The Discipline of Novel-Writing:
A writer’s creativity toolkit (exegesis)

and

Six Minutes (novel)

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Abstract

The Discipline of Novel-Writing: A writer's creativity toolkit is a creative writing thesis in two parts: a draft novel centred on the contemporary Brisbane legal scene, titled Six Minutes, and an exegesis which examines and addresses the scarcity of self-evaluative creative writing resources for writers who are no longer novices.

The exegesis and toolkit evolved from my search for answers to complex, common, but little-understood writing problems which I had encountered while producing Six Minutes.

By overlaying the legal world onto the world of novel-writing, I show how a novelist builds a case, much like a lawyer does. A number of aspects of my toolkit are generated out of appropriations from legal thinking and practice. An interesting irony, therefore, is that my novelistic interrogation of misbehaviour in a law firm uses the tools of the legal world against itself.

The novel reveals the quirks, traditions and unwritten rules of the patriarchal legal profession and explores the hegemony at play, where women have been let into the profession, but continue to be outsiders. The story centres on the protagonist, Sandra Jeeves, and her painful, growing realisation that access does not amount to equality, or equal opportunity.

There continues to be a need for writer resources that address in a precise, but not prescriptive way, the research and creativity processes in the whole conceptualisation and production of a novel. It is largely about understanding the connections between thinking, researching and writing (including editing) and how they impact on the production of 'story truth'. A reader 'believes' a story; much as a juror accepts or rejects a case.

This project focuses a writer on the ultimate ambition of finishing a novel that is believable, authentic and in some way, transformative.

The toolkit prompts writers to make more effective creative decisions by becoming more observant readers of their own work, feeding into a the-better-the-reader-the-better-the-
writer causative link. While this project focuses on the novel, many comments would apply equally to other forms of creative writing.

This project is not about producing another delimiting formula, or another how-to-write or how-I-wrote-it memoir. (Specific examples of these works will be examined in the exegesis.) Rather, it pursues a better understanding of the discipline of novel writing.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed: Theresa Elizabeth Lauf
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PART ONE
Exegesis
The Discipline of Novel-Writing:
A writer’s creativity toolkit

Love words, agonise over sentences. And pay attention to the world.

— Susan Sontag
CHAPTER ONE:

A writer's creativity toolkit

There are three rules for writing the novel. Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.

W. Somerset Maugham

Introduction

Novel writing is a long and lonesome process. So much so that it can be difficult to maintain focus on what a novel could or should be achieving and to find the degree of detachment necessary to be able to go back and improve it.

Reading advice from other writers, in the form of how-to-write books, writing memoirs or autobiographies, does not particularly assist a more experienced (as opposed to novice) writer in improving a work-in-progress. In fact, these well-intentioned books may be either too basic or so prescriptive that they impede the originality of the writer.

This exegesis proposes a new writer's creativity toolkit, which can incorporate numerous strategies at any stage of novelistic production. It moves away from the traditional do-as-I-say self-help genre by drawing on the writer's originality and intuition.

I hope that the writer's creativity toolkit will encourage writers to find (and refine) their own style and do it with authority. As a developing writer myself, I cannot claim to have realised all of the ambitions of the toolkit in my own work; this is something that very few writers can achieve in a lifetime. The version of Six Minutes included as part of this thesis reflects an active engagement with the toolkit, and is the same version submitted to a major publisher (with whom I continue to develop the manuscript).
While my ego might recommend that I lock this version of the novel in a bottom drawer (because it no longer represents my best work), for the sake of the experiment we call ‘education’, I feel it would be most instructive to share it. That way, others may learn from my mistakes (all of my mistakes; not just the ones I might otherwise only reveal in homeopathic dilutions should I have chosen to write a different kind of exegesis).

Through including the novel in the thesis, and reflecting on the process of developing that draft in the process of creating the writer’s creativity toolkit, I am sharing my journey, rather than my arrival as a writer. I refer to the attached novel as a ‘draft’ in the sense that, although it has the interest of a publisher, until it is actually published, it will always be a draft.

So, who might find this project of interest? This project is aimed at:

- postgraduate writing students
- tertiary writing teachers
- working writers, particularly novelists.

Bookshelves are crammed with self-help books claiming to be able to make us better writers. Yet, during the course of this project, it became clear to me that there is little to comfort the no-longer-novice writer in the process of writing and creative self-editing.

Gary Disher says that there is one constant in all the different approaches to writing by famous and successful writers: ‘writing is work, there is no secret.’1 Unfortunately, knowing this is more comforting than helpful.

This project provides tools and resources for more advanced or experienced writers. In the context of this thesis, advanced or experienced writers are those who have a practical

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grasp of the craft\textsuperscript{2} and an ability to comprehend and apply useful writing theories and strategies (such as Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizome theory); someone who is not necessarily published, but who has writing experience and who has attended writing seminars or completed some training in the craft.

This project is for writers who have not found entirely satisfactory answers to their writing problems elsewhere. It will help solve problems by understanding their own processes better within the frame of their own unique practice. The flexibility of the toolkit is such that it can be used in conjunction with tools, strategies and theories offered by other writers.

Rather than presenting another how-to guide to writing, or write-like-me manual, or a technical guide to editing, I hope that the writer’s creativity toolkit will encourage writers to find (and refine) their own style and process. The toolkit provides an overarching framework, which attempts to neatly depict the ‘what’ of good novel production (writing and editing) without oversimplifying the underlying iterative processes. It puts clear points on the novelist’s horizon, towards which she must navigate. It assumes the novelist-as-ship’s-captain knows how to man the ship.

To emphasise this fact, I am presenting the other part of this project, the novel, \textit{Six Minutes}, in its original version as submitted to a major international publisher. This draft was submitted to the publisher before I had fully completed or understood my own toolkit—and this is clearly demonstrated by the work itself. From the viewpoint of a professional in the discipline it is uncomfortable for me to show something that is less than the best work I can produce today. This is against the culture of a discipline where the final product is the only thing that all but a very select few ever see. I believe it is more helpful to allow readers of this project to understand the problems which the toolkit was designed to help me address, by showing them in context. My writing problems were

\textsuperscript{2} Disher, G. 1989, pp.96-104 lists traditional elements of fiction which this project assumes the reader has a competent grasp of, including for example: character; plot; dialogue; setting; point of view; structure; scenes, summaries and transitions; and style. (Although, style is developed over time, if at all.)

not and are not peculiarly my own; every working writer will grapple with them at some point.

While it merits further development, the novel as submitted demonstrates the usefulness of the toolkit in developing a novel manuscript that is ready for submission to a publisher or agent.

**A gap in the field of knowledge**

In the early days of my project, I had spent a considerable amount of time surveying how-to-write books, which I thought might help me in the task of writing of a novel. They essentially boiled the job down into researching, writing and editing. Most how-to books rolled all three tasks in together, or dealt with researching and editing in the most cursory of ways, focusing instead on the basics of narrative, such as plot and character.

Most of the books reviewed did not address the more complex problems I was encountering while writing my novel, *Six Minutes*. Consequently, it was difficult even diagnosing, let alone addressing the specific problems I encountered. My search for a way to articulate my concerns took me through all kinds of writing self-help books, academic essays, papers delivered at writing conferences, writing magazines, philosophy from Immanuel Kant to Gilles Deleuze, education theory, metacognition, hermeneutics, qualitative research practice including ethnography, practice-led

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4 I was most inspired by the words of Susan Sontag, Nigel Krauth, Frederick Reiken and Samuel Shem.

5 The annual Australian Association of Writing Programs (AAWP) conference being one of the best conferences for advanced writers interested in writing and pedagogy.


8 I adapted the notion of the hermeneutic circle in the development of the toolkit (see Fig.2 & Fig.3). A definition of 'hermeneutic circle' can be found at p.389 of The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought (2000), Bullock, A. & Trombley, S. (Eds.). Fundamentally, this process is about deepening knowledge.

9 See Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y, 1994. N.B. Baszanger, I & Dodier, N. 1997, p.19: 'Characterisation of the ethnographic study' which diagramatically indicates that if the study of human activities is not done with an empirical approach, then it is based in philosophy rather than the social sciences.
research, text books on human motivation, communication and management theory, contemporary debates about writing ethics, the poetics of narrative fiction and reading narrative theory.

Surely, my writing problems were not peculiar to just me, I figured. Nevertheless, I found there was very little guidance available for how to improve a book that was not bad, but not good enough to gain a publisher’s interest. *What do you do when your novel is lacking, but you do not know what it is missing?*

For the sake of brevity and in lieu of a separate Literature Review, I have included published book reviews in Appendix Three and Appendix Four to this exegesis. They examine two of the more robust (as opposed to simplistic) how-to-write books, as examples of the broader concerns I have with the genre.

As can be seen in Appendix One, I have sampled over 60 books in the writing self-help genre, before concluding that serious practitioners need something more complex and flexible, but still practical. I would also echo Nigel Krauth’s warning that great writing cannot be reverse engineered, although many writing books promise to help a writer do just that. Furthermore, “The road already taken by one individual may not be the pathway forward for another.” In other words, projecting one person’s experience of novel writing onto another person’s experience of novel writing is like borrowing someone’s prescription glasses and expecting to see well (a good outcome being possible, but unlikely; a result of coincidence).

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10 See www.textjournal.com.au for the most complete round-up of essays on practice-led research and Australian writing pedagogy generally.

11 See Rimmon-Kenan, S., 1983, p.3 ‘In the empirical world, the author is the agent responsible for the production of the narrative and for its communication. The empirical process of communication, however, is less relevant to the poetics of narrative fiction than its counterpart within the text. Within the text, communication involves a fictional narrator transmitting a narrative to a fictional narratee.”


13 This list does not include the magazine articles and academic essays examined, as they by their nature, only deal with singular issues, not the entire novel researching, writing and editing concern. Where pertinent, the articles and essays are cited within the body of this paper. Writing magazines tended to be a little basic in content.


Ernest Hemingway\textsuperscript{16} similarly noted that great writing couldn’t be dissected out from good reading:

In truly good writing no matter how many times you read it you do not know how it is done. That is because there is a mystery in all great writing and that mystery does not dis-sect out. It continues and it is always valid. Each time you re-read you see or learn something new.\textsuperscript{17}

Books on editing\textsuperscript{18}, while helpful on a technical level, also fail to address the intrinsic creativity in the whole book researching, writing and editing endeavour.

The writing self-help books I surveyed attempted to reduce the complexity of novel writing (including researching and editing) into either:

- repeatable sequences; or

- do-as-I-have-done\textsuperscript{19}, and see-the-world-as-I-see-it, instructions.

While books like Kate Grenville’s \textit{The Writing Book} and \textit{Writing From Start to Finish: A Six-Step Guide} and Michael Petracca’s \textit{The Graceful Lie} are more helpful than many other references currently available, they still demand a particular methodology of reading, criticism of the set readings and focus on stimulating the various stages of putting pen to paper. The ways they are presented also romance the reader into tuning into the personal frequency of those particular textbook writers. Now, while I might admire the work of Grenville and Petracca (and many other writers), I am no longer at the smitten-novice stage of wanting to be them, or to write as they write, or see the world as they see it. I know that I have my own way of seeing things, and this, if I can tap into it


\textsuperscript{17} Phillips, L.N. (Ed.) 1985, p.5.

\textsuperscript{18} A good book on creative writing revision is Michael Legat’s \textit{Revision: An Author’s Guide}.

\textsuperscript{19} Or rather, ‘do-as-I-say-I’ve-done.’ Nigel Krauth, at p.169 of ‘Learning Writing Through Reading’ points out some of the problems inherent in the autobiography genre regarding ‘selectivity, reordering, summarising, memory and a host of other factors (including the emotionally, politically and commercially charged: “Should I give away my very deepest secrets?”)’
usefully, will be the core of my originality as a writer. Many writers are past imitating, yet most writing resources, subtly or unsubtly, recommend just that.

Grenville’s *Writing from Start to Finish: A Six-Step Guide* is directed at beginner-writers and is not focussed on novel-writing *per se*, although, it has a similar objective to this exegesis: ‘Instead of being caught up inside the machinery of your own thinking, you can stand outside it, and see the process happening one step at a time.’20 However, this exegesis, being directed at more confident and experienced writers, does not simplify the process into a step-by-step process as Grenville’s book does, reflecting my belief that the true nature of creativity is not linear.

*Making Stories* by Kate Grenville and Sue Woolfe extends the methodology set out in *The Writing Book* and *The Graceful Lie* in useful ways, while honestly acknowledging its limitations. ‘We had intended to demystify the process, but in the end this did not seem possible. It was another assumption we had to abandon.’21 The book contains interviews with ten Australian authors, and shows just how differently writers come at the writing process, and how their methods vary from book to book. For that reason, it seems logical to encourage writers to write and revise in their own ways, while gently reminding them that there are certain artistic goals to be met. In the end, the novel is not about what we put into it (or how we describe it e.g. as research or writing), but what we (readers, writers and readers-of-our-own-work) can get out of it. It is more than the sum of all its parts.

Not being satisfied with the level of detail in how-to books, I looked more closely at books on quantitative22 and qualitative research23 partly with the idea that my practical

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22 Which is ‘[e]mpirical research in which the researcher explores relationships using numerical data. Survey is generally considered a form of quantitative research. Results can often be generalized, though this is not always the case.’ (Colorado State University n.d.)

23 Which is ‘[e]mpirical research in which the researcher explores relationships using textual, rather than quantitative data. Case study, observation, and ethnography are considered forms of qualitative research. Results are not usually considered generalizable, but are often transferable.’ (Colorado State University n.d.). I found Silverman, D. (Ed.) 1997 and Faulkly, J.L. 1991 useful in relation to qualitative research, along with Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. 1994.
knowledge of women in the legal profession could be drawn on for the writing of a novel through surveying female lawyers to record their experiences and compare them with my own. I soon realised that this was not going to achieve what I needed in a timely and sensible fashion. Interviewees were fearful of defamation laws and reluctant to speak on record about their experiences of professional mistreatment, harassment or discrimination. My formal, quantitative approaches were abandoned as I realised that others had already undertaken similar (sociological) studies, which were too big a task for one author intent on completing the research simply as a way of informing the composition of a novel. I quickly replaced this idea with a more flexible qualitative approach, abandoning formal interviews and surveys altogether: I knew enough from having practiced in the profession for several years and continued to speak with those in the profession casually, and off-the-record (which they were much more comfortable with). This less rigid approach encouraged more honest and revealing discussions about aspects of the profession I was exploring in the novel.

I became engrossed with the possibilities of ethnography, of ‘being in the field’, of ‘being an active participant in the research,’ only to realise that it was not enough. Ethnography would not write the novel, nor fully describe the processes involved in creatively researching for it.

I also enjoyed teasing out the possibilities of practice-led research, only to find, much like Nicola Boyd, that it did not provide ‘a unifying language, model or framework which clearly states how we conduct research and brings together the multitude of research processes into something which is specific, explanatory and usable as a platform to refine these processes.’

It is in many cases true, but not enough to say that practice-led research is:

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26 Also called practice-based or practitioner-led research. Boyd, N. 2009, p.3.

firstly research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners; and secondly, that the research strategy is carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and specific methods familiar to us as practitioners.\textsuperscript{28}

Which methodologies and specific methods? Where were they usefully and accurately described? While writing the novel itself may arguably be described as a form of research insofar as it is a way of finding answers to questions, and therefore the result (the novel itself) may represent new knowledge,\textsuperscript{29} it does not help a writer in any practical way to say so. After a decade of watching this debate, it still feels like a laboured and artificial construction of an author's methodology, produced and useful purely in the context of the Creative Writing Higher Degree Research exegesis, which is equally baffling (if not more) baffling, and equally a reflection of a discrete research process or method. A writing student might rightly ask: Show me what practice-led research can do for me as a writer; show me how an exegesis can be used by other writers.

It is central to this exegesis, that effective creative writing goes beyond the technical ability to put words on a page and edit them well—it involves effective thinking with effective research as well as finding the best, most original way to communicate to readers through words; to imaginatively project a believable fictional reality onto the page, which engages the minds of the readers. The proposed toolkit respects this complexity of novel writing, without being overly complex itself. It does not stand alone as the one thing that writers need, but rather, is like a grid into which writers may plug-in whatever other advice or techniques they find helpful. It is an overarching device, not an exclusive mechanism.

In the end, nothing is going to help a writer unless a writer is able to put on the hat of the dispassionate critic and editor and look at her own work with clear eyes. Krauth tells us that ‘Good writing process indicates that the ability to edit oneself entails true mastery over the craft of writing.’\textsuperscript{30} Ultimately, this is what this project is about — how to let a

\textsuperscript{28} Gray, C. 1996, p.9.
\textsuperscript{29} Arnold, J. 2007, p.3.
\textsuperscript{30} Krauth, N. 2009, p.13.
writer properly see, interrogate and improve her own work. As Krauth points out, even experienced writers struggle with this. He was angry with himself for not seeing what an editor had pointed out in his work although the problem they had identified seemed so obvious after the fact. Krauth explains that being able to write involves being able to self-edit and that this is one of the hardest tasks of a writer; although it is generally not well taught at university.\footnote{Krauth, N. 2009.}

Before moving on to the toolkit itself, it is necessary to examine some fundamental ideas that inform the language and approach of the toolkit, including notions of ‘fictional truth’\footnote{Reiken, F. 2007, p.60.}, ‘story truth’\footnote{O’Brien, T. 1991, p.203.} (also ‘moral fiction’\footnote{Gardner, J. 1978, p.115. Also, Reiken, F. 2007, p.63.} or ‘the space of experience, not that of existence’\footnote{Berger, J. 1992, p.214. An excellent analysis of Berger’s implicit distinction between actual and textual can be seen at p.60 of Frederick Reiken’s essay, ‘What is True? Thoughts on Fictional “Truth,” Unconscious Metaphor and Celery.’} and ‘imaginative projection’\footnote{Reiken, F. 2007, p.60. Also see p.59: ‘...the successful writing of a novel will require you to invent the experience of the narrative’.} from private (author) to public (readers), as two of the assumed objectives of all good novels (which, one would hope, would be achieved, if the toolkit were applied to its full effect by a competent operator). A more detailed explanation of the private-to-public process is given later in this paper (see Figure 3). The interaction between Figures 1, 2 and 3 is necessarily complex and non-linear (which goes some way towards demonstrating, or at least reflecting, some of the reasons that describing what we do as writers has always been fraught).

