

**Aim of the course**



```
graph LR; A[Aim of the course] --- B[Stimulate]; A --- C[Motivate]; A --- D[Give Insight]; A --- E[To be a primary resource for you in the future];
```


Stimulate

Motivate

Give Insight

To be a primary resource for you in the future

Who can get benefit from  
this course



```
graph LR; A[Who can get benefit from this course] --- B[Writers]; A --- C[Filmmakers]; A --- D[Actors]; A --- E[Presenters]; A --- F[Creatives]; A --- G[Thinkers]; A --- H[Communicators]; A --- I[Er...anyone!]
```

Writers

Filmmakers

Actors

Presenters

Creatives

Thinkers

Communicators

Er...anyone!

# Method of the course

```
graph LR; A[Method of the course] --- B[Who am I as a Storyteller]; A --- C[Course style]; A --- D[Take notes!]; A --- E[Reviews and groups]; B --- F[Doc film director]; B --- G["(Principally) Fiction Narrator"]; B --- H[Founder of Storyoptic]; B --- I["Story consultant for filmmakers, distributors and others"]; D --- J[Doodle!]
```

Who am I as a Storyteller

Doc film director

(Principally) Fiction Narrator

Founder of Storyoptic

Story consultant for filmmakers, distributors and others

Course style

Take notes!

Doodle!

Reviews and groups



What kind of storyteller are you?

film

writer

business

oral

A Plotter..or a Dunker/Explorer?  
Both?!

## What is a story?

```
graph LR; A[What is a story?] --- B[All Stories are Psychological]; A --- C[All Stories are Emotional]; A --- D[All Stories have characters]; A --- E[All stories have a Hero]; A --- F[All Stories have a Beginning, Middle and End]; A --- G[It has a Message, a Purpose]; A --- H[We emerge the other end feeling different (if the story is any good)]; A --- I[People come to Stories not to be entertained, to escape - but to CONNECT with themselves, with their own TRUTH: this is the MIRROR]; A --- J[A Story is something where you NEED to get to the end - to know what happened]; A --- K["OED: 'An account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment'"];
```

All Stories are Psychological

All Stories are Emotional

All Stories have characters

All stories have a Hero

All Stories have a Beginning, Middle and End

It has a Message, a Purpose

We emerge the other end feeling different (if the story is any good)

People come to Stories not to be entertained, to escape - but to **CONNECT** with themselves, with their own **TRUTH**: this is the **MIRROR**

A Story is something where you **NEED** to get to the end - to know what happened

OED: "An account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment"

The difference between  
story and theme



Why a story is not words  
(or shots)



Why (excellent) Stories  
don't obey formulae and  
rules

How does a story work?

What marks out an excellent story from the humdrum?

What is your favourite story..and WHY?

# How to start a story?

```
graph LR; A[How to start a story?] --- B[Dunk Them In It]; A --- C[Then they need to work their way out]; A --- D[Tabula Rasa]; A --- E["What If..."]; B --- B1[The Dunking MUST feel real, and matter to the Story Recipient]; B --- B2[Then, dog leg]; E --- E1[What if W, who suffered X, decides to do Y, or achieve Z]; E --- E2[Your story Hypothesis]; E --- E3[Make it SPECIFIC - not vague];
```

Dunk Them In It

The Dunking MUST feel real, and matter to the Story Recipient

Then, dog leg

Then they need to work their way out

Tabula Rasa

“What If...”

What if W, who suffered X, decides to do Y, or achieve Z

Your story Hypothesis

Make it SPECIFIC - not vague



# How to finish a story?

```
graph LR; A[How to finish a story?] --- B[...and why sometimes you need to start at the end]; A --- C[There's always a sacrifice to attain the ultimate goal]; A --- D[Not all stories have a happy ending]; A --- E[Whether happy or sad - there are NO endings. Time does not exist]; B --- F[What is your Lodestar?]; F --- G[An image from Blake]; F --- H[A catchphrase]; F --- I[A song]; F --- J[An image]; F --- K[Think...Rosebud]; C --- L[Victory is always bittersweet]; C --- M[The only sacrifice that matters is an Internal one - that leads to CHANGE]; D --- N[But they MUST have a satisfying ending!];
```

...and why sometimes you need to start at the end

What is your Lodestar?

An image from Blake

A catchphrase

A song

An image

Think...Rosebud

There's always a sacrifice to attain the ultimate goal

Victory is always bittersweet

The only sacrifice that matters is an Internal one - that leads to CHANGE

Not all stories have a happy ending

But they MUST have a satisfying ending!

