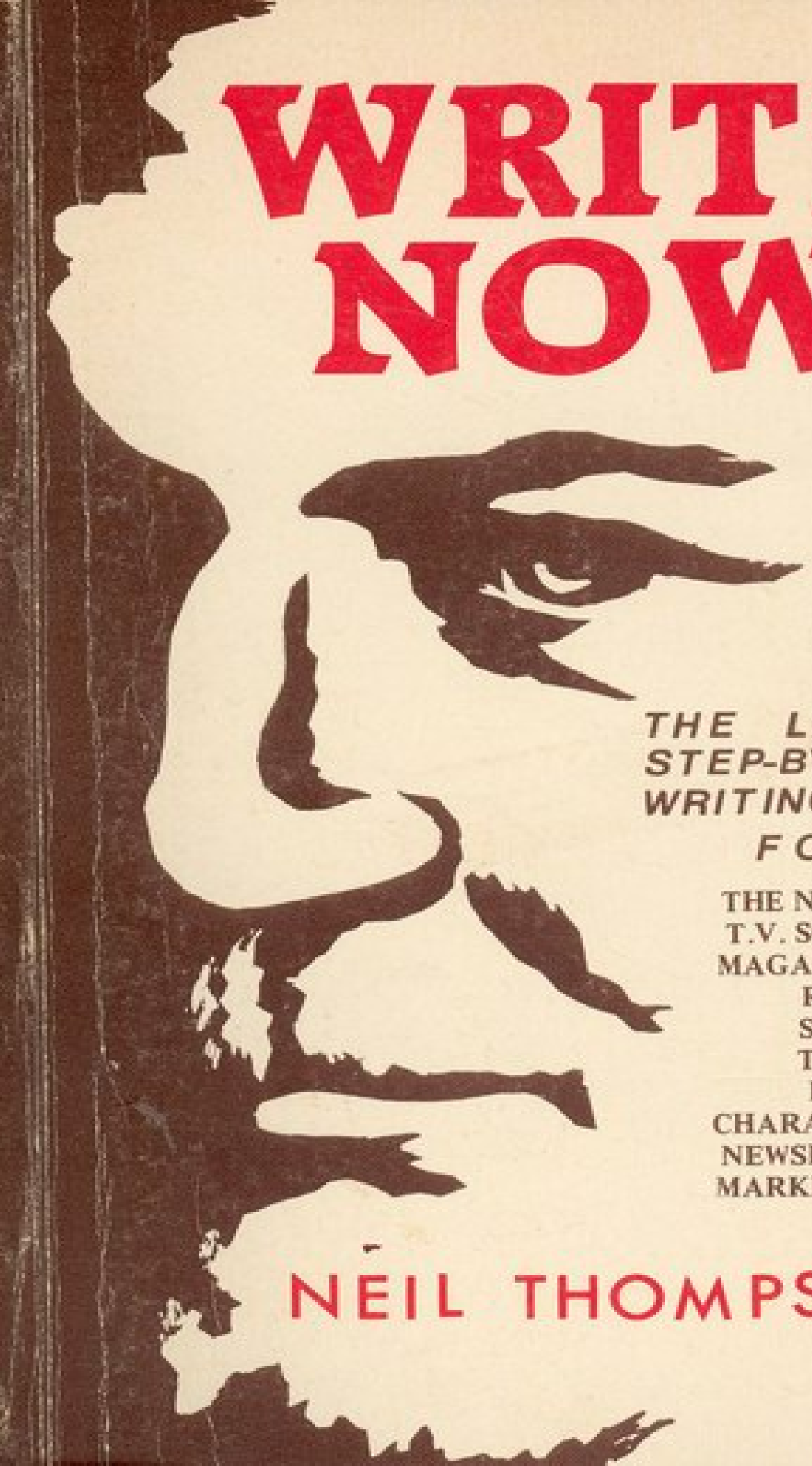
WRITE NOW!



THE LATEST STEP-BY-STEP WRITING PLAN FOR:

THE NOVEL
T.V. SCRIPT
MAGAZINES
RADIO
STORY
THEME
PLOTS
CHARACTER
NEWSPAPER
MARKETING

NEIL THOMPSON

Write Now!

By

Neil Thompson

Section One The Formats Of Writing

1. Magazine And Newspaper Articles

The most widely-read materials in the world today are the headlines, sporting results and comic strips of daily newspapers.

Next in popularity come the thousands of various articles that appear in a variety of publications. Many are submitted by professional, full-time journalists. At the same time, however, there has never been a more wide-open, extensive and lucrative market for the amateur free-lance writer who researches his market and has something original and interesting to offer.

Magazine and newspaper articles vary greatly. They can be lengthy, brief, serious, or comical, provided the contents deal with people, places, happenings, speculations, sports, occupations and other interests that occupy people's lives in dreams or reality. Note the term article does not include the short story or the poem.

For every interest known, there is a publication somewhere.

There is no limit to the market, as far as the range of published articles is concerned. The obvious limitation comes in whether the work is fresh and original, and whether it suits the particular format of the publication to which it is submitted.

Articles As A Training For Other Writing

Writers of all types of fiction can learn much from the journalist, particularly in matters of planning, ideas grouping, simplified presentation, revealing conversation, and small unobtrusive comments that quickly bring a character to life.

This does not mean that all stories and novels need to be written in short, terse sentences and paragraphs. It does mean, however, that because many writers of fiction tend to ramble through lack of planning and extreme wordiness, an understanding of some basic principles of journalism can be most useful.

Ernest Hemingway, for instance, always credited his basic training with the Kansas City Star for his later style in fiction.

How To Start A Feature Article

First, select a topic - but do not start writing. What is your interest? Is it in people, places, sports, hobbies, entertainments, or occupations?

Next, research the range of magazines into which your intended article could possibly go. Remember that although the country you live in will be your best market, many overseas

publishers actively seek material from abroad. In Australia alone there are over 230 magazines and newspapers, in United States some 1,800, and in England over 1,200.

Be thorough in your research. Understand that your article must be shaped to fit the magazine; not the reverse.

Every publication maintains a unique sound and content that is different from that of any other, and the writer must recognise what this is before he can begin. The way a character is presented in Reader's Digest, for instance, can be seen to have a subtly different ring to the way people are described in Cleo, National Geographic, T. V. Times, Women's Weekly, or Blackwood's Magazine.

It therefore is necessary to read a range of any particular magazine's articles to note the pattern that emerges concerning number of words required, usual length" of paragraphs, formal or familiar expressions used, and the typical "sound" of the publication.

So - select your magazine. Study its format.

This done, the writing of the article can begin.

Examples Of Feature Articles

Use the following samples to note how widely article formats may vary.

1. Man In His Job

The "Man-Job" feature article, so common in newspapers and magazines, provides an excellent starting-ground for the beginning writer. It can be written to a pattern, and is popular because readers always are interested to find out how "the other half lives, be they miners, students, pop stars, housewives, racing drivers, business men, local identities or whatever.

Read the following article carefully. See if you can locate any particular structure or planning within it.

> **The Lonely Light**
>
> 1. Henry Bolton, lighthouse keeper, looks out at the far horizon. His eyes slowly move along it, and he does not look down as he finishes tamping the tobacco in his pipe and returns the pouch to his pocket. "Yes, I've been in the game forty years. And they need us just as much now as they ever did."
>
> 2. His eyes are still searching something as yet unseen in the far distance, and it is not until the match has actually been lit that he looks down and concentrates on getting the pipe drawing. Between puffs he adds, "They've

put some of the lights on automatic over the past few years. But they give trouble, and one day they'll all be manned again."

3. Mr. Bolton is a senior lighthouse keeper on the Althorpe Islands in Spencer Gulf, South Australia. He is 60 years old, and has been in the Service for 30 years.

4. Althorpe Islands is a lonely posting. The wind blows almost constantly, and one has to get used to the sound. In the winter the gales howl in from the south and west.

5. The islands are separated from Yorke Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island by seas which, according to Lloyds, 'can be among the roughest in the world'.

6. Supplies come in by boat, weather permitting, and by light aircraft drop at other times. Bad weather can result in groceries, and the precious mail, being weeks late.

7. "Food supplies are never really a problem," Mr. Bolton says. "Makes you appreciate the fresh milk and vegetables all the more when they get here. We've got refrigeration of course, these days, and there's always plenty of fish.

8. "And it's a good life here. A comfortable one."

9. Mrs. Bolton speaks for the first time. "If it wasn't for the wind." She is a small, motherly woman, given to few words.

10. "Well, that's true," Henry admits. "Last year we did record gusts of over 200 kilometres an hour."

11. The Boltons live in a comfortable cottage that snuggles under the backbone of the island, and thus gets some protection. There is electricity from the island plant for cooking, heating and refrigeration, and a spare bedroom which is used by the very, very rare visitor.

12. High above rears the great tower of the light. It is a land-mark by day and its 400,000 candle-power lamp can be seen for thirty miles at night.

13. The light is almost automatic now, and switches itself on at sundown. But the keepers must be on the station by day to keep the plant working, the reflectors polished, the bearings lubricated and a host of minor things maintained. They are also responsible for meteorological reports.

14. "Not like the old days," Henry Bolton says. "The place we always think of as home - Mum and me - was Cape Borda light on Kangaroo Island. We spent 15 good years there.

15. "When we first went there - and for a long time after - it was all kerosene lamps. We'd trim wicks and fill them in the day - that was the day-shift, and there was three men on the job. Polish the reflectors, too. And all the maintenance we do today.

16. "But on top we rostered ourselves for the night shift. That was the important one. Light up half hour before sunset, keep her burning till sunrise.

17. "Seven days a week, year around."

18. Cape Borda had been a 'snug berth' for the Boltons. Although ninety miles from the nearest town of Kingscote, it was connected by a road of sorts. Visitors were not uncommon, and could even become too plentiful.

19. "Three or four a year was just nice."

20. He is adamant that lighthouse keeping is not a boring occupation.

21. "How can it be? Even today you've got a routine to do - there's days when I work what should be overtime, just to keep up."

22. Doing what? "Just keeping everything in tip-top order. Weather, wind, sea and rain details by telex to the mainland. Do maintenance for the sake of maintenance. Don't wait for trouble to develop. Don't let it happen."

23. "A job worth doing is a job worth doing well," Mrs. Bolton murmurs, and Henry nods. He admits, though, there are people who can't take to the life and do find it boring and desperately lonely.

24. "But they're not lighthouse keepers, you see? They're just not cut out for the trade.

26. "Once we couldn't get a boat in here for a month. When it finally came, it took away one of the new keepers who'd been here for just a month.

27. "Another bloke, a writer, couldn't stop talking about how good it was when he first landed. Just what he always wanted. Peace and solitude.

28. "He lasted a week."

29. Henry Bolton himself has never had such worries. He points out that a man who has simple needs and good health, and particularly if he has a good wife, will fit in the Service well.

30. He does seem such a man himself; at peace with his own thoughts and the world about. Standing over six feet tall, with a straight back and full head of grey hair, he spaces his words carefully and methodically.

31. His early training was of the sea. For 15 years he was a seaman on coastal ships around South Australia. He sailed under steam, but also on ketches and schooners.

32. There is not one lighthouse, or stretch of South Australian coast, that he cannot recognize from the sea. Even today, after 30 years away from the . ships.

33. It is when talking about wrecks that Henry Bolton really warms to his subject. He has witnessed two, and been part of one.

34. "There was a ship that drove ashore not far from Borda in the early days.

35. "At least most of her crew got ashore, judging by the tracks on the sand. Maybe 20 or so men.

36. "The tracks led ashore into a deep valley of terribly thick bushland that now's called Flinders Chase.

37. "Search party after search party went in to find them. Do you know what? Never a trace of any one skeleton. Not one. To this day."

38. He muses on that. "I've gone in to look myself. Not a trace of all those men.

39. "Then there was another ship driven ashore at Snug Cove, also by Borda. The two survivors walked all the way into Kingscote.

40. "They claimed the Borda light was out. There was also the rumour that they carried gold bullion ashore and buried it in the sandhills there at Snug Cove.

41. "Plenty have looked, but it's never been recovered. Me? Yes, I've had a bit of a poke around there myself." His eyes light up with humour. "But as you can see, I'm still a lighthouse keeper."

42. The future for the Lighthouse Service is a constant, even expanding one. Many light-houses that have been made keeperless and automatic in the past 20 years may become manned again.

43. "There was a close thing a few years back," Henry recalls. "A light on the mainland was reported out by four ships in one night.

44. "When they got to the light next morning by land they found it was shattered by bullets. Vandalized.

45. "Can you risk even one ship going ashore for the sake of one keeper's wage?"

46. And the future light-house keeper?

47. "He'll be a different breed as far as training and background goes. He may even be a university man, trained in Meteorology. That as much as a light technician.

48. "With helicopters laid on for regular spelling ashore."

49. Mr. Bolton will be retiring in a few short years. He hopes to buy a house at Largs Bay in Adelaide, close to the beach but not far from the wharves of Port Adelaide.

50. He may be right about the future lighthouse keeper being a new breed.

51. But when the gales howl for a month around Althorpe Islands, and the helicopters cannot land, it will still be men of his calibre and quiet philosophy who will be needed to successfully man the Light.

Many pieces of journalism read in such an easy, flowing manner that the structure is completely hidden. The Lonely Light is such an article in that it contains a tight pattern which was planned in detail before the first word was written.

Check the article again thoroughly as you follow these planned features:

1. Time Periods

The work is set out in three distinct time periods to give variety and interest:

The factual present (Paras. 1-13)
The nostalgic past (Paras. 14 - 41)
The speculative future (Paras. 42-51)

2. The Two Voices

There are two "voices" used to unobtrusively give a conversational tone, being the voice of "The Man", i.e. the reported speech of Henry Bolton, and that of "The Author". When The Man speaks his words are friendly and colloquial, quite in contrast to the more terse, factual statements of The Author. This vitalizes the article throughout, while allowing at the same time a mass of factual data to be included without risk of boredom. Note the contrast between the paragraphs of the following excerpt:

> The light is almost automatic now, and switches itself on at sundown. But the keepers must be on the station by day to keep the plant working, the reflectors polished, the bearings lubricated and a host of minor things maintained. They are also responsible for meteorological reports. "Not like the old days," Henry Bolton says, "The place we always think of as home - Mum and me - was Cape Borda light on Kangaroo Island. We spent 15 good years there."

The ratio of The Man to The Author utterances is about 50:50.

3. Short Paragraphing

Short, journalistic paragraphs of 1 to 3 sentences only are used. The length of each is determined by its "thought-conversational" content, i.e., each paragraph is a small group of utterances as could be expected in normal, easy, two-person conversation. (This despite the fact that The Man is talking to The Author, whereas The Author is commenting direct to the reader.)

> Cape Borda had been a 'snug berth' for the Boltons. Although ninety miles from the nearest town of Kingscote, it was connected by a road of sorts. Visitors were not uncommon, and could even become too plentiful.
>
> "Three or four a year was just nice."

4. Use of Present Tense

The use of the present tense, used in conjunction with the "two voices", encourages a "here-and-now" feeling " within the article.

> Supplies come in by boat, weather permitting, and by light-aircraft drop at other times. Bad weather can result in groceries, and the precious mail, being weeks late.
>
> "Food supplies are never really a problem," Mr. Bolton says. "Makes you appreciate the fresh milk and vegetables all the more when they get here. We've got refrigeration, of course, these days, and there's always plenty of fish."

Actual Plan of the Article

The Present

Paragraphs

1-2 The Author and The Man: some interesting comment on job.
3-6 The Author: introduces details of the man, his trade, location.
7-10 The Man: talks of current job; location; facilities.
11-13 The Author: talks of current job; location; facilities.

The Past

14-17 The Man: his favourite job/location he remembers.
18-20 The Author: describes that job/location.
21-28 The Man: the effects of the occupation on some people.
29-33 The Author: the Man's qualifications, suitability for job.
34-41 The Man: his pet topic (ship-wrecks).

The Future

42 The Author: future of the job in general.
43-48 The Man: future of the job in general.
49-51 The Author: future of the Man and his job.

The reading and television-viewing public has always been interested in - and will always be interested in -the continuing cavalcade across page and screen of visiting celebrities, old gold miners, politicians, policemen, women with housefuls of cats and so on.

There is a constant market within city and country daily newspapers, Saturday Magazine sections, tourist promotion magazines, women's magazines and many other issues. Preferred formats for each publication of course vary, but this can be determined by research.

With regards to interviewing, the "double-meeting" process is best for the beginning writer. With this technique the first meeting reveals the skeleton of a life-time: early years, locations, nature of job, and present status; but it is unlikely that any intimacy of detail will emerge. People need time to reflect. The writer therefore goes away to plan the article through visualizing the life he has just heard about, and to compile a list of questions to fill in the vague areas.