Figure 1 shows how ‘story truth’ is not the same as transcribing or tweaking a historical or literal truth. Writers deal with several kinds of truth in order to write an untruth (which, ironically, best tells a necessary story truth). How writers handle this part of the process determines to a large extent whether the final novel will be believable and authentic. Believability and authenticity are two of the ambitions of a novel, as indicated in the toolkit (Fig.2).
Figure 2 demonstrates the complex processes involved in producing a novel that is believable, authentic and, in some way, transformative. It brings together the research and knowledge acquisition processes as well as the three modes of thought (scientific, philosophical and artful) that underpin an advanced writer’s practice.

Without embarking on an unfruitful diversion into defining what makes a writer ‘advanced’ or ‘experienced’ or ‘great’, I will let the figure demonstrate it (and allow individual readers of this work determine where they themselves sit on the spectrum).

Jane Smiley makes some interesting conclusions about ‘greatness’37:

There is no single quality that the ‘great’ novels share other than the biographical quality—the sense that the reader comes to understand a character completely, better than the character understands himself or herself. (200)

What seems to be happening is that the author’s voice and his or her protagonist’s potential fit one another and illuminate one another in a unique way. But in fact, capaciousness works for the novelist in several ways. When he includes many components in his novel, he stimulates his own thinking as he tries to get the parts to mesh—dilemmas of narrative as simple as time sequence and cause and effect require the author to think about the complex connections between his parts and to express these complexities in his style, which becomes more probing and more idiosyncratic. (201)

Smiley explains ‘greatness’ in terms of Kafka’s The Trial. In particular, how through radically simple and clear narration, images and incidents become powerful and ineradicable in the reader’s mind. It is this intensity of intimacy that is thoroughly original and is another path to greatness.38

Greatness in a novel does not depend upon perfection of the object; perfection of the object is merely an added dimension to the greatness of certain novels. But every great novel offers incomprehensible abundance in some form—even The Trial, only a couple of hundred pages long, is abundantly meticulous, abundantly intimate, abundantly strange, and abundantly original. (203)

Very few writers will ever achieve all of the ambitions of a great novel according to Smiley, or of Figure 2, even if they are experienced, advanced, professional, dedicated, published and enormously clever – all they can do is try and, in the process, improve their work all the more for it. Greatness tends to be regarded as work which has stood the test of time long after the writer has gone\(^3\); though even that definition is fraught. It is enough to say that a writer, when capable of recognising greatness in the writing of others (and being able to put defining characteristics into a table) may be able to develop insights and glean strategies from work that is great.

Figure 3 highlights the challenges writers face in producing a novel that reaches beyond themselves, from the private to public domains. This process essentially makes the work done by writers under Figures 1 and 2 worthwhile. Although the private-public process does not sit squarely in any one part of the toolkit in Figure 2 (but by degrees is implied throughout) its relevance is more apparent in the final right hand column (under Significance of Knowledge). To ignore the importance of the processes involved in Figure 3 is to write a novel for the bottom drawer, or for oneself.

**Fiction and reality**

It may seem too obvious to state that the difference between fiction and reality is that fiction is *imagined* and that, if the fiction borrows heavily from reality, that it is a *re-imagined* reality.\(^4\) Beginner writers may be forgiven for thinking that a story can be a tweaked transcription of life, but experienced writers know that this rarely turns out well.

Too often, we hear anguished writers protest, ‘But it really happened!’ (and who hasn’t been guilty of this?) in response to the criticism that the fiction being examined is not believable.\(^5\) Even experienced writers struggle with this anomaly.\(^6\) It is a poorly

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40 To further confuse matters, Patrick O’Neill, 1994, states that ‘post-structuralist textology makes clear, reality is itself merely a fiction...’ at p.129.

41 As if to reinforce this point, during my final post-examination revisions to this exegesis, a case involving a young female lawyer from a top-tier Australian law firm became headline news, with facts very similar to the plot of *Six Minutes*. I had invented this ‘not-believable’ story-line more than a decade earlier!
understood, yet common problem. It was a difficulty that I faced in writing the novel, *Six Minutes*. Even though the characters and story were completely fictional, I had tried to insert some real life details (ironically, intending to make the story seem truer, more life-like and genuine) into a scene or two which did occur in a law firm somewhere, at some time, in Australia in the last decade. Those passages corrupted the narrative and I wanted to know why. Gary Disher warns writers to be careful when using experiences as a basis for fiction:

‘...you must not merely report what happened or how you felt. You must be able to ‘stand outside’ the experience and assess it and yourself with honesty and understanding—this will help you identify the point of your experience (for example ‘people can sometimes behave badly when under sudden stress’) which will be the theme of your story. Often you will have to meddle with the truth, for example give your story or novel a different ending, or have the events happen to another character. Beverly Farmer argues that life should not be mirrored accurately in fiction, but instead exaggerated ‘... just that little bit so that people are shocked into seeing something differently’.”

The process of creating story believability, through story truth, is one of the most perplexing problems that creative writers face. Perhaps there is no ‘unchallengeable truth’, merely ‘levels of narration’? O’Neill states that ‘as structural analysis gives way to textual play, the search for origins becomes less important than the co-constructive role of readerly interpretation, and scientific rules revealing the truth about narrative become less important than ludic rules governing textual games.’ Irrespective, writers need to engage with issues of truth in fiction in practical ways.

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McDonald, E. 2011.

42 Reiken details his own such struggle in ‘Thoughts on Fictional “Truth”, Unconscious Metaphor, & Celery’ at pp.59-60.

43 Disher, G. 1989, p.94

44 O’Neill, P. 1994, p. 21

45 O’Neill, P. 1994, p.157
What is it that writers do? Disher\textsuperscript{46} puts it thus:

What you are doing is transforming reality to create a specific imagined reality. You are distorting, selecting only part of the picture, telling lies. You are falsely emphasising some details, imagining or ignoring others. You are getting to know all the characters well and establishing a sense of the setting and the emotional atmosphere.

A story is believable because it feels true for the time that the reader is immersed in its pages. Story truth and believability go hand-in-glove, but they are not precisely the same thing.

Even the law (which is the subject of the novel, \textit{Six Minutes}) depends on the use of ‘legal fictions’\textsuperscript{47} (such as the ‘reasonable man’, to name but one) to make it workable. Participants know the ‘truth’ to be a convenient ‘untruth’ or ‘half truth’, which is invoked in aid of reaching a particular result without breaking the rules. Everyone merely bends his or her mind and the facts of the case around the rules in a collusive fashion. That way, everyone is expected to arrive at the same result. Everyone agrees to simultaneously suspend his or her disbelief.

The difference between the legal and book businesses is, that in the case of the law, the participants have no choice but to comply (and they can be sour later). In the service industry of books, on the other hand, the reader can opt out at any time and simply refuse to go along with the writer’s artful invitation (or clumsy begging) to suspend disbelief. The author does not wield the same kind of authority as a bewigged lawyer or judge— one gets a response by a wordy seduction of sorts, while the other uses coercive verbosity to influence other (often reluctant) players.

Patrick O’Neill notes a paradox: ‘...indeed, however fantastic the story may be, the story world is always entirely real for its actors; while however real the story may be for the

\textsuperscript{46} Disher, G. 1989, p.96

\textsuperscript{47} A ‘fiction of law’ is defined as ‘a supposition of law that a thing is true, without inquiring whether it be so or not, that it may have the effect of truth so far as is consistent with justice’. Furthermore, the phrase ‘implied by law’ is frequently used to cover a legal fiction. (See Saunders, J.B. (Ed.) 1977, p.137).
reader, the discourse that presents it always has the potential to demonstrate that reality to be completely unreliable.\(^{48}\)

A novel is the product of the author’s imaginative projection of fictional truth: something the reader, through the expertise of the writer, feels at ease to accept and believe as truth, for the duration of the story (providing the discourse does not demonstrate the unreliability of the reality, in O’Neill’s terms).

Put succinctly, the truth of the story is not the writer’s (idea of) truth\(^{49}\), nor is it a copied or emulated truth of some other successful writer.\(^{50}\) It is something that is unique to the story being told. *The question becomes, how does one identify and invoke story truth?*

John Berger states thus:

> The moment a writer’s attention is diverted by considerations of style, rhetoric or verbal glory, his words, instead of containing, will merely evoke. The moment he simply repeats facts instead of imagining the experience of them, his writing will be reduced to a document.\(^{51}\)

The toolkit I propose goes some way towards prompting the office-bound writer out into the world, and the *wanderlust* writer back into his head\(^{52}\), to achieve balance in the writing. As Gilles Deleuze puts it: “To write is not to recount one’s memories and travels, one’s loves and griefs, one’s dreams and fantasies. It is the same thing to sin through an excess of reality as through an excess of the imagination.”\(^{53}\)

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49 This would not be following the fictional ‘mode of thought’ and hence would not be ‘moral fiction’ according to John Gardner, in his controversial 1978 book, *On Moral Fiction*.

50 Imitating is the work of amateurs. Professionals might imitate in their early days, as a kind of practice, trying on and adapting styles, however it is only once they find their own voice and style (not from self-help books) that they achieve great writing.


Psychologists are bound by certain rules of engagement. So too are sociologists. Writers are not—apart from implied ethical obligations, for example, to not grossly mishandle historical or other sensitive facts and issues. Writers may form opinions about the nature of human motivation and test out their hypotheses in their fiction. This is what John Gardner means when he says ‘True moral fiction is a laboratory experiment too difficult and dangerous to try to invent in the world but safe and important in the mirror image of reality in the writer’s mind.’ When the story works, when it ‘rings true’, the writer has, in all likelihood, somewhat accurately transposed or better still, transmogrified the real into fiction, reflecting what a ‘real live person’ in a fictional setting (where life has to make some sense for narrative to be believable) would do. It is strange, but no surprise, that fiction has to make more sense than life. More fundamentally, the writer has trusted his own instincts in willingly following through with the fictional, imaginative, exploratory ‘mode of thought’. Writers are writers because they think like writers, and they write.

Frederick Reiken explains the difference between actual (or ‘happening truth’) and truth in fiction thus:

...actual truth is irrelevant in fiction. This is not to say that one can’t take an actual truth and turn it into a successful and imaginatively projected fiction, but to do so will still require transmuting the actual through the alchemical machinery of the writer’s imagination, such that the actual is reinvented as something textual.

Writers often fail to upgrade from economy to business or first class in their writing, I would suggest, when they accidentally or purposely transpose an element of some other successful story-teller’s story (be it, character, setting, observation, plot, style) and drop it into their own mix, hoping alchemy will do the rest. Oddly enough, in the hard sciences,

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54 Ethics in representation could be the subject of another paper. For the purposes of this exegesis, I can only mention it and make allowance for it in Figure 1, below.


56 With respect, Reiken explains this concept more effectively than Gardner does himself in his book, On Moral Fiction; see Reiken, F. 2007, pp.63-64.


58 Reiken, F. 2007, p.60.
this is precisely what leads to truth; that is, using others’ ideas and findings. Even the legal profession depends upon (and is bound by) the law of precedent. Unfortunately, when a novelist ceases to apply his or her own beliefs, observations and ‘knowledge’ to the way the story must happen but instead, follows what the writer thinks ought to happen (which invariably ends up being what has happened in other people’s stories time and again) the story fails. Writers fall into this trap due to a lack of confidence, practice or sophisticated thinking. The adapted story tends to congeal around the artifice of ‘originality’—the monstrous wounds of the ad hoc sewn-together story never completely heal. At best, they remain as raised and angry scars. The successful story, on the other hand, depends on a smooth and natural skin—a natural cohesiveness and wholeness.

As creative writers, we cannot borrow someone else’s seemingly convincing truth; authenticity cannot be replicated, nor simulated—it has to be unearthed from within ourselves, then cut and polished. Every book we write has to be a discovery (for the writer and the reader). Gardner says that moral fiction ‘does not start out with clear knowledge of what it means to say’ but rather, the ‘process’ propels the writer ‘toward unexpected discovery and frequently a change of mind.’

If (to argue the opposite case) one rejects the notion of a writing process involving a particular mode of thought, in preference to a more mechanical view of writing (with a fixed outcome i.e. a predetermined moral, rather than a discovery) then Christopher Booker is probably right. He believes that following the traditional three-act structure with combinations of archetypal characters, plot and setting will create great fiction, and that every worthwhile story has been written. According to him, all we can hope to do is write variations of the classics (from at least 200 years ago). Booker believes stories should have moralistic (God-centred as opposed to process-centred) messages that explain the human condition (and how conformity to strict, traditional norms is what the world needs). As I have indicated in my review of his book in Appendix Three of this work, I do not agree with Booker’s conclusion. While I accept that his analysis may to some extent explain the stories that he has chosen to include in his study, I also note that

60 Booker, C. 2004.
his method of analysis is not new. Furthermore, what is left out of his analysis as well as
his narrow conclusion precludes a broader usefulness of his work. There is room (indeed,
a need) for all kinds of writing, not just the stories springing from Judeo-Christian
traditions.

Writers do more than tell a story; they do more than record observations or annotate
cultural/historical context. They certainly could be doing better than window-dressing
moralistic messages or propaganda. Great writers reinterpret and represent all the
potentials engaged in living. But, at the same time, the good storyteller focuses on one
story—the one that tells the most about what is necessary in a unique way. The story’s
‘truth’ is probably an ideal truth rather than an actual truth, not in a moralistic or
romanticised way, but in a story-telling way.

Writers explore the ugly side of life, so when I suggest focusing on an ideal truth or story
truth, it is not perfection or romantic imaginings that I refer to, but rather, ideal as in
what is essential or necessary to tell the story. Writers are likely to poke around in the
remains of washed-up, rotting jellyfish and storm-water drains that empty onto the beach,
and even much worse. But like those shampoo companies that market products called
Seaside Bliss, writers are seeking to tap into universal emotions that are a product of both
nature and nurture—nature, being how we are all hard-wired to respond to certain
stimuli, and nurture, being the way we learn through and respond to (common)
experiences. That way, writers are able to allow readers to participate in new experiences
by associating them with and extending old experiences. Falling short of that finds a
novel in the common terrain of cliché and formula.

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62 Sontag, S. 1999. p.1. In her National Book Award winning novel, In America, the opening monologue
includes: “There are so many stories to tell, it’s hard to say why it’s one rather than another, it must be
because with this story you feel you can tell many stories, that there will be a necessity in it... It has to be
something like falling in love...”

63 By contrast, perfume-makers hone their scents to signify, memorialise and relive moments of imagined
perfection—perfect romance, perfect happiness, perfect sexiness, perfect confidence and so on.
Comic-fantasy writer, Terry Pratchett, wrote at the end of his novel, *The Truth*, ‘...nothing has to be true for ever. Just for long enough, to tell you the truth.’\(^{64}\) This short quote would seem to encapsulate the distinct purpose of any novel. After all, if a reader is unable to suspend his disbelief, he is not going to be absorbed by the story—to see and experience the fictional world as an active participant from *inside* the story rather than from the position of critic standing *outside* of the story. If the reader discerns obvious inaccuracies or inconsistencies, the writer has broken her end of the bargain, nullifying the implicit contract between reader and writer, thus releasing the reader from following through with his end of the bargain, which is to read the book to its conclusion.\(^{65}\) This is the nature of the ‘fair-weather’ faith of the reader in the writer. The faith extends to buying or borrowing the book, and starting to read it until the writer gives the reader a reason to stop, or insufficient reason to continue.

Having worked through the multi-faceted issue of truth in fiction, it seems to me that there are different aspects of truth that writers must grapple with. Dealing effectively with each is a necessary part of the task of novelistic research, as there are particular consequences that attach to the final fictional product if all are not addressed adequately. In the following diagram, I summarise what I see to be the causes and effects of ‘truth’ in fiction.

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\(^{64}\) Pratchett, T. 2000, p. 319.

Figure 1: ‘Truth’ and truth-telling consequences in fiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truth for factual accuracy</th>
<th>Sustaining authorial authority and readers’ trust through story believability and generating effective, detailed description relying on actual truth/fact.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truth in the ethics of representation</td>
<td>Responsibility to not mislead or misrepresent and being conscious of authorial motivation and its possible effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being true to oneself as author</td>
<td>Finding the stories you are uniquely qualified to tell, which leads to originality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling the story’s truth—the necessary and moral central story</td>
<td>Transmogrifying the three other types of ‘truth’ into a new truth, that of an authentic, believable, original story. An ideal or textual rather than actual truth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Truth for factual accuracy results in readers happily suspending disbelief in order to be immersed in the story and be empathetically involved with the characters. This lets readers feel the story through the senses of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing. This is largely about including enough specific detail and situational context in the story, to make it believable on a fundamental level. This takes a story away from being an abstracted, moralistic/didactic, clichéd idea and requires the reader ‘to envision singular characters or a specific, high-acute situation.’ Novelists do well to remember that one fact has to logically lead to the next one and that the story grows out of the seeds planted. This type of truth is of the objective kind.

66 Reiken, F. 2007, p.61. See Reiken for his highly useful extrapolation of Tim O’Brien’s 1991 work in ‘How to Tell a True War Story.’ The key is the combination of the singularity and specificity of details and/or situational context (vividly projected detail), paired with a sense of resonant ambiguity. This is one of the most powerful tools that exists with regard to making a piece of fiction ‘true’.
Truth in the ethics of representation stretches and engages the reader in a new, unique way and encourages them to think about the story. Moral questions may be posed. The way they are handled in the story will determine whether the resulting novel is necessary or humbug. Resonant ambiguity⁶⁷ might be considered generally under this heading, along with more direct concerns regarding misrepresentation, ethics in research and other grey areas which approach and stretch the boundaries of creative practice, law, ethics and morality. Shady Cosgrove suggested during her presentation ‘Fictionalising ‘True’ Histories: Ethics, Representation and Creative Writing’, at the 11th Australian Association of Writing Programs Conference in 2006 at the Queensland University of Technology, that maybe writing students should be required to take classes in the ethics of representation just as journalism programs decree.⁶⁸ Cosgrove does have a good point. For the purposes of this exegesis however, I can merely indicate that this is an important area of work requiring further investigation.

Being true to oneself as author means that the reader will experience a genuinely new reaction because the writer is allowing the reader to tap into the frequency of the world to which the writer is tuned. The writer is not imitating another writer’s style, or attempting to transcribe reality, but is attaching a unique story to, and extrapolating upon some universal understandings and experiences. Part of the process involves getting around one’s own ‘life-lies’⁶⁹, delusions or strong feelings which potentially block knowledge and self-knowledge, as well as letting the demons speak for themselves.⁷⁰

Telling the story’s truth will allow readers to feel, think and experience the liberation of escapism and living in the story, and possibly bring some of their empathetically engaged/induced understandings from that experience back into their real, everyday lives—thus participating in a transformative act. There is surprise and delight in the

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⁶⁷ Reiken, F. 2007, p.61. See Reiken for his highly useful extrapolation of Tim O’Brien’s 1991 work in ‘How to Tell a True War Story.’


