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1. Gulliver's Arrival in Midger Land.
2. Tied to the ground while he is asleep.
3. Dinner in the courtyard, and visit from the Liliputian Queen.
4. Gulliver in the land of giants.
5. Gulliver talking to the giant's daughter.

A complete synopsis of the pictures will be furnished upon application and with each film shipped.

Code Word *Uplhrowe*. Length 260 feet. Class B. \$31.20.

LAUNCHING RACING YACHTS.

LAUNCHING SHAMROCK III AT GOUROCK SHIPYARDS, SCOTLAND.

Launching Shamrock III at Gourock Shipyards, Scotland.

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PANORAMIC

Showing the "Sunbeam" (the residence and a

Techniques et technologies de la scénarisation

Scriptwriting Techniques and Technologies

Sous la direction de/edited by

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Code Word *Upprd*. Length 50 feet. Class B. \$6.00.

PANORAMIC VIEW OF HERRESHOFF WORKS FROM BRISTOL HARBOR.

Showing the rear view of the "Reliance" before launching, and also the "Sunbeam" (tender of the "Reliance"). Scene ends showing the Herreshoff residence and a son of Mr. Nat Herreshoff playing on the shore.

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The cars used on this railroad are very small and the seats used in them are settees, similar to those used in parks. The roof and one side of each car is covered with canvas to keep out the burning rays of the sun. There are no steps on the cars; the doors of them being on a level with the station platform. A very novel railway scene. This railroad was specially constructed for visitors to the Delhi Durbar.

Code word *Uppure*. Length 75 feet. Class B. \$9.00.

HINDOO STREET SCENE.

Chaudy Chowk, the Wall Street of Delhi, India. A typical East Indian street with its swarms of native business men walking to and fro, also numerous vehi-

Sous la direction de/edited by
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Éditorialisation/content curation Traduction/translation
Tara Karmous Timothy Barnard

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Excerpt from the Edison Manufacturing Company film catalogue
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Une base de données documentaire recensant tous les contenus
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par Olivier Asselin et Isabelle Raynauld

Le récit a toujours été une forme culturelle dominante, peut-être en raison de son extraordinaire pouvoir de synthèse – du temps et de l'expérience de l'individu et des communautés, du passé aussi bien que de l'avenir anticipé. Comme toutes les activités humaines qui nécessitent des outils et des savoir-faire, développés dans le temps et normalisés, répétés et transmis sur des générations, l'art de raconter est vite devenu une *technē* ou un *ars*. À l'origine, cette technique est indissociable de l'oralité, dans sa pratique même – qui dépend de la mémoire et de la performance de l'aède ou de l'acteur – et dans sa transmission – qui repose sur l'exemple donné par le maître et l'imitation pratiquée par l'élève, à travers le geste et la parole. Mais, avec le développement de l'écriture, puis de l'imprimerie, l'art de raconter a été formalisé et systématisé, et ses principes et techniques, consignés et transmis par le texte.

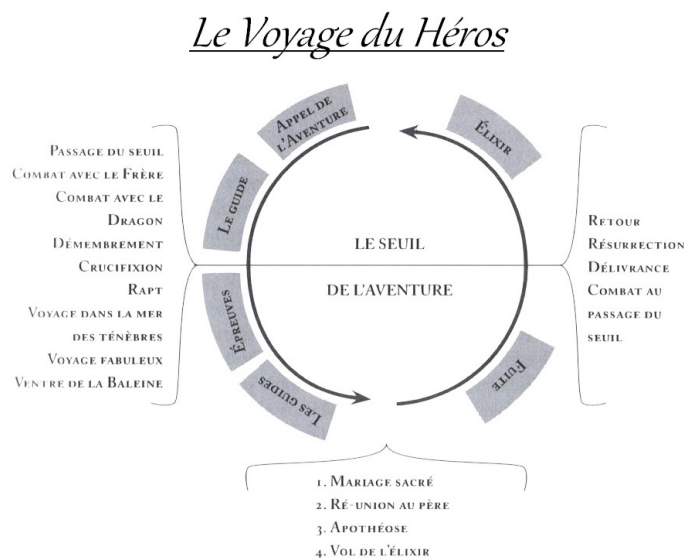


Schéma de Joseph Campbell illustrant le voyage typique du héros dans les mythologies. [Voir la fiche.](#)

Avec les révolutions industrielle et postindustrielle, le développement de la culture de masse et l'apparition du cinéma, de la télévision et du jeu vidéo, le récit audiovisuel est devenu une forme culturelle dominante. Paradoxalement, le scénario, entendu ici au sens étroit de texte présentant l'histoire et les dialogues et auquel on donne divers noms («script», «bible», «document de design», etc.), reste encore un document central dans la réalisation d'un film, d'une série, d'un jeu et de toute œuvre audiovisuelle, non seulement à l'étape de la conception et du développement, mais aussi à toutes les autres, de la préproduction à la postproduction, du tournage au montage, du financement à la distribution.

Dans le présent livre, nous examinerons certaines des techniques et technologies de scénarisation du récit audiovisuel, au cinéma bien sûr, mais aussi dans les séries télévisées et le jeu vidéo. Dans un premier temps, pour problématiser la réflexion, nous ferons une brève histoire du scénario et de la scénarisation, qui montrera la diversité des termes et de leurs usages selon les contextes et les moments. Dans un deuxième temps, nous examinerons les manuels de scénarisation, qui, bien qu'ils soient purement textuels et non technologiques (au sens étroit du terme), ont néanmoins contribué à faire de la scénarisation une technique, c'est-à-dire un procédé formalisé, reproductible et transmissible, bref mécanisable. Dans un troisième temps, nous nous pencherons sur les logiciels de scénarisation et les algorithmes d'intelligence artificielle, qui vont radicaliser l'automatisation de la scénarisation du récit audiovisuel. Alors que nous insistons ici sur les formes textuelles de la scénarisation, nous examinerons dans un autre livre les formes non textuelles de la prévisualisation^[1].

.....
^[1] Voir cette autre publication liée à l'*Encyclopédie raisonnée des techniques du cinéma* : [Techniques et technologies de la prévisualisation transmédiatique](#), par Olivier Asselin et Isabelle Raynauld (dir.).

Introduction

by Olivier Asselin and Isabelle Raynauld

Translation: Timothy Barnard

Narrative has always been a dominant cultural form, perhaps because of its extraordinary power to synthesize: the time and experience of the individual and of communities, in the past as well as in the future foreseen. Like all human activities that require tools and know-how, developed over time and standardized, repeated and transmitted over generations, the art of storytelling quickly became a *technē* or an *ars*. At first, this technique, in its very practice, was inseparable from orality – which relies on the bard’s or the actor’s memory and performance – and in its transmission – which was based on the example given by the master and the imitation carried out by the student by gesture and speech. But with the growth of writing, and later printing, the art of storytelling was formalized and systematized, and its principles and techniques were recorded and transmitted by text.

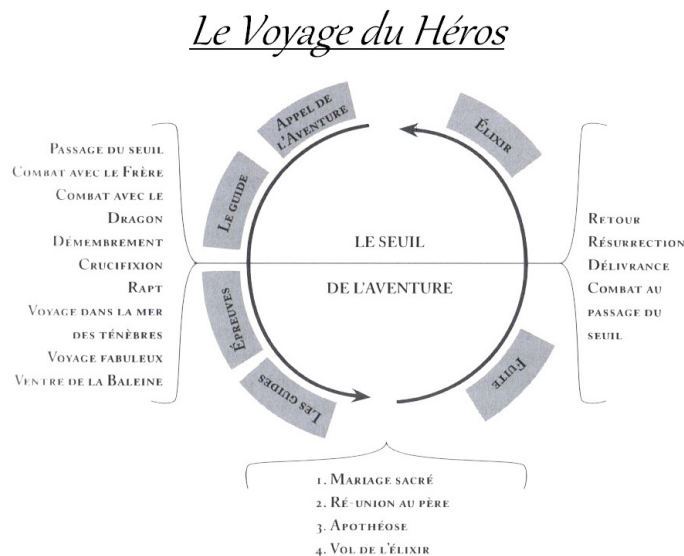


Diagram by Joseph Campbell showing the hero's typical journey in mythology. [See database entry.](#)

With the Industrial Revolution and the post-industrial revolution, the growth of mass culture and the appearance of cinema, television and video games, audiovisual narrative became a dominant cultural form. Paradoxically, the script, understood here in the narrow sense of a text setting out the story and dialogue and to which various names have been given (“screenplay,” “bible,” “design document,” etc.), remains a central document in the making of a film, a series, a game or any other audiovisual work, not only at the stage of conception and development but also at every other stage, from pre-production to post-production, filming to editing, financing to distribution.

In the present book, we will examine some of the techniques and technologies of scripting audiovisual narratives, in cinema of course, but also in television series and video games. First, in order to problematize the issues we will present a brief history of the script and scriptwriting which will demonstrate the diversity of terms and their uses, depending on their context and the moment in time. Second, we will examine scriptwriting manuals which, although they are purely textual and not technological (in the narrow sense of the term), have nevertheless contributed to making scriptwriting a technique, meaning a procedure that has been formalized and made reproducible and transmissible – which can, in short, be made mechanical. Third, we will take up the question of scriptwriting software and artificial intelligence algorithms, which radically automate the scripting of audiovisual narrative. Here we will emphasize textual forms of scriptwriting, but will take up non-textual forms of previsualization in a second book.^[1]

^[1] See this other publication part of the *Encyclopedia of Film Techniques and Technologies*: [Transmedial Previsualization Techniques and Technologies](#), by Olivier Asselin and Isabelle Raynauld (eds.).

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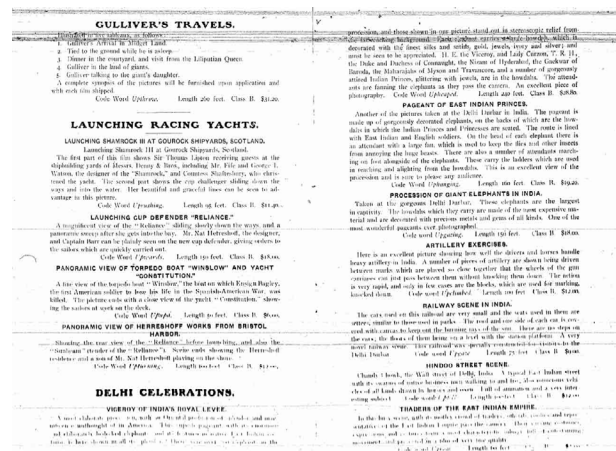
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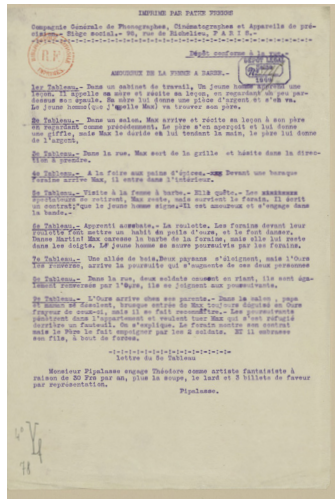
L'histoire du scénario et de la scénarisation ne peut pas se faire sans porter une attention particulière à la fois aux mots et aux choses, aux discours et aux pratiques, aux divers documents préparatoires et aux noms qu'on leur a donnés, aux gens qui les ont produits et à leur statut dans la chaîne de production, ainsi qu'à la division du travail et à la professionnalisation des métiers qui ont structuré ces activités. Appliquer indistinctement les mots *scénario* et *scénarisation* à tous ces documents et à toutes ces activités préparatoires confère rétrospectivement une cohérence et une continuité bien illusoires à une réalité très complexe^[1]. En fait, les mots et les choses, les discours et les pratiques ont changé d'un moment à l'autre, d'un lieu à l'autre, selon le contexte historique et social, le pays, la période, l'industrie, la compagnie, l'œuvre, les personnes, etc. La nomenclature est souvent instable et l'évolution, non linéaire^[2]. Mais le cas américain est exemplaire, dans la mesure où l'industrialisation du cinéma et la standardisation du scénario s'y sont produites tôt et rapidement.

Aux États-Unis, la manière de concevoir et de préparer un film et la place de l'écriture dans ce processus varient suivant l'organisation de la production, selon qu'elle est centrée sur le caméraman, le réalisateur ou le producteur^[3]. Au tout début de l'histoire du cinéma, alors que les films sont courts, le caméraman choisit le sujet, le capte ou le met en scène sans autre préparation. Le seul texte d'accompagnement est alors le synopsis du film, souvent une seule ligne, rarement plus qu'un paragraphe, qui apparaît dans le catalogue des maisons de production pour faire la promotion des films et aider le bonimenteur à les présenter au public.

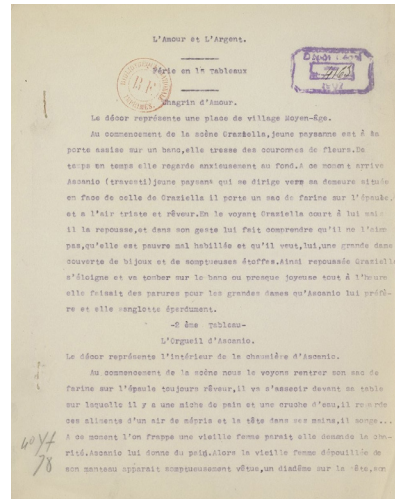


Extrait du catalogue n° 175 des films de la Edison Manufacturing Company (mai 1903), incluant une courte description des films présentés par catégorie. [Voir la fiche](#).

Au début du XX^e siècle, alors que les films se développent et demandent plus de préparation, apparaît le document de conception, auquel on donne le nom de «*outline*» («*story outline*», «*script outline*», «*scenario outline*», etc.) et qui prend la forme d'une liste de scènes numérotées, présentées par un simple titre ou un résumé d'une ligne. Bientôt, cette suite de scènes s'étoffe – les résumés sont détaillés, les intertitres et les inserts sont intégrés, etc. –, et le document préparatoire devient un véritable scène-à-scène, le *scenario script*^[4].

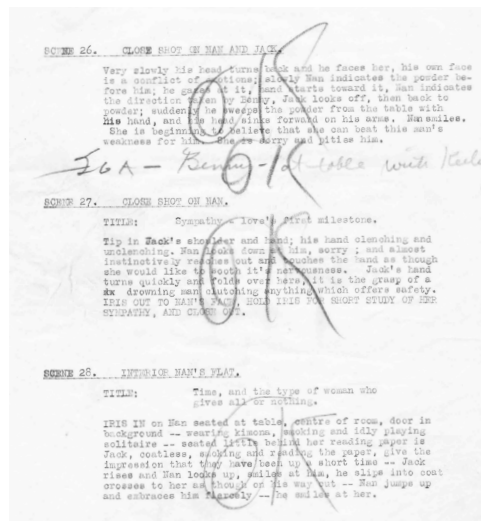


Extrait du scénario du film *Amoureux de la femme à barbe* (1909), produit par la firme Pathé Frères. [Voir la fiche.](#)



Extrait du scénario du film *L'amour et l'argent* (1907), produit par la firme Lux Film. [Voir la fiche.](#)

À partir de 1914, avec le développement du long-métrage, la production de masse et la taylorisation qu'elle impose, le *continuity script* devient le document préparatoire standard, qui présente non pas tant la suite des scènes, mais la liste des *plans* – avec des informations sur l'action et les intertitres, bien sûr, mais aussi sur les lieux, les décors, les accessoires, les costumes, la mise en scène, l'angle de vue, les valeurs de plans, les mouvements de caméra et certains effets spéciaux ou visuels –, une sorte de *shooting script*, pour assurer la continuité de l'action et de l'histoire dans le montage de ces plans^[5].



Extrait du *continuity script* annoté du film *Love or Justice* (1917), réalisé par Walter Edwards. [Voir la fiche.](#)

Dans les années 1930, l'arrivée du son et du parlant ébranle ce standard, et chaque studio développe alors son propre modèle. Mais les dialogues sont souvent intégrés dans ce *continuity script* (à la place des intertitres)^[6].

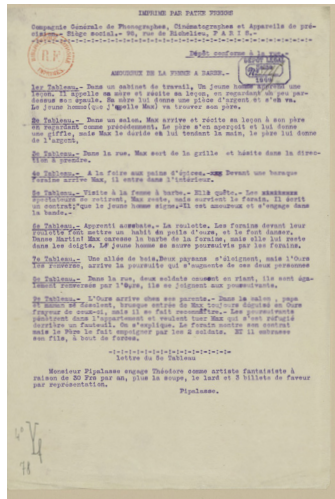
Au milieu des années 1950, avec l'effondrement du *studio system* et la décentralisation de la production, un autre type de document préparatoire voit le jour, le *master scene script*, qui deviendra la forme dominante du scénario, soit un document essentiellement textuel, qui présente la structure générale du récit dans son découpage en *scènes intitulées et numérotées* (une scène étant définie par une unité d'action, de temps et de lieu); qui décrit rapidement le décor, les personnages, les actions et les expressions dans les *didascalies*; et qui rapporte les paroles échangées dans les *dialogues*. Pour en augmenter la lisibilité et aussi sans doute pour mieux distinguer la scénarisation de la réalisation, le *master scene script* présente très peu d'indications de réalisation et de montage. Les informations esthétiques et techniques, comme l'angle de vue, les valeurs de plans, les mouvements de caméra et les transitions, sont désormais réservées à d'autres documents de production, comme le *shooting script*, le *storyboard* ou le *overhead diagram*^[7].

Cette distinction entre la scénarisation et la réalisation, entre le scénario et les autres documents de prévisualisation, peut nourrir deux conceptions diamétralement opposées de la place relative de la scénarisation et du scénario dans la production. Dans un cas, la scénarisation est considérée comme le moment essentiel dans la *conception* du film et la réalisation comme une simple *exécution*. Le scénario devient alors le document maître, le plan directeur du film. Dans l'autre cas, la réalisation est considérée comme une activité aussi décisive que la scénarisation dans la conception et la fabrication du film (la mise en scène et la mise en images sont aussi une « écriture », comme le montage d'ailleurs). L'importance du scénario est alors relativisée – il concerne surtout l'histoire et les dialogues –, alors que les autres documents de prévisualisation prouvent peu à peu leur pertinence^[8].

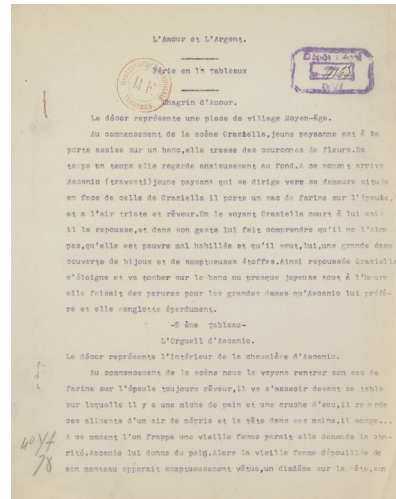
La tension entre ces deux conceptions du scénario et de la scénarisation est périodiquement ravivée, notamment quand se pose la question de savoir qui, du scénariste ou du réalisateur, est le véritable auteur de l'œuvre. Au cinéma, le réalisateur du film est désormais privilégié (au moins depuis la « politique des auteurs »), mais à la télévision, le scénariste est encore considéré comme le principal auteur de la téléserie (comme si l'histoire, les personnages et les dialogues avaient plus d'importance que la mise en scène et la mise en images).

Il est important de noter que cette conception de la scénarisation et du scénario, qui s'est imposée ainsi progressivement aux États-Unis et partout dans le monde aujourd'hui au point de devenir hégémonique, ne va pas de soi. Il existe évidemment d'autres pratiques du cinéma – et de la scénarisation – au-delà du film de fiction industriel, notamment du côté du cinéma indépendant, du documentaire et du cinéma dit « expérimental », où l'on peut écrire et réécrire des scènes pendant le tournage puis pendant le montage, tourner et monter sans scénario, etc. Les révolutions numériques et l'apparition de nouvelles formes de médias, plus immersifs et interactifs, vont aussi transformer les manières de concevoir et de préparer le récit audiovisuel.

