

***** Proposals for amendments to the Study Regulations *****

* formerly R.O.I. (Internal Regulations, from the French *Règlement d'Ordre Intérieur*), today R.E.I.N.E.

Preliminary remarks

In accordance with Article 1 of this Regulation, this text is written using inclusive language: a language whose "form" (grammar, syntax, choice of terms) does not discriminate or make invisible any gender identity.

The various typographic forms of gender-inclusive writing will all be represented in order to discriminate against no-one:

- use of plural nouns and pronouns: students shouldn't be imposed an identity they don't feel comfortable with
- use of the singular they: a student shouldn't be imposed an identity they don't feel comfortable with
- alternate genders and pronouns: a student shouldn't be imposed an identity she doesn't feel comfortable with, or he didn't choose
- use of the feminine neuter: use of the feminine form systematically
- if you really don't want to escape binarity:
- use of the slash: he/she, s/he, her/him
- use of the dash: s-he
- use of the point: s.he
- use of the midpoint: s-he
- use of new terms invented for the purpose of following the requirements of Article 1

Article 1 : Inclusive writing and language

The use of gender and intersectional inclusive writing will now be mandatory for any written communication and report: reports, theses, reviews, minutes of general assembly, minutes of the students' council, the pedagogical council, administrative communications.

The use of inclusive writing will also be mandatory for any communication published on the social networks of the school.

Training will be given to all students and teachers, to develop the practice of this writing.

Training of oral adaptation of the inclusive writing will be created, and the Masters-degrees will be offered an advanced module to invent new "including" and inclusive language, to make it change continuously, and adapt to novelties.

The hegemony of the "objective", "impartial" and "neutral" point of view will be punished (see Article 19: BDSM / Whip).

Article 1 bi : Female neuter oral language

The use of the feminine neuter will now be mandatory for all oral courses and oral communications.

Article 1 bis : On the question of language in general

Mandatory reading *Non, le masculin ne l'emporte pas sur le féminin !* by Éliane Viennot

Learn with your heart the following vocabulary by *Reclaim The Night*

<https://reclaimthenightbruxelles.wordpress.com>

Article 2 : Concerning the library and its books

When the author identifies themselves as a man, cisgender, heterosexual and white, their books will be moved to the archives, to recall, on the one hand, that this is a point of view among others, on the other hand, that the latter is hegemonic. A warning page should be included in each book.

Strict quotas will be implemented regarding the selection of the books acquired and on display. Attention will be paid to the topics, the writing context and the gender of the authors

The library will have to offer on its shelves books with topics in the following proportions:

- 20% on gender issues,
- 20% on Queer questions,
- 20% on issues of feminism,
- 20% on issues of Afrofeminism ,
- 20% on issues of transfeminism,
- 20% on issues of cyborgfeminism,
- 20% on issues of xenofeminism,
- 20% on issues of intersectional feminism,
- 20% around issues of ecofeminism,
- 20% around issues of cosexuality,
- 20%, around LGBT issues ,
- 20% around questions LGBTQQ!2S-PAA + (to be updated regularly).

The list is not exhaustive.

Article 3 : Tuition

Tuition fees are levied by the school's subsidiary body. Its amount is indexed and varies by year and type of studies.

The tuition fee will be adjusted for each student according to a coefficient that will be assigned according to the following criteria which will determine the privilege rate:

- ◇ man
- ◇ straight
- ◇ cisgender
- ◇ white
- ◇ normalized body
- ◇ valid
- ◇ literate
- ◇ middle class and bourgeois class
- ◇ carnivorous
- ◇ human

Total = ... / 10

This coefficient is then translated into percentage (10/10 = 100%, 5/10 = 50%, etc.).

This percentage will be applied in two ways:

- to increase tuition and other expenses related to the school (coffee machine, photocopies, etc.)
- to decrease marks awarded during evaluations and juries

Example :

If you get 5/10:

- 50% of the price of your tuition will be asked in supplement.
- 50% of the marks of your jury will be deducted from your final grade.
- and so on,...

Article 4 : References and Courses

Article 34 bis. The management now requires that its teaching staff review its historical and artistic references, in order to prohibit, in all the theoretical courses, the mention of works of cisgender heterosexual white men. The school intends to broaden the references of students and professors.

