

# Augmented Machine Translation Enabled by GPT4:

## Performance Evaluation on Human-Machine Teaming Approaches

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### Abstract

Translation has been modeled as a multiple-phase process where pre-editing analyses guide meaning transfer and interlingual restructure. Present-day machine translation (MT) tools provide no means for source text analyses. Generative AI with Large language modeling (LLM), equipped with prompt engineering and fine-tuning capabilities, can enable augmented MT solutions by explicitly including AI or human generated analyses/instruction, and/or human-generated reference translation as pre-editing or interactive inputs. Using an English-to-Chinese translation piece that had been carefully studied during a translator slam event, Four types of translation outputs on 20 text segments were evaluated: human-generated translation, Google Translate MT, instruction-augmented MT using GPT4-LLM, and Human-Machine-Teaming (HMT)-augmented translation based on both human reference translation and instruction using GPT4-LLM. While human translation had the best performance, both augmented MT approaches performed better than un-augmented MT. The HMT-augmented MT performed better than instruction-augmented MT because it combined the guidance and knowledge provided by both

human reference translation and style instruction. However, since it is unrealistic to generate sentence-by-sentence human translation as MT input, better approaches to HMT-augmented MT need to be invented. The evaluation showed that generative AI with LLM can enable new MT workflow facilitating pre-editing analyses and interactive restructuring and achieving better performance.

### 1 Introduction

The core of machine translation (MT) is the automation of the full translation process (Hutchins 2009). The degree of MT automation can vary: fully automatic machine translation, human-aided machine translation, or machine-aided human translation (Sager 1994). Nearly all MT systems currently in use rely on the assistance of human operators. Human involvement can come in three different modes: (1) pre-editing the source text, (2) interaction between system and human operator, or (3) post-editing. The dominant MT work model at present days is to use human translators as post-editors (correction/revision) on MT output. Dominant MT tools (e.g., Google Translate, Bing Microsoft Translator, or DeepL) convert text from a source language into an equivalent passage in the target language, but they do not provide any pre-editing analysis results as

guiding instructions or any interaction mechanisms between the human and MT system.

Translation has been modeled as a multiple-phase process where pre-editing analyses guide meaning transfer and interlingual restructure. There are many differing theories that conceptualize different phases of the translation process.

Nida’s translation theory of dynamic equivalence (Nida 1964, 1974, 2006; Kim 2015) divides the translation process into three phases (illustrated in Figure 1): (1) analysis (based on the source language characteristics), (2) transfer (between the source and target language), and (3) restructuring (based on the target language characteristics). The analysis phase reflects the understanding and interpretation that can be used to guide the transfer and restructuring phases.

Present-day MT tools do not provide explicit

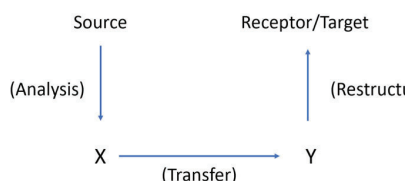


Figure 1: Nida’s translation model with multiple phases: analysis, transfer, and restructuring.

means for users to analyze the source language, which would then be used to guide the transferring and restructuring process.

Another translation process model (Pym, 2011) also has three phases: (1) recognize the problem (how to say X in target language?), (2) generate many alternative solutions, (3) select one solution (out of many).

Present-day MT tools do not provide explicit alternative solutions and let users select a solution; nor do they provide explanations as to why the final output it provides is more accurate than the alternatives.

(Austermuhl, 2001) pointed out that a transfer architecture for MT included three separate stages: (1) analysis, (2) transfer, (3) synthesis/generation. In addition, it stated that pre-editing and interaction with the MT system before and during the MT process could be strategies to improve MT quality outside of post-editing.

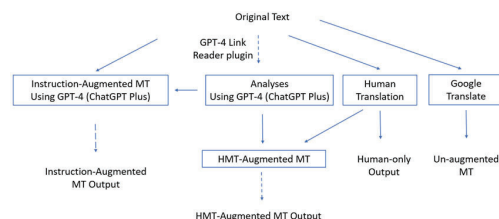


Figure 2: The story was translated by a human translator, Google Translate (un-augmented MT), instruction-augmented, and HMT-augmented MT using LLM-GPT4.

Present-day MT tools do not provide mechanisms for pre-editing and human-machine interaction during the MT process.