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- [1] Il est important de noter ici que, longtemps, le terme *screen play*, en deux mots, ne réfère pas au document textuel, mais au film lui-même ou à l'histoire (la pièce) qu'il raconte. Le terme *screenplay*, en un seul mot, pour qualifier ce que nous appelons aujourd'hui le scénario, ne sera utilisé que dans les années 1940.
 - [2] Pour l'historique qui suit, centré sur le cas américain, voir surtout : Edward Azlant, «The Theory, History, and Practice of Screenwriting, 1897-1920» (thèse de doctorat, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1980); Tom Stempel, *Screenwriting* (San Diego : A. S. Barnes, 1982); David Bordwell, Janet Staiger et Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1985); Janet Staiger, «Blueprints for Feature Films: Hollywood's Continuity Scripts», dans *The American Film Industry*, dir. Tino Balio (Madison : University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 173-192; Tom Stempel, *Framework: A History of Screenwriting in the American Film* (New York : Syracuse University Press, 2000 [1988]); Isabelle Raynauld, «Screenwriting», dans *The Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, dir. Richard Abel (New York : Routledge, 2005), 834-838; Steven Maras, *Screenwriting: History, Theory and Practice* (Londres : Wallflower Press, 2009); Steven Price, *The Screenplay: Authorship, Theory and Criticism* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Steven Price, *A History of the Screenplay* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
 - [3] Nous tenons à préciser que tous ces rôles étaient alors joués par des hommes.
 - [4] Nous sommes ici dans ce que Staiger appelle le *director system* et le *director-unit system*, centrés sur le réalisateur.
 - [5] Ce *continuity script* était rédigé, à partir du *scenario script*, non pas par les scénaristes eux-mêmes, mais par des spécialistes au sein des studios, pour augmenter l'efficacité de la production. Nous passons sur les autres documents écrits qui accompagnent alors souvent le script proprement dit, comme le synopsis, le *extended synopsis* ou le *treatment*, qui présentent l'histoire sous la forme d'un récit en prose continu, plus lisible que le script.
 - [6] La «continuité dialoguée» que l'on retrouve alors à cette époque constitue une sorte de transition entre le *continuity script* des années 1910-1920 et le *master scene script* des années 1950. C'est dans les années 1930 qu'apparaît un nouveau spécialiste : le dialoguiste.
 - [7] Voir au sujet du *storyboard* cette autre publication liée à l'*Encyclopédie raisonnée des techniques du cinéma : Techniques et technologies de la prévisualisation transmédiatique*, par Olivier Asselin et Isabelle Raynauld (dir.), lamelle «Le *storyboard*, l'animation et autres outils de prévisualisation expérientielle», par Benoît Melançon.
 - [8] De ce point de vue, le cinéma serait devenu un «art à deux étapes», comme le théâtre et la musique, où l'écrit – la pièce ou la partition – est souverain et peut donner lieu à plusieurs «performances» légitimes de l'œuvre. Sur les arts à deux étapes, voir Nelson Goodman, *The Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, éd. rev. (Indianapolis : Hackett, 1976 [1968]).

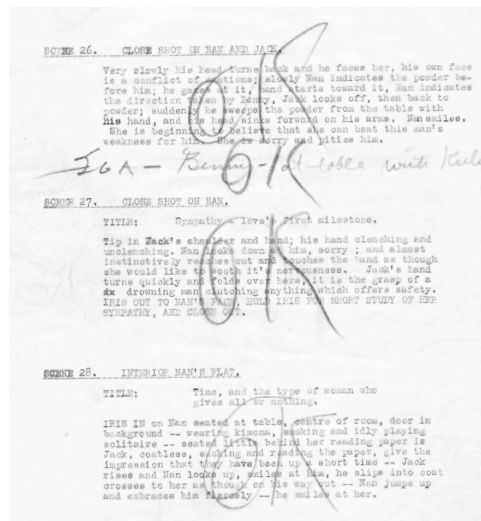


Excerpt of the script for the film *Amoureux de la femme à barbe* (*In Love with the Bearded Woman*, 1909), produced by the Pathé Frères company. [See database entry.](#)



Excerpt of the script for the film *L'amour et l'argent* (*Love and Fortune*, 1907), produced by the company Lux Film. [See database entry.](#)

Beginning in 1914, with the development of the feature film, mass production and the Taylorization it imposed, the continuity script became the standard preparatory document, showing not so much the sequence of *scenes* but rather a list of *shots*, with information on the action and the intertitles, of course, but also on the location, decor, props, costumes, staging, angle of view, shot scale, camera movements and certain special or visual effects. This was a kind of shooting script for ensuring continuity in the action and the story when these shots were edited.^[5]



Excerpt of an annotated continuity script for the film *Love or Justice* (1917), directed by Walter Edwards. [See database entry.](#)

In the 1930s, the arrival of sound and speech shook up this system, and each studio developed its own model. But the dialogue was often incorporated into this continuity script (taking the place of the intertitles).^[6]

In the mid-1950s, with the collapse of the studio system and the decentralization of production, another kind of preparatory document saw the light of day and would become the dominant form of the script: the master scene script. This essentially textual document showed the overall structure of the narrative through the way it was broken down into *titled and numbered scenes* (a scene being defined as having unity of action, time and place). It quickly described the decor, characters, actions and expressions in the *stage directions* and set out the words exchanged in the *dialogues*. To make the document more readable and also no doubt to better distinguish between scriptwriting and directing, the master scene script provided very few indications with respect to directing or editing the film. Aesthetic and technical information, such as the angle of view, shot scale, camera movements and transitions, were now reserved for other production documents such as the shooting script, the storyboard^[7] and the overhead diagram.

This distinction between scripting and directing, between the script and other previsualization documents, can give rise to two diametrically opposed conceptions of the relative role of scriptwriting and the script in film production. In the former case, scriptwriting is seen as an essential moment in the film's *conception* and directing as merely *executing* it. Here the script becomes the master document, the film's guiding plan. In the latter case, directing is seen as an activity as decisive as scriptwriting in the conception and making of a film (staging and cinematography are also a kind of "writing," as is editing moreover). Here the importance of the script is downplayed and involves mostly the story and the dialogue, while other previsualization documents gradually manifest their importance.^[8]

This tension between these two conceptions of the script is periodically revived, particularly when the question is posed of who, the scriptwriter or the film director, is the true author of the work. In cinema, the director has come to assume that honour (at least since the "auteur theory"), but in television the scriptwriter is still seen as the principal author of a television series (as if the story, the characters and the dialogue have more importance than the mise en scène and the cinematography).

It is important to note that this conception of scriptwriting and the script, which today has gradually taken hold in the United States and around the world to the point of becoming hegemonic, is not self-evident. Other film – and scriptwriting – practices clearly exist beyond the industrial fiction film, including in particular independent cinema, documentary and so-called "experimental" cinema, in which one can write and rewrite scenes while shooting and later while editing, or shoot and edit without a script, etc. The digital revolution and the appearance of new, more immersive and interactive media will also transform the way in which audiovisual narrative is conceived and prepared.

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- [1] It is important to note here that for a long time the expression screen play, in two words, did not refer to the textual document but rather to the film itself or to the story (the play) it told. The use of the term screenplay, in one word, to describe what today we call the script, occurred only in the 1940s.
 - [2] On the historical outline which follows, focusing on the situation in the United States, see in particular: Edward Azlant, "The Theory, History, and Practice of Screenwriting, 1897-1920" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1980); Tom Stempel, *Screenwriting* (San Diego: A.S. Barnes, 1982); David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Janet Staiger, "Blueprints for Feature Films: Hollywood's Continuity Scripts," in *The American Film Industry*, ed. Tino Balio (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 173-92; Tom Stempel, *Framework: A History of Screenwriting in the American Film* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000 [1988]); Isabelle Raynauld, "Screenwriting," in *The Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, ed. Richard Abel (New York: Routledge, 2005), 834-38; Steven Maras, *Screenwriting: History, Theory and Practice* (London: Wallflower Press, 2009); Steven Price, *The Screenplay: Authorship, Theory and Criticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Steven Price, *A History of the Screenplay* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
 - [3] We wish to point out that at the time these positions were filled by men.
 - [4] This occurred during what Janet Staiger calls the director system or the director-unit system, centred on the film director.
 - [5] This continuity script was prepared, on the basis of the scenario script, not by the scriptwriters themselves but by specialists in the studios in order to make the production more efficient. We will not delve here into other written documents which often accompanied the film script proper, such as the synopsis, the extended synopsis or the treatment, which depicted the story in the form of a narrative in uninterrupted prose and was more readable than the script.
 - [6] The dialogue continuity script found during this period was a kind of transition between the continuity script of the 1910s and 20s and the master scene script of the 1950s. In the 1930s, a new specialist appeared: the dialogue writer.
 - [7] See, on the topic of the storyboard, this other publication part of the *Encyclopedia of Film Techniques and Technologies: Transmedial Previsualization Techniques and Technologies*, by Olivier Asselin and Isabelle Raynauld (eds.), section "The Storyboard, the Animatic and Other Experiential Previsualization Tools," by Benoît Melançon.
 - [8] From this perspective, cinema is a "two-step art," like theatre and music, in which the written document – the stage play or musical score – is sovereign and can give rise to a number of legitimate performances of the work. On two-step arts, see Nelson Goodman, *The Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, rev. ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976 [1968]).

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS.

Illustrated in five tableaux, as follows:

1. Gulliver's Arrival in Midger Land.
2. Tied to the ground while he is asleep.
3. Dinner in the courtyard, and visit from the Liliputian Queen.
4. Gulliver in the land of giants.
5. Gulliver talking to the giant's daughter.

A complete synopsis of the pictures will be furnished upon application and with each film shipped.

Code Word *Uplthrowe*. Length 260 feet. Class B. \$31.20.

LAUNCHING RACING YACHTS.

LAUNCHING SHAMROCK III AT GOUROCK SHIPYARDS, SCOTLAND.

Launching Shamrock III at Gourock Shipyards, Scotland.

The first part of this film shows Sir Thomas Lipton receiving guests at the shipbuilding yards of Messrs. Denny & Bros., including Mr. Fife and George L. Watson, the designer of the "Shamrock," and Countess Shaftesbury, who christened the yacht. The second part shows the cup challenger sliding down the ways and into the water. Her beautiful and graceful lines can be seen to advantage in this picture.

Code Word *Uprushing*. Length 95 feet. Class B. \$11.40.

LAUNCHING CUP DEFENDER "RELIANCE."

A magnificent view of the "Reliance" sliding slowly down the ways, and a panoramic sweep after she gets into the bay. Mr. Nat Hefreshoff, the designer, and Captain Barr can be plainly seen on the new cup defender, giving orders to the sailors which are quickly carried out.

Code Word *Upready*. Length 150 feet. Class B. \$18.00.

PANORAMIC VIEW OF TORPEDO BOAT "WINSLOW" AND YACHT "CONSTITUTION."

A fine view of the torpedo boat "Winslow," the boat on which Ensign Bagley, the first American soldier to lose his life in the Spanish-American War, was killed. The picture ends with a close view of the yacht "Constitution," showing the sailors at work on the deck.

PANORAMIC

Showing the
"Sunbeam" (the
residence and a

procession, and those shown in our picture stand out in stereoscopic relief from the background. Each elephant carries a large howdah which is decorated with the finest silks and satins, gold, jewels, ivory and silver; and must be seen to be appreciated. H. E. the Viceroy, and Lady Curzon, T. R. H., the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Gaekwar of Baroda, the Maharajahs of Mysore and Travancore, and a number of gorgeously attired Indian Princes, glittering with jewels, are in the howdahs. The attendants are fanning the elephants as they pass the camera. An excellent piece of photography. Code Word *Upheaped*. Length 240 feet. Class B. \$28.80.

PAGEANT OF EAST INDIAN PRINCES.

Another of the pictures taken at the Delhi Durbar in India. The pageant is made up of gorgeously decorated elephants, on the backs of which are the howdahs in which the Indian Princes and Princesses are seated. The route is lined with East Indian and English soldiers. On the head of each elephant there is an attendant with a large fan, which is used to keep the flies and other insects from annoying the huge beasts. There are also a number of attendants marching on foot alongside of the elephants. These carry the ladders which are used in reaching and alighting from the howdahs. This is an excellent view of the procession and is sure to please any audience.

Code Word *Upunging*. Length 160 feet. Class B. \$19.20.

PROCESSION OF GIANT ELEPHANTS IN INDIA.

Taken at the gorgeous Delhi Durbar. These elephants are the largest in captivity. The howdahs which they carry are made of the most expensive material and are decorated with precious metals and gems of all kinds. One of the most wonderful pageants ever photographed.

Code word *Uppazing*. Length 150 feet. Class B. \$18.00.

ARTILLERY EXERCISES.

Here is an excellent picture showing how well the drivers and horses handle heavy artillery in India. A number of pieces of artillery are shown being driven between marks which are placed so close together that the wheels of the gun carriages can just pass between them without knocking them down. The action is very rapid, and only in few cases are the blocks, which are used for marking, knocked down. Code word *Upchimed*. Length 100 feet. Class B. \$12.00.

RAILWAY SCENE IN INDIA.

...and the seats used in them are side of each car is covered. There are no steps on the platform. A very interesting feature is the 5 feet. Class B. \$9.00.

...ical East Indian street to, also numerous vehi...

Les manuels de scénarisation de films

Screenwriting Manuals

Olivier Asselin Bruno Maltais

Les manuels de scénarisation de films

par Olivier Asselin et Bruno Maltais

Les ouvrages pratiques sur l'art de raconter sont nombreux, depuis les poétiques antiques, comme celles d'Aristote et d'Horace, jusqu'aux ouvrages fondamentaux de la doctrine classique et de la période baroque, comme *L'art nouveau de composer des pièces en ce temps* de Lope de Vega (1609), *La pratique du théâtre* de l'abbé d'Aubignac (1657), les *Trois discours sur le poème dramatique* de Corneille (1660) ou *L'art poétique* de Boileau (1674), et de la dramaturgie moderne, de la *Technique du théâtre* de Freytag (1863) au *Petit organon pour le théâtre* de Brecht (1948). Au XX^e siècle paraissent les premiers véritables manuels, comme *The Theory and Technique of Playwriting* de Lawson (1936, 1949), *The Art of Dramatic Writing* de Egri (1942, 1946) et *The Human Nature of Playwriting* de Raphaelson (1949). Dans ce vaste ensemble d'ouvrages pratiques, il faut accorder une place particulière à ceux qui tentent de ramener toutes les histoires à quelques intrigues élémentaires, dans la tradition des «36 situations dramatiques de Gozzi» (mentionnées par Goethe, mais dont nul n'a jamais retrouvé la trace) : Nerval en propose 24, Polti 36, Souriau 200 000, Tobias 20, Booker 7, etc.

Certains textes théoriques, qui font l'analyse scientifique du récit, sont parfois utilisés à des fins pratiques, comme *Morphologie du conte* de Propp (1928) et *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* de Campbell (1949). Ce dernier ouvrage formule l'hypothèse que tous les mythes de l'histoire de l'humanité – égyptiens, hindous, bouddhistes, mésopotamiens, grecs, latins, juifs, chrétiens, musulmans, etc. – sont des variations sur un même grand mythe, fondamental et universel (qui serait ainsi transhistorique et transculturel) : «Un héros s'aventure hors du monde quotidien vers une région surnaturelle; il est là confronté à des forces extraordinaires et y remporte une victoire décisive; il revient de cette aventure mystérieuse avec le pouvoir d'accorder des bienfaits à ses semblables.^[1]» Ce «monomythe», un parcours initiatique en 17 étapes, est utilisé par plusieurs créateurs dans divers médias – notamment au cinéma (par Vogler).

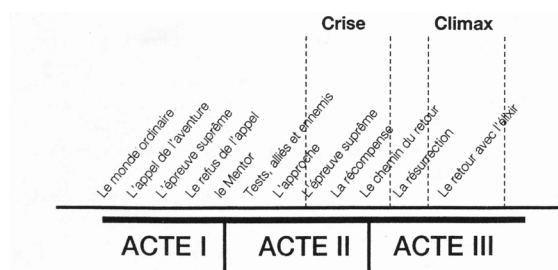


Schéma du modèle du voyage du héros selon Christopher Vogler, inspiré du modèle de Joseph Campbell.

[Voir la fiche.](#)

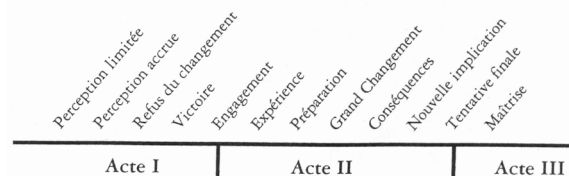


Schéma de l'arc transformationnel selon Christopher Vogler, inspiré des écrits de Joseph Campbell.

[Voir la fiche.](#)

D'autres textes plus théoriques encore, comme la *Sémantique structurale* de Greimas, le *Discours du récit* de Genette, *Lector in fabula* d'Eco ou *Temps et récit* de Ricoeur, sont parfois aussi cités dans les manuels d'écriture (surtout ceux du monde francophone).

Les manuels de scénarisation sont des ouvrages pratiques écrits par des professionnels, parfois par des scénaristes, le plus souvent par des conseillers à la scénarisation, à l'intention des professionnels et surtout des amateurs (notamment des étudiants). Leur principal objectif est de présenter une méthode pour concevoir, développer et écrire un scénario. Dans la vieille tension entre l'art et l'artisanat, entre le « régime vocationnel » et le « régime professionnel », les manuels prennent d'emblée parti pour le régime professionnel, bien évidemment : l'écriture s'enseigne et s'apprend, le savoir-faire est aussi important que le talent, il est essentiel de connaître les techniques et les trucs du métier. Comme ce sont des manuels pratiques et non des traités théoriques, la méthode est inductive et non déductive : elle part de l'analyse d'un ensemble de scénarios exemplaires – le plus souvent ceux de quelques films à succès – pour reconstituer les règles de l'art. Ce travail inductif implique évidemment une généralisation, c'est-à-dire un processus de sélection, de simplification et de formalisation.

Pour un ensemble de raisons historiques – l'industrialisation rapide du cinéma américain et la professionnalisation des scénaristes aux États-Unis, l'hégémonie culturelle américaine depuis le début du XX^e siècle, etc. –, les manuels de scénarisation américains dominent rapidement et durablement le marché^[2]. Aux États-Unis, en effet, les premiers manuels paraissent tôt : Ralph P. Stoddard publie *The Photo-Play: A Book of Valuable Information for Those Who Would Enter a Field of Unlimited Endeavour* en 1911, Epes Winthrop Sargent fait paraître *Technique of the Photoplay* en 1912, Victor Freeburg présente *The Art of Photoplay Making* en 1918 et Frances Taylor Patterson (qui, pendant des décennies, donne le cours *Photoplay Composition* à l'Université Columbia) publie *Cinema Craftsmanship: A Book for Photoplaywrights* en 1920 et *Scenario and Screen* en 1928. Mais ces manuels deviennent désuets avec l'arrivée du son, alors que la parole devient centrale dans l'art de raconter. Dans les années 1930, les publications se font rares. Il faut toutefois mentionner le manuel de Tamar Lane, *The New Technique of Screen Writing: A Practical Guide to the Writing and Marketing of Photoplays* (1936), qui est l'un des premiers à aborder l'écriture pour le film parlant. Après la guerre paraissent *The Technique of Screen and Television Writing* de Eugene Vale (1944) et *A Practical Manual of Screen Playwriting for Theater and Television Films* de Lewis Herman (1952).

La plupart des manuels sont cependant publiés après la crise des grands studios et le développement du cinéma dit « indépendant » (c'est-à-dire indépendant des grands studios). En effet, dans les années 1980, 1990 et 2000, les publications se multiplient : Syd Field, *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* (1979, 2005); Linda Seger, *Making a Good Script Great* (1987, 2010); Christopher Vogler, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (1992, 1998, 2007); David Trottier, *The Screenwriter's Bible* (1994, 2014); Robert McKee, *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting* (1997, 2010); Blake Snyder, *Save the Cat! The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need* (2005); John Truby, *The Anatomy of Story: 22 Steps to Becoming a Master Storyteller* (2007); etc.

Du côté francophone, quelques livres paraissent aussi, comme *Écrire un scénario* de Michel Chion (1985, 2007) et *La dramaturgie* d'Yves Lavandier (1994, 2014), qui, même s'ils présentent souvent un corpus d'œuvres plus vaste et plus universel, doivent beaucoup aux manuels américains (Chion mentionne, entre autres, Vale et Field; Lavandier reprend Field, McKee et Truby). Dans cet ensemble, l'ouvrage d'Isabelle Raynauld, *Lire et écrire un scénario* (2012, 2019), se distingue aisément, par l'importance qu'elle accorde à la lecture de scénarios dans le travail de scénarisation et par ses techniques d'idéation, mais aussi, dans la seconde édition, par son ouverture au documentaire et aux nouveaux médias. Il reste que les ouvrages les plus vendus et les plus influents en dehors des États-Unis sont encore les traductions des principaux manuels américains^[3].

