

TASTE IT

ROC
Pascal Biras

I would like to present an original way of creative writing used as a methodological tool in the language classroom: the Collective Oral Novel (ROC = Roman Oral Collectif). The idea of the Collective Oral Novel was born in a secondary school in Budapest, Hungary, with the purpose of getting students to speak in French during the class and to provide them with motivation through the collaborative creation of a novel.

During my lecture, I will present the ROC program. ROC, which combines creative writing, constrained writing and language teaching, involves small groups of around 10 students creating a novel orally, as a group activity in the language classroom. While the students invent the characters and build up the story line from lesson to lesson, the teacher acts as a guide and prepares the transcript of the oral novel. I will also provide an answer to questions like: What kind of novels could be written this way? What kind of activities can be used to facilitate creativity? What kind of characters could be formed in a foreign language? How could a story reflect the authors themselves if it is written in a foreign language? How does the compromise between “what students know how to say” and “what they want to say” can be source of liberty? And how do the limitations imposed on the speaker by a foreign language can open doors to a new type of creativity, as students experience the freedom and liberation of speaking in a language other than our mother tongue?

I have been using ROC for 4 years. During that period 5 novels have been written: an oral biography, an initiatic novel, an epistolary novel and 2 modern fairy tales. I will explain how a narrative frame can be combined with language teaching purposes, and how language teaching purposes can be used to create a narrative frame. I will define two style of ROC: ROC buffo, in which kids explore the playful dimension of the language and ROC serio, in which kids create a narrative by practicing real life functions of the language. This offers them the double benefit as they learn to write a letter of complaint for example and produce and create fiction at the same time.

I know from experience and I strongly believe that creative writing used for foreign language teaching is a perfect way to motivate kids to speak in the classroom. It gives them something to say both to the teacher and to each other, which is not always obvious in a language classroom. At the same time, it also

enables students to create and develop a close relationship with a foreign language, as the language becomes more than a simple school subject. It becomes a tool for expressing their ideas and also of creating a world of imagination, through which the subconscious mind is also activated.

MUSIC AS A KEY TO STORYTELLING

Selene Favuzzi & Luigi Maiello

As storytellers, we are all used to shape whichever story we want through a more or less rigid division between 3, 4 or 5 Acts; and then Calls; Refusals; Resolutions coming right after Climaxes, and so on. Over the years, though, these fertile archetypal structures – after having been codified and “canonized” – currently risk being also crystalized, thus becoming sterile for storytellers wishing to face new challenges. This course will bring new lymph against such a Status Quo – by providing handy and useful examples of how Music can be seen as a key to Storytelling and how it can suggest unexpected and precious solutions to narrators of all kinds. A Rondo has a completely different structure from a Symphony, and a Sonata has an entirely different framework than a Rhapsody – yet in Storytelling they keep telling us that, if we want to tell a story (be it a Commercial, a Short movie or a long running TV Series), we have to have a certain number of Acts, and a certain pre-set succession of events. Selene Favuzzi and Luigi Maiello, both collaborators of Story Veterans and Storytelling Legends Christopher Vogler (*The Writer’s Journey*) and James Hart (*Dracula by Bram Stocker’s, Contact, Hook, Epic*) will give the audience a first hand experience over the American Storytelling method and its relationship to Music. Then they will push the participants to widen their creative horizons, by providing them insights from some of the most successful and long lasting musical forms of all times. At the same time, they will illustrate the numerous touching points and analogies between the two Arts:

- ✓ Both Storytelling and Music are among the most ancestral forms of creative expression
- ✓ Both of them lead their “user” through a Journey
- ✓ Both have themes and can develop “characters” (instruments, in fact, can sometimes be seen exactly as the regular characters of a narration)
- ✓ Like oral storytelling, Music speaks to both mind and body and can conjure entire worlds in a bunch of seconds
- ✓ Both Music and Storytelling carefully orchestrate a dance between building up tension and releasing it

In detail, the first “Taste” of this course will provide the participants with:

- ✓ Some clarifying video-audio examples of the semantic power of music
- ✓ A hint of the vast new horizons accessible through a positive synergy between Music and Storytelling

- ✓ A brief experience of the Hero's Journey music – inspirational for many writers and realized by Maiello over the different stages of The Hero's Journey by Chris Vogler

At the end, the participants will have realized that Music can bring much “healthy Biodiversity” to Storytelling, and they will be ready to deepen their studies of the stunning analogies within these two Art Worlds. Both at a Macroscopic and at a Microscopic level.

