

UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

The Mysterious Magics of Creative Writing

Re-envisaging practice as research

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The Mysterious Magics of Creative Writing:

Through engagement with both reflective and reflexive methodologies related to specified published works, this thesis identifies unconscious, preconscious and conscious states; it explores shifts in creative process to identify that which seems instinctual, alongside that which is materially visible, re-envisioning practice as research in the context of creative writing while exploring potential for teaching pedagogies. These pedagogies have particular relevance within primary and secondary school, the key markets for my published works, and additionally have been core to my teaching of creative practice in Further Education, Higher Education, Adult Education and at conferences with fellow authors.

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Abstract

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

The Mysterious Magics of Creative Writing

Through reflective and reflexive methodologies, this thesis identifies unconscious, preconscious and conscious states; it explores shifts in creative process to identify that which seems instinctual, alongside that which is materially visible, and re-envisages practice as research while exploring potential for teaching pedagogies. These pedagogies have particular relevance within primary and secondary school, the key markets for my published works. They have also been fundamental to my teaching of Creativity and Creative Writing within Further Education, Higher Education, Adult Education and at conferences with fellow authors, thus demonstrating applicability within all levels of learning.

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ABSTRACT FOR THESIS

In writing over fifty works of published fiction over a timespan of twenty years, I have needed to learn not how to magically conjure up creative possibilities, but how to identify material practices that actively evoke imaginative and relevant outputs. My subsequent teaching, at all levels of learning, has evolved from these processes and I have constantly sought to re-position my creative approaches as pedagogic tools that can be adapted for a range of learning needs.

The research in this thesis has therefore been drawn from an interrogation of process related to specific submitted titles, each originally evolved through a distinct creative practice and each with a different aim and intent. By re-constructing scenes and scenarios, in raising up long lost fictional characters – and finding they were, in fact, never lost – and in reflecting on what these ‘unlost’ old friends have had to tell me, I have found new perspectives related to the writing of fiction. In this context I have sought, primarily, to identify the shifts between unconscious and conscious thinking, capturing that emerging moment – not the magical, ethereal light of an idea but the tangible, recordable evidence that demonstrates how creative processes that inform works of fiction can be made, honed, and shaped. Through this I have identified that which lies at the core of my practice, aligning researched but creative approaches with existing theory and unveiling new knowledge that impacts my writing, my research, my pedagogic approaches and methodologies related to creativity, all underpinned by an enhanced awareness of creative practice as research.

Keywords: Creativity, Creative-Writing, Creative-process, Practice-as-Research, Theory, Pedagogy, Teaching, Unconscious, Conscious, Memory, Fiction.

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Preface

As a child, writing was always the ‘thing’ I could do. Yet, arriving with all the usual insecurities at my teenage years, and discovering the rich and vivid prose of Mervyn Peake’s *Gormenghast*¹ trilogy, I thought, ‘this is what good writing is, I could never write like this.’ I boxed any potential away, tucked in that attic-corner where life’s might-have-beens get stored.

Twenty years later I waved a wand across that attic corner. A tentative ‘me’ entered a series of competitions pitched for children’s and Young Adult (YA) authors. I won in the picture book and YA categories, was also highly commended with a different picture book, and was placed second in writing for middle-grade (MG) readers. As a consequence, I was invited to London to meet the adjudicators, who were also publishers. It began... yet that beginning did not only unlock the attic door to my future as a children’s and YA writer. Writing is all about re-writing, and evolving craft and editorial skills formed part of my evolution. However, it is within the role of researcher that I have, arguably, flourished the most.

Creative Writing research, as defined by the National Association of Writers in Education’s (NAWE) benchmark statement,² identifies modes of enquiry that engage creative practitioners with both ‘knowing’ and ‘doing’; the new knowledge evolved from active approaches to learning.³

Creative Writing research can take many forms, but at its heart are the activities of writing creatively... Creative Writing researchers often consider critical questions concerning Creative Writing practice and the results of this practice; for example, structural or stylistic questions, questions of form and function, or questions of authorship. Equally Creative Writing research might be driven by thematic or subject-based ideas, concerns with cultural conditions, the psychology or emotive context of Creative Writing, or explorations of Creative Writing aesthetics. Some Creative Writing researchers might be interested in the types of knowledge that Creative Writing entails and offers; others may have an interest in the audiences for Creative Writing, its distribution or reception.⁴

¹ Mervyn Peake, *Gormenghast*, London, Vintage Books, 1999.

² NAWE, *Research Benchmark Statement*, accessed 17 December 2020. <https://www.nawe.co.uk/writing-in-education/writing-at-university/research.html>

³ Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts*, (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 11.

⁴ NAWE, *Research Benchmark Statement*.

Practice-as-research acknowledges that publishable fictions do not just 'happen'. Writers research primary and secondary sources, hone craft skills and develop voice and style. Writing must be reworked, explored, discussed, reworked again... and then edited.

The move to publication demands awareness of genre conventions, wordcounts and marketability.

Additionally, writers of children's and Young Adult (YA) fiction, must satisfy complex criteria related to morality, education, language, and subject.

Aligning these conscious processes with titles submitted for this thesis, my distinct creative practice-as-research methodologies are summarised below:

Mouse Look Out

Magi Publications, 1998, target reader age 4-7 KS1, 32-page picture book (PB) (mixed readership).

Triggered by initial interest in a rejected submission, editors suggested I write something featuring small animals. The library's non-fiction section presented limited possibilities, the most engaging being an image of a mouse seeking shelter from a storm. However, this seemingly minimal result initiated a narrative which evolved without manipulation of form or style, the more conscious focus being to rework each scene for compliance with standard PB format. This resulted in one stanza being edited out. There were no other edits required.

The Storm Seal

Magi Publications, 1998, target reader age 4-7 KS1, 32-page PB, (mixed readership).

A publication charting the evolution of the Gweek Seal Sanctuary⁵ activated research into seal populations. Seal-pups are washed onto rocks due to human overpopulation of beaches, driving seals to remote coastal areas. The emerging narrative engaged a poetic form and, while publisher advice led to amendments which evolved a short story, the narrative retained its alliterative style. This offered educational value, alliteration forming part of schools' literacy programmes. The environmental sub-text afforded further educational potential, raising awareness of responsibilities related to human interaction with nature.

⁵ Ken Jones, *Orphans of the Sea*, (Glasgow, Fontana/Collins, 1976).

Cheat

Heinemann, 1998, target reader age 7-8 KS2, (educational commission), 7000 words, (mixed readership).

Cheat was commissioned for Year-6 pupils; the publisher brief identifying a 12,000 word 'realistic novel with a central moral or dilemma'. Research drew from a personal dimension: a childhood memory. The scenario was reworked into a third person linear, chaptered novel; this format identified by editors as most accessible to primary-level pupils. Subsequent Government intervention related to topics within year groups resulted in *Cheat's* readership being amended to Year-3, edited down to 7,000 words. Redrafting demanded an intense word-cull without compromising on narrative voice, form, and intention. The rework included a focus on linguistic choices and related editorial discussions, ensuring *Cheat's* adapted viability as an 'early reader'.