Whether happy or sad - there are NO endings. Time does not exist

## The importance of characters (and how to create them)

```
graph LR; A["The importance of characters (and how to create them)"] --- B["Character arcs"]; A --- C["What you NEED to know about your characters (and what you DON'T)"]; A --- D["Giving each character a voice/personality"]; A --- E["Loops - we get stuck in them. They are funny, sad, traumatic, and replete with The Human Condition"]; A --- F["People are COMPLEX and CONTRADICTIONARY - don't make them a pastiche of a real person; otherwise your characters will feel Inauthentic"]; D --- G["Using Reference as an aid"]
```

Character arcs

What you **NEED** to know about your characters (and what you **DON'T**)

Giving each character a voice/personality

Using Reference as an aid

Loops - we get stuck in them. They are funny, sad, traumatic, and replete with The Human Condition

People are **COMPLEX** and **CONTRADICTIONARY** - don't make them a pastiche of a real person; otherwise your characters will feel Inauthentic

**Your Inescapable Hero**  
(hint: it's probably you)

Stories are ALWAYS about Heroes

All Great Heroes are FLAWED and  
CONFLICTED

Otherwise they are FLAT

Passions

Fears

Skeletons in Cupboard

Magnets

Antimagnets

Heroes have Beliefs - many of  
which are Flawed. This is why the  
Hero is flawed!

These Beliefs stem from past Experiences. In particular, a Defining Experience. A Moment in Time (even though the overall experience may have been years).

Great Heros are VULNERABLE

Emotional Wounds

How people PROCESS Pain

Feelings of LACK OF WORTH

The Nature of OBSESSION

Leads to risk taking

Heros have masks (to cover their  
Vulnerability)

Hop on the Ride with the Hero -  
SHARE it

As the Author/Creator - YOU share his/her ride

The closer you identify with your Hero, even if he/she is a monster, the sharper your portrait will be

The closer your Reader/Viewer/Listener identifies with the Hero, the better your Story will deliver

The BIG WHY (on this Quest)

ALWAYS ultimately relates to Fixing Themselves (or trying to, and failing...but a Glorious Failure)



**The Hero's Journey**



```
graph LR; A[The Hero's Journey] --- B[The Classic Hollywood Structure]
```

The Classic Hollywood Structure



# The Quest

```
graph LR; A[The Quest] --- B[What is the consequence if this Quest is NOT fulfilled?]; A --- C[Must Have DRAMATIC stakes]; A --- D[A Quest is Escape From Pain for the Main Character/Hero (even if it's framed otherwise)]; C --- E[External]; C --- F[Internal];
```

A mind map diagram with a central node 'The Quest' in a red rounded rectangle. Three lines branch out to the right. The top line connects to the text 'What is the consequence if this Quest is NOT fulfilled?'. The middle line connects to 'Must Have DRAMATIC stakes', which then branches into two sub-nodes: 'External' and 'Internal'. The bottom line connects to 'A Quest is Escape From Pain for the Main Character/Hero (even if it's framed otherwise)'.

What is the consequence if this Quest is NOT fulfilled?

Must Have DRAMATIC stakes

External

Internal

A Quest is Escape From Pain for the Main Character/Hero (even if it's framed otherwise)

# The Four Riders of the Story

## THE FOUR

An unmet need that creates a deep longing or sense of urgency - Inner Motivation

The Wounding Event, The Deep Dark Secret, The Traumatic Event, The Inciting Incident, etc - the point is that it creates a bloody MONSTER lurking in the psyche that WILL NOT GO AWAY

