FICTION (SHORT STORY): NEW VENTURES

John unfolded the tiny wad of paper and read it. He was thirsty after eating the dry sandwich he'd thrown together in the morning, and wished he'd agreed to meet Peter closer to the kiosk. Too late now – he'd have to grab a drink on the way back from lunch. He leaned back on the bench and closed his eyes, trying to enjoy a few moments of sun in the busy city park while he waited for his brother.

When Peter arrived, he tugged on the scrap of paper in John's fist. "What does this one say?"

John looked up with a start. "It's a receipt for a box of matches, five hundred grams of sausages and some paper plates."

"Hmm. Kids' party?"

John smiled. "Adults' barbecue, Pete. They're chili sausages."

"You didn't tell me that part." Peter snatched the receipt off his brother and binned it before sitting down. "Haven't you got anything better to do than study litter?"

"Yes, I do, but I can't get on with it while waiting for you in the park."

"I'm not that late."

"Twenty minutes is a long time to sit and stare into space."

"You were napping."

"Anyway, litter's become quite the hobby. Look at this one." John pulled a bright yellow memo from the pocket of his well-worn jacket.

"You're keeping them now?"

"Just this one. Read it."

Peter did so and frowned. "What does it mean?"

"I've no idea, Pete. I'll throw it away when I've figured it out." He took it back and slid it carefully into his pocket.

Peter shook his head. "I thought we were going to talk about *my* hobby."

"And my money."

"Of course. Are you still interested?"

"I like your idea, Peter, but I'd need to see a business plan first."

"Half done already. Will I bring it to your office?"

"No. Bring it here. This time next week."

"Oh. Okay." Peter got up. "I guess I'll get onto it."

John got up too, brushing lunch crumbs off his tie. He gave a friendly flick to his brother's trim stomach. "I hope you ate on the way here."

Peter grinned, giving a return flick to John's shoulder. "And keep you waiting? No way."

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That night John lay in bed, reading the yellow memo aloud. He tried it in different tones of voice. Businesslike, chirpy, sexy. He liked sexy best.

"Tuesday: 1. Spangles

2. crop

3. a man."

The handwriting was smooth, flowing, with an elegant flourish here and there. "*Spangles*," he muttered, vaguely recalling the name of an expensive boutique nearby. *Crop*. Riding crop? He veered away from that thought. A haircut? Nah. It wouldn't be specified like that on a list, would it? 'Hairdresser,' more likely. Then again, maybe she had really long hair, so getting it cropped would be a big step. He hated it when girls with really long hair got it cropped. Oh, well. *A man*. That was clear enough. He traced over the flourishes with his index finger for a while, then gently tucked the note under his pillow. Sighing deeply, he turned out the light.

The following Wednesday he looked over the business plan while Peter fed John's lunch to the pigeons. "You seem to have thought it all through, Pete."

"You like it? I didn't grow these bags under my eyes for nothing?"

John chuckled. "No, keep them – they're useful for gaining sympathy. Now what do you think of this?" He pulled out another memo, this one vivid purple.

Peter plucked it off him, holding it by the corner. "If you're going to make a habit of this you should invest in some latex gloves." In a rushed monotone, he read out: "Tuesday, one--herb tea, two--dog food, three--never mind." He dropped it back in John's palm. "That makes sense."

"Alone, it doesn't," John said, ignoring Peter's sarcasm. He pulled out a rainbow of wadded-up papers and let them tumble onto Peter's business plan. "But put together with these six, it adds up. It's almost like reading her diary."

"Tell me you're kidding," Peter invited.

"Nope." John deposited the newly colourful business plan into Peter's lap. "What do you think?"

"Ugh." With a curl of his lip, Peter unrolled each one, arranging them in his palm like a hand of crumpled cards. "You found one of these every day?"

"Every day."

"In the same place?"

"Roughly."

"Same time?"

"Yep. On my way here for lunch."

"What is she, a professional litterbug?"

"You agree it's a woman?" John asked, a hint of anxiety in his voice.

"Well, maybe having a man on her to-do list most days isn't a dead giveaway, but along with that dainty writing and Smarties notepaper, yeah, the odds are increasing."

John nodded. "Read them out to me."