The second interview, accordingly, usually uncovers such a wealth of human-interest detail that the problem will be to keep the article down to size.

II. Activities - Hobbies

Today there are magazines for rock-hounds, hi-fi enthusiasts, hot-rodders, dressmakers, inventors, dieters, sports-people, and any number of others with particular hobbies, sports and interests.

The first step for the beginning writer, again, is to select a topic: in this case, something he is close to or involved in. Next comes the research of publications to see how the article must be shaped.

A person interested in fishing for instance, could start by reading in Australia the Fishing World and Modern Fishing, in Britain the Angler's Mail, Angling, ox Angling Times, and in America Field and Stream. Although each magazine will have its own format, certain elements of style will be seen to be in common.

Fishing magazines, for instance, do not look for "tall stories". Their interest is to ensure an authentic ring through simply-worded, interesting accounts of actual catches with details of weights, lengths, times, locations, tackles, baits, etc. If the writer is able to round off the article through a touch of research at a public library concerning, for example, spawning habits, so much the better.

Begin with an immediate reference to the topic. Say what the theme is, but do not make the article simply a string of facts and figures. Whet the reader's appetite, let him anticipate as the story unfolds.

Always remember that readers are interested in people as well as their activities, and what is the world of reality to the writer is the world of dreams to the reader. So the reader must be encouraged to dream and be catching those fish, too.

Take the two following examples, the first of which is poor journalism. It would be suitable for an encyclopedia entry, but would be rejected by a magazine editor as it only relates to facts and in doing so excludes the reader from the action:

> Bream of one-quarter pound to one pound are caught in the Port River. The bait is crabs found under rocks. The gear is a short hand-line with one hook. The fish always bite from high tide for ...

Note the contrast in this 1,500-word article entitled Bream in the Estuary, in which the writer is encouraging reader-participation from the opening words:

> Catching bream of one-quarter to one pound in the reaches of the Port River is satisfying for several reasons.
>
> First, it could not be a cheaper sport. The hand-line used is only eight feet long with no weights and just a No. 9 Mustad hook on the end. And the bait of crabs is collected free from under the rocks you stand on to fish!

There the writer is talking directly to the reader; yarning to him while at the same time supplying a steady stream of interesting comment and fact.

Most magazines for sports, activities and hobbies use this informal, friendly, person-to-person touch. The following opening sentences of seven separate articles in Swimming magazine show the warm, conversational approach that comes before, and then cloaks, the information that follows:

> A handicap need not prevent someone from winning a championship ...
>
> "Chaser with steady roll," Adrien Fells tells his students. "Five up, right? Ready? Go!" Jo-Anne began swimming in earnest when she turned three ...
>
> For the single-minded swimming fanatic there's nothing like the Y.M.C.A. titles ...
>
> Alright, people, listen - today we move into swimming biology (Biology?) Yes, biology!
>
> With winter moving in the outdoor pools down the Coast are getting bleaker at each dawn ...
>
> Townsville brilliant individual medalist Peter Brown bettered his own record of 1:49.40 on September 18, swimming ...

Even magazines on nature try to maintain the "human" touch in their articles, as these beginnings of four articles from Wildlife show:

> The black duck is one of the most numerous and widely-distributed ducks in Australia. One day we found a nest ...
>
> I grew up in Tasmania and knew all about Tasmanian Devils ...
>
> Sulphur-crested cockatoos are some of the most entertaining birds I know in the wild state ...
>
> The banded Hare-Wallaby is one of the small number of small wallabies in the family of kangaroos ...

To summarize, then - write your article to fit the magazine you have selected. Be original and factual, but do not preach or teach. Just communicate without superfluous words in a natural, friendly, one-sided conversation.

III. The Humorous Article

There is a ready and lucrative market for the writer who can successfully sustain humour. A top-grade radio-script of one hour, for instance, commands over $800, with a strong chance of doubling that sum by repeats.

Most newspapers and many magazines unobtrusively include small humorous pieces to balance out their offering. Such articles fall into three categories.

First, there is the account of an incident, person, or situation. The manner of telling may be light or serious, provided that the overall or final impression is of humour, and the whole piece is written in simple, direct prose.

Summer Holidays

> October is the month when the last cold sea gales come in and Christmas seems so far away.
>
> Exams were the only things on my mind ...

Second, there is the telling of the direct joke. Magazines such as Readers' Digest use a number of these.

Bodily Form

> First-year high school biology essays are often erratic, but this one stopped even me, after thirty years. It read as follows: "There are three sort of holes or caves in the body.
>
> Up top is the branium, which contains the brain.
>
> Next is the borax which has the lungs, lights, liver, lymph´s and living things.
>
> Then there is the Abominable Cavity which contains the five bowels labelled A,E,I,O and U."!

Finally there is the play on words, the spoof.

Fruit For Frivolity

> A politician in Canberra recently tried to promote the apple industry by claiming seriously that eating fruit made people romantic.
>
> He quoted the case of a woman becoming amorous within six and three-quarter minutes of sampling an apple.

What a glorious idea for Adelaide in the apple season! The entire population of 900,000 spreading upwards through the Adelaide Hills eating not just one, but say a dozen apples. What fun and frolics away from the rat-race! Perhaps all fruit has this effect? The results of research are varied.

On eating oranges, for instance. I mean, everyone knows that Charles II had to wade through basket upon basket to complete his courtship, but weren't the results worth it? Certainly a case of Gwyn and bare it.

And history has it that one cause of his displeasure was a rumour about Nell's secret oriental lovers. Perhaps he got the hint when she changed over to Mandarins.

Passion-fruit I can testify to as being a great lemon. After years of reasoning how passion-fruit must cause dusky maidens to perform under huge moons and waving palms, I headed for Fiji. I consumed great quantities of passion-fruit and the sole result was berry-berry.

When I recovered I set about trying to lure women back to my hotel room. It's not true that where mangoes, woman will follow. In fact, all that comes out of tropical fruit is the pip.

And Queensland politicians must be kinky if they do what they are often told to do with their pineapples. Be quite bananas, in fact.

Perhaps the stealing of fruit adds to the zest of eating it. Since my earliest days I've been intrigued by the ancient picture on the Cherry Ripe wrapper. Remember? There's a Tom Brown-type little boy on a stone wall reaching for a cherry and a John Bull-type down below with a birch stick. At any moment the little boy is going to have a cherry in his hand and a loquat on his bottom.

Every summer I land plum in the middle of the fruit season, with everyone frantically unloading over-ripe apricots on each other.

By New Year it's practically impossible not to wince at a quince, or not to tell people where to jam their jam.

A group of us bucks recently went up to Lenswood in the heart of apple country to get into this spicy romantic apple-action. We had talked so much about it that we actually anticipated seeing romps and goings-on under trees and in haystacks and all over.

After driving for hours without result we wound up at a packing-shed. I peeped over some boxes and said, "What a peach!"

> There was a wild crashing of crates as everyone surged to see. Then I have to bear scathing remarks for choosing to admire the one last piece of fruit on the tree.
>
> As the others filed into the shed I noticed a real country beauty walking past, putting Racquel Welch to shame. The aroma of apples was working, and I got hot flushes. "What a pair!" I cried.
>
> But the others refused to look back, saying that apples were the fruit they had come to see, not pears.
>
> Inside the shed we asked the ancient caretaker - would you believe his name was Jonathon! - whether apples caused romance, and whether he had seen wild goings-on at packing-time.
>
> "No," he said gloomily, "But I do remember thirty-eight years ago there was a little codlin in the back shed."
>
> So do we give a raspberry to all this Apples for Amor, Pears for Purulence, Nectarines for Naughtiness kick?
>
> Sounds like a severe half-case of sour grapes.

"Fruit For Frivolity" was well-received because a politician actually had made that statement, and therefore the article was topical.

Most pieces, however, are simply light plays-on-words about any topic under the sun.

A writer might be lying in a hospital (better than telling the truth) and as a result of being bored (a new economy operation) he might start to see all sorts of complications in bed-pans that don't pan out, unorderly orderlies, and sisters that act more like step-mothers.

There are distinct possibilities in situations where the wife is sick and the man has to run the house, children and animals; where the woman has to take the off-spring camping; or where a high-pressure house-decorator gets his foot in the door.

The organizing of a debating team, let alone the debate that follows when the topics get mixed, can be hilarious. And have you ever tried shopping at your local supermarket after the shelves have been re-arranged, and some baby perched on a shopping-trolley has left a trail of ice-cream?

Many occupations and industries lend themselves to a play on words. Take the new chum in a factory. Could it be he, instead of the materials he is trying to work with, that gets drilled, bored, fitted, slotted, shaved, jointed or dovetailed (as in timber), punched (as in timeclock), struck (as in strikes), locked out (as on Saturday night), measured up, ticked off, or elevated (forklift, not promotion)?

IV. Summary on the Writing of Articles for Magazines and Newspapers

1. *The Man-Job Feature Article*

The example of The Lonely Light shows how a firm, planned format allows a beginning-writer to enter this field.

The actual writing of such articles, moreover, is excellent practice in characterization for the short story and the novel.

There is no reason why anyone should not begin publication in this way, provided the subject is unique and the work well-edited.

Most people know at least one interesting character -sometimes even in the family. If not, go out and make a contact!

2. *Articles on Activities - Hobbies*

The examples given so far on fishing, swimming and wild-life barely scratch the surface of this extensive field.

A further constant market in this category exists for occupational articles: how to teach a Gr. VII history lesson, cultivate a strain of wheat, operate a laser-lathe, or use a new model of typewriter. There is a publication for practically every industry and occupation, with editors continually looking for new and interesting aspects of the trade concerned. Novice writers should not overlook this easily-entered and often quite remunerative area.

Articles concerning the home (decorating, furnishing, cooking, knitting, gardening, handy-man hints) supply another surprisingly wide market.

There are magazines and journals for the more serious preoccupation of the mind concerning religion, philosophy and society in general.

The list is endless.

And as everyone must have some sort of expertise they possibly could shape into an article, why not get started?

3. *The Humorous Article*

This is probably the most challenging form of writing for the beginning writer, as not everyone can "be funny" on demand. For those who can build a comical turn of phrase or theme however, the rewards are correspondingly high.

2. The Novel

Most beginning writers are confident that they have the nucleus of a novel "inside" them, but:

a. are very vague about anything other than a general setting or a shadowy main character,

and

b. maintain that they do not have the time, isolation, or freedom from job-money needs even to consider making a start. (Has this been your excuse for a long time?)

The first point indicates that the important planning and research stage has not been entered into. This is easily rectified.

The second point is nonsense. No author can afford to wait until he or she is rich enough to leave work and be free from all family commitments, stress and noise before beginning to write. When would that ever be?

Would-be novelists should simply force themselves to make a start, bearing in mind that getting set-up and settling into a writing-routine is the most difficult stage for everyone.

The Writing Schedule And Place

A suggested time-allocation might be two hours per night, say seven to nine, Monday to Friday (sacrificing what? The mind-destroying monotony of television?) The important thing is to establish a regular timeslot which is reasonably within the normal life-pattern, and to vary from it under no circumstances. And if in the beginning the two hours is more sitting and staring at paper than writing, this will soon change.

The second requirement is a permanent place in which to write, set aside and recognized for just that purpose. In the normal rowdy household a bedroom will suffice, but a corner of a sleepout or a garage, equipped with an old desk and a fan or a heater, can be more than adequate. Beginning writers will be surprised how, after a short familiarization period, they can enter their domain, sit at the desk and immediately begin to write: take the same work out to the dining-room table, however, and a "dry-up" will result.

Beginning The Novel

The first stage is the gaining of a shadowy idea, or "inspiration", to use the hackneyed term.

Although the jolting thought, "This idea will make a book!" fires the author to want to begin immediate writing, such action should be restrained until it is seen whether research might enrich the whole vision that is emerging. Often it will.

Research

The term "research" has a far wider scope than merely poring over volumes. It can include reading books, files, newspapers, diaries, manuscripts and tombstones: equally, it involves recall of personal experience, talking with people, and watching analytically (but with great interest) the world around at work and play.

Suppose a unique plot is conceived for a novel in which a large city bank is robbed in broad daylight. Brilliant though it may be, the plot can only work if it comes to life in an authentic setting characterized by detail and atmosphere. The writer should not rely on vague memories of a bank interior, therefore, but go into one to specifically absorb the atmosphere therein: uniforms, customs, procedures, teller and customer roles, windows, doors, floors and so on. The way the receptionist smiles should be noted, and the expression and stance of the man at the door. What is he really thinking about? Is he armed? How would he react to violence? With this sort of "information" (actually speculation) the guard in the proposed novel firms from a shadowy, two-dimensional figure to a real person with particular and unique characteristics.

If the writer can go on from the bank premises to the public library to find a book on alarm systems, the touch of authenticity that will result will make the effort most worthwhile.

It is true that writers of novels set in modern times use settings which they have to some degree experienced. Even here a little learning is a dangerous thing, as memory can fade. To have been in a certain country for a few days, or to have made a commercial airline flight over the Antarctic, is not enough. Slides, photographs and travel books should be researched to help provide a more detailed and comprehensive setting, at least in the mind of the author. Not only will this infuse authenticity into the writing, it will almost certainly add ideas and dimensions to the plot.

The place of research in historic novels is obvious. Again, to have a great-grandfather who came out from England to prosper and lead a colourful life, is not enough. Nor are the family records, which probably boil down to names and dates, plus photographs and a few anecdotes if you are lucky. What is needed is extensive research of those times: manners, customs, language, commerce, transport, markets, religion, government, communications, morals, dress and so on. Consult an array of books as well as the photographs, documents, clippings and manuscripts held in capital city Archives. If your grandfather drove a wagon find out what a wagon really is, so that the unobtrusive description of a wooden brake and a "spreader" will add greater depth and a feeling of reality in your work.

While all novels do not call for research, it is surprising how many do achieve greater depth through the writers immersing or re-immersing themselves in the research of particular settings, great or small. And it can be most interesting.

After the germ of the idea and the relevant research, the writer must begin to see the work as having three major components.

Not only do these components account for the planning - they are also a check-list referred to periodically throughout the entire writing process.

1. A unique theme (plot, story outline) must be conceived.
2. The work must present a created, walk-in universe of its own.
3. The characters must be credible, with a life-force of their own.

It cannot be stressed too highly the importance of the writer making these three basic elements a part of his or her writing consciousness, so that they are at all times integral in the work.

I. The Unique Theme *

The first requirement of a successful novel is that its theme be unique and different in some recognizable way from anything that has gone before.

This "new idea for a book" can come from viewing, reading or hearing existing fact or fiction. It can come from watching people or talking to them. As writers are daydreamers, it can come from any or a mixture of sources, at any time. *The only stipulation is that in some way it be original*.

The difference does not have to be vast, of course. After all, what is "new" on the face of the earth?

Take the theme of sexual love as it has been sung, told and written about over thousands of years. It is still man and woman, pursuit and culmination, ecstasy and heartbreak, the eternal triangles, and the whole cycle repeating and repeating.

* Note that "theme" is used here to encompass "plot" and "story outline". The inseparable nature of these three terms is discussed at length in Chapter 7.

The amount of love stories published is without number, and it is a rare novel of any type that does not include a developing love affair as one of its strands or themes.

Yet on top of all this a simple, direct tale called Love Story can sell millions of copies. How? By presenting living people in ordinary but different circumstances, reacting to specific pressures that could come to bear on any person. *In other words, the love and death elements are old as time itself, but the circumstances they are presented in are unique to those people in those situations at that time*.

Take a second common literary topic of this century: international espionage. Both before and since James Bond there have been books about spies, an incredible number of which have been best-sellers. Why?

To start with, the concept of spying as going out of your own base, outwitting the opposition, gaining something and returning safely seems to appeal to some basic instinct of human nature. It is not a declaration of open war, yet the scheming, violence and adventure are all there, cloaked under the heading of working for one's country. Numerous indoor and outdoor games along these lines have become popular with children and adults alike.

So, spying as a nucleus for novels will be with us for a long time to come, unless human nature changes drastically.

But above and beyond the normal spy-setting each future novel must have some different and unexpected aspect that will make the story unique in itself, as has been the case in each of the successful past spy-novels.

This may be achieved in part by the setting. You may recall when East Germany and Russia, just after World War II, were locations of prime interest. When these became 'old-hat' the swing was to the glamour of Monarco with the chase extending into the sun-drenched Greek Isles. Next came the spy-dramas set in the Orient; then America, South America, mid-Atlantic (above and below), and under the Arctic ice-cap, with Africa rising again like nostalgic shades of Casablanca. The vast and unexpected natural beauties of Iceland have been used almost as a travelogue to successfully enhance one novel of what would otherwise have been a mundane story of espionage, similar to many that had gone before. But because of its setting in the Icelandic wild grandeur, it was unique.