Eclipse

Horse Healer Series - Scholastic Books, 1999, target reader age 9-11, 35,000 words, (mixed readership).

An initial intention was to challenge gender expectations. 'Horse' books traditionally attract female readership; by positioning a male as the central character the series could, potentially, attract male readers, extending commercial value. Active and field-based research included interviews with world-renowned horse-whisperer Monty Roberts, and interactions with Gypsy families to appropriate culture and ideologies. Research evolved into distinctive process-led methodologies, recreating Roberts' techniques at a local riding school, and such engagement with experiential approaches included riding and stable duties.

Trick of the Mind

Oxford University Press, 2001, target reader YA 11+, 45,000 words, (mixed readership).

Inspired by a documentary about magician David Blaine,⁶ who can (seemingly) read minds, levitate, and bring dead (pigeons) to life, themes centred around romance, obsession and belief-systems.

Field-research included interviewing contemporary magician Derren Brown, who unveiled processes linked to magic and mind-control.

⁶ David Blaine: *Dead Bird*, Accessed 14 December, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhPcuf3EoI8>

Primary reading included re-reading *The Catcher in the Rye*⁷ which reflects a style relevant to contemporary YA readers.

The novel evolved as a dual-voice perspective with one character, Matt, in first person, and another, Erin, in third person. Third person offers a more objectified reader experience. This became problematic when positioned beside first person, so, while creating Erin, I wrote her diary, letters and private thoughts. Erin disclosed motivations that advanced plot, while the process enabled an immediacy of tone more easily achieved in first person narratives. This immediacy enhanced pace and, as characters interact consecutively, each redraft focused on keeping both perspectives equally engaging.

Forbidden

Oxford University Press, 2002, target reader YA 14+, 50,000 words, (predominately female).

Forbidden took a two-part structure reflecting the 'before and after' experiences of main character, Elinor, who grew up in a cult. Although initially inspired by a memory, the narrative reflects a familiar storyline: forbidden love. Elinor's perspective was achieved through third person present-tense, representing an isolating tone intended as a metaphor for repression evident in cults. Experiential research included infiltrating two cults - Scientology and a 'wellness' cult which ran weekend retreats. I briefly joined these cults, my focus on experiencing applied techniques related to brainwashing and mind-control.

YA fictions are often rite-of-passage narratives, reflecting readers at a pivotal point in their lives, and my broader aims explore religion, opening potential for discourse related to values and belief-systems.

Aspects contained sexual elements which, in editorial discussions, positioned the content as relevant for 14+ YA. This positioning enabled darker, more controversial material to evolve as a sub-text within the narrative.

Game Girls

Anderson Press, 2004, target reader YA 14+, 80,000-words, (predominately female).

Junk,⁸ a YA novel focusing on drug-addiction, created controversy related to its suitability for the target reader. In considering this opposition, I observed that beyond drug taking, sex was another

⁷ J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*, (London, Penguin, 2010).

⁸ Melvyn Burgess, *Junk*, (London, Andersen Press, 2014).

taboo not addressed in YA. I proposed a novel to address this taboo. Three college-age friends set up a brothel in their home town - a pleasant, leafy suburbia. Initial research included studying social attitudes related to sex-workers, secondary reading of sex-worker's memoirs, and paying a sex-worker for a private tour of Amsterdam's red-light district. Reflecting on my own 'leafy suburban' home I considered how this façade of coming from a 'nice' place formed a thin veneer over the complexity of human behaviours and so set the narrative in my local environment. I evolved three first person experiences, focusing on individual characters, drafting their narrative and time-lines independently before weaving the three together. The novel, like *Junk*, was banned from some schools after publication. The ban created reflective discourse around appropriate content for YA readers, and was later utilised in schools within PHSE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) classes, as much as within a literacy context.

Wordtamer

Routledge Education, 2017, target reader teachers, student-teachers, creative-writing students, writers, 80,000 words.

I visit schools, running workshops, afterschool clubs and residencies. These extend to conference dissemination, and at the 2015 UKLA conference (United Kingdom Literacy Association) editors from Routledge Education commissioned *Wordtamer*. The brief was to develop accessible and coherent pedagogies for teachers practising in literacy and creative writing at KS2 and KS3. I developed methodologies evolved from creative and artistic practices, demonstrating approaches in schools and assessing resultant written outputs. My focus was on evolving material that would engage learners creatively, whilst improving motivation and application related to writing. Ten templates were developed, incorporating a variety of genres, writing styles and approaches. The templates were sequenced for levels of complexity, offering differentiation related to age and ability. The book is a hybrid publication, additionally discussing issues related to creativity and education, and underpinning craft skills identified as relevant to literacy by National Curriculum criteria. These link my experience in schools with my substantive practices and processes as an author.

****Please see appendices for synopses of submitted works.***

The above outlines visible, material approaches to the evolution of creative works. However, in synthesising my personal experiences in the context of creative writing, my interest became less about research in which I had actively engaged, and more about aspects I had never considered, positioning my emerging awareness within themes of magic and mystery.

For example, during the research-day spent with magician Derren Brown, I identified subconscious correlations between magicians and writers. The strongest stories avoid overt explanation - authors seek to reveal and conceal, much like magicians. Brown suspended my disbelief when he bent spoons, floated objects, and read my mind. Mind-manipulation is the writer's skill too, a writer must make their reader believe content the author has conjured up. Both practices, and practitioners, are influencing the subconscious mind.

Practice as-research also identifies these subconscious contributions, evolved from more abstract, intuitive pedagogies. As I identify approaches that shift away from that which is visible, I interrogate instead tensions between writing, intuition and the mysterious stirrings that inform process and product.

The Mysterious Magics of Creative Writing

Dorothea Brande identifies 'writer's magic' as a phenomenon to control writing and uncover voice,⁹ ...but both the looking, and the control, are only sleight of hand: when we learn to learn from what we cannot see we might realise that 'the dove that appeared from nowhere has been in the magician's pocket all along.'¹⁰

Introduction: Lifting the invisibility cloak

Magic, as a performance, needs to feel real. The audience may analyse the trick later, but in the moment, they are transfixed. Convinced. There are parallels here with the analysis of works of creative writing. Magicians are artists, as authors are artists. Like magicians, authors seek to conceal and reveal. They may spend years evolving ideas, practising skills, discarding possibilities, yet to the reader a published work appears only in completed form, the narrative as slick and silver-tongued as a magician on stage.

If the outcomes themselves hold a resonance with magic, then the *processes* of creativity, with all their mysterious machinations are, arguably, even more shrouded in obscurity.