⁶⁹ ‘Life-lies’ according to Ibsen in The Wild Duck, are the necessary delusions that make life possible, give hope, even if unreasonably so (see Oates 2004, p.136).

⁷⁰ Regarding the writer’s demon, see D.H. Lawrence, in his note to Collected Poems, 1928 (cited in Oates 2004, p.35).
reader recognising something ordinary but being given access to it in a totally different way.

It should be noted that story truth also depends on how a writer deals with time and causality. As Tzvetan Todorov\textsuperscript{71} points out (explained by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan\textsuperscript{72}) in relation to time:

The notion of story-time involves a convention which identifies it with ideal chronological order, or what is sometimes called ‘natural chronology’. In fact, strict succession can only be found in stories with a single line or even a single character. The minute there is more than one character, events may become simultaneous and the story is often multilinear rather than unilinear. Strict linear chronology, then, is neither natural nor an actual characteristic of most stories. It is a conventional ‘norm’ which has become so widespread as to replace the actual multilinear temporality of the story and acquire a pseudo-natural status.

Dealing with story time adds another layer of complexity to the writer’s task. It was something I struggled with in the writing of \textit{Six Minutes}, which is a novel relating the significance of time to big-firm lawyers (whose working lives are measured in six-minute increments on timesheets). In legal practice, there are enormously long stretches of time which cannot be explained in an interesting or worthwhile fashion when done in a real or linear way: it would bore readers. Similarly, it is difficult to contrast just how quickly lawyers have to move to make near-impossible deadlines. The fact that the pressure-cooker environment of legal practice warps and deforms perceptions and values of time further complicates matters for a fiction writer.

Forster wrote about time sequence in narrative, originally in 1927, merging the ‘and then’ principle of temporal succession with the ‘that’s why’ or ‘therefore’ principle of causality\textsuperscript{73}:

\textsuperscript{71} Todorov, T. 1966, p.127.
\textsuperscript{72} Rimmon-Kenan, S. 1983, p.17.
\textsuperscript{73} Rimmon-Kenan, S. 1983, p.17.
We have defined story as a narrative of events arranged in time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. ‘The king died and then the queen died’ is a story. ‘The king died and then the queen died of grief’ is a plot.\textsuperscript{74}

Similarly, lawyers present negligence cases (for example) constructing stories which best represent their client’s actions in the most believable way possible in the circumstances. One of the tests of causality involves asking, ‘Would the harm have occurred but for the actions of the defendant?’ Lawyers, like writers, are always looking for causation, either on the balance of probabilities (in civil matters) or beyond reasonable doubt (in criminal matters). Like writers, lawyers also have to understand and best present matters pertaining to motive (human motivation), in ways that will satisfy judges and juries (such that they will believe to the requisite standard, or suspect their disbelief and accept the story at hand).

Each layer of ‘truth’, as indicated in the diagram above, is imbued with the truth of the individual writer, who is trying to get at the truth of the story—what is necessary and somehow transformative, moral (cf. moralistic), believable, original and valid about the one central story that potentially tells many stories.

The writer’s degree of self-awareness and openness-to-the-world correlates with her ability to tune into her own being-in-the-world frequency and sensibilities. In terms of writing outcomes, when effectively done, this translates into a strong, authentic voice that is irresistibly believable (see under ‘Truth for factual accuracy’ above), tempered by an awareness of ethical sensitivities (see under ‘Truth in the ethics of representation’ above), and is unique or original (see under ‘Being true to yourself as author’ above). In turn, the intensity of imagination behind the voice convincingly conveys a story that at its core is necessary and moral (see under ‘Telling the story’s truth’ above).

Effective research begins with being open to the world, yet knowing how to tune into one’s own frequency. Effective writing depends upon it. Story truth demands it.

\textsuperscript{74} Forster, E.M. 1963, p.93. (Orig. publ. 1927).
Henry James broadly defined a novel as 'a personal and direct impression of life,'\textsuperscript{75} and believed that a novel had merit if '… its foremost claim is its truth … its truth to something, however questionable that thing may be in point of morals or taste.'

Novelist Robert Boswell argues that writing fiction is like creating a half-known world; that there must be a dimension to the fictional reality that defies comprehension. 'The writer wishes to make his characters and their world known to the reader, and he simultaneously wishes them to resonate with the unknown.'\textsuperscript{76}

I would suggest that novel writing demands a type of honesty from writers—to know and share what they know of the world, looking at it through their own windows out of the 'house of fiction'\textsuperscript{77}—but equally, to fairly represent or acknowledge that which is unknown or unknowable.

Perhaps the most significant failings of other literature in the field, such as formulaic how-to-write manuals and how-I-wrote-it memoirs, is that:

- they do not encourage the writer to find her own way to the story truth, but inadvertently kill creativity with the kindness of showing the road already taken; and

- by attempting to remove creative doubt, they inadvertently dispense with the very elements that make fiction dangerous and 'real'.

**Purpose of toolkit**

The toolkit does not tell a writer what to do, nor is it any kind of short-cut towards a completed, fully actualised novel. What it does do, is to provide novelists with an iterative, flexible concept that they may use at any stage of the researching, writing or

\textsuperscript{75} James, H. 1998. p. 374.

\textsuperscript{76} Boswell, R. 2008. p. 6.

\textsuperscript{77} Miller, J. (Ed.) (1972). p. 27.
editing processes in order to work towards a novel that is 'effective' in being believable, authentic and transformative—the opposite of what Reiken terms literary 'celery'.

Put another way, it is about getting beyond celeriac writing by writing 'the story's truth' through methodically improving one's technique of 'imaginative projection' or of mapping ways of moving through the writer's domains of experience towards the ultimate 'weaving/merging of inner and outer environments' into fiction.

Broadly speaking, the toolkit plots out the skills/outcomes required to transform the actual (facts, experiences, research etc) into the textual (the novel-world).

It also, in some ways, responds to Joyce Cary's challenge to produce a practical method that can be taught, but which will not simply become a vulgarised, practised trick resulting in 'mechanical and imitative' work by hordes of students. Thoughtfully applied, the toolkit might afford experienced writers 'a true[r] expressive form for their own new intuition.'

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79 Krauth, N. 2006. p.187. 'Continually they pass between the real world and their stored world. This process of passing between – this weaving / merging of inner and outer environments – creates fiction.' O'Neill, P. 2004. P. 117 refers to 'the quality of wovenness of the literary text'.
81 Cary, J. 1958, p.95.
82 Cary, J. 1958, p.95. Bracket inserted to modify 'true' to 'truer', to be clear that the toolkit is but another means to a (hopefully better) end, that being the best novel possible for the author at the time.
**Figure 2: A writer's creativity toolkit**

(A writer’s copy of this toolkit, with space for writing notes, is provided in Appendix Five.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research process</th>
<th>Knowledge (Conveyed through narration, description, dialogue)</th>
<th>Knowledge of knowledge (Contemplated by writer searching for the story’s ‘truth’)</th>
<th>Significance of knowledge (Imbued into the story and used as the ultimate editing/culling tool)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing stages</td>
<td>Research: facts Writing: plot / situation</td>
<td>Research: validity Writing: point of view</td>
<td>Market + audience Accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific enquiry</td>
<td>Character motivation</td>
<td>Authorial motivation</td>
<td>Originality Moral and necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical enquiry</td>
<td>Pure feeling</td>
<td>True thinking</td>
<td>Potential for new thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artful transformation</td>
<td>Believability</td>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Transformation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Structure of the toolkit

At the outset, it is worth noting the general structure of the toolkit and the movement along the x and y-axes. From left to right, horizontally, marks a movement from the *private* to the *public.* From top left hand corner, to bottom right hand corner, diagonally, indicates a transformation of *actual* through to *textual,* or in Deleuzian terms from *being* to *becoming.* Consider the diagonal movement not as a lining up of boxes as the crow flies, but more as a book’s life journey towards self-actualisation. Imagine it travelling the peaks and troughs of a sine wave, which swells to encompass everything, the whole length and breadth of the toolkit. Like a sine wave, a novel naturally oscillates between reality and imagination, as well as reality and possibility.

Patrick O’Neill speaks of narration as being the process of transforming story into text through a complex series of acts of arrangement by the implied author and narrator, including:

(a) chronologization (action to plot)

(b) localization (place to setting)

(c) characterization (arranging personality traits into characters)

(d) focalization (arrangement of narrative perspective)

(e) verbalization (arrangement of words on the page, making all of the implied author’s arrangements known to the reader and duly received by the reader as ‘voice’ of the narrator)

(f) validation of narrator’s degree of reliability.

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83 To be discussed, below. See Figure 3.
84 As discussed earlier in this paper in the context of Frederick Reiken’s and John Berger’s work in the area.
In O'Neill's theory, the implied author acts as director behind the narrative and the narrator acts as a performer. The implied author is what is left of narration after the narrating voice is taken away, that is, definable as the difference between what the text says and what we take as its meaning.\(^{87}\) The real author dissolves in a web of post-formalist intertextuality, such that it is methodologically convenient to regard the implied author as the ultimate intratextual guarantor of the narrator's reliability (while admitting the possibility of an unreliable implied author).\(^{88}\) A working knowledge of O'Neill's complex theories on narrator-narratee, implied author-implied reader, real author-real reader, and narrative communication\(^{89}\) between senders (both extratextual and intratextual) and receivers (both intratextual and extratextual) is not needed to be able to use the toolkit, although the toolkit does not preclude their involvement.

From top to bottom, marks the development in a novel's layers of sophistication, indicating that the ultimate ambitions for a novel, as expressed by this toolkit, are believability, authenticity and transformation.

A key feature of the toolkit is that it is not a restrictive 'how-to' guide, nor a linear method for researching, writing or editing a novel. It is a representation of a novel's (and author's) developmental journey and a device to self-diagnose possible impediments to creating a fully actualised novel. It is described in diagrammatic terms only insofar as it is difficult to contemplate and organise a discourse which has no structure, or which is difficult to hold in one's mind's eye.

Working through the toolkit on an actual writing project makes it clear that it accommodates the truly iterative and multi-modal nature of creative research, writing and editing. In effect, it summarises, contemplates, and accommodates all that has been described in my exegesis to this point, and potentially, more in its usage.

\(^{87}\) O'Neill, P. 1994, p. 69.

\(^{88}\) O'Neill, P. 1994, p.70.

\(^{89}\) O'Neill, P. 1994, pp.74-75.
A writer can consider the toolkit as a mere node in Deleuze's rhizome theory of infinite connectivity\textsuperscript{90}: The rhizome

is comprised not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills...

Unlike the graphic arts, drawing or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entranceways and exits and its own lines of flight.\textsuperscript{91}

Considering further, the concept of a line of flight:

Multiplicity are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities. The plane of consistency (grid) is the outside of all multiplicities. The line of flight marks: the reality of a finite number of dimensions that the multiplicity effectively fills; the impossibility of a supplementary dimension, unless the multiplicity is transformed by the line of flight; the possibility and necessity of flattening all of the multiplicities on a single plane of consistency or exteriority, regardless of their number of dimensions.\textsuperscript{92}

In a Deleuzian sense, a writer may use the toolkit to open up the potential of his or her text through process. Something new, of endless transformative potential is possible when the writer is able to take up the interrupted line in the middle, and become through art. Deleuze's concept of the line of flight opens up different lines of thought and actualises the novel as art.

A line of flight may also be thought of as a line of escape; a creative escape from standardisation. In that way, the toolkit offers the writer an opportunity to think outside of the box of formula and how-I-wrote-it books, by better understanding the box and how to


\textsuperscript{92} Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. 1980, pp.9-10.
make it into something better. The toolkit is an example of de-territorialising lines of flight. I have deliberately presented it so that it may be used flexibly, rather than prescriptively, to avoid re-territorialising creative writing within new boundaries. The toolkit may be entered and exited at any point, and moved through at will: it is a jumping-off point for a writer’s self-determined line of flight. I want the toolkit to be a smooth space for writers, where creativity is unlimited and unobstructed.

This is where the toolkit and this exegesis both depart from other writing in the field. The toolkit does not claim to replace other methods; in fact, other methods may be adopted or adapted within the toolkit itself—it is a model in baggy pants. It does not limit research method, nor writing style, nor writing output—be it literary, popular, genre or experimental. Again, this is a major point of departure from other writing self-help models, which tend to focus on particular outcomes in a very narrow sense.

My original three questions (which inspired the toolkit) changed from questions to statements:

- ‘What do I know?’ …to ‘Knowledge’.
- ‘How do I know it?’ …to ‘Knowledge of knowledge’.
- ‘Why does it matter, and to whom?’ …to ‘Significance of knowledge’.

These are nominally referred to as being on the ‘research process’ axis.

Knowledge is conveyed through narration, description and dialogue in the novel. As O’Neill reminds us, ‘it is [also] through the text, and only through the text, that we can acquire knowledge of the narration, namely knowledge of the process of its production.’

The writer searching for the story’s truth, contemplates knowledge of knowledge.\footnote{One could spend years reading about knowledge, starting perhaps with Russian philosopher Immanuel Kant’s early obsession with the subject, through to current thinking on metacognition, or knowledge of knowledge/ways of knowing. Details become the casualties of succinctness; however, it is necessary to note that these things have been considered in the development of the toolkit.}

\footnote{O’Neill, P. 1994. p. 108}
Significance of knowledge is about the effect of the book beyond the author and beyond itself. Significance of knowledge is imbued into the story and used as the ultimate editing tool. That is, if something in or about the novel is not significant or purposeful (or necessary) consider amending it.

Down the vertical axis, the processes are nominally referred to as ‘writing stages’. These writing stages are set up as three levels of enquiry also, but set out in terms of three predominant types of thinking: scientific, philosophical and artistic. For an in-depth consideration of these modes of thought (thought is becoming, according to Deleuze), one could consult Deleuze’s work (co-authored with Félix Guattari), *What is Philosophy?* which was published in French in 1991 and in English in 1994. Claire Colebrook explains it in an accessible way in her book, *Gilles Deleuze* in Chapter 1. Further, in Chapter 7, she summarises as follows:

> Philosophy, literature and science are powers of becoming. Philosophy allows us to think the forces of becoming by producing concepts of the differential or dynamic power of life; science allows us to organise matter by creating functions that allow us to extend our perception beyond what is actually given; literature allows us to become by creating affects that transform what we take experience to be.\(^{98}\)

In this way, the toolkit is based in the Deleuzian tradition of remaining open to the outside and allowing for the continual rejuvenation of thought by ‘not remaining within any one discipline, and not just combining disciplines, but crossing from discipline to discipline, to continually open and renew the very medium or ‘milieu’ within which we think.’\(^{99}\)

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\(^{95}\) Regarding story truth, see Fig.1.

\(^{96}\) The potentially expansive effect of a novel is encapsulated in Fig.3. To my mind, the diagram also represents how a novel becomes or fails to become ‘necessary’ (see toolkit, under Philosophical Enquiry). To be necessary, a novel must connect with people.


Lovers of Deleuze’s work might also contemplate the movement down the vertical axis (under the ‘knowledge’ column) as reflecting a complicated dance between percept (what is received or intuited) and affect (what is felt). However, a working knowledge of French philosophy is not needed to operate the toolkit—it is merely another (potentially more challenging) way into it.

The first level of ‘scientific enquiry’ responds to the need for content and consistency in the story to be developed. Disher sets out a useful list of sources for ideas and how to incorporate them into fiction; this is mostly about organising and recording (as science does) the story’s basic background, the skeleton.

The second level of ‘philosophical enquiry’ is about process and is largely about the writer becoming attuned to the characters and therefore the story’s needs and being open to the world in the researching and writing of the novel. If level 1 is the skeleton, then level 2 is the flesh.

The third level of process is the skill of ‘artful transformation’. This is about what the story invokes in the reader (and in the writer, as new learning via a hermeneutic process).

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102 Disher, G. 1989, pp. 93-96. Disher lists: snatches of overheard conversation; cuttings from newspapers; relationships you’ve observed; interesting characters; people’s behaviour; personal experiences; anecdotes and incidents related by others; witnessed incidents; paintings and photographs; images, atmosphere, textures, landscapes; voices; what if; a complete, isolated sentence; short descriptive observations; traditional plot ideas.
103 N.B. Characters’ domain in Fig.3
104 N.B. Story domain in Fig.3
105 Susan Sontag implored writers to remain open to the world and to pay certain kinds of attention. See Newsday.com: Essay: ‘The truth of fiction evokes our common humanity’, 20/4/07 at p.3 of 5.
It might be considered in light of Deleuze and Guattari's work on affect (and percept)\textsuperscript{106}, which I loosely repackage into 'pure feeling'. I suggest that 'pure feeling' is not located in the author's original feelings or perceptions nor those of the characters as described by the text on the page. It moves beyond this to an imprinting of the vividly re-imagined and projected\textsuperscript{107} feelings of the characters (and to some degree, the author's) onto the intuition of the reader. The reader experiences the author's feelings\textsuperscript{108}, the character's feelings\textsuperscript{109} and his own imagined feelings\textsuperscript{110} (as extended by the story\textsuperscript{111}) anew, in a unique combination that feels like the experiencing of something familiar in a fresh way. It is an experience that moves the reader beyond expectation, but not beyond all recognition.

What this means is that the writer does not send the reader on a journey without a map or compass because the reader always takes his own map (being the way he sees the world) and orienteering skills (derived from life experiences) but the artful writer has a magical magnetism which realigns true north to the true north of the story. In this way, the reader is guided towards the story’s truth as depicted in Figure 1 as the final destination but, ultimately, the reader still chooses his own way there, because every reader's self-made map of the world will differ.

\textsuperscript{106} Claire Colebrook explains the Deleuzean terms of affect and percept at p.xix of her 2002 book, Understanding Deleuze. The terms originate from Deleuze and Guattari's 1994 work, What is Philosophy? 'Affect': In its most general sense, 'affect' is what happens to us when we feel an event... Affect is not the meaning of an experience but the response it prompts. Deleuze redefines this notion to argue that art is the creation of 'affects' and 'percepts'... Whereas affections and perceptions are located in perceivers—we can say I have a 'perception' of red or that I 'feel' fear—Deleuze argues that art creates affects and percepts that are not located in a point of view. (Imagine a painting that just is terrifying or depressing; we may not be depressed or terrified when we view it but it presents the 'affect' of depression or terror. Imagine a novel that describes a certain light; we may not see the light but we are presented with what it would be to perceive such light, or what such a perception is regardless of who perceives; this is a percept.)


