

FIELD NOTE 0000008

September 9, 2026

Field Notes from the Mabuhay Stories Experiment Beyond the Story Score.

THE CRAYONS ARE TOOLS

WHAT WE ILLUMINATE WITH THEM IS OUR STEWARDSHIP

Human minds are rather remarkable predictive engines.

We observe.

We remember.

We anticipate.

We imagine what might happen next.

We try something.

Sometimes we're right.

Sometimes we're spectacularly wrong.

Humph.

And, if we're paying attention, we learn.

That last part matters.

Because prediction without learning is merely repetition with confidence.

Human history contains more than enough examples of that.

We've cultivated extraordinary intellectual fibers within ourselves over thousands upon thousands of years.

Language.

Memory.

Logic.

Storytelling.

Mathematics.

Music.

Engineering.

Science.

Philosophy.

Faith.

Art.

Community.

And yet those very same human capacities have sometimes produced extraordinarily unhelpful things.

Weapons.

Propaganda.

Exploitation.

Systems of exclusion.

Very sophisticated explanations for why somebody else ought to remain outside the gates.

The fibers themselves don't guarantee goodness.

What matters is what we weave from them.

Which brings us to agentic technology.

Large language models and the increasingly capable systems being built around them arise, in part, from patterns found within an enormous inheritance of human language.

They can predict.

Associate.

Recombine.

Extend.

Question.

Compare.

Help us follow a thought considerably farther and faster than we might have managed alone.

That doesn't make the technology good.

Nor wise.

Nor merciful.

Those are stewardship questions.

And perhaps that's precisely why I don't believe our proper response to these technologies is either unquestioning enthusiasm or reflexive fear.

There's another possibility.

Learn how to steward them.

Bring different fibers together.

Not because human beings and machines are the same things.

We aren't.

But because different capabilities can sometimes be braided together into something useful.

A human being can bring intention.

Memory.

Experience.

Love.

Responsibility.

Moral concern.

Embodied encounter.

A lifetime of failures and the scars through which their lessons remain remembered.

A machine can bring another kind of reach.

Patterns across enormous bodies of language.

Rapid iteration.

Comparison.

Recombination.

The ability to hold an unfinished thought in conversation long enough for us to discover where it might go.

And when these capabilities are used together carefully, something interesting can happen.

We can sometimes reach the logical ends of our thoughts more efficiently.

And occasionally more elegantly.

Not so that we can finish thinking sooner.

Quite the opposite.

So that we can arrive at the **next useful question sooner.**

That's where learning gets interesting.

Because the learning that matters most to me isn't merely the accumulation of facts and figures that can be regurgitated on examinations or stored away for future game-show appearances.

Useful though those things occasionally are.

I'm interested in learning that changes what we do next.

Learning that becomes:

A better question.

A safer bridge.

A longer table.

A repaired relationship.

A more dignifying system.

A story somebody can finally hear.

A tool somebody else can improve.

An invitation somebody previously excluded can accept.

A little less suffering.

A little more possibility.

A little more Peace.

That's learning translated into stewardship.

And perhaps that's one reason we haven't shied away from using agentic technologies in creating The Mabuhay Stories™.

These stories draw upon some very old practices for becoming meaningfully helpful human beings.

But the tools helping us explore those practices are remarkably new.

I don't find that contradiction particularly troubling.

Old wisdom has always traveled through new tools.

Stone.

Papyrus.

Paper.

Printing presses.

Radio.

Film.

Networks.

Phones.

And now predictive and increasingly agentic machines.

The stewardship question remains remarkably similar:

What shall we do with what we've been given?

Which returns us to the crayons.

In Field Note 0000007, we suggested that the Story Steward should remain childlike enough to hand them over.

Here's the next problem.

Eventually somebody has to **draw something**.

Wonder cannot remain permanently suspended in possibility.

Encounter matters precisely because encounters can change what happens afterward.

A hungry creature still needs food.

A lonely creature still needs company.

A broken system still needs repair.

A difficult problem still needs somebody willing to work on it.

The blank page is an invitation.

But leaving every page blank forever isn't stewardship either.

So illuminate something.

Try.

Wobble.

Discover that your first idea was inadequate.

Good.

Learn.

Draw again.

Ask somebody else what they see.

Hand them the crayons.

Receive what they give you.

Then become a **receiving giver** yourself.

That phrase matters.

Because giving and receiving aren't opposite roles in a healthy community.

They're movements within the same relationship.

I receive something I didn't possess.

I steward it.

I add what I can.

I give it onward.

Someone else receives it.

They change it.

Improve it.

Correct it.

Translate it.

Challenge it.

Perhaps discover that half of what I thought was terribly clever was entirely beside the point.

Excellent.

Then they give something back.

And the cycle continues.

That's Divergence™ practiced rather than merely described.

Different minds.

Different experiences.

Different cultures.

Different capabilities.

Different kinds of intelligence.

Not flattened into sameness.

Not forced toward agreement before anything useful can happen.

But invited to contribute toward something larger than any participant could've produced alone.

That's what I hope people eventually do with these stories.

Don't merely illuminate the blank pages in the books.

Illuminate the blank spaces **beyond them**.

Take the story somewhere we didn't anticipate.

Translate it.

Read it differently.

Question it.

Build something because of it.

Use agentic technology if it helps.

Use a pencil if that helps.

Use a shovel.

A saucepan.

A musical instrument.

A spreadsheet.

A swimming pool.

A piece of wrong wood that somebody finally figured out how to teach to grow the right way again.

The tool isn't the premium.

Neither is the completion.

And neither is technological sophistication.

The encounter is the premium.

Because the encounter is where something can pass between us.

And meaningful stewardship is what we do with what we receive there.

Perhaps, over time, enough receiving givers doing that well can accomplish something considerably more interesting than producing smarter machines.

Or even smarter human beings.

Perhaps we can build wiser communities.

Places where extraordinary becomes possible.

Places where learning becomes action.

Places where our differences become contributions rather than divisions.

Places where whatever intelligence we possess—human, artificial, ancient, new, individual, or communal—is measured finally by what it helps us do for one another.

That seems a worthy experiment.

So bring your crayons.

Bring your tools.

Bring your questions.

Bring whatever strange and wonderful fibers Grace has placed into your hands.

Receive what somebody else brings.

Weave carefully.

Then give something useful onward.

And behold what the next receiving giver does with it.

So that together we might—

Help Mercy Abound.

Naturally.

Organically.

And as widely as possible.

Without end.

Right on the streets where we live.

4EVER!