There are theories and interrogations into process spanning almost 100 years; from Wallas' four stage model of creative development in 1929,¹¹ to Czikzentmilhayli's identification of a five part progression.¹² More recently logic-based research, incorporating neuroscience and cognitive analyses, offers alternative approaches to the value of conscious awareness and creativity.¹³ Yet, still, the inventive, inspirational and visionary elements seem undefinable.

⁹ Dorothea Brande, *Becoming a Writer*, (London, Macmillan, 1996)152-4.

¹⁰ Judy Waite, *Wordtamer*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2017) 19.

¹¹ Graham Wallis, *The Art of Thought*, (Kent, Solis is Press, 2019).

¹² Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity*, (New York, Harper Collins, 1996).

¹³ Kevin Brophy, *Patterns of Creativity*, (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2009).

Arguably, these can be categorised as ‘knowing what we do not know we know’, our senses compressed into some altered awareness,¹⁴ but as Katherine Coles asserts, ‘To rely on intuition as if it were some magical thing is lazy... Research is what we do to court intuition and to make ourselves ready for it when it comes’.¹⁵ Yet, even intuition suggests an ethereal quality, as does the idea that it somehow needs to be courted... coaxed and cajoled out into the spotlight. At the time of my earliest publications, I was not an academic, nor did I have any sense that this might be a future possibility. Graeme Harper acknowledges this position when he identifies that creative processes connected to writing and research can occur without conscious acknowledgement as to what such engagement might consist of.¹⁶ What, I wonder, is the language of such intuition? How do we help it speak to us? My intention is to investigate such ambiguities in relation to my own creative evolution.

Robyn Stewart identifies aspects of these more instinctual, elusive qualities¹⁷ and I locate Stewart’s observations in those early writing experiences. Long before linguistic constellations such as ‘active-research’, ‘experiential learning’ or ‘creative pedagogy’ entered my language-sphere, I cultivated a wide reach of research methodologies, drawing from intuition.

These methodologies, the seemingly illusional qualities, are the focus here. My investigations will offer up selected published works, and I will scrutinise the sparks that invoked these narratives.

The ‘mysterious’ seems to connect to perceptions around the unconscious mind. The most frequently asked question for many authors manifests in some form of ‘where do you get your ideas?’ Responses are often elusive, enigmatic. *Keep your creative antennae switched on. See the world with an artist’s eyes. Be curious, and curiouser.* I say these things too. I will repeat them in this thesis, but they will not simply be whipped into view with a colourful flourish, like a string of silk handkerchiefs. My intention is to articulate what such phrases mean, and where they might be positioned in the context of theory and practice. I do not want to pull the rabbit from the hat, so much as identify where in a hat the rabbit might be hidden.

The process has not sat comfortably with me, peering through the years and re-examining my own work. What was I thinking? Why did I believe that? What might I change if I wrote this now? In this reflexive state, I have striven to identify elements that will have value now, to myself as both writer

¹⁴ Andrew Cowan, *The Art of Writing Fiction*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2003) 35 – 55.

¹⁵ Katharine Coles, ‘Forward, Wayward, The Writer in the World’s Text, At Large’, *Research Methods in Creative Writing*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 158.

¹⁶ Graeme Harper, ‘The Generations of Creative Writing Research’, *Research Methods in Creative Writing*, 135.

¹⁷ C. Prescott quoted in Robyn Stewart, ‘Creating New Stories for Praxis: Navigations, Narrations, Neonarratives’ *Practice as Research, Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, 129.

and teacher of writing. Stepping backstage and rummaging among the boxes of mirrors and magnets and invisible string, I ask a new question...

...if I unravel my work, what else might I reveal?

This potential for unravelling has relevance to creative process, for all creative work can be linked back to some version of ourselves. Most people tell stories: they tell stories about their lives, utilising memories that draw from some combination of their emotional, historical and scientific truth.¹⁸ These autobiographical retellings are a means by which we all make sense of ourselves as individuals.

I am then, perhaps, in a constant state of making sense of myself. If I view myself in this sense-making framework, I might say:

'I came from a standard sort of family. Two parents. Four siblings. Being the second oldest impacted on my version of myself, as did my being the only girl. This only girl loved animals. Rescued strays. She longed for a horse and hung around stables, worked for nothing, begged for rides... at one point, around the age of ten, she became a horse. Yes, really. Well, sort of...'

Notice how the narrative voice slips from first person to third. This achieves distancing. The author now stands at arm's length from her memory, the protagonist in her own narrative.

This protagonist is sometimes adolescent, sometimes a schoolchild. She has been a thief,¹⁹ a homeless teenager,²⁰ and a proactive member of a religious cult.²¹ There was a period of animal personas.^{22 23 24} A spell at prostitution.²⁵ Life drifts from the recollection and into the characters she became, these characters revisited and re-envisaged through an altered pedagogic lens.²⁶ Notice when the narrative voice slips from third person to first. The author steps closer to her memories, as I step back to search for the mysterious magics that breathed life on my own fictions.

¹⁸ J.M. Coetzee and Arabella Kurtz, *The Good Story*, (London, Vintage, 2016).

¹⁹ Judy Waite, *Cheat*, (London, Heinemann, 1998).

²⁰ Judy Waite, *Trick of the Mind*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003).

²¹ Judy Waite, *Forbidden*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004).

²² Judy Waite, *Mouse Look Out*, (London, Magi Publications, 1998).

²³ Judy Waite, *The Storm Seal*, (London. Magi Publications, 1998).

²⁴ Judy Waite, *Eclipse*, (London, Scholastic, 1999).

²⁵ Judy Waite, *Game Girls*, (London, Andersen Press, 2007).

²⁶ Judy Waite, *Wordtamer*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2017).

Section One: Creative process and the shift between unconscious and conscious thinking.

Mind-magic. The very thought of it draws me, suggesting mysterious processes controlled by... someone. Who? If it is possible to manipulate the minds of others then it should, presumably, be possible to manipulate ourselves.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is arguably one of the earliest manipulators of the mind. Freud was a neurologist, his research related to psychiatry but his ground breaking research using associative thinking and freewriting with traumatised soldiers resonates with Andre Breton's references to 'psychic automatisations'.²⁷ Breton made connections with Freud's word-play therapies, evolving the concept of cut-ups, repositioning a written context by literally cutting up words, sentences or phrases and then rearranging them to access altered perceptions and dimensions. Breton embraced this process, experimenting with text and image as he sought the unpredictable and spontaneous features that the practice produced. Breton's techniques influenced emerging creative innovators, including William Burroughs, who evolved his own, multimedia, creative cut-ups. Evolving this new form of 'writerly' collage with painter and poet Bryon Gysin²⁸, Burroughs produced poems, films and novels.^{29 30} Later David Bowie developed his own interpretation of cut-ups, describing the process as an unconscious intelligence which triggers ideas.³¹ These investigations, in their shift from psychiatry to creative process, have evolved Freudian techniques as insightful methodologies linked to writing. More recent advances enable researchers to 'peer into the human cranium at many levels'³² and results both support and advance Freud's findings, identifying how unconscious and conscious processes play separate but equal roles.³³ I will return to this unconscious versus conscious

²⁷ Mark Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of Andre Breton*, (Boston, Black Widow Press, 2009) 53.

