

## Notes on The Windownesian (Chapter 1-8)

*The Windownesian* is a project I started back in July 2021 as a Summer writing hobby alongside my part-time job at a convenience store, and completed in mid-September 2021. Why is it called *The Windownesian*? Back when I was still an undergraduate (can't believe that was just 4 months ago), I chatted with my roommate Erik about all the nasty behaviours of his girlfriend Elisha's roommate Veronica. Her distasteful habits include keeping the windows shut, not showering for days and so on, so forth. I suggested the name "windownesian", and that's how the title was coined. At that time I thought, writing stories about nasty roommates would be fun. Besides, I have learnt a lot during this four years of university as an English Major and wish that I have the chance to write about what I have discovered. It was since then, I have always been dreaming about writing stories on various issues, one topic per chapter. And our windownesian acts as a bystander in all these issues. I kinda failed in this aspect because Bobby as an alien allergic to oxygen cannot go anywhere. Instead, our protagonist Jonathan ended up completing what I intended.

Now the question should be, what or who inspired *The Windownesian*? On one hiking trip with my godfather, I introduced the concept of Technological Singularity to him, and argued about the impacts of it. We talked about how the world would be drastically changing with such technology, why would people fear it, and how powerful individuals would use it. The content of the discussion ended up forming Chapter 7. And that's how *The Windownesian* started, on the hiking trails in Tai Tong Mountain. And yes, I started with chapter 7, for whatever reason, with no plan of writing preceding chapters. And I set the date as 2027, for whatever reason. Perhaps that is because we have just seen a technological breakthrough of inserting brain chips in

monkeys and pigs in 2020. And I am convinced that such a technology can be applied to humans soon, if ethics is not a concern. Shortly after I drafted chapter 7, I had another idea. Things have been happening in Shue Yan University English Department. My roommate is closely monitoring it, so I get information too. On a certain date, I felt that writing up all I have heard as a story would be great. And hence chapter 8. Meanwhile, I have been wanting to write about the social movement in Hong Kong since it started. I have written and translated one before in 2019, it is called “On Both Sides of War”, where I first created the characters Athena, Zedekiah and Rona. When I was writing chapter 7, a chapter centred on social movement was in mind when I mentioned that Rona was shot by a live bullet. These three chapters, alongside chapter 6 are in my mind the highlights of the whole book. Later I went back and wrote chapter 1 and 2 to provide a character arc for Alex and Bobby. Then I wrote chapter 3 inspired by a show of Ultraman I happen to know. Chapter 6 is a surprise since I basically had no idea what to write other than feminism, but it turned out great with many sudden thoughts including using a plot device I created back when I wrote “On Both Sides of War”. In that sense, chapter 4 is the last chapter I wrote when I got inspired by a tree.

Speaking of getting inspired, *The Windownesian* is entirely made up, with a lot of people knowingly and unknowingly providing ideas for this book. First there is my godfather whose conversation started it all. Then there is my roommate Erik whom I talk to a lot. He is also a reliable information source for chapter 8. Lecturers of The Department of English surely broaden my horizon to many ideas. Most specifically Professor KY Wong whose appearance in this work should have been obvious. If you still can't identify him, you possibly aren't an English Major graduated in or before 2021. Then there is Dr Jason Leung who disguises as Professor Mike Resnick in this book. By the way Mike Resnick is my most favourite writer among all. His

works “For I have Touched the Sky”, “The Elephants of Neptune”, “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” and “Homecoming” are my most enjoyed writings. Many doctors who taught me taught me well enough to write this book. Several significant parts of *The Windownesian* are directly taken from or inspired by their lecture notes. The christians in the book are made up, yet there IS a James Fellowship. The Bible Camp in Chapter 6 is real, there has been such camp of which I have been to, with the exact same content reading *Lamentations*. In that chapter, Jason and Shara are real persons and their interaction in that camp is real according to what I remember. Meander’s great-grand aunt’s experience in the same chapter is a very similar version of my own grandmother’s. A respectable great woman whose parents and husband favour sons over her. The one who has six daughters. The one against all odds and my grandfather’s objection, managed to get all her daughters to universities. The tree in the house 筱廬 mentioned in chapter 4 does exist next to my church. That image alongside migration inspired an entire chapter when I had no idea what to write after chapter 6. In reality, that house is yellowish and the tree actually reaches out her branches from the second floor. Someone migrating to Cambodia was actually heard from my colleague in the school I work in. Oh by the way, Athena is not just a name. She is named after the Greek god and war and wisdom. And her character orientation? The wisest one. Her family is full of gods too. The mother is Juno, Roman name for Hera. She calls her husband “Jup” which can be Jupiter, Roman name for Zeus. Her older brother is Apollo the god of Solar and her younger brother is Bacchus, Greek version of Dionysus, god of wine and pleasure. See, I don’t create out of nothing.

