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The text was originally written as a single piece in the winter of 2018, and later mentored by Annette Krauss and edited by Manju Sharma as a part of Yu's graduation thesis in the spring of 2020.

Travelogues with Prompts is a script of travel stories with annotations. The approach in writing them, in such a format, aims to express the threads of thoughts entwined in my mind. This method is based on, but not limited to the general idea of the terms as described below.

Script

— The written text of a play, film, or broadcast.

Travelogue

— A film, book, or illustrated lecture about the places visited by or experiences of a traveler.

Prompt book

— An annotated copy of a play for the use of a prompter during a performance.

(Adapted from Lexico dictionary, 2020)

Prompts are supposed to assist in building, maintaining, and documenting a performance. They can be made before, at the same time as, or after the performance. The writing of the future, the now, and the past.¹ Prompts are like magical tunnels between happening and writing. Let us not forget, that writing is also happening.

1. This is the first prompt, thanks to the ambiguity of language. In mandarin, 於 can mean 'at, to, of, from, on, about and by.' But here, in English, I have to choose between 'writing of' or 'writing on.' Clarity of time and space is demanded to communicate, even though time and space are never experienced in any clear sense. Beautifully lost in translation? Don't go praising another colonising language this soon.

Travelogues with Prompts

Scene 1 Chris

M.C. Julie Yu

You can see a performance through the reading of a prompt book. However, for this reading, the normal orders of the past, the now, and the future are challenged, as these tunnels lead the reader to jump among times and spaces. Despite the confusion that might be caused, only through these magical prompts might I have a chance to describe the maze in the script, the trap that I am still in.

Prompts can be considered additional, you can ignore them but they will affect you some way or another. Prompts have the goal to assist the script; the script is aiming to be performed. Through performing, I aim to get lost again and again.²

Characters

Some are fictional, and some are real.

Chris

— Is a tourist.

Some

— Like to tell people things.

A Tourist

— Not Chris.

2. To understand the concept of repetition, I went to the Deleuze Dictionary.

For Deleuze, repetition is not a matter of the same thing occurring over and over again. That is to say, repetition is connected to the power of difference in terms of a productive process that produces variation in and through every repetition... it allows new experiences, affects and expressions to emerge. To repeat is to begin again; to affirm the power of the new and the unforeseeable. In so far as life itself is described as a dynamic and active force of repetition producing difference, the force of which Deleuze encourages us to think of in terms of 'becoming,' forces incorporate difference as they repeat giving rise to mutation.

(The Deleuze Dictionary, 223)

I feel that life is built out of repetitions and most of them are not pleasant for me to endure. It is always easier to escape than to stay with them. However, I do believe that in order to break through or conquer the struggling repetition in life, I need to stay with them. Then I might find a way to radically change the nagging repetition, as described in the quote, 'incorporate difference as they repeat giving rise to mutation.'

Scene 1 Chris

*[These texts are the lines meant to be read out. The number of performers is not limited.]*³

壹. 1.

Chris is a tourist everywhere.⁴
In this continent and that nation, and in a country that is not a country.

In this mountain and that ocean.
In this city and that village.
In this museum and that festival.
In this market and that tomb.
In this screen and that page.
In this budget and that message.
In this disease and that fashion.
In this sweetie and that bastard.
In this verb and that noun.
In this joke and that news.
In this discourse and that secret.
In this dream and that action.
In public and in private.⁵

貳. 2.

Chris calculates everything in Currency. Food, clothes, rent, transportation, water, electricity, signal, air, smell, dust, shadow, sunshine, temperature, intensity, volume, rhythm, frequency, speed, health, wealth, title, identification, personality, perspective, angle, aesthetic, methodology, results, data, philosophy, language, history, law, responsibility, intimacy, humidity, pain, wind, curiosity, weight, hospitality, distance, density, quality, emotion, relationship, pressure, moonlight, starlight, space, time,⁶ and currency,⁷ ...

Chris calculates them.

Chris calculates Chris in currency,
Chris in currency in Chris, Chris in currency
in Chris in currency, ...

Some said to Chris – 'It's all constructed.'
Chris knows it (or Chris thinks so).⁸

3. Spoiler alert: the parentheses are stolen for other use, so the brackets are here to accompany stage directions.

4. Characteristic of a tourist: it is hard to catch a clear image of something that is moving all the time. Especially when the movements are also moving.

□□□

These images are photos of my left hand that I took from my right hand: Only the left hand is moving. You can see the edges of the hand are vague. But the background is still clear. Photo of the middle and right: The right hand, with my phone, is moving as well. I cannot even catch the hand in the photo of the right.

The blurriness gives the scene a new look. I am not sure of the causality between the new appearance and my movement. Is it my movement that makes the new appearance or is it the new appearance that gives me the reason to move?

New is mutual relations between the tourist and the place. The place is new to the tourist. The tourist is also new to the place. New is against the idea of old. Old can be built through the past. Chris has some issue with the past as we can tell here.

5. Exercise: Create your own sentences. In this □□□□□□ and that □□□□□□. Keep doing it until you catch this format fully and you understand why you want to break the format.

6. Characteristic of a tourist: The time limit is a treasure as it creates the magic in the eyes of the tourists. For the tourist, this is the first time seeing this, trying that, doing those and making these. It is the last time trying this, it is only for now, no experience before and no commitment after. The magic of once is created by knowing there will be no repetition. The magic of once makes everything more valuable, and that is why

However, Chris does not abandon these habits. Chris could not recognise the world without these calculations. And Chris believes no one could.

參. 3.