Peter glanced sidelong at John then down at his business plan. "Ohhkay." He started with a memo on lime green. "Wednesday: One--nails. Two--Possibilities. Three--a man. Thursday: One--gym. Two--vits. Three--a man." Shielding his eyes for the next one, he grated, "If that was hot pink, this must be arc welder's blue."

That earned him one of John's rare grins, quickly pulled into line with a go-on gesture.

"Friday: One--phone calls. Two--bills. Three--who am I kidding?" He snickered, and rolled the lot together into a psychedelic ball. "Yay! She's back to reality." He tossed the ball to John, who caught it with difficulty.

"Come on – she spruced herself up, didn't find who she was looking for, and took a break for the boring stuff, that's all."

Peter squinted at his brother. "She's on a dedicated campaign to get hooked, she had a complete makeover and still didn't get any offers. Aren't warning bells ringing yet?"

"She's very responsible. Look." John unravelled the ball. "On Saturday she went shopping, took the dog out–"

"Dogs are supposed to be walked every day."

"To the *beach* – it was a special trip."

"It better've been a dog beach. And I hope she used those poop bags, if her dog is anything like her."

"I'm serious. She was still looking for someone on Sunday, then went back to work on Monday. She's very focussed."

"I'll say. She dumps trash in the same place at the same time every day."

"Maybe she's on one of those Eastern things, where you have to throw your plans out after making them."

Peter stared at him.

"Well, I haven't studied it fully..."

Peter wiggled out Monday's note. "Number three here says 'Quit dreaming'. Sounds like good advice to me. Listen, John, I hate to rush you, but my lunch hour's nearly up. Can I have my business plan back?"

"I'll keep it for now." John retrieved the note and patiently pressed it flat again. He did the same with the others then closed Peter's file, noting his brother's long face. "I'll lend you enough to make up a small batch first. See how you go with that." He rummaged around in his jacket, swapping the notes for his mobile phone. Though looking down to perform the online money transfer, John could almost feel his brother's face light up next to him.

Peter cleared his throat. "How small a batch?"

"Say, a thousand?"

"By when?"

"Sunday."

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Pete laughed. "Yeah, Sunday. Sure thing. And I'll just bring them here, right?"

"Exactly. One o'clock. And be on time."

The next day there was no coloured note. John doubled his tracks, checking a promising white scrap that turned out to be a flier from a hair loss centre, but there was nothing from her. He cursed on both counts.

There was nothing the next day either.

That night he spread his earlier findings out on the spare pillow beside his own and lay next to them. They looked so cheery, reassuring. He imagined her carefully writing her plans each day. Or perhaps she wrote at night, at a white desk stacked with pads of coloured paper, in a white satin nightie ... or in bed, as he was, wearing nothing at all. Why had she stopped? He propped himself up on his elbow and stroked the notes, turning them about to make patterns. "Don't give up," he whispered, then fell back on his pillow and threw the light. "Even if I have," he said quietly into the darkness.

On Saturday he stayed home. He tied himself to the phone and computer, ordering pizza in for dinner when the empty fridge almost forced him out.

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[End of excerpt]

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NON-FICTION (BOOK CHAPTER): THE PLACEMENT ARTS

Earlier in this book I explained a little about Spiritual Housework. I've since discovered this term can have a social science usage [1] in discussions of class & gender distinctions. That is definitely not the way I'm using it. The term could also convey ideas of religious practices requiring a belief system, or even defying some belief system. That may well be an aspect of one's own practice of Spiritual Housework but, as a blanket term, I'm not using it that way either.

I mean any housework, done by any human being, which is not purely for cleaning, maintenance or decorative purposes, even though it may well involve cleaning, maintenance, decorating, gardening, repairs, renovations or any household-enhancing activity. What makes the housework 'spiritual' is the fact that the action is not mere labour. It is being done to grace the home with a figurative 'magic touch', if you like. It has the specific aim of generating a positive effect on the inhabitants, their environment, or their affairs.

Many actions considered Spiritual Housework are not even housework as such. They may be habits, rituals, paperwork or interpersonal activities. Indeed, they could be any category of thing, as long as they're to do with enhancing the inhabitants' experience of home, or supporting their lives and aspirations outside it. Any sort of intentional household enhancement is all that is meant by 'Spiritual Housework' in *The Everies™ Book*.