Where next for the spy-story to be set? Mainland China? Exotic Pacific atolls? In the heart of a Muslim community? In a very ordinary home in a drowsy working-class suburb in a small country town?

Besides the setting, the characters, goals and motivations of future spy-novels will have to be changed to provide something unique, something different. Will the future reading-public be intrigued by a leading character who is handsome and moral, or small, ugly, disillusioned and without any ethics whatever? Crippled or whole, young or old, man or woman, travelling pop star, religious crusader, or ex-soldier? Will he or she drink whisky or milk, smoke a cigar, or suck lollipops? Will the mission be to gain information or a film, or to helicopter-lift a whole electronic bank out to a submarine or a temporary hiding place? Will the motivation be patriotism, money, or a chance to satisfy brutal instincts? Will the people in command be concerned with human life and country, or will they be portrayed as inhuman manipulators of lives in a deadly game without rules that no one really understands?

Two things can be predicted.

One, as already stated, is that espionage will serve as a basis for novels for a long time to come. The other is that any would-be writer can come up with the basis of a successful spy novel if he

a. reads the first page of a daily newspaper
b. brings to mind any real-life or screen character who has impressed him, and
c. stares at a map of the world for five minutes and lets his imagination wander.

Try it for yourself.

For the future novel, there are endless themes that can be explored. Certain predictions, however, can be made:

As in the past, *human* settings of love, conflict, union, violence, gain and the like will provide the overlay for *physical* settings of home, hotel, airport, battlefield, farm, spaceship, city, outback, laboratory, primitive tribe, jet-set and so on *ad infinitum*.

The successful novels will be those judged not on what the setting is, but how it is merged with plot, theme and characterization to provide a work that in some way, great or small, is unique and refreshingly different.

Which links directly to the next point.

II. The Work Must Entail A Created, Walk-In Universe Of Its Own

A book that you just "can't get into" invariably lacks a created universe that can be identified with. Conversely, when you just "can't put a book down", or when you sit in a theatre oblivious to your actual surroundings but engrossed in the film, then you have entered a literary universe.

The intent of every author must be to create such a literary micro-world, to concentrate on building it by word and action until it achieves a reality of its own. Nor should this creation be seen as an opening gambit only: it is an integral, ongoing process throughout the whole work.

Visualization

To "see" such literary universes even as they are being created, writers must be day-dreamers, to use an old-fashioned word.

Despite the pressures of the rat-race and time-and motion studies that conserve every second, they must develop the capacity to opt out, to become oblivious to actual surroundings as they drift into an imaginary world which they are first creating and will then transcribe on paper.

First comes the germ of a unique idea, plus a vague background and shadowy main figure(s).

Next the "mental television" is switched on so that the daydreaming begins, for the writer must create, enter and become as one with the whole world of the protagonist, not just that part which will show in the story.

Finally, at some later point comes the writing, interrupted at first by lapses of varying periods back into daydreaming. As the work progresses, however, the gap between visualization and transcribing decreases rapidly until the action is almost, but never quite, simultaneous.

To round off the point: if your mother ever once said sharply, "Stop dreaming and get on with it!", you need now know in all conscience that this rebuke does not apply to writers. Just the opposite. And be warned about one thing: the daydreaming of a literary universe, protagonist and theme does not only happen at the writing desk. Many an inspiration or "brown study" works itself out at the dinner table, in bed, driving a car, on the beach, waiting for a football match to begin, or at work where you should be concentrating on other things.

An important point to keep in mind during the planning and visualization stage of a novel is that *the literary universe should be created largely (though not completely) through the eyes of the protagonist*.

Point Of View Of The Protagonist

First, the relationship of the protagonist (leading character) to the reader must be made clear.

Once the reader senses who the protagonist is in the opening pages, an immediate liaison and even identification is formed.

This can happen in two ways.

Parallelism (agreement in direction, tendency, or character), here used as a literary term, means that the reader identifies directly with the protagonist. A man, for instance, reads James Bond avidly because in his secret heart he believes that if things had been different he also could have been a James Bond. He glories in the action, the glamour and the love-making. He, as well as Bond, smashes the crooks, and when the Bond-in-the-book is captured, he (the reader) feels apprehension (even though he knows it must end alright), and cannot put the book down until an escape is made.

It is interesting to note that this can happen even when the protagonist's behaviour violates the reader's morals, laws or social customs. Most people seeing the film Bonnie and Clyde, for instance, feel a sense of loss at the end, even though in real life they would in no way condone violence and bank-robbing.

A writer must never under-estimate the power of parallelism a reader can build up for a character.

The second reader-protagonist liaison is called empathy. This is an intuitive feeling of involvement that does not imply social or moral approval. In a book on Mussolini the reader builds strong empathy in that he experiences the places, the people, the conflicts, and the conditions. He understands, or believes he understands, why Mussolini acts, but does not identify with him or condone his actions. Rather, he (the reader) fleetingly envisages what he might have done in Mussolini's place.

Bearing in mind the power to sway of parallelism and empathy, and remembering that the great majority of literary works evoke parallelism in particular, the *writer accordingly builds a literary universe through the eyes of the protagonist*.

This is not to suggest that the writer does not portray the protagonist, other characters, places and events in clear and succinct terms. Of course he must, and his "style" will carry on from this work to the next, which probably will have a different protagonist.

What it does mean is that because no two people see anything in exactly the same way, and because of the sympathetic power of parallelism, the literary universe of a novel should be revealed and coloured according to the protagonist's past experience, emotions and anticipations.

* * *

Take the example of Novel A and Novel B, both set in the little South American town of San Leon . Both refer to a white tower in the town.

> Novel A is a light romantic comedy. The protagonist is a beautiful young woman, Linda, who is friendly with everyone and full of life and love. She and her group have come ashore off a cruise ship to stay for a week in a hotel, and life has been a hilarious romp of mixed bedrooms, love, exotic foods and friendly people. At one stage she is rattling through town in an old bus when the driver points to a white tower and says casually that it is where condemned prisoners are hung. Linda laughs with the rest when one of the group says he hopes they are not going to be hung before getting another chance at the marvelous hotel luncheon. She looks at the tower, can see no one, and is impressed by the prettiness of the whole scene: the walls of the tower so white that they remind her of the purity of the surf back home, the curved red tiled roof, the picturesque brown dusty landscape curving away beyond with its little houses and clumps of trees. She looks further around to the sea and hastily averts her eyes, for memories flood back of the last week of bad weather when she was constantly sea-sick. She opens the window of the bus and feels with pleasure the strong wind blowing away the unaccustomed humidity, then looks up past the white tower to comment on the clearest, bluest sky she has ever seen, and the beautiful clean architecture of the tower.

> Next moment the bus stops in the market place, and all tumble out to drink wine and bargain hilariously for souvenirs. Life is really very good, and the white tower and everything else most quaint and picturesque.
>
> Novel B is a longer novel of oppression and brutality in San Leon. The protagonist, Bento, is a young peasant, uncouth, disfigured by a massive burn down one side of his face, now living in constant overwhelming fear. He is in the condemned cell, and cannot take his eyes off the tall white tower where he is to be hanged. There are two barred windows to his cell and the wind howls in by day and night so that there is no protection or relief from it, until he hurls himself dementedly in the corner, blocking his ears to shut out the eternal whine. At other times he looks at the dusty landscape and curses the clear harsh blue sky from which no rain has come for two years, and remembers the blown-away crops and what happened when the rent collector came - . His eyes are drawn back to the tower and widen with superstitious terror as he ponders that his soul may join some macabre line of eternally-damned who have been hanged there over the past two hundred years. The white glare of the tower affects his eyes, and he feels a gust of anger as he remembers the blinding glare of the penal salt farm. He looks out over the blue sea and for the first time his eyes soften, for only there, and for a short time, had he known peace and freedom. He is drawn back to the white tower again, and as the sweat forms and the stomach muscles knot, he wonders who win miss him. His old mother is senile, his only friend dead, and because of his disfigurement he has never known the love of a woman.

In "reality" the white tower should be identical in both novels - simply an inanimate object of bricks and mortar. Yet that is not how it comes across in either work.

Dependent upon how it is symbolically presented, the tower conditions mood and reaction according to whether the reader is drawn into the light, free and effervescent world of Novel A, or the starkly realistic, almost horrifying micro-universe of Novel B. *In other words, according to the particular literary universe as viewed largely through the eyes of the protagonist.*

III Characters Must Be Credible With A Life Force Of Their Own

Characterization is the most important single element of literature.

A skimpy plot, provided it is unique and well-charactered, can lead to a best-seller. On the other hand skimpy, i.e. undeveloped characterization, can lead only to failure in that it prevents the necessary literary universe being developed.

People are primarily and deeply interested in other people, and in point of fact spend a lifetime assessing those they meet. Readers, accordingly, are sharp critics in that they demand no less than that a character be credible and possessive of a life-force.

Note that the term "life-force" is used here, rather than "real life". A green blob from Mars or Donald Duck may achieve a life-force even though the reader is quite aware that talking blobs and talking ducks do not exist. Conversely the deliberately stereotyped, wooden heroes of some old Western paperbacks usually so lack a credible life-force that they are acceptable to a small, dedicated reading minority only.

There are six aspects to characterization:

1. The Writer Must Know the Protagonist Intimately Before Beginning to Write.

While it is true that a reader may retain only a shadowy picture of the physical side of a character, this will not suffice for the writer.

He must visualize and daydream the character he is creating; know him intimately in look, gesture and action before writing a word. He must know how his protagonist will react to all stimuli; know how he will perform in any situation.

Suppose you have to write a scene from the following cues:

> Visualize a room in a luxurious penthouse. A woman is lounging on a settee; long hair, long evening dress, long cigarette holder. 1 he door opens and John Smith stands there. He says sarcastically he didn't expect to see the woman again after she had double-crossed him. A man comes up behind him with a cosh. The woman calls a warning, Smith spins round and knocks the man unconscious. He then calls the woman "Baby", saying they had better get out of the building while the going is good.

Can you visualize the man? Does the scene come to life? Of course it does not, because John Smith has not yet achieved a life-force of his own. Nothing is known about his shape, appearance, habits, sound or the like. He is cardboard, two-dimensional. You, as the writer, do not know this man.

Substitute now the words "Humphrey Bogart" for "John Smith" and read the passage again, visualizing it. Can you hear Bogart's gravelly voice, see the way he holds the door open, see the expression (or non-expression) on his face? You can, and suddenly the scene is alive, and the writer has but to describe it.

To reiterate this most important point: make sure your character is wholly alive before you begin to write. Day-dream him in a number of situations, get to know every look, action and reaction.

2. The Protagonist Must Show Change Over the Course of the Story.

Perhaps the most significant realization for the writer comes in the awareness that his readers cannot be told what a person's character is, they can only be prompted to discover it after being supplied with cues. We would not want to be informed, for instance, that a

man hit his wife because '... she made him late.' We want to make that decision by observing all the facts, then deciding whether that was the real cause, and whether perhaps the action denoted insanity, meanness, cunning, or whatever.

True involvement - which means enjoyment and satisfaction - comes as progressive actions and words give us further insight into the man to the point where we anticipate his reactions to events. By that time we are involved, and the work is successful, provided the person being portrayed stays "in character".

At the same time that the writer looks to maintain this constancy of characterization, he must also bear in mind that nothing is without change, and that everything since time immemorial has been in a state of flux. People are born, age and die.

Accordingly, everyone is changing or altering a little or a lot through day-to-day experiences, and *a sound test of any fiction (or non-fiction) is to look for evidence of change in the main character at the end of the work.*

If a protagonist is brave, polite and consistent at the beginning of a story and - despite the trauma of shipwreck, great suffering and betrayal - is still precisely the same valiant, well-mannered, smiling, constant gentleman all through and at the end, then he probably is two-dimensional indeed. If, on the other hand, pressure and conflict reveals other, perhaps unexpected, sides to his character, then his chances of appearing three-dimensional are considerably greater. We still like our main character to come out on top because we identify with him, but we know we are not perfect and cannot accept that anyone else could be either. Human frailty certainly is a part of our makeup, and recognizably so.

Change, or mutability as Shakespeare called it, is a necessary component of ongoing characterization, *provided the basic personality and identity of the character remains clearly identifiable*.

3. Look for the Individual and Unique Features of People.

The *hero* of the past seems largely to have given way to the *anti-hero*, hence the term protagonist, which implies no moral judgement.

Remember in developing characterization that general words such as *beautiful, ugly, ordinary, good-looking, good* and *bad* have little meaning on their own: interestingly also, people of today do not seem to be drawn particularly to the ultimately beautiful or the perfect.

Perhaps we are becoming more honest, and are sceptical of anything that is presented as perfect. We look for the "hidden catch". Or it could be that, because of some strange quirk of human nature, it is the unusual and the not-so-accept able features of others that intrigue us, probably because we are aware of them in ourselves?

Consider this: when asked to describe a person you met briefly some time back, you might be hard put to remember his clothing or colour of eyes. But what you would remember would be a facial twitch, a birthmark, a wart, a shining bald head, a stammer, or a tendency to dribble.

Nor is it only the more extreme items that are particularly remembered, or that people are intrigued to read about. It is just as much the small, individual differences-: the way of holding a cigarette between the thumb and forefinger, the inability to hold someone's eyes or the direct stare, the sniff, the intent way of listening, gesturing with the hands, particular dress, the repetitive use of certain words, and so on.

A continuing (and intriguing) practice for all writers is to study people for individual differences. Besides the stranger on the bus, look again carefully at your best friend. You may be quite surprised at the small traits and mannerisms that have lain unnoticed for so long.

Consider the difference in the following excerpts:

> Mr. Thomas is a stooped, tall, elderly, blue-eyed man. He is sitting at his desk, wearing glasses and an old cardigan.

These words give very little to a reader except a vague image of some male. There is no clue about personality or how he might respond or react.

A more deft promotion would be to present a Mr. Thomas who is not a vague figure but a person with recognizable traits and characteristics, not necessarily of a commendable type:

> Mr. Thomas, startled, looks up from behind thick glasses which give his pale blue eyes a swimming and enlarged effect. His right hand, white and crippled with arthritis, goes up to twist the top button on an old cardigan, moving it aimlessly back and forth on its already stretched thread. He is a man obviously near retiring age. His broad Scots accent cuts across the silence. "What are you meaning?"

Here, at least, is the first hint of characterization that will build through unobtrusive authorial comment and reported conversation into the necessary literary third dimension.

4. Characterization Through Object Association.

A common trap for beginning writers is not to recognize the extent of human association with objects, and to describe houses, cars and the like in isolation as if people see them as ends in themselves.

This is rarely so. An expensive suit is not purchased for the sake of warmth: it is a recognized symbol of social prestige, and the wearing of it reveals much about character.

Similarly there is a reason for polishing a car or fitting an emblem, and it is not to make the vehicle go better or faster.

What does heavy makeup and gaudy jewellery tell about a woman? Things are not always as they seem on the surface, and the reader's appetite concerning why is insatiable. What is the significance of the same gaudy jewellery if it is on a shelf? Or on a man?

Note the literary relevance of these two examples:

> An unidentified world-famous diamond, set among a heap of paste replicas, will attract little attention. Let it be known that the stone is real, however, and that its history is one involving repeated theft and murder as well as the overthrow of a throne, and the viewer's (reader's) attention will alter sharply. It is not the inanimate diamond, but its human associations that really intrigue.
>
> If, in a work of fiction entitled Barnseley House, Chapter One painstakingly describes the brickwork, Chapter Two the timber, Chapter Three the roof and so on, it is unlikely that few readers would become interested. Introduce a human element to the house, however: who built it and his dreams, wants, love-affairs, successes, failures and connections, and Barnseley House begins to pulsate with a life-force that achieves authenticity according to the credibility of the characters within.

5. Every Character Must Have a Functional Role.

A reader can get lost if a character is well built-up, seems important, and then - fades to nothing.

In the planning stages of a novel, theme-development is far easier to manipulate if the known characters first are categorized in relationship to the protagonist:

> 1. The main character or protagonist, with whom the writer and the reader feel parallelism or empathy.
>
> 2. Characters who represent the goals of the protagonist, such as the lover or the criminal pursued by the policeman.
>
> 3. The protagonist's friends, who help achieve the goal. (The lover can fit in here as well as in 2.)
>
> 4. Those who oppose the protagonist in his struggle for the goal. These could be a) the criminal pursued or business rival, b) the wife of the policeman who brings pressure on him to resign.

5. Those who influence the main characters incidentally: the petrol station attendant who gives instructions unwillingly, for instance. Although he is not seen again, his reluctance is taken as a hint of trouble to come.

Of course all characters are not created before the writing begins. Minor characters will "happen" as the work progresses, as will possibly another major character.

What the writer must be acutely aware of is why they are happening, how they directly or indirectly influence the protagonist, and in what way they enrich the whole literary image.