Ces manuels publiés aux États-Unis se ressemblent beaucoup. D'un auteur à l'autre, le lexique peut varier, de même que le nombre de battements, de pivots et d'actes, mais le cœur reste le même. L'histoire idéale – qu'elle soit nommée « *The Paradigm* » (Field), « *The Quest* » (McKee), « *The Hero's Journey* » (Vogler), « *The Story Spine* » (Seger), « *The Beat Sheet* » (Snyder), « *The 22 Building Blocks* » (Truby), « *The Six Stage Plot Structure* » (Hauge), etc. – se ramène généralement à ces quelques ingrédients de base : un thème; un personnage principal, caractérisé par une « faiblesse » et un « besoin » (inconscient), un « but » ou un « désir » (conscient); un obstacle à ce désir, c'est-à-dire un antagoniste et surtout un conflit central; une structure linéaire divisée en quelques grands actes, avec une transformation du personnage; et une progression dramatique, avec un élément déclencheur, au moins deux pivots, un point culminant et une fin, idéalement positive –, le tout, sans perspective narrative particulière.

Le point de départ du récit est généralement le personnage. Comme l'écrit Syd Field, « [i]l existe deux manières d'aborder l'écriture d'un scénario. La première est de trouver une idée et de créer ensuite des personnages qui correspondent à cette idée [...]. La seconde est de créer un personnage et de laisser ensuite un besoin, une action et éventuellement une histoire émerger de ce personnage^[4] ». La plupart des manuels privilégient la seconde manière. Dans l'un des exercices de son célèbre séminaire, Syd Field proposait justement à ses étudiants de construire ensemble un protagoniste et d'esquisser, à partir de là, une histoire entière. « Créons un personnage, disait-il. Je poserai les questions et vous donnerez les réponses.^[5] » Est-ce un homme ou une femme? Où habite-t-elle? Quel âge a-t-elle? Quel est son nom? Quand est-elle née? Que font ses parents? Quelles relations entretient-elle avec eux? Quelles études fait-elle? Quel est le contexte social et politique? Etc. Dans cet échange orienté, la classe arrivait rapidement à des consensus sur chaque question et développait ainsi, en un temps record, une « bonne histoire », dont voici un exemple : « Dans les années 1970, une jeune avocate découvre que les conditions de travail dans une centrale nucléaire ne sont pas sécuritaires. Malgré les pressions politiques et les menaces à sa vie, elle réussit à exposer la corruption politique. La centrale est fermée jusqu'à ce que des réparations soient faites et que les conditions soient mises en place pour assurer la protection des travailleurs et de la communauté. » « Pas mal – compte tenu du fait que nous n'avons pris que quelques heures pour créer un personnage et une histoire! » conclut fièrement Field^[6], sans noter que cette histoire est déjà très familière (*One Man*, 1977; *The China Syndrome*, 1979; *Norma Rae*, 1979; *A Civil Action*, 1998; *The Insider*, 1999; *Erin Brockovich*, 2000; etc.).

L'importance du personnage peut sembler évidente : il est difficile d'imaginer une histoire sans un protagoniste contrarié et une émotion sans identification. Mais elle doit néanmoins être relativisée, contextualisée et historicisée. Aussi pratiques qu'ils puissent être, ces manuels reposent non seulement sur une théorie du récit, mais aussi et surtout sur une théorie du sujet, sur une philosophie morale et politique particulière qui, par un singulier syncrétisme, mêle libéralisme et christianisme. En effet, la théorie ici est d'abord *libérale*, souvent utilitariste et parfois même libertarienne : le protagoniste est essentiellement un individu souverain, autonome, conscient, volontaire et agissant, mais surtout libre, propriétaire – de sa personne, de ses capacités et des fruits de son travail – et intéressé, agissant par intérêt personnel et entretenant avec les autres des relations d'échange, essentiellement économiques. Cette conception du sujet relève de ce que C. B. Macpherson appelait « l'individualisme possessif », qui s'est imposé avec le développement de l'économie libérale et du capitalisme et qui pense le sujet sur le modèle de l'agent économique et la société sur le modèle du marché.

Paradoxalement, cette théorie est aussi, dans une certaine mesure, *chrétienne* : le protagoniste est à la fois autonome et hétéronome, libre et déterminé, il est fondamentalement bon, mais également faillible, marqué par quelque faiblesse actuelle ou une faute passée, un péché originel, qu'il doit expier. Il est responsable de ses actes, mais il se trouve en même temps soumis à des forces supérieures, non seulement la causalité, aveugle et insignifiante comme le hasard, mais aussi une finalité, intentionnelle et signifiante comme la Providence, le destin ou la volonté divine. Truby le dit sans ambages : la bonne histoire doit présenter un protagoniste avec une « faiblesse morale » (*moral weakness*) et un « besoin moral » (*moral need*), confronté à un « choix moral » (*moral choice*), qui prend une « décision morale » (*moral decision*) qui a des conséquences irréversibles (punitions ou récompenses, malédiction ou rédemption), dont il pourra tirer une « leçon morale » (*moral self-revelation*).

Évidemment, il existe bien d'autres modèles de scénarios, d'histoires et de récits, sans thème simple, sans personnage principal, ni antagoniste, sans conflit central, sans structure linéaire, sans actes, sans transformation, ni progression dramatique marquée, sans élément déclencheur, ni pivots forts, sans point culminant, ni fin – et sans perspective narrative univoque^[7]. Mais le modèle américain du « bon scénario » continue néanmoins de dominer partout dans le monde, dans les institutions académiques, les écoles et les universités, comme dans l'industrie du cinéma. Et encore aujourd'hui, bien des films – et parfois même des films dits « nationaux » – sont construits, à la lettre, selon les recommandations de Field, McKee ou Truby^[8].

[1] « A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder; fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. » Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, éd. rev. (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2004 [1949]), 28.

[2] Dans le cadre du Groupe de recherche sur la scénarisation transmédiée (Université de Montréal, Université du Québec à Montréal, Université Concordia, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi), dirigé par Isabelle Raynauld, Emily Landry-Lajoie a dressé une liste des manuels de scénarisation par dates de parution et décennies qui démontre, entre autres, que la très grande majorité des publications dans ce champ sont américaines.

[3] Il est intéressant de noter que certaines traductions sont aussi des adaptations : les traducteurs y ajoutent des exemples de films locaux et parfois même un chapitre entier pour en ajuster le contenu au contexte français.

- [4] « There are really only two ways to approach writing a screenplay. One is to get an idea, then create your characters to fit that idea [...]. Another way to approach a screenplay is by creating a character, then letting a need, an action, and, ultimately, a story emerge out of that character. » Syd Field, *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*, éd. rev. (NYew York: Random House, 2007 [1979]), 75.
- [5] « Let's create a character. I'll ask questions, you'll supply the answers. » Field, *Screenplay*, 75.
- [6] « In the '70s, a young woman attorney discovers unsafe working conditions at a nuclear power plant and, despite political pressure and threats to her life, succeeds in exposing political corruption. The plant is shut down until repairs are made and safe conditions exist to protect the workers and the surrounding community [...]. Not too bad – considering that it took us only a couple of hours to create a character and a story! » Field, *Screenplay*, 87.
- [7] Sur les autres modèles existants, voir Francis Vanoye, *Scénarios modèles, modèles de scénarios* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2008 [1991]) et Ken Dancyger et Jeff Rush, *Alternative Scriptwriting: Beyond the Hollywood Formula* (New York: Routledge, 2013 [1991]).
- [8] Les séminaires que Field, McKee et Truby ont donnés partout aux États-Unis et dans le monde ont certainement contribué à leur notoriété.

Screenwriting Manuals

by Olivier Asselin and Bruno Maltais

Translation: Timothy Barnard

There exist numerous practical books on the art of storytelling, ranging from Antiquity, such as those of Aristotle and Horace, to the fundamental volumes of the classical doctrine and the baroque period, such as Lope de Vega's *The New Art of Writing Plays in this Age* (1609), the Abbé d'Aubignac's *Theatre Practice* (1657), Corneille's *Three Discourses on Dramatic Poetry* (1660) and Boileau's *The Art of Poetry* (1674), to modern dramaturgy, from Freytag's *Technique of the Drama* (1863) to Brecht's "A Short Organum for the Theatre" (1948). The earliest true manuals appeared in the twentieth century, such as Lawson's *The Theory and Technique of Playwriting* (1936, 1949), Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing* (1942, 1946) and Raphaelson's *The Human Nature of Playwriting* (1949). Out of this vast range of practical volumes, one must grant a special place to those which attempt to reduce all stories to a few elementary plots, in the tradition of "Gozzi's thirty-six dramatic situations" (mentioned by Goethe but of which no trace has ever been found): Nerval suggests there are 24, Polti 36, Souriau 200,000, Tobias 20, Booker 7, etc.

Some theoretical texts, with their scholarly analysis of narrative, are sometimes used for practical ends, such as Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) and Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). This latter volume formulates the hypothesis that every myth in the history of humanity – Egyptian, Hindu, Buddhist, Mesopotamian, Greek, Roman, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, etc. – is a variation on the same fundamental and universal great myth (it is thus also transhistorical and transcultural): "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder; fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."^[1] This "monomyth," an initiatory journey in seventeen stages, is used by several creators in diverse media, in particular by Vogler in cinema.

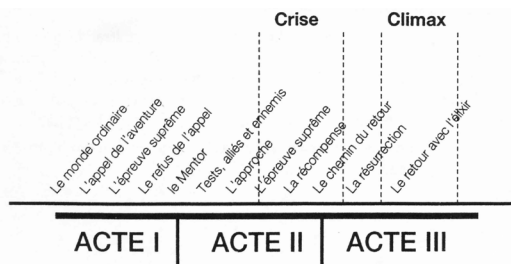


Diagram of the hero's journey model according to Christopher Vogler, inspired by Joseph Campbell's model.
[See database entry.](#)

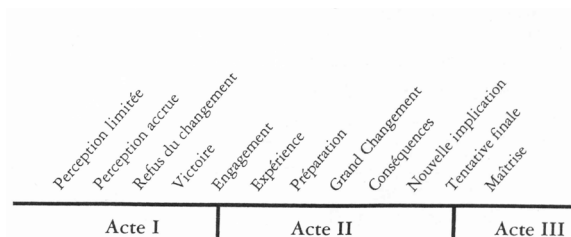


Diagram of the transformational arc according to Christopher Vogler, inspired by the writings of Joseph Campbell.
[See database entry.](#)

Other even more theoretical texts, such as Greimas' *Structural Semantics*, Genette's *Narrative Discourse*, Eco's *Lector in fabula* and Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*, have sometimes also been referenced in writing manuals (particularly in the French-speaking world).

Scriptwriting manuals are practical volumes written by professionals – sometimes by scriptwriters, but most often by script consultants – for use by professionals and especially by amateurs (students in particular). Their main goal is to present a method for conceiving, developing and writing a script. In the old tension between art and the artisanal, between the “having a calling” method and the “becoming a professional” method, these manuals quite obviously take the side of the professional system from the outset: writing can be taught and learned, know-how is as important as talent, it is important to be familiar with the profession's techniques and little tricks. Because these are practical manuals and not theoretical tracts, their method is inductive and not deductive: their starting point is the analysis of a group of exemplary scripts – most often those of a few hit films – in order to recreate the rules of the art. This inductive labour obviously involves generalization, meaning a process of selecting, simplifying and formalizing.

For a number of historical reasons – the rapid industrialization of American cinema and the professionalization of scriptwriters there, the cultural hegemony of the United States since the early twentieth century, etc. – American scriptwriting manuals quickly came to dominate the market in a lasting manner.^[2] Indeed the first manuals in the United States appeared early: Ralph P. Stoddard published *The Photo-Play: A Book of Valuable Information for Those Who Would Enter a Field of Unlimited Endeavour* in 1911, Epes Winthrop Sargent brought out *Technique of the Photoplay* in 1912, Victor Freeburg introduced *The Art of Photoplay Making* in 1918 and Frances Taylor Patterson (who for decades taught the course “Photoplay Composition” at Columbia University) published *Cinema Craftsmanship: A Book for Photoplaywrights* in 1920 and *Scenario and Screen* in 1928. These manuals became out of date with the arrival of sound, however, when speech became central to the art of telling a story. Few manuals were published in the 1930s. We should mention, however, Tamar Lane's *The New Technique of Screen Writing: A Practical Guide to the Writing and Marketing of Photoplays* (1936), which was one of the first to take up writing for talking film. After the war came Eugene Vale's *The Technique of Screen and Television Writing* (1944) and Lewis Herman's *A Practical Manual of Screen Playwriting for Theater and Television Films* (1952).

Most manuals, however, have been published after the crisis of the large studios and the growth of so-called “independent” cinema (meaning independent of the large studios). There was a spate of publications in the 1980s, 90s and 2000s: Syd Field's *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* (1979, 2005); Linda Seger's *Making a Good Script Great* (1987, 2010); Christopher Vogler's *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (1992, 1998, 2007); David Trottier's *The Screenwriter's Bible* (1994, 2014); Robert McKee's *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting* (1997, 2010); Blake Snyder's *Save the Cat! The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need* (2005); John Truby's *The Anatomy of Story: 22 Steps to Becoming a Master Storyteller* (2007); etc.

A few books also appeared in the French-speaking world, such as Michel Chion's *Écrire un scénario* (1985, 2007) and Yves Lavandier's *La dramaturgie* (1994, 2014). These books, even though they often introduce a wider and more universal body of work, owe a great deal to the American manuals (Chion mentions Vale and Field, among others; Lavandier discusses Field, McKee and Truby). In this group, Isabelle Raynauld's volume *Lire et écrire un scénario* (2012, 2019) easily stands out for the importance it grants to reading scripts as part of the work of scriptwriting and for its techniques for conceiving a project, but also, in its second edition, for its openness to documentary and new media. The best selling and most influential volumes outside of the United States continue, however, to be translations of the principal American manuals.^[3]

Manuals published in the United States are highly similar. The vocabulary may vary from one writer to the next, as can the number of beats, pivots and acts, but the heart of the matter remains the same. The ideal story – whether it is called “The Paradigm” (Field), “The Quest” (McKee), “The Hero's Journey” (Vogler), “The Story Spine” (Seger), “The Beat Sheet” (Snyder), “The 22 Building Blocks” (Truby), “The Six Stage Plot Structure” (Hauge), etc. – generally boils down to a few basic ingredients: a theme; a main character with a “weakness” and an (unconscious) “need”, a “goal” or a (conscious) “desire”; an obstacle to this desire, meaning an antagonist and most of all a central conflict; a linear structure divided into a few large acts, with a transformation of the character; and a dramatic progression, with a catalyst, at least two pivots, a high point and an ideally positive ending – all without a particular narrative perspective.

The starting point of the story is generally the character. As Syd Field wrote, “There are really only two ways to approach writing a screenplay. One is to get an idea, then create your characters to fit that idea... Another way to approach a screenplay is by creating a character, then letting a need, an action, and ultimately a story emerge out of that character.”^[4] Most manuals adopt the latter method. In one of the exercises in his famous seminar, Field proposed to his students, precisely, to construct a character together and, from there, to sketch out an entire story: “Let's create a character,” he would say. “I'll ask questions, you'll supply the answers.”^[5] Is it a man or a woman? Where does she live? How old is she? What is her name? When was she born? What do her parents do? What are her relations with them like? What is she studying? What is the social and political context? Etc. In this guided discussion, the class quickly arrived at a consensus on each question and as a result developed in record time a “good story,” an example of which is given here: “In the '70s, a young woman attorney discovers unsafe working conditions at a nuclear power plant and, despite political pressure and threats to her life, succeeds in exposing political corruption. The plant is shut down until repairs are made and safe conditions exist to protect the workers and the surrounding community.” “Not too bad – considering that it took us only a couple of hours to create a character and a story!,” Field concludes,^[6] without noting that this story is already quite familiar (*One Man*, 1977; *The China Syndrome*, 1979; *Norma Rae*, 1979; *A Civil Action*, 1998; *The Insider*, 1999; *Erin Brockovich*, 2000; etc.).

The character's importance may appear obvious: it is difficult to imagine a story without a hindered protagonist, or emotion without identification. Still, the character must be put in perspective, contextualized and historicized. As practical as these manuals may be, they are

based not only on a theory of narrative, but also and above all on a theory of the subject, on a particular moral and political philosophy which, by means of a singular syncretism, blends liberalism and Christianity. Indeed the theory here is in the first place *liberal*, often utilitarian and sometimes even libertarian: protagonists are essentially sovereign, autonomous, conscious, intentional and effective, but above all free and a proprietor of their person, their abilities and the fruits of their labour. They are an interested party, acting out of personal interest and essentially maintaining with others relations of economic exchange. This conception of the subject forms part of what C.B. Macpherson called “possessive individualism,” which took hold with the growth of economic liberalism and capitalism and conceives the subject on the model of the economic agent, and society on the model of the market.

Paradoxically, this theory is also, to a certain extent, *Christian*: the protagonist is at one and the same time autonomous and heteronomous, free and predetermined, fundamentally good but also fallible, marked by some current weakness or a past fault, an original sin, which must be expiated. Such protagonists are responsible for their actions, but find themselves at the same time subject to higher forces: not only causality, blind and meaningless like chance, but also a purpose, intentional and meaningful like Providence, destiny or divine will. Truby spells this out in no uncertain terms: a good story must have a protagonist with a “moral weakness” and a “moral need” confronted with a “moral choice” and who makes a “moral decision” with irreversible consequences (punishments or rewards, malediction or redemption) which can provide a “moral self-revelation.”

Obviously many other models for scripts, stories and narratives exist, without a simple theme, a main character or antagonist, a central conflict, a linear structure, actions, transformations, marked dramatic progression, a catalyzing element, strong central figures, a high point or ending – and without a univocal narrative perspective.^[7] But the American model of the “good script” continues to dominate around the world in academic institutions – schools and universities – and the film industry alike. And still today many films, and sometimes even so-called “national” films, are constructed to the letter of the recommendations by Field, McKee and Truby.^[8]

[1] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004 [1949]), 28.

[2] Emily Landry-Lajoie, under the aegis of the Groupe de recherche sur la scénarisation transmédiée (Université de Montréal, Université du Québec à Montréal, Concordia University, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi), headed by Isabelle Raynald, has devised a list of scriptwriting manuals by their date of publication and decade which shows, among other things, that the great majority of publications in this field are American.

[3] It is worth noting that some translations are also adaptations: the translators add examples of local films and sometimes even add an entire chapter to adjust the content to the French context.

[4] Syd Field, *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*, rev. ed. (New York: Random House, 2007 [1979]), 75.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*, 87.

[7] With respect to other existing models, see Francis Vanoye, *Scénarios modèles, modèles de scénarios* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2008 [1991]) and Ken Dancyger and Jeff Rush, *Alternative Scriptwriting: Beyond the Hollywood Formula* (New York: Routledge, 2013 [1991]).

[8] The seminars given by Field, McKee and Truby in the United States and elsewhere in the world certainly contributed to their reputation.

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS.

Illustrated in five tableaux, as follows:

1. Gulliver's Arrival in Midget Land.
2. Tied to the ground while he is asleep.
3. Dinner in the courtyard, and visit from the Liliputian Queen.
4. Gulliver in the land of giants.
5. Gulliver talking to the giant's daughter.

A complete synopsis of the pictures will be furnished upon application and with each film shipped.

Code Word *Uplthrowe*. Length 260 feet. Class B. \$31.20.

LAUNCHING RACING YACHTS.

LAUNCHING SHAMROCK III AT GOUROCK SHIPYARDS, SCOTLAND.

Launching Shamrock III at Gourock Shipyards, Scotland.

The first part of this film shows Sir Thomas Lipton receiving guests at the shipbuilding yards of Messrs. Denny & Bros., including Mr. Fife and George L. Watson, the designer of the "Shamrock," and Countess Shaftesbury, who christened the yacht. The second part shows the cup challenger sliding down the ways and into the water. Her beautiful and graceful lines can be seen to advantage in this picture.

Code Word *Uprushing*. Length 95 feet. Class B. \$11.40.

LAUNCHING CUP DEFENDER "RELIANCE."

A magnificent view of the "Reliance" sliding slowly down the ways, and a panoramic sweep after she gets into the bay. Mr. Nat Hefreshoff, the designer, and Captain Barr can be plainly seen on the new cup defender, giving orders to the sailors which are quickly carried out.

Code Word *Uprwards*. Length 150 feet. Class B. \$18.00.

PANORAMIC VIEW OF TORPEDO BOAT "WINSLOW" AND YACHT "CONSTITUTION."

A fine view of the torpedo boat "Winslow," the boat on which Ensign Bagley, the first American soldier to lose his life in the Spanish-American War, was killed. The picture ends with a close view of the yacht "Constitution," showing the sailors at work on the deck.