A tangible goal that represents the fulfilment of this need - Outer Motivation

People or forces that oppose the Hero's Quest - Outer Conflict

**Fears, flaws and misbeliefs that block personal growth and the Hero's self-worth - Inner Conflict**

This is the key 'Fil rouge' for your Story

If one of these four is missing, your Story will suffer

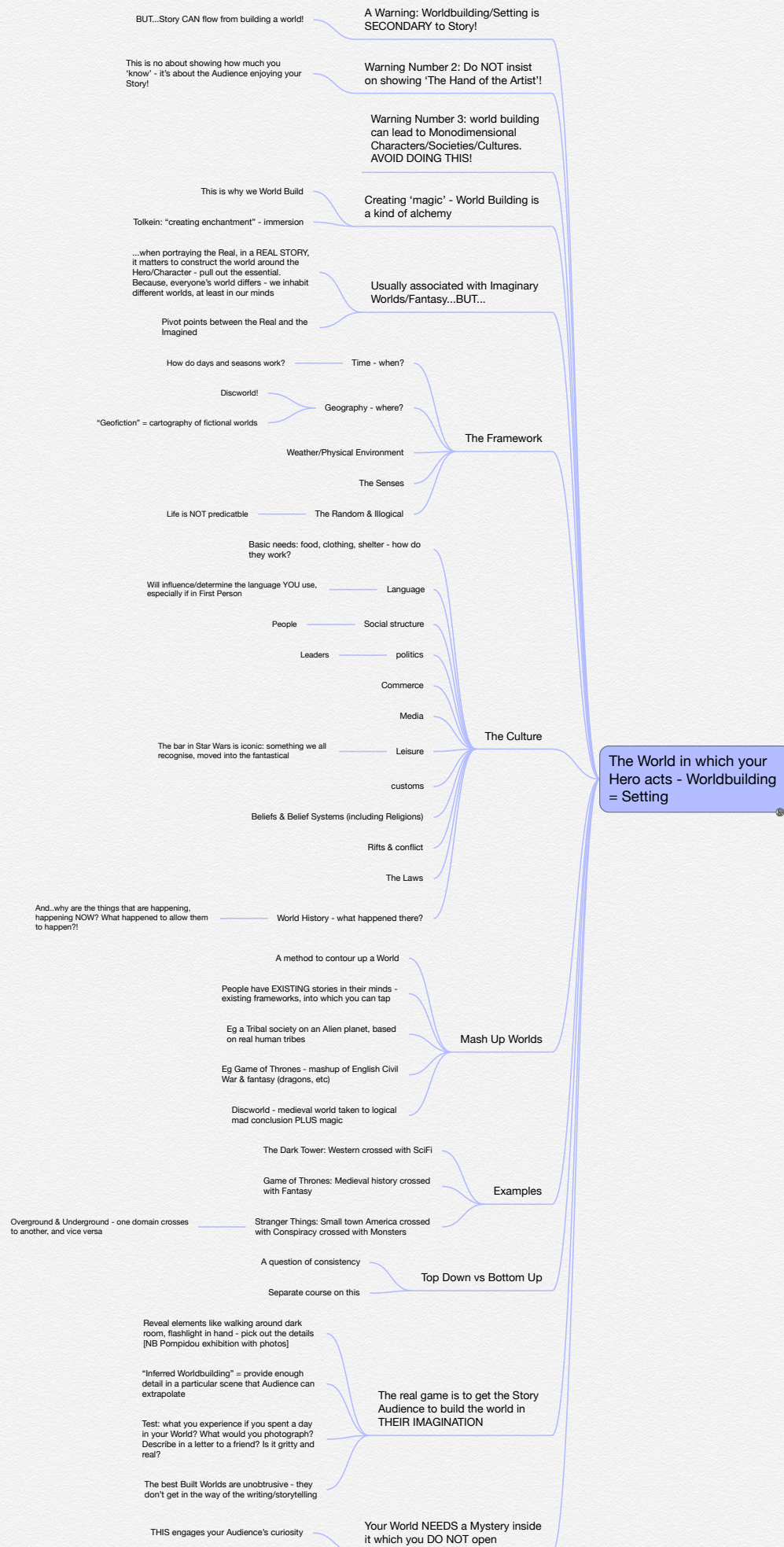
Key Question: What is  
your Story ABOUT?



In ONE sentence. Not able to express it that way? Means you haven't UNDERSTOOD the Story you are telling

The 'log line' aka Hollywood; 'Save the Cat'









BUT...Story CAN flow from building a world!

A Warning: Worldbuilding/Setting is  
**SECONDARY** to Story!



This is no about showing how much you  
'know' - it's about the Audience enjoying your  
Story!

Warning Number 2: Do NOT insist  
on showing 'The Hand of the Artist'!



Warning Number 3: world building  
can lead to Monodimensional  
Characters/Societies/Cultures.  
**AVOID DOING THIS!**

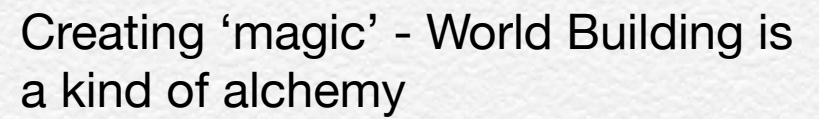
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This is why we World Build