In (Carl, 2011), the human translation process was studied using eye tracking. In the end, three phases were identified: (1) preparation phase during which initial document reading was performed and translation strategy was chosen. (2) drafting phase. (3) revision phase. Furthermore, different translators were found to have different styles: large versus small context planners (who read more or less content before they made strategy choices or started to translate), backtracker versus non-backtrackers (who did or did not frequently go back to revise), and various orientation styles: systematic, skimming, or head start without orientation.

Present-day MT tools do not provide mechanisms to support these translation style variations.

Following the post-editing only work model, since human experts cannot provide pre-editing and interactive guidance to MT system through the many mechanisms described above, achieving high-quality translations is challenging and time-consuming, leading to inaccurate or unnatural results.

The solution to the aforementioned limiting factors could come in the form of Generative Large Language Models (LLM) such as GPT4, which could be the game changer that enables all or most mechanisms described above (Table 1).

GPT models can achieve very competitive high-quality translations for high resource languages, even though they were not originally designed to be used as MT tools. One of the unique features of GPT models is the prompting engineering (Zhou, 2022), where precise and context-specific instructions or queries—known as prompts—can

be crafted to elicit desired responses from language models. Prompts guide the model and help shape its behavior and output. In this study, we focus on evaluating the approach to provide pre-editing or interactive guidance to MT using prompting engineering.

Unlike “traditional” MT tools, GPT4 based augmented MT can fully reflect pre-editing preparation, recognition, analyses, and human-machine interaction by explicitly including AI and human-generated text analyses and human-generated guidance or translation in the prompt.

Phases of Translation process models	Generative AI LLM features supporting pre-editing and human-machine interaction
Pre-editing → Interaction → Post-editing (Sager 1994) Analysis → Transfer → Restructure (Nida 1964, 1974, 2006; Kim 2015)	- Prompting engineering (e.g. OpenAI/GPT or Google Bard) can represent analysis results, transfer guidelines/strategies using instructions and few-shot examples.
Recognition → Generation → Selection (Pym 2011)	- Multiple drafts that are distinct from each other can be generated to support multi-version selection and HMT (e.g., Google BARD alternative drafts feature).
Analysis → Transfer → Synthesis/Generation (Austermuhl, 2001)	- LLM-based Chatbox (e.g. OpenAI/BARD) enables human-machine interaction.
Preparation → Drafting → Revision (Carl 2011)	- Larger and complex context can be addressed through LLM finetuning.
	- ...

Table 1: Phases in different translation process models can be implemented through pre-editing and interactive components that can be enabled by various features of generative AI LLMs.

Using an English-to-Chinese translation piece that had been carefully analyzed and discussed during a translator slam event, a Human-generated Chinese translation of an English story (<https://www.thecut.com/2020/03/book-excerpt-samantha-irbys-wow-no-thank-you.html>) was compared with multiple Chinese translations generated using GPT4 and related plugin software (illustrated in Figure ) following the steps below:

- 1) Writing styles of the original English story were analyzed using GPT4 (ChatGPT Plus) and a GPT4 plugin (ChatGPT Plus Link Reader).
- 2) The story was translated from English to Chinese with the additional writing style instructions (derived in step 1) using GPT4 (ChatGPT Plus). This MT version was named as the instruction-augmented MT.
- 3) The story was translated from English to Chinese using both human-generated translation (as a reference translation) and using the additional writing style instructions (derived in step 1) in the prompt text using GPT4 (ChatGPT Plus). This MT version was named as the human-machine teaming (HMT) augmented MT.

Using 20 translation instances, two human translators assessed the pros and cons of the two augmented MT approaches using GPT4 over human-generated translation and an un-augmented MT using Google Translate.

## 2 Human Translation Slam Event

Translation slam events have been organized by the American Translators Associations (ATA) to have two translators go head-to-head to display their works on the same translation source text so the two translators have an opportunity to glimpse each other’s work on the same content. Audiences can also hear their discussions and comments during the event.

In June 2023, an English-to-Chinese Translation Slam was hosted by ATA’s Chinese Language Division (CLD) featuring two professional translators: Sijin Xian and Arthur Wan. They competed to translate a challenging English text into Chinese and compare notes on their techniques and choices during the discussion session (see the original English text and a compilation of the two translations in the appendix). Their comments on each other’s work were recorded to discover how each translator analyzes, translates, and revises their translations. Based on the detailed discussion during the slam event, Sijin’s translation focused

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**User (Prompt)**  
Please read the story at <https://www.thecut.com/2020/03/book-excerpt-samantha-irbys-wow-no-thank-you.html> and make a list of the author's writing style.