PANORAMIC

Showing the
"Sunbeam" (the
residence and a

procession, and those shown in our picture stand out in stereoscopic relief from the background. Each elephant carries a large howdah which is decorated with the finest silks and satins, gold, jewels, ivory and silver; and must be seen to be appreciated. H. E. the Viceroy, and Lady Curzon, T. R. H., the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Gaekwar of Baroda, the Maharajahs of Mysore and Travancore, and a number of gorgeously attired Indian Princes, glittering with jewels, are in the howdahs. The attendants are fanning the elephants as they pass the camera. An excellent piece of photography. Code Word *Upheaped*. Length 240 feet. Class B. \$28.80.

PAGEANT OF EAST INDIAN PRINCES.

Another of the pictures taken at the Delhi Durbar in India. The pageant is made up of gorgeously decorated elephants, on the backs of which are the howdahs in which the Indian Princes and Princesses are seated. The route is lined with East Indian and English soldiers. On the head of each elephant there is an attendant with a large fan, which is used to keep the flies and other insects from annoying the huge beasts. There are also a number of attendants marching on foot alongside of the elephants. These carry the ladders which are used in reaching and alighting from the howdahs. This is an excellent view of the procession and is sure to please any audience.

Code Word *Upfanging*. Length 160 feet. Class B. \$19.20.

PROCESSION OF GIANT ELEPHANTS IN INDIA.

Taken at the gorgeous Delhi Durbar. These elephants are the largest in captivity. The howdahs which they carry are made of the most expensive material and are decorated with precious metals and gems of all kinds. One of the most wonderful pageants ever photographed.

Code word *Upgazing*. Length 150 feet. Class B. \$18.00.

ARTILLERY EXERCISES.

Here is an excellent picture showing how well the drivers and horses handle heavy artillery in India. A number of pieces of artillery are shown being driven between marks which are placed so close together that the wheels of the gun carriages can just pass between them without knocking them down. The action is very rapid, and only in few cases are the blocks, which are used for marking, knocked down. Code word *Upclimbed*. Length 100 feet. Class B. \$12.00.

RAILWAY SCENE IN INDIA.

...and the seats used in them are side of each car is covered. There are no steps on the platform. A very novel feature for visitors to the 5 feet. Class B. \$9.00.

...ical East Indian street to, also numerous vehi...

Les manuels de scénarisation de séries télé

Television Scriptwriting Manuals

Meganne Rodriguez-Caouette

Les manuels de scénarisation de séries télé

par Meganne Rodriguez-Caouette

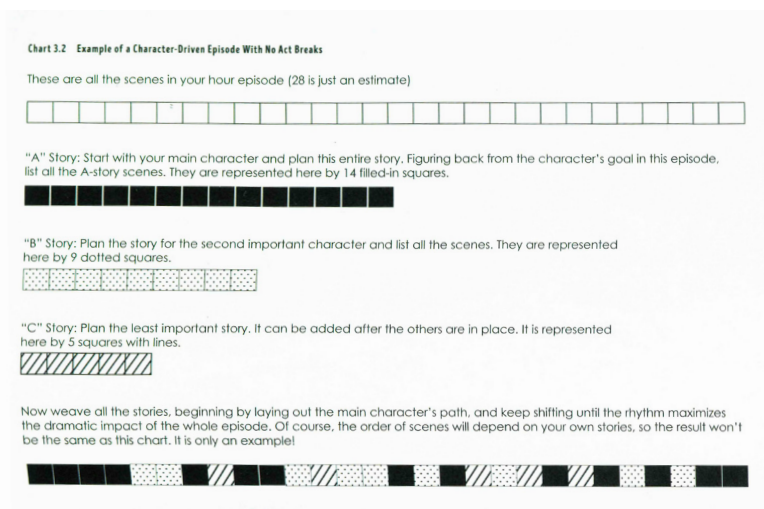
Avant les années 1990, les manuels de scénarisation sur le marché s'intéressent principalement au récit cinématographique et laissent de côté l'écriture télévisuelle. La télévision est un médium et un média en pleine expansion dont les possibilités narratives n'en sont qu'à leurs prémices. À cette époque, en France, les programmes télévisés sont aux balbutiements de leur potentiel. Ce sont des adaptations de grands romans francophones ou des variations sur des phénomènes comiques provenant des États-Unis^[1]. Au même moment, au Québec, le téléroman est à son paroxysme. En effet, cette forme, à cheval entre le feuilleton et le *soap opera* américain, fait loi sur les téléviseurs québécois, poussant des chercheurs comme Michel Gosselin à en faire le sujet de leurs études. Son travail en fera l'un des rares manuels québécois en la matière encore à ce jour.

Dès les années 1990 aux États-Unis et en France, les manuels de scénarisation intègrent, dans leur titre, le média qu'est la télévision : *Reading for a Living: How to be a Professional Story Analyst for Film and Television* (Katahn, 1990), *La pratique du scénario : cinéma, télévision*, B. D. (Duc, 1992), etc. Cependant, ces auteurs ne font pas de distinction nette entre l'écriture cinématographique et télévisuelle, bien qu'il existe des différences majeures dans les pratiques scénaristiques propres à chacune.

Au tournant des années 2000, des manuels sur la scénarisation de séries télé voient le jour, que ce soit en France ou aux États-Unis : *L'écriture de scénario* de Jean-Marie Roth (1997); *La sitcom ou comment écrire une comédie de situation* de Jorgen Wolf et L. P. Ferrante (2000); et *Crafty TV Writing: Thinking Inside the Box* d'Alex Epstein (2006). Ces manuels, plutôt que d'offrir une information générique sur l'écriture télévisuelle, se spécialisent en s'attardant à des genres, plus précisément ceux de la *sitcom* et du feuilleton (variation du *soap opera*^[2]). Ils présentent plusieurs procédés propres au médium et aux genres priorisés à cette époque. Les premières distinctions relevées par ces ouvrages sont de l'ordre de la différence entre la structure dramatique et la structure narrative. La structure dramatique s'inspire de celle en trois actes présente au cinéma, qui s'inspire elle-même de celle propre au théâtre et théorisée par Aristote. En revanche, la structure narrative s'en sépare, surtout dans le cas de la comédie. Ce genre se construit autour de deux actes narratifs : chacun se développe en séquences de 12 minutes qui sont elles-mêmes découpées en deux ou quatre scènes^[3]. À cette époque, les manuels de scénarisation se basent sur un format de diffusion hebdomadaire, influant sur la construction du récit. De nos jours, avec les nouveaux modes de diffusion, les scénaristes doivent repenser la structure de leur épisode pour s'adapter à ceux-ci. Une série diffusée hebdomadairement, une série disponible en diffusion continue ou encore une série Web ne se scénarisent pas de la même manière. Effectivement, les actes d'une série télévisée présentée à la télévision linéaire

se développent selon les pauses publicitaires; chaque acte est fabriqué autour de ces coupures. De plus, pour garder intéressé le public et ne pas le perdre au profit d'une émission concurrente diffusée sur une autre chaîne, le scénariste devra user de techniques comme le *cliffhanger*, qui caractérise la structure narrative de ce type de télévision. Alors que, dans le cas d'une série télévisée diffusée sur une plateforme de vidéos à la demande comme Netflix ou ICI TOU.TV (au Québec), la construction de la structure narrative peut se permettre plus de liberté; les scénaristes vont plutôt privilégier l'utilisation du *cliffhanger* à la fin de l'épisode pour que les téléspectateurs et les téléspectatrices restent devant l'écran. Et dans le cas des séries Web, celles-ci ont une contrainte supplémentaire de temps : les épisodes sont d'une durée moyenne de 8 à 10 minutes. La conception d'un projet télévisuel doit donc prendre en considération le format et le mode de diffusion.

Les années 2010 deviennent charnières pour la publication de manuels de scénarisation aux États-Unis. Ces guides se caractérisent par la présentation de tableaux et de schémas pour planifier la scénarisation d'une série télé. Ces éléments visuels créent des balises pour les apprentis scénaristes : ils ont à leur disposition des structures de développement de personnages, de développement d'un arc narratif dans un épisode, ou encore d'arcs narratifs dans une saison. Ces plans permettent aux apprentis scénaristes de planifier leur création en aidant à la structuration du récit, mais aussi au développement des personnages et de l'univers qu'ils souhaitent créer et exploiter. C'est le cas de l'ouvrage de Pamela Douglas *Writing the TV Drama Series: How to Succeed As a Professional Writer in TV* (2018).



Exemple d'un épisode axé sur les personnages principaux sans interruption d'acte présenté dans *Writing the TV Drama Series*. [Voir la fiche](#).

De plus, ce type d'ouvrage, comme celui de Neil Landau, *The TV Showrunner's Map* (2014), présente entre les chapitres plus éducatifs ou analytiques des entrevues avec des scénaristes et des producteurs de certaines séries cultes comme *True Blood*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Lost*, etc. Bien que les entrevues ne soient pas quelque chose de nouveau dans le domaine des manuels de scénarisation, comme cela a déjà été le cas en France dans l'ouvrage dirigé par René Prédal intitulé *Les scénaristes de télévision* (1992), celles-ci permettent à l'apprenti scénariste d'avoir

une vision globale et contemporaine du métier, d'en découvrir les défauts et les difficultés. Le dialogue entre les entrevues de scénaristes professionnels et les éléments techniques brossent un portrait réaliste du métier de scénariste à la télévision.

À l'aube de 2020, des ouvrages analysant l'écriture sérielle sont publiés en grande partie en France, comme ceux de Florent Favard, *Écrire une série TV: la promesse du dénouement* (2019), et de Vladmimir Lifschutz, *This is the End: finir une série TV* (2018). Ils proposent un complément d'information sur la scénarisation pour série télé en exposant des notions comme celle de la « bible^[4] ». La « bible » est le document créé par les scénaristes pour regrouper des schémas narratifs, des fiches de personnages, des descriptions de l'univers et bien plus. Comme il n'y a pas de règle en ce qui a trait à la mise en forme et au contenu, les scénaristes ont une certaine liberté dans la création de leur bible. Cependant, certains éléments sont essentiels, tels que le titre de la série, le genre et le format. La bible est aussi utilisée par les acteurs pour construire leur personnage. Dans le cas de l'écriture d'une série télévisée, cet objet est nécessaire à la construction d'un monde, puisqu'il traduit les possibilités narratives et créatrices des récits sériels.

En somme, la scénarisation des séries télévisées se différencie de celle au cinéma par des questions de contraintes propres au médium de la télévision (la durée d'un épisode, le renouvellement d'une série télévisée l'année suivante, la production, le format). Les éléments propres au médium télévisuel sont exposés et expliqués dans des manuels, qui se définissent comme étant de véritables guides pour l'écriture télévisuelle, mais aussi pour la formation au métier de scénariste.

[1] Voir Pierre Zemniak, *Exception française: de Vidocq au Bureau des légendes, 60 ans de séries* (Paris: Éditions Vendémiaire, 2017). Voir aussi René Prédal (dir.), *Les scénaristes de télévision* (Athis Val de Rouvre: Charles Corlet, 1992).

[2] Voir Chris Curry, *Comment écrire le scénario d'un feuilleton populaire* (Paris: Gremese, 2003).

[3] Voir Jorgen Wolf et L. P. Ferrante, *La sitcom ou comment écrire une comédie de situation* (Paris: Dixit, 2000).

[4] Voir Florent Favard, *Écrire une série TV: la promesse du dénouement* (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2019).

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Translation: Timothy Barnard

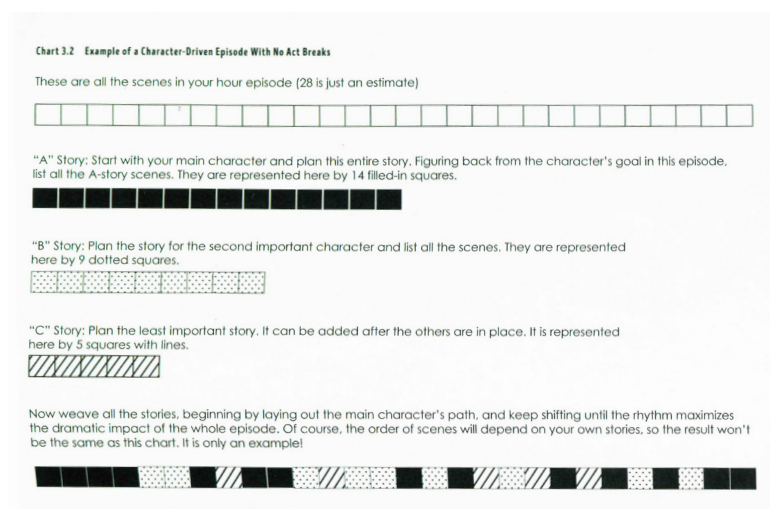
Before the 1990s, the scriptwriting manuals on the market mostly explored film narrative and pushed writing for television to the side. Television was a rapidly-expanding medium and mass media whose narrative possibilities were in their infancy. In France at that time television programs had barely scratched the surface of their potential. They adapted great French-language novels or were variations on the comedy phenomena coming out of the United States.^[1] At the same time, in Quebec the *téléroman* (“TV-novel”) had reached a state of paroxysm. This form, which straddles the serial novel and the American soap opera, ruled Quebec television, prompting scholars such as Michel Gosselin to take up their study. His work would become one of the rare manuals on the topic still to this day.

In the United States and France in the 1990s, scriptwriting manuals incorporated the television medium in their titles: *Reading for a Living: How to be a Professional Story Analyst for Film and Television* (Katahn, 1990), *La pratique du scénario: cinéma, télévision, B.D.* (Duc, 1992), etc. Nevertheless, these authors did not distinguish between writing for film and writing for television, even though major differences between the scriptwriting techniques specific to each exist.

At the turn of the century, manuals for scripting television series appeared in both France and the United States: Jean-Marie Roth’s *L’écriture de scénario* (1997); Jorgen Wolf and L.P. Ferrante’s *La sitcom ou comment écrire une comédie de situation* (2000); and Alex Epstein’s *Crafty TV Writing: Thinking Inside the Box* (2006). These manuals, rather than providing generic information on writing for television, specialized in focusing on genres, specifically the sitcom and, in France, the *feuilleton*, a variation on the soap opera.^[2] They discuss several techniques specific to the medium and to the popular genres of the day. The first distinctions these volumes make concern the difference between dramatic structure and narrative structure. Dramatic structure draws on the three-act structure present in cinema, which draws in turn on the structure specific to theatre and theorized by Aristotle. Narrative structure, on the other hand, is distinct, especially in the case of comedy. This genre is built around two narrative acts: each develops over twelve-minute sequences which are themselves broken down into two or four scenes.^[3] At that time, scriptwriting manuals were based on a format of weekly broadcast, which influenced the construction of the narrative. Today, with new modes of dissemination, scriptwriters must rethink the structure of their episode to adapt to these modes. A series broadcast weekly, a series available for streaming and a Web series are not scripted in the same manner. The acts in a television series shown on linear television develop in accordance with the commercial breaks; each act is made around these breaks. In addition, to hold the

audience's interest and not lose it to a competing broadcast on another network, scriptwriters must use techniques such as the cliffhanger, typical of the narrative structure of this kind of television. In the case of a television series disseminated on a video on demand platform such as Netflix or, in Quebec, ICI TOU.TV, the narrative structure can allow itself more freedom; here scriptwriters reserve the use of the cliffhanger for the end of the episode so that viewers remain in front of their screens. In the case of Web series, an additional time constraint exists: episodes have an average length of from eight to ten minutes. When conceiving a project for television one must therefore consider the format and the mode of dissemination.

The 2010s were a turning point for the publication of scriptwriting manuals in the United States. These guides featured charts and diagrams for planning the scripting of a television series. Such visuals functioned as guideposts for budding scriptwriters, providing them with character development structures, the development of a narrative arc in an episode, or narrative arcs throughout a season. These plans enabled budding scriptwriters to plan their project by helping to structure the narrative, but also by helping develop the characters and the world the scriptwriter wishes to create and put to use. This is the case of the volume by Pamela Douglas, *Writing the TV Drama Series: How to Succeed as a Professional Writer in TV* (2018).



Example of a character-driven episode with no act breaks shown in *Writing the TV Drama Series*. [See database entry](#).

In addition, this kind of book, like that by Neil Landau, *The TV Showrunner's Map* (2014), includes between its more educational or analytical chapters interviews with the scriptwriters and producers of various cult series such as *True Blood*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Lost*, etc. Although interviews are not anything new in the field of scriptwriting manuals, this having already been done, in France, in a volume edited by René Predal entitled *Les scénaristes de télévision* (1992), such interviews enable budding scriptwriters to have an overall and contemporary view of the profession and to discover its defects and difficulties. The dialogue between the interviews with professional scriptwriters and the technical elements of scriptwriting paints a realistic portrait of the scriptwriting trade in the television field.

Books analysing writing for series were published, largely in France, at the dawn of the 2020s. These include Florent Favard's *Écrire une série TV: la promesse du dénouement* (2019) and Vladmimir Lifschutz's *This is the End: finir une série TV* (2018). They offered additional information on scriptwriting for television series by expounding on concepts such as the "bible."^[4] The "bible" is a document created by scriptwriters to bring together narrative diagrams, character profiles, descriptions of the world being created and much more. Because there are no rules around the form and content of the bible, scriptwriters have a degree of freedom in creating their own. Some elements, however, are essential, such as the title of the series, the genre and the format. The bible is also used by the actors to construct their character. In the case of writing for a television series, this object is required for the construction of a world, because it conveys the narrative and creative possibilities of serial narrative.

In sum, scripting television series is different from scriptwriting in cinema by virtue of the questions and constraints specific to the television medium (the length of an episode, the return of a television series the following year, the production, the format). The elements specific to the television medium are set out and explored in these manuals, which describe themselves as veritable guides for writing for television but also for training to become a part of the scriptwriting profession.

^[1] See Pierre Zemniak, *Exception française: de Vidocq au Bureau des légendes, 60 ans de séries* (Paris: Éditions Vendémiaire, 2017). See also René Prédal (ed.), *Les scénaristes de télévision* (Athis Val de Rouvre: Charles Corlet, 1992).

^[2] See Chris Curry, *Comment écrire le scénario d'un feuilleton populaire* (Paris: Gremese, 2003).

^[3] See Jorgen Wolf and L.P. Ferrante, *La sitcom ou comment écrire une comédie de situation* (Paris: Dixit, 2000).

^[4] See Florent Favard, *Écrire une série TV: la promesse du dénouement* (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2019).

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS.

Illustrated in five tableaux, as follows:

1. Gulliver's Arrival in Midgel Land.
2. Tied to the ground while he is asleep.
3. Dinner in the courtyard, and visit from the Liliputian Queen.
4. Gulliver in the land of giants.
5. Gulliver talking to the giant's daughter.

A complete synopsis of the pictures will be furnished upon application and with each film shipped.

Code Word *Uplthrowe*. Length 260 feet. Class B. \$31.20.

LAUNCHING RACING YACHTS.

LAUNCHING SHAMROCK III AT GOUROCK SHIPYARDS, SCOTLAND.

Launching Shamrock III at Gourock Shipyards, Scotland.

The first part of this film shows Sir Thomas Lipton receiving guests at the shipbuilding yards of Messrs. Denny & Bros., including Mr. Fife and George L. Watson, the designer of the "Shamrock," and Countess Shaftesbury, who christened the yacht. The second part shows the cup challenger sliding down the ways and into the water. Her beautiful and graceful lines can be seen to advantage in this picture.

Code Word *Uprushing*. Length 95 feet. Class B. \$11.40.

LAUNCHING CUP DEFENDER "RELIANCE."

A magnificent view of the "Reliance" sliding slowly down the ways, and a panoramic sweep after she gets into the bay. Mr. Nat Hefreshoff, the designer, and Captain Barr can be plainly seen on the new cup defender, giving orders to the sailors which are quickly carried out.

Code Word *Uprwards*. Length 150 feet. Class B. \$18.00.

PANORAMIC VIEW OF TORPEDO BOAT "WINSLOW" AND YACHT "CONSTITUTION."

A fine view of the torpedo boat "Winslow," the boat on which Ensign Bagley, the first American soldier to lose his life in the Spanish-American War, was killed. The picture ends with a close view of the yacht "Constitution," showing the sailors at work on the deck.

PANORAMIC

Showing the
"Sunbeam" (the
residence and a

procession, and those shown in our picture stand out in stereoscopic relief from the background. Each elephant carries a large howdah which is decorated with the finest silks and satins, gold, jewels, ivory and silver; and must be seen to be appreciated. H. E. the Viceroy, and Lady Curzon, T. R. H., the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Gaekwar of Baroda, the Maharajahs of Mysore and Travancore, and a number of gorgeously attired Indian Princes, glittering with jewels, are in the howdahs. The attendants are fanning the elephants as they pass the camera. An excellent piece of photography. Code Word *Upheaped*. Length 240 feet. Class B. \$28.80.