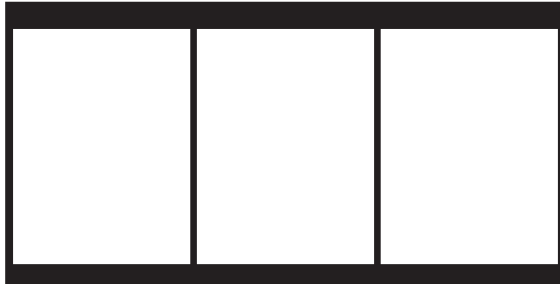
Some told Chris you have to think in a bigger picture. And Chris focuses on the individuals. Some told Chris you should care about the minority. And Chris thinks in a bigger picture. (Chris is smart and stupid at the same time). Locals tolerate Chris because Chris is a tourist. Chris seems to have no bad intentions. Tourists will leave eventually.⁹

people raise the price for tourists. The magic of once also makes you feel valued for yourself and the time, and we feel things only when we feel the value.

7. Exercise: Add up your own terms in currency, make a selection, and arrange the order. Do not forget to breathe. Try and put some emotions in it.

8. Whose voice is it in the parentheses? Are the ones' outside of the parentheses known for sure? There is always more than one elephant in the room.

9. Characteristic of a tourist: disposability takes a significant part in the concept of a tourist. It is the ability, or freedom, to abandon the future of objects, and of those who are objectified by the eyes of a tourist. I try to organise these characteristics together in a diagram.



Anti-repetition aims to detach the past and the future. If it has no past then it is New; If there is no future then it is disposable. These two properties build the magic of once, which can be cut short via the limit of the past and the future.

As I mentioned before, the magic of once shows the value. It centralises the value of the now. However, Value is not meaning. Meaning cannot exist within the limit of now. Meaning shows through when staying with time.

肆. 4.

Chris knows that intentions matter too much and, at the same time, not at all. Chris just keeps traveling and hides in the role of a tourist, so that Chris would not get exposed that Chris doesn't exist.¹⁰

Chris would not be acknowledged if Chris stays.

肆點伍. 4.5

Trapped in the place not yet HOME.

Waiting for a surprise,*

To correct.

So that you can go back?

A 'not yet' stems from A 'no longer'

You have lost it, and you will not have it even if you have found it.¹¹

10. Exercise: Try to name the factors that you think make up existence. Then try to find what happened to Chris in these factors. You will realise that this exercise does not help at all.

11. HOME is a fluid. It follows the tracks of the one/person performing their pendulum of life, which I describe as —

I go there. I work. I come back here. I stay home.

The places of here and there have meaning, Because there I work, and here I come back. I build meaning here and there by continuing to do what I always do here and there.

The meaning building is mutual. Because the doing is done there so it is working. Because the doing is done here so it is home staying. Doing makes meaning for space and space makes meaning for doing. So a doing is making meaning for a space that is also making meaning for that doing that makes meaning for that space that makes meaning for... Mutuality makes loops.

Meaning is also made within time. I go to work, for I can come back home. I come back home, for I can go out again. I go to work because I was at home. I go home because I was at work. I go for coming back. I come back for going. A doing makes meaning for the previous doing and for the next doing. To keep doing it, staying with the looping, makes meaning as well.

— This is what I define

伍. 5.

This time, Chris couldn't travel anymore because of a mistake.*¹²

No one knows why. Neither does Chris. Chris waits and does nothing. To remain, Chris must make as little interaction as possible and keep as much distance as possible to others.¹³ One thing is for sure, Chris is vanishing.¹⁴

陸. 6.

People cannot tolerate vanishing Chris. So they try to give help to Chris or try to get rid of Chris. Chris is in an existential crisis and these people are not helping Chris at all.

陸點伍. 6.5

Don't touch Chris. Chris is Vanishing. Don't say it out. Chris needs distance. Voice is too intimate. Chris doesn't want to vanish or be vanished. Chris might burst. Chris doesn't want to touch others. So don't touch Chris. For now.

12. What a surprise.

13. I wrote these sentences in the autumn of 2018, two years before the pandemic of 2020. It creeps me out that they are a kind of prophecy of social distancing measures now in the Netherlands. I do believe it is important to be aware of the contexts of now and find the appropriate position to respond to the context every time the text is showed to the public.

14. From the limit of time to the endless temporality. One way to vanish oneself is through waiting.

柒. 7.

One day, A Tourist came to Chris. And asked Chris if Chris can speak the tourist's language. Chris burst out.*¹⁵ A Tourist thought Chris couldn't understand anything. So A tourist left.

15. I use * as a symbol of Deus ex machina or anything related to the characteristic of it.

Deus ex machina: Noun. An unexpected power or event saving a seemingly hopeless situation, especially as a contrived plot device in a play or novel. Origin: Late 17th century modern Latin, translation of Greek theos ek mēkhanēs, 'god from the machinery.' In Greek theatre, actors representing gods were suspended above the stage, the denouement of the play being brought about by their intervention.

(Adapted from Lexico dictionary, 2020)

There is no doubt, I overuse this term. I extend Deus ex machina towards an idea as a lifesaver or a destructive bomber coming from nowhere that reverses the situation/condition/narrative. By definition, Deus ex machina is supposed to appear at the end of a scene or a script and it certainly works best at that position. However, I release it from that position in my world. Deus ex machina can be at any place in this script.

I do not deny but embrace my preference for using this idea in a humorous way. It can be considered as a magical tunnel to jump out of the box. It is also an approach to escapism. Using jokes to prevent confronting seriousness is a tendency rooted in my personality.