Note that the person with the intention should be the one to impose it through their own labours, unless delegating aids the intention. If you want a teenager to benefit from a cleaned room, it would be better to have them clean their own space. Makes sense, right? Yes, I know: you'll probably need to do your own Spiritual Housework to increase the odds that your teen will go along with you. The object, though, is to empower household members to take charge of their own areas, not to override them. Additionally, tasks legitimately outside your skill set or lawful zone – such as wiring or plumbing – should definitely be outsourced.

Spiritual Housework as used in this text is more like Space Clearing, associated with the Placement Arts. These usually have building science at their roots. The best known of these Arts are Feng Shui, Vaastu and Wabi Sabi, but there are other arts or sciences designed to enhance the home's harmony with its environment and occupants. Simple decluttering is a sub-study of most of these arts. Sustainability is now rightly popular in design, building and everyday living. Passive solar design as a component of this is something we especially value here in Australia. We think of these as scientific, relegating the Placement Arts to something more vague. Yet I consider Vaastu, Feng Shui and sustainability to be elements in a continuum of built environment knowledge. That might be contentious. Bear with me.

I believe those earlier Arts began as sustainable design for their region in their respective eras, incorporating other bodies of knowledge and beliefs in an attempt to create the sturdiest environment possible against the ravages of time, the elements, enemies, and the unforeseen.

Wherever technology and understanding ended during the ongoing development of these Arts, factors which perhaps seem less sound when viewed from today's knowledge base were also introduced. Similarly, when talking about placement, location is everything! What works in one climate, culture or microcosm may not work in another. We can still learn from these by trying to understand what problem those architects, builders and homemakers were trying to solve or what connection – however inaccurately – was being made between a cause and its effect.

By applying this viewpoint to using The Placement Arts today, we can understand the rationale behind certain advices, occasionally examining our current knowledge to substitute a reasoned action that better suits a given purpose. In a hundred years' time, that too may compare with superstition. Well, okay. Use what you know for now, and be willing to keep on learning. You'll be in good company. For example, the Building Biology movement stemming from Europe [2] is an application of modern health knowledge being coupled with sustainability to improve outcomes.

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[End of excerpt]

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[1] Roberts, Dorothy E. *Faculty Scholarship,* Spiritual and Menial Housework, Paper 1282. http://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/faculty_scholarship/1282 , 1997, accessed 5 April 2016.
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NON-FICTION (ESSAY): THE MOVING PICTURE

Motion pictures developed in a society that was becoming accustomed to new technologies. Taking a local view, Australia had been linked to Europe by telegraph since the 1870s and was making its first phone calls in 1878. Writing about this period of our cinematic history, Laughren states, "Efficient railways, postal services, newspapers and magazines, mail order catalogues, schools of arts, trade union offices and travelling shows brought together city and country in pursuit of the same pleasures" (1995, p.10). The Western academic discipline of sociology was emerging, focussing on studies of mass society (Grossberg, Wartella & Whitney, 1998a). Inevitably, entertainment and science sought ways to reach a wider, international audience. In exploring this, I will argue that even before the world's first cinema opened – and there is contention about that date – development of the technology of film itself was a Western, yet transnational, cultural process of social dialogue and shared meanings.

This interplay between an audience and the producers of new technologies is best expressed in the cultural model of communication discussed by Grossberg, Wartella & Whitney: "The process of producing new shared meaning out of the interaction of historically given shared meanings and individually created meanings" (1998b , p. 20). Such is the way movies operate in our culture. Having seen the previews and read the reviews, we watch the movie with friends, compare it with earlier movies, discuss meanings, and then pass our opinion on to others. Public response and box office sales affect which movies will be invested in next. This was just as true of society in the late nineteenth century. Motion picture development is an excellent frame of reference for examining this notion. It provides Smith's (1993) requisite model of the inventing process, which illustrates how social dialogue precedes new inventions.