PAGEANT OF EAST INDIAN PRINCES.

Another of the pictures taken at the Delhi Durbar in India. The pageant is made up of gorgeously decorated elephants, on the backs of which are the howdahs in which the Indian Princes and Princesses are seated. The route is lined with East Indian and English soldiers. On the head of each elephant there is an attendant with a large fan, which is used to keep the flies and other insects from annoying the huge beasts. There are also a number of attendants marching on foot alongside of the elephants. These carry the ladders which are used in reaching and alighting from the howdahs. This is an excellent view of the procession and is sure to please any audience.

Code Word *Upfanging*. Length 160 feet. Class B. \$19.20.

PROCESSION OF GIANT ELEPHANTS IN INDIA.

Taken at the gorgeous Delhi Durbar. These elephants are the largest in captivity. The howdahs which they carry are made of the most expensive material and are decorated with precious metals and gems of all kinds. One of the most wonderful pageants ever photographed.

Code word *Upgazing*. Length 150 feet. Class B. \$18.00.

ARTILLERY EXERCISES.

Here is an excellent picture showing how well the drivers and horses handle heavy artillery in India. A number of pieces of artillery are shown being driven between marks which are placed so close together that the wheels of the gun carriages can just pass between them without knocking them down. The action is very rapid, and only in few cases are the blocks, which are used for marking, knocked down. Code word *Upclimbed*. Length 100 feet. Class B. \$12.00.

RAILWAY SCENE IN INDIA.

...and the seats used in them are side of each car is covered. There are no steps on the platform. A very novel feature for visitors to the 5 feet. Class B. \$9.00.

...ical East Indian street to, also numerous vehi...

Les logiciels de scénarisation

Scriptwriting Software

Olivier Asselin

Les logiciels de scénarisation

par Olivier Asselin

L'art de raconter ne nécessite pas seulement des savoir-faire et des techniques, mais aussi, bien évidemment, des outils et des technologies. Longtemps, ces outils sont restés ceux de l'écriture et de l'imprimerie – style, calame, plume, presse – comme d'ailleurs les supports utilisés – pierre, métal, argile, papyrus, parchemin, papier. Ces outils, comme tous les autres, peuvent sembler neutres, de simples moyens d'inscrire, de conserver et de transmettre des histoires. Mais l'outil a une incidence sur la matière, le médium sur le message – et sur les interlocuteurs.

Comme l'a bien montré Kittler, les nouvelles technologies d'enregistrement que sont le gramophone et le cinéma vont bientôt briser le monopole de l'écriture et de l'imprimerie dans le stockage et la transmission des données. La machine à écrire, qui apparaît au même moment, va pousser plus loin encore la standardisation, la mécanisation et l'automatisation de l'écriture^[1]. Elle va devenir l'outil principal de ceux et celles qui font profession d'écrire – journalistes, écrivains et scénaristes. Dans la plupart des films centrés sur un personnage de scénariste, comme *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder, 1950), *The Player* (Altman, 1992), *Barton Fink* (Joel et Ethan Cohen, 1991), *Adaptation* (Jonze, 2002) et *Trumbo* (Roach, 2015), la machine à écrire devient même l'emblème de la profession.

Le développement de l'électricité, de l'électronique, puis de l'informatique, atténue les différences médiales entre le texte, l'image et le son en imposant un nouveau média universel qui peut traduire, stocker et transmettre tous les types de données sous la forme de signaux ou de bits. La machine à écrire est quant à elle bientôt remplacée par l'ordinateur. Sur ce nouvel outil, les logiciels de traitement de texte, comme WordPerfect (Corel, 1979) ou Word (Microsoft, 1983), permettent non seulement de saisir du texte sur un clavier pour transformer les lettres en caractères d'imprimerie, comme le faisait la machine à écrire, mais aussi de modifier le texte en temps réel, de le mettre en forme et en page automatiquement, puis de l'imprimer ou de le transmettre.

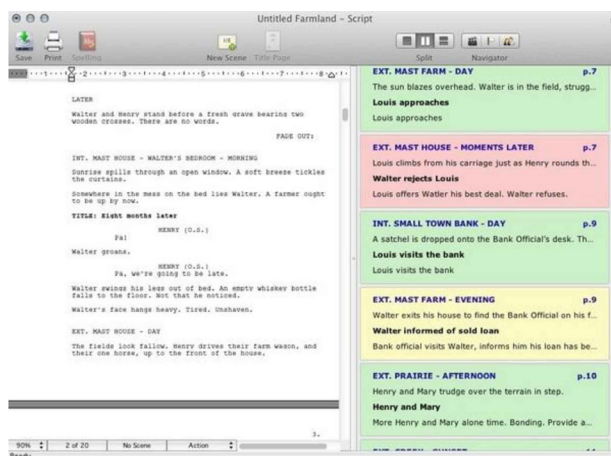
Rapidement, certaines compagnies vont mettre au point des logiciels spécialisés de scénarisation. Scriptor, développé dans les années 1980 par Stephen Greenfield et Chris Huntley et leur compagnie Screenplay Systems (aujourd'hui Write Brothers), est l'un des premiers programmes du genre (qui obtiendra d'ailleurs aux Oscars, en 1994, un « Technical Achievement Award »). Mais ce logiciel permet seulement de formater un texte déjà écrit à l'aide d'un logiciel de traitement de texte régulier. Au même moment, Ken Shafer développe ScriptThing, qui, lui, formate le texte automatiquement pendant l'écriture. Ce dernier logiciel est ensuite acquis et développé par Screenplay Systems et deviendra un important logiciel de scénarisation connu sous le nom de Movie Magic Screenwriter.

Le logiciel le plus influent est toutefois incontestablement Final Draft. Développé dans les années 1990 par Marc Madnick et Ben Cahan, il est utilisé aujourd'hui par la majorité des professionnels de la scénarisation de films et de séries.

À l'origine, Final Draft est principalement un outil de formatage. Il permet d'écrire, tout en formatant les différentes parties d'un scénario – titres de scène, didascalies, noms de personnages, parenthèses ou dialogues – automatiquement, en appuyant simplement sur la touche « Retour à la ligne » et, s'il y a lieu, en sélectionnant dans le menu qui s'ouvre l'élément pertinent. Le formatage est automatique, l'écriture est fluide, et le scénariste peut se concentrer sur les questions de contenu et de style.

Au fil des mises à jour, Final Draft a ajouté de nouvelles fonctions. Au-delà des outils usuels du traitement de texte (saisie automatique, correction et dictionnaire, dictée, suivi des modifications et comparaison de documents, annotation, écran divisé, exportation en différents formats, etc.), le logiciel offre plusieurs gabarits de scénario (pour le cinéma et la télévision, la *sitcom* ou la série, mais aussi pour le théâtre, la comédie musicale, le roman, le roman graphique, selon différents modèles, américain, britannique, etc.). Il comprend également une banque de noms de personnages, un outil de collaboration en ligne (qui permet à un ou plusieurs scénaristes de travailler en même temps, à distance et en temps réel, sur le même scénario), des rapports de production (sur les scènes, les personnages, les lieux), etc. Il offre même à l'utilisateur un lien pour faire le dépôt légal de son scénario à la Writers Guild of America.

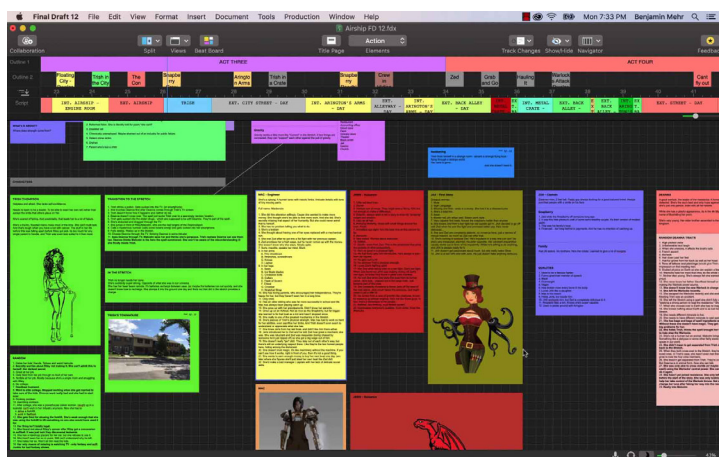
Ce logiciel va en fait bien au-delà du traitement de texte et du formatage automatique : il intègre aussi des outils de conception. Les *index cards* permettent de visualiser toute la structure narrative du film et de la retravailler simplement en déplaçant des fiches qui correspondent à chacune des scènes du film (comme sur ce qu'on appelait à l'origine un *storyboard*, au sens strict).



Capture d'écran intégrée au manuel de Final Draft 9, avec un scénario (à gauche) et des *index cards* (à droite). [Voir la fiche](#).

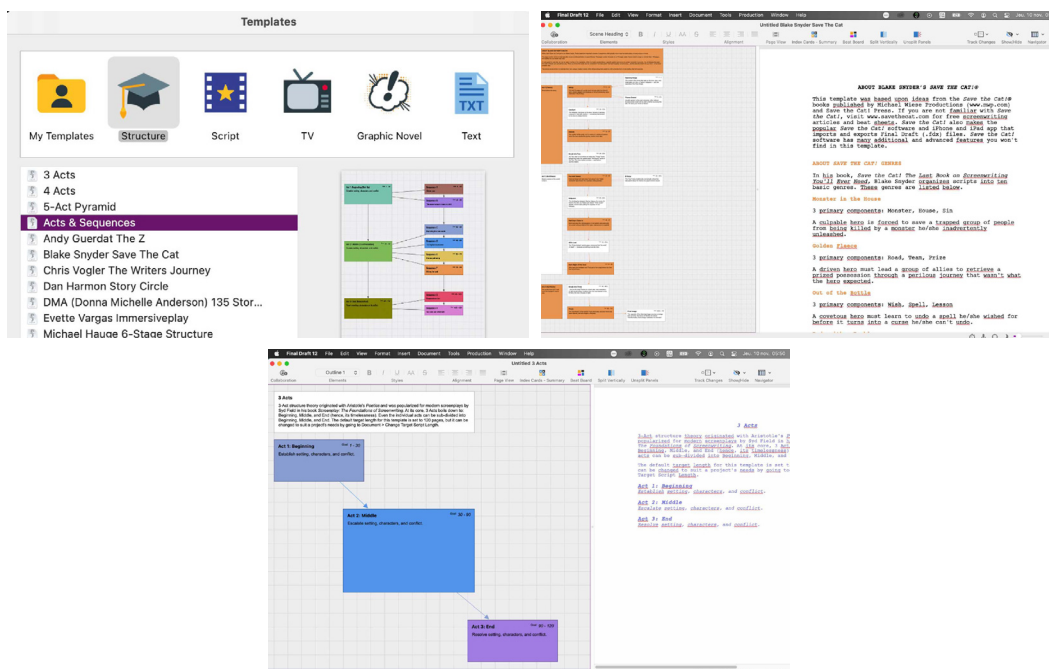
La *story map* (dans la version 11) ou le *outline editor* (dans la version 12) visualise les principaux pivots du scénario sur une ligne de temps. Enfin, le *beat board* permet de construire une carte mentale du scénario en disposant librement, sur un grand espace quadrillé, des boîtes de

couleur avec des idées – des personnages, des événements, des actes, des scènes, etc. – qu'on peut associer, notamment par des liaisons graphiques, selon diverses structures, spatiale ou temporelle, linéaire ou arborescente.



Capture d'écran d'un tutoriel vidéo de Final Draft 12, montrant l'utilisation d'un *beat board* avec des cellules contenant du texte et des images. [Voir la fiche.](#)

Enfin, Final Draft offre maintenant non seulement des gabarits pour le formatage du scénario, mais aussi des modèles pour la construction narrative, empruntés aux principaux manuels de scénarisation. En ouvrant un nouveau document, le scénariste peut choisir entre diverses structures – les 3 actes d'Aristote et de Field, les 5 actes de Freytag, les 15 battements de Snyder, les 12 étapes de Campbell et Vogler, les 6 stades de Hauge, etc. – et commencer à concevoir son histoire sur un *beat board* et un *outline* préstructurés.



Captures d'écran de Final Draft 12 montrant les différents gabarits proposés. [Voir la fiche.](#)

Il existe d'autres logiciels de scénarisation, comme Movie Magic Screenwriter. Dans cet ensemble, CeltX (lancé en 2006) se distingue, notamment parce qu'il permet d'intégrer des images, un *storyboard* et des diagrammes de plateau (avec le *shot blocker*) et de faire de la scénarisation interactive pour le jeu vidéo et la réalité virtuelle. Final Draft continue toutefois d'exercer un quasi-monopole sur l'industrie.

[1] «Two of Edison's developments – the phonograph and the kinetoscope – broke the monopoly of writing, started a non-literary (but equally serial) data processing, established an industry of human engineering, and placed literature in the ecological niche which (and not by chance) Remington's contemporaneous typewriter had conquered.» Friedrich Kittler, «Benn's Poetry – 'A Hit in the Charts': Song Under Conditions of Media Technologies», *Substance* 61, n° 1 (1990): 6, cité par Geoffrey Winthrop-Young et Michael Wutz dans leur introduction à l'édition anglaise du livre de Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999 [1986]), XXV.

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by Olivier Asselin

Translation: Timothy Barnard

The art of telling a story requires more than know-how and technique alone; it also, quite evidently, requires tools and technology. For a long time these tools remained those of writing and printing – the stylus, reed pen, quill and printing press – as did the supports used – stone, metal, clay, papyrus, parchment, paper. These tools, like any tool, may appear neutral, as merely the means for inscribing, preserving and transmitting stories. But a tool has an impact on the material, and the medium an effect on the message – as well as on one’s interlocutors.

Friedrich Kittler demonstrated convincingly that new recording technologies, the gramophone and the cinema, would soon break up the monopoly of writing and printing in the storage and transmission of data. The typewriter, which appeared at the same time, would push writing’s standardization, mechanization and automation even further.^[1] It would become the principal tool of those whose profession was writing: journalists, authors and scriptwriters. In most films whose focus is a scriptwriter character, such as *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder, 1950), *The Player* (Altman, 1992), *Barton Fink* (Joel and Ethan Cohen, 1991), *Adaptation* (Jonze, 2002) and *Trumbo* (Roach, 2015), the typewriter is even seen as the emblem of the profession.

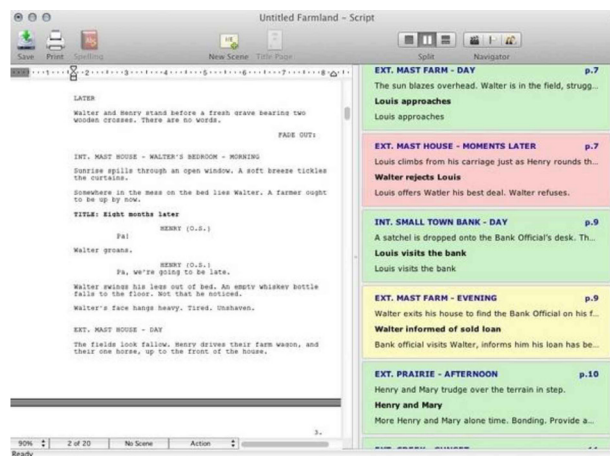
The development of electricity, electronics and then information technology would mitigate the media differences between text, image and sound by imposing a new universal medium which could translate, store and transmit all kinds of data in the form of signals and bits. The typewriter would soon be replaced by the computer. The word processing software on this new tool, such as WordPerfect (Corel, 1979) and Word (Microsoft, 1983), made it possible not only to enter text on a keyboard to transform letters into printing characters, the way the typewriter did, but also to modify text in real time, to format it and lay it out on the page automatically, and then to print it or transmit it.

A few companies quickly developed specialized scriptwriting software. Scriptor, developed in the 1980s by Stephen Greenfield and Chris Huntley and their company Screenplay Systems (today Write Brothers), was one of the first programs of its kind (and would win “Technical Achievement Award” at the 1994 Academy Awards). This software, however, only made it possible to format a text already written with regular word processing software. At the same time, Ken Shafer developed ScriptThing, which formatted the text automatically while writing. This software was then acquired and developed by Screenplay Systems and would become an important brand of scriptwriting software known as Movie Magic Screenwriter.

Nevertheless, the most influential software is incontestably Final Draft. Developed in the 1990s by Marc Madnick and Ben Cahan, today it is used by most professional scriptwriters working in cinema and television. At first, Final Draft was mainly a formatting tool. It made it possible to format automatically while writing the various parts of a script – scene titles, stage directions, characters' names, asides, dialogue – simply by hitting Enter and, if applicable, selecting the relevant category in the drop down menu that opened. The formatting was automatic, the writing fluid, and the scriptwriter could concentrate on matters of content and style.

As it has been updated, Final Draft has added new functions. Apart from the usual word processing tools (automatic formatting, spell check and dictionary, dictation, tracking changes and document comparison, annotation, split screen, exporting into different formats, etc.), it offers several script templates (for film and television, sitcoms and dramatic series, but also for theatre, musical comedies, novels and the graphic novel, etc., according to different models: British, American...). It also includes a database of character names, a tool for online collaboration (which enables one or more additional scriptwriters to work simultaneously on the same script remotely in real time), production reports (on the scenes, characters and places), etc. It even offers users a link for legal deposit of their script with the Writers Guild of America.

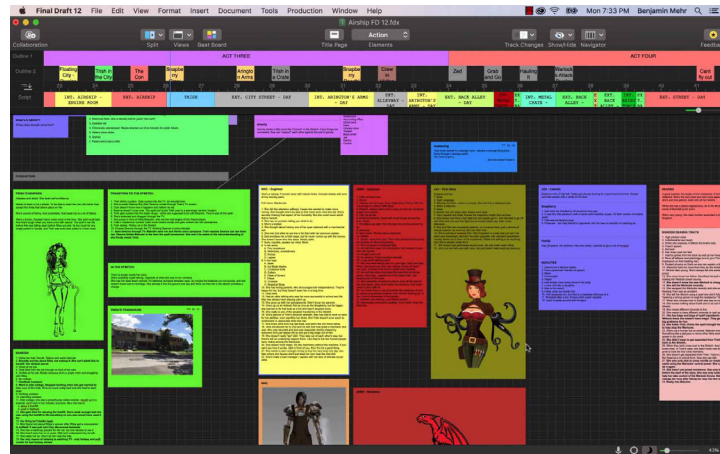
In fact this software goes well beyond word processing and automatic formatting: it also includes tools for conceiving the script. Index cards make it possible to visualize the entire narrative structure of the film and to rework it in a simple manner by moving the cards corresponding to each scene in the film (the way one would with what was originally called a storyboard in the strict sense of the term).



Screenshot incorporated into the Final Draft 9 manual, with a script (on the left) and index cards (on the right).

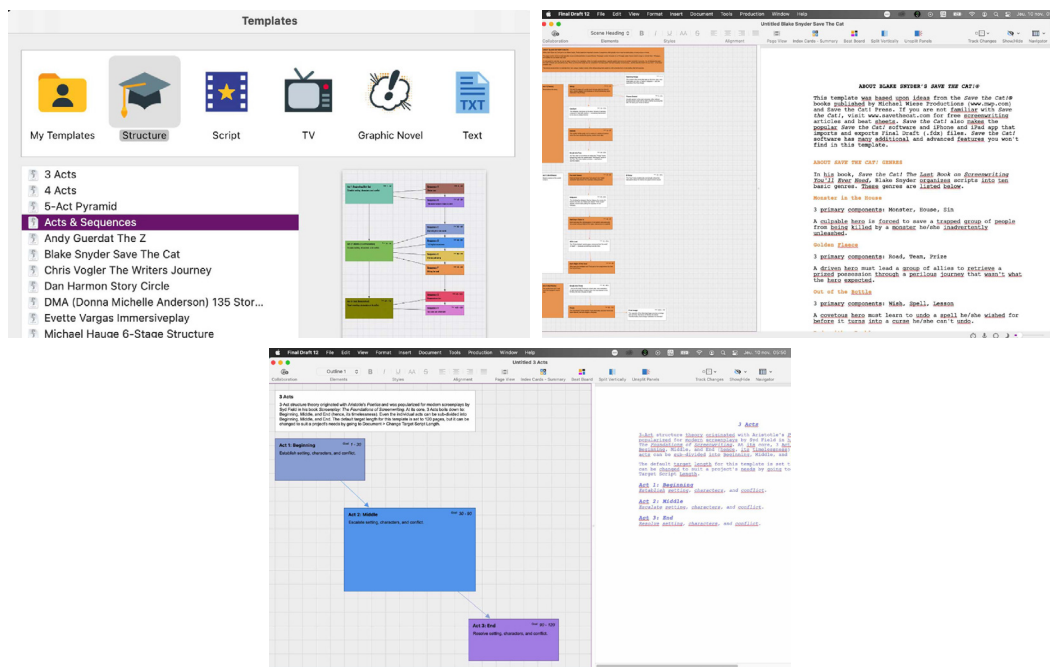
[See database entry.](#)

The story map (in version 11) and outline editor (in version 12) visualize the script's main pivots on a timeline. Finally, the beat board makes it possible to construct a mental map of the script by freely arranging, on a large space divided into squares, coloured boxes with ideas – for characters, events, acts, scenes, etc. – which can be joined, in particular by means of graphic connections, in a variety of linear or tree-shaped spatial or temporal structures.