**ChatGPT (Used Link Reader)**  
Based on the excerpt from Samantha Irby's essay collection "Wow, No Thank You.", here are some characteristics of her writing style:

1. Humorous and Self-deprecating: Irby often uses humor and self-deprecation to engage her readers. She makes fun of herself and her situations, which adds a light-hearted tone.
2. Conversational Tone: Her writing style is very conversational, feeling personal and relatable.
3. **Vivid Descriptions:** Irby uses vivid and detailed descriptions to paint a clear picture of her experiences. This helps to immerse the reader in her stories.
4. **Casual Language and Slang:** She uses casual language, slang, and colloquialisms, which contributes to the conversational and informal tone of her writing.
5. Honesty and Authenticity: Irby's writing is characterized by its honesty and authenticity. She doesn't shy away from discussing personal and sometimes uncomfortable topics.
6. Anecdotes: She uses anecdotes to illustrate points and make writing more relatable.
7. **Exaggeration for Effect:** Irby often uses exaggeration to emphasize her points.
8. Direct Address: She frequently addresses the reader directly, which helps to establish a connection between her and the reader.
9. Use of Rhetorical Questions: Irby often uses rhetorical questions to engage the reader and encourage them to think more deeply about the topics she's discussing.
10. Pop Culture References: She incorporates pop culture references into her writing, which can make her work feel more current and relatable to a wide audience.

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Table 2: writing style analysis report generated by GPT4 Link Reader plug-in. The bolded entries are styles that were identified by both humans and GPT4 Link Reader plug-in.

<b>The prompt for instruction-augmented MT</b>	<b>The prompt for HMT-augmented MT</b>
Translate the following sentences to Chinese reflecting the following writing styles (if applicable): humorous, self-deprecating, conversational tone, vivid description, casual language and slang, honesty and authenticity, use of anecdotes, exaggeration for effect, direct address, use of rhetorical questions, and pop culture reference.	Revise the following Chinese translation reflecting the following writing styles (if applicable): humorous and self-deprecating, conversational tone, vivid description, casual language and slang, honesty and authenticity,
Original English: ...	Original English: ...
The full translation to Chinese is: ... (GPT4 output)	Chinese translation (by the human translator) is: ...
	The Revised Chinese translation is: ... (GPT4 output)

Table 3: Prompts for instruction-augmented and HMT-augmented MT using GPT4.

more on style transfer between languages while Arthur's translation focused more on word selection. We selected Sijin's version to represent human translation because the augmented MTs also orient towards style transfer through instruction and human inputs.

### 3 Writing style analysis by human experts and GPT4

During the translation slam event, the two human translators discussed the writing style of the English writer and their approaches to reflect related styles in their Chinese translations. In addition, ChatGPT plus's Link Reader plugin

was used in the prompt text to generate a style analysis report for the original English story.

### 3.1 Writing styles recognized by human experts

During the slam event, the two human translators recognized the following writing style elements in the English version of the original story:

- (1) Confessional writing style: more focus on shocking or even irritating the reader instead of presenting the facts objectively.
- (2) Informal colloquialisms, not afraid of using dirty words to express emotion.
- (3) Well-selected specific subtle details that trigger sympathetic responses from readers.
- (4) Reflective of the unique personality of the author (e.g., focus and amplify on small details).
- (5) The author also had worked as a professional narrator before; therefore, the conversational style is unique: with fast paced talking firing off phrases like a “machine gun”.
- (6) ...

### 3.2 Writing styles recognized by GPT4

ChatGPT Plus’ Link Reader plugin was used to generate a style analysis report on the story (Table 2). It can be seen that the styles detected by LLM-GPT4 included many entries that were detected by human translators as well: casual language and slang versus informal colloquialisms, vivid description versus unique effects achieved by well-selected subtle words/phrases, exaggeration for effect versus confessional writing style. The GPT4-generated report also includes several other writing styles that were not mentioned by human translators.

## 4 Comparison of Human Translation, Google Translate MT, Instruction-Augmented MT and HMT-Augmented MT

The purpose of this section is to compare translation results generated by:

- (1) MT by Google Translate.
- (2) a human translator.