The so-called "taboo" topics in that they are not voluntarily addressed in current courses will cease to be invisible. They will be given their real place in the cultural landscape. For example, pornography, which is an important part of the production of images and stories, will be reintegrated into appropriate courses.

The new topics will be:

- Theory of misogynistic communication
- Current Queer and Queer proto stories and news
- Support for orientation: crimson modulations
- Stories and Experiments Post-porn & Ecosex
- Dazzle Resume, Multiple Politics: Appearance Transformation Course
- Eat your make-up: cooking classes, how to reclaim our livelihoods
- Feral Woman: wrestling class, led by Queer people <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvqvEcS4OqA>
- Get me that! : trash makeup course inviting the European queer high places to manage the proposals.

The guidelines will be redesigned with new names, such as:

- Sexual performances and installation
- Vegan sculpture
- Fairy costumes from the school
- ...

Article 5 : Organisation of studies

The rhythm of the first and second cycles are to be adapted to the menstrual cycle.

Article Cis : Composition of juries

The juries are composed of at least five members, including five women. No academics. No artists.

The composition of juries will be implemented according to an inverted coefficient defined in Article 3 of this document.

In preparation, members of the non-gender, post-colonialism, intersectional, queer and situated feminist juries will have to spend at least two weeks locked in the library (and not in the archives).

Article 7 : Occupation of space and time

In order to prevent the common space from reproducing the same oppressive patterns as those of the world around us, several rules will be implemented concerning the occupation of space:

- the proportion of cis heterosexual white men should not exceed 30% for each spatial unit (hall, corridor, workshop, etc.). When this percentage is exceeded, one or more of them must leave the room to maintain a healthy mix.
- this rule also applies to speaking in mixed assemblies: the speaking time of cis heterosexual white men must not exceed 30% of the total time of the discussion.

Article 8 : Rules of Conduct for Public Events

To ensure that people who identify as heterosexual follow the same rules as others during public events, the following sign, which is taken from the *Queer Nation Manifesto*, should be posted at the entrance of the common area:

Rules of Conduct for Straight People:

1. Keep your displays of affection (kissing, handholding, embracing) to a minimum. Your sexuality is unwanted and offensive to many here.
2. If you must slow dance, be as inconspicuous as possible.
3. Do not gawk or stare at lesbians or gay men, especially bull dykes or drag queens. We are not your entertainment.
4. If you cannot comfortably deal with someone of the same sex making a pass at you, get out.
5. Do not flaunt your heterosexuality. Be discreet. Risk being mistaken for a lezzie or a homo.
6. If you feel these rules are unfair, go fight homophobia in straight clubs, or
7. Go f--- yourself.

Each will be required to observe these rules and will be held solely responsible for any violations. These rules will also be valid at open days and other major public events, and must be observed by school members and visitors.

Article 9 : Heels and/or hairy days

The heels and/or hairy days require the visible wearing of heels and/or body hair.

The graduation day is now becoming a "heels and/or hairy" day in order to increase the school's appeal.

The shoes and socks left in the dressing-room will be treated and taken care of during the day by foot fetishists (a public call for interest will be issued for the event).

Article 10 : Toilets

The toilets of the school will now be renamed for alternative uses:

- Vegan and cannibal toilets
- Toilet for maniacs and fairies of the house
- Toilets for men who are having their period and women who pee standing

Article 10 bi

Drawings of sex organs in the washroom (and elsewhere) must show a diversity of representation, colours and forms.

Article 10 bis

The school will provide free dispensers of tampons, towels and mooncups, stand-to-pee devices, condoms of all kinds and gels, in all toilets (including vegans).

This list can be updated at any time during the toilet council.

Article 11 : Cuddle Room

A Cuddle Room will be available throughout the year at the school.

Mattresses and cushions will be installed in this space so that users can pamper themselves.

Consent is required and sexual intercourse is allowed in this area provided that you move into the Back Room.

Article 12 : Respect relating to the material

There are regular Queer and bondage parties, where anyone entering the building has to be tied to furniture, walls, doors in the school and spend the night there.

(see: Furniture Porn Project - Antoine Heraly (Fun Queer), Greenham Common's ecofeminist human chains,...)

Article 13 : Medical examination

The school rejects the imposition of a compulsory medical examination and offers instead a session of self-health and gyno-andro-genital self-observation,, for the re-appropriation of knowledge of our bodies.