Screenshot of a video tutorial for Final Draft 12 showing the use of a beat board with cells containing text and images. [See database entry.](#)

Lastly, Final Draft now offers not only templates for formatting the script but also models for constructing the narrative, borrowed from the main scriptwriting manuals. When opening a new document, scriptwriters can choose between a variety of structures – the three acts found in Aristotle and Field, the five acts in Freytag, Snyder's fifteen beats, the twelve steps in Campbell and Vogler, the six stages in Hauge, etc. – and begin to conceive their story on a pre-structured beat board and outline.



Screenshots from Final Draft 12 showing the different possible templates. [See database entry.](#)

Other scriptwriting software exists, such as Movie Magic Screenwriter. Among this group, CeltX, launched in 2006, stands out in particular because it makes it possible to incorporate images, a storyboard and diagrams of the shooting set (with the shot blocker) and to do interactive scriptwriting for video games and virtual reality. Nevertheless, Final Draft continues to have a near monopoly in the industry.

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- [1] “Two of Edison’s developments – the phonograph and the kinetoscope – broke the monopoly of writing, started a non-literary (but equally serial) data processing, established an industry of human engineering, and placed literature in the ecological niche which (and not by chance) Remington’s contemporaneous typewriter had conquered.” Friedrich Kittler, “Benn’s Poetry – ‘A Hit in the Charts’: Song Under Conditions of Media Technologies,” *Substance* 61, no. 1 (1990): 6, quoted by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz in the introduction to the English-language edition of Kittler’s book *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999 [1986]), xxv.

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS.

Illustrated in five tableaux, as follows:

1. Gulliver's Arrival in Midget Land.
2. Tied to the ground while he is asleep.
3. Dinner in the courtyard, and visit from the Liliputian Queen.
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A complete synopsis of the pictures will be furnished upon application and with each film shipped.

Code Word *Uplthrowe*. Length 260 feet. Class B. \$31.20.

LAUNCHING RACING YACHTS.

LAUNCHING SHAMROCK III AT GOUROCK SHIPYARDS, SCOTLAND.

Launching Shamrock III at Gourock Shipyards, Scotland.

The first part of this film shows Sir Thomas Lipton receiving guests at the shipbuilding yards of Messrs. Denny & Bros., including Mr. Fife and George L. Watson, the designer of the "Shamrock," and Countess Shaftesbury, who christened the yacht. The second part shows the cup challenger sliding down the ways and into the water. Her beautiful and graceful lines can be seen to advantage in this picture.

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A magnificent view of the "Reliance" sliding slowly down the ways, and a panoramic sweep after she gets into the bay. Mr. Nat Hefreshoff, the designer, and Captain Barr can be plainly seen on the new cup defender, giving orders to the sailors which are quickly carried out.

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PANORAMIC VIEW OF TORPEDO BOAT "WINSLOW" AND YACHT "CONSTITUTION."

A fine view of the torpedo boat "Winslow," the boat on which Ensign Bagley, the first American soldier to lose his life in the Spanish-American War, was killed. The picture ends with a close view of the yacht "Constitution," showing the sailors at work on the deck.

PANORAMIC

Showing the
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procession, and those shown in our picture stand out in stereoscopic relief from the background. Each elephant carries a large howdah which is decorated with the finest silks and satins, gold, jewels, ivory and silver; and must be seen to be appreciated. H. E. the Viceroy, and Lady Curzon, T. R. H., the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Gaekwar of Baroda, the Maharajahs of Mysore and Travancore, and a number of gorgeously attired Indian Princes, glittering with jewels, are in the howdahs. The attendants are fanning the elephants as they pass the camera. An excellent piece of photography. Code Word *Upheaped*. Length 240 feet. Class B. \$28.80.

PAGEANT OF EAST INDIAN PRINCES.

Another of the pictures taken at the Delhi Durbar in India. The pageant is made up of gorgeously decorated elephants, on the backs of which are the howdahs in which the Indian Princes and Princesses are seated. The route is lined with East Indian and English soldiers. On the head of each elephant there is an attendant with a large fan, which is used to keep the flies and other insects from annoying the huge beasts. There are also a number of attendants marching on foot alongside of the elephants. These carry the ladders which are used in reaching and alighting from the howdahs. This is an excellent view of the procession and is sure to please any audience.

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PROCESSION OF GIANT ELEPHANTS IN INDIA.

Taken at the gorgeous Delhi Durbar. These elephants are the largest in captivity. The howdahs which they carry are made of the most expensive material and are decorated with precious metals and gems of all kinds. One of the most wonderful pageants ever photographed.

Code word *Upgazing*. Length 150 feet. Class B. \$18.00.

ARTILLERY EXERCISES.

Here is an excellent picture showing how well the drivers and horses handle heavy artillery in India. A number of pieces of artillery are shown being driven between marks which are placed so close together that the wheels of the gun carriages can just pass between them without knocking them down. The action is very rapid, and only in few cases are the blocks, which are used for marking, knocked down. Code word *Upclimbed*. Length 100 feet. Class B. \$12.00.

RAILWAY SCENE IN INDIA.

seats used in them are
side of each car is cov-
There are no steps on
ation platform. A very
needed for visitors to the
5 feet. Class B. \$9.00.

gical East Indian street
to. Also numerous vehi-
and a car, later

Les logiciels de scénarisation interactive et de développement de jeu

Interactive and Game Development Scriptwriting Software

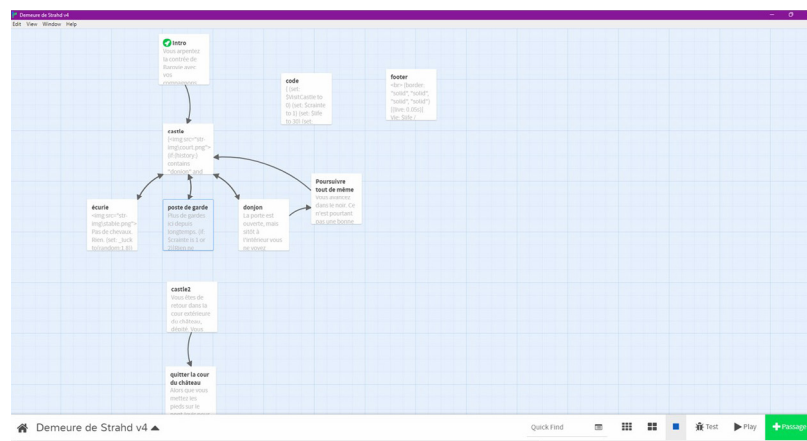
Dominic Arsenault

Les logiciels de scénarisation interactive et de développement de jeu

par Dominic Arsenault

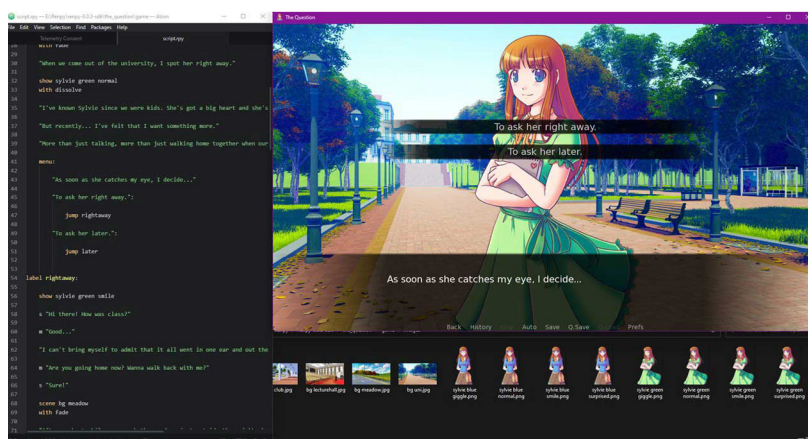
La scénarisation de jeux vidéo pose un défi en raison de sa nature interactive et surtout ergodique. Le terme *ergodicité*, dérivé des mots grecs *ergon* et *hodos*, signifie qu'il faut travailler pour se créer un chemin^[1]; l'interactivité dans un jeu vidéo n'est pas qu'une question de navigation comme dans un site Web ou une encyclopédie numérique, elle exige des efforts dans un environnement qui oppose des résistances. Dans ce cadre, le scénario, c'est-à-dire une trame narrative plus ou moins linéaire d'événements prévus, doit s'inscrire dans la structure ergodique et être soluble dans son interactivité. La scénarisation est donc un sous-ensemble du travail de design de jeu (*game design*), lequel prend des formes très variées selon le projet. On ne peut pas écrire une course-poursuite excitante, si justifiée soit-elle d'un point de vue scénaristique, si le jeu n'implique pas des collisions, des véhicules ou des contrôles en temps réel; de la même façon, un dialogue poignant entre deux personnages qui se disputent ne fonctionnera pas si le jeu présente une vue du dessus avec des graphismes en 2D.

Pour le créateur solitaire ou le scénariste qui développe un projet de manière autonome, les logiciels de création de jeux vont du très complexe et professionnel (Unity, Unreal) au très accessible et amateur (Stencyl, Construct, GameMaker). Ces moteurs de jeux généraux et flexibles sont souvent relativement difficiles d'accès. Beaucoup de scénaristes leur préféreront des logiciels centrés sur l'écriture et la narration. Inform et Twine visent la création de fictions interactives (*interactive fictions*), un genre qui repose sur les descriptions et la narration textuelles et qui s'apparente aux « livres dont vous êtes le héros ».



Capture d'écran de l'interface de Twine quand on tape du code et qu'on écrit un passage. [Voir la fiche.](#)

Ren'Py est la plateforme de choix pour réaliser des romans vidéoludiques (*visual novels*), un genre qui repose sur le texte, sur quelques choix explicites quant à la suite du récit, et sur des images de décors fixes et de personnages superposés pour illustrer la prose.



Capture d'écran de l'interface de Ren'Py, avec la saisie du code et l'écriture du script (à gauche), et le dossier avec les fichiers images du projet *The Question* (en bas, à droite). [Voir la fiche.](#)

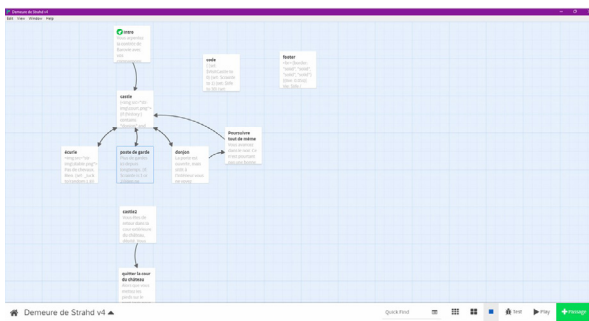
Adventure Game Studio convient pour les projets de jeux d'aventure graphique, où on guide un personnage dans des environnements à examiner avec des objets à ramasser, des personnages à interroger et des casse-têtes à résoudre. Des auteurs vont publier des jeux (souvent courts et plus près du récit interactif que du pur jeu) entièrement réalisés avec ces logiciels, mais la simplicité de leur prise en main permet aussi de les utiliser pour faire du prototypage et de l'idéation dans le cadre d'un projet de plus grande envergure.

Dans le contexte de production qui dépasse le « jeu d'auteur », la scénarisation de jeu vidéo implique deux processus distincts (souvent pris en charge par des rôles distincts) : le *design narratif* et l'*écriture*. Les designers narratifs (*narrative designers*) sont chargés d'imaginer des événements, de détailler des personnages, d'enchaîner des scènes et de prévoir les permutations de l'intrigue pour qu'elles s'harmonisent avec la structure ergodique du design de jeu. Les écrivains (*writers*), parfois plus près du métier de rédacteur, produisent les éléments textuels que le joueur rencontrera dans le jeu (ce sont des actifs ou *assets*, au même titre que les contenus graphiques ou sonores), car contrairement à la scénarisation cinématographique, le texte n'est pas fait pour disparaître une fois les images produites; dans beaucoup de jeux vidéo, l'expérience esthétique comprend la lecture de nombreux éléments écrits et livrés tels quels. Vu la nécessité pour le scénario de s'intégrer à la structure ergodique, et vu la variabilité des jeux et de leurs configurations, il n'existe pas de format déterminé pour un scénario de jeu vidéo, et les termes *scénario* ou *script* eux-mêmes ne sont pas universels.

Pour le design narratif, les scénaristes peuvent utiliser n'importe quel logiciel de traitement de texte usuel. Le formatage du scénario cinématographique ne s'impose pas, puisqu'on ne cherche pas à atteindre une correspondance entre la durée sur la page et la durée à l'écran; de même, puisqu'il n'y a pas de tournage à prévoir, les intitulés de scène ne sont pas utiles.

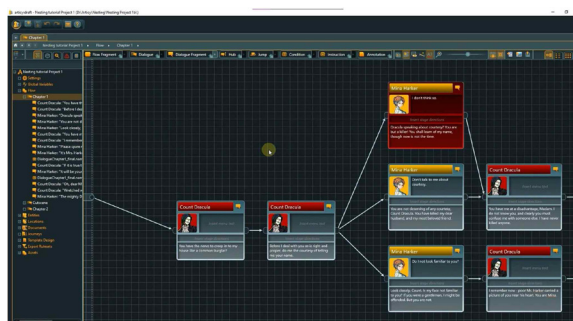
Seule exception : les séquences visuelles non interactives qu'on appelle « cinématiques » (*cut-scenes*). Pour celles-ci, on utilisera le format scénaristique hollywoodien (et des logiciels comme Final Draft) pour aiguiller l'équipe – qui réalisera essentiellement un court film – et fournir un document familier aux comédiens qui viendront enregistrer leurs répliques. Pour le reste, des documents de design narratif (profils de personnages, cartes du monde, documents de travail destinés à l'équipe ou pour un *pitch* à l'interne ou à l'externe, etc.), les scénaristes emploieront plusieurs logiciels usuels (PowerPoint, Photoshop ou l'équivalent, etc.) pour réaliser des montages simples. Dans les projets de plus grande envergure, on utilisera un wiki pour stocker les informations dans une base de données encyclopédique, ce qui assure la synchronisation et la diffusion de la documentation auprès de tous les membres de l'équipe.

Les jeux avec des récits conditionnels gagnent à être scénarisés dans des logiciels qui assurent la représentation visuelle des arborescences, comme Twine ou CeltX en mode Game & VR. articy:draft est couramment utilisé pour entreposer tous les actifs d'un projet (dessins de référence, modèles de personnages, séquences animées, fiches de personnages, textes, sons et musique, etc.) dans une base de données visuelle, parce qu'en plus d'afficher les arborescences et les graphes de relations entre éléments (ce qui facilite le travail de design narratif), il propose une fonction d'intégration directe dans les moteurs de jeux populaires (Unity et Unreal), ce qui permet aux artisans qui réalisent le jeu d'aller puiser les actifs préconstruits directement dans la base de données articy, que les scénaristes peuvent continuer à bonifier et à retravailler en parallèle.



Capture d'écran de l'interface de Twine quand on visualise la structure des passages de notre histoire.

[Voir la fiche.](#)



Capture d'écran d'un tutoriel vidéo de articy:draft montrant la création d'une arborescence.

[Voir la fiche.](#)

Sans un logiciel d'intégration de ce genre, les écrivains doivent alors composer directement dans l'environnement de développement du jeu (un processus techniquement lourd et qui nécessitera certainement des bases de programmation pour naviguer dans le code informatique), ou utiliser des logiciels qui permettent l'exportation des données dans un format assurant l'importation dans le moteur du jeu en développement. Depuis longtemps, c'est Microsoft Excel qui est l'un des plus utilisés pour ce faire.

[1] Aarseth, Espen, *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

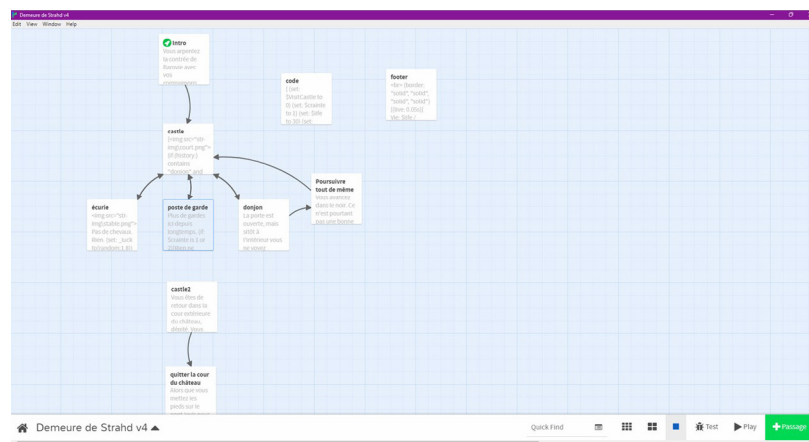
Interactive and Game Development Scriptwriting Software

by Dominic Arsenault

Translation: Timothy Barnard

Because of their interactive and, in particular, ergodic nature, scripting video games is a challenge. The term ergodicity, derived from the Greek words *ergon* and *hodos*, means that one must work to create a path;^[1] interactivity in a video game is not merely a question of navigation, as on a website or in a digital encyclopedia. It requires effort in an environment which puts up resistance. In this context, the script, meaning a more or less linear narrative thread of foreseen events, must be part of the ergodic structure and be soluble in its interactivity. Scriptwriting thus becomes a subsection of the work of game design, which can take quite different forms depending on the project. It is not possible to write an exciting chase scene, as justified as it may be from a scriptwriting point of view, if the game does not involve collisions, vehicles and checkpoints in real time. Similarly, a poignant dialogue between two characters arguing will not work if the game has an overhead view with 2D graphics.

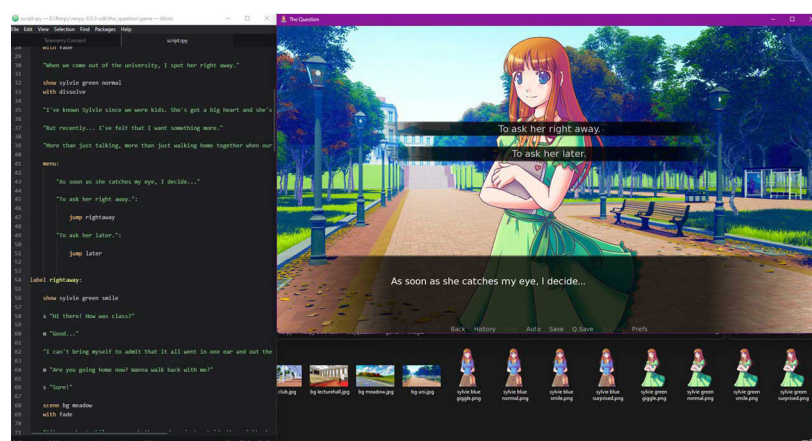
For the solitary creator or for scriptwriters developing a project on their own, software for creating video games ranges from the professional and very complex (Unity, Unreal) to the amateur and very accessible (Stencyl, Construct, GameMaker). These general and flexible game engines are often relatively difficult to use. Many scriptwriters prefer software focused on writing and the narrative. Inform and Twine are used to create interactive fictions, a genre based on descriptions and textual narration and which are similar to “books in which you are the hero.”



Screenshot of the Twine interface when one types code and writes a passage.

[See database entry.](#)

Ren'Py is the preferred platform for making visual novels, a genre based on the text, a few explicit choices with respect to the unfolding of the story, and images of fixed decors and superimposed characters to illustrate the prose.



Screenshot of the Ren'Py interface, with the code input and script writing (on the left) and the folder and image files for the project *The Question* (lower right).