(3) instruction-augmented MT using LLM-GPT4 prompt with style instruction.

(4) HMT-augmented MT using LLM-GPT4 prompts with style instruction and human-generated reference translation.

The discussion by the two human professional translators during the translation slam event indicated that while one of them focused more on style transfer between languages, the other focused more on word choice. The translation produced by the translator who had focused more on style transfer is chosen to represent human translation as described in (2) and to serve as the human-generated reference translation as described in (4).

### 4.1 Prompts for augmented MT using GPT4

Table 3 lists the two prompts for augmented MT.

### 4.2 Evaluator qualifications and guidelines

Two evaluators were selected to evaluate the four versions of translation. Both evaluators are American Translators Association (ATA) certified translators who are native Chinese speakers, have 15-20 years of experience, hold translation degrees, and have worked on a wide variety of text types in the language pair. Detailed qualifications of the two evaluators can be found at <http://www.wutrans.com/> and [www.y17.us](http://www.y17.us).

The evaluators were instructed to rate translation output using a 5-point Likert scale score: very satisfied (2), somewhat satisfied (1), neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (0), somewhat dissatisfied (-1), and very dissatisfied (-2).

The evaluators were encouraged to provide the reasons for the ratings they gave. Figure shows the rating scores given by the two evaluators using color scales. Human translation had the best performance based on evaluations. Conversely, GPT4 augmented translations using either style instruction or human input in the prompt performed better than MT without augmentation using Google

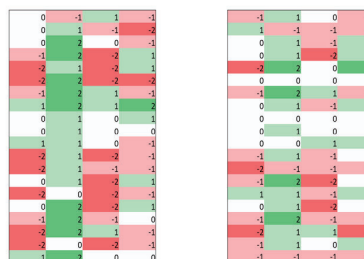


Figure 3: Color scaled rating scores by the two evaluators (4 columns are for Google Translate, human, instruction-augmented and HMT-augmented MT).

Translate. HMT-augmented MT performed better than instruction -augmented MT because it combined the guidance and knowledge provided by both human reference translation and style instruction.

Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7 show the ratings and the summarized reasons provided by the evaluators.

Table 4 shows the ratings and summarized reasons towards MT (Google Translate) results for all 20 instances. The main criticism was that MT did a lot direct (literal) translation, which led to mistranslation and awkwardness in the target language result.

Table shows the ratings and summarized reasons towards human translator results for all 20 instances. The main compliment was that the human translator uses more free translations to focus on conveying intended tone and meaning in target language.

Table shows the ratings and summarized reasons towards instruction-augmented MT (using LLM-GPT4) results for all 20 instances. The main criticism is on mistranslation and unnatural expressions.

Table shows the ratings and summarized reasons towards HMT-augmented MT (using LLM-GPT4) results for all 20 instances. The main criticism is still on mistranslation and unnatural expressions, but HMT-augmented MT demonstrates better performance than instruction -augmented MT because it has human-generated reference translation as an input. Therefore, in some instances, satisfactory free translations were generated.

Instances	Evaluators' ratings and reasons
1	(-1) direct translation does not sound natural to native ears. (0) N/A
2	(1) direct translation maintains the meaning. (0) N/A
3	(1) direct translation lacks intended tone the author aimed to convey. (0) N/A
4	(0) direct translation maintains the meaning (-1) N/A
5	(-2) incorrect translation (-2) wrong translation
6	(0) N/A (-2) wrong translation
7	(-1) direct translation lacks the intended tone in the original (-1) wrong target word selected
8 - 11	(0) N/A (1) N/A
12	(-1) incorrect translation; does not flow well (-2) Some words are mistranslated
13	(-2) incorrect translation (-2) incorrect translation
14	(-1) incorrect translation (0) N/A
15	(1) N/A (-2) wrong translation
16	(0) N/A (0) N/A
17	(-1) incorrect translation (-1) misleading
18	(-2) incorrect translation (-2) mistranslation
19	(-1) does not sound natural (-2) mistranslate multiple words
20	(-1) direct translation but incorrect meaning (1) N/A

Table 4: Ratings and summarized reasons on MT results (N/A: no reason provided).