\textsuperscript{108} N.B. Author's private domain (self) in Fig.3

\textsuperscript{109} N.B. Character's domain in Fig.3

\textsuperscript{110} N.B. Reader domain (self) in Fig.3

\textsuperscript{111} N.B. Story domain in Fig.3
"True thinking" may encompass aspects of Deleuzean concepts but goes beyond the philosophical (which was the second level of enquiry) and merges with the artistic, as the literature itself embodies and demonstrates somehow the clarity and certainty of a philosophical conceptualisation, particularly of cause and effect, or awareness, without naming or framing it as such. I see this cause and effect as having been first tested in the laboratory of the writer's mind, then proved (or not) in the literature (in the method of Gardner's moral fiction).

Literature goes beyond philosophy because it takes the somewhat general concept and makes it personal (attaching an abstract concept to an individual life—that of a character, vividly imagined). Assuming the reader feels an empathic connection to the well-written characters in the story, literature then makes the personal even more personal by helping the reader realise that what applies to the characters may also apply to him. James N. Frey tells us that we gain readers' empathy through the power of suggestion, using sensuous, emotion-provoking details that allow the readers to put themselves into the character's place. Literature informs, educates and extends that human capacity to imagine oneself as being in another's circumstances, or indeed, of being that other person. Literature also has the power to make the personal more general when the reader realises that not only does the concept / moral of the story (without being moralistic) apply to the characters, potentially to himself the reader, but also to others in the world at large. This is why the toolkit covers the three modes of thought as they apply to the novelistic enterprise—no single mode describes everything a novelist does—a novelist does many things all at once (which is probably why we have such a hard time describing what we do).

112 Claire Colebrook's explanation at p.xxi of her 2002 book, Understanding Deleuze. "Concept: For Deleuze, a concept is not a generalisation or a label that we use to name the world. Concepts are creations that testify to the positive power of thinking as an event of life. We create concepts in order to transform life..."
114 N.B. the Reader domain as "self" in Fig.3
117 N.B. the Characters' domain in Fig.3
118 N.B. the Public domain as "other-self" in Fig.3
Philosophy floats in the amorphous space of concept, whereas literature combines that resonant ambiguity with concrete detail. Accordingly, literature transmits the ‘true thinking’ and ‘pure feeling’ invented (essentially, a lie that feels like the truth) by the author across the novel-as-synapse to the reader. Ultimately, the reader feels / intuits / experiences, what the writer knows (in a bodily or neural-sensory way) without necessarily coming into possession of direct knowledge of a philosophical proposition (in a neural-thinking way). It is almost as if the reader takes possession of a shared memory, imprinting it as his own.

I think of the novel as a synapse between reader and writer (and potentially, between reader and other readers, or reader and the world-at-large, as demonstrated in Figure 3). In biology, a synapse is a juncture or structure that allows a neuron to transmit a chemical or electrical signal to another cell (another neuron, or non-neuronal cell such as for a gland or muscle). Synapses are essential because they facilitate the connection between the neural and other bodily functions—the mind cannot control the body if it does not know what the body is doing or feeling, and without the mind, the body cannot interpret meaning from sensation. This aligns with Nigel Krauth’s proposition that the writer’s body is a recording device—what the body feels, it records—and what the body records, the hand can write. He also speaks of his experiences colliding / converging with the experiences of his readers to achieve connection and understanding. In this way, the novel-reading experience is more than a stimulation of neural activity; it simulates a bodily connection and potentially becomes embedded like muscle memory is for dancers and athletes. It is almost a refining or retraining of intuition (for writers and readers).

‘True thinking’ signifies the author’s invocation of the mind as the ultimate testing laboratory. Potential for new thinking is what happens to both writer and reader when new possibilities are opened up—when both become more open to the world. Martha

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120 The interaction can become a network, going beyond the original reader-writer connection. For example, a book’s effect can be communicated through reviews, social commentary, books written about the book—analysis of story line, characters, cultural impact and impact on belief systems and knowledge of the world of the story.
121 Krauth, N. 2006, p.189.
Nussbaum posits that positive change in social policy and legislature could be brought about if people in positions of power were affected by pertinent novels.\textsuperscript{123} If level 2 is the flesh, then level 3 gives it the personality.

The bottom row, ‘outcomes in the creative product’, is about the perfect union between story and reader. It is about reconnecting the reader to the world, to feel more, see more, hear more (in Sontag’s terms\textsuperscript{123}) and is about making the reader experience the world in a new way. This is where the novel, continuing the metaphor, would be fully actualised as a person (in terms of Maslow’s well-known hierarchy of needs) and has reached some Zen-like state (as Bradbury would have it\textsuperscript{124}). It is when story truth (as illustrated in Figure 1) has been achieved on every level and the writer has successfully bridged the gap between intuition and expression.\textsuperscript{125} Joyce Cary speaks of the gap between intuition and expression as a practical problem that professional artists must overcome.

Writers wishing to take a deeper philosophical approach to applying the toolkit may look at transformation in terms of:

- a ‘literary effect’ or ‘literary machine’ (Deleuze)\textsuperscript{126};
- a ‘magnifying glass’ to look within oneself (Proust)\textsuperscript{127};
- novels as machines for producing epiphanies (Joyce)\textsuperscript{128}
- a novel being a psychoanalysis beyond psychoanalysis, since the author is a clinician of civilization\textsuperscript{129} (Deleuze), or ‘physician(s) of culture’ (Nietzsche)\textsuperscript{130};

\textsuperscript{124} Which is self-evident given he wrote a book by the name of Zen in the Art of Writing (1992). See p.138-139.
\textsuperscript{125} Cary, J. 1958, p.42.
\textsuperscript{126} Deleuze, G. 1997, p.xxi–xxii.
\textsuperscript{127} See ‘Antilogo; or, the Literary Machine’, in Proust and Signs, pp. 93–157.
\textsuperscript{128} Proust and Signs, p. 128, 154; for the comparison with Joyce’s epiphanies, see p.138.
\textsuperscript{129} Deleuze, G. 1997, p. xviii.
• life having a direct relation to literature because writing itself is ‘a passage of Life that traverses both the livable and the lived.’\textsuperscript{131};

• ‘transparence’ which is ‘the highest, most liberating value in art—and in criticism today. Transparence means experiencing the luminousness of the thing in itself, of things being what they are.’ (Sontag)\textsuperscript{132};

• ‘becoming.’ (Deleuze and Guattari).\textsuperscript{133}

I consider all of these notions to be helpful, depending on what a writer needs in a particular project. They are not answers in themselves, but a set of skeleton (or master) keys to work through in order to unlock the writer’s mind. Any number of other ideas may work equally well (or better) and be added to the jangling key chain that we all carry.

Just briefly on ‘becoming’:

• ‘To write is to become something other than a writer.’\textsuperscript{134}

• ‘To write is certainly not to impose a form (of expression) on the matter of lived experience. Literature rather moves in the direction of the ill-formed or the incomplete, as Gombrowicz said, as well as practiced. Writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed, and goes beyond the matter of any livable or lived experience. It is a process, that is, a passage of Life that traverses both the livable and the lived. Writing is inseparable from becoming.’\textsuperscript{135}

I do not endorse comparisons between writing and machines (even though Deleuze stretches the usual notion until he completely deforms it) simply because the writing process is not made up of clearly definable parts that work together in pre-determined, predictable and reproducible ways. Making reference to the writing process in

\textsuperscript{130} Nietzsche, Friedrich, 1873. For Deleuze’s analysis of the symptomatological method in Nietzsche, see Nietzsche and Philosophy, pp. x, 3, 75, 79, 157.

\textsuperscript{131} Deleuze, G. 1997. p. xiv.

\textsuperscript{132} Sontag, S. 1966.


\textsuperscript{134} Deleuze, G. 1997. p. 6.

mechanical terms ventures too close to the rigidity of formula. I would rather think of it in terms of a periodic table for fictional elements, borrowing from chemistry as Thomas Wolfe did in his essay ‘The Story of a Novel.’\textsuperscript{136} He described his compositional technique:

It was as if I had discovered a whole new universe of chemical elements and had begun to see certain relations between some of them but had by no means begun to organize and arrange the whole series in such a way that they would crystallize into a harmonious and coherent union. From this time on, I think my effort might be described as the effort to complete that organisation.

Unfortunately, the more one knows about the periodic table for chemical elements, the more one realises the wisdom in Deleuze’s warning about not arbitrarily adopting scientific metaphors that may be misleading and amount to forced applications.\textsuperscript{137} The periodic table is a guide that indicates trends and exceptions. To an extent, my toolkit does something similar for writing, but it is difficult to discern any other useful analogies as far as process is concerned. Accordingly, the metaphor becomes limited in a practical sense. Deleuze indicates, ‘But perhaps these dangers are averted, if we restrict ourselves to extracting from scientific operators a particular conceptualisable character which itself refers to non-scientific domains, and converges with science without applying it or making it a metaphor.’\textsuperscript{138}

Great authors are more like doctors than patients (they are physicians to the world as well as to themselves) according to Deleuze\textsuperscript{139}. It must then follow that authors who are not that great, are more like patients. Within the toolkit, this would be addressed under ‘authorial motivation’. Deleuze rightly points out: ‘We do not write with our neuroses. Neuroses or psychoses are not passages of life, but states into which we fall when the process is

\textsuperscript{136} in Field, Leslie (Ed.).
\textsuperscript{137} Deleuze, G. 1997, p. xxiv.
\textsuperscript{138} Deleuze, G. 1989.
\textsuperscript{139} Deleuze, G. 1997, p. 3.
interrupted, blocked, or plugged up. Illness is not a process but a stopping of the process…¹⁴⁰ The toolkit might be used to help unblock the process.

Critics look for hints of the author as patient in the work,

... seeking a sign of neurosis like a secret in their work, its hidden code. The work of art then seems to be inscribed between two poles: a regressive pole, where the work hashes out the unresolved conflicts of childhood, and a progressive pole, by which the work invents paths leading to a new solution concerning the future of humanity, converting itself into a ‘cultural object’.¹⁴¹

In this framework, the immature author represents a normativity of the text, something that will respond to the notion of a cure. What makes an immature author immature is their being constrained by a traditional psychoanalytic framework. In exploding this framework, Deleuze provides a line of flight for the mature author.

Daniel W. Smith, in his Introduction to Deleuze’s Essays Critical and Clinical, pulls together some very noteworthy observations about Deleuze’s work, which could explain something of the toolkit’s ambitions.

¹⁴⁰ Deleuze, G. 1997, p. 3.
for Deleuze, writing is never a personal matter. It is never simply
a matter of our lived experiences: You don’t get very far in literature
with the system ‘I’ve seen a lot and been lots of places.’ 142 Novels
are not created with our dreams and fantasies, nor our sufferings and
grievances, our opinions and ideas, our memories and travels, nor ‘with
the interesting characters we have met or the interesting character
who is inevitably oneself (Who isn’t interesting?).’ 143 It is true that
the writer is ‘inspired’ by the lived; but even in writers like Thomas
Wolfe or Henry Miller, who seem to do nothing but recount their
lives, ‘there’s an attempt to make life something more than personal,
to free life from what imprisons it.’ 144 Nor does Deleuze read works
of literature primarily as texts, or treat writing in terms of its
‘textuality,’ though he by no means ignores the effect literature has
on language. His approach to literature must thus be distinguished
from Jacques Derrida’s deconstructive approach. 145

Deleuze, commenting on Derrida’s deconstructive approach, once said,

... I do not present myself as a commentator on texts. For me, a text
is merely a small cog in an extra-textual practice. It is not a question
of commenting on the text by a method of deconstruction, or by a
method of textual practice, or by other methods; it is a question of
seeing what use it has in the extra-textual practice that prolongs the
text. 146

My thinking on this relates to the use that the reader can put the novel to—how the novel
translates into the public domain (see Figure 3) and becomes more than words (text) on a
page. The actual real world is transmogrified (through fictional projection as discussed
earlier) to the textual (progressing in a non-linear way across the toolkit from the top left
which deals mostly with factual reality, diagonally to the bottom right, which represents
story reality) and the textual is effective or useful by being transformative in an extra-
textual way. The greatest novels go well beyond the page, and have a long-lasting extra-
textual effect in the lives of individual readers, and collectively, in society (as affected

143 Deleuze, G. 1994, p.170
146 Deleuze was answering a question posed at the Cerisy colloquium on Nietzsche in 1972; see Nietzsche
and changed by individual readers and by those they in turn affect through their actions and choices).

Smith goes on to explain, "For Deleuze, the question of literature is linked not to the question of its textuality, or even to its historicity, but to its 'vitality,' that is, its 'tenor' of Life." 147

Keeping with the theme of writing and life: "Style, in a great writer, is always a style of life too, not anything at all personal, but inventing a possibility of life, a way of existing." 148 Samuel Shem would say it has something to do with presenting life as it is, and life as it could be. 149

Disher 150 demands that,

Your aim in writing should be clarity, evocation, truth and grace. To develop these you must at the same time develop your powers of perception, thought and expression, for if you cannot see, feel and understand clearly, then nor will your readers. You must avoid what Henry James called 'weak specification'. Very often with a story or novel your main problem will be finding the right tone of voice. If the voice is working, then your story or novel will work.

In more practical terms, achieving transformation in a novel is about:

- recovering our senses (Sontag)—I think of this as including both the reader and writer's. Reversing the 'steady loss of sharpness in our sensory experience' 151

- achieving a standard of writing which seems fictionally true because it grabs the reader's imaginative attention (Tim O'Brien, How to Tell a True War Story) 152

• the reader being fully transported into the world of the novel\textsuperscript{153} (complete immersion and suspension of disbelief, but moving beyond that to actual belief on some level)

• successfully maintaining the vivid and continuous dream (Gardner)\textsuperscript{154}

• giving the reader a new experience of imaginatively projected events held on the page (Berger).\textsuperscript{155}

Robert Boswell\textsuperscript{156} puts it all together in this way:

\begin{quote}
The illusion of people and place created by a story is the algebraic product of a writer's art and a reader's engagement. This world exists not on the page but in the reader's mind. The writer is responsible for the surface story of character and conflict, the evocation of a fictional reality (including the terms by which it operates), and the execution of a full narrative shape.
\end{quote}

Boswell neatly encapsulates the transformative processes of developing and engaging the reader in the imaginary world, the relationship between writer and reader and the actual and textual, and the responsibility of the writer to hone her craft. The variables would result in originality unless specifically thwarted by the writer's conduct or lack of skill.

Now, we have an idea about the what factor, as in, what needs to be achieved in a novel, but we are still to contemplate the how, without writing another how-to-write manual or how-I-wrote-it memoir. The final part to this paper will present a case study application of the toolkit to my novel, Six Minutes, to give other writers ideas on how the toolkit (along with Figures 1 and 3) might be used in their own work.

It will have been evident by now that the major theoretical influences on my toolkit are Gilles Deleuze, Susan Sontag and Nigel Krauth. It is the differences between these very different thinkers that makes them so valuable in combination. This is because, together, they cover the range of creative activity from philosophical speculation (Deleuze) to an

\textsuperscript{153} Frey, J. N. 1994, p.6.
\textsuperscript{154} Gardner, J. 1991, p.31.
\textsuperscript{156} Boswell, R. 2008, p.5.
empiricism of the body (Sontag, Krauth). In short, they capture the multiplicity crucial to my toolkit.

**Modelling helpful thinking**

Somerset Maugham joked that there are three rules to writing, but that no-one knows what they are. He is probably right. On the other hand, maybe there are only two. Stephen King\(^{157}\) and Nigel Krauth\(^{158}\) would say: read well; write well. Or read lots; write lots. And, learn to edit well. Yet, there are plenty of unsuccessful writers who follow this advice. Thinking well deserves more consideration.

The toolkit is about refining and better understanding helpful thought processes. It is about knowing what has to be done, in what context, and developing a practised and refined ‘instinct’ about the ‘how’.

Just as seasoned top-class athletes do not go into a competition without refined and practised mental conditioning as well as physical training—so that it all ‘instinctively’ clicks into place without slowing one down to think about it, a top writer does not achieve peak (and personally reproducible) performance by mere accident.

Nobody can tell you how to write, beyond the technical aspects. Those are mostly dealt with under the first stage of the three-part writing creativity process in the toolkit (i.e. under ‘scientific enquiry’, being a particular mode of thought, rather than about science per se). To varying degrees, writing courses and better books about writing (for example, Kate Grenville’s *The Writing Book: a workbook for fiction writers*) assist in the second part of the writing creativity process, insofar as they discuss the need for character motivation in driving conflict and action, which in turn drives a story forward (character-

\(^{157}\) King, S. 2000, p.112, 117.

\(^{158}\) Krauth, N. 2002, p.171: ‘Creative writing is the major investigator of the culture because of its awareness of what’s going on all around. To be aware, writers must read.’
driven narrative). Some books attempt to discuss originality as being, well, original...not copying other writers' styles, being true to yourself as a writer, drawing upon your experiences as a person in the world. But beyond that, there is an aching chasm of unspoken knowledge, or a disorganised array of little wisdoms, about what takes writing skill beyond being one of the better writers in the village to being one of the best writers, period.

Much is left to the romance and intuition of creativity. On the other hand, athletes are not content with claiming that passion and good genes will see them through.

We are all grateful for luck, at times, but the toolkit is about depending less on luck, and more on sure-footedly refining one's own writing (or writing-survival) instinct. This is what it means to develop discipline and discretion in one's writing practice. That is not to say that one should not take risks. A professional knows how to measure risk and manage it; an amateur does not.

Modelling successful thought patterns — be it for sport, business or novel writing — is not the same as insisting that the map is the territory.\(^{159}\) Everyone makes their own maps through living (and in this case, writing) and eventually all these maps lead back to their source: ourselves.

With that in mind, it is useful to consider the nature of the writer's challenge to make the private worthy of the public's attention. This fundamentally goes towards explaining the whole second stage of the writing creativity toolkit (as well as the 'significance of knowledge' column). Put most basically: who cares about your novel, and why? Because the writer cares, and that care is successfully contained in the characters, who equally care (whether they know it or not) and speak to things that matter to people in the real world, about real-world issues, the readers care. This is what gives a novel morally urgent/necessary and original attributes. This is what is meant by 'the care factor'.

