk about a man, also from Florence, that travels through hell, purgatory and paradise, named Dante, everybody can follow me. If I refer to the Trojan horse tale we

understand each other even if we do not speak Greek. If I picture Don Quixote fighting windmills, everybody knows what I'm talking about.

Our richness in language can divide us, but our richness in stories won't.

This is something that happens also between people that share the same mother tongue. It is just harder to notice. Teaching creative writing I discovered that putting the emphasis on the content, on the tale, is more productive. When the students have something to say that they care about, then they will find the words, better and better words. And in the end they will share our passion both for story and for languages.

There may be a language that we all can share, it is what Thoreau calls "father tongue", distinguishing it from "mother tongue". Our "father tongue" is the language of the great books, a language in which "we must laboriously seek the meaning of each word and line, conjecturing a larger sense than common use permits out of what wisdom and valor and generosity we have."

I do not know if there will be a great European tale and I do not know in which language it will be written, but I'm sure that Thoreau would think that that tale will be written in our "father tongue".

BEFORE IMPROVISATION

Risto Niemi-Pynttari

In this paper, I will study the possibilities to support young beginners for improvisational play in Web. The concept of Netprov, Networked Improvisation Narrative, developed by Gilbert Marino and Rob Wittig uses several social medias in the play: chat, SMS, tweets and blogs. The playes in Netprov participates in the networked happening of a story. I will ask what is the easiest way to participate in the improvisation.

What are the already familiar elements of speaking and writing in social media, that makes the improvisation easy for everyone? What preliminary planning and writing can be done before the online-happening to support the action in the play?

I am using classical distinction of *praxis* and *poiesis* (Aristotle) as two sides of media writing. Instead of terms like synchronous and asynchronous writing, praxis and poiesis are concepts of creative process. By these concepts I am trying to trace the problems that prevent creative participation in playing and improvisation.

Before improvisation some frames are needed. One place, one time of happening and the main purpose as the goal of action – the elements of classical play – are facilitating the Netprov play also. The familiar and central place is needed while the action happens with several online-medias. As Marino and Wittig says: the place for main infos and news. What is needed to know, the rules, the frames of the play. The motives of the action for the players. The news during the play: what to do, writing assignments, invitations, surprises and turns.

The motive of action comes from the character, and it is planned before the play, and I am asking what are the elements that facilitate this for the young people. What kind of scriptwriting may support the

action in changing situations. When the surroundings and motives are known the player can make some plans of action, and even openings of dialogues in order to use if the situation opens. My hypothesis is that this kind of open planning, writing about goals and situations that the player will hope to achieve, will help in decisions in the play and make also the improvisation easier.

The last question is the improvisation itself, and what are the other recourses than open scripts strategies and plans? How to activate the language and speech recourses for the play?

HOW TO USE THE EMOTIONS IN WRITING

From the body to the mind through the heart

Mariana Torres

Gordon Lish, famous literary editor - he championed many American authors, particularly Carver, Hemingway and Ford -, said once: "It's not about what happens to people on a page; it's about what happens to a reader in his heart and mind".

This workshop explores a creative use of emotions, as tools, in our own writing.

Isak Dinesen said once: "All suffering is bearable only as a part of a story". The workshop is based in a 3x3 division. The characters of a story is composed by three parts: the physical body, where the sensations appears and manifest, the heart, where the feelings and emotion lives and the brain, where the mind thinks, takes conclusion and decisions.

As well the reader and the writer are composed by the same three parts. The knowing about how this three parts work at the same time and passing information through each other, is a key in the own writing, and, specially, in the approach of emotions.