AT CHRISTMAS GIVE A MEMORY...

Manuela Ravecca

A writing workshop to make special your Christmas and that of your loved ones.

At Christmas give a memory, a path to learn how to pick a memory of a loved one and turn it into a gift that will make unforgettable your next festive season. The workshop is an opportunity to approach the practice of biographical return . It will appeal to all, regardless of writing and listening skills of each.

At the first meeting take with you a small notebook and a pen, we will do the rest.

TEXTS FROM THE DISCOVERY AND GIFT SHOP

Xavier Roelens

Texts are not written anymore in a confrontation with the silence of the white paper. Nowadays, they have to be an answer to the overabundance of information, of texts surrounding us.

An explicit way in dealing with the world of texts is by quoting it. This can be done in the hard way: by retyping The New York Times of September 11th 2001, resulting in a book of almost 1,000 pages (The Day), Kenneth Goldsmith made his own Ground Zero. But other tactics exist as well, combining different found texts with one another in a collage like result, or using them as a starting point, as the not so white page for a playful editing into a new text. Last but not least you can not only use texts from books or the internet, but also colleagues in a workshop can give you words or sentences to work with and to make group texts.

I would like to turn this perspective on literature into a 5-course workshop explicitly for beginners. Most results in this kind are called poetry, but I would like to open this up to prose writers too.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE TALE

Javier Sagarna

This course proposes a journey through the main resources, techniques and narrative strategies of the short story, using adventures and science-fiction short stories as a guide. Combining theory, writing and the analysis of different short stories of writers as Robert Louis Stevenson, Paul Bowles, Jack London or Ray Bradbury, we will go deep into the structure, the build up of characters and their conflicts or the use of the situations to reinforce the meaning of the story.

As usual in a literary workshop context, the students will learn about these essential tools for writing and will practice them in their own adventures and science-fiction stories that will be commented by the rest of the group and the teacher. Besides, they will receive a reading guide of the short story selected for each class with some questions to think about. Part of each class will be reserved for the debate about them and for analysing in deep each story, always pointing at one or two specific literary strategies that are remarkable in it.

Why a story starts on a bus that chugs through the desert, down to a hot small town of Morocco? Could the stones of the desert and the tongues the natives speak contain the deep meaning of a story? How can we fill of magic a story just moving it to another planet? How the focus of the conflict of a story has changed in the last century? Who is the real main character of this story?

Questions like that will be answered and explained during the course.

The aim is to approach the students to the essentials of creative writing, using the special magic and relative simplicity of adventures and science-fiction stories, that connect us with the young reader that lives inside us, that, many times, is in the essence of our desire of writing.

This 4 classes course could be easily expanded to 8 or even 12 classes and is intended to work both in a presential mode and in the Internet, using the technical resources of the virtual campus of Escuela de Escritores.

DO YOU SEE WHAT I SAW?

Kaisa-Leena Suvanto

Can pictorial thinking be used as a creative writing tool? Is it possible to write knowingly in a way that creates vivid mental pictures? This session introduces the topic of mental imagery in creative writing practice. In the session I will introduce a hypothesis of using visual thinking consciously as a tool in creative writing. The presentation and creative writing class lesson will discuss the following questions: Are there creative writing tools available for writers to write text that creates vivid mental images in the reader's mind? Can a writer write in a way that the outcome is easily imagined? Should and can a writer take into account the readers' different cognitive styles? Should a writer focus on creating visual mental images solely, or does a text profit from multisensory mental images? In the class lesson we will try out the hypothesis and test the ideas I have found or come across during my research and teaching.

First, we will test and explore our cognitive styles and different ways of imagining. Second, we will try out some hints on how to enhance text's capacity of creating effective mental imagery. Finally, we will discuss the tested method and its possibilities, and consider different ways to develop it further. In this study, mental images are understood as nonverbal, cognitive and multisensory representations of meanings that include qualities and feelings as well. The study draws from cognitive literary studies, cognitive neuroscience and embodied cognitive science. Also, it utilizes creative writing guidebooks.

I am a university teacher in Jyväskylä Open University and a doctoral student in Jyväskylä University, where I study visual thinking and mental images in screenwriting process. My article on the subject will be published in *Scriptum Magazine* and come out on September. In addition to university and open university, I've given creative writing and screenwriting classes in verbal art schools, schools and adult education centers. In my personal life I'm a goal-directed amateur screenwriter. I partake in Helsinki Film Academy, and I am currently working on a short script called *The Friend*.