\(^{159}\) Alfred Korzybski, the founder of general semantics, wrote in *Science and Sanity*, 'The map is not the territory'. The map is only our interpretation of the territory. This comprises the whole philosophical foundation of the field called 'Neuro-Linguistic Programming' (NLP). He coined the expression in 'A Non-Aristotelian System and its Necessity for Rigour in Mathematics and Physics', a paper presented before the American Mathematical Society at the New Orleans, Louisiana, meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, December 28, 1931. Reprinted in *Science and Sanity*, 1933, p. 747–61.
In terms of fictional projection, which is key to writing an effective novel, the concept of the traditional hermeneutic circle\textsuperscript{160} comes into play. I hold this concept in my mind by imagining it as a pearl necklace.

Laid out as a straight progression (rather than repeating cycle), it would be contemplated as something like this:

Author's private domain $\rightarrow$ domain of fictional characters $\rightarrow$ story domain $\rightarrow$ reader's domain $\rightarrow$ public domain

I use the term ‘domain’ to cover the experiential territory of all the players in a novel’s ultimate success. In this way, my use of the term is more closely aligned with Nigel Krauth’s position than Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s. Krauth describes ‘the domains of the writing process’\textsuperscript{161} as ‘the various planes of experience, mental and physical, that the writer deals with in the writing process.’\textsuperscript{162} While Csikszentmihalyi has many interesting insights into creativity\textsuperscript{163} from his studies in psychology, his use of the term ‘domain’ is (by comparison to Krauth) mere sociologese for ‘field’ as in a field of study (such as music, mathematics, religion and so forth).

In my exegesis, the author's private domain is discussed in terms of authorial motivation, and is repeated in the toolkit. Joyce Carol Oates might refer to this as the solitary, individual voice.\textsuperscript{164} It is where the author looks at the world through his own eyes.

The domain of the fictional characters is discussed under character motivation in the toolkit. In short, it is when the author tries to see the world through someone else's eyes (a character's). Rimmon-Kenan suggests 'that the construct called character can be seen

\textsuperscript{160} At p.389, \textit{The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought} (Bullock, A. & Trombley, S. Eds.): ‘A process of hermeneutics is the “hermeneutic circle”, which refers to the notion that any part of a text cannot be understood until the whole is understood, and that the whole cannot be understood until the parts are understood.’ I would extend this usage beyond the mere interpretation of existing texts, to the whole novel production process. It also hints at why the toolkit cannot be explained block by block—it doesn’t work like that, but rather has the all-for-one and one-for-all attitude about it.

\textsuperscript{161} Krauth, N. 2006. p.192.

\textsuperscript{162} Krauth, N. 2006. p.195.


as a tree-like hierarchical structure in which elements are assembled in categories of increasing integrative power. Thus an elementary pattern may be established by linking two or more details within a unifying category.165 Her theory may assist at this stage of the toolkit, in understanding how worldview, manner of speech, actions, physical and psychological traits, character name and so forth, can be combined into a cohesive (therefore believable) character, through repetition, similarity, contrast and implication.166

Also from Rimmon-Kenan:

In the text characters are nodes in the verbal design; in the story they are — by definition — non (or pre-) verbal abstractions, constructs. Although these constructs are by no means human beings in the literal sense of the word, they are partly modeled on the reader’s conception of people and in this they are person-like.

Similarly, in the text, characters are inextricable from the rest of the design, whereas in the story they are extracted from their textuality.167

Like Rimmon-Kenan168 and Henry James, I do not believe that character is subordinate to action or the other way around, as it may be possible to consider the two as interdependent. As Henry James once said, ‘What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?’169

Story domain is how the moral and necessary aspects of the particular novel are relied upon to guide and develop the character-driven story.

It is clear that, without a reader, the domains of the characters and of the story remain essentially private, although not entirely private to the author. They have moved into something akin to purgatory, where they are neither private nor public, neither damned nor saved. This is where the story truth becomes clear and resolute or the story remains in

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169 James, H. 1963. p.80 (Orig. publ. 1884).
the limbo of creative endeavour, waiting to be saved by some cruel-to-be-kind editing and rethinking. This is the realm of the dank, bottom drawer.

The reader’s domain is private to the reader, and yet public and external to the author, the characters and the story. The reader’s eyes are opened to see the world privately, in a new way that is always already public. This new way is not directly the author’s way, but involves the author’s world-view, which has been processed through the psychology of believable characters as well as the alchemy of the story-world.

The public domain is the effect of the story in the world: the understandings and new perspectives gained by readers and communicated to others through words (e.g. simply discussing the book) or actions (applying or demonstrating new learning, and an expansion of moral sensibility). Oates might call this the ‘communal voice’.\(^{170}\)

The reason why it will not do to have the traditional hermeneutic circle remain a flat linear diagram (as shown on the previous page) is because the reality of creative development dictates that the process is more like a circle, a hermeneutic circle in the traditional sense, in fact. Each part feeds into each other part, and the whole is understood through understanding the parts, and the parts understood in relation to the whole. The writer can enter the circle at any point, although how-to-write books would have them start and end with the character and story domains. Very few writing manuals go into any depth about the other three domains in terms of the creativity underpinning novel development. In fact, I wonder whether Figure 3 inverted (upside-down), in which the characters’ domain and the story domain would be above water, would go some way towards understanding and extending upon Hemingway’s famous iceberg theory of writing.

Hemingway’s theory of omission or the ‘iceberg principle’ is outlined in *Death in the Afternoon*. He states:

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of the iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. The writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing.\(^{171}\)

Hemingway’s style of writing, in applying the iceberg theory, *demands reader participation* in trying to work out the seven-eighths\(^{172}\) that is not directly obvious. While Hemingway does not state a character’s thoughts or emotions, they are invoked by the way the story is told. The story grabs the reader’s imaginative attention through implication of the subaqueous mass. Krauth writes in ways he hopes converge with readers’ bodily experiences, to achieve the same effect of connection and understanding. In a way, for Krauth, perhaps, the reader’s body is the rest of the iceberg.

The following Figure 3, in practical terms, loops around the middle-section of the toolkit, predominantly, but not exclusively, being the ‘philosophical enquiry’ stage and twirls up and down the ‘significance of knowledge’ column. I say ‘predominantly, but not exclusively’, not to be difficult or imprecise, but because the true nature of creativity cannot be defined by a strict formula. Krauth rightly speaks of the ‘weaving/merging of inner and outer environments’, domains of experiences\(^{173}\) and, in the toolkit, there is a constant (iterative) progression from private to public across each of the creativity processes. The public domain is mostly accounted for under ‘significance of knowledge’ (as in, why are you writing this book at all, if not to connect with and affect readers other than yourself?).

Figure 3 also draws out the theory behind Martha Nussbaum’s thesis in *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* about the potential effect a novel can have on public policy and social justice, by interacting with the public imagination. My thesis is

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\(^{171}\) The Hemingway Resource Center (2009).

\(^{172}\) Looking at Fig. 3 one might well ask whether the fraction ought to be more like three-fifths.

not about the novel as activist—but about the novel's potential per se, and how that potential might be achieved or at least contemplated, in one's own work.

**Figure 3: Hermeneutic circle of fictional projection from the private to the public domain**

![Diagram showing the hermeneutic circle with nodes for Public domain (other-self), Reader domain (self), Author—private domain (self), Characters' domain, and Story domain. There is an arrow from the Reader domain to the Author domain labeled "extant of most self-help writing books."]

Readers include those initial readers who will decide if the book is necessary enough, worthy of their efforts to publish and promote it. They ask themselves *will it create word-of-mouth, self-perpetuating enthusiasm or does its worthiness have short, weak legs?* It also relates to the reader as the individual consumer, affected by the novel in some new way.

The reader, internalising something learned, experienced or felt from reading the novel, re-enters the real world anew. Armed with new insights from what was moral and necessary about the book (Nussbaum) the reader moves differently in the public sphere. That reader might talk about the novel, or might simply conduct himself differently,
further projecting the novel into the public arena—which is not then just the market or audience, but more. In the public sphere, thoughts can produce new actions and new ways of thinking about old problems, subtly changing the real world through effective use of the fictional world. Earlier in this paper, I discussed the novel-as-synapse. If a novelistic synapse could be placed under a metaphorical microscope, perhaps it would look something like Figure 3.

Of course, the real starting point (often subconsciously) is the author and authorial motivation, wherein the author usually wants to learn more about something that has caught her attention (e.g. a moral conundrum, unfairness, or something more general). Authors may perceive themselves to be starting in the character or story domains, without realising that intuitively, their subconscious is directing them there to use fiction (or the power of the hypothetical) to untangle the ball of wool in their heads. There is a certain cringe factor in admitting that at its core writing is about figuring something out for ourselves—testing an idea, hunch, notion, in the creative laboratory of the author’s fictive world. In the process we evolve from inward looking and self-serving—self-gratifying in our creativity—to outward looking and more community-minded in our endeavour to share our latest discoveries and insights. Until we do cross the private/public divide, the work is unreadable by others, because it is originally written for ourselves. It is like the dancer who fails to engage with the audience. A private rehearsal is no public performance, yet many immature authors mistake the one for the other.

In the toolkit in Figure 2, character motivation is addressed in the most extreme left-hand side first, and then authorial motivation in the supposed movement of the narrative from the private to the public space, as this, in terms of writing conceptualisation, makes more orderly sense. Not all writers necessarily become self-aware enough to definitively tick the box of so-called authorial motivation under ‘knowledge of knowledge’. It, if ever, usually comes well after the characters and their motivations, even if in sketchy forms, are born in the writer’s mind. The subconscious mind of the writer uses imaginative projection to get at and through a sensed problem or gap in knowledge and develops characters and plots that play themselves out often in several different ways before a writer has a quiet moment to realise that it is all motivated by something quite personal.
Therefore, it is not a contradiction to depict character motivation ahead of authorial motivation in the toolkit.

Writing manuals focus first and foremost on telling the story, not on working out why that particular story is worth telling and whether the particular writer is qualified to be writing it.

It would not be unfair to say that writers sometimes act as their own therapists by putting a fictional character on the couch and thereby coming to a better understanding of what makes him (the writer) tick. Understanding gained from safely playing with character motivation is equally about analysing one’s own feelings and hence arriving at a better appreciation of human motivation generally. The development is from private to public, that is, how I would feel in that situation to how others may feel in that situation (of course, aspects of ‘others’ being incorporated into characters, as well as aspects of ourselves, directly or indirectly). Hopefully, the story displays the truth that human motivation is not always clear but, unlike a therapist who must truthfully and methodically recount observed data regarding human motivation in order to cure a malady, writers need to move beyond that and tell an actual untruth in the form of fiction so that the story makes sense and communicates something useful to its readers about living (rather than about medical conditions per se).

It is to educate the reader’s moral judgement and engage empathic awareness, not educate in a clinical, scientific, knowledge-based way. It is about imbuing the work with knowledge and encouraging the reader to contemplate new knowledge as and when they are willing and able to. Otherwise, the novel is only a story for entertainment (which has its niche also—who doesn’t love a good brain-in-the-bucket book or movie from time to time?). Although sometimes, no matter how well written a novel may be, it falls into the hands of an incompetent reader, or as Krauth puts it, an ignoramus.  

The process of considering the writer and the reader goes back and forth like a pendulum in some respects, as one needs the other. O’Neill speaks of narrative as communication as

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174 Krauth, N. 2007, p.16.
a multiple interplay of projection from senders and reception by receivers; a ‘multiple, stereophonic, polyvocal telling’.

Effective fiction also depends on the connections being made from writer through characters and story to reader, such that if it does not feel like it matters to the writer, then the characters will be flat and the story unmotivated and unconvincing. Examples where the writer can be seen ‘not to care’ would include when he writes for the sake of writing (art for the sake of art is a furphy) or showing off gorgeous but empty prose (the work of an uninteresting but highly competent technician). To show what one cares about as a person (as opposed to as a writer) is brave but sometimes not sensible. It is much safer to seem to be all things to all people. To write about things that truly matter to you, you must be fearless, unapologetic. This in some way goes against the authorial motivation factor of writing to be loved and admired. Sometimes, writing brings nothing but scorn and heartbreak. It also reveals the writer who hides behind her words, as James points out:

There is one point at which the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very near together; that is in the light of the very obvious truth that the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer. In proportion as that intelligence is fine will the novel partake of the substance of beauty and truth. To be constituted of such elements is to have purpose enough.

The public/private is not necessarily considered in any particular order, or necessarily contemplated at all until editing, when the writer realises that something is wrong in that the story or characters are not resonating with the reader or potential reader. This is where the writer is attempting to read as his own critic (which is difficult, hence the toolkit).

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177 See George Orwell’s 1946 essay, ‘Why I Write’, for a discussion of the four great motives for writing: sheer egoism; aesthetic enthusiasm; historical impulse; and political purpose. These exist in all writers to different degrees and the proportions in any one writer shift depending upon the circumstances he finds himself in.
CHAPTER TWO:

A case study of Six Minutes

Many authors, even if they manage to look at their own work fairly objectively, will still end up knowing that something is wrong with their work, but not being able to put their finger on what it is.

— Michael Legat, 1988 (p. 14)

Preliminary notes on the use of the toolkit

Most of the theory underlying the toolkit has already been described in one form or another by this point. Rather than restating and explaining its details again here, I shall demonstrate how I found it useful in reworking the drafts of my novel, Six Minutes.

While writing the novel for this PhD, I applied the toolkit as an organising strategy, taking a whole-novel approach, as opposed to a piecemeal approach commonly endorsed by editing and writing books currently on the market.179

Post-submission, I was fortunate enough to engage the interest of a major publisher. I have since amended the novel again, using the toolkit to revise my work with the editor. Further editing will be conducted at the direction of the publisher, however, I will demonstrate how I used the toolkit in subsequent drafts in addressing problems raised.

It was reaffirming to have my impressions of how the novel submitted for the PhD could be reworked for commercial publication, supported by feedback from a major publishing company.

179 How-to books tend to deal with elements of a novel, for example, having a chapter on plot, characterisation, and so forth.
I used the toolkit by looking at the outcomes level first, asking (and then answering)\textsuperscript{186}:

- \textit{Is the novel believable?} (In parts, but bettering this can be achieved with some work.)

- \textit{Is the novel authentic?} (In parts, very much so according to the major publisher, but overall, the novel still needs work to ‘ring true’.)

- \textit{Is the novel transformative?} (Not yet, but only the greatest novelists actually achieve this.)

Then, I worked my way back up through the toolkit, again asking:

- \textit{Does the novel provide moments of pure feeling?} (Something is blocking this in the novel.)

- \textit{Does the novel encourage true thinking?} (It seems too argumentative and didactic in places, so not yet.)

- \textit{Does the novel create the potential for new thinking in readers?} (Yes, about the legal profession, but some parts could be done more subtly.)

Working from ‘Character motivation’ on the toolkit, I asked myself, ‘Are the characters believable?’ The publisher indicated that some of them were convincing, although the protagonist needed ‘something’. Writers working with publishers and editors will recognise this response. Essentially, while publishers and editors (and agents) are quickly able to point out problems in manuscripts, they do not necessarily tell an author (nor can they) how to fix them. Since a protagonist in need of revision is a major issue, I shall focus on this one key problem when discussing my latest revisions. Other more specific issues, such as fixing errors, adding details, lengthening or shortening chapters are more easily dealt with and can be itemised in the toolkit (again, as a general organising strategy).

\textsuperscript{186} The answers are supported by feedback from a major commercial publisher. I am continuing to work with this publisher post-PhD.
Feedback from the publisher indicated that my manuscript and writing voice is highly original and that the story is an important one that needs to be told. I have succeeded to some degree in considering market and audience (as per the toolkit) as the manuscript has been judged to have commercial potential.

These are ways that the toolkit may be applied, but are in no way limiting. The toolkit has been specifically designed to allow writers to use it in any way that works for them. It is key to note that in using the toolkit, a writer does not think about one element (e.g. ‘Character motivation’) or aspect of it at a time but, in considering each aspect, thinks about how it relates and interacts with all the other elements and the whole effect.

The toolkit does not tell a writer what to do; rather it assists the writer in making better choices, tapping into conscious and subconscious processes. It does not prevent a writer from making poor choices if the writer is so inclined. It cannot impose maturity or discipline if there is none to start with.

Its design is deliberately open-ended, in terms of what it can potentially contain within it. Writers might like to insert their favourite quotes or pearls of wisdom under each of the headings, or even pictures (such as Escher’s famous, mind-bending lithographs\(^1\)) or tools taken from other writers or other fields. When revising the novel for PhD submission, I used one copy with large spaces under each heading, for technical editing—to record things that needed attention in my novel—be it more research on a point, or revision of typographical errors, or flagging of areas needing rewriting. I used another copy with pictures of Escher’s lithographs and cut-outs in each segment as a creativity-inspiring crutch (for the days when the muse was AWOL). I used a third version, to record thoughts and references to other texts, specifically for the purpose of writing and revising this exegesis. It was my ultimate project-management and creativity-harnessing tool, and my silent supervisor.

\(^1\) e.g. See Forty, S. 2006, pp.34, 63: Hand with Reflecting Sphere, 1935 Lithograph 31.8 x 21.3 cm. Plate 23, p.34. (Used in connection with Authorial Motivation); and Relativity, 1933 Lithograph 27.7 x 29.2 cm. Plate 52, p.63. (Used in connection with Potential for New Thinking. Note Nigel Krauth’s use of this lithograph in Krauth, N. 2006, pp.194-195).
The novel has developed further since originally submitting this PhD for examination. I have used this toolkit again, guiding my reactions to advice received from an editor in a major publishing house. For the sake of completeness, I will explain how I have recently been using it, looking at one of the most significant novelistic challenges of characterisation and character motivation. Any further edits will be done at the instruction of the publisher, such that the published novel may or may not resemble its former self, for reasons beyond the reach of even the toolkit.

Michael Legat offers the advice that to achieve ‘the detached view’ before reviewing one’s own work, it is helpful first to put the manuscript away for weeks or months.\textsuperscript{182}

If you do not leave a gap between completion of the first draft and the commencement of revision, you are likely to be so close to the writing that it will not only be totally familiar, but you will probably remember the actual setting down of the words and the difficulty or ease with which the words were flowing, and your feelings at the time, and none of this will allow you to see any imperfections which may be there.

Even with the aid of the toolkit, Legat’s suggestion is a wise one: leaving a gap of time allows the toolkit to work even more successfully. The toolkit is a device for not only deeper entry into the writing process, but also analysis of it. The toolkit re-situates the writer (to avoid being ‘so close’, as Legat has it) while its prism re-aligns the writer’s sight-lines. It provides objectivity while retaining involvement.