6. Characters Must Possess a Literary Third Dimension.

An understanding of the concept of literary third dimension can come through comparing the measuring of a photograph of a man and the measuring of the man himself.

There is no problem in measuring the three dimensions of the actual man: height, weight and depth.

With the photograph it is different, even if the subject has been taken standing alongside a tall scale ruler and facing the camera squarely.

By placing the card (photograph) on a flat surface and using a micrometer, height and width can be measured.

Depth, however, is immeasurable, for the micrometer cannot go "into" the photograph. The depth can only be guessed according to the skill of the photographer in his manipulation and capturing of light and shade. Herein lies the difference between the amateur snapshot and the work of the professional photographer.

Far too many writers satisfy themselves with literary "amateur snapshots". They heap on physical surface details of the character: name, height, hair, eyes, wife, job, car, contacts and so on, but ignore the far more important depths: wants, aims, lusts, aversions and a mass of other characteristics, overt but mostly hidden, that make . up and identify an individual as a unique human being. Here the writer should become the professional photographer, building the perspective that at times is illusion which the viewers (readers) will go on to fill in for themselves.

In the following portrayal of Blass, an unusual but not particularly exciting picture is being built of a man who becomes deranged, and who sees himself regimenting and reorganizing a city. The reader is casually interested, then becomes much more acutely involved as the writer opens chinks in the curtain to reveal the true depths of Mr. Blass:

> Blass stood very still, erect, military. He might even have been going to salute as he stared at his wife.

> She tried to stare back, even smile as she made her voice as light as possible. "Arthur, it doesn't matter, does it? 1 know I held you up two minutes this morning but it can't matter that much, can it? I mean, you have been working for the Company for thirty years - ". Then the blue eyes the office girls admired so much were clouding, and somehow he stood even taller, even more dignified under the fine sweep of grey hair carefully brushed and dressed with the "California Poppy" oil that had been in vogue during World War II.
>
> "I told you. Precisely eight-thirty. The Black Diamond corner at eight-forty-five, the Bridge at eight-fifty. The operation must be on schedule." When she covered her face with her hands the look on his face changed, just for a moment, to one of keen scrutiny. Then the shoulders squared again and he was gone.
>
> She made it to the phone, somehow. "Doctor? Mrs. Blass. It's Arthur - he's bad again. He thinks he's back in the war! I didn't want to, but I've got to agree with you that we've got to do something-".

Blass goes on to don military uniform and disrupt traffic, whereupon he is carried off, violently resisting, to a mental home. There he is committed, on his wife's and doctor's authorization, for observation and treatment.

By this time the reader is committed through literary parallelism with the protagonist, and reads on with something like glee. He now knows that Blass is perfectly sane, and that his lover is the nursing sister at the mental home who will only pretend to sedate him heavily with drugs before the nursing staff locks him in a padded cell for the night. In actuality she lets him out at 2 a.m. and after committing a huge and perfectly executed theft at his former place of employment, Blass returns within the hour to be locked up again by his accomplice to sleep soundly in the perfect alibi.

Blass becomes authentic with credibility and a life-force that develops as the depth of his characterization is revealed. The fact that he has silver hair does not make him unique or interesting: how and why he dresses it, does. And while the manner of his holding up traffic is important to the story, it would mean little without the background realization of his wants and ambitions.

It is the depth of Blass's characterization; merged with the literary creation of his universe comprising home, office and mental institution; plus the unique plot, that makes this particular novel a success.

* * *

While the case of Blass is an extreme one, it must nevertheless be remembered that every person has two sides to personality. One is the outer facade, largely shaped by the society around into a mould of laws, regulations, folkways and mores regarding dress, eating

habits, sexual freedom/ restriction and the like. The other side of personality is the inner one of instincts, drives and needs. To present characterization, the writer must reveal how the latter influences the former.

Although the term "Freudian" has become a gimicky one in recent years, an understanding of Sigmund Freud's three components of personality structure is most useful to the writer.

Freud speaks first of the id, which is a storehouse of instinctive reactions for satisfying wants. If the id says to eat, food is taken from the nearest source and consumed with gusto in whatever manner gives the greatest sensual appreciation. Wild animals and early cave-man would act largely, but not completely, by the id.

The id is usually bridled by the ego. This consists of elaborate and intricate ways of behaviour according to a network called society. It delays immediate satisfying of urges, channeling them into socially acceptable outlets. The ego keeps people working, eating, dressing, driving and the like in certain ways; getting along with people; and generally adjusting to the realities of (social) life.

Finally there is the superego, commonly called the conscience. It consists of restraints, acquired in the course of personality development, on both the id and the ego. Whether the superego is inborn or acquired will keep psychologists arguing forever, but it is generally accepted that ideals and morals taught in childhood have a lasting effect here.

Thus the id may have a lust for the sensual pleasures money can buy; the ego may devise a whole set of acceptable (but false) tax deductions, and the superego may someday cause an anonymous cheque to be sent to the Taxation Department.

An understanding, or at least awareness of the outer and inner sides of personality, is as fundamental to the writer as it is to the psychologist. It helps explain and reveal through literature how the quiet, conservatively-dressed little man who regularly attends church and sits without movement through the service, is in actuality fantasizing a naked romp with one of the choir girls. It makes credible the con-man whose stock in trade is charm and apparent honesty to cover deceit and theft.

Above all, it allows the writer to reveal a literary personality-depth which lifts a character from the cardboard of two dimensions to the authenticity and life-force of three-dimensional writing.

Length Of The Novel

To arrive at some estimation of wordage, it is necessary to make clear the different formats of the novel, the short novel (once called the novello) and the short story.

The short story, as described in Chapter 3 , is a "slice of life", a compressed offering of about five hundred to six thousand words which can be read in one sitting. In that short

space some degree of literary universe and characterization must be developed, complication provided, and the story brought to a meaningful conclusion.

The novel is at the other end of the continuum. It may run from say forty thousand to several hundred thousand words, or more, and has room to expand. The first fifty pages of a large work may not even clearly reveal the protagonist; it may be defining background, mood and an intricate environment. From there on the particular universe and characters steadily evolve and interact with a complexity and lack of haste that should effectively stand as a replica of life on this planet.

In between the novel and the short story comes the short novel, and it is this medium which the beginning writer may well choose. Varying from say ten thousand to fifty thousand words, the short novel must have the unique themes, universe and authentic characterization of the full novel, but at the same time must observe something of the economics of the short story. The result is a faster-moving, more intense production which the writer can more easily oversee as a whole from the start.

Moreover, it can be the ideal medium through which the author can, through fiction, reveal his or her own philosophical concern regarding mankind's treatment of itself. An example of this could be the Novel B quoted earlier, the case of the condemned prisoner Bento and the white tower. Here the aim of the author is not just to tell a simple story, but to leave a profound impression of loss, injustice, inhumanity and brutality concerning one man. As a medium the short story would be too brief to accomplish this, on the other hand a full novel, because of its vast scope and host of detail, may allow the desired concentration of the reader to ease at times from the protagonist to other issues.

The number of novels published each year is increasing, ranging from the very expensive hard- and soft-backs of known writers to a proliferation of short novels by unknown people. In the field of children's literature alone up to five hundred new titles per month are being issued in America, England and Australia.

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3. The Short Story

The age of the short story well could be about to dawn. Since the mid-1970's magazines and newspapers have been allocating more space for this field, while mixed anthologies of previously-published short stories, some dating back to the last century, are continually being sold out and reprinted. The number of literary awards and competitions which each year now look to the short story as well as the poem and the novel, moreover, indicate the swing in reading opinion.

Read the following short story, Black Tea Or White, twice. The first reading is purely for enjoyment. When completed, look carefully at the seven guidelines for short story writing that follow. Finally, re-scan Black Tea Or White to see how the guidelines help direct the story.

Black Tea Or White

The north wind, searing and scorching its way across thousands of miles of outback, swirled dust and buckbush through the aborigines' camps and into Port Augusta itself.

The buckbush, or tumbleweed as an American tourist had once called them, bounded across the dirt parking lot of The Tearooms and piled high on the fence. Almost gleefully, as if reclaiming the whole town in the name of the desert.

Albert Betts, manager of the Tearooms, paused in unlocking the door, but his dark eyes set in the broad aboriginal face were not seeing the buckbush.

They were seeing the parking lot as it would be at precisely five o'clock that afternoon, for it was the second Thursday of the month. And on the second Thursday the Ladies of the Country Women's Association descended on the Tearooms after Bowls, for The Tearooms was a marvelous project of the Aborigines Board, and the Ladies had voted unanimously to do their bit. Today would be their third visit for tea and sandwiches, and Albert found the whole experience exhilarating and uplifting beyond words.

Then his stomach twisted in cold apprehension of who else might come in today. Please, please. Not them. Not today.

He came back to reality abruptly. "Alice, get rid of them buckbush this morning. Right away. Throw them over the fence so they keep going." He opened the door with a flourish, waiting for the answer which rarely came. She was looking up north somewhere beyond washed-out Namatjira hills, across red-olive-grey plains already hazed out by gusting dust. To where she came from.

He repeated, "Them buck-bush," because as Manager he always spoke with authority, even though she was the only staff.

"Then someone else get them if they go over the fence," she murmured.

Albert stuck on that; vague sharp apprehensions rising that he might be committing a Pollution, and the Board frowning and asking questions. As he hesitated, a violent gust rattled the door and three more buckbush came bounding, one hitching on the front verandah.

"No." He turned, the authority and assurance coming louder with each word. "No. You just toss them old buck-bush over the fence, then they

blow in the harbour. Can't have that fence littered when the C.W.A. Ladees get here this afternoon." He drew the "ee" out in "Ladies" because it was pleasurable to him, then realized it might sound frivolous and repeated, "Yes, C.W.A. Ladies" in an ordinary tone, making it sound like an after-thought.

The white teacups on saucers stood satisfyingly drawn up in long rows, winking with cleanliness in defiance of the dust. He touched one and there was no grit, but the chrome tables and chairs, spaced neatly in their newness, could do with a quick polish before the Ladies arrived.

It was not just the fact that forty ladies were backing the Aborigines Board's new project of The Tearooms, with its aboriginal manager and aboriginal waitress, that gave him this feeling.

No, it would be the noise, perhaps, all the voices talking and white bowling uniforms and hats with badges and the almost breath-taking stamp of respectability from pink and white faces. These were the wives of the bank-managers and business-owners and station-owners who ran Port Augusta, as their wives ran them. It was all very satisfying, and enough to make a hard knot in the stomach and extra moisture on the palms.

How that Thursday morning flew by. Milk was delivered, and an odd sprinkle of customers dropped in for ice-cream and soft-drinks mainly, though one Western Australian car stopped to order tea and sandwiches. Then Albert brewed in the brown pot with the tea-cosy, and the big knife flew swiftly and happily through the soft fresh white bread.

At twelve o'clock a car drew up and as a man got out with a suit-case, the first cloud appeared on Albert's horizon. It was another traveller, and he would have to say no. The Board had forbidden any further expenditure on stock. Travellers were persuasive people, and Albert felt the damp spread to his forehead.

Almost at the same time a taxi pulled up with two men. Check shirts, jeans, high-heeled boots, broad features. One fat with a loud voice, one thin, both coloured.

They all reached the entrance at the same time, but it was the traveller who put his case down to hold the door open.

High heels across the floor. Albert steeled himself against the beer-smell and voice that always came on too strongly, too loud with too much mateship forced into it.

"Good-day, Albert. Just thought we'd drop in to see how The Tearooms is coming on." Wide, grinning face, familiarity that soured in the aura of business sparkle and blue-and-white table cloth.

Albert forced a smile. "Alright, Johnno. Good-day, Strop. I be with you two in a minute. Just see what this gentleman wants."

"That's alright." Johnno's voice was all hearty mateship. He pushed his hand out. "I'd like to meet this gentleman too. I'd like to shake his hand."

The traveller's face was a frozen smile. He shook the hand, to find he could not withdraw his own.

Johnno's other hand fastened on his elbow.

Johnno leant closer, his fat stomach overhanging the belt to almost touch the traveller. "I'd like to shake your hand because what you done just then. What you done just then went right to my heart, mate. I tell you that." He released the traveller's arm to clench his hand over his heart, then grasped the arm again, quickly.

The traveller's face split further. "Really? I didn't realize I'd done anything." He attempted to withdraw his hand again, but failed. Albert winced behind the counter, but held his smile.

Johnno's voice dropped in earnestness. "When you opened that door for me and said 'after you', I tell you that went right to my heart. How many people do that nowadays for a stranger? Not too many, I tell you. I really appreciate it."

"Think nothing of it." The traveller got his hand free, but was not quick enough in taking it away. It was grasped again.

"No, I mean it." Johnno's voice was loud again and the beer-smell even smothered the new-bread and coffee aroma. "They talk about blacks and whites havin' trouble. Well I tell you there won't be none with blokes like you around. No, I mean it. And my name's Johnno Meningee. This here's my mate Strop. And this here's the manager of this place, Mr. Albert Betts."

The traveller dragged his hand free, this time fastening it quickly on his suitcase to toss it on the counter and fumble for the catches. "How do you do? I'm John Evans from Ace Greeting Cards. This is our range, Mr. Betts."

Perhaps it was the sound of his name, said like the C.W.A. President said it, that drove Albert out of the blank mist of soul-shrinking embarrassment. He gestured, almost violently, to a table. "You boys sit down. I just deal with this gentleman." But Johnno was already leaning forward, his voice showing amazement. "I never seen such beautiful cards as them." He lifted a silver anniversary and stared at the traveller, open-mouthed. "I tell you, they are bloody beautiful. Best I ever seen. You reckon, Strop?" He wheeled towards Albert. "You ought to sell these in the shop, Albert. You be silly if you don't, I tell you that."

The traveller in a kind of desperation was also fastening on Albert, talking rapidly as he retrieved the anniversary card. "Price range from 30 cents to 80 cents, Mr. Betts. Profit markup of 60 percent for you. And they're good sellers, anywhere, if you buy in a display."

"No," Albert said. "No, I don't think so, thanks. Not this trip. Thanks." He desperately tried to think of something that would break off the conversation without sounding rude. Nothing came. Johnno's voice was loud in amazement. "Look, Albert, you got a chance in a million here. This gentleman don't come round every day, you know. It's two hundred mile from Adelaide up here."

"I know. I know that." In his agitation Albert was emphasizing words with the point of the knife. Realizing this he put it down, his speech becoming a fast mutter. "Look, mister, other places in town - you know - they have cards, that stuff. They don't got sandwiches like we got - we got - ." He paused, cleared his throat to force authority back. "So what I say is, no cards. Not right for this business. Maybe when we been open a bit longer."

For a moment it seemed that the Ace Card Company was going to open its sales barrage, all those good reasons that no-one could answer against. In desperation Albert picked up the dishcloth and began to swab the counter. Hard. Then out of the corner of his eye the suitcase was closing, the wide salesman-smile beaming, the handshake being made quickly, and the business card accepted. "Next time, then, Mr. Betts. I'll call again - or just drop us a line and we'll have a full range up, display stand and all." A brief nod to Johnno and Strop, now sprawled at a table, and the traveller was gone.

Intense relief was quickly dispersed by memory and a surge of anger. But before Albert could speak the door opened again, this time with a regular customer coming in - Mrs. Duggan, white lady who lived across the Bridge and did morning work in the town. Most days she stopped on the way home for a ham sandwich and a cup of tea.

The clouds lifted. "How are you, Mrs. Duggan?

Ham sandwich and cup of tea, special small pot brew?"

But she was looking at Johnno, sprawled out so that she would have to walk around him to the next table. And Strop, small and morose, who was seeing the same things Alice saw on the far salt-bush horizon. He had his heels hooked on the next chair, blocking the way through.

"Er - no thank you, Mr. Betts. Just a packet of Benson & Hedges, thanks."

As the door shut behind her, Albert knew more anger. Black, soul-searing, throat-choking that made him shake and his voice crack. At losing that special white customer, and cringing to white travellers, and loss of dignity in his position. "You, Johnno! What you mean, coming in here messing up the business like this? What you think you on about?"

Johnno sat up, loud and incredulous. "What? Me? What I done? I done anything Strop?"

Strop did not answer. Nor look.

"What you done!" Albert was in white heat now, his stomach knotting so hard he knew the taste of dry retch. It was the nightmare, the great nightmare coming into real life, the choosing of sides, the dividing of the waters. He rushed on, because if he stopped he would never start again. "What you done? You come staggerin' in, dirty like you never wash an' stinkin' of grog. You butt in on that traveller. What you know about cards an' business? You lay around so that regular customer she take one look, then get out quick as she can. She won't come back. How you think I can run a respectable business here? What you want to shove your bib in on that traveller for anyway?"