²⁸ Maria Casiidan, *The Idea Machine: Brion Gysin*, Accessed 3 April 2020, <https://www.thewhitereview.org/feature/the-idea-machine-brion-gysin/>.

²⁹ William S. Burroughs, *The Soft Machine*, (New York, Grove Press, 1966).

³⁰ Joan Hawkins and Alex Werner-Colan eds., *William Burroughs: Cutting up the Century*, (Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2019).

³¹ Alan Yentob, Cracked Actor in *BBC News* accessed 3 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nlW4EbxD8>.

³² David Eagleman, *Incognito*, (Edinburgh, Canongate Books Ltd, 2011), 19.

³³ Blackburn, Simon. "Creativity and Not-So-Dumb Luck." In *The Philosophy of Creativity: New Essays*, by Paul, Elliot Samuel, and Scott Barry Kaufman, eds., edited by Elliot Samuel Paul, and Scott Barry Kaufman. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2014. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199836963.003.0008. Accessed 29 April 2020, <https://www-oxfordscholarship->

relationship later, but as the curtains open on my own explorations, I start the show by discussing not what lies either side of that separation, but the mysterious elements of the boundary itself.

Dorothea Brande seems to acknowledge such a boundary as she identifies writing process as a form of duality, an exchange between distinct aspects of the personality, a sort of 'taking turns' as two sides of the persona cross back and forth.³⁴ Margaret Atwood references a similar observation: 'There has been a widespread suspicion among writers... that there are two of him sharing the same body, with a hard to predict and difficult to pinpoint moment during which one turns into the other.'³⁵ Something is happening, we know it, and neuroscience may even be able to see it - but still the moment of crossover seems elusive. We hover in a place of strange magics.

This strangeness is supported by Kevin Brophy when he describes the upwelling of creativity as 'the darkness over the great unseen', interrogating our individual role in the process that brings perception and understanding to the surface of our awareness.³⁶

To shine a light in Brophy's darkness feels charged with electrifying possibilities. What are my own intangible moments and dualities? Dare I challenge Atwood's assertion that we [writers] are never able to catch that crucial point when the writing takes place?³⁷ There is a place - a space, as Robyn Stewart suggests, where creative practice crosses and meets theory. In this place of transition artists make new discoveries: contradictions, intuition and serendipity reveal insights that engage the more visible aspects of correspondence and discipline.³⁸ It is in this space that I stand, looking for revelations in a conscious attempt to draw out the unconscious. I am almost beside myself with anticipation. If I manage to instigate some great reveal, what might the transition look like? A fox in a dark, dank cellar? A unicorn by a moonlit lake?

I turn my focus to my first two publications, picture-books *Mouse Look Out* and *The Storm Seal*, in my quest to find out.

com.winchester.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199836963.001.0001/acprof-9780199836963-chapter-8

³⁴ Brande, *Becoming a Writer*, 43-54.

³⁵ Margaret Atwood, *Negotiating with the Dead*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 37.

³⁶ Kevin Brophy, Peculiarities and Monstrosities, *Creative Writing Theory Beyond Practice*, eds. Nigel Krauth and Tess Brady (Teneriffe Qld, Post Pressed, 2006), 140.

³⁷ Atwood, *Negotiating with the Dead*, 55.

³⁸ Robyn Stewart, 'Creating New Stories for Praxis', eds. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, (London, I.B.Taurus & Co. Ltd, 2010) 124.

The Practice of Process: **the same difference**

I was invited by a picture-book publisher to write something that involved a 'small animal'.³⁹

I visited the children's reference section of my local library, engaging in active research, pulling books from shelves and scribbling notes in my notebook.

Despite scanning numerous publications celebrating owls and hamsters and goldfish and frogs, my interest was only sparked by one book. It relayed the life of a field mouse, and how these rodents sought shelter in old buildings during storms. However, the material was slight, and I had no sense of what type of story might evolve. Accepting failure, I left and headed for an RSPCA charity shop, purchasing a tattered paperback entitled *Orphans of the Sea*.⁴⁰ This true-life account of the founding of a seal sanctuary in Gweek, Cornwall, seemed as if it might offer 'small animal' value.

During the drive home, whilst sat at traffic lights, the phrase came to me: 'The gate no one opened' - in fact not just that line; sentence patterns, rhymes and rhythms danced through my head. The traffic lights changed, I reached home, and raced indoors. The complete narrative seemed to 'fall onto the page':

The gate no one opened
Was rusted up and old.
When the wind blew,
it sometimes creaked and sighed.⁴¹

The whole narrative took under two hours to write, there were no reworks and the publishers asked for no changes other than the deletion of one stanza; this because the text was too long to fit into Magi's standard picture book thirty-two-page format.

This experience cannot be applied to process related to *The Storm Seal*. *Storm's* approach supports a more perfectionist methodology, as opposed to inspirational torrent.⁴² I read *Orphans of the Sea*; scratched out plot ideas, developed characters. Additional research included gathering facts about seal behaviours and their physical development, alongside wider salient material related to environment and ecology - human activity along the Cornish coast had driven seals to seek shelter

³⁹ Linda Jennings, Editor, *Magi Publications*, pers comm. 1997.

⁴⁰ Ken Jones, *Orphans of the Sea*, (Glasgow, Fontana/Collins 1976).

⁴¹ Waite, *Mouse Look Out*.

⁴² Cowan, *The Art of Writing Fiction*, 35 - 55.

among rocks, rather than protective coves and beaches. I next explored the narrative both visually and textually by creating a blank picture book and connecting words with proposed imagery, writing and doodling onto the pages and focusing on a sequential timeline.⁴³ The format took a basic text-image interaction, the verbal element communicating narrative and the visual showing setting⁴⁴ - a true 'show and tell' double-act.

The creative process that triggered *Mouse* seemed shadowy and elusive, whereas *Storm* offered practical and repeatable methodologies - could I consciously recreate only the latter, and hope only to summon some sort of muse for the former?

David Eagleman illustrates how our conscious assessment of an activity as 'easy' or 'natural' can 'grossly underestimate the complexity of the circuits that make it possible [...] The more obvious and effortless something seems, the more we need to suspect that it seems that way only because of the massive circuitry behind it.'⁴⁵

Eagleman, in this context, seems to place this circuitry as something hidden: we are not aware of the machinations, only the conscious outcomes. Coles, on the other hand, identifies how *deliberate* creative research can enhance the outcome.⁴⁶ Coles is a manipulator of her own mind, and it is these conscious approaches to stimulating the unconscious that seem worthy of deeper interrogation.

