

Story for performance #930
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Source: Reuters, 'Iraqi soldier shot dead US servicemen', *The Age online*, 06/01/08.

Tags: [incarceration](#), [literature](#)

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Spurred by the notion of extending their knowledge and understanding of imagi-thought, the characters searched out the physical edges of Under-Space, travelling to the four corners of their faded landscape. Though satisfying in itself, the characters only discovered that something unseen hovered around or near them, somehow framing them, which they sensed as a type of imprisonment. Each character's growing sense of imprisonment manifested as an acknowledgement of the presence of another space, as a kind of gap between their sentences and movements. Some thought that this made them aware that their speech was somehow stilted like it was meant to be read rather than spoken. Others had the distinct sensation that the more they knew the physically flatter they became.

Their long searches over—what came to be known as the Great Imagi-thought Expeditions—the characters converged and agreed that the journey had left them with a certain consensual disquietude. All the characters agreed that even though they had investigated their vast world, this disquietude required further examination. They toiled heavily on the nature of the soul, existence and indeed the intersection of these subjects, pushing imagi-thought to the extremes of logic and back again. The consensus that they reached was that there must be something 'outside' their own reality, something they came to term, the Oversphere. A few thought this was simply a white space, but an agreement on the colour could not be reached.

Once the characters had created a name for this previously unknown space their reality began to change. The fleeting ideas of frames around them became more knowable and they began to question the validity of their own words. Were they really saying them? Or had they been specifically chosen for them to say? Increasingly they rejected speaking the first words that came to mind, subsequently choosing disparate words and even deciding that the meanings of some words were no longer applicable to the words that they spoke. The frontiers of imagi-thought blossomed exponentially—The Great Imagi-thought Expansion was taking place. The more they spoke in this manner the more they saw a change in the environment around them. Colours blurred. The edges of objects frayed. The characters experienced themselves fluidly moving from one place to another through time, not as separate poses but as continuous beings. In their minds, curtains fell, layers of reality peeled back as the characters looked forward and around things, experiencing several dimensions of objects. The excitement of the characters was palpable. Their numbers were growing all the time, and as a collective consciousness they knew that to break into the Oversphere, which they could feel was closer than ever, they had to project their words through imagi-thought's time and space.

The Reader watched as the words began to pull themselves off the comic book's rough worn pages, viscous black liquid leeches forming, electrostatic charges crawling and whipping over the elastic surfaces. Was this some kind of ficto-accident?

The letters searched the humid air antennae-like, seeking gaps in the Oversphere to infiltrate, to live. Finding none they slithered towards each other forming a nexus that coalesced as a black circle, the centre of which sparkled with pinpoints of light before swirling like a whirlpool, becoming an opening, a para-hole from the Under-Space to the Oversphere. Lacuna yawning open, the characters self-consciously reached out towards the horrified features of the Reader in the Oversphere.

Screaming, the Reader dropped the flimsy volume from his sticky hands.

Realities were fusing. Like the flicking pages of a book the Reader felt his being dragged towards the para-hole's chaotic ficto-gravitational swirls. Frightening and tantalisingly inviting at the same time, the Reader empathised with the characters' wish for a release from their simple two-dimensional existence, noting his own uneasy existence, which he escaped from periodically when immersing himself in their world.

Ficto-gravity tugged harder...the Reader considered the exchange, them for him.

One of the characters, an older man with spiked grey hair wearing a skin-tight green suit penetrated his hand into the Oversphere's reality, a flat limp thing that couldn't exist, the colours of the hand immediately bled into each other. Still the character continued forward, unknowingly. The Reader grabbed the character's hand, the smooth, soft limb squishing limply in his grip. The character grimaced and fell back, their hands sliding apart. The Reader wanted them to come through, but the horror. He watched as the other characters examined the crumpled hand. The para-hole began to collapse upon itself. The Reader heard one character say to another: 'It's not yet time. Next time. Next time we'll be successful. Our collective imagi-thoughts will be condensed further. Stronger. We will make it to the Oversphere, one day.'

How many times had they tried? How many people had unlocked their cryogenic stasis by reading the faded yellow pages of this ragged, dog-eared comic book?

The last thing the Reader saw before the para-hole closed completely was the satisfied faces of the collected characters staring at him.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Ross Murray.