Instances	Evaluators' ratings and reasons
1	(1) N/A (-1) wrong register level
2	(-1) incoherent meaning (1) N/A
3	(1) free translation captures the intended tone (2) N/A
4	(1) free translation captures the intended tone (2) N/A
5	(2) free translation captures the intended tone (1) Good translation with the sentences re-organized
6	(0) N/A (2) Good translation. Exactly what means.
7	(2) free translation captures the intended tone (2) Good translation. Exactly what it means.
8	(1) N/A (2) Good word choice
9	(0) N/A (1) N/A
10	(1) free translation captures the intended tone (1) free translation selects a word that is different from the source, but is a smooth word that can be used here
11	(0) N/A (1) N/A
12	(1) free translation captures the intended tone (1) N/A
13-16	(-1) N/A (1) N/A
17	(2) free translation is appealing (2) N/A
18	(1) free translation is appealing (2) reflects true meaning and adopt a source word seamless into the target
19	(1) free translation is simplified and appealing (0) N/A
20	(-1) direct translation but incorrect (2) smoother than other translations

Table 5: Ratings and summarized reasons on human results (N/A: no reason provided).

Instances	Evaluators' ratings and reasons
1	(0) direct translation but not appealing to readers (1) N/A
2	(-1) incoherent meaning (-1) awkward expression, not natural
3	(-1) not natural (0) N/A
4	(-2) direct translation sounds awful (-2) does not make sense
5	(0) OK can be better (-2) wrong translation
6	(0) N/A (-2) wrong translation
7-11	(1) N/A (1) N/A
12	(-1) incorrect translation and does not flow well (-2) some phrases were translated incorrectly
13	(-1) N/A
14	(-1) a phrase was translated wrong (-2) incorrect translation
15	(-2) incorrect translation (-1) N/A
16	(-2) wrong translation (-2) wrong translation
17	(-1) wrong translation (-1) misleading translation
18	(1) free translation and correct (1) correctly express the meaning of the source text
19	(0) N/A (-2) several mistranslated words
20	(-1) direct translation but wrong (0) N/A

Table 6: Ratings and summarized reasons on instruction-augmented results (N/A: no reason provided).

## 5 Conclusion

Generative AI with Large language modeling (LLM), equipped with prompt engineering and fine-tuning capabilities, can enable augmented MT solutions by explicitly including AI or human generated analyses, and/or human-generated reference translation as pre-editing or interactive inputs.

Using the English-to-Chinese translation piece, we evaluated translation outputs on 20 text segments using human-generated translation,

Instances	Evaluators' ratings and reasons
1	(-1) direct translation, not natural (-1) misinterpret the circumstance
2	(-1) incoherent meaning (-2) "invent meaning" that does not exist in the source
3	(1) free translation captures the original tone (-1) too much transcreation
4	(1) free translation captures the right tone (1) N/A
5	(2) free translation captures the original tone (1) Good sentence reorganization
6	(0) N/A (-2) wrong translation
7	(-1) N/A (-1) mistranslation (general versus specific)
8	(1) N/A (2) N/A
9	(0) N/A (-1) register level (too strong a word is used)
10	(0) N/A (0) N/A
11	(1) N/A (-1) register level (formal versus casual)
12	(0) N/A (-1) some mistranslated words
13-16	(-1) N/A (-1) a chosen target word does not make sense
14	(0) N/A (1) N/A
15	(1) N/A (-2) wrong translation
16	(0) N/A (1) N/A
17	(-1) wrong translation (0) not clear
18	(-2) wrong translation (-1) literal translation does not make sense
19	(1) free translation that is appealing (-1) missing connective word
20	(-1) not natural (0) N/A

Table 7: Ratings and summarized reasons on HMT-augmented results (N/A: no reason provided).

Google Translate MT, instruction-augmented MT using GPT4-LLM, and Human-Machine-Teaming

(HMT) augmented translation based on both human reference translation and style instruction using GPT4-LLM.

The evaluation results show that while human translation had the best performance, both augmented MT approaches performed better than MT without augmentation. The HMT-augmented MT performed better than instruction-augmented MT because it combined the guidance and knowledge from both human reference translation and AI-generated style instruction. However, since it is unrealistic to generate sentence-by-sentence human translation as input to MT, better approaches to HMT-augmented MT need to be studied further. The evaluation showed that generative AI with LLM can enable new MT workflow facilitating pre-editing analyses and interactive restructuring and achieving better performance.

### Acknowledgments

We wish to extend our gratitude to Sijin Xian and Rony Gao for their dedication in orchestrating the translation slam event, generating, and curating the translation data for this manuscript.