The perceived 'manipulated' research for *Mouse* had yielded a poor crop of possibilities, while the subsequent writing seemed a fevered outpouring. Annie Dillard echoes my experience when she describes this rush of inspiration as akin to '...copying from a folio held open by smiling angels.'⁴⁷ It did feel like that. I was the channel this narrative could tell itself through and when Jeri Kroll states 'no writer is innocent', referring to a self-awareness of process,⁴⁸ my recollection is that, beyond that initial aim to stimulate creative possibilities, I had no such self-awareness. The experience seemed an enigma.

For *Storm* the process appeared visible. It evolved a traditional, symmetrical narrative wherein the relationship between word and image complemented each other.⁴⁹ I could identify ways it was a reflection on the environment, a commentary on what happens when humans intervene with nature.

⁴³ Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott, *How Picturebooks Work*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2001), 139.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 26.

⁴⁵ Eagleman, *Incognito*, 89.

⁴⁶ Coles, 'Forward, Wayward, The Writer in the World's Text, At Large,' 157.

⁴⁷ Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life*, (New York, Harper Collins, 1990), 29.

⁴⁸ Jeri Kroll, 'The Creative Writing Laboratory and its Pedagogy', *Research Methods In Creative Writing*, 115.

⁴⁹ Nikolajeva, *How Picture Books Work*, 13-14.

The weather was wild. Angry lightning scratched across the darkening sky. The waves heaved and hurled and, in the exploding night, pressed against giant grey rocks, the seals were huddling.⁵⁰

To illuminate differences and similarities, I have framed each publication within established theory linked to creativity and explored them in greater depth. The subsequent interrogations in the next section lead from what seemed, initially, obvious, to what might be darker: the hidden motivations.

Theory about Theory: **delving deeper**

Csikszentmihalyi has identified creative process as drawing from five identifiable stages. The first of these is preparation, fostering curiosity through an immersion of ideas. Incubation is the stage where this initial curiosity is churned around and processed in the preconscious. This 'churning' makes unexpected connections, enabling new perspectives which lead to stage three, sometimes described as the 'aha' moment. The conscious mind takes over here, as the fourth stage evaluates and questions the fresh insights, debating whether they are worthy of pursuit. Stage five is when the new perceptions can be crafted and shaped for a specific purpose.⁵¹

This model, albeit somewhat linear in its identification of progression, fits well with *Storm*. However, *Mouse* does not reflect Csikszentmihalyi's model in any obvious form, seeming to leap from stage one to stage five like - well, a cat pouncing might be a relevant analogy.

Philosopher Simon Blackburn identifies how Csikszentmihalyi's concept of an 'aha' moment of illumination requires a thoroughly prepared mind.⁵² This preparation, in the case of *Storm*, suggests a consistent dialogue between the unconscious and conscious. Again it seems there is balance here - the balance within the brain's own manipulations as it juggles the two states:

⁵⁰ Waite, *The Storm Seal*.

⁵¹ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity*, (New York, Harper Collins, 1969), 79-81.

⁵² Blackburn, 'Creativity and not so Dumb Luck', *The Philosophy of Creativity*.

...creative ideas do indeed originate in the unconscious mind. Indeed, multiple ones may be generated at each choice point. The unconscious is not a single, unified process but rather a welter of separate, independent processes. A creative artist may be aware of an assortment of options for what to do next at each point in composing a work. Consciousness is needed to select among them, integrate the best ones, and thereby fashion a coherent, pleasing, novel product.⁵³

So what, then, of *Mouse*? What more secret Freudian-freewrite associations had my unconscious been making that informed the content? To truly reveal the differences that evolved these two narratives, I needed to widen the scope of my quest, directing a searchlight in unexpected directions. Instead of trying to map process to external influences, I shine the beam inwards to reveal elements of reaction, and response.

The unicorn is in the cellar.

The fox is by the lake.

A Personal Response: **telling the truth**

Anne Lamott suggests that writers must choose subjects close to their heart: themes, messages and concepts that the writer feels are implicit. 'Telling these truths is your job. You have nothing else to tell us.'⁵⁴

This search for truth is a complex one, and not necessarily as straightforward as Lamott implies. We may feel we know what we have written, but it is often the spaces in between our awareness where true intentions can be revealed. Freud considers how detail we '... omit without thinking (i.e. without conscious thought) may contain our deeper truths'.⁵⁵

⁵³ Baumeister, Roy F., Brandon J. Schmeichel, and C. Nathan DeWall. "Creativity and Consciousness: Evidence from Psychology Experiments." In *The Philosophy of Creativity: New Essays*, by Paul, Elliot Samuel, and Scott Barry Kaufman, eds., edited by Elliot Samuel Paul, and Scott Barry Kaufman. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2014. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199836963.003.0010. Accessed 20 April 2020, <https://www-oxfordscholarship-com.winchester.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199836963.001.0001/acprof-9780199836963-chapter-10>.

⁵⁴ Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird*, (London, Penguin, 1995), 103-104.

⁵⁵ Coetzee et al, *The Good Story: Exchanges on Truth, Fiction and Psychotherapy*, 2.

Keith Oatley, in *Such Stuff as Dreams* discusses how 'truth' in fiction is not simply a surface appearance but a deepened connection with reality that can resonate with any reader. In the same way that morality is related to identity and ideology, the reading of any work will be interpreted uniquely by every individual.⁵⁶ This links with the research of Frederic Bartlett (1886-1969), British psychologist and professor of experimental psychology at the University of Cambridge. Using a short story - *The War of Ghosts* - Bartlett asked participants to read, then rewrite from memory fifteen minutes later. *The War of Ghosts* had derived from an indigenous group in Oregon, and so was culturally underpinned by different symbolic codes and references. Using a method labelled 'repeated reproductions' participants returned over a period and rewrote the story again, and again. As the experiment continued, readers sub-consciously re-interpreted its meaning, changing actions and symbolic references until it became 'more English'.⁵⁷ From this and similar studies it was inferred that readers will alter what they do not easily comprehend to make content have value for them.

This reader engagement was researched further by Oatley, who evolved an experiment wherein readers identified responses to a written piece by noting points where they experienced emotion, memory or a new thought. Oatley's participants were not reading the story, they were reacting to it, evolving their own interpretation and therefore making the narrative their own.⁵⁸

This research into intertextuality supports Cole's assertion that knowledge (from writing) is an active exchange of information between writer and reader.⁵⁹ In speculating around this interchange, I considered what might happen if the writer becomes their own reader, not in an editorial or rewriting sense, but truly as an independent participant. I decided to adapt both Bartlett's and Oatley's methodologies to re-interpret *Mouse* and *Storm*. I hoped to make the invisible visible; the emergence of a material reality I could scrutinise for differences.