"Him!" Johnno's voice was all scorn, though his eyes shifted. He screwed his face up and bored in one ear with his finger. "What about him? He don't offer to shake hands with me and Strop when he go, does he? Like hell he does. He think his dung don't stink. Bloody stuck-up white -and that woman, I dint even speak to her. What you pickin' on me for?"

Strop spoke then. Like a wind-whisper in the mulga, but every word clear. "Them two, they is both white. Old Albert, he like them whiteys."

"You damn right." The chair crashed as Johnno stood up and lunged to the counter, grabbing Albert's shirt. "You're black, same as us. But you don't want to be black, eh? When you ever drink with us? Come to our houses? Eh?"

Albert tore himself clear. The beautiful white temple walls were falling, hurting. "You get out, you hear? Get out or I call the cops!"

"You do that," Johnno said, his voice loud. Not anger, but enjoyment. "Go on, you do that." He brought his hand down flat on the counter.

"Now I want service, see? A cheese sandwich with vegemite and that stuff. All the trimmin's, you hear?"

Albert pointed a trembling hand. "You get out. Now."

"You hear that?" Johnno appealed to Strop.

"He won't serve us. Last week he don't serve Joannie. Before that he kick out Pete and Harry. This here is a Board Tearoom, but he don't serve no Mulgas, this Mister Bloody High and Mighty Albert."

"I serve everyone," Albert said. He fought to steady his voice. "But I don't serve no-one makes this place not respectable. And them others -Joannie, she stinks. And what does Pete do before they come in? He spews outside, both full as boots. And Alice got to clean it up. You think that's right?" Anger was getting on top again.

"Now you get, or I do call the cops. Get now!"

"So he won't serve us aborigines." Johnno turned to Strop, humming aloud. He belched elegantly. "That is racist dis - discrimination, Strop. Against the law. His own people. So we sit here and wait for the fuzz, eh"? We ask them about who he got to serve."

But Strop was already walking towards the door.

"No. Come on - we go back to the pub while Ole Bill's still buying. But five o'clock when we finish we all come back here - three, maybe four taxi-loads of us Mulgas. Then we get Dung-don't stink Albert. Five o'clock we be back. All of us." Johnno stood struck, mouth open, as the beauty of it all dawned. He stifled the wide smile that started, then hurried out to where Strop was already hailing a cab.

In front of Albert, Alice was already squatting on one of her jobs of stacking Fanta bottles on the bottom shelf of the frig. Nothing disturbed her. But this time even the flash of the surprisingly white inner thigh, which Albert usually surreptitiously manoeuvered to see, did not raise the accustomed uncomfortable warmth. He did not see it, or her.

"Mulgas!" The words were Mission, and dust, and white-boy high school and a white mother that there was not even a photo of now. "All they do is draw Social Services and get on the piss. Now who respectable goin' to come in if they all make it a lay-about piss-up club? This ain't - isn't no Mission store, you know!" But Alice calmly went on with the bottles, not looking up at the accusing stare or sound of fury any more than she had looked up before, except when Strop spoke.

"And the Board! What they say if I don't serve them? What they know, anyway?" Something close to tears came, and the choking vision of five o'clock and four taxi-loads of drunken aborigines-arriving before, or worse, during - the forty white bowling uniforms and pink C.W.A. prestige faces. It was too much and he stumbled out on the back porch, a small area with only an old rocker. When the northerly gusted around from the other side, as now, the rocker rocked itself in small spasmodic jerks. When the wind went round in the afternoon to the south to blow cool up the Gulf, however, some happy ghost rocked the chair in long even strokes.

Albert's eyes focused on it and the frustration boiled over. "Silly damn chair!" He kicked it, hard, then limped back into the shop. After polishing the counter for half-an-hour he raised his voice. "Alice! What you standing there for? I told you, rub over all them chairs." "That done." She had done it right in front of him, but would never have thought to point it out.

"Then get busy round other things. Stack them Coke crates outside."

"That done too," she said calmly.

"Yes, cops. What they there for?" He lifted the phone then slowly replaced it. "No, no cops. They can't do nothing till something happens, then it's too late. The Board? I can ring Mr. Hoffman." His hand moved to the receiver, then stopped. "No. All he say is 'Can't you handle the job?' No."

Black despair welled up, sickening frustration that made reasoning impossible. He tried desperately to think, to try to remember anything that he must have learnt in the Gawler High School down south where his white mother had lived after his half-caste black father had long since disappeared. Nothing came.

Odd customers through the afternoon. The tables and chairs leered back at him emptily, the raised corner where one day a three-piece band would entertain a hundred paying customers, now stood shrunken to a piece of three-by-two masonite.

The hours dragged by. A dozen jobs; cleaning, rearranging, doing all the cups and saucers again. Minutes like hours.

At four o'clock a taxi drew up, and Albert's heart stopped.

Then Ole Bill got out. A wizened jackeroo from Ooldea Station who hit town once a year, and welcomed help to drink up his year's savings in three short weeks. He was also Alice's father.

He came up to the counter, reeling, with the wide grin that everyone recognized him for.

"Hello, there, daughter. My, you looking good. And your Momma says you bring home money. I'm proud of you." His gaze focused on Albert and he held out his hand. "And you, Albert. You a real credit the way you run this place. I tell 'em that up on the station. Now how about you leave Alice here to look after things and you and I go have a drink? I got a thousand bucks in my kick and three weeks off before I go back up north there."

"No." Albert felt he was standing just a bit taller, but not much. It helped, though. "No, Ole Bill. Thanks, but I can't leave the job. Plenty be happy to see you over at the Central, I reckon."

"Oh, yeah." Ole Bill chuckled. "Plenty been happy to see me over Westside Pub there this morning, too. I been in the chair since ten o'clock." He reeled a little, steadied himself against the counter as he groped for his tobacco.

"You see ah - Johnno and Strop?" Albert's voice was as non-committal as he could make it.

"Them bastards!" Ole Bill laughed. "Since ten o'clock, them. Never missed a shout, except for a little while there. Then they come back all steamed up about somethin' and say they want to call a Meetin'. Then in came Curly Peters. You know him? He live down Port Pirie, called in on his way back to Thevenard where he work. Buys drinks for everyone and says he can swing two extra jobs in the fish factory where he work over there. Big money."

It was Alice who broke the silence as Ole Bill concentrated on rolling the cigarette. "Johnno and Strop, they go with him?"

"Eh? Oh, yes, they go. Bastards. All pile in the ute, head off." Ole Bill waved extravagantly. "They be at least a hundred mile west by now." He held out his hand. "I see you soon, Albert. Mighty thirsty work this

travelling in taxis." In the silence that followed Albert moved in a vacuum, then life flowed back, then exhilaration. He tossed a clean cloth to Alice.

"We got one hour. Last polish, eh? Good one. All over."

By ten to five the big urn was whistling softly, the brown tea-pots in line, the white bread buttered with the dozen fillings ready for the light snack that would not spoil the Ladies' tea. Albert looked around: it almost hurt. Everything was so beautiful. Outside the northerly had dropped and no buck-bush tumbled, no dust swirled. The Flinders Ranges east of the town stood out in striking purple and blues, an artist's creation.

At five to five a screech jarred his thoughts. A harsh, discordant noise as a high-powered motorbike swung in, skidding to a stop on the gravel. Then another, and another, till the yard was half-full of stationary, revving machines. Then silence. Boots, loud. Safety helmets crashing down on tables, shrill voices of leather-coated tight-jeaned girls, swastikas, four-letter words in combinations surely never thought of before.

Long hair and a red beard looming over the counter. "Say, man, have the Port Pirie mob been in here yet? We're up from Adelaide, they're to pick us up here, you understand? They been?"

Albert shook his head. Numbly.

"Alright, we wait. Give us Cokes all round. What's in those sandwiches, man? - Right, we take them. And knock up as many again." Noise, and greater noise as the Port Pirie mob arrived. Small flasks tipped into Coke bottles.

Four letter words in profusion.

Once, as Albert looked up, there was a procession of cars passing by on the main road. White dresses, white faces glimpsed for a second, pointed blankly at the Tearooms. Then gone.

Much later. Albert sat in the rocking chair, the cool south breeze rippling unnoticed over him. Awareness seeped back. No damage to furniture. And the take - he remembered now counting it. It had never been so big.

He ambled darkly across the bottom of the car park, because the street lights did not penetrate that far.

Left alone the old rocker rocked slowly, picking up its regular beat that it would retain all night until, with the dawn, would come the northerly and the first of the buck-bush.

The short story, because it is just that, short, demands a controlled format. Seven guidelines help achieve this end:

1. Gain a unique idea, the same as for a novel. Instead of presenting a panorama of settings, events and characters, however, write what Hemingway called "a slice of life". This entails a limited view of a limited number of people, interacting in specific circumstances. *The hallmark of a short story is the happening or twist of fate that comes as a recognizable climax just before the end*. It should impress or even surprise the reader by its unexpectedness, e.g. as when the motor-bike gang descended out-of the blue onto the Tearooms.

2. Do not be worried by length, unless you are writing for a specific publication. One rather vague rule-of-thumb is that a short story is such that it can be read comfortably in one sitting. Wordage may vary from 500 (a page and a quarter) to 6,000, or even more.

3. Concentrate on the protagonist, even if the story does involve a close group. It is a skilled writer indeed who can bring more than one character to full life while manipulating a plot in the confined wordage.

4. Edit out wordiness. Bear in mind during the first draft that there is no place in the short story for extended description. When correcting the rough draft, prune vigorously to ensure that the same colour and meaning is being portrayed in less words.

5. Economize also on scene-setting. One technique is to start in the middle of the story, and as it progresses towards the end, fill in the beginning through comment and flashback.

> Alby crouched in the tunnel, the bleak mountain wind howling completely unnoticed around his fifteen-year-old frame. He hooked the first wire on to the explosives, but his trembling fingers let the pliers slip.
>
> The clanging was terribly, unnaturally loud. He froze, his eyes screwing so that tears stood out in the corners, but no guard appeared in the light at the far end. Reaching slowly for the pliers again, he could only hear the words ringing in his head that this job was easy. Dead easy. Big Mac had said so in the cafe that night when the planning had started. He had shown them ...

6. The action of the story (but not the twist of fate just before the end), plus the protagonist, must be made known in the very opening of the story. In the above excerpt the protagonist (Alby) is introduced in the first word, and the main movement of the story, his attempt to blow up the tunnel, is commenced right away.

7. Foreshadowing is a desirable ingredient of the short story, and must also occur in the very beginning. With Alby, the reader not only immediately grasps the plot, but senses that the youth's age, tears, and state of nervousness will cause some major mishap, which it does.

In the following short story opening there is a foreshadowing of violence that seems bound to the inanimate object that in turn causes it:

The Gun

> Dalby saw the gun immediately he entered the auction room.
>
> The stock was unoiled wood but the barrel burned with a dull blackness. As he grew closer he noted it looked old, though there was no mark on it. He went to pick it up but for some reason drew his hand back and just stood looking. The old man must have come up quietly, for Dalby was not aware of him until he spoke.
>
> "Wouldn't touch that one."
>
> "Why not?"
>
> The old man took the pipe out of his mouth to point with the stem. "First man who had it up here blew his arm off. Second man put the muzzle in his mouth and removed the back of his head. Nice mess for the wife to find on the carpet." Dalby waited, but nothing more came. The old man was staring at the weapon, lost in thought.
>
> "What then?"
>
> "Then? Oh, Partridge bought it for a song, but only used it once. Wouldn't touch it, used to borrow mine. Then he died." The old man lit his pipe in clouds of acrid-smelling smoke before turning away. "Of no good reason, neither."
>
> Dalby slowly reached out to turn the ticket over and read the number ...

By this point of the story the reader a) knows that the man will purchase the gun, and b) experiences a sense of foreboding concerning its ownership. In other words Dalby is "hooked" on the weapon, and the reader is "hooked" to continue and find out if his premonition is correct.

Before re-reading Black Tea Or White, consider the ways in which the seven guidelines have been incorporated to develop the story.

First, a unique (original) idea was conceived. This was to show the newly-appointed, nervous manager of the Tearooms walking a tight-rope between two contrasting "worlds", only to be affected abruptly by a third unexpected one.

Such material would be more than enough for a large novel. Accordingly, just one "slice of life" is shown: the whole action is compressed into one day in one setting, the Tearooms.

Note how the general setting of a desert town with wind, dust and buckbush; the introduction of the protagonist ; the revealing of the all-important visit of the forty C.W.A. Ladies; and the foreshadowing of trouble and disruption to come are all presented in the opening section.

Albert, the protagonist, is the fulcrum and centre of the story throughout. All other characters exist only in their relationship to him: accordingly, how Albert deals with each individual or group reveals something further about his character and intentions. There is the pressure from the drunken dissolute life-style of Johnno and Strop; enormous influence connected with the "pink and white" prestige of the Ladies; and last, unobtrusive but still there, there is the awareness of an unattainable freedom symbolized by the buckbush tumbling "freely" out of the desert tribal lands as if "reclaiming the whole town."

The day's conflicts of social, business and personal involvements come to a climax in the arrival of the bike gangs. This unexpected twist of fate destroys an exhilarating, precious dream, and the protagonist will never be quite the same again. How much Albert is altered is left to the imagination of the reader as he watches him "amble darkly" away into the night.

How To Start A Short Story

How many slices of life will you encounter before tonight? Here is a suggestion for the would-be short story writer: don't take things for granted today.

Look keenly and deeply into people, places and objects and be prepared to notice a host of detail that you had "skidded" over previously in the humdrum of daily existence. *Add an overlay of imagination to everything you see*.

Suppose you travel by train to work. Every morning you have passed this certain factory, but never really looked at it. Now you do, and you see the name is Bottomsley Washer Company. Bottomsley! What sort of business name is that in this day and age? The building is fretted red brick; one chimney only out of six is working and that is rolling out thick black smoke. But it is the yard behind the factory (the sort of view you only can see from a train) that is intriguing. It is filled with junk. More - it is crammed. Battered washers of every shape and size are piled high and close so that the narrow pathways between are like rusty canyons. And just before the train rattles you out of sight you twist your neck that last bit to see a man standing in one of the canyons. Obviously old, portly, with a leather apron and what could have been a large grey walrus moustache. Not doing anything, just standing.

Now what have you got as you settle back in the seat? At least a unique literary universe that is filling in fast. Third generation Bottomsley, maybe? From a proud start in the 1920's with eighty workers; now run-down, decrepit, with three employees. Dirt floor in the foundry section; no coffee room, actually an old woodstove with a huge, ancient enameled tea-pot on it. There are no washers made at the Bottomsley Washer Company any more, just repairs done and old washers bought for scrap and piled out the back. But why not sold? Rates and taxes and three wages must be found, and surely the Pollution Control Board is calling about modern filters for the chimney? What is old Bottomsley thinking or planning as he stands out the back there?

The imagination starts to run overtime. There are several ways the short story could develop from this point. You decide that it will be about a decrepit old man in a decrepit old factory, hounded by government officials, debtors and people who want to 'take the scrap off his hands' for a song. The twist of fate, or novel climax, will come when he astounds everyone, perhaps including himself, by uncovering some source of wealth from the past. But where? How?

At this stage your train journey may be nearing its end, so you open your newspaper and a headline rushes out at you: Gold Rises Again. Of course! Old Bottomsley has still got that one foundry working, and he can melt metal! So without telling anyone he goes to ...

* * *

There are several reasons why a beginning writer should try a short story. One is that the format is relatively simple; seen in one light, it is little more than a tightly controlled "yarn".

The second reason is that the nuclei for short stories are all around at all times, if the imagination but be let wander. Nor need it be the exotic setting of cops and robbers, or the unusual world of old men in rundown factories. Everyone has "a tale to tell": the man at the next desk, the woman in the corner store, and so on. Why was that monument with the strange shape erected?

The final reason, and perhaps the most important one, stems from the fact that the origin of many a successful novel or script has been found in a short story. In other words, the writing and even publication of a short story is sometimes just the beginning of a much wider vision.

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4. Script . T.V., Radio, Stage

Nowhere is it more essential for a writer to develop the capacity to visualize (daydream, make believe, 'see' whole new worlds, creations, people and happenings, call it what you will) than in the writing of script.

For not only must this visualization take place, but it must be specifically shaped according to production techniques that vary dramatically from radio to television to the theatre. An overriding consideration of the playwright at all times is how his creation will be brought to life by the next person who handles it.

That person will not be a reader, for plays are not meant to be read. Those of us who hated Shakespeare in the classroom, only to find unexpected delight in our first stage version of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, bear witness to this.

The next person following the scriptwriter will be either a television producer-director, a radio producer-director, or a stage producer-director.

Each of these people are artisans in their own right, with differing skills and techniques, and with completely different formats.

The scriptwriter must clearly understand these differences and write strictly for the media chosen.