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## Appendix

### A segment-by-segment compilation of the two translations together with the source text

Source (English)	Translation Version 1 (by Sijin Xian)	Translation Version 2 (by Arthur Wan)
The Worst Friend Date I Ever Had	我的“社死”之 交	我经历的最糟 的朋友会面
An excerpt from Samantha Irby's new essay collection Wow, No Thank You. By Samantha Irby <a href="https://www.thecut.com/2020/03/book-excerpt-samantha-irbys-wow-no-thank-you.html">https://www.thecut.com/2020/03/book-excerpt-samantha-irbys-wow-no-thank-you.html</a>	节选自萨曼莎· 尔比全新散 文集《哇， 不了谢谢》 作者：萨曼莎· 尔比 <a href="https://www.thecut.com/2020/03/book-excerpt-samantha-irbys-wow-no-thank-you.html">https://www.thecut.com/2020/03/book-excerpt-samantha-irbys-wow-no-thank-you.html</a>	节选自萨曼莎· 艾比的新散 文集《哇， 不用了，谢 谢》。 作者：萨曼莎· 艾比 <a href="https://www.thecut.com/2020/03/book-excerpt-samantha-irbys-wow-no-thank-you.html">https://www.thecut.com/2020/03/book-excerpt-samantha-irbys-wow-no-thank-you.html</a>
You don't have to cry for me, but listen: trying to make new friends as an adult is the hardest thing I have ever attempted.	同情的眼泪倒 犯不着，就 听我说一句 ：设法在成 年人的世界 里结交新朋 友，是我努 力做过的最 艰难的事。	你不必为我伤 心，但听着 ：作为一个 成年人，尝 试结交新朋 友是我所尝 试过所有事 情中最痛苦 的。比多次

Harder than  
multiple  
colonoscopies?  
Yes.  
Harder than  
listening to  
the dentist  
pry my  
tooth bone  
away from  
my jawbone  
while I lie  
there wide  
awake?  
Also yes!

有比做好几  
次肠镜还艰  
难吗？有。  
有比躺在牙  
医椅上，眼  
睁睁地听着  
我的牙骨从  
我的下巴骨  
上被撬走还  
艰难吗？也  
有！

结肠镜检查  
还痛苦？是  
的。比我醒  
着躺在那里  
听牙医将我  
的牙骨从下  
颌骨上撬下  
来还痛苦？  
答案也是肯  
定的！

<p>When I moved to Kalamazoo from Chicago, I thought for sure that I was going to be happy staying at home and never going outside. And, for the most part, I am. I get to travel and work in fancy cities with mass transit and Ethiopian food, then come back and pay \$1.87 for a gallon of gas for the car that I can park anywhere on my sprawling 2,000 acres of land that were practically free. Okay, I'm exaggerating, but my point is FUCK THE CITY.</p>	<p>我从芝加哥搬 来卡拉马祖 的时候，心 想我肯定可 以惬意地宅 在家里，门 都不用出。 结果，我大 体上是挺满 足的。我可 以趁着去外 地工作，领 略有发达的 公共交通和 埃塞俄比亚 菜的华丽都 市，然后回 来付个一加 仑只要1刀 8毛7的油 钱，把车随 便停在我家 几乎白送的 2000英亩的 辽阔土地上 。好吧，这 话夸张了， 但我的重点 是：去他妈 的大城市！</p>	<p>当从芝加哥 搬到卡拉马 祖时，我确 信我将会快 乐地呆在家 里，再不出 门。而且， 在大多数情 况下，我就 是如此。我 可以在有公 共交通和埃 塞俄比亚食 物的光鲜城 市旅行和工 作，然后回 来给我的汽 车加1.87美 元一加仑的 汽油，在我 那2000英亩 的近乎免费 的广袤土地 上，我可以 随意停车。 好吧，我是 在夸大其词 ，但我的意 思是：去他 妈的城市！</p>
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But, how does one make friends without an office to go to? Or a club to participate in? Or various PTA meetings to grimace at each other through? Are you just supposed to walk up to an interesting-looking person on the street and ask them to be your friend? I don't know if this is some kind of reverse profiling, but I can usually glance at a person and know at first sight that we're probably going to get along. I don't have it down to a science (I'm not researching shit, dude), but here are some dead giveaways: they have interesting, alternative, "cool person" hair, dumb tattoos, or are carrying a book, multiplied