I rewrote *Storm* and *Mouse* by hand, re-establishing a creative connection, then reacted to the narratives in the same way as Oatley's readers, marking points where I felt an emotional response, points which triggered a memory and points that opened a new and sometimes unrelated thought. I then returned to each marked point, making notes to expand my responses.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Keith Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams* (Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 156.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 58-61.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 63-64.

⁵⁹ Katharine Coles, 'Forward, Wayward: The Writer in the World's Text, at Large', *Research methods in Creative Writing*, 155.

⁶⁰ Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams*.

Stem Seal		
T IIII I		① The weather was wild.
M IIII IIII		Angry lightning scatted across the grumbling sky. The waves heaved and hurled, and in the exploding night, pressed against giant grey rocks, the seals were huddling.
E IIII IIII IIII I	17 - vent - 10 pax - 20 pup - 20 pup	By morning the storm had faded. The wind dropped to a shush, then a whisper.
_____		Along the sand an old man was walking, clearing rubbish. And as he scouted carefully between rags of seaweed, something stirred.
Made look out.	18 - 10 pup - 20 pup - 20 pup	
T II		
M IIII	19 - 10 pup - 20 pup - 20 pup	
E IIII IIII IIII I		Trapped among the knots of an old fishing line lay a tiny seal pup, barely breathing.

IMAGE 1⁶¹

⁶¹ Sample from *The Storm Seal* adapted Oatley activity:

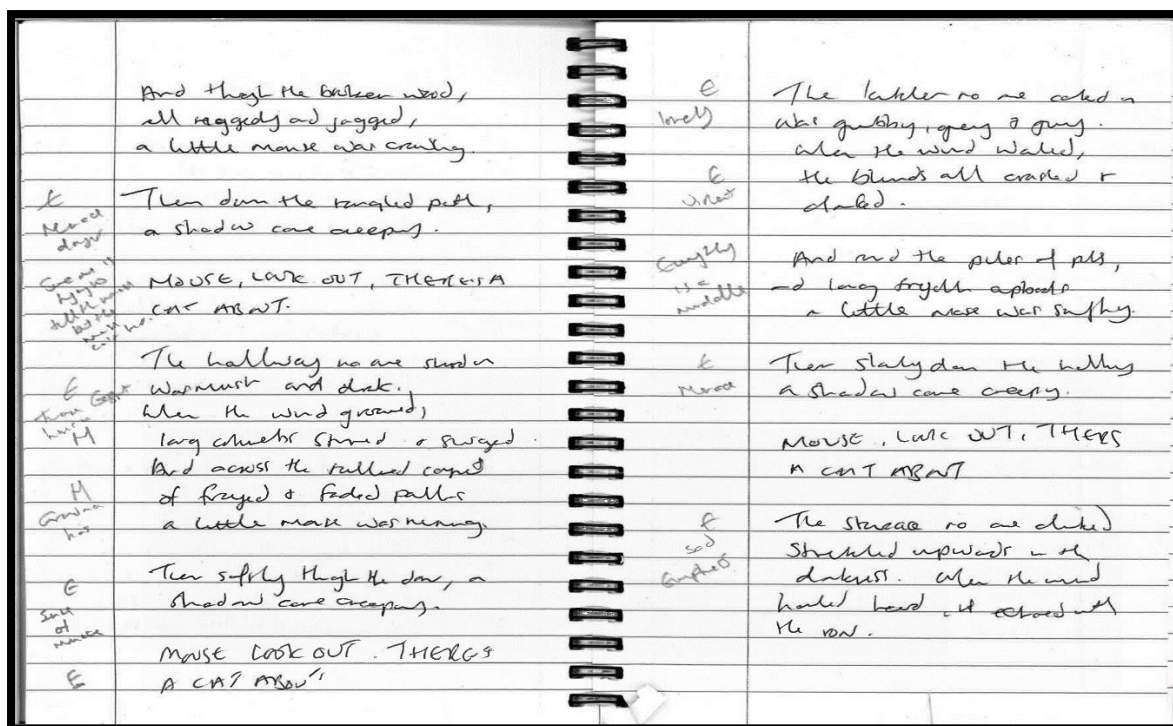


IMAGE 2⁶²

The key differences in the breakdown of my responses is that both pieces evoked more ‘emotion’ responses than the other categories, but *Mouse* was dominated by ‘emotion’ whereas *Seal* demonstrated greater balance between the three options.

This brought my own ‘aha’ moment. Exciting. Insightful. What I was finding were aspects of self, my beliefs and reactions: the potential to really identify how those differences in processes worked. I felt intrigued enough to delve deeper still. My adrenalin was running, I might at least be getting closer to discovering something about myself, and possibly about writing too.

Setting myself up in a silent zone⁶³, I used the Bartlett ‘writing from memory’ model overlaid with freewriting, allowing my mind to make associations and connections⁶⁴. I became not merely my own reader, but my own student:

⁶² Sample from *Mouse Look Out* adapted Oatley activity:

⁶³ Judy Waite, ‘Creative Places and Creative Spaces’, *Wordtamer*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2017), 67-71.

⁶⁴ Peter Elbow, *Writing with Power*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998), 14.