The Stage

The predominant reason why so few people write for the stage is the limited market. For those who do make it, the satisfaction is enormous.

Bear in mind the physical restrictions of the stage in comparison to other mediums. With radio, sound effects can have the audience visualizing action in a plane; in television they will see the actual plane; but on the stage there is no way this can be achieved. Even a skilful mock-up of an airplane interior will still look like the mock-up of an airline interior.

Stage sets, for this very reason, are simple and often stylized: a patio, a room, a street section, a dance floor. Within the limited framework of three to four sets the writer must present his vision.

To accomplish this, heavy reliance must be placed on dialogue with a minimum of supportive action. The stage, essentially, is dialogue.

One useful factor of the stage play is its length. Like the novel, it does allow time to set adequate background before developing without haste into the main theme.

For those writers who find description and direction heavy going, but who revel in the skilful build-up of conversation, stage script may well prove an apt medium.

Radio

Radio is essentially and only sound. There is no vision attached to it, and if a poignant pause is attempted as on the stage, the likely result will be that the listener will thump the set and twiddle around to another station. So, rule one: the dialogue must be continuous.

The second rule is to fit the listener into the action from the opening words. This is usually accomplished by the use of a narrator who will set the scene and introduce the main character(s). This is all he can do, however, and it must be done briefly and unobtrusively at that.

Thereafter the dialogue itself must be self-explanatory in introducing characters, demonstrating their relationships, and reporting action. *What is important is that by the time the opening sequences have concluded, the listener must know the protagonist at least, be aware of the setting, and recognize and be ready for the type of action that is about to follow*.

It cannot be stressed how important this "early conditioning" of the listener is. Suppose, for instance, two plays were written about a protagonist called Mel Jones, a policeman.

Play One opens with Jones sadistically roughing up a young hood in an alley. The next scene is in the Police Briefing room, where the superintendent stresses that the drug and violence scene has never been worse in the slums, and that the operators will kill anyone who gets in their way, police included. These two opening scenes take only four out of the fifty-two minutes but they do condition the reader immediately to expect slums, drugs and violence.

Play Two opens in Jones' home, which is in a very pleasant suburb nowhere near the slums. We hear the sound of a bassoon being played, and the dialogue begins:

> **Woman's Voice**. Mel, come on, will you? Your breakfast is getting cold. You can practise that later.
>
> **Mel**. Right, Mum. Coming now.
>
> **He blows a last few notes and we hear the instrument being put down.**
>
> **Right**. Here 1 am, ready for a good breakfast. I've got three whole days off duty, it's a beautiful day, and my mother is the best cook in the world.
>
> **Mrs. Jones**. How you do go on! You've got your father's charm. Why you haven't got a woman of your own, I'll never know.
>
> **Mel**. (Voice changing slightly). Don't start that again, Mum.
>
> **Mrs. Jones**. And why not? Here you are, forty-one and lost a bit of hair and gained a bit of weight, but what's that? You've got a good steady job in the Police Force, so why aren't you married?

Mel. (tries to sound amusing). I'm a fat, middle-aged drop-out of the marriage stakes, is why. Who'd want me?

Mrs. Jones. Plenty of girls! Now that nice Iris Blaum at the Church, we'll be seeing her this afternoon. What about her? I see you sitting by her every time you play in the band.

Mel. Aw, look, Mum, that's just - just - well, we're friends, that's all. Just friends.

Mrs. Jones. Well, you'll both be staying with the band up at the Church Lodge tonight. We'll see. <-

Play Two goes on to develop what used to be called a "tender love story", and that is exactly what the listener would expect from such a beginning.

If, by particularly bad scripting, however, (or by particular good scripting, but it would have to be very good), the sensitive, non-violent ending of Play Two had been made to follow on the violent, insensitive aggressive start of Play One, then the play would fail because listener expectations would be unfulfilled and thus become confused.

This does not mean that a script should not contain unexpected action and character-development. Of course it should, for this produces the unique aspect that is so vital.

What is being said - and this applies particularly to beginning writers - is that the listener must be involved in the main character from the opening of the play, and be able to anticipate the type of action that will follow.

Rule three for radio scripting is that a workable balance must be struck between the scriptwriter prompting the visualization and the listener providing his own. In other words, how much is it necessary for them to "see" the same physical attributes of people and places?

This varies according to the need of the plot.

Suppose a new character comes into the story. The narrator cannot interrupt to introduce him, so it must be done in other ways. He might introduce himself: "I'm Albert Tomlison, life representative of the Mutual Insurance ..." What he then does and says will give an immediate impression of personality, which will build as the play progresses. Or he may be introduced indirectly by another person, and the listener will form a firm picture of him even before he begins to speak: "Oh no, look who's coming down the street. It's that life insurance salesman, Tomlison. He's always got that greasy smile and hand-rubbing manner and you just can't get rid of him ..."

The interesting point in radio is that the listener may get to know a character quite well, yet have only a vague impression of physical characteristics. In other words, he will be

given only the relevant details: that Tomlison has an ingratiating smile and manner; that Mel Jones (because it has a real bearing on his love life) is seen as plump, balding and forty-ish. But regarding his height, eyes and the like, no clue is given, nor needs to be.

It becomes a matter of priorities, of deciding how much "physical" vision must be transmitted and implanted in the listener. Suppose two characters are travelling to a house to stay the weekend. If the type of house does not have a bearing on the story, the playwright will include no direction, and accordingly the listeners will each and every one form different vague images: red-brick, cream, two-storey, ranch-style, villa, etc. It does not matter.

Suppose the house does have a bearing on the characters' frames of mind, as a necessary influence in the story. Then the script is structured to force a certain physical configuration to form in the listener's mind:

> **John**. Lord, how I hate this place.
>
> **Deering**. Why? Two hundred years old, eighteen rooms, two storeys high, pride of the district. Look at the grounds it stands on.
>
> **John**. It's just - just - I don't know. Those grey walls, those acres of slate on the roof, those tiny windows, the way the wind howls around those tall chimneys ...

There are other useful tips for writing, producing, and sound-effecting radio plays. Too much instruction can kill a vision at birth, however, so that the beginning scriptwriter is amply-equipped with just these three cardinal rules:

> 1. No prolonged pauses in conversation.
> 2. Involve and direct the listener from the start.
> 3. Cause the listener to have the same "physical" images as the scriptwriter only when it is necessary for the action of the play.

Television

The differences of television to stage and radio script are obvious. Television has sound the same as radio; it also has vision. It has sound the same as the stage; it also has the whole world in actuality to use for its sets as well as those it constructs indoors.

But if television appears to have all these advantages, remember that its audiences are both over-exposed and finicky.

As with radio, it is essential that the viewer becomes involved through interest and anticipation from the very opening scene.

Unlike the stage and particularly radio, television depends upon periods of non-dialogue and often non-sound. It is then that "actions speak louder than words".

The best apprenticeship for the potential television scriptwriter (besides, of course, actually writing) is to analytically view a number of varying programmes. Have a pad on the knee and note the number of scenes, approximate lengths, close-ups, group-shots or long-shots, use of sound or non-sound, main characters, secondary and incidental characters. Take time after each viewing to judge how effective the programme was concerning the presentation of a unique idea, and the development of authentic characters in a living, walk-in world of their own.

This practice causes the writer to come to "see" his own vision through a television screen complete with close-ups, fade-outs, non-sound, "stings" of music and all the other techniques which distinguish the medium.

He is ready to start writing.

Marketing of Television and Radio Scripts

It is not being monetary-minded to say that one of the first considerations of the television and radio script writer is the market. To write a concise and polished half-hour script, only to find that one-hour spaces are all that is being called for, is heart-breaking to say the least.

After having selected a broad category such as hour-long drama, half-hour drama, educational, comedy or children's session, the first step is to ascertain where the script-to-be might be used. This research involves watching newspapers for notices of awards, following regularly the television and radio programmes, and watching and listening to those sessions in particular that might suit.

Do not fall into the mistake of one writer (there have probably been many others also) who selected a particular television series that was currently running, and wrote a full script for an episode. One episode may not sound very much, but spaced out correctly with one-third page margins, it came to fifty-nine pages. There were twenty-three scenes, with an estimated timing of forty-nine and a half minutes. Characterization was true to the series, with a plot that was commendable in its freshness and originality. All-in-all it was sound script, as might be expected from the amount of work that had gone into it.

The result? A short reply from the television studio saying that the series had gone out of production over a year ago.

The lesson to be learnt is obvious. If you feel you could write for a particular current series, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope and letter to the studio, channel or station, asking if you could submit a story outline. If a particular good idea has already occurred, include it in brief.

In the case of awards and competitions, send for the entry form and details of length, format and deadline.

With locally-produced children's and educational sessions, ring the station or channel direct and speak to the programme director as the first step.

In summary: know that a market does exist before going past the initial stage of a brief story outline.

Presentation Of Script

Television

The three stages of a television script are

A. The story outline
B. The box-up
C. The full script.

A. The Story Outline

This will be half to say four pages in length, setting out simply the theme, plot, cast and approximate production details. In particular it will show how the work in some way is interesting and refreshingly different concerning content or interpretation of a traditional theme.

Suppose a T.V. script were to be developed from the short story Black Tea Or White in Chapter III. The full story outline is the first step for submission to the studio:

Black Tea Or White

Story Outline Neil Thompson
Anticipated length, 50-55 minutes

> This is one traumatic day in the life of Albert Betts, newly-appointed mixed-blood manager of the Tearooms in the desert town of Pt. Augusta, South Australia.
>
> The overall theme is of isolation and loneliness. Albert is torn between old aboriginal and modern white ways; between business and pleasure; between the lure of a prestige association with white ladies and the blood-bond of not-so-respectable kin-folk. In his job he is party to all worlds, full member of none. But all have demands on him.
>
> The play opens and closes on the desert, to emphasize by comparison all man's puniness and presumption in that area.

The first take, accordingly, is a close-up of the implacable aboriginal features of Alice, the Tearooms waitress. She is staring somewhere away up north, unseeing as the desert wind howls in blowing dust and buckbush through the town. The last scene reverts to an awareness of the desert, showing the Tearooms in darkness as the wind eerily rocks an old empty chair on the verandah. The action starts with Albert fussing around nervously behind Alice, trying to unlock the door. He chides Alice to clear the buckbush off the fence, for today is special. Today forty ladies from the Country Women's Association are calling at five o'clock for tea and sandwiches. It is not just the good business prospects that elate Albert, it is the almost "stolen fruit" feeling, the incredible prestige of having "The Ladees" as he calls them.

He can hardly wait, and the morning flies busily and happily until two problems occur simultaneously.

One is a traveller selling cards to whom he will have to say no. He has not learnt to do this without discomfort yet, for salesmen can combine friendliness with persistency. At the same time the salesman arrives, two drunken aborigines called Johnno and Strop also enter the Tearooms. Johnno ingratiates himself with the traveller, forces himself loudly into the business conversation on the cards, and causes a regular customer to leave the premises.

Albert finally gets rid of the traveller, and in anger and confusion, orders Johnno and Strop out, threatening them with the Police, they leave, promising to come back with five car-loads of their drinking mates that afternoon to demand service. If Albert won't serve them, they will call the Police on grounds of racial discrimination. Albert's world is crumbling into nightmare. He knows the thirty or so out-of-work mates of Johnno and Strop will not leave the pub until they are well drunk, and the chaos they will cause trying to cram in the Tearooms with the forty C.W.A. Ladies is unthinkable. Albert is terrified at the prospect, and there is no one he can turn to. The Tearooms has only been set up as an experiment by the Aborigines Board, and this will surely put an end to it.

Then, in the afternoon, a miracle happens. Albert gets word through Alice's father that Johnno and Strop have left town, headed for a place several hundred miles away. A chance acquaintance passing through had stopped for a beer and told them he was heading for a fish factory where there were extra jobs going with big money. Johnno and Strop had just walked out and gone with him. An elated Albert comes to life again, and by ten to five he has everything ready for The Ladees. Suddenly a motorbike swings in, then another, until two bike gangs have descended on the Tearooms. Swearing and drinking they fill the place, demanding

sandwiches and drinking from flasks. Boots, noise, swastikas, helmets and four-letter words.

Albert numbly catches just a glimpse of the C.W.A. Ladies, passing right on by. His dream is over. The play ends with Albert "ambling darkly" away across the bottom of the deserted car park. The Tearooms are in darkness behind him, with the old chair being rocked eerily by the night desert wind.

Major Cast. Albert, Alice, Johnno, Strop, traveller, Ole Bill.

Minor Cast. A customer, bikies, a glimpse of C.W.A. Ladies in cars.

Sets. Apart from a pan of the desert, the sets are the car-park, the verandah, and the inside of the Tearooms.

B. The Box-up

If a television producer feels a story outline has possibilities, he will do one of three things:

a. Offer to buy the story outline as is, and have his own scriptwriter develop it.

b. Commission the original author to go on to write the full script. Or he may suggest (without commitment) that this be done privately and submitted.

c. Call for a "box-up" when a promising story outline has been too brief.

A box-up is a more explicit story outline which may include camera direction and some conversation. In particular it will outline, step by step, the action sequences

Suppose that, instead of the full story outline of Black Tea Or White given on the previous pages, a brief synopsis only had been submitted. A box-up to rectify the situation would read as follows:

Black Tea Or White

Box-up Neil Thompson
Length, 51 minutes

Teaser:

The camera slowly pans over desolate-looking houses and the desert behind. It shows dust and tumbling buckbush, and the only sound is the wail of the wind. A close-up is shown of Alice, the aborigine waitress. She is staring, non-seeing, into the distance somewhere away up north. She

comes out of her reverie and moves aside as Albert Betts, manager of the Tearooms, unlocks the door. He is fat and good-natured, but obviously nervous about something.

He points to the buckbush by the door and tells her to throw them over the fence. She objects mildly that someone else will get them, but he insists, pointing out that everything must be spic and span because forty Country Women's Association Ladies would be coming in for tea and sand-wishes at five o'clock.

Inside, he bustles around, talking about "The Ladees". He obviously is elated at the prospect of them coming. "They'll give real good class to the place," he tells Alice, reminding her anxiously that the tearooms at this stage is only an experiment set up by the Aborigines' Board, and that unless it runs respectably and with profit, it could easily close.

Close-ups of the wall clock show the morning passing with odd customers dropping in. Mostly Alice cleans, Albert serves.

At one stage Albert is happily cutting a sandwich, humming softly.

We cut to a close-up of his face as he looks up, the expression changing to something like fear. The camera draws back to show him motionless, plate in hand, watching three men outside passing by the window.

Credits. First Commercial Break

There are six such segments for the box-up of *Black Tea Or White*, covering ten pages. In total they set out sequentially every scene of the play, so that now the studio shares in detail the overall vision of the scriptwriter.

C. The Full Script

Although scripts may vary, there is now one widely-accepted international format. It entails:

a. Leaving the left-hand third of the page blank. (For producer/director additions and instructions)

b. Putting all camera directions, actions, settings and names in upper case (capital letters).

c. Putting all dialogue (and only dialogue) in lower case.

Black Tea Or White

Neil Thompson
Length, 51 minutes.

Teaser:
Fade In

1. EXTERIOR, VERANDAH OF THE TEAROOMS. THE CAMERA SLOWLY PANS OVER DUSTY-LOOKING HOUSES ON THE EDGE OF THE DESERT. IT COVERS STUNTED TREES AND MOUNTAINS IN THE DISTANCE. DUST BLOWS AND THE DESERT WIND ROLLS DRIED BUCKBUSH ALONG BEFORE IT. THE WIND HOWLS AND WE CAPTURE THE FEELING OF DESOLATION AND THE POWER OF THE DESERT, ON WHICH MAN IS CLINGING PRECARIOUSLY TO MAKE A LIVING.

Cut To:

2. FULL FACE OF ALICE, THE ABORIGINAL WAITRESS. SHE IS STANDING MOTIONLESS, HER EYES LOOKING UNSEEINGLY UP NORTH. AS IF HEARING SOMETHING IN THE WIND.

3. ALBERT, THE FAT, PLEASANT ABORIGINAL MANAGER OF THE TEAROOMS, WHO IS UNLOCKING THE DOOR. THE KEY STICKS AND HE RATTLES IT. THE WIND GUSTS EVEN HIGHER AND TWO BUCKBUSH BOUND ONTO THE VERANDAH.

ALBERT. Darn buckbush!

HE KICKS AT ONE.

Alice', you get rid of all these buckbush, first thing. Throw them all over the back fence, the lot of them.

ALICE. Then someone else get them.

ALBERT PAUSES AT THAT, AS IF CONSIDERING WHETHER SOMEONE MIGHT COMPLAIN. HE MAKES UP HIS MIND.