可是，一个人在这种情况下要上哪儿交朋友呢？我一不在办公室上班，二不参加俱乐部，三不去各种家委会上和人挤眉弄眼暗送嘲讽。我难不成要在大街上直接走到一个貌似有趣的人跟前，让人家当我朋友？不知道这不是以一种褒义的以貌取人，反正我通常扫一眼就立马能知道我和一个人大概会合得来。我倒没得出什么科学体系（大哥，我才不会费这破劲儿去做研究呢），但吃准了几点特征：这人通常有别致、另类、酷范儿十足的发型，傻里傻气的纹身，或是拿着一本书——要是还刚好是我写的，

但是，一个人如果不去办公室，又怎么交友呢？如果不去俱乐部呢？如果也不去各种家长教师联谊会的会议上互相挤眉弄眼呢？难道你就指望在大街上走到一个看起来很有趣的人面前，要求其成为你的朋友？我不知道这是否是某种逆向分析，但我通常可以瞥见一个人后，第一眼就知道我们可能会相处得很好。我没把它归结为一门科学（哥们，我不是在做什么狗屁研究），但这里有某种致命信号：这人有有趣的、另类的、“酷哥/靓妹”的头发，帅气的纹身，或者拿本书，如果它碰巧是我写的，那就要更

by a factor of ten if it happens to be one I wrote (I'm sorry — I am an egomaniac).

Have you ever considered what a friendship is, or what any of your current friendships are, and thought about how to present that to a prospective new friend? You know, like how you are going to eventually be sending them selfies of you trying on 12 similar-yet-slightly-different pairs of glasses in your ophthalmologist's waiting room while your garbage insurance is being processed? How do you convince a stranger to give you their real email when you are going to litter their gmail.com

就十倍加分（不好意思啊，我是个自大狂）。

你有没有思考过友情是什么，或者你目前的友谊都是些什么情况？你有没有想过要怎么把这些向你的求友对象交代？你懂的，比如你怎么跟人说，等你们混熟了，你会在眼科医生的等候室里一边等你那垃圾保险走程序，一边发你试戴 12 副大同小异的镜的自拍？既然你明明会往人家的 Gmail 邮箱乱塞没头没脑的废话，那还怎么说服一个陌生人把真正的邮箱地址给你？

好十倍（对不起——我是个自大狂）。

你有没有想过什么是友谊？或者你目前的朋友是怎样的？并考虑如何向潜在的新朋友呈现这些？就像你最终要给他们发送你在眼科医生等候室里试戴 12 副相似又略不同的眼镜的自拍照时你的垃圾保险正在处理中那样吗？你如何说服一个你肯定会在其 Gmail.com 上胡说八道留言的陌生人、让他给你真的电子邮件呢？

with dumb nonsense?

A few years ago (before I moved to Michigan and joined my wife's community of backyard composters and travel-soccer chauffeurs), my lady and I went to her friend's costume wedding and — I know you already know this, but let me just say it for anyone who is new or still has a shred of hopefulness in their heart — I did not wear a costume.

The last time I wore a Halloween costume was in the second-grade costume parade at Lincoln Elementary School in 1986 (go, dolphins), and the only costume I could come up with was "housewife," a concept I didn't fully understand but thought I could

几年前，我和我老婆去了她一个朋友的婚礼。（那时我还没有追随我家夫人搬来密歇根州，加入她那在后院堆肥和开车接送孩子去各地踢足球的圈子。）婚礼是变装主题的一——我知道你已经有了，但容我对新来的或心里还存有一丝希望的读者说：我并没有扮角色。我上一次万圣节变装，还是在1986年林肯小学的二年级变装游行上（不免俗地喊个口号：海豚队加油）。那时我唯一能想到的装扮就是“家庭主妇”，虽然对这个概念一知半解，但我想着穿上我妈破得抽条的旧袍子，

几年前（在我搬到密歇根并加入我妻子的后院堆肥者和旅行足球司机圈子之前），我娘子和我去参加她朋友的礼服婚礼，然而——我知道你懂的，但让我告诉新来的或心中尚有一丝希望的人——我没穿礼服。我最后一次穿万圣节服装是1986年在林肯小学二年级的服装游行中（加油，海豚），我唯一能想到的服装是“家庭主妇”——一个我那时还不能充分理解的概念，但我认为我可以用我妈妈的破旧长袍、半融化的锅铲和她在新卷发后的晚上睡觉用过的缎面帽子来扮个大概

approximate with my mom's tattered old robe, a half-melted spatula, and the satin cap she slept in the nights after a fresh press 'n' curl. Because I was a Very Large Son, everyone just thought I had worn my shitty pajamas to school.