Is there anything I particularly like about these stories? I actually am not sure whether they shall be called this way. Because when writing them, at least for chapter 7, I intended to focus on ideas rather than the plot. The much more accurate way I would describe *The*

*Windownesian*, is a creative expression of academic discussions. And they are! Meander's interviews, Professor Wong's and Professor Resnick's lectures, the discussions among Christians, and various dialogues, it is academic! I particularly like the opening of each chapter, with several lines listing out years and events. I have no idea what it is called, I call it a "timeline of preceding events", also a style of *The Windownesian*. I find myself quite fond of it after using it once for my university assignment "The Search for the Sapient Sabre". I like it. Not only does it lay out what the chapter will be talking about to prepare readers for what's to come, it also shows history. From these few simple short italicised lines, I see what we humans have accomplished or done, and that leads to a following event.

One feature consistent throughout this book is that, it is written in present tense. I challenge you, take three novels around you, and check what the tenses are. Stories are mostly written in past tense. I asked the lecturers in a Summer exchange program about tense usage in creative writings and they have no exact answer. In my understanding, the use of past tense is mainly because it is a story. It is written and already happened even for tales set in the future. Another less known reason is that, past tense can sometimes signify hypothetical situations. Therefore when using type two hypothetical conditional sentences, we use past tense because we know that we are just making up things. The same goes to writing stories. This book, however, is written in present tense. First, it is because I want the reading experience to be more immediate, to be more simultaneous. Second and the biggest reason, is because they are very real to me. Yes, the characters Jonathan, Meander, Athena, Zedekiah, Bobby, Alex, they are not real, I made them up. Yes, I made up stories and none of the incidents actually happened in real life. Yet they are very real to me, or they will be a real issue. Fully operating AI, alien from another world, The Technological Singularity, these can be true a few years later depending on our progress,

particularly The Technological Singularity. Migration, social movement, feminism, the downfall of a university, these are issues that are very related to me, of which there are actual cases of people having conflicts in it. Yes, what I portray may or may not be close to the real picture. But these are genuine issues I feel many are facing and deserve a chapter. This is also a reflection generally on the world I am living in after four years of being an undergraduate, years of being a Christians, and two decades of being a human. You may think that I am crazy. But hey, you have read the whole book from start to finish without angrily throwing it away, I presume.

Speaking of grammar, it is one feature of this book too. Notice that Alex as an AI speaks in SVO most of the time, and cannot change to the question format like we do, not until he receives his brain implant. This is his character, a robot who cannot do human language. And we can always see Bobby correcting him. This is also a reason why I will never translate this book, because the distinctive grammatical feature can never be translated, alongside several concepts better expressed in English. The grammar of this book is sometimes incorrect according to Google. There are multiple blue and red underlines. I recognise the computer has made many suggestion, but given that those are some stupid-ass suggestions, I've elected to ignore them. Okay, Nick Fury memes aside, I chose to ignore, because I am human, that is how I speak and what sounds smooth to me.

Will there be a chapter 9 and onwards? I don't know. I haven't write about the gay people, ethnicity problem, point of views from animals (oh wait I did, it is called "Feed, Pat and Heaven"). I have thought about them, but there's not yet enough inspiration to write. Besides, I might be too busy to write, having to work in a school. But if someday somewhere you hear me

saying “That deserves a chapter,” that may mean a new chapter. Writing, to me, shall remain as a hobby. Those that I enjoy doing, and with no deadline.

And oh, one more thing. If you insist on nagging me about my grammar, you are, the Windownesian.