INFORMATION SESSION

General Assembly
about Study Regulations
20 April 2018 - 10 a.m.
lecture hall @ erg

erg

87, rue du Page
1050 Bruxelles
www.erg.be

Contribution

for special issue of MAI:
Feminism and Visual
Culture on *Feminist
Pedagogies*

Our lives and ways of living seem to be more and more regulated, evaluated, framed by contracts and regulations. Reviewing these texts from a feminist point of view from inside institutions — such as schools — can be interpreted as an act of feminist pedagogy.

How to hack Study Regulations

Caroline Dath

– Intro

Most of the time, when you arrive in a community, you inherit the rules of that community. They have been written over time and are often a reflection of an era, sometimes long past, and yet they govern our daily lives. You just have to accept, submit and sign up to them, and certainly not call them into question. This is particularly the case in schools. Study Regulations are a common good and give rules for the community but they are often a place where the patriarchy holds sway.

– Context

First, a bit of context: This performative action took place in a Higher School of the Arts named E.R.G. (École de Recherche Graphique, Brussels), but we prefer to write it as *erg* because of the reference to the unit of measure of energy (from ancient Greek *εργον*). It's so much more fun not to be able to pronounce it easily.

The *erg's* pedagogical project is to forge a series of practical and discursive tools that can be freely appropriated by the students, whatever the direction of their artistic practices in the future. This project generates teaching processes that prioritise experimentation and institutes research at its core by considering its methodologies, fields of investigation, discourses and economies as well as its capacity to nourish trans-artistic dialogues. Indeed, in a classroom situation, some of the teachers and students try to practice horizontal pedagogy, self-evaluation, group authority instead of authority resting solely with the teacher, breaking the hierarchy and working with the economy of the project, as a collective pedagogical practice. Especially in these days of turbulence (political, environmental, social, etc.), we invite students to experiment with new patterns of setting up their artistic projects engaged in a critical approach towards the art scene and socially connected with their environment.

As a Higher School of the Arts, the *erg* seems to be a very open-minded school with a range of great people who promote freedom and equality. Despite that, like anywhere else you can find sexist, racist, homophobic and transphobic behaviours due to systemic discrimination. It is, after all, a subset of society. Students are mainly white and privileged people, only a few of them need to apply for scholarships to be able to afford to attend. Teachers are also mainly white and privileged, as in so many art schools; and the Masters Degree, the highest qualification in our school is led by six straight white men in their fifties.

*Teaching to Transgress is the title of a book of bell hooks written in 1994 : *Teaching to Transgress : Education as the Practice of Freedom*.

In 2016, Laurence Rassel, a well-known cyberfeminist, became the headmistress of the school. This crucial moment in the history of *erg* allowed several people to come out as feminist, gender concerned or queer people. A research group named *Teaching To Transgress**¹ (referring to bell hooks' book) came out from these coming outs, including mine. As a teacher in the Graphic Design section for 10 years, I was more and more concerned about the lack of spaces for students to develop art and projects dealing with these issues without finding allies among the pedagogical team.

—— Laurence Rassel also put on the table post-colonial issues with the seminar 2017 'After Empire'² and began to change the face of the school a little by hiring black people, and not only for the Non-European Art course but also for Theory of Communication, for example. When one bears in mind the whiteness of the hundred or so teachers in the pedagogical team, it's a good starting point let's say. ——

Each year, an intellectual seminar takes place at the *erg*. In January 2018, the decision was taken to create a special one *No Commons Without Commoning* with an original set up. It wouldn't be one speaker after another for two days, but instead just empty tables set up in the largest room of the school.

The seminar aims to connect to stories and experiences of collective forms, practices of words, modes of making images, objects and spaces, all of which deal with the *common*.

Laurence asked our group *Teaching To Transgress** to just be seated around one of the ten tables. We were told not to prepare anything. We just had to be seated together around the table and then we would see what happens.