Tolkein: “creating enchantment” - immersion

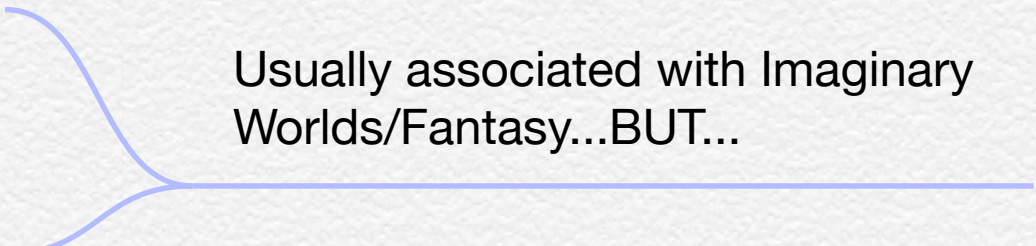
Creating ‘magic’ - World Building is  
a kind of alchemy



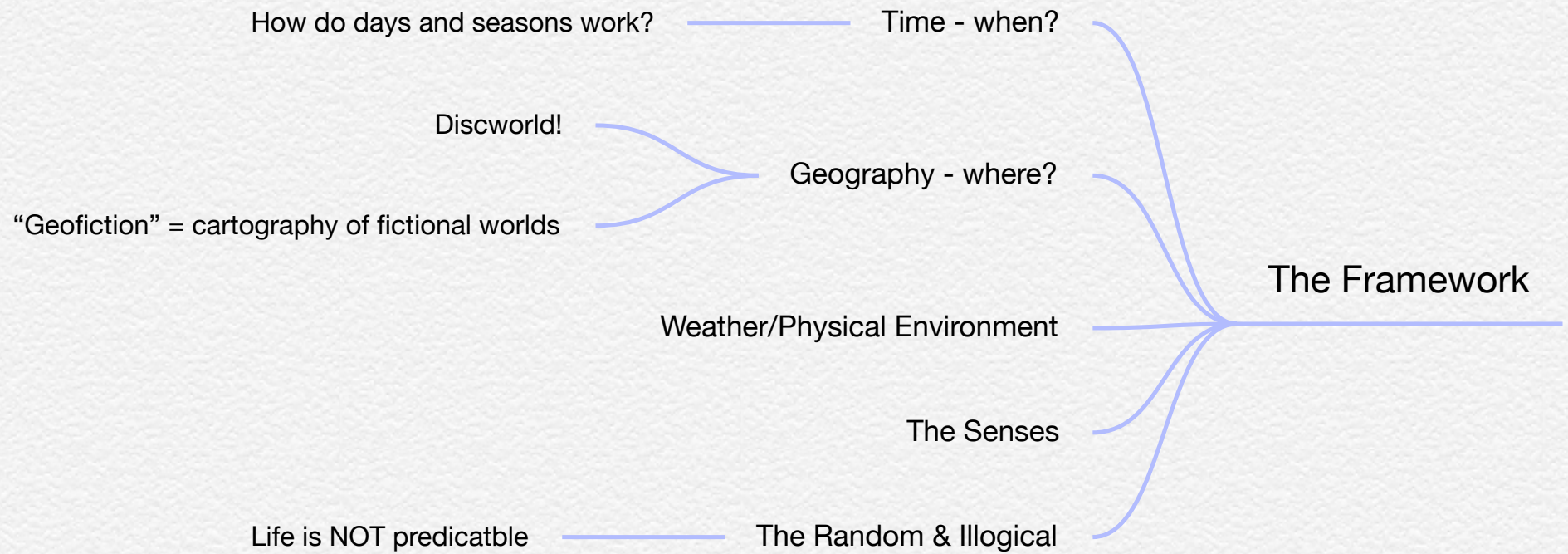


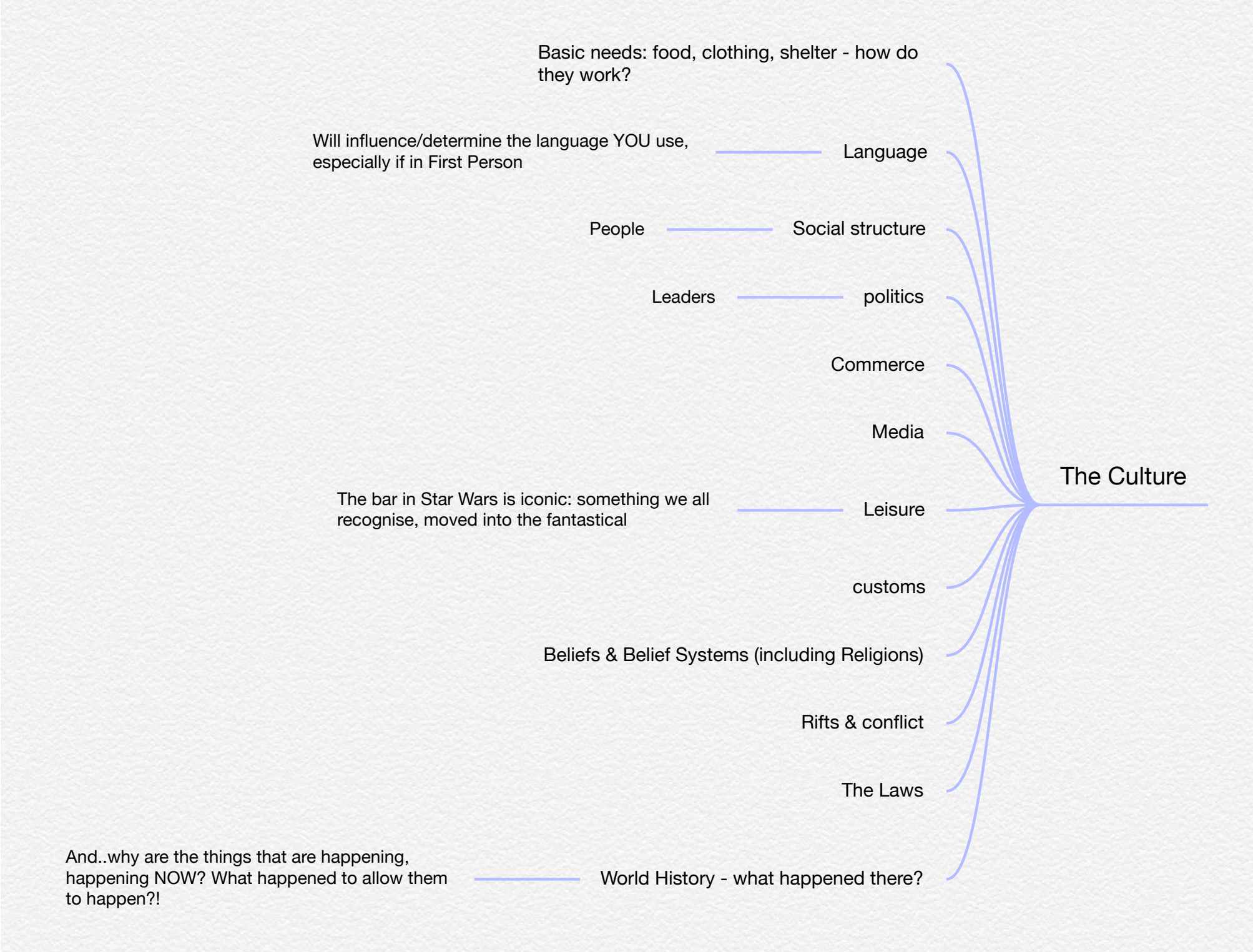
...when portraying the Real, in a REAL STORY,  
it matters to construct the world around the  
Hero/Character - pull out the essential.  
Because, everyone's world differs - we inhabit  
different worlds, at least in our minds