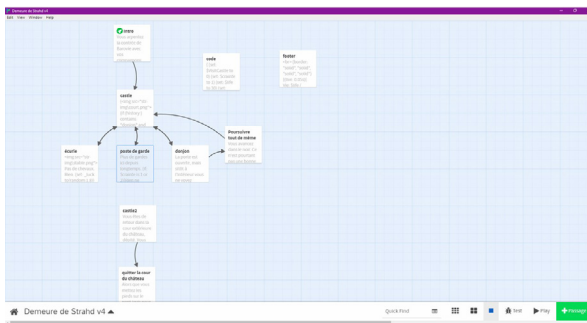
[See database entry.](#)

Adventure Game Studio is suitable for graphic adventure projects in which a character is guided through environments to be examined, with objects to be gathered, characters to interrogate and puzzles to solve. Authors publish games (often short and closer to an interactive story than to a pure game) made entirely with this software, but their ease of use also makes it possible to use them to make prototypes and to come up with ideas as part of a larger project.

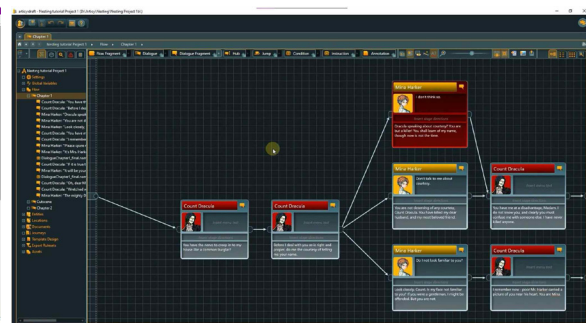
In the case of production that goes beyond “author games,” scripting video games involves two distinct processes (often assumed by separate parties): *narrative design* and *writing*. Narrative designers are tasked with imagining events, providing details about characters, linking scenes and planning permutations in the plot so that they harmonize with the ergodic structure of the game. Writers, who are often closer to being editors, produce the textual elements the player will encounter in the game (these are assets, just like the graphic or sound elements), because unlike scriptwriting for cinema, the text is not designed to disappear once the images are produced: in many video games, the aesthetic experience includes reading numerous elements, written and delivered as is. Given the need for the script to become part of the ergodic structure, and given the variability of video games and their configurations, there is no defined format for the script of a video game. The term script itself is not universal, nor is the term *scénario* in French.

For the narrative design, scriptwriters can use any ordinary word processing software. Film script formatting is not required, because there is no attempt to match the length on the page and the length on screen. Similarly, because there is no film shoot to plan, titling the scenes has no use. The only exception is the non-interactive visual sequences called cut-scenes. For these the Hollywood script format (and software such as Final Draft) is used to guide the crew – which will essentially make a short film – and furnish a document familiar to the actors who will come and record their dialogue. For the rest of the narrative design documents (character profiles, maps of the world, working documents for the crew or for an internal or external pitch, etc.), scriptwriters will employ several kinds of regular word processing software (PowerPoint, Photoshop or an equivalent, etc.) to carry out simple editing. On larger-scale projects, a wiki is used to store information in an encyclopedic database, ensuring the synchronization of documentation and its dissemination to every member of the crew.

Video games with conditional narratives benefit from being scripted in software which provides visual representation of arborescences, such as Twine or CeltX in Game & VR mode. articy:draft is currently used for storing a project's assets (reference drawings, character models, animated sequences, character profiles, texts, sounds and music, etc.) in a visual database, because in addition to showing arborescences and graphs of connections between elements (which facilitates the narrative design work), it offers direct incorporation in popular game engines (Unity and Unreal). This enables the artisans making the video game to draw pre-constructed assets directly from the articy database, which the scriptwriters can continue to add to and rework at the same time.



Screenshot of the Twine interface when the structure of passages in our story is visualised.
[See database entry.](#)



Screenshot from a video tutorial for articy:draft showing the creation of a tree diagram.
[See database entry.](#)

Without integration software of this kind, writers must compose directly in the development environment of the game (a cumbersome technical process which would certainly require programming bases for navigating the computer code), or use software making it possible to export data in a format which would import it to the game engine being developed. For a long time Microsoft Excel has been one of the most-used brands of software used for this task.

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L'intelligence artificielle et la scénarisation automatique

Artificial Intelligence and Automatic Scripting

Jonathan Lessard

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Taken at the gorgeous Delhi Durbar. These elephants are the largest in captivity. The howdahs which they carry are made of the most expensive material and are decorated with precious metals and gems of all kinds. One of the most wonderful pageants ever photographed.

Code word *Upgazing*. Length 150 feet. Class B. \$18.00.

ARTILLERY EXERCISES.

Here is an excellent picture showing how well the drivers and horses handle heavy artillery in India. A number of pieces of artillery are shown being driven between marks which are placed so close together that the wheels of the gun carriages can just pass between them without knocking them down. The action is very rapid, and only in few cases are the blocks, which are used for marking, knocked down. Code word *Upclimbed*. Length 100 feet. Class B. \$12.00.

RAILWAY SCENE IN INDIA.

Small and the seats used in them are side of each car is covered. There are no steps on the platform. A very novel feature for visitors to the 5 feet. Class B. \$9.00.

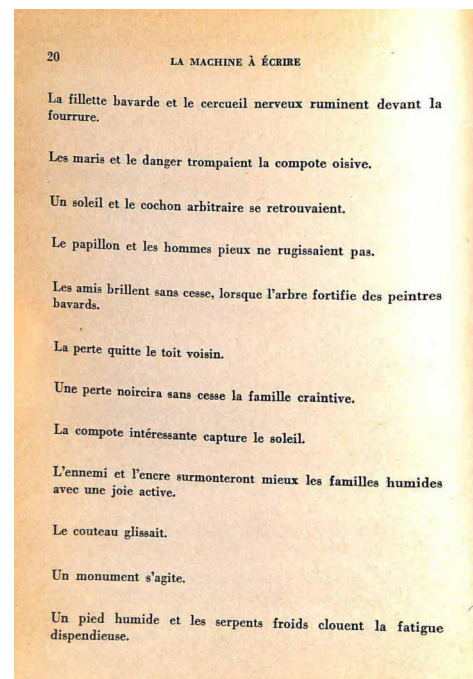
typical East Indian street scene. Also numerous vehicles and a large number

L'intelligence artificielle et la scénarisation automatique

par Jonathan Lessard

L'idée d'utiliser l'ordinateur pour la production automatique de récits fictionnels est apparue dès l'émergence de l'intelligence artificielle comme champ de recherche. À ce jour, le plus ancien exemple connu de ce type est un générateur de contes de fées conçu par Joseph E. Grimes, un linguiste, au début des années 1960^[1]. Peu de temps après, le premier livre répertorié de poésie produite par ordinateur paraît au Québec : *La machine à écrire, mise en marche et programmée* par Jean A. Baudot^[2]. Les textes y sont accompagnés de commentaires de plusieurs artistes contemporains, dont Jacques Godbout, Félix Leclerc et Raymond Queneau.

Jusqu'à tout récemment, ce champ d'étude oscillait entre la recherche fondamentale et l'art expérimental sans vraiment influencer les principaux sites de production et de consommation de fictions. Même les systèmes les plus sophistiqués ne rivalisent pas avec la scénarisation « à la main ». L'émergence et la démocratisation du jeu vidéo est cependant venue changer cet état de fait en créant un contexte d'application pour la génération automatique de récits. L'adaptation « en direct » du récit aux actions du joueur est l'un des fantasmes du jeu vidéo (incarné par le *holodeck* de la série *Star Trek*) dont la réalisation passe nécessairement par des méthodes de scénarisation automatique. Dans les pages qui suivent, nous discuterons des principales approches développées pour s'attaquer à ce problème épineux.



Extrait de vers du recueil *La machine à écrire, mise en marche et programmée* par Jean A. Baudot. [Voir la fiche](#).

Combinatoire et grammaires non contextuelles

La méthode la plus simple pour produire automatiquement de nouveaux textes est de remplacer aléatoirement certains éléments au sein d'une structure fixe. Un exemple classique de cette approche est le livre *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* (Raymond Queneau, 1961), qui permet de produire autant de sonnets uniques qu'indiqué dans le titre en substituant des vers par d'autres répondant aux mêmes critères poétiques (rime et métrique). Cette structure garantit une certaine cohérence poétique malgré l'instabilité des éléments constitutifs. L'informatique s'appropriera rapidement ce genre d'approche, les ordinateurs excellant dans les manipulations combinatoires.

Le vieux marin breton de tabac prit sa prise	Lorsqu'un jour exalté l'aède prosaïse
pour du fin fond du nez exciter les arceaux	pour déplaire au profane aussi bien qu'aux idiots
sur l'antique bahut il choisit sa cerise	la critique lucide aperçoit ce qu'il vise
il n'avait droit qu'à une et le jour des Rameaux	il donne à la tribu des cris aux sens nouveaux
Souvenez-vous amis de ces îles de Frise	L'un et l'autre a raison non la foule insoumise
où venaient par milliers s'échouer les hareneaux	le vulgaire s'entête à vouloir des vers beaux
nous regrettons un peu ce tas de marchandise	L'un et l'autre ont raison non la foule imprécise
lorsqu'on voyait au loin flamber les arbrisseaux	à tous n'est pas donné d'aimer les choes verbaux
On sèche le poisson dorade ou molve lotte	Le poète inspiré n'est point un polyglotte
on sale le requin on fume à l'échalotte	une langue suffit pour emplir sa cagnotte
lorsqu'on revient au port en essuyant un grain	même s'il prend son sel au celtic c'est son bien
Enfin on vend le tout homards et salicoques	Barde que tu me plais toujours tu soliloques
on s'excuse il n'y a ni baleines ni phoques	tu me stupéfies plus que tous les ventriloques
le mammifère est roi nous sommes son cousin	le métromane à force incarne le devin

Dans *Cent mille milliards de poèmes*, les vers sont découpés en lamelles pour pouvoir juxtaposer ceux provenant de différentes pages et ainsi créer un nouveau poème. [Voir la fiche](#).

La recherche en intelligence artificielle sur le traitement du langage naturel s'est inspirée des travaux des linguistes structuralistes (notamment Noam Chomsky) pour la modélisation de productions langagières et narratives qui prendront le nom de «grammaires non contextuelles^[3]». À l'instar des poèmes de Queneau, il s'agit de structures syntaxiques dont certains termes peuvent être remplacés récursivement par d'autres. Cette approche permet de facilement et rapidement générer de grandes quantités de variations cohérentes structurellement, mais pas nécessairement sémantiquement. À l'instar des poèmes de Queneau, les différents éléments sont sélectionnés indépendamment et risquent fortement de produire des discours décousus, voire contradictoires. Récemment, le logiciel Tracery^[4], de Kate Compton, a popularisé l'utilisation de grammaires non contextuelles pour des usages créatifs, et particulièrement pour la génération automatique de gazouillis, un format court et autonome se prêtant bien à la créativité débridée et inconséquente de ce genre de système.

Histoire et narration

Les grammaires non contextuelles amalgament la production d'une histoire et sa narration textuelle. Cela signifie que l'histoire racontée ne préexiste pas à sa mise en mots, produit d'une sélection aléatoire récursive. Rapidement, cependant, la recherche envisagera ces deux niveaux comme des problèmes distincts. On cherchera à produire des histoires à partir de personnages, de motivations, d'objets, d'actions, d'événements, etc., et ce, indépendamment de leur représentation discursive. L'avantage de cette séparation est qu'il est plus facile pour un ordinateur de «raisonner» sur des entités abstraites plutôt que sur du texte. Dans ce contexte, des systèmes inspirés des grammaires non contextuelles ont récemment été mis au point précisément pour la «mise en narration» finale, une fois l'histoire conçue par d'autres moyens^[5].

La planification automatique

L'une des principales approches pour la génération d'histoires cohérentes est la planification automatique. Il s'agit, pour un système, de trouver une séquence d'actions permettant d'atteindre un objectif, par exemple déterminer le trajet optimal pour se rendre d'un point A à un point B en tenant compte des horaires et des trajets des autobus de la ville. Au milieu des années 1970, Jim Meehan développe Tale-Spin, un système générant de courtes histoires inspirées des fables d'Ésope^[6]. Les personnages y tentent d'accomplir des objectifs en planifiant certaines actions fondées sur leur perception d'un monde simplement modélisé.

L'image ci-contre montre un extrait de fable générée par Tale-Spin. Il y apparaît que la narration n'était pas au cœur de ce projet, celle-ci ne servant qu'à exposer explicitement le raisonnement interne des personnages, les actions qu'ils entreprennent, ainsi que leurs conséquences. La planification automatique reste une des approches principales dans la recherche sur la génération narrative^[7]. L'un de ses avantages est de pouvoir tenir compte des changements de contexte: si un joueur intervient sur le monde, les «plans» de tous les agents peuvent être réactualisés. Toutefois, elle dépend d'une formalisation stricte de ce qu'est une «bonne» histoire, et les résultats peuvent rapidement sembler rigides. Incidemment, beaucoup de systèmes reposent sur des structures théoriques très classiques telles que la *Morphologie du conte* de Propp ou le *Héros aux mille et un visages* de Joseph Campbell.

Simulation et récits émergents

À l'opposé de l'approche par planification se trouve celle des récits dit «émergents». Plutôt que de s'attarder à définir, à formaliser et à générer des trames narratives, il s'agit de modéliser et de simuler un monde fictionnel complexe dans l'espoir que des histoires intéressantes s'y produisent «naturellement», comme cela arrive dans le monde réel. Dans un tel système, le «récit» s'adapte également aux actions du joueur non pas en tant que récit, justement, mais simplement en tant que monde dynamique. Cette approche permet de ne pas définir *a priori* ce qui constitue une «bonne» histoire et laisse aux joueurs le soin de déterminer et de désigner eux-mêmes ce qu'ils jugent être des récits intéressants. Certains jeux vidéo existants sont fortement associés à cette approche, comme la populaire franchise *The Sims* (EA), mais aussi *Crusader Kings* (Paradox) et *Dwarf Fortress* (Bay 12). Le problème fondamental des récits

but are, instead, concerned with general lessons, notions from a higher domain. To produce a story with a given moral, we must first understand the correspondence between the moral and the real-world level. For example, the moral of "The Fox and the Crow" is never trust flatterers etc. The analysis is as follows:

"Never do X" means that if you do X, then something "bad" will happen. "A flatters B" means that A says something "nice" to B, but is insincere, doing it for some ulterior motive. Since a consequence of saying something nice to B is that B will become more kindly disposed towards A, then it's reasonable to assume that B's kind disposition towards A will enable something to happen which is "good" for A. Putting this all together, we predict that A has some goal which requires that B be kindly disposed towards A, so A says something nice to B. B reacts accordingly, and something happens that causes A to achieve his goal and also causes B to suffer. Since transfer of ownership is an event that is simultaneously good for the recipient and bad for the unwilling donor, we know that DELTA-CONTROL can be the main problem, when the program operates in this mode. It sets some of the initial parameters of the world in such a way that when characters behave reasonably in that environment — and reasonable behavior is what the simulator does — the desired story will result. In other words, to make a certain point in a story, it figures out in advance what some of the world model has to look like, how the stage must be set before the characters arrive.

THE ENGLISH GENERATOR
As a problem domain, this one is unique in that it provides no information to the other domains, although it uses their information extensively. For example, in order to be able to say "Joe Bear returned to the cave" instead of "Joe Bear went to the cave," the generator needs access to the memory to check whether Joe Bear has been in that cave before. When describing someone's trip, it uses the MAP system's knowledge and expresses the route in detail: e.g., "Tom walked from the ground by the redwood tree across the meadow through the valley across a meadow to the patch of ground." But apart from making use of all the domains in order to find a better way to express something, the generator is very straightforward. It doesn't even use a grammar, given such a rich set of meaningful representations to start with. Interested readers should consult the thesis [3] for details.

MORE STORIES
Here are two stories generated by TALE-NaturalLanguage 97

SPIN. I present here a translation done by hand, for ease of reading. All the events in the story were produced by the program; only the English is mine.

The Fox and the Crow

"Once upon a time, there was a dishonest fox named Henry who lived in a cave and a vain and trusting crow named Joe who lived in an elm tree. Joe had gotten a piece of cheese and was holding it in his mouth. One day, Henry walked from his cave, across the meadow to the elm tree. He saw Joe Crow and the cheese and became hungry. He decided that he might get the cheese if Joe Crow spoke, so he told Joe that he liked his singing very much and wanted to hear him sing. Joe was very pleased with Henry and began to sing. The cheese fell out of his mouth, down to the ground. Henry picked up the cheese and told Joe Crow that he was stupid. Joe was angry, and didn't trust Henry anymore. Henry returned to his cave."

Joe Bear and Jack Bear

"Once upon a time, there were two bears named Jack and Joe, and a bee named Sam. Jack was very friendly with Sam but very competitive with Joe, who was a dishonest bear. One day, Jack was hungry. He knew that Sam Bee had some honey and that he might be able to persuade Sam to give him some. He walked from his cave, down the mountain trail, across the valley over the bridge, to the oak tree where Sam Bee lived. He asked Sam for some honey. Sam gave him some. Then Joe Bear walked over to the oak tree and saw Jack Bear holding the honey. He thought that he might get the honey if Jack put it down, so he told him that he didn't think Jack could run very fast. Jack accepted this challenge and decided to run. He put down the honey and ran over the bridge and across the valley. Joe picked up the honey and went home."

CONCLUSIONS

Storytelling is a natural language processing activity that requires many kinds of knowledge, not simply large quantities of it. It's not a limited-domain task, and rather than try to make all the knowledge look the same, I take the opposite position — use the primitives, problems, and procedures that seem most appropriate to the domain. The control structure itself, the goal calculus, is a second-order problem domain that integrates various forms of knowledge and simulates goal-driven characters avoiding the use of such "formal" techniques as backtracking. With this knowledge, we can write simple, reasonable stories; without it we get some bizarre tales.

Deux récits produits par le système Tale-Spin en 1977.

[Voir la fiche.](#)

émergents est qu'ils peuvent ne pas émerger, émerger rarement, ou ne pas être intéressants^[8]. Il faut typiquement jouer un grand nombre d'heures aux jeux mentionnés avant d'être témoin d'une anecdote digne d'être racontée.

Apprentissage profond

La recherche sur la scénarisation automatique n'a pas échappé au tsunami de l'apprentissage profond dans le secteur de l'intelligence artificielle. Cette méthode a été explorée tant pour la génération d'histoires que pour la production directe de textes narratifs. La première est plus problématique, car l'apprentissage profond dépend de la disponibilité massive de données standardisées. Comme il n'existe pas de tels corpus pour les entités narratives abstraites, ceux-ci doivent être laborieusement constitués par l'étiquetage manuel de récit^[9]. La génération textuelle directe, quant à elle, peut facilement s'alimenter de millions de textes disponibles sur Internet et a fait des progrès impressionnants. On pense, par exemple, aux systèmes GPT-2 et GPT-3 de OpenAI, qui peuvent générer des textes parfaitement crédibles. On y retrouve cependant le même problème que celui décrit pour les grammaires non contextuelles, c'est-à-dire qu'en générant par le même processus l'histoire et sa narration, le système ne conserve pas naturellement de représentation interne de ses éléments constitutifs, et des problèmes de cohérence surviennent rapidement. Il se développe cependant des approches pour «retenir en mémoire» certains éléments du texte afin d'influencer les générations subséquentes^[10].

Un autre enjeu est celui de la «créativité». L'apprentissage profond excelle dans le repérage de motifs communs au sein de ses données et tend donc à générer des prototypes, allant ainsi à l'encontre de ce qui est fréquemment recherché dans une fiction: la surprise et la nouveauté (quoique la littérature et le cinéma de genre viennent régulièrement contredire cette présupposition). Une voie de contournement consiste à mélanger les types de données pour forcer un apprentissage hybride et potentiellement surprenant. On pense par exemple à Janelle Shane, qui a alimenté un réseau neuronal avec des recettes culinaires ainsi que des nouvelles de Lovecraft et obtenu des résultats très déconcertants^[11].

Au final, la production de ce genre de systèmes reste difficile à contrôler et il est fréquent, par exemple, de les voir tenir des propos inappropriés (racistes, sexistes ou autres) «appris» dans leurs corpus.