A joint group, composed of around ten people —students and teachers— took their places around the table and we began to discuss what makes a framework for a community. We began to work on the Study Regulations, with a feminist, post-colonial and queer perspective. We created a new text collectively (the PDF document in attachment.), a work of fabulation, with a certain sense of humour, where power structures were overturned. Even after the seminar we continued to work on it in secret from time to time over the next two months, until the text was ready to send to all the members of the school. We have a new title for the Study Regulations, formerly R.O.I. from the French *Règlement d'Ordre Intérieur* — (K.I.N.G. in English), it was turned into R.E.I.N.E. in French (Q.U.E.E.N. in English). The typographical aspect of the document plays also with the codes of an authentic administrative document (numbering the articles, typographic choices, columns, etc.) to sow trouble.

With the agreement of our headmistress, as a performative act, this document was sent officially to all our school staff and students in the guise of the real new Study Regulations. A debate in the form of a General Assembly was planned to discuss each point on Friday 20 April 2018.

1 *Teaching To Transgress** is an initiative which started at the *erg* — École de Recherche Graphique — Higher Art School in Brussels in 2017 to create spaces for teachers and students to exchange experiences around questions of genders, post-colonialism, intersectional, queer and situated feminisms in the pedagogy of art. *Teaching To Transgress** is an attempt to fill a gap in art schools, where people who are trying to address these topics, often in an isolated way, in the margins of official programs, doing their best to integrate these important and urgent questions. Several encounters have taken place from 2017 to 2019, gathering people coming from different countries, different schools and active in different artistic and theoretical fields. From October 2019 to June 2021, *Teaching To Transgress** will be extended to an international Erasmus Programm as a post-Master Degree during two years for fellows from *erg* Brussels (Belgium), I.S.B.A. Besançon (France) and Valand Academy, University of Gothenburg (Sweden) : *Teaching To Transgress The Toolbox*.

– Ideological criticism

We received several ideological attacks. One of the main complaints was *'feminism is an ideology - you can't bring it into school, you have to stay neutral'*. By re-writing the Study Regulations, we wanted to demonstrate how its norms and the rules are deeply ideological; it's called patriarchy. Some of our colleagues realised at this stage how deeply the patriarchy was anchored in our supposedly open-minded school and how each posture and behaviour is ideological. As if it were possible for them not to be! During these debates we tried as much as possible to go beyond the gender divide, as a transfeminist, to get out of the binary, and to try to take the point of view of a transgender person. This often gives new perspectives to the debate.

Another comment we received was *'you are calling for more freedom and open minds but you want to install rules and frameworks'*. These persons, mainly white men in their fifties, didn't seem to notice that they are imposing rules all the time. For once, we played with their own system to show up the inequalities they provoke. When inequalities affected them, they reacted immediately because they were afraid to lose privileges.

Of course, we didn't want to impose new rules, but instead our aim was to discuss them collectively. That's why a General Assembly took place, one month after the text was received, to bring together all the people from school who wanted to participate (from scholars, to teachers, to administrative staff). At that time, we were told that we were acting *'as a commando'*, but again the people who spoke about us in these terms did not come to express their point of view at the meeting.

– Rethinking the art school³

I will not go through all the articles one by one, but I can describe some of them and the real (re)actions that took place at school after this General Assembly which gathered around 50 people from erg who took part in the discussion.

First, some of our colleagues really thought it was the new official text for the Study Regulations - they were totally taken in by the fiction. Presumably they had not read the text all the way to the end, or they would have seen the surrealist humour which steadily increases through to Article 12. A special irony is that even a teacher from the *Speculative Fabulation* Master Degree was fooled, and now this performative action is given as an example in his own course, probably the best compliment we received.

Article 12

There are regular Queer and bondage parties, where anyone entering the building has to be tied to furniture, walls, doors in the school and spend the night there.

They probably stop their reading at Article 1 about inclusive writing, a hot topic in 2017 in the French speaking community. Regarding this article, we received this email:

'As a linguist and grammarian, I obviously regret not being able to be with you. I could have presented the neutral and objective point of view of both grammar and linguistics on this subject.'

This person, who of course wouldn't be present at the assembly (a frequent behaviour among critics), didn't neglect to mention his qualification first - maybe to discredit other points of view- and to mention that linguistics is neutral and objective,

3 This title refers to the talk by Laurence Rassel. Thursday, 1 March 2018, @HeK, House for Electronic Arts in Basel. <https://vimeo.com/269943587>

even though Éliane Viennot's book *Non, le masculin ne l'emporte pas sur le féminin!*⁴ shows that masculinising the French language was a political decision during Richelieu's period. Who talks about neutrality ? Ready for the whip ?