Pivot points between the Real and the  
Imagined

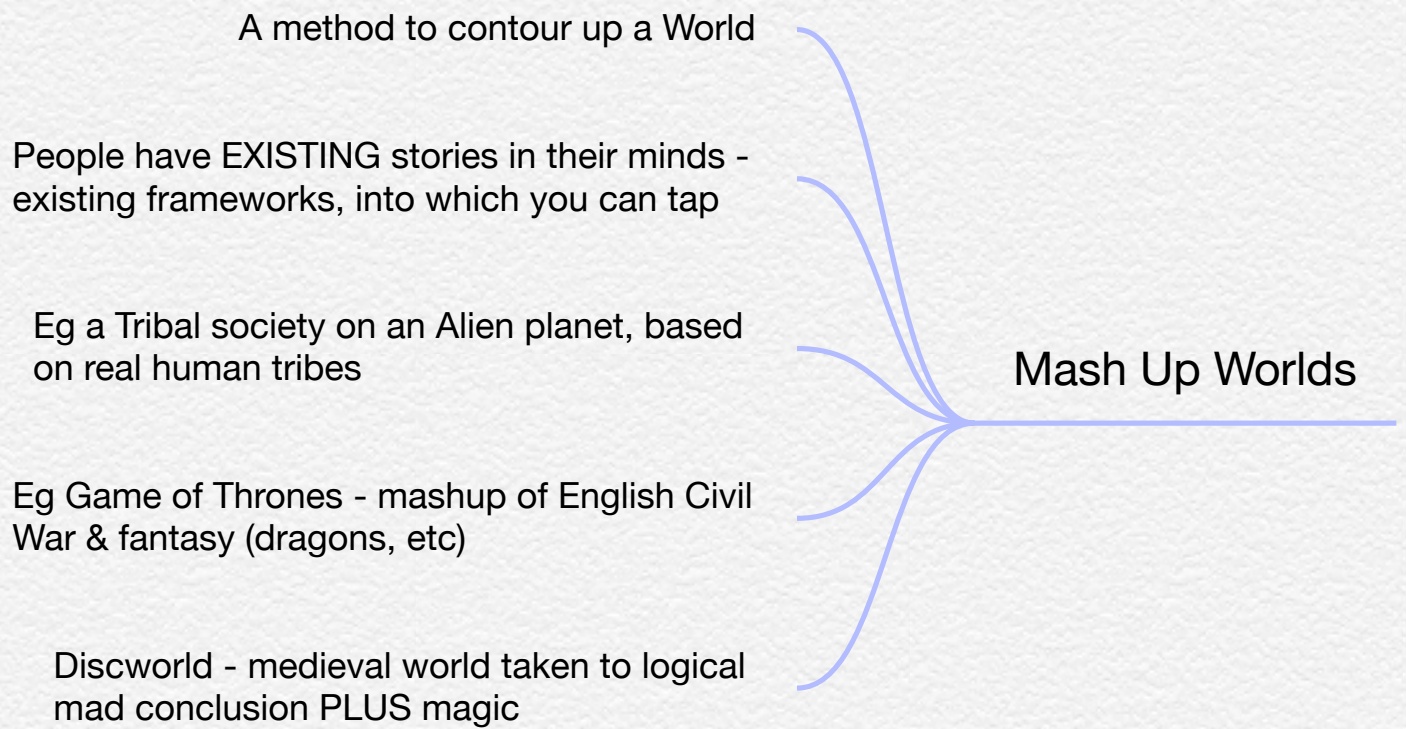


Usually associated with Imaginary  
Worlds/Fantasy...BUT...









Overground & Underground - one domain crosses to another, and vice versa

The Dark Tower: Western crossed with SciFi

Game of Thrones: Medieval history crossed with Fantasy

Stranger Things: Small town America crossed with Conspiracy crossed with Monsters