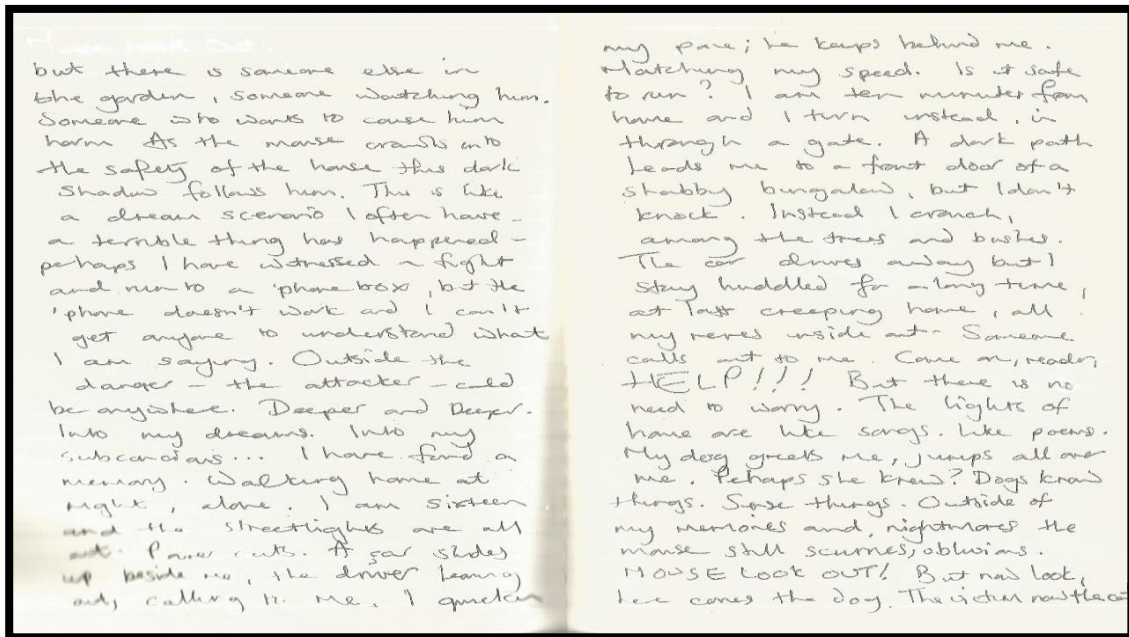


IMAGE 3.⁶⁵

... Deeper and deeper. Into my dreams. Into my subconscious... A dark path leads me to a front door of a shabby bungalow, but I don't knock. Instead I crouch, among the trees and bushes. Someone calls out to me. Come on reader, HELP! ... But there is no need to worry. The lights of home are like songs. Like poems... Outside of my nightmares and memories the mouse still scurries, oblivious. Mouse look out!

IMAGE 4.⁶⁶

The narrative seems to be pulled from a recurring nightmare, and a dark unsettling memory.

In my place of 'slippage' I call on an external reader to 'help' even in the freewriting and this echoes a constant refrain that is integral in the story. *Mouse* is interactive. It breaks the 'fourth wall' as it invites the child themselves to protect the mouse, with the repeating phrase 'Mouse, look out, there's a cat about'. This refrain - always enthusiastically adopted and loudly vocalised by children - both empowers the child and ensures continuing engagement throughout the narrative. Within picture books, the dynamic is that of text, image and reader. This empowerment engages and maintains focus for the target audience.⁶⁷ Additionally, small animals in picture book contexts represent child readers: the child is also the mouse.⁶⁸ The narrative then, it seems, connects both

⁶⁵ Handwritten 'Freewriting' *Mouse Look Out*.

⁶⁶ Typed Extract from freewriting example.

⁶⁷ Nikolajeva, *How Picture Books Work*, 45.

⁶⁸ Nicholas Tucker, *The Child and the Book*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982).

power and vulnerability within a single reader identity. There are morals, morals that draw from my cultural identity,⁶⁹ while the dog acts as a metaphor for safety. The whole narrative can be read as a manifestation of ‘... psychological conflict...projections of the inner divisions of the mind.’⁷⁰ But the search was on for creative visibility. I was not yet ready to grasp at the more discernible conclusions. I was still my own student, and by reviewing my writing as both writer and critic I could acknowledge this abstract quality through a ‘slippage’ in awareness - the moment of shift between how it presents, and what it means.⁷¹

So... how does it present, and what does it mean?

If emotion was the primary force for creating *Mouse*, then perhaps, in the search for inspiration, I had not needed to head off to the library... I would be better employed in some creative activity that uncovers emotion and desire, such as freewriting in a diary or journal.⁷² However, these more automatised responses will take me no closer to understanding that process of transference: they will merely bring new, potential, ideas to a conscious level.

In this interrogation, it was the moment of ‘the shift’ that I wanted to identify.

Returning to Atwood and her ‘dynamic duo’, I acknowledge how both author and writer are present in the narrative, but Atwood seems convinced that we can never quite capture either the fox, or the unicorn:

We suspect they both [author and writer] have a hand in the writing of the page but if so, when and where? What is the nature of the crucial moment – the moment in which the writing takes place? If we could ever catch them in the act, we might have a clearer answer. But we never can. Even if we are writers ourselves, it is very hard to watch ourselves in mid-write, as it were: our attention must be focused on what we are doing, not on ourselves.⁷³

⁶⁹ Julia Bell, ‘Workshops’, *The Creative Writing Coursebook*, eds. Julia Bell and Paul Magrs (London: Macmillan, 2001), 292-315.

⁷⁰ John Yorke, *Into the Woods*, (London, Penguin, 2013), 206 – 207.

⁷¹ Katharine Coles, ‘Short Fiction’, *Teaching Creative Writing*, ed. Graeme Harper, (London, Continuum, 2006), 11-15.

⁷² Elbow, *Writing with Power*, 96-97

⁷³ Atwood, *Negotiating with the Dead*, 55.

However, through active engagement with process I can begin to shine that Brophy light if not on every author's experience, at least in context with my own. Eagleman identifies how unconscious processes are constantly at play, even when we are seemingly consciously aware. Driving a car on a familiar route, for instance, takes no conscious deliberation. Conscious awareness comes online instinctively when something violates expectation.⁷⁴

Imagine this violation as a rabbit escaping from the magician's hat, darting across the road, bedazzled by our headlight's glare. This moment, for me, came in that unexpected connection between unconscious emotion and conscious idea.

I therefore, somewhat cautiously, step forward to challenge Atwood's 'never can' assertion. Through immersing myself not merely in the examination of process, but in the process itself, I have come closer to understanding where this dynamic duo merge, and where they separate. I am back to magic and manipulation again, and I consider these now through the lens of a more Freudian association: *Do not write, but think. Do not think, but feel. When you feel, just write.*

The creative process is still elusive. My experiences may be too personal, my one-person university designed only for me. Yet I can adapt, and evolve, these 'crossings' both as writer and teacher. I may not have watched, but I surely glimpsed myself in that moment of transition. And I know how to do it again.

The lake is by the fox.

The cellar is in the unicorn.

⁷⁴ Eagleman, *Incognito*, 141-142

Section Two: memory and memoir - looking backwards

The responses related to *Mouse* and *Seal* reveal a form of analytical response drawn from interrogation of the unconscious mind. Forgotten influences. Unintentional outputs. This next section takes a more deliberate focus, considering the impact of memory, the content drawing from recollections related to emotion, reaction and identity. However, the use of the word 'memoir' does not imply a linear non-fictional autobiographical account, but the way my recalled life events have been reshaped as fictions and influenced by belief systems that, in themselves, can be re-envisioned and manipulated. My practice included experiential activities combined with immersion in memory; this latter a process my academic persona might describe as 'finding meaning in past experiences and synthesising these for new work.'⁷⁵

The Quest for Complete Stories: **ghosts of Christmas past**

In this new quest I seek to explore such foundations as discussed in the previous section through two distinct creative outputs: *Cheat*, (1998) and *Horse Healer* (series) (1999-2001). Framed by these publications, I have consciously stepped across that boundary to revisit my child-self, coaxing her out from some enigmatic silence; offering her a voice.

The interrogation starts with a lower middle grade (MG) novel commissioned by an educational publisher. The book *Cheat*⁷⁶ is short - less than 10,000 words, but the process of its writing marked the beginning of my practice-led research related to conscious manipulations of memory.