\textbf{‘Scientific enquiry’}

I had done exhaustive research on women lawyers’ experiences in the profession to back up my anecdotal information gleaned from discussions with female lawyers and also to test out my working hypotheses that despite more than twenty years of anti-

\textsuperscript{182} Legat, M. 1988, pp. 12-14.
discrimination legislation in Australia, sex discrimination was still rife in the profession and had become particularly insidious.

However, the toolkit reminded me to refresh my research to ensure it was still current, not only in terms of whether discrimination still existed, but even in simple factual details. I had begun this project a decade earlier and even things like the make/model car that Sandra was driving had to be updated by a decade to make her a believable solicitor-character. Changes in timeline and chapter order also necessitated revision for consistency under this heading.

I found it helpful to have a copy of the toolkit next to me while re-reading the novel, so that any details which came to mind as needing further attention could be notated under the relevant heading\textsuperscript{183} with the page number in the novel. This way, I could continue reading the manuscript without forgetting what I had wanted to do, and without losing the momentum with which I was progressing through it. I could read it from beginning to end to get the whole feel for it, and comfortably come back to the pages I had noted under the toolkit as needing further attention.

This refreshing of my research also went towards checking the validity of my work, re-testing my point of view to ensure it was not embarrassingly ensnared in personal opinions and subjectivities that would not translate into a likely fictional scenario. This is a consideration then, of market and audience, as well as accuracy for the sake of accuracy. The making of too many errors would meet with a hostile audience, particularly from those with law qualifications! Reapplying the toolkit to my revision

\textsuperscript{183} For example, I under this 'Scientific enquiry' heading, I noted that chapters III and IV needed to be better integrated to be meaningful and that they could perhaps be used to give back story on Sandra and Mick's relationship. Also, that in chapter VI, I had forgotten to give Andrea a surname. In chapter IX, I needed more description and detail about Mick and Sandra's relationship as well as his illness, so that this shows (rather than tells) more about Sandra and why she is as she is in relationships. In chapter XI, Sandra takes a loan from Frances, which makes this relationship puzzling rather than likely. In chapter XII, is it still autumn from the previous chapter and how long has it been since Andrea was sacked? Chapter XIII needs more detail and flesh, showing Sandra more visibly upset by finding out that Paul had cheated on her. Plots needs to be worked into the middle of the story so that he does not inexplicably reappear in chapter XXXI. Time confusion in chapters XVI and XVII and a basic factual error at p.127 also needed attention. Under 'Scientific enquiry', I also attend to matters such as correcting spellings (removing American spellings and generally correcting errors), capitalisations and punctuation, grammar etcetera. These are attending to correctness, accuracy but also are courtesies to the reader (considered under 'Market + audience').
with the publisher, it became apparent also that I needed to add more detail at this first level of enquiry, describing or showing:

- Sandra’s home (leaving it to chapter XVIII and XXIII is too late);

- Sandra’s relationship with Mick (bring it forward to chapter III and do not leave large unexplained absences from the story up to chapter XXXV);

- Sandra’s relationship with Paul (leaving the secret of their affair too long does not work well);

- What each character looks like (especially Paul and Mick, with whom Sandra has romantic involvement);

- Sandra’s relationship with her mother (because this will show what sort of person she is outside the office and go some way towards making character motivation, which is further along in the toolkit, more solid).

I use this stage of the toolkit to examine basic structural issues, including plot points and pace. In this regard, I noted in my latest reworking, that some chapters are too short (e.g. chapters XX and XXX) which upset the balance and flow of the novel; and some other chapters could be deleted or significantly reworked because they did not work hard enough to be included. Mostly, they were guilty of slowing down the narrative at inopportune times (e.g. chapter XXI and back story in chapter XXXI). Sometimes, humorous scenes were not enough justification to keep chapters which were not driving the narrative forward (e.g. chapter XXIV). I look at the reasons why (‘Authorial motivation’) I wrote a particular chapter which needs to be deleted or significantly reworked and ask myself whether I wrote it for myself or for the story (e.g. Chapter XXI where Sandra goes to see her old mentor who had previously let her down. Was Sandra confronting her demons and fears, or was I facing my own?).

In relation to the ‘Research validity’ and point of view stage, I considered how to nuance the facts (real or re-imagined) in the context of the characters and the time and place, and to make them (and the story) acceptable to readers. For example, the fact that there was a
‘Beddable Babe’ competition in an Australian law firm is not believable because it is so offensive. I am reworking the scene to make the competition a below-the-radar matter, conducted by notorious staff, but not officially condoned by the firm (which instead, turns a blind eye). Also, I am reworking the International Women’s Day Breakfast scene to be mindful of unnecessarily ruffling feathers for no good story reason. By way of illustration, Sandra’s thought that one of the speakers would not look out of place in the audience was meant to convey how much the multicultural society in Queensland has changed over the last twenty years, such that there is no longer a ‘norm’ or clear ‘us’ and ‘them’. One academic examiner took offence, thinking that the comment was racist, when in fact, it was not intended to be, or, if Sandra’s character were racist, that would not be unheard of in the profession either.

Under ‘Knowledge’, I ask myself whether I have succeeded in balancing the delivery of knowledge in the novel through narration, description and dialogue to meet the needs of the story. My current revision-in-progress is addressing what I see to be a need for more description and effective dialogue.

In relation to market, audience and accuracy, I have tested the manuscript on a number of readers, including lawyers, non-lawyers and academics, as well as a publishing house and agent. The lawyers and non-lawyers were very positive in their responses to the novel; the publishing house continues to assist me in the next stage of rewriting for commercial publication; the agent offered representation should it be required; and all but one of the academics and examiners was impressed with the novel. Lawyers could identify with the story; non-lawyers who worked in large office-based organisations saw parallels in their own hierarchies; and people who had otherwise had the misfortune of coming into close contact with the legal profession could certainly appreciate where the novel was situated.

Each stage of the toolkit can incorporate methods of, or ideas adapted from, other creative writing text books, or even, from other areas of study. At the ‘Scientific enquiry’ stage, world-building tools would be useful. For example, in writing about a workplace, a writer might consider whether her writing sets out appropriate details of workplace
culture and organisational structure as described by Edgar Schein. Scott Campbell
usefully distils these as follows:

In his 1992 work, Organizational Culture and Leadership, Edgar
Schein divided organizational culture into three levels: (1) at the
surface are ‘artefacts,’ those aspects (such as dress) that can be easily
discerned yet are hard to understand; (2) beneath artefacts are
‘espoused values,’ which are conscious strategies, goals, and
philosophies; and (3) the core, or essence of culture is represented by
the basic underlying assumptions and values, which are difficult to
discern because they exist at a largely unconscious level yet provide
the key to understanding why things happen the way they do.134

In Six Minutes, I ensured that descriptions of Edgar Schein’s ‘Level 1 artefacts’ were
accurate. For example, I described the form of dress by each social stratum within
Hennessy Clark, as well as how differing dress modes indicate the status of other firms
and whether they were corporate or criminal law firms, struggling or successful. The way
people talked and walked also came under this heading. Under artefacts, I also described
the workplace surroundings—opulent marble and timber in client-areas, desks and offices
for senior staff, pathetic cubicles (sometimes without walls, but cubicles nonetheless) for
juniors and a chicken coop-type partitioned enclosure for the typing pool.

‘Level 2 espoused values’ were described in terms of the firm’s expectations of its staff
(such as billing 7.5 hours per day, in 6 minute units, rarely taking lunch or holidays
unless directed, being seen and being trackable with electronic ID tags). The goals of the
firm were to be as profitable and prestigious (some would say, pretentious) as possible.
The goals of individual players then, to align with the firm’s goals, involved being seen
with the right people, and jostling for the most glamorous files (such as the Dover
Industries file).

The core of the culture, rather than being described outright, was best demonstrated
through actions and interactions of the various characters, and the way they bumped up
against the law itself. This third level is more reflective and subtle than the first two
levels (which can be encompassed easily in straight description). The third level might

134 Campbell, S. 2003, p. 11.
even be akin to the details that Hemingway, referring to his iceberg theory, might leave out, yet infer by their very absence.

Level 2 espoused values, insofar as creative writers are concerned, would actually straddle ‘Scientific enquiry’ (as indicated above) for factual content, and also ‘Character motivation’ in the toolkit—as the missions, goals, strategies demonstrate underlying character motivation when written in an insightful and creatively relevant and appropriate way.

As creative writers, we must do something with our facts—build worlds, set up character motivation, generate conflict to drive the story forward. They do not just remain as facts—or we would be reporters. O’Neill reminds us to not confuse fiction and reality: remember that ‘The Amsterdam we encounter in the narrated world of story is in principle every bit as fictional as a Narnia or an Oz, all three of them fictional locales inhabited by fictional inhabitants.’\(^\text{185}\) We should think: stockpile data initially, with a big surplus\(^\text{186}\), but be prepared to cut ruthlessly. Michael Petracca says, ‘Don’t hit the reader over the head with background information.’\(^\text{187}\) Michael Legat quotes Diane Pearson, who once said, ‘Research is like manure—a little here and there makes everything blossom and grow, but in large lumps it is horrid.’\(^\text{188}\)

Schein’s ‘Level 3 core assumptions and values’ including unconscious beliefs, perceptions, feelings and so forth, would also come into play in other parts of the toolkit such as ‘pure feeling’ and ‘true thinking’ (under ‘artful transformation’). I say this here, to indicate how intuition and flexibility play a major part in applying the toolkit—it is not a machine, which goes through a predictable, reproducible sequence. It is modelling and refining, not restricting, writing creativity.

It should be noted, that some details which seem completely suitable early on, become unsuitable later, because they get in the way of telling story truth instead of actual truth.

\(^{185}\) O’Neill, P. 1994, p. 36.
\(^{186}\) Trimble, J.R. 2000, pp. 18-19.
\(^{187}\) Petracca, M. 1999, p.263.
\(^{188}\) Legat, M. 1998, p.75.
An example of this would be how in early drafts of *Six Minutes*, I had written dialogue between lawyers exactly as I know it to be. This was being completely faithful to Level 1 artefacts (which would include things like dress, language, work processes and so forth). However, at a later stage of my editing, it became clear that the language was too ‘wanky’ (to use the term of a friendly, non-lawyer reader), particularly for non-lawyer readers (considering ‘Market and audience’ under ‘Scientific enquiry’). It took me several years to work out how facts could get in the way of story truth. The results of that realisation are as summarised in Figure 1: "‘Truth’ and truth-telling consequences in fiction’ (see above).

In *Revision: An Author’s Guide*, Michael Legat suggests imitating other writers to get yourself out of a hole:

> It is always very difficult, I think, if you have based your story too closely on truth to see where it does not really work, but I would like to suggest that you should make frequent stops as you read through, think of your favourite author, and then ask yourself each time what would happen at that point if it had been a novel by Catherine Cookson, or Anita Brookner, or Wilbur Smith or Graham Swift, or whoever you admire.  

Of course, I read other novels set in the legal world (such as Jan McKemmish’s *Only Lawyers Dancing*), or with female protagonists generally, to consider where my novel might fit into the market, but also, to see how they had handled matters such as lawyerly dialogue. I did not find anything that I could or would have consciously imitated. There is very little in the way of contemporary Australian legal fiction, let alone with my type of humour (with the exception of Richard Beasley’s *Hell Has Harbour Views*), with complex, sassy female protagonists. Legal tales seem to be mostly about boys in suits, on boys’ own adventures, or highly emotive female drama in the style of Jodi Picoult, or novels like McKemmish’s which set out to subvert genre (which is not the intention of my project). Besides, imitation has its obvious limitations.

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189 Legat, M. 1988, p. 35.

In writing both my novel and exegesis, I took the advice of John R. Trimble when trying to envision my audience. He says that, at some point, we need to create our audience in a way ‘that frees you to be the kind of person, on paper, that you want and need to be if you are to write and think your best.’ Trimble states that in his own work, he envisions,

my reader—no matter who it is—as a companionable friend with a warm sense of humor and a love of simple directness. That’s how I’m envisioning you right now. But even if I’m wrong, you might become that way during this ‘conversation’. (People often act as they’re treated.) And even if you won’t ever become my ideal reader, I still need you (or my image of you) to be that way if I am to be the way I need to be in order to write in a way I can respect.  

And finally, under this mostly-about-facts section of the toolkit, it must be made quite clear that events of the novel need to grow out of each other, and events grow out of facts. So, if the relevant facts are not in place, the events which are determined by facts combined with character motivation cannot proceed: the story stalls. Legat reminds us to ‘cut out anything which does not have an effect on the story, leading on to another development.’ In the toolkit, the editing can be done after or alongside the writing (as in, considering what to include, what to exclude), but it happens at every stage of the toolkit, not independently of it. Hence, the word ‘revision’ does not appear anywhere in the toolkit, yet is intrinsically woven throughout it. Revision for the purposes of this project, takes on the meaning given it by Legat, as a ‘process of looking critically at every aspect of the work to see whether it could be improved.’

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192 Trimble, J.R. 2000, p. 22.
'Philosophical enquiry'

Character believability has been the major stumbling block for my project. No wonder since, as O’Neill admits: ‘The multifarious ways in which characters emerge from the words on the page, in which story-world actors acquire a personality, is one of the most fascinating and least systematically explored aspects of narrative theory and narrative practice.’

My uncomplicated view of character motivation is that motivations drive people, characters and characters-as-people to be who they are and what they do. This starts with building up world details and character descriptions and basic plot under the first level of enquiry (scientific) and making them more nuanced through processes at the market / audience / accuracy stage. This is partly to not lose the market and reader but also to ensure that characters and their motivations are believable and acceptable, although, not necessarily likeable.

Legat gives a helpful outline of characterisation in fiction, wherein he poses questions such as:

*Whose story is it?* (Sandra’s).

*Where is the focus of attention?* (On Sandra).

*Are there too many characters?* (Possibly).

*Are your characters alive?* (They need more detail to come alive).

*Are your characters believable in their actions and reactions?* (Not in every instance).

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197 Legat, M. 1988, p. 49.

198 Legat, M. 1988, p. 49.

199 Legat, M. 1988, p. 50.


201 Legat, M. 1988, p. 53.

Are your main characters sympathetic? (Not early in the PhD draft).

Do your characters grow and change? (Yes).

Have you libeled anyone? (No).

Does your research show? (In places, yes).

Have you kept yourself out of the book? (Not enough).

Have you ended your chapters effectively? (Some end abruptly).

I would recommend that every writer ask herself those questions during the revision process.

Gerard Genette poses useful questions for writers in relation to focalisation, which I would add to Legat’s broad list. Focalization is the distinction between who is the character whose point of view orient the narrative perspective and who is the narrator. Gennett’s questions are simple:

Who sees?

Who speaks?

It took a long time to realise that much of the problem lay in my mishandling of authorial motivation and focalization. I was forcing the protagonist to do unlikely things as a fictional character, largely because I did not like her (feared her, in fact) and because her being a complete and utter failure as a person would offer proof for my hypothesis that the legal profession was deliberately unsuitable for women and made monsters out of

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204 Legat, M. 1988, p. 60.
207 Legat, M. 1988, p. 76.
208 Legat, M. 1988, p. 77.
212 O’Neill, P. 1994, p. 84.
them—desperately unhappy individuals who would become detached from normality and from their true, emotive, female selves. Applying Genette’s questions to my own novel, it could be said that the character, Sandra, was allegedly doing the seeing, but in fact, I, the actual author, was doing the speaking in places.

It was an enormous challenge then, to admit to myself as a writer that the character flaws were not the type of character flaws that added to a successful story, but the type that came about because the writer was doing something wrong. Of course, what I had been doing wrong was trying to translate reality directly to the page, like Frederick Reiken did with his incomplete and unsuccessful Israel book.²¹³ I had seen women falling apart in the legal profession, with failed relationships or a complete lack of meaningful relationships beyond the office door; women who were supremely confident in defending other people’s rights, but utterly hopeless at recognising that their own needed defending. I thought my purpose as a writer was to tell the reader that.

Legat reminds us:²¹⁴

If when reading through you become aware that you, as the author, are speaking directly to the reader, then rewrite so that your views are expressed by the characters—and of course it must be natural for them to do so.

Of course, once the story started taking its own shape, and I let the characters (particularly the protagonist, Sandra) do what they needed to do (rather than what I thought I wanted them to do) then the novel started to rewrite itself in a fruitful manner. For example, in an earlier draft, I had Sandra and Frances being caught by the security guard while in Paul’s office. During the confrontation with the security guard, the women mostly went along with his directions without resistance or argument. They were compliant. This is in line with what I would imagine would happen in a real law firm if someone were caught doing the wrong thing. Then the security guard put them into separate rooms until the bosses came back into work to talk with them. This may have been realistic, but it occurred to me, and to another reader, that it was flat, and

²¹⁴ Legat, M. 1988, p.76.
unbelievable. The comment my supervisor gave me was that it was not believable that such smart, sassy women with the gift-of-the-gab would be so compliant and unresisting to a lowly security guard. To my way of thinking, the security guard’s status was relevant as a symbol of the firm’s power, rather than of his own independent means. However, I took on board the criticism and acknowledged that the toolkit had also hinted that the section was not working, but that I was hoping that it was okay as it was. Sometimes I thought of my toolkit as my perfect, silent supervisor!

When I rewrote the section, I kept in mind that I had to make the characters believable in a fictional sense to other readers, not necessarily lawyer readers, and clearly not just believable to myself. Once I had straightened out my own thinking, I rewrote the conflict to be between Sandra and FBI and Paul, which immediately raised the stakes and made the passage more interesting, more intense and more believable in a story sense. Fixing my perspective and being more focused on the reader’s needs (to believe etc.) and the story’s needs (to be believable etc.) than my own needs (to say my piece, instead of letting the story tell itself) resulted in a much more satisfying outcome, which also went towards fixing the middle-of-the-novel-sag that was becoming evident.

It became clear to me that the sagging passages the toolkit suggested were not working, were my feeble attempts at coping out of addressing underlying concerns. These concerns included my reluctance to speak out against the profession, when all my legal training had been to be compliant. In story terms, that resulted in wishy-washy statements using the word ‘maybe’ a lot and offering both sides of every opinion, instead of letting the characters have strong opinions and being prepared to back them up with words and actions. Originally, I had written the first major confrontation as a word-fight between the firm’s security guard and two of the women (Sandra and Frances). Once I deleted and rewrote this scene, now incorporating the security guard as a mere footnote to the proceedings, the pace immediately picked up as well as the conflict and developing character motivation (hatred and revenge).