ALBERT. No. You throw them over, you hear? They'll finish up in the harbour, sooner or later. You know why everything has to be right today, Alice? Because it is the second Thursday of the month, and that is when the Country Women's Association Ladies play bowls. And after bowls they come here, same as they started doing last month. And that is good business, Alice, adds good class to this place. Very good class. Next thing you know, them ladies will be dropping in on their own any old time. Just coming in and saying, 'Good morning, Mr. Betts. Cup of tea and a ham sandwich, if it's not too much trouble?' And today, come five o'clock, there'll be forty of those C.W.A. Ladees.

HE HAS BEEN CARRIED AWAY BY THE THOUGHT OF IT, AND DRAWS THE 'LADEES' SOUND OUT PLEASURABLY. COMING BACK TO THE PRESENT, HE DARTS A LOOK AT ALICE AND REPEATS THE WORDS IN AN ORDINARY TONE.

Yes, C.W.A. Ladies. Today.

HE UNLOCKS THE DOOR AND LEADS THE WAY IN.

Cut To:

4. INTERIOR OF THE TEAROOMS.

A SLOW/PAN AROUND THE ROOM, SHOWING NEAT ROWS OF NEW-LOOKING CHROME TABLES AND CHAIRS, HIGHLY-POLISHED LINOLEUM ON THE FLOOR, A BIG GLEAMING URN AND COFFEE POT, AND LONG STRAIGHT ROWS OF WHITE CUPS ON SAUCERS.

Cut To:

5. A CLOSE-UP OF ALBERT'S FACE. THE PRIDE AND SATISFACTION IS SO OBVIOUS THAT WE REALIZE THE PREVIOUS PAN AROUND THE ROOM HAS BEEN THROUGH HIS EYES.

Cut To:

6. A WIDER SCENE, SHOWING ALBERT AND ALICE WORKING. SHE IS SETTING CUPS ON THE TABLES, HE IS SWITCHING ON THE URN AND GETTING SANDWICH-INGREDIENTS OUT. ALBERT. Another thing, Alice, about getting a good lot of customers for this place. You remember what the Aborigines Board said two months ago when they set this place up and gave us the jobs?

AS USUAL, ALICE DOES NOT ANSWER OR GIVE ANY INDICATION OF HEARING. ALBERT GOES ON TALKING.

Two things, they said. Two things you got to be sure of. One, the Tearooms makes money and stands on its own feet. Alright, it will. We got C.W.A. Ladies, and passing cars, and more and more local people going to use it. It'll pay, alright. if, Alice, if we can keep it respectable. That's the second point. But if we let them others come in, dirty and drunk and just laying around the tables shouting or getting in the way, who going to come in them? Not C.W.A. Not local people. No. Just become a layabout's club and then they don't come no more, either, because there's no beer here.

ALBERT IS GETTING QUITE WORKED UP. HE IS USING A LARGE KNIFE TO CUT A SANDWICH, AND SLICES THROUGH IT IN ONE LONG SWEEP. HE

LOOKS UP AS THE DOOR OPENS AND HIS EXPRESSION CHANGES AS HE HASTENS TO SERVE A CUSTOMER.

Cut To:

7. EXTERIOR, BY BACK FENCE.

ALICE IS THROWING THE BUCKBUSH OVER. SHE STRAIGHTENS UP AND AGAIN LOOKS UP NORTH, OBVIOUSLY DRAWN TO SOMETHING IN THE DESERT AND HILLS. AFTER A MOMENT SHE BENDS TO THROW THE LAST BUCKBUSH OVER AND RETURN TO THE TEAROOMS.

There are sixty-five such scenes, varying from long to very short, in the full script of *Black Tea Or White.*

One word of warning is necessary for the beginning scriptwriter: do not set yourself up as producer-director also. Include in your script only the camera instruction that is necessary to enable the producer-director to share your (the scriptwriter's) vision. By all means refer to wide pans, close-ups and even particular music effects, but remember that it is in the province of the producer-director to alter, add or subtract production details as he or she feels fit. A scriptwriter may write a simple two-minute dialogue, for instance, which the director may choose to portray through a fast-moving sequence of a half-dozen angles: close-ups, long shot, even momentarily interspersing actions happening elsewhere or memories flashing back in the mind of one of the characters. None of this may have been envisaged by the scriptwriter, and it does not detract from the excellence of the script because it was not.

The following terminology should be known before a full script is attempted:

Close-up: Camera concentration at close quarters, e.g. head and shoulders.

B.C.U.: Big Close-up, as on eyes.

Cold: Music only, no video.

Cross-Fade: To fade from one picture to another. Same for audio (also called 'dissolve').

Cut To: Switch from one picture to another. 'Direct Cut' is a more abrupt movement.

Dolly (in and out) Motion by the camera toward or away from an object. (The same effect can be obtained by 'zooming').

Fade (in and out): Video - a picture gradually appearing out of or disappearing in to a dark screen.

Audio - swell or dying away of music.

Film Clip: Film inserted into live telecast.

Frame: What camera sees in fixed position.

Full Back: Dolly well back.

Long Shot: A shot including foreground as well as background.

Over Frame: The speaker is not visible.

Panning: Camera moves from one position to another without a break.

P.O.V.: Point of View, as seen through a particular character's eyes.

Sneak: To bring in music, voices or sound at an extremely low (often unnoticed) level.

Sting: To punctuate with a sudden musical phrase or chord, usually vibrant.

Scripting for Children's Television

This surprisingly large market is overlooked by many writers.

One large field is educational, catering for classes ranging from kindergarten up to university levels.

The Education Department or government television channel of each state is responsible for these programmes, and enquiries regarding free-lance scriptwriting should be made direct to the appropriate studio.

The format for educational script is similar to adult script, but much simpler:

Our World

"Cooking"
Time:15 minutes
Cast: DEB and PETER.

OPEN WITH 2-SHOT OF DEB AND PETER STANDING AT TABLE.

DEB AND PETER. "Hello."

DEB. Today we're making things. Would you believe? We're going to cook our own tea!

PETER. We hope! But really, it's not so difficult if you follow a recipe. Now let's look at what we have here.

CAMERA DROPS TO CLOSE-UP OF VEGETABLES AND INGREDIENTS. PETER'S HAND GOES ALONG, TOUCHING THEM.

PETER (OFF CAMERA). Flour - self-raising flour, salt, onion, potato, milk, pepper. What could be simpler?

DEB (CLOSE-UP). But how we put them together is what counts (LAUGHS).

etc.

This script of "Cooking" covered eight pages only.

The other children's television that provides a likely market for the beginning writer is the afternoon session for tiny tots; Don't be put off by the level for which you are writing! The format might be simple but the money is good, and the primary criteria for success is the same as for other writing: namely, come up with something fresh and original.

A quick spot of research in a TV Guide will show the channels which have their own children's hour, complete with regular personnel. A typical cast is a compere or leading figure, balanced against a big bird or animal which may or may not talk, but will certainly mime.

Because such shows are only semi-formal, and because they run most nights of the week, actual dialogue is not written into the script.

Big Birdie Show

"Meet Captain Kid"

1. CLOSE-UP OF COVER OF A PIRATE BOOK ON CAPTAIN KID. DRAW BACK TO INCLUDE BIG BIRDIE AND JOE LOOKING AT BOOK.

2. BIG BIRDIE, JOE GIVE GREETINGS TO EACH OTHER AND THE AUDIENCE.

3. BIG BIRDIE. Indicate to Joe that he wants him to read aloud from the book.

4. JOE. Names the book and starts to read the first page.

5. BIG BIRDIE. Stops him to ask what a pirate is.

6. JOE. Explains, goes on reading.

7. BIG BIRDIE. Stops him to ask what a treasure chest is.

8. JOE. Acts slightly exasperated at being interrupted all the time. Says a chest is a box full of treasure that pirates bury on a beach.

9. BIG BIRDIE. Becomes very excited. Let's go down the beach and dig up a treasure!

10. JOE. Laughs. Not likely here on our beaches. He stops to think. Could be, though. He names a local beach and says they could go down in his car.

11. BIG BIRDIE. Hurries Joe off-stage.

OUT OF FOCUS.
RE-FOCUS ON SET OF BEACH.

etc.

This fifty-two minute script of "Meet Captain Kid" covered seven pages only.

Presentation of Radio and Stage Script

Although the layout is similar to television, several variations occur. The first is that the left-hand margin is reduced to about 1 1/2 inches.

Where the television script refers to camera directions, the stage refers to stage direction and sets, and the radio refers to sound effects.

The practice of putting all directions, actions, settings and names in upper case, and all dialogue in lower case, however, is common to all three.

Now couple what you have learnt about the guidelines of T.V., radio and stage scripting with the three integral rules of all fiction:

1. Come up with a unique idea, something interesting that is different to a degree from anything which has gone before.

2. Create a walk-in, real universe.

3. Develop characters with authentic life-force, and the writing of the script may well begin.

Section Two The Colour Of Writing

5. Contrast And Conflict

The South Korean flag symbolizes much of the thought, philosophy and mysticism of the East. Yet it also contains a direct message for writers of all nations: not because of its politics or religion, but because of its applicability to universal, everyday life.

Predominantly in the centre of the flag stands a large circle which is precisely half red, half blue. The red section represents the Yang and the lower (blue) section the Yin, or the Um.

The Yin and the Yang between them make up all creation for they express the dualism of the cosmos: fire and water, day and night, dark and light, construction and destruction, feminine and masculine, good and evil, active and passive, heat and cold, plus and minus, and so on. The ancient truth embodied here is that the universe, and all life, is a constant balancing of opposites.

This is the lesson that the writer must take to heart: *literature can only be a successful mirror of life if it demonstrates opposites*.

In the same way that if there were no night the word "day" would be meaningless, a novel that is, say, all "good and gentle," would be meaningless in terms of life as we know it. As a species of life on this planet we are not morally perfect or non-violent in thought or action for twenty-four hours a day. Even the most saintly must be faintly provoked by traffic lights and television ads.

This is not to say that a book with a non-violent tone cannot be written about anon-violent character. Of course it can, and successfully at that, provided that some awareness of violence is included as a counter-balance to provide reality. The lives of Martin Luther King and Gandhi, for instance, would hardly have been the same without the constant presence of violence.

Conversely, many a script and novel has failed because it has been all violent, which is quite as unnatural as being all non-violent. Ninety percent violence, yes. but somewhere there must be included the insight into a killer who grows flowers (corny as it may sound), or a household or business routine that is existing quietly in peace.

A strange-sounding but practical rule for writers is to establish an ideal, then involve the opposites.

A yacht crossing the Pacific, ideally, wants gentle, steady, favourable winds, calmish seas, correct sightings, safe landfalls, friendly welcomes. Does the reader want this? Not at all - such a book would be monotonous. What he looks for, and expects, is rough and calm, comfort and discomfort, safety and danger, certainty and uncertainty, friendly and unfriendly islanders, and indeed a whole gamut of contrasting emotions, places and happenings that spark each other into life.

Consider what is expected of love: in literature would it be "loving" i.e., gentle acceptance, submission and compassion? It would be difficult to sustain a novel along these lines only. The great love affairs have seemed much more tempestuous affairs, and indeed it seems a fair question to ask anyone if their own love affair has at all times been "loving". Again, it is the contrasting desires, plans and even realizations that make interesting reading.

One final facet of human behaviour that the writer must note is conflict, for this in itself is a form of contrast.

Conflict, when the term is narrowed down, simply means an opposing of wills. It can take place in a major or a very minor way. It can be physical, oral, overt, or hidden; it may involve direct confrontation, or the parties may to all intents and purposes ignore each other.

Conflict is a part of our way of life, though in saying this it must be pointed out that people in conflict need not be enemies. They are usually adversaries, and more or less friendly ones at that.

A child may be in ongoing conflict with a parent over table manners or keeping a room tidy. This may last from age two until the offspring leaves home. A couple may be in love yet be in recurring conflict over the man's drinking or the woman's special friend. A person who speeds sees himself in conflict with the police. Every taxpayer senses conflict. Each worker is in conflict with his workmates when it comes to promotion, and so it goes on. Just to compete in human society, even in the mildest way, is to engage in conflict. And competition is something with which we have been indoctrinated since early childhood.

On a wider scale there is the violent conflict so noticeable in most novels and films. Physical impact ranging from sport to mugging to war runs parallel with the greatest tragedy of mankind - mental violence, in all its manifestations.

Four particular aspects of conflict in fiction should be noted:

1. *Relevancy*. The conflict must be significant to the plot. The protagonist moves towards what is called crisis point, i.e. conflict that involves stress which in turn leads to some variation of character as a result of the profound experience.

2. *External Balance*. The opposing forces in a novel should be of more or less equal strength. No one enjoys a one-sided game: in the same sense, the outcome of conflict in literature should provoke suspense and be in doubt until the very end. In a novel about a young man starting a business, for instance, it would make very dull reading to see him only plodding upwards with unopposed buying and selling, loyal staff that stays with him for life, steady profits, no business worries, harmonious home life, nine-to-six behind the counter and early to bed, death at ninety-nine with a benign, satisfied smile.

What the reader expects are the contrasts and conflicts that are far more life-like: business deals that have to be fought for, successes and failures, ruthless opposition, hard times with profits dropping, upsurges, staff problems, family problems, and all the other stresses, strains and odd exhilarations associated with modern business life. Nothing is certain, except that success must be paid for in one way or another.

3. *Internal Balance*. A common flaw in writing is to describe only the external conflict, i.e. the obvious physical actions of two people, as described by a third. But this is only part of the picture, and is nowhere near enough to promote full characterization. It is inner conflict that brings a picture to life.

Remember that the reader identifies directly with the protagonist, so that finding out about his aims, wants, lusts, ambitions, fears and beliefs must be similar to finding out something about oneself. And what is of more vital interest to a person than him or herself?

It is therefore the "inside" (as opposed to "outside") mental conflicts of the leading character in having to choose between two courses of action, two moral issues, two people, business against pleasure, right against wrong, lust against self-denial and so on, that can be said to be the real cornerstone of characterization within a novel or play.

4. *Outcome of Conflict*. The modern reader refuses to be satisfied by a handsome hero who, being brave and morally impeccable, vanquishes the opposition, becomes rich and famous, marries a beautiful (and good) woman, and faces a life of continuing utopia. Something more realistic is required, and it may not entail the traditional "happy" ending. Conflict may be finally resolved in several ways:

a. *The protagonist wins the major issue*. If the work is to be life-like, however, there will be a balancing awareness of the price he has had to pay.

b. *He will win the major issue, but not appreciate what he gets*. This involves a theme of disillusionment; of a restructuring of life-values. (Once a war-hero was a vital, romantic figure. Now he is rarely portrayed in that way.)

c. *He loses the major issue*. This can be satisfactory in the case of a protagonist killer who is finally shot himself.

d. *The conflict goes on*. The business-man reaches a satisfactory point in his career which is also a satisfactory point on which to end the novel. There is no suggestion given, however, that the struggle to stay on top is ended or even abated.

Conflict, then, (remembering the minor applications of the term as well as the major) must be a component of literature in that it goes a long way towards providing a reason for behaviour. And it is the subtle manipulation of contrast that highlights such behaviour, as well as providing the spice of life - variety.

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6. Tone And Mood

What is the *tone* of the novel you are planning?

This question usually brings a blank stare from a beginning writer. Yet tone is a vital component of every novel, script, short story and even article.

Tone refers to the overall feeling of a complete work, not just to any part of it. A work will be substantially affected dependent upon whether its delivery is dramatic, light, flippant, sarcastic, melancholic, heavy, sad, violent, humorous, ironic or prophetic.

It may be intense and personal or detached, according to how the writer wants his reader to react. It must be something the writer is acutely aware of, for it dictates the very expression of the words being chosen.

The reader, on the other hand, is rarely aware of "tone" in a conscious way. It is something he experiences and accepts through the process of identification or empathy that the work evokes.

Suppose a theme were to be worked out for a war novel. Here are some of the tonal approaches which might be considered as a means of conveying the story:

BOOK A. *As a serious, bitter indictment.*

> Tense dialogue and description builds a picture of disease, filth and suffering; of inhuman politicians, blundering officers and men unable to help themselves; of needless death and maiming. There is neither romance nor much hope to be found in the writing which promotes a morbid fascination in the reader despite the heavy and oppressive atmosphere.

BOOK B. *As a romantic adventure.*

> The tone is light, carefree, gay. adventurous. Bands play, uniforms dazzle, beautiful women abound. Death happens but never to the hero who suffers and loses friends, fights on. and takes massive revenge. The reader "floats'" pleasurably through the book and is particularly gratified with the final destroying of the enemy and the triumphant return home. It is light, escapist literature which invokes nothing of the intense reaction to Book A. (This format stays surprisingly popular, as can be seen from the constant issue of novels and films using the "raid" theme from World War II and modern mercenary incursions into Africa.)