The hegemony of the 'objective', 'impartial' and 'neutral' point of view will be punished (see [Article 19](#): BDSM / Whip).

Inclusive writing suggests formulations that are more representative than those where the masculine has been imposed as a neutral, generic form, part of a history of the patriarchal and exclusive language that we inherit from the 17th century, combined with a very genuinely French language.

– Gender Fluid – Bye Bye Binary

This debate around inclusive writing appears as a field of research to explore, particularly in the field of typography to imagine other possibilities for non-binary representation inside a set of typographic glyphs. The one week workshop 'Gender Fluid – Bye Bye Binary'⁵ took place six months later, we asked and received some money from the government to be able to organise it in good conditions. We gathered 25 typedesigners and activists to design together what could be the future of our own writing and language; even going as far as creating new suffixes to form a new lexical unit and also new words, including the French translation of 'circlusion' (the active form of the act of penetration), invented by Bini Adamczak⁶, and which we strive to disseminate as much as possible as a word of empowerment.

This workshop proposed to explore new graphical and typographic forms, including the work of new glyphs (letters, ligatures, midpoints, linking or symbiosis elements). This research will continue in 2020 as part of the Teaching To Transgress The Toolbox program and we plan to write an article about these experiments, *How typography could be a place of resistance to power*. Stay tuned!

– Building a pirate library

During the General Assembly, a lot of ideas came up from the group. Article 2, contains the idea of building a physical and digital pirate library for sharing activist texts. This idea sprouted in the head of a very active little group with students and teachers who built a physical and digital space, as well as a homemade book scanner.

Article 2 : Concerning the library and its books

When the author identifies themselves as a man, cisgender, heterosexual and white, their books will be moved to the archives, to recall, on the one hand, that this is a point of view among others, on the other hand, that the latter is hegemonic.

4 Viennot, Éliane (2014), *Non, le masculin ne l'emporte pas sur le féminin!*, Donnemarie-Dontilly: Éditions iXe.

5 www.genderfluid.space

6 Adamczak, Bini (2016), 'Come On. About a New Word Allowing to Speak Differently about Sex', *Mask Magazine*, www.maskmagazine.com/the-mommy-issue/sex/circlusion (last accessed 16 August 2019).

– Pay for your privileges

Article 3 was inspired by an experiment led by a pop-up lesbian bar in Brussels *Mothers and Daughters*. They decided to display two price lists for drinks in their bar⁷: one if you self-identify as a privileged person with a higher price and a second price, cheaper, if you self-identify as not privileged. This experiment is very relevant, because when you are in front of this double price list, you have an introspective reflection about your own level of privilege in society. Ok, I am a girl, but I am white, I have a job and am in good health so I can pay the higher price to adjust the total amount for the community.

– Digital Non Binary

In Article 4 we wrote a long utopian list of new queer artistic courses that seem meaningful to us. It was not on the list, but in 2018, I co-created the *Digital Non Binary* class with Stéphanie Vilayphiou, a course that questions how the majorities (nationalities, origins, sex, age, social class) who design our digital objects (tools, interfaces, algorithms) influence the minorities in their way of producing, creating, living on a daily basis. We were quite proud that this program was included in the official syllabus of the student. For once, it was not left in the margins.

– At least 50% 50%

In Article Cis we called for the total exclusion of men from the composition of juries. After our performative action, the educational management board has set up a system of equal election between men and women for use when electing its own representative members. Incredible, but it was not the case until now!

Article Cis : Composition of juries

The juries are composed of at least five members, including five women. No academics. No artists.

Impressed by our common reading of *The Tyranny Of Structurelessness* by Jo Freeman⁸ and our shared experiences of leading debates sometimes with difficulties when attempting to hear all the voices equally, our group *Teaching To Transgress** tried to establish some guidelines inspired by shared experiences and creative tools. Our shared document about this subject is still under construction⁹ and all contributions are welcome. This initiative is related to Article 7 & 8 about *Occupation of space and time*.