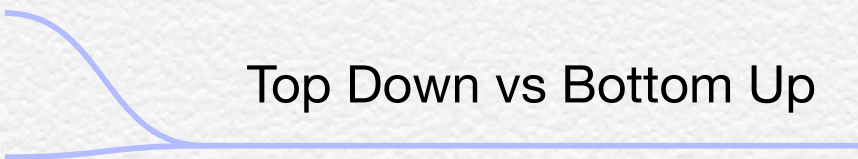
Examples



A question of consistency

Separate course on this

Top Down vs Bottom Up



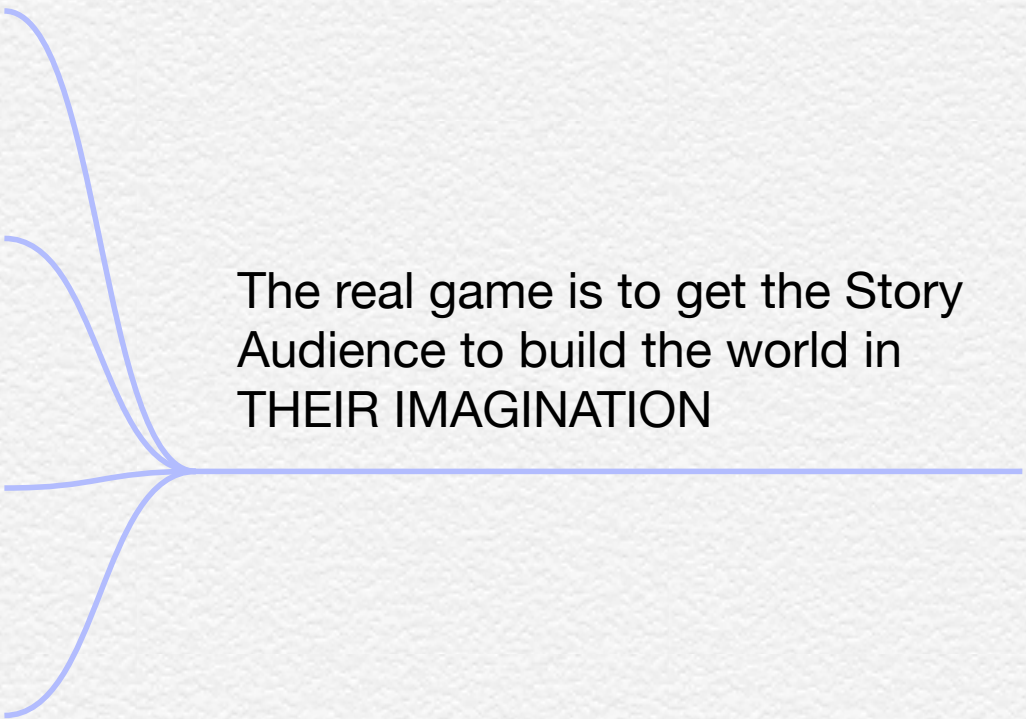


Reveal elements like walking around dark room, flashlight in hand - pick out the details  
[NB Pompidou exhibition with photos]

“Inferred Worldbuilding” = provide enough detail in a particular scene that Audience can extrapolate

Test: what you experience if you spent a day in your World? What would you photograph? Describe in a letter to a friend? Is it gritty and real?


The best Built Worlds are unobtrusive - they don't get in the way of the writing/storytelling



The real game is to get the Story Audience to build the world in  
**THEIR IMAGINATION**

THIS engages your Audience's curiosity

Your World NEEDS a Mystery inside  
it which you DO NOT open

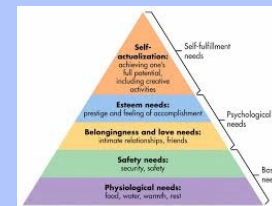


‘Deficiency needs’ = bottom 4,  
without which individual feels tense  
and anxious