BOOK C. *As a satire.*

> Seriousness, hilarity and light or savage irony combine to dramatize in a laughable way the dangers caused by individuals, institutions and societies. The overall tone of satire may seem light, inconsequential and even a great belly-laugh, but its lasting effect on the reader may stand as much a savage indictment as that of Book A.

BOOK D. *As an autobiography.*

> Here the tone might be even, unbiased, factual, and touched at times with humour to balance the unadorned descriptions of goriness. The overall impression would be of a fairly simple, but highly authentic, tale being told.

BOOK E. *As a fictionalized history.*

> A tone of crisp reportage, of documented facts concerning leaders, battles, places, armaments, uniforms, morale, rations, recruitment, songs of the time, and a host of other valid detail, that brings an era to life. This in turn cloaks and authenticates a relatively simple human drama which unfolds within.

Can a work exist without tone?

The answer is no.

Every piece has its unique colouring, something inseparable from what used to be called the "style" of the author.

Writers who claim they do not plan tone because their work is "just straight and unbiased writing" are in point of fact saying either:

a. That their product is flat, boring and unsuccessful.

or

b. That they do not consciously plan the tone, which must be there none-the-less if the work is successful.

Black Tea Or White is a sound example of how the planning of tone dictates the shape of the product that follows.

This particular short story could have been planned in several ways, each of which would have evoked a different reader-reaction. One would have been to use terse expression, a predominance of harsh-sounding words, and physical violence in the action, resulting in a lasting impression of brutality and insensitivity. As such the emphasis would have swung away from the better points of Albert to the worse points of others. In other words, the whole story would have changed.

Another presentation of *Black Tea Or White* would involve an ironic tone, with emphasis being subtly placed to highlight the contrasts between aborigines and C.W.A. Ladies. As such the role of Albert shrinks to that of a pawn, and the work as a whole emerges as a savage indictment of racism.

The story, as it was actually planned and written, is neither of the above. It is an uncomplicated, open glimpse of alienation within a society, revealing the plight of a good-natured individual torn by forces from all sides. The main action is heightened, and yet dwarfed in a way, by the fleeting touch of mysticism and power in the opening and closing desert scenes. All through the play the words and descriptions are simple and designed not to stir the reader to feelings of anger, contempt or even compassion. In fact the very tone of the work is shaped to promote a feeling of detachment, perhaps even a certain joy in the atmosphere and oddity of the curious tricks which fate can play. There is sadness and disillusionment, but it is balanced by lively touches and a dry, almost mellow humour. Above all it is the story of an individual who will, we suspect, learn in one way or another to cope.

Tone is an essential component of all literature, whether it arises through deliberate planning or some form of literary instinct. When specifically planned, however, it becomes a direct means by which the author can colour and shape his work to achieve the particular impact he desires.

Mood.

Whereas tone is the feeling of a work as a whole, mood relates to the emotional situation at any one point. Mood can, and should, vary and even change completely. In the war novel Book B the opening mood of colour, romance and excitement gives way to a steadier, more permanent aura of comradeship, which in turn is sharply replaced by tension and exhilaration, then the darkness of disillusion and despair, and so on.

To summarize: within a work, mood should be varied to provide contrast and vitality.

It is the amalgamate impression of all the moods, seen as a merging continuum, that sets the final tonal impression of the work as a whole.

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7. Story Outline: Theme And Plot

First, let several old ghosts be laid.

One is that mention of the word "theme" is synonymous with embarrassment. This hang-up would date in most cases back to high school and being landed (in front of the whole class) with the question, "What is the major theme of Hamlet?" After trying to make a blank mind function, one would hear the teacher reel off with condescending ease, a number of literary clichés. Then notes would be jotted down in a furious nonsensical welter, because The Exam was looming.

So let this first ghost be laid. The term "theme" is easy to understand, can be discussed in the simplest of terms, and is the most indispensable tool that the writer possesses.

The second ghost is the belief that once the plot is worked out, the planning of the work is complete. Not so: plot without theme can be a meaningless, pointless ramble. Just remember the times when some person has fastened on to you to give a long-winded blow by blow account of the, plot of some picture they have seen -nothing could be more boring. Any work in which the plot does not reveal the theme must be doomed to failure.

Theme

"Theme" simply means any aspect of life which is interesting enough to comment on. There is usually one major theme and several minor themes in a novel or play.

Example A. If we look back to the tonal settings of a war novel in Chapter 6, it can be seen that "theme" and "tone" often are indistinguishable. The theme in the first example, for instance, is one of grim disillusionment, of showing war as a literally dirty, unromantic. nonsensical waste of life. In the next the theme is different: war is romantic, colourful, even desirable. It is portrayed as being worthy of man's high aspirations and self-sacrifice.

Which novel gives the "true" picture of war? Obviously the first one has a better chance of success, but if the second develops a unique plot, realistic universe and life-force characterization, it may well make compelling reading.

The point is that whereas the two novels might have highly similar plots regarding the actual facts of recruitment, training, farewells, combat losses and return; *they are nevertheless strikingly different in theme (and tone). And neither novel could have been written unless the particular theme was clear-cut in the mind of the author during planning stages*.

Example B. An author who has come from the country decides he will write a novel about a young city man who buys a farm, marries a local girl, and settles down.

Fine. That is the plot in brief - but what is the major theme? Is it to be a comedy? Or a romantic comedy, a real romp in the hay? A shocking sexual revelation of what goes on down on the farm? Will it be the story of one small success following another? Or of dirt, hard toil, and disappointment? Of one man alone, or will the district be involved? Will it be a tale of actually how to grow things, or will the farm be purely a business venture, or background setting?

Whatever the theme is, it is going to drastically affect the tone, action, and viewpoint of the novel. It must therefore be settled immediately after (or as) the very basic plot is worked out.

Let it be decided that the major theme concerning the young farmer is one of mental isolation, of sheer doggedness, of a reserved character, desperately lonely, who is unable to accept help or social advances from anyone.

This will be the backbone of the whole work: the inner picture of a man tormented by the past, withdrawn through fear of personal involvement, struggling against continual odds, finally finding a new acceptance of life.

The subsidiary themes of drought, learning to cope with machinery and animals, financial worries, the girl from the next farm, and district involvement, will all be merged and brought to bear in the story only as they serve to expedite the main theme.

Tone, mood, contrasts and conflicts must also be visualized within this first planning of the theme. It may be decided that the overall tone will be a sober, even pessimistic one in keeping with the thoughts of the protagonist. The moods through the work will vary from depression to elation to quiet persistence. There will be a series of contrasts to animate and colour the work: city to country, drought to rain, brown to green, depression to elation, old (country inhabitant) to new (protagonist), mental work to physical work, failure (machinery and stock) to success, etc. The work as it progresses will involve a series of conflicts of great or lesser nature: protagonist vs. his neighbour over straying stock, debt-collectors, the drought, the animals he must milk or work with, first contact with the girl, etc.

Plot.

The plot is the step-by-step series of events that builds up the whole work. It is understandable that every detail cannot be planned in advance, and that a plot can (and should) vary as the writing progresses. Before beginning, however, a fairly specific overall plot may be worked out to tie in with the theme(s), and a quite detailed plot could be drawn up for the first chapter.

Here is what is called a bare plot:

The Farm

Chapter 1

> Ray Higgins (description) is seen walking down a city street (describe bustle, impersonal feeling of a man in a crowd). He swings into his office. Curt greeting to receptionist. We hear his thoughts. He hates the grey, small office. Where he boards is dull. There is no future in his work. In a sudden, almost desperate mood he tosses his briefcase on the desk, opens it and takes out a newspaper, turning to the "Farms For Sale". He reads aloud. The intercom squawks and a voice asks him to bring in a certain file. He answers, but goes on reading. He comes to an advertisement he likes and dials the estate agent, etc.

Some writers insist that they plan better by keeping the plot strictly separated from the theme. This method must surely be open to doubt, though, as a completely bare plot (i.e. just a straight listing of physical events) can develop an artificial picture on its own. For

this reason, a merging of theme and plot is recommended to make what is called a "story outline".

Story Outline

The Farm

Chapter I

> Open with a scene of greyness, depression, monotony. Ray Higgins is seen walking down a crowded street. Describe him, emphasizing the slight stoop, pallor of face, white hands with neat nails, conventional dress, far-away, detached and yet tense look in the eyes. Emphasize the feeling of one man in a crowd, with strangers bustling and hurrying, looking right through him. Refer to grey buildings, drizzle of rain, noise and queues. Higgins swings into building, curt greeting to receptionist, goes into office. He looks at it in sudden loathing, seeing it as tiny, drab, grey and imprisoning. We hear his thoughts, and realize what the pointless monotony is doing to him mentally. He suddenly throws his briefcase on the table and takes out a newspaper ...
>
> etc.

The value of a story outline is obvious. Not only does it detail the plot, it also incorporates theme, tone, mood, conflict and actual writing instructions.

N.B. Another useful aspect of the story outline is that it is easily adaptable into either prose or script format.

Summary of Theme, Plot and Story Outline

The following steps help plan any literary work to give it meaning, direction, and a sense of authenticity:

1. Come up with a kernel of an original idea. Summarize it in several sentences to get your thoughts together, e.g.

> "The Farm". A young city man, depressed and hovering on mental collapse, gives up everything to buy a run-down farm. Being introverted he refuses all aid, struggling to cope with debt, drought, and his own lack of skill in farming matters. Success comes when he finally accepts help from a girl and his neighbours, and in doing so finds a new meaning to life.

2. Visualize this world you are creating and its characters until they become "real" to you. (See Chapter II). (This will probably be done at the same time as the following point 3.)

3. Work out the major and minor themes. Decide on the overall tone for the work. Plan some general areas that will illustrate mood, contrast and conflict.

4. Either: work out a general plot for the whole work and a detailed plot for the first chapter,

or, better,

work out a general story outline for the whole work and a detailed story outline for each chapter as you come to it.

Now let the writing start.

Section Three

8. Draftwriting, Presentation and Marketing

All work, whether it be prose, script or poetry, should begin as a rough draft.

Authors must face up to the fact that writing is an on-going process, and that the editing (second look at a piece) will result always in additions and alterations of a great or small nature.

How great or small depends on the individual. One person may make five drafts - which does not mean five separate, unrelated sets of words. It means one basic original, corrected and altered four times so that substantial change occurs.

Most writers, however, are satisfied with one substantial editing of the first rough draft, claiming that any more would affect the spontaneous flow of the original concept.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of using a rough draft is that it frees the writer for the essential task of uninterrupted creation. How can you build a flow-sequence of dialogue or description if one half of your mind is worried about sentence construction or spelling errors?

The rough draft should be written without any particular attention being given to paragraphing, syntax, spelling, repetitious words or whatever. Forget all those potential errors that can ruin a finished work. *Just write. Let it come out so that all you are aware of is the universe, characters and action you are creating*.

Try following these guidelines for the first writing:

1. Use international A4 sheets. Leave an inch margin, write double-spaced, and do not use the backs of the sheets.

2. Number the pages according to chapters: 1-1, 1-2, 1-3. Use approximately the same number of pages per chapter (for the novel), say 15 to 30 of 300 words, but do not worry if this varies.

3. Try not to backread more than is necessary to pick up the thread and ensure continuity.

4. Again, do not even consider any structural faults such as spelling, syntax or repetition that might be occurring as you write.

5. When the work is finished, add a front leaf and staple the sheets down the left-hand margin to make a rough book in which the left-hand pages are blank.

6. Put it aside for a period of at least a week. Forget it. Put it right out of your mind. In this time (if possible), do no other writing.

7. Return to the work with a good dictionary and a Roget's Thesaurus to hand. To start with, it will be like reading someone else's work.

Be prepared to be ruthless.

Some sections will cry out for great alterations, other slabs will remain unaltered except for punctuation changes and repetitious expression being adjusted.

Use the area between the double-spaced lines to write on, and more particularly the blank sheets to the left.

Rewrite whole paragraphs or more if the material is not live or colourful, or if it is not portraying what it was meant to say. Does it develop the theme?

When little unusual ideas occur, put them in.

If a whole new exciting major twist occurs, write that in also. Just be sure that it ties in perfectly with the rest of the story to come, or be prepared to alter that accordingly.

8. Check thoroughly on the mechanical side. (This really calls for a separate reading.)

Look for errors in expression; eradicate repetitious words or phrases.

Check any word of which you have the faintest doubt concerning spelling or precise meaning.

9. Undo the staples, rewrite or retype the sections that have received substantial alteration. Where only a section of a page is changed, rewrite just that part and glue it over the original. Glue blank paper over the used backs of sheets. Restaple. Leave it for another week.

It is important to do this thoroughly so that the second draft can be read at speed, without detractions from additions and alterations, to gain an overall impression.

10. If substantial alteration occurs - repeat the procedure into the third draft.

Hopefully, however, it will be a case of reread, final alterations, and type up for publication.

N.B. A manuscript that is poorly-typed and poorly-edited is at an obvious disadvantage. *If finances allow, always have your work corrected and typed by a separate competent editor-typist. It is well worth the outlay.*

Presentation, Or What the Editor Wants

It has been noted in Chapter IV that television script calls for a particularly wide margin. In all other respects, however, prose and script presentations should heed the following requirements:

1. Use firm, blank A4 paper. Do not use thin, transparent paper that allows "see-through" to the next sheet. Type on one side only.

2. Work must be typed. Keep the keys cleaned and the ribbon changed so that a clear strike is obtained.

3. Thoroughly proof-read your work. Check off any possible faulty sentence or spelling error. Work with a good dictionary and *Roget's Thesaurus* to hand.

4. If typing errors or corrections are made, re-type the work.

5. Always double-space and leave an inch and a half margin.

6. Indent all paragraph-beginnings

7. Enclose an introductory page stating name, address, title and length of article, and a one-sentence summary of content. If you wish to, state whether you are offering state, country, or world rights for publication purposes.

8. Submit the copy unfolded in a suitably-sized envelope.

9. Make sure that you have retained a copy before the original is posted off.

10. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope to ensure return of your work if it is not accepted.

Marketing

Marketing is a matter of research. And, with the exception of the novel, it is research that should take place before the writing, not after it.

This is not prostitution of art, nor is it a matter of crying poverty.

It is a matter of efficiency, and there are two aspects of it. One is that, in the same way that an artist learns something every time he walks through an art gallery, a writer will learn every time he looks analytically at a film, T.V. programme, novel, short story or article. He will listen with enjoyment to a radio play, while at the same time checking whether it is successful, and what makes it so. He will also note the studio that produces it.

The other aspect of research is a purely practical one. While it is true that novels come in all shapes and contents, it is also true that many publishers over the years have come to lean towards, if not specialize in, certain formats. Some produce children's literature only; others short adventure, longer philosophical works, tales of the outback, or romances. Many produce anything at all, judging solely on sales potential. The writer therefore should be aware of a publisher's requirements before submitting script.

References for Marketing

Extensive publishing guides are issued regularly in the U.K., Australia and United States. As the following list represents over $90 in purchase price, it is recommended that the beginning writer commence his research at the Public Library before deciding on a purchase:

* Writers' and Artists' Year Book, A. & C. Black Ltd.. 35 Bedford Row, London WC1R. This directory for writers, artists, playwrights for film, radio and T.V., photographers and composers, has been issued yearly since 1907. It contains information on prizes, awards, copyright and tax services; as well as lists of English, American, Australian, Indian, Irish, New Zealand, South African and Canadian journals, magazines and book publishers. It contains statements of the kind of material accepted by each and rate of payment, lists of publishers, literary agents, and other kinds of directory assistance useful to writers wishing to place manuscripts.

* Writers' and Photographers' Marketing Guide. Australian Writers' Professional Service, Box 28, Collins Street P.O., Melbourne. This directory of Australian and New Zealand literary and photography markets sets out in detail for the two countries every magazine, newspaper and book publisher, stating types of material required, length and payment. A surprisingly large listing is included of prizes and awards made annually and biennially for prose, script and poetry.

* Writers Handbook. Writer Inc. 8 Arlington Street. Boston, MA 0 Z 1116. In two parts. Pt. I is made up of articles by famous writers including

fiction, non-fiction and specialties. Pt.2 is a market guide, mainly in the periodical field, giving for each periodical: Address, editor, type of material, indication of payment. Also has section for radio, T.V., and book publishers.

* Writers' Market. F & W Publishing Corp., 9933 Alliance Road, Cincinnati OH 45242.

* Literary and Library Prizes. R.R. Bowker Co., 1180 Avenue of the Americas, N.Y. 11036. Four sections: International, American, British, Canadian. States what the prize is and conditions, lists recent winners.

* Literary Market Place. R.R. Bowker, 1180 Avenue of the Americas, N.Y. 11036. A listing of publishers, courses, conferences, contests, agents, radio, T.V. and motion picture producers, magazine and newspaper publishers.

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