I had to come to terms with my own feelings first, the very ones that I had buried for so long in the hope of fitting into the legal profession. Women, characterised as emotive and
not rational in the professional workplace, were metaphorically beaten into submission by the daily assaults on womanhood. Normal human emotions had to be curtailed, not only to be effective in the man’s world, but to not go crazy with the ongoing pain of knowing that you were being methodically excluded from full participation, from fully being able to realise your potential, simply because you were born female.\textsuperscript{215}

Once I was able to deal with my own demons sufficiently, I had to go back into the novel and assign more truthful emotions to my characters. This contradicted my original goal of showing how devoid of feelings and personality they had become, and how paralysed by fear they were.

Beyond the window, a gaggle of geese flew in the distance in a V formation, each knowing instinctively how to keep up with the others, all turning almost in unison, catching the last of the thermal breezes, gliding effortlessly. I watched numbly as I saw two of the geese were falling behind and struggling to catch up.\textsuperscript{216}

Of course, the trouble with too convincingly demonstrating how paralysed by fear the characters were, was that they were, well...paralysed. They were no longer moving the story forward in any dramatic way, and pace was suffering because character motivation needed work. Of course, character motivation needed work, because my authorial motivation needed work. In short, I was the one who was paralysed, and was paralysing the characters and the story. I had to get out of the way and get a grip on myself.

Once I did this, I found the characters suggested new actions and reactions for themselves. These were more satisfying than the ones I had previously nominated for them, when they had been mere cardboard cut-outs depicting ideas rather than potential, real people in a story sense\textsuperscript{217}. Besides, even if one could say that real-life lawyers are

\textsuperscript{215} See Pamela Tate’s address about the ways the legal profession still prevents the full participation of women. Also: Margaret Thornton’s \textit{Dissonance and Distrust}. For further reading regarding women in the legal profession, see separate reference list under Appendix 2. General texts about women in the workforce, gender equity and feminism can be found in the complete list of references and bibliography.

\textsuperscript{216} Lauf, T. 2009, p.167.

\textsuperscript{217} Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan explains the ‘realist’ and ‘purist’ arguments well at p. 32 and ‘Mimetic’ theories versus ‘Semiotic theories’ at p.33 of \textit{Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics}, 1983. ‘Mimetic theories (which consider literature as, in some sense, an imitation of reality) characters are equated with people, in Semiotic theories they dissolve into textuality.’
often a lot more dull than even the early drafts of my characters, it defeats the purpose of telling a story if you have bored the reader into putting the book down. Fictional truth is not the same as actual truth (see Figure 1).

In a similar vein, I had to reconsider the impact of authorial motivation (in traditional literary terms)\(^{218}\) and whether my thinking was true and clear on the issue of Sandra’s reaction to her being fired. In earlier drafts, I had Sandra moping about the house for much too long, being depressed and drinking too much. While that would have been believable in a real-world scenario, the story required that I modify this because it was not helping with character motivation (clearly, if the character is so depressed that she loses motivation!), and hence stalling the story.\(^{219}\) The depression also needed to be curtailed to a shorter time frame so that the feeling of emptiness and being defeated could be demonstrated, but not to the exclusion of all other more interesting feelings that readers would be identifying with—like the desire for revenge, which is a good strong motivator in a story sense. Also, it becomes progressively clearer that Sandra’s reactions are, to an extent, a result of her unrequited love for Paul (the very same Paul who had the affair with Andrea before sacking her for falling pregnant to him). The human heart is complicated. Translating this effectively leads to believability in a story sense. Understanding one’s own heart is difficult enough. Trying to convincingly demonstrate someone else’s is an order of magnitude harder.

Insecurity, anguish, grief and despair were written into the female characters, as well as a cautious, but growing sense of warmth between them. They needed each other and had to learn to let go of professional distance, and workplace rivalries, to be able to move ahead with life (and a useful storyline). In my last revisions, I had Frances and Sandra getting drunk together and letting down their respective guards with each other (something which


\(^{219}\) Other writers do successfully write stories that are slower, with sustained darker moods such as the numbness of depression in the context of a relationship on the brink (Patrick West’s short story, ‘Hill’); or blank, unarticulated anxiety and depression, stemming from the intergenerational misery of a family blighted with mental health issues (Stefan Laseczek’s novel, I Dream of Megal). However, such stories require a higher degree of commitment from the reader, and crafting in such way that the mood is the interesting point of the story. It simply was not working for my novel, because the focus had to be on overcoming adversity, not succumbing to it. Each story has its own natural rhythms and demands.
Frances would never have done before) and had Andrea move in with Sandra so that Sandra could support her towards the end of her pregnancy (as well as after the child was born).

I wrote in a few scenes of frivolity between the female characters to demonstrate their growing friendships—for example, I added the Firing Party chapter to show Andrea’s sense of fun and personality outside of her persona as an uninteresting lawyer (who might not have inspired reader empathy otherwise). Also, rewriting the plot in the middle to have Andrea move in with Sandra assisted in removing the bulk of the selfish-Sandra passages, which had been making her completely unlikeable in an unredeemable way (in earlier drafts). By this submitted draft, Sandra is still a damaged character, who while not particularly likeable to start with, redeems herself through her resolve to be of assistance to Frances and particularly Andrea. I am continuing to revise this aspect of the novel for publication, as it is a difficult matter of characterisation and possibly authorial motivation. I am deciding what Sandra’s ‘characterological issues’ are in psychological terms and considering how they came about through her personal development and family history (her father died in a workplace accident while Sandra was young. How did her mother cope and react?).

This has something to do with the opening and closing of possibilities (Stephen Muecke221) and concrete detail being paired with resonant ambiguity (quoted by Frederick Reiken). My novel needed more relevant detail woven through it, which could open up possibilities of interpretation and development of the key characters. When not enough has been offered to a reader to weigh and judge for herself, characters and hence stories seem flat and un-lifelike. It is key to remember that just because an author may have already determined the nature of her characters and (pre-) judged them accordingly, the richness of ambiguity and possibility must not be taken away inadvertently from the reader. Let every reader come to a story and consider its characters in her own way.

Looking at the toolkit, the main intention of assessing ‘Authorial motivation’ is to assess as honestly as possible whether one is open to the world and, if not, how that is impacting on the story. Focusing in on the point between ‘Authorial motivation’ and ‘Originality, Moral and necessary’ is a defining moment in the success of a novel. Borrowing from Cary, it is the point at which the writer ‘communicates the discovery of a truth of the actual world’ and makes it independent of the writer.  

The reader may refer back to the detailed discussion on ‘Moral and necessary’ earlier in the paper to see what other aspects of revision were dealt within the section ‘Philosophical enquiry’. This is a challenging process to apply to oneself. Oates would also remind us to avoid ‘the oracular voice, the inflated self-importance of the Seer’.  

Reading psychology texts about character motivation, or texts designed for writers in this area can be helpful. Also, workplace management (and organisational psychology) tools like Johari’s Window, Myer-Briggs personality typing, and the ‘Temperament Theory’ (developed by psychologist, David Keirsey, and made accessible by Linda Berens) can assist in determining whether the characters and prose of the novel demonstrate believable, or even possible, character motivation. Taking this approach to studying character motivation and informing the development of a character might be seen to be adopting the ‘realistic’ position which:

...sees characters as imitation of people and tends to treat them—with greater or lesser sophistication—as if they were our neighbours or friends, whilst also abstracting them from the verbal texture of the work under consideration.... Such an approach... tends to speculate about the characters’ unconscious motivations and even constructs for them a past and future beyond what is specified in the text.

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222 Cary, J. 1958, p.16.
225 For a brief explanation see http://www.noogenesis.com/game_theory/johari/johari_window.html
226 For a brief explanation see http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/sgite/read5.htm
227 See for example, Four Temperaments for Peak Performance by Campbell, S., 2001.
228 Mudrick, M. 1961, p. 211.
Rimmon-Kenan\(^{229}\), in explaining Marvin Mudrick, adds: that, 'The realistic argument allows for easy transference of psychology and psychoanalysis. But it fails to discover the differentia specifica of characters in narrative fiction.' The differentia specifica are of a verbal and non-representational order, which derive from 'purist' ('semiotic') argument. She goes on to reconcile the two opposing positions (of characters as persons and as parts of a design) by suggesting that they can be thought of as relating to different aspects of narrative fiction. In the text, characters are nodes in the verbal design; in the story, they are, by definition, non (or pre-) verbal abstractions, constructs. While these constructs are not human, they are partly modelled on the reader's conception of people and in this way, they are person-like. In a similar way, characters in the text are inextricable from the rest of the design, whereas in the story they are extracted from their textuality.\(^{230}\)

Along similar lines, Joel Weinsheimer speaks of the complex status of character, as 'the textualized persons, personified texts that are characters.'\(^{231}\) In this context, psychologists' texts may provide directions for the creative writer. Johari's Window is about mapping personality awareness and improving communication. Myer-Briggs personality typing helps to identify a person's learning and decision-making style as well as assisting that person in better understanding his own and others' behaviour. It identifies orientations that influence motivation and consequently, lifestyle. Temperament Theory describes the patterns of behaviour inherent in four specific temperament groups. This is of particular interest to writers as temperament drives behaviour and governs character development (being how they grow and adapt to meet their needs).

Any tool or book\(^{232}\) that helps a writer more fully contemplate human motivation is going to be of some assistance.

\(^{229}\) Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, p. 32.


There is no simple way to understand character in fiction. No matter what approach one takes, perhaps the best thing to do is to remember that characters are 'the structuring element that make objects and events meaningful'.

'Artful transformation'

This stage of the toolkit, in general, is about making the story seem effortless and real, by using feelings and instincts that are universal. It concerns using emotional realism over less nuanced physical or historical realism, to hold the reader in the story through effective descriptions and language.

The effect is an empathic identification with the characters and story: the realisation that that could be me. Looking back at Figure 3 regarding the movement from private to public domains, I believe this effect starts with the writer realising her moral proximity to the characters (just as I eventually did with Sandra in particular).

'Pure feeling' in the toolkit is a reminder to the writer that sensation makes the reality immediate to the reader. At its most basic, this strategy would encourage writers to review their stories to ensure they have not simply assumed feelings they themselves feel, while forgetting to insert triggers in the story that would assist readers to feel the story too. We all know we ought to focus not only on the sense of sight (the predominant one, which we tend to overuse) but also hearing, touch, taste and smell. Beyond that, there

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234 Perry, A. 2008, p. 32.
235 Anne Perry describes the 'Heathcliff dilemma' where in one version of the film Wuthering Heights, the hero Heathcliff was greasy-haired, bad-toothed etc. as he might realistically have been. But the truth that mattered for the story was that Cathy was madly in love with him, and even though in her time, his appearance may have been normal, today's audience found him repellent. If you lose the audience, you've failed, regardless of the accuracy of the physical historical realism. Perry, A. 2008, p.32
may be a clever way to suggest intuition, or a sixth sense, through feelings of foreboding or similar. Joyce Carol Oates is particularly adept at this.237

Writers wishing to engage in a more philosophical approach may find Deleuze’s work on percepts and affects to be of interest. ‘Percepts are not perceptions, they are packets of sensations and relations that outline those who experience them. Affects are not feelings, they are becomings that go beyond those [sic] [who?], live through them (they become other).’238

A section239 in *Six Minutes* that expresses aspects of ‘Pure feeling’ is when Sandra feels the power balance shifting in favour of her, Andrea and Frances (who had been victims to that point). In court, Sandra notes it this way: ‘I could feel our luck changing, like a small shift in tectonic plates.’240 Sandra realises that the women are now calling the shots, bending the rules to suit themselves. While Frances and Andrea do not verbalise the moment, they do visibly respond to it by sitting up straight, no longer hunched and burdened, but confident and proud, with their chins off their chests, heads held high.

The novel needed the reader to feel this moment as one of those fantastic moments in life when everything feels like it is finally going your way—the moment when the storm clouds part to reveal blue sky. Deleuze and Guattari might say, ‘We are not in the world, but become with the world.’241 Woolf might call this ‘moments of the world’.242

With ‘True thinking’, as one of the aspects of ‘Artful transformation’, I perceived this in my own novel when I realised that two things had happened. First of all, my feelings about the characters had changed in that I felt more kindly disposed towards them; and secondly, I had become less resolute about my views and more open on the issues raised

237 For example, in her novel *The Falls*, the falls themselves have a menacing, other-worldly presence throughout—the place becomes personified, but it moves beyond this to ‘pure feeling’.
238 This quote is directly reproduced from Smith, D.W. & Greico, M.A. 1997, p. xxx. There appears to be a typographical issue in the translation. I have added ‘[who?]’ to attempt to correct the error.
in the novel. In some ways, I had changed my mind. I grew to understand / like Sandra. Perhaps my underlying reason for writing the novel changed also: from telling how terrible the profession is to women, to finding something to like about it and the people in it. The subconscious is a peculiar thing. Rather than reacting irrationally towards her out of fear (that she embodied all the things I hated about what women did / became after too long in the profession), I softened my stance. In reality, I was writing about my own deepest fears—that to survive in the profession, a woman became Sandra. Once I had quietly established the personal connection (and driven out the demon of fear) I had the author-character empathy necessary to start (re-)writing the story. There had to be the awkward personal acknowledgement that Sandra’s scar tissue could have been my own.243

‘True thinking’ is fundamentally about ‘getting a grip’ on oneself as writer, observer and participant and being open to the possibilities. Once there was room for ‘maybe’ in my thinking, this allowed for ‘resonant ambiguity’ in my writing. Nothing is ever as it seems, yet inexperienced writers inadvertently insist it is so in their writing. They do this by deliberately pinning down every feeling, action and description in the way the writer thinks it should be. This leaves no room for resonant ambiguity (based in concrete detail) which makes the writing less life-like and believable (even if only marginally). It is where the inexperienced writer is telling his truth (as he imagines it) not the story truth. Story truth is complex. It is ultimately about authenticity.

A whole thesis could be written about authenticity alone. Indeed Sartre spent some time trying to explain it. In reality, we all know it when we see it, or sense its absence. For the sake of succinctness, let us turn to the definition offered by the New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought 3rd Edition (1999), at page 58:

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243 It would be glib to say that I would in any circumstances do what Sandra did, because I certainly would not. However, as author, I had to get off my high horse and walk around in her skin (inside the laboratory of my mind, of course—I do not subscribe to the do-then-write / method acting style to the extent that some practitioners do!).
Authenticity: In the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, the opposite of BAD FAITH. It is a coincidence of the consciousness of the subject (pour-soi) with its own objective reality (en soi). If this can be overcome, authenticity is the achieved coincidence of the two. The difficulties in this human enterprise, which are enormous, are sharply presented in Sartre’s early novels La Nausee (1938) and L’Age de Raison (1945). For further reading: J.-P. Sartre, Being and Nothingness (1957).

‘Potential for new thinking’ is often indicated when a writer has had a change of heart and a change of mind about aspects of her own novel: chances are, she has experienced the albeit-fleeting epiphany of ‘Pure feeling’ and ‘True thinking’. Referring back to my Figure 3 on domains, this is because the writer has moved out of the private, comfortable domain of her own personal truths, and moved into the more complex and interesting public domain of the characters and potentially then, of the readers. The writer’s thinking has changed because she is no longer limited to her own thoughts, but has moved into the headspace of potential others, or as I describe earlier in this paper in relation to domains, the space of her ‘other-self’ (see Figure 3). The writer may well come back to her own private domain and the thoughts of the characters may perfectly align in the end with their creator’s. However, there is a definite moving-beyond-oneself process going on in order to tap into universal feeling and more open thinking.

A novel opens up ‘Potential for new thinking’ when it encourages the reader to look at the world differently (not necessarily agreeing or disagreeing with the author’s or characters’ world view) or as Sontag would say, ‘opens up ‘space’ of narrative possibility in which we may or may not come to know more about that which has not yet come into our field of perception.’ Deleuze speaks of ‘concepts’ that have the potential to transform life; Nussbaum proposes that fiction has the power to transform society by engaging the imagination of individuals and empowering them to believe that things could be different. Whether a writer wishes to use any of these writers’ works to guide

266 Nussbaum, M.C., 1995.
her delivery of 'potential for new thinking' through her novel is entirely up to her. Each writer may come to it in her own way.

**Outcomes in creative product**

Believability, authenticity and transformation are the outcomes in the creative product (in this case, a novel). I submit that the most transformative novels affect readers in psychological ways: exploring self-identity; invoking empathetic responses; triggering new learning and understanding; creating a shared memory of the experiences in the story; and engaging in meaning-making.

Each aspect, as is shown in the toolkit, intermingles and relies upon each other aspect in the hope of evolving into a story that is believable, authentic and transformative. In discussing focalisation and narrative voice, O’Neill links the concepts of knowledge, characterisation, actual/textual and believability. Looking at the toolkit in Figure 2, this description travels predominantly down the 'Knowledge' column, but also reaches across the 'Knowledge of knowledge' and 'Significance of knowledge' columns.

We readily accept that an external focalizer, like an external narrator, should lay claim to unrestricted knowledge, but assume that a character focalizer’s knowledge will be ‘naturally’ restricted, like our own. We tend to treat a character-focalizer’s perspective cautiously as being subjective, but quite happily accept an external focalizer’s vision as entirely objective. As in the case of the narrative voice, indeed, we tend to read the norms of internal focalization as questionable, those of external focalization as authoritative. Since externality and internality are interchangeable, however, the textual potential for manipulation of the reader here is abundantly evident.247

This is but one example of how a writer cannot attend to each element of writing in isolation to the other elements. It is not enough to read a chapter on focalisation or

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characterisation and attempt to work on them in a novel. It is paramount to realise the interconnectedness of each unseen process in the writing of a novel.

Enough has been said on believability, authenticity and transformation. We all know it when we experience it and miss it when we do not. If a reader is affected by a novel and feels somehow unsettled or challenged by it, it has probably done its best work, even if (particularly if?) the reader does not agree with it.

Conclusion

Presenting the largely intangible aspects of a novelist’s craft poses a methodological difficulty. While there are many kinds of books about writing and what it means to be a writer, they typically focus on the how-to or how-I of writing through defined and somewhat limiting methodologies. They demand we write or read in certain ways, or give general advice like ‘read a lot, write a lot’. Advanced writers need more than that. They are more interested in the unseen processes involved in novel writing, but may also want an accessible way of using (even high) theory in daily practice.

The writer’s creativity toolkit is about revising one’s thinking, researching and writing in a creativity-centred (rather than technically-focused) way. It is a clear mechanism for creative review, with defined outcomes—of a novel that is believable, authentic and transformative. It flexibly assists a writer in finding and telling ‘story truth’ (O’Brien, Reiken, Figure 1) for the public domain (Figure 3).