‘Metamotivation’ = motivation of  
people who strive for betterment

Use in Characters

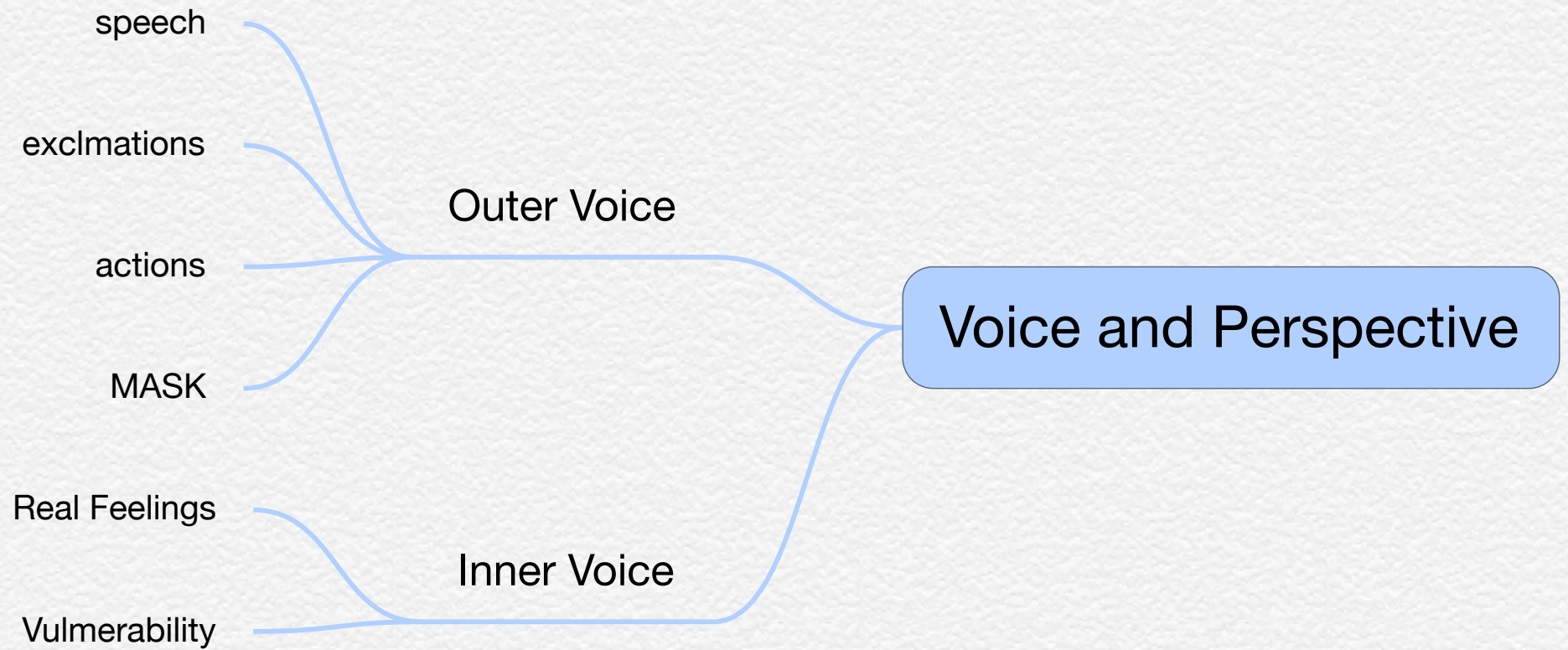
Use in Plots

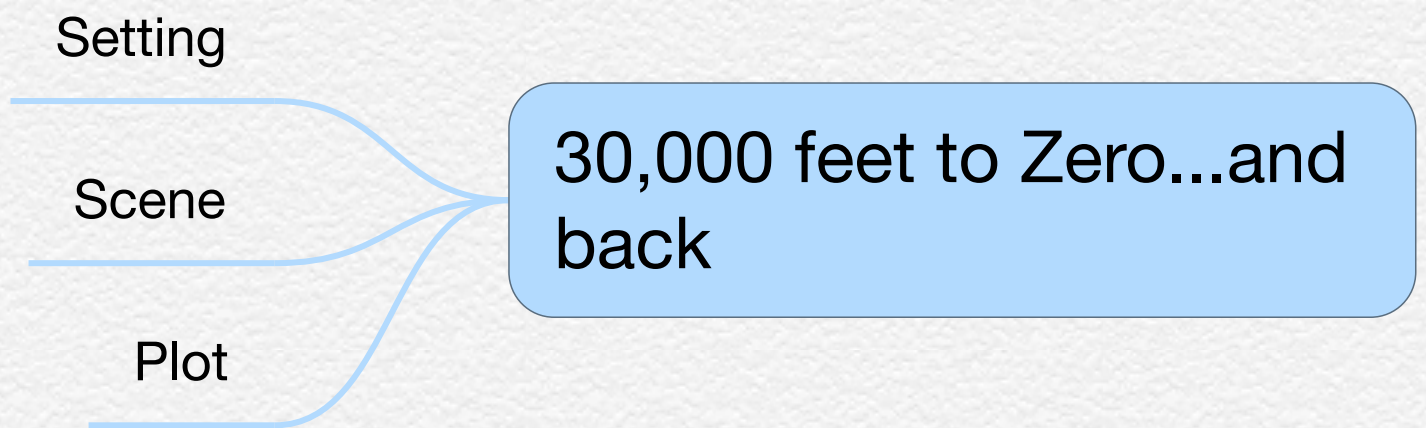


## Mazlow ‘Hierarchy of Needs’ and How You Can Use It









*/ The Story Course*

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Emotional-Wound-Thesaurus-Writers-Psychological/dp/0989772594/ref=pd\\_sim\\_14\\_2?\\_encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=YG5YQ2ZEPD7B8SV571VT](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Emotional-Wound-Thesaurus-Writers-Psychological/dp/0989772594/ref=pd_sim_14_2?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=YG5YQ2ZEPD7B8SV571VT)

*/ The Story Course / PLOT = 'characters in motion' / Comparison of Plot Structures / Core examples*

*/ The Story Course / The Devil is in the Detail*

Iain M Banks great skills. I periodically re-read *Against A Dark Background* not just for the story (which is as good a reason as any to read it) but for the incredible observational writing of planets like Golter and Miykenns: the detailed and creepy description of the Sea Keep, the intricate description of the world-spanning ecosystems of the impossible-to-pronounce Entraxrln plant. He makes it sound as if he's been to these places and just set his senses to record minutiae like the colour of the wood a bar table is made of, or the smell of the melange of perfumes one of the characters uses, or the sound a plastic folder makes slapping against an android's thigh.

*/ The Story Course*

<https://www.google.fr/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.simplypsychology.org%2Fmaslow-pyramid.jpg&imgrefurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.simplypsychology.org%2Fmaslow.html&docid=QfRGk3lYD817sM&tbnid=FHoX0imBZJNPuM%3A&vet=10ahUKEwj1jJuF8u3ZAhWfUBQKH3OCdQQMwj6ASgBMAE...i&w=1344&h=1000&client=safari&bih=839&biw=1440&q=maslow&ved=0ahUKEwj1jJuF8u3ZAhWfUBQKH3OCdQQMwj6ASgBMAE&iact=mr&uact=8>

*/ The Story Course*

<https://io9.gizmodo.com/7-deadly-sins-of-worldbuilding-998817537>