Anyway, my wife and I were at this wedding where I knew a few people well enough to say "Hi" but not well enough to say "Hi, \_\_\_\_\_," and as we're sitting in our assigned dinner seats I'm looking around the room, taking it all in, wondering who I can latch on to in the hopes of a semipermanent relationship once I officially moved to Kalamazoo. A dude named Ike

拿上一个一半已经熔化了了的铲子，再来一顶她把头发拉直烫卷后的头几天晚上会戴着睡觉的缎面帽，就八九不离十了。由于我的“大块头儿子”形象，大家只是以为我穿着烂不啦叽的睡衣去了学校。

再扯回婚礼的事。现场认识的人不多，而且只熟到能说声“嗨”，还没熟到能叫出“嗨，某某”来。我们在晚宴的指定座位坐下后，我环顾房间，消化着眼前的一切，寻思着可以“勾搭”上谁，好在正式搬来卡拉马祖之后发展一段还算地久天长的友谊。自助餐还没准备就绪，不夸张地说，我完全是奔着这

。因为我是个特大号儿子，所以大家都以为我穿着我的烂睡衣去了学校。

总之，我和我妻子参加了这个婚礼，我认识那儿的几个人，可以跟他们打招呼说“你好”，但还没熟到说“xx，你好”的程度。当我们坐在指定的晚餐座位上时，我环顾房间，一切尽收眼底，脑子里想着一旦我正式搬到卡拉马祖，我可以抓住谁才能建立半永久的关系。在我们等待自助餐的时候

came and sat next to me as we waited for the buffet to be set up, literally the only reason I braved a room full of people unironically dressed as Tolkien characters. He was wearing a Scientology uniform as his costume, and I immediately fell deeply in love. I talked to Ike for a while, writing his name in permanent marker on the Potential New Friends list in my mind.

After he abandoned me to go fill up his plate with communal vegan enchiladas from the hot bar, a cool-looking woman with shiny bangs and interesting glasses (PRO) carrying a tiny crying baby (CON) and wearing a Ruth Bader Ginsburg costume

顿饭，才硬着头皮直面这一屋子正儿八经打扮成托尔金笔下的魔幻角色的人。等待时，一个叫艾克的哥们儿过来坐在了我旁边，他一身科学教徒制服的扮相，让我一见倾心。我和他聊了一会儿，用永久性记号笔在心的新朋友备选名单上写下他的名字。

后来他抛下我，端着盘子到热食区去狂拿公共的纯素焗墨西哥卷饼去了。这时，一个酷炫女人走过来向我介绍了自己。她有闪亮的刘海和别致的眼镜（加分），抱着一个哭嚎的小婴儿（扣分），一副大法官露

，一个叫艾克 (Ike) 的老兄走过来坐在我旁边，这简直就是我面对一屋子人不伦不类地打扮成托尔金怪人的唯一原因。他穿着科学教的制服作为服装道具，我立刻深深爱上了他。我和艾克聊了一会儿，把他的名字用永久标记写在我心中的潜在新朋友名单上。

在他离开我去自助餐台，在盘子里堆满公共素食墨西哥卷饼的时候，一个看起来很酷的女性走过来向我介绍自己，她有着闪亮的刘海和有意思的眼镜（优点），抱着一个哭泣的小宝宝（缺点），穿着露

(NEUTRAL) came over to introduce herself to me. We got on like a house on fire. After a few minutes, my palms started to sweat in anticipation of what would surely be an awkward transition from a pleasant introductory conversation to the method by which I could secure her contact information to lock down a future friendship.

·丝·贝·德·金斯伯格的装扮（不加不扣）。我们一见如故，打得火热。几分钟后，我的手心开始冒汗，因为要想锁定这份未来的友谊，我得从这初识的愉快浅聊，进展到设法取得她的联系方式，但这个过渡必定会是尴尬的。

·金斯伯格的服装（不好不坏）。我们一拍即合。几分钟后，我开始手心出汗，我估摸着，从愉快的介绍性谈话，到我可以获得她的联系方式以锁定未来友谊的方法，肯定是个尴尬的过渡。