Cheat's origins did not come from the horse's mouth, but they did emerge from memories of a horse; a long-ago horse and a long-ago friend. Sandra Russ connects childhood emotional experiences as a motivator for creative expression in writing,⁷⁷ and these experiences are the

⁷⁵ Jeri Kroll, 'Redrafting the Self', *Creative Writing: Theory beyond Practice*, eds. Nigel Krauth and Tess Brady, (Teneriffe, Australia, Post Pressed, 2006), 205.

⁷⁶ Waite, *Cheat*.

⁷⁷ Sandra W Russ, 'Pretend Play, Emotional Processes and Developing Narrative', *The Psychology of Creative Writing*, eds. Scott Barry Kaufman and James C. Kaufman, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2019) 257.

stirrings of *Cheat's* evolution. In context with Russ' explorations, I re-synthesised the emotion, not the specific event that triggered it, to inform an original fiction. It starts with facts.

The facts: At age ten, I painted a picture of a pony called Benjy, planned as a Christmas gift for the instructress at my local riding school. However, as Christmas crept closer, I began to doubt the quality of the work. I confided these doubts to a friend who insisted the picture was worthy and offered to present it to the instructress on my behalf. The picture was framed and wrapped. Friend 'Lucy' (name changed to protect the guilty) duly handed it to the instructress. My fears around the reception of my masterpiece had been unfounded; the instructress loved the painting, but my happiness was stalled when she hugged Lucy. 'Thank you so much, it's incredible. It must have taken you ages,' she beamed. Lucy, without a hoof-beat of hesitation, beamed back at her. 'Yes, it did.'

I do not recall holding a grudge. Whatever emotion I felt slipped into the shadows of my subconscious, waiting for... well, nothing. Pourjalali (et al) discuss dysphoric rumination as a creative force,⁷⁸ and I have long known the worth of negative experiences for an author, but the ten-year old me felt no call down the years from tomorrow's children's writer. I forgot all about Lucy's treachery and just got on with being ten.

Over twenty years later, and I am back with my educational commission. I decided I would draw from memory, focusing on my experiences of being ten.

Memory itself is an unreliable narrator of reality. Memories are constructs not so much of the actual event, but of our perspectives at that given time.⁷⁹ In this context reality is not passively recorded by the brain but is 'actively constructed by it,'⁸⁰ creating scenarios that reflect stages of ourselves. In evolving my timeline, I was seeking not only a viable event, but my 'then-stage'. Who I was in that time, the things I thought, the things I felt. The time-line evolved a list of anecdotes, experiences and reactions, fast-thinking⁸¹ my way through initial possibilities, then using mind-maps with a 'for' and 'against' option to gain a more measured and critical perspective.⁸² The process nudged me into a sense of things being 'unfair'. Times when I had no voice; or at least no skills to articulate my thoughts. My next question, a star-trail from the original nucleus of 'what mattered', asked for

⁷⁸ Samaneh Purjalali, et al, 'The Creative Writer, Dysphoric Rumination and Locus of Control', *The Psychology of Creative Writing*, 23-33.

⁷⁹ Rowlands, Mark. "The Metaphysical and the Autobiographical Self." In *Memory and the Self: Phenomenology, Science and Autobiography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2016. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190241469.003.0004. Accessed 20 April 2020, <https://www-oxfordscholarship-com.winchester.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190241469.001.0001/acprof-9780190241469>

⁸⁰ Eagleman, *Incognito*, 82.

⁸¹ Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow*, (London, Penguin, 2011), 3-15.

⁸² Tony and Barry Buzan, *The Mind Map Book*, (London, BBC Worldwide Ltd, 2003), 129-138.

scenarios wherein someone had done something my ten-year old self disapproved of, and ‘got away with it.’

A memory came ghosting up out of my smokescreen of possibilities.

The ghost emerged. She carried a gift, a Christmas offering. Another child stepped forward and took the gift, holding it up for me to see. I knew at once what was inside. A picture. A painting. Long-ago-Lucy. False praise and deceit. A real-life narrative with clear appeal to an age group who view the world through the lens of what is fair, and what is not.⁸³

If a reader reads to seek to resolve order from chaos, and if a successful happy ending relies on the resolution of conflicts,⁸⁴ then drawing so blatantly from a complete selected stage-of-self suggests a psychological resolution not only for the reader, but for the writer too.

However, in every memory there is a distance between the individual as they experience the event, and the individual - now existing within a different stage of themselves - who remembers it.⁸⁵ To recreate the incident convincingly, I needed to broach that distance and not just remember, but *become* that ten-year old self who would delight in the downfall of Long-ago-Lucy.

Ray Bradbury acknowledges this distance-broaching, observing how his father, reminiscing, would find not just the memory, but the voice of his past, becoming his recollected self through talking, but his altered cadence and language choices did not come straight away. It took five minutes – six minutes....⁸⁶ I did that ‘talking’ with my pens. Fat coloured pens that drew mind maps: a collage of fragmented memories activating ‘unconscious intelligence’.⁸⁷

For commercial viability I adapted my story-collage with a version wherein a fictional protagonist, ten-year-old Danny Stokes, steals a blind artist’s work. Danny’s painting is entered in a competition, and wins. His guilt is only absolved when he confesses his sin to the blind man, who not only forgives but feels liberated himself - at age eighty-one he can still paint well enough to win a competition.

So, it seems I had my story. Yet now, travelling back through that distance, I see a different potential.

⁸³ Robert Fisher, *Teaching Children to Think*, 2nd.ed. (Cheltenham, Nelson Thomas, 2005), 143.

⁸⁴ Yorke, *Into the Woods*, 132.

⁸⁵ Rowlands, *The Metaphysical and Autobiographical Self, Memory and the Self*.

⁸⁶ Ray Bradbury, *Zen in the Art of Writing*, (Santa Barbara, CA, Joshua Odell, 1995), 34.

⁸⁷ Yentob, *Cracked Actor*. Page number?

I had not told *Cheat* from the perspective of the remembered scenario - someone wronged, self-righteous and judgemental. I moved to the mindset of the perpetrator. This was a considered decision, placing my reader in proximity with the 'villain' for greater moralistic impact,⁸⁸ but there were other, more unconscious forces at play.

One element of such forces relates to identity. Harper considers that a writer has more than one identity.⁸⁹ This resonates with Brande's suggestion that all fiction draws on elements of adult-child duality.⁹⁰ These aspects of both dual and potentially multiple personas seem worthy of greater scrutiny. So far, I have taken the remembered facts and the attached emotions. My response to this then rose above these contingent details, identifying both my ten-year-old stage (wronged and resentful) and the stage-of person that I was at the time of evolving *Cheat* (parent, author, a probing teacher). In this identification I reflect that there were two of me battling our way through the narrative; my child self and that probing teacher. Both of us were waving our fists at Long-ago-Lucy, chasing her along the corridors of time from opposing directions. Yet if these can be