Article 7 : Occupation of space and time

In order to prevent the common space from reproducing the same oppressive patterns as those of the world around us, several rules will be implemented concerning the occupation of space:

- **the proportion of cis heterosexual white men should not exceed 30% for each spatial unit (hall, corridor, workshop, etc.). When this percentage is exceeded, one or more of them must leave the room to maintain a healthy mix.**
- **this rule also applies to speaking in mixed assemblies: the speaking time of cis heterosexual white men must not exceed 30% of the total time of the discussion.**

⁷ www.mothersanddaughters.be/menu-food
There is a documented difference in wages, education, support and economic and social freedoms for many of us due to our ethnicity, gender and/or sexuality. At Mothers & Daughters we use a pricing system that tries to address this gap.

⁸ Freeman, Jo aka Joreen (1972), *The Tyranny Of Structurelessness*, Vol. 2, No. 1 of *The Second Wave*. www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm

⁹ <https://annuel.framapad.org/p/teachingtotransgress-discussions>

– Vegan or cannibal

The signage of the toilets was solved by one of our students, Justine Sarlat, who decided from her own initiative to replace existing pictograms by drawing a urinal and a toilet bowl to make it non-gendered and more comfortable for transgender people. It seems so evident to draw what you will find behind the door instead of trying to represent people with symbol of patriarchy, as a skirt.

Article 10 : Toilets

The toilets of the school will now be renamed for alternative uses:

- Vegan and cannibal toilets
- Toilet for maniacs and fairies of the house
- Toilets for men who are having their period and women who pee standing

– Dealing with authorities

In Higher Schools, it seems archaic but a medical examination is mandatory to be able to receive your diploma. For people in a process of transition, this could be very intrusive, especially if the doctor, imposed by the authorities, is not aware of these questions. That's why our administrative staff asked the authorities in charge whether our school could choose a specific doctor concerned by these issues as an ally. This question is still pending...

Article 13 : Medical examination

The school rejects the imposition of a compulsory medical examination and offers instead a session of self-health and gyno-andro-genital self-observation, for the re-appropriation of knowledge of our bodies.

– Times & Spaces

Writing a joint¹⁰ article about Feminist Pedagogies, for the French-speaking publication *Culture & Démocratie*¹¹, one of our conclusions was that giving times and spaces is a feminist practice of the pedagogy.

Since the arrival of Laurence Rassel at erg's direction, there is a whole series of times and spaces that have been set up quite rhizomatically and are connected to each other on these issues of feminism and pedagogy.

This project about the Study Regulations emerged literally from this physical space of the table Laurence gave to the *Teaching To Transgress** group during the seminar *No Commons Without Commoning*. We did not know what we were going to do, which was very scary, but it was also clearly a space offered. From this first space, many others, cited above, have resulted from this collective writing. Feminist pedagogies tend to make babies!

Maybe the strongest aspect about this action is that it could be repeated in other contexts, in other places where commons are shared, from sports clubs to primary schools to workplaces. I can only encourage you to replicate this action in the communities in which you participate. And from now, when you arrive in a new community, don't hesitate to reconsider the regulation with all your team –even before playing basketball–, from my point of view, it's a feminist act.

— August 2019.

10 with Alexia de Visscher, Xavier Gorgol, Bernadette Kluyskens, Laurence Rassel, Carolina Serra and Stéphanie Vilayphiou.

11 www.cultureetdemocratie.be/productions/view/culture-la-part-des-femmes

Bibliography

hooks, bell (1994), *Teaching to Transgress : Education as the Practice of Freedom*, Oxford: Routledge.

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Freeman, Jo aka Joreen (1972), *The Tyranny Of Structurelessness*, Vol. 2, No. 1 of *The Second Wave*, www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm (last accessed 16 August 2019).

Biography

Caroline Dath has been a graphic designer at Kidnap Your Designer and a teacher at *erg* since 2009, in the graphic design section. She also teaches the module 'Digital Non Binary' with Stéphanie Vilayphiou (OSP). Since 2017, with Loraine Furter and Xavier Gorgol, she is part of the research group *Teaching To Transgress** which is an experiment on gender and queer issues, postcolonialism and intersectional feminism, within the context of the pedagogy and practice of the arts.

She implements a reflexive approach on pedagogical practices that she experiments by initiating workshops with others (Summer School Art Passing Trans*, Trans//Border, Gender Fluid Bye Bye Binary,...), by facilitating workshops with others or by writing from time to time.

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