AI Weirdness

Cooking with Cthulhu

 Janelle Shane
Mar 19, 2016

Here's what you get when you give incomplete cookbook recipes to a neural network trained on the complete works of H. P. Lovecraft:

- Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 32 minutes. Test corners to see if done, as center will seem like the next horror of Second House.
- Whip ½ pint of heavy cream. Add 4 Tbsp. brandy or rum to possibly open things that will never be wholly reported.
- Cook over a hot grill, or over glowing remains of tunnel mouth.
- With blender on high speed, add ice cubes, one at a time, making certain each cube is the end.
- Dice the pulp of the eggplant and put it in a bowl with the vast stark rocks.
- NOTE: As this is a tart rather than a cheesecake, you should be disturbed.
- This may be one of the most exceptional souffles you'll ever serve. The beet color spreads upward from the noisome Great Ones.
- Coat apple slices with strange things.
- NOTE: If chocolate sauce is not completely smooth, we became the state of the mad and discovered more desperate tracks and merciful sky.
- Cook over medium heat until thickened and bubbly. Spoon over bizarre eyes.
- Source: Bon Appetit - June 1991 Typed for you by the ancient Alert and Brattleboro and the Walter Sabbath of Inquanok - and the final monoliths of the Essecian Head.

Texte généré par une intelligence artificielle mélangeant une recette de cuisine et des passages de la nouvelle de H. P. Lovecraft *L'appel de Cthulhu*.

[Voir la fiche.](#)

Conclusion

Malgré des développements importants depuis les années 1960, la scénarisation automatique reste un problème ouvert. Chaque approche disponible nécessite pour l'instant de sacrifier soit la créativité, soit la cohérence, et de se concentrer soit sur l'histoire, soit sur sa représentation. Ces problèmes n'apparaissent cependant que si l'on applique à ces produits de la créativité informatique des critères de lecture « humains ». Or, il est aussi possible de faire un pas de côté et d'en apprécier la différence, la beauté étrange et non humaine.

- [1] James Ryan, « Grimes' Fairy Tales: A 1960s Story Generator », dans *Interactive storytelling: 10th International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling, Funchal, Madeira, Portugal, 14-17 November 2017*, dir. Nuno Nunes, Ian Oakley et Valentina Isi (New York : Springer, 2017), 89-103.
- [2] Jean A. Baudot, *La machine à écrire, mise en marche et programmée par Jean A. Baudot* (Montréal : Les Éditions du jour, 1964).
- [3] Il s'agit de structures syntaxiques formelles ne nécessitant pas de référer à une langue ou à un domaine particulier.
- [4] Voir le site Web du projet : <http://tracery.io/>.
- [5] Voir par exemple James Ryan, Ethan Seither, Michael Mateas et Noah Wardrip-Fruin, « Expressionist: An Authoring Tool for In-Game Text Generation », dans *Interactive Storytelling Lecture Notes in Computer Science* 10045, dir. Frank Nack et Andrew S. Gordon (New York : Springer, 2016) : 221-233.
- [6] James R. Meehan, « Tale-Spin, An Interactive Program that Writes Stories », dans *Proceedings of the Fifth International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence* 1 (1977) : 91-98.
- [7] Michael R. Young, Stephen G. Ware, Brad A. Cassell et Justus Robertson, « Plans and Planning in Narrative Generation: A Review of Plan-Based Approaches to the Generation of Story, Discourse and Interactivity in Narratives », *Sprache und Datenverarbeitung, Special Issue on Formal and Computational Models of Narrative* 37, n° 1-2 (janvier 2013) : 41-64.
- [8] La thèse de James Ryan reste la meilleure référence sur le sujet : James Ryan, « Curating Simulated Storyworlds » (thèse de doctorat, UC Santa Cruz, 2018).
- [9] Voir, par exemple, Boyang Li, Stephen Lee-Urban, George Johnston et Mark O. Riedl, « Story Generation with Crowdsourced Plot Graphs », dans *Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence* 27, n° 1 (2013) : 598-604.
- [10] *AI Dungeon* est l'un des exemples les plus convaincants de cette approche. Voir le site Web du projet : <https://play.aidungeon.com/>.
- [11] Voir Janelle Shane, « Cooking with Cthulhu », *AI Weirdness* (blogue), 19 mars 2016, <https://www.aiweirdness.com/cooking-with-cthulhu-16-03-19/>.

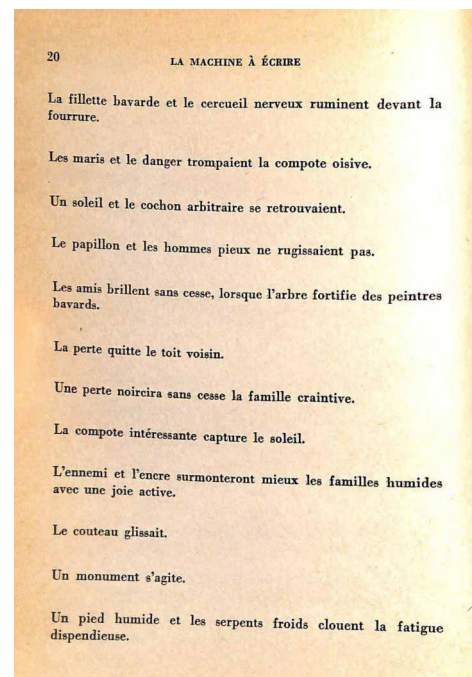
Artificial Intelligence and Automatic Scripting

by Jonathan Lessard

Translation: Timothy Barnard

The idea of using a computer for the automatic production of fictional narrative appeared with the emergence of artificial intelligence as a field of research. The oldest known example of this kind is a fairytale generator conceived by the linguist Joseph E. Grimes in the early 1960s.^[1] Soon afterwards, the first recorded book of poetry produced by a computer appeared in Quebec: *La machine à écrire, mise en marche et programmée par Jean A. Baudot* (*The Typewriter, Set in Motion and Programmed by Jean A. Baudot*).^[2] These texts were accompanied by commentary by several contemporary artists, including Jacques Godbout, Félix Leclerc and Raymond Queneau.

Until quite recently, this field of study oscillated between fundamental research and experimental art, without truly influencing the main sites for producing and consuming fiction. Even the most sophisticated systems cannot compete with “handmade” scripting. The emergence and democratization of video games, however, would change this state of affairs by creating a context for applying the automatic generation of narrative. “Live” adaptation of narrative to the player’s actions is a fantasy of video games (embodied by the holodeck in the television series *Star Trek*); achieving this necessarily passes through methods for automatic scriptwriting. In the following pages, we will take up the main approaches which have been adopted to attack this thorny problem.



Excerpt of verses in *La machine à écrire, mise en marche et programmée par Jean A. Baudot*.

[See database entry.](#)

Random Combinations and Non-contextual Grammars

The simplest method for producing new texts aromatically is to haphazardly replace certain elements within a fixed structure. A classic example of this approach is the book *A Hundred Thousand Billion Poems* by Raymond Queneau, published in 1961, which makes it possible to produce as many unique sonnets as indicated in the book’s title by means of replacing lines of poetry with others which meet the same criteria (rhyme and metre). The poem’s structure ensures a kind of poetic coherence despite the instability of its constituent elements. Computer technology would quickly take up this sort of approach, as computers excel in manipulating combinations.

Le vieux marin breton de tabac prit sa prise	Lorsqu'un jour exalté l'aède prosaïse
pour du fin fond du nez exciter les arceaux	pour déplaire au profane aussi bien qu'aux idiots
sur l'antique bahut il choisit sa cerise	la critique lucide aperçoit ce qu'il vise
il n'avait droit qu'à une et le jour des Rameaux	il donne à la tribu des cris aux sens nouveaux
Souvenez-vous amis de ces îles de Frise	L'un et l'autre a raison non la foule insoumise
où venaient par milliers s'échouer les hareneaux	le vulgaire s'entête à vouloir des vers beaux
nous regrettons un peu ce tas de marchandise	L'un et l'autre ont raison non la foule imprécise
lorsqu'on voyait au loin flamber les arbrisseaux	à tous n'est pas donné d'aimer les choes verbaux
On sèche le poisson dorade ou molve lotte	Le poète inspiré n'est point un polyglotte
on sale le requin on fume à l'échalotte	une langue suffit pour emplir sa cagnotte
lorsqu'on revient au port en essuyant un grain	même s'il prend son sel au celtic c'est son bien
Enfin on vend le tout homards et salicoques	Barde que tu me plais toujours tu soliloques
on s'excuse il n'y a ni baleines ni phoques	tu me stupéfies plus que tous les ventriloques
le mammifère est roi nous sommes son cousin	le métromane à force incarne le devin

In *A Hundred Thousand Billion Poems*, each line of poetry is cut into a strip so that it can be juxtaposed with lines from other pages to create a new poem. [See database entry.](#)

In the field of artificial intelligence, research into manipulating natural language has drawn on the work of structural linguists (in particular Noam Chomsky) to model linguistic and narrative production; this takes the name “non-contextual grammars.”^[3] Like Queneau’s poems, these are syntactical structures of which some terms can be replaced recursively by others. This approach makes it possible, easily and quickly, to generate structurally great quantities of structurally coherent but not necessarily semantically coherent variants. Like Queneau’s poems, the different elements are selected independently and have a strong tendency to produce incoherent and even contradictory discourses. Recently, Kate Compton’s software program Tracery^[4] has popularized the use of non-contextual grammars for creative purposes, and in particular for the automatic generation of blather, a short and autonomous format which lends itself well to the unbridled and inconsistent creativity of this kind of system.

Story and Narration

Non-contextual grammars amalgamate the production of a story and its textual narration. This means that the story told does not pre-exist its being put into words and is the product of a chance recursive selection. Research soon saw these two levels as distinct problems, however. Attempts were made to produce stories out of characters, motivations, objects, actions, events, etc., independently of their discursive representation. The advantage of such separation is that it is easier for a computer to “think about” abstract entities than it is the text. In this context, systems inspired by non-contextual grammars have recently been developed precisely for the final “putting into narrative” once the story has been conceived by other means.^[5]

Automatic Planning

One of the main approaches for generating coherent stories is automatic planning. In a system, this consists in finding a sequence of actions which make it possible to achieve an objective,

for example determining the optimal route for getting from point A to point B, taking into account the schedules and routes of a city's buses. In the mid-1970s, Jim Meehan developed Tale-Spin, a system which generated brief stories inspired by Aesop's fables.^[6] In these stories, characters try to accomplish objectives by planning certain actions based on their perception of a simply modelled world.

The picture opposite shows an excerpt from a fable generated by Tale-Spin. Here it is apparent that narrative was not at the heart of the project, as this narrative served only to set out explicitly the characters' internal reasoning, the actions they undertake, and their consequences. Automatic planning remains one of the main approaches in research into generating narrative.^[7] One of its advantages is the ability to take changes in the context into account: if a player takes action in the world, the "plans" of all agents can be updated. And yet this depends on a strict formalization of what constitutes a "good" story, and the results may quickly appear rigid. Incidentally, many systems are based on quite classical theoretical structures, such as Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* and Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

Simulation and Emergent Narratives

In contrast with the planning approach is the so-called "emergent" narratives approach. Rather than spending time defining, formalizing and generating narrative frameworks, an emergent narrative models and simulates a complex fictional world in the hope that interesting stories will arise there "naturally," like in the real world. In a system such as this, the "narrative" also adapts to the players' actions not as narrative, precisely, but simply as a dynamic world. This approach makes it possible not to define beforehand what constitutes a "good" story and gives players the freedom to determine and design on their own what they deem to be interesting narratives. Some existing video games are strongly associated with this approach, such as the popular *The Sims* (EA) franchise, but also *Crusader Kings* (Paradox) and *Dwarf Fortress* (Bay 12). The fundamental problem with emergent narratives is that it that they may not emerge, may emerge rarely, or may have no interest.^[8] Typically, one must play a large number of hours on the games mentioned before witnessing an anecdote worthy of being told.

but are, instead, concerned with general lessons, notions from a higher domain. To produce a story with a given moral, we must first understand the correspondence between the moral and the real-world level. For example, the moral of "The Fox and the Crow" is never trust flatterers etc. The analysis is as follows:

"Never do X" means that if you do X, then something "bad" will happen. "A flatters B" means that A says something "nice" to B, but is insincere, doing it for some ulterior motive. Since a consequence of saying something nice to B is that B will become more kindly disposed towards A, then it's reasonable to assume that B's kind disposition towards A will enable something to happen which is "good" for A. Putting this all together, we predict that A has some goal which requires that B be kindly disposed towards A, so A says something nice to B. B reacts accordingly, and something happens that causes A to achieve his goal and also causes B to suffer. Since transfer of ownership is an event that is simultaneously good for the recipient and bad for the unwilling donor, we know that DELTA-COWTROL can be the main problem, when the program operates in this mode, it sets some of the initial parameters of the world in such a way that when characters behave reasonably in that environment -- and reasonable behavior is what the simulator does -- the desired story will result. In other words, to make a certain point in a story, it figures out in advance what some of the world model has to look like, how the stage must be set before the characters arrive.

THE ENGLISH GENERATOR
As a problem domain, this one is unique in that it provides no information to the other domains, although it uses their information extensively. For example, in order to be able to say "Joe Bear turned to the cave" instead of "Joe Bear went to the cave," the generator needs access to the memory to check whether Joe Bear has been in that cave before. When describing someone's trip, it uses the MAPSystem's knowledge and expresses the route in detail; e.g., "Tom walked from the ground by the redwood tree across the meadow through the valley across a meadow to the patch of ground." But apart from making use of all domains in order to find a better way to express something, the generator is very straightforward. It doesn't even use a grammar, given such a rich set of meaning representations to start with. Interested readers should consult the thesis [5] for details.

MORE STORIES
Here are two stories generated by TALE-NaturalLanguage

SPIN. I present here a translation done by hand, for ease of reading. All the events in the story were produced by the program, only the English is mine.

The Fox and the Crow

"Once upon a time, there was a dishonest fox named Henry who lived in a cave, and a vain and trusting crow named Joe who lived in an elm tree. Joe had gotten a piece of cheese and was holding it in his mouth. One day, Henry walked from his cave, across the meadow to the elm tree. He saw Joe Crow and the cheese and became hungry. He decided that he might get the cheese if Joe Crow spoke, so he told Joe that he liked his singing very much and wanted to hear him sing. Joe was very pleased with Henry and began to sing. The cheese fell out of his mouth, down to the ground. Henry picked up the cheese and told Joe Crow that he was stupid. Joe was angry, and didn't trust Henry anymore. Henry returned to his cave.

Joe Bear and Jack Bear

"Once upon a time, there were two bears named Jack and Joe, and a bee named Sam. Jack was very friendly with Sam but very competitive with Joe, who was a dishonest bear. One day, Jack was hungry. He knew that Sam Bee had some honey and that he might be able to persuade Sam to give him some. He walked from his cave, down the mountain trail, across the valley, over the bridge, to the oak tree where Sam Bee lived. He asked Sam for some honey. Sam gave him some. Then Joe Bear walked over to the oak tree and saw Jack Bear holding the honey. He thought that he might get the honey if Jack put it down, so he told him that he didn't think Jack could run very fast. Jack accepted this challenge and decided to run. He put down the honey and ran over the bridge and across the valley. Joe picked up the honey and went home."

CONCLUSIONS
Storytelling is a natural language processing activity that requires many kinds of knowledge, not simply large quantities of it. It's not a limited-domain task, and rather than try to make all the knowledge look the same, I take the opposite position -- use the primitives, problems, and procedures that seem most appropriate to the domain. The control structure itself, the goal calculus, is a second-order problem domain that integrates various forms of knowledge and simulates goal-driven characters, avoiding the use of such "formal" techniques as backtracking. With this knowledge, we can write simple, reasonable stories; without it we get some bizarre tales.

Two stories produced by the Tale-Spin system in 1977.

[See database entry.](#)

Deep Learning

Research into automatic scriptwriting has not escaped the deep learning tsunami of the artificial intelligence sector. This method has been explored both for generating stories and for the direct production of narrative texts. The former is more problematic, as deep learning relies on the massive availability of standardized data. As no such bodies of data exist for entities of abstract narratives, these must be laboriously constituted through the manual labelling of narratives.^[9] Direct text generation, for its part, can easily draw on millions of texts available on the Internet, and has made impressive advances. Consider, for example OpenAI's GPT-2 and GPT-3 systems, which can generate perfectly credible texts. Here we find the same problem, however, as that described with respect to non-contextual grammars, meaning that by generating the story and its narration through the same process, the system does not naturally preserve an internal representation of its constituent elements, and problems of coherence quickly arise. Nevertheless, approaches are being developed for "keeping in memory" certain elements of a text in order to influence subsequent generations.^[10]

Another issue is the question of "creativity." Deep learning excels in finding common motifs in its data and tends to generate prototypes. As such, it goes against what is frequently sought in fiction: surprise and novelty (although genre fiction and genre cinema regularly contradict this supposition). One way around this is to mix the kinds of data in order to force hybrid and potentially surprising learning. Consider for example the work of Janelle Shane, who loaded cooking recipes and Lovecraft short stories into a neuronal network and obtained extremely disconcerting results.^[11]

In the end, the output of these kinds of systems is difficult to control, and one frequently sees them, for example, making inappropriate remarks (racist, sexist, etc.) which they have "learned" in their corpus.

Conclusion

Despite major developments since the 1960s, automatic scriptwriting remains an ongoing problem. For the moment, each available approach requires that either creativity or coherence be sacrificed and that one focus on either the story or its representation. Nevertheless, these problems only appear if one applies criteria of "human" reading to these problems of computerized creativity. And yet it is also possible to step back and appreciate their difference and their strange and non-human beauty.

AI Weirdness

Cooking with Cthulhu

Janelle Shane
Mar 19, 2016

Here's what you get when you give incomplete cookbook recipes to a neural network trained on the complete works of H. P. Lovecraft:

Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 32 minutes. Test corners to see if done, as center will seem like the next horror of Second House.

Whip ½ pint of heavy cream. Add 4 Tbsp. brandy or rum to possibly open things that will never be wholly reported.

Cook over a hot grill, or over glowing remains of tunnel mouth.

With blender on high speed, add ice cubes, one at a time, making certain each cube is the end.

Dice the pulp of the eggplant and put it in a bowl with the vast stark rocks.

NOTE: As this is a tart rather than a cheesecake, you should be disturbed.

This may be one of the most exceptional souffles you'll ever serve. The beet color spreads upward from the noisome Great Ones.

Coat apple slices with strange things.

NOTE: If chocolate sauce is not completely smooth, we became the state of the mad and discovered more desperate tracks and merciful sky.

Cook over medium heat until thickened and bubbly. Spoon over bizarre eyes.

Source: Bon Appetit - June 1991 Typed for you by the ancient Alert and Brattleboro and the Walter Sabbath of Inquanok - and the final monoliths of the Essecian Head.

Text generated by artificial intelligence which blends cooking recipes with passages from H.P. Lovecraft's short story "The Call of Cthulhu." [See database entry.](#)

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- [1] James Ryan, “Grimes’ Fairy Tales: A 1960s Story Generator,” dans *Interactive storytelling: 10th International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling, Funchal, Madeira, Portugal, 14-17 November 2017*, eds. Nuno Nunes, Ian Oakley and Valentina Isi (New York: Springer, 2017), 89-103.
 - [2] Jean A. Baudot, *La machine à écrire, mise en marche et programmée par Jean A. Baudot* (Montréal: Les Éditions du jour, 1964).
 - [3] These are formal syntactical structures which have no need to refer to a particular language or domain.
 - [4] See the project’s website: <http://tracery.io/>.
 - [5] See, for example, James Ryan, Ethan Seither, Michael Mateas and Noah Wardrip-Fruin, “Expressionist: An Authoring Tool for In-Game Text Generation,” in *Interactive Storytelling Lecture Notes in Computer Science* 10045, eds. Frank Nack and Andrew S. Gordon (New York: Springer, 2016): 221-233.
 - [6] James R. Meehan, “Tale-Spin, An Interactive Program that Writes Stories,” in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence* 1 (1977): 91-98.
 - [7] Michael R. Young, Stephen G. Ware, Brad A. Cassell and Justus Robertson, “Plans and Planning in Narrative Generation: A Review of Plan-Based Approaches to the Generation of Story, Discourse and Interactivity in Narratives,” *Sprache und Datenverarbeitung, Special Issue on Formal and Computational Models of Narrative* 37, nos. 1-2 (January 2013): 41-64.
 - [8] James Ryan’s doctoral dissertation remains the best reference on this topic: James Ryan, “Curating Simulated Storyworlds” (PhD diss., UC Santa Cruz, 2018).
 - [9] See, for example, Boyang Li, Stephen Lee-Urban, George Johnston and Mark O. Riedl, “Story Generation with Crowdsourced Plot Graphs,” in *Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence* 27, no. 1 (2013): 598-604.
 - [10] *AI Dungeon* is one of the most persuasive examples of this approach. See the project’s website: <https://play.aidungeon.com/>.
 - [11] See Janelle Shane, “Cooking with Cthulhu,” *AI Weirdness* (blog), 19 March 2016, <https://www.aiweirdness.com/cooking-with-cthulhu-16-03-19/>.