



A man stands on an outdoor stairway in Jaipur, India in Jan. 2013. PHOTO: PAUL COOPER, TAIPEI TIMES

一名男子站著在一座戶外樓梯上，二〇一三年一月攝於印度的齶普爾。 照片：台北時報記者古德謙攝



A woman walks toward a door in the Nanyuan resort in Hsinchu County on Aug. 17. PHOTO: PAUL COOPER, TAIPEI TIMES

一名女子走向一扇門，八月十七日攝於新竹縣的南園。 照片：台北時報記者古德謙攝

Stairs; door; track

樓梯、門、鐵軌

There are certain objects in the physical world, often related to ideas of movement or transition, that lend themselves to metaphor.

Stairs, for example, allow ascension, relocation from a lower level to a higher one. People at the top may seem, or feel, powerful, but also exposed; people below could feel, or appear to be, weak, but grounded, often accompanied by others, retaining the luxury of aspiring to power. Ascending a staircase tells of achieving a goal, and of leaving experiences, and past existences, behind. And they offer a way to enlightenment; for Heaven is often imagined as being above, and Hell, as we all know so well, lies below.

Doors represent transition from one state to another. They can allude to a rite of passage. Closed, they offer protection from the outside world; open, they threaten vulnerability. Closed, they obstruct opportunity, but promise privacy; open, they allow change to happen. Once through, you never know whether you will return.

The train track, meanwhile, insists upon movement in the most direct way possible. Its strength lies in dictating the route you take, its weakness lies in the same. A track may seem to stretch out to the distance, farther than the eye can see. Once a journey is started, it invariably changes the traveler. You can come back, said Bob Dylan, but you can't come back all the way.

(PAUL COOPER, TAIPEI TIMES)

與 移動或轉變的概念相關的物件，常常很適合作譬喻。

比方說樓梯。樓梯可以攀升，讓人從低處抵達高處。一個人站在樓梯頂上，不論是在旁人還是自己眼中，都好像高人一等，卻又無處可躲。而在樓梯下的人，雖在自己和旁人眼中都顯得軟弱，卻穩穩地踏在地上，通常是一群人，渴望著權力。攀登樓梯可用以表現人達成目標，或離開過去的經驗及事物，獲得新的領悟。畢竟按一般想像，天堂總是在天上，而地獄，眾所皆知在地下。

門，代表狀態的轉換，如標誌人生階段的重大事件。一扇門，關著，替人隔絕了外界的危險；開著，則透漏著威脅。關閉的門阻斷機會，卻保守了隱私；敞開的門則容許改變的可能。穿越了門，你不會知道能否回得來。

此外還有鐵軌，堅持往最直截的方向鋪展。它支配著你前進的方向，這是它的魄力，也是缺陷。鐵軌可以很長，一路延伸到視線所不及之處。旅途中的你，改變是必然的。就如巴布狄倫所寫的，你可以回來，但不能重來。

(台北時報涂宇安譯)

» Physical objects as metaphors for abstract ideas. What others can you think of?

» 還有哪些物件可以用於表達抽象概念？請舉例。



A stretch of railway track in Miaoli County's Tongsiao Township on Jul. 1. PHOTO: PAUL COOPER, TAIPEI TIMES

位於苗栗縣通霄鎮的鐵軌，攝於七月一日。 照片：台北時報記者古德謙攝