In order of experience, I am a lawyer, student, small business operator, mother, and aspiring academic and writer. In each domain of experience, I have acquired certain skill-sets, yet none of them particularly makes me a writer. It seems to me that writers, despite their varied backgrounds, are different to everyone else because they think like writers.

248 I wish I could do more to honour the effort put into each individual book on writing that I have read for this project, however, that is clearly impossible. I have resorted to commenting on examples of types of books which are generally more or less helpful to more advanced writers to cover the spectrum of what is currently available. In the end, there is something to be learned from every book that we read—good, bad, or other.
Their thinking potentially (even necessarily) spans many disciplines (intentionally or not) and may draw on various professional or other skills, but fundamentally writerly thinking is loyal to only one process—that is, to produce writing, a novel. In doing so, the writer is simultaneously engaged in deeply learning and creatively facilitating the learning of others in how to reconnect with the world, to be open to it, to see more, hear more, feel more. It is both a selfish and selfless act, imperceptibly crossing between private and public domains of being.

To be a writer, is to be a perpetual student—of life and of writing.
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Last accessed: 3 June 2009.


APPENDIX ONE: List of self-help books for writers sampled for this project


APPENDIX TWO:

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APPENDIX THREE:

Cyclopean View of Story Telling

Review by Theresa E. Lauf

Theresa E. Lauf is a Master of Philosophy student in Creative Writing at Griffith University, Gold Coast Campus researching women, gender and the Australian legal profession.

*The Seven Basic Plots: Why we tell stories*

Christopher Booker

Continuum, London, 2004

ISBN 0-8264-5209-4

728pp. Pb AU$69.95

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Someone shared this anecdote with me recently. I cannot stipulate as to its accuracy, but that is not the point. Apparently, a large hamburger producer was not prepared to track the meat put into its food because of the scale of the task. In every meat patty, goes beef from around one thousand cows, all combined in an enormous meat grinder. Oddly, this anecdote resonates with my reading of Booker’s The seven basic plots: Why we tell stories.

Booker has thrown more than a thousand interesting thoughts into his life-time work, ground them all up and come out with an homogenous mass of his own. At least initially, it tastes good and it satisfies basic hunger, until one starts to suspect the quality control and feels queasy. Unfortunately (and no doubt unlike the meat products which I still half-heartedly consume) there are more than a few mad cows in this patty Booker has thrown in, hooves and all, and, frankly, it’s surprising that his editors didn’t pick them out.

This was a very difficult book to review. The four parts could well have been four separate books. It is both brilliant in parts and incredibly one-eyed and wrong in others. The number of typographical errors also surprised me. The sheer size of the book (728 pages) and the amount of (sometimes contradictory) information imparted is overwhelming. In case you’re in a hurry, the answer to the central question is literally given in the last sentence of the book. The question, put simply, is: Why do we tell stories? Remember that.

Booker’s intended audience is not easy to identify. The tone is often condescending and the material repetitive. In its current form, only academics, keen scholars and true literature lovers are likely to persevere with it.

This isn’t your usual how-to-write book, although by grinding the goodness out of hundreds of stories (mostly classics, predating the Romantic Period) and contrasting that with the sludge that he purports emerged in the last two hundred years, Booker tells us that there is only one right way to tell a story. Is this a worry? You bet. But more on that later.
By stealth, Booker has produced a work that encapsulates his expansions and amendments to the work of famous psychoanalysts, Freud and Jung, into understanding the workings of the human unconscious, no less. The unsuspecting reader is tricked into reading a lot of personal opinions of one man, stacked on top of each other, to seem big enough to equate to a thesis. Some of the opinions are well grounded (but one must question the completeness and integrity of the methodology behind the work). Many are not. The things that are left out tell us as much about the author as the things he deigned to include.

The formal layout and heavy reliance upon 'precedent' (in the form of centuries of stories) gives this book at least the veneer of logic and authority.

Part one: The seven gateways to the underworld

To answer his question, Booker first analyses the plots of many of the stories familiar to Western readers since the beginning of time, and categorises them into his seven plot types, including: Overcoming the monster; Rags to riches; The quest; Voyage and return; Comedy; Tragedy; and Rebirth. The idea of there being only a handful of master plots is not new, but no-one has gone to such lengths to prove it. For that, we can congratulate Booker. Part one of the book is eminently useful for teachers, scholars and literature lovers. Nothing like it has been achieved before. It is superb.

However, it needs to be noted that the stories are not necessarily representative of the entire world. Indeed, they seem limited to those Booker thinks his readers might be most familiar with: those in the Western, Christian or Jewish traditions mostly. Stories of Australian Aboriginals, Asians, gays, feminists, to name a few, are completely left out, and according to Booker, because of America's beginnings, almost nothing good has come out of America—ever. American stories are mostly used to illustrate unsuccessful outcomes. The limitations of the resource material aren't clearly stated. This issue is only alluded to in the Author's Notes (p. 703).

In his Epilogue to Part one, Booker introduces the reader to the chief archetypal numbers around which stories are structured: one, two, three and four. Any others are dealt with
only in a footnote (p. 235), including, ironically, the number seven, as in The seven plots...the seven deadly sins...need I say more?

Part two: The complete happy ending

In Part two, Booker submits that there is a familiar cast of characters who keep reappearing in the plots he has just categorised in Part one, and that they are significant in revealing some deep mystery about storytelling and life. The chief archetypes are: Mother, Father, ‘animus’ and ‘anima’, and Child. At this point, the reader begins to wonder what Booker’s point is. Is he looking for the meaning of life through stories? Is he telling us how to suck eggs?

Booker explains the significance of dark/light figures and corresponding masculine/feminine traits and the need for all to be balanced to achieve a fully resolved story. This all seems tame enough, until he starts applying it to the modern world, particularly in the context of the feminisation of men and the masculinisation of women in his very last chapter. But in this part, Booker continues to apply his theory only to traditional stories to illustrate his points, lulling his readers into a false sense of security.

Part three: Missing the mark

Part three catalogues the downfall of modern storytelling, in parallel with the happenings in the world and the shifts in consciousness since the Romantic period and French Revolution. This whole part reads like a long complaint of almost two hundred pages, pulling apart stories of each kind of plot, highlighting the darkness and unresolved natures of the stories.

In Chapter 25, Booker goes further and compares the downward spiral of the quality of Thomas Hardy’s work with his own life’s tragedies. Chapter 27 obsesses about the active ego and the unacceptable coming to the fore of sex and violence which merely titillates rather than telling genuine stories. In Chapter 29, he suddenly introduces a new plot to the mix, which he says has only emerged recently: The mystery. The mystery does not represent a fully developed and resolved story and is strictly lowbrow in Booker’s literary estimation.
Booker has a disconcerting habit of amending accepted theories in footnotes (for example, his comments on Jung’s ‘psychological types’ theory [p. 559] and how Freud got his ‘Oedipus Complex’ theory wrong [p. 521]). I wonder how the learned establishment would view such flippancy.

**Part four: Why we tell stories**

In Part four, Booker steps ‘outside this self-contained world of storytelling, and to see how the ways in which we tell stories relate to what we call ‘real life’ ’ (p. 540).

Booker examines the difference between humans and other animals and highlights that his study differs to all others in that he takes into account ‘the consequences arising from the split between the ego and instinct’ (p. 553). He asserts that his work picks up what Freud and Jung missed: essentially, they studied dreams to better understand the unconscious, without recognising ‘just how much more systematic a picture of its workings can be derived from analyzing the process whereby we imagine stories’ (p. 553).

It is disconcerting to me that Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs was not featured in a study about plots. Maslow is not even mentioned, but masturbation is. Feminism isn’t included in the index, but feminisation of men is. Booker’s work is odd in the things it chooses to completely ignore or highlight and, in that sense, I do not feel confident that it has been balanced and properly presented as a scholarly work. Furthermore, Booker has no qualifications in psychoanalysis as far as I know.

As I mentioned before, feminism is not listed in the index or contents. However, I pushed myself to the end of the book because I couldn’t believe that he would have excluded it. I was right.

If you want to read Booker’s thoughts on feminism, look up ‘feminisation of men’ (pp. 661, 687–89) and ‘The heroine as hero’ (p. 486) for starters. I’m not being funny. His feelings on this supposed social disintegration are palpable. I thought I was conservative and traditional in outlook and lifestyle until I read pages 486, 661 and 687 to 691 for example—I thought my eyes were bleeding.
Booker can’t hide his contempt for the ‘new ‘mannishness’ ’ (p. 661) and ‘emancipated attitudes’ (p. 661) (‘mass-individualism’ [p. 661], ‘political correctness’ [pp. 689–90], ‘new secular Puritanism’ [p. 689]) and those who have become ‘possessed by a fanatical and humourless intolerance’ (p. 689). He doesn’t understand the different types of feminism, nor does he acknowledge any positives from its intervention. I don’t think I’d like to live in Booker’s ideal world, even if all the stories have happy endings.

While it isn’t addressed all in one place, Booker appears to suggest that all the evils in the world, including the demise of good storytelling, are because of women’s egocentricity (beginning with Eve and Pandora). These days, women in the modern world and modern stories are not complying with their preordained archetypal roles and are upsetting everything, from a psychoanalytical standpoint of course. Reverse ‘gender stereotyping’ of women in modern stories particularly offends him (pp. 486, 690).

Only women who fulfill their archetypal roles (of two centuries ago) and ‘complete’ the hero are acceptable to Booker. A woman needs to be ‘tamed’ back into contact with her femininity’ (p. 688).

See page 689 for Booker’s views on ‘political correctness’, the ‘mother’s boys’ (Tony Blair and President Clinton), extremism and anti-discrimination issues. This reads like a John Laws script.

**Epilogue: The light and the shadows on the wall**

Here Booker preempts any criticisms of his work by relying on Plato’s Parable of the Cave, basically, that with our limited state of consciousness, of course we can’t see what he’s talking about! There are so many other incredible throwaway lines in this chapter about the scientific significance of his work, and religious references about the state of the world, that it’s too much to summarise. Once he started talking about ‘cosmic mind’ (p. 701) I lost it. Happy reading...

Without clearly stating it, Booker has presented us with his life’s work (summaries of many stories) within the framework of psychoanalytical theory. It was incumbent upon him to stipulate this at the beginning rather than setting up clichéd cliffhangers on every
page, right up to the last page where we finally get the answer, but still within an unclear context.

Psychoanalytical theory presupposes that human beings are pushed and pulled by unconscious instinctual impulses. That should have been in paragraph one, page one. Then he should have prepared his reader for the journey they were embarking upon.

What I realise now is that Booker subscribes to psychoanalytical theory (which he expands upon, on the basis of his reading of stories), and feels that proper stories (which he defines, and which definition seems to hold up until 200 years ago) hold the blueprint to our own ‘happily ever after’. The problem with Booker’s ‘theory’ is that he only refers to things which support it and disregards the 200 years of experience which don’t.

Booker believes in evolution (he describes the first single-celled organism as our ultimate Rags to Riches hero [p. 545]), but somehow, he can’t accept that we’ve changed since we started walking on two legs and that maybe our lives, expectations and consequently stories have also.

Ironically, Booker so clearly explains the role of the ‘deadly opposites’ (p. 233) in storytelling and how the hero must walk the fine line between them or face a sudden and horrible death, yet, he cannot see that he has in numerous, fundamental respects, overstepped the line himself. And as he says, it’s all about fighting one’s own egocentric nature. At least on that point, we agree.

As a writer, the most unsettling thing about this work is that it states in absolute terms that if we don’t follow the archetypes, both in plot and character, we don’t have a satisfying story, because we are all unconsciously programmed to look for these archetypes. It would be an interesting question for someone to take up with Booker: Where do the archetypes end and the clichés begin? Also, is art in all its forms, including storytelling, not art if it engages in and reflects the culture of its time? And could it be that there is more than one reason why we engage in storytelling?

This book is a worthwhile addition to the general discourse on storytelling, however, it needs to be considered with caveats.
APPENDIX FOUR: Novel Lesson Fails to Inspire

Review by Theresa Lauf

Theresa Lauf is a Master of Philosophy student in Creative Writing at Griffith University, Gold Coast campus researching women in the Australian legal profession, and novelistic research and writing practice.

13 Ways of Looking at the Novel: What to read and how to write

Jane Smiley

Faber and Faber, London, 2006

ISBN 0-571-23110-1


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Jane Smiley's *13 Ways of Looking at the Novel: What to read and how to write* may be of interest to readers and first-time writers.

Pulitzer prize-winning Smiley is clearly passionate about the novel and keenly discusses the history, psychology and morality of the novel while offering personal suggestions about her own reading and writing journey.

The book does not give insights into advanced writing techniques but is an eclectic distillation of her personal writing and reading experiences. It may offer an interesting read for lovers of memoir and literature review. However, it offers little practical guidance or assistance on the actual process of writing.

The title suggests that the guide will provide some clear discussion of writing practise. It also references Wallace Stevens' poem '13 ways of looking at a blackbird'. Smiley was clearly looking for an external form as a medium for her to explore a vast array of novels in order to understand what makes a novel 'great', or 'striking' (in the absence of greatness) (p.200). More about greatness later. Thirteen is the eccentric number. There are clearly many ways of looking at a novel. Structuring the book around this referential number, however, contributes to a less than cohesive view of novel writing.

What are the thirteen ways of looking at a novel, you ask? The headings of the thirteen chapters to this book are as follows: Introduction; What Is a Novel?; Who Is a Novelist?; The Origins of the Novel; The Psychology of the Novel; Morality and the Novel; The Art of the Novel; The Novel and History; The Circle of the Novel; A Novel of Your Own (I); A Novel of Your Own (II); Good Faith: A Case History; Reading a Hundred Novels.

The subtitle is particularly provocative: What to Read and How to Write. This is such a big claim.

Essentially, Smiley brings together some interesting trivia and points of view on the novel in itself, the novelist's life, a case history of her own work, and a précis of the hundred novels she read during a September 11-induced case of writer's block. This work took her three years to complete.
Only twenty-five pages (204–229), are dedicated directly to answering the second part of the subtitle, namely ‘how to write’. Here is the opening paragraph to Chapter 10, ‘A novel of your own’ (I):

Now that you have decided to begin your novel, you may congratulate yourself. You have not been asked or groomed to write a novel. You have not gone to novel-writing school, nor taken a standard curriculum of preparatory courses. Chances are, no one wants you to write your novel—if they say they do, they are just meaning that you should get it over with or get on with it. The people you know actually dread reading the novel you are about to write—they don’t want to read about themselves, they don’t want to be bored, and they fear embarrassment for everyone. You are therefore, free. (204)

It would have been helpful to have had this clearly stated at the beginning (or indeed, indicated in the title). This is a book for people who haven’t even begun writing. Instead, one had to wait until page 204 to find out.

Based upon her reading of Middlemarch, The Trial, Vanity Fair and Wuthering Heights, with reference to ‘The Clock’ (or the ‘circle of the novel’) at page 179, Smiley makes some conclusions about ‘greatness’ at pages 200–203. Some of her thoughts are as follows:

There is no single quality that the ‘great’ novels share other than the biographical quality—the sense that the reader comes to understand a character completely, better than the character understands himself or herself. (200)

What seems to be happening is that the author’s voice and his or her protagonist’s potential fit one another and illuminate one another in a unique way. But in fact, capaciousness works for the novelist in several ways. When he includes many components in his novel, he stimulates his own thinking as he tries to get the parts to mesh—dilemmas of narrative as simple as time sequence and cause and effect require the author to think about the complex connections between his parts and to express these complexities in his style, which becomes more probing and more idiosyncratic. (201)
The Trial, though, shows that radical simplicity and focus, resulting in an intensity of intimacy that is thoroughly original, is another path to greatness. What Kafka understands better than anyone is the simple power of narration—a story is constructed one image and one incident at a time. Once the images and incidents are expressed clearly, they exist powerfully and in some sense ineradicably in the reader’s mind. If they are sufficiently compelling, the reader cannot help contemplating them. To qualify them in any way, even by relating them to other ideas, is to muddy them. The Trial is an effective answer to E.M. Forster’s lament that attention to ‘What happens next?’ inevitably renders a narrative too common or pedestrian to be truly profound. (202)

Greatness in a novel does not depend upon perfection of the object; perfection of the object is merely an added dimension to the greatness of certain novels. But every great novel offers incomprehensible abundance in some form—even The Trial, only a couple of hundred pages long, is abundantly meticulous, abundantly intimate, abundantly strange, and abundantly original. (203)

Smiley’s book does not contain writing exercises, nor does it methodically deal with every commonly accepted element of the novel (see chapter 10, which touches upon a writing ‘pyramid’ and chapter 9 for ‘The Clock’, with the twelve different types of discourse that can be incorporated into a novel). It is an idiosyncratic representation of the author’s own conceptions of the novel. It is too broad-ranging to be of direct service to beginner writers (other than as a source of ‘yes you can do it’ motivation or general friendly wisdoms) and not detailed enough for advanced writers. However, having said that, had the title and purpose been different, one could have said that this was a book that could have contributed towards making better readers. This would include average reading enthusiasts and novice writers. Smiley speaks passionately about the form. Perhaps, for some readers of this work, that will be enough.

At the end of ‘A novel of your own’ (II) Smiley states:
The feeling you are looking for as you decide whether you are finished is exhaustion. I do not mean literal physical fatigue as much as the sense that you have used up your inventiveness, your intelligence, and your ideas with regard to this story and these characters. While you are still interested in them, you have thought every thought you are capable of about them. Chances are your novel is not perfect, and someone else will have a good idea of how it can be improved or at least be done differently the first time he reads it, but you have come to the end of your relationship with it. Print it out; go to a bookstore and buy a book about publishing, which is a whole subject in itself.

While this book is interesting, it ultimately fails to deliver. Unfortunately, the title promises the moon whereas the book itself delivers only its reflection in a bucket of water. This is a well-intentioned (but inaccurately named) book of hearty advice to would-be writers and reading enthusiasts.
**APPENDIX FIVE: Using the writer’s creativity toolkit**

The toolkit is reproduced here for the use of other writers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Process</th>
<th>Knowledge (Conveyed through narration, description, dialogue)</th>
<th>Knowledge of knowledge (Contemplated by writer searching for the story’s ‘truth’)</th>
<th>Significance of knowledge (Incorporated into the story &amp; used as the ultimate editing/defining tool)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Research facts Writing plot situation</td>
<td>Research validity Writing point of view</td>
<td>Market + Audience Accuracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philosophical inquiry (philosophy)</td>
<td>Character motivation</td>
<td>Authorial motivation</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Pure feeling</td>
<td>True thinking</td>
<td>Potential for new thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterization in creative product</td>
<td>Believability</td>
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<td>Transformation</td>
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