Today when we think of motion pictures, the institution of Hollywood is inextricably evoked. From the Golden Era of black and white movies to the latest blockbuster, the *post*-invention period of movies springs to mind. Yet the struggle to develop motion pictures was less involved with entertainment than with science and education; nor was it significantly the province of the USA. Perth's SciTech and Sydney's Powerhouse Museum are reminiscent of the earliest movie promotions. Baubles and gimmicks are included to demonstrate scientific principles to the layperson; the object of the spectacle is the technology, the medium itself.

The full history culminating in the phenomenon of the cinema cannot be given here, but a few pre-Victorian landmarks are worth mentioning. Perhaps the first picture display that could truly be considered 'moving' was in the late 1790s when Parisian Etienne Robertson used "rear projection, complex lenses, reflectors and numerous lamps producing composite images…projected on gauze and smoke" (Laughren, 1995, p.6). Sound effects of rain and thunder were added. This was followed around 1820 by panoramas: exotic, cylindrical paintings lit to create a passing scene. They were a portable version of the 360 degree illusionistic paintings that 1787 Irish artist Robert Barker had patented, called cycloramas (Laughren, 1995). In 1822, Louis Daguerre's dioramas of "transparent paintings, changing patterns of light and three-dimensional models" dazzled the audience in a moving

auditorium. When Daguerre took it on tour, a rolling canvas was used instead (Laughren, 1995). Many a science pupil has since been called upon to simulate a diorama.

It was when Dr Peter Roget – of thesaurus fame – revived Aristotle's 3rd century B.C. concept of 'persistence of vision' in 1824 that the clue to authentically moving images was widely grasped: A succession of images at a prescribed speed would create the illusion of motion (Laughren, 1995). Yet the problem then became two-fold for, once motion pictures were taken, they would have to be *shown* in motion. What followed was an exciting period of dialogue and experimentation that crossed countries and disciplines to culminate in the 1895 match of film, camera, printer and projector that would allow silent movies to be born.

We can now turn to what factors in the nineteenth century environment encouraged this flurry of activity toward the capture of motion. Certain discourses particular to Victorian times mirrored an earlier creative age. Smith concludes that "the Victorian bourgeois' obsession with the perfect mechanical reproduction of images in movement, sound and hue had some psychic link with the evolution of the representational technologies of film, phonograph, telegraph and wireless" (1993, p. 4). Smith takes this further, saying "the techniques have their roots in the Renaissance, with the development of anatomical study and the growing importance of perspective as the enabling science that made it possible for the new knowledge to be recorded and imparted" (1993, p. 8).

One Renaissance innovation served Joseph Perry, Australia's most prodigious pioneer film producer, who filmed to promote Salvation Army work and to raise funds for it through other genre. He acknowledged that his Limelight[1] Department used the sixteenth century technique of a Florentine painter, della Porta, which had been refined a century later by the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher.

Another Renaissance link to motion pictures was furnished by Leonardo da Vinci, whose anatomical drawings are a popular motif today. He described in 1500 the basic structure of a modern camera, which led to its current name. The *camera obscura* was "a darkened room with a small hole in one side which permitted an inverted image to form on the opposite inside wall" (Laughren, 1995, p. 9). It would be three centuries before a rudimentary camera was developed.

Additionally, anatomical study afforded the first motion picture sequence. The connections made in Gould (1995), are worth relating: Englishman Eadward Muybridge agreed to take rapid-fire photographs of a horse in motion to settle a bet between Californian factions on whether all four hooves of a horse left the ground during a gallop. Using an elaborate tripwire system, Muybridge's resulting shots showed that all four feet did indeed leave the ground. More pertinently, by projecting the photographs through his Zoopraxiscope invention, he created the illusion of a horse in motion. The year was 1872. This led to a meeting with American Thomas Edison in which Muybridge unsuccessfully floated the idea for pairing his Zoopraxiscope with Edison's popular phonograph. Muybridge went on to partner with Philadelphia's university to produce *Animal Locomotion* (University of Pennsylvania, 1888), a definitive book of photographs of humans and animals in motion.

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[End of excerpt]

[1] *Perry heated a lime block with gas in his projection lanterns to achieve powerful lighting, hence the name, "Limelight Department" and our current usage of the term 'in the limelight', although this is less accurately associated with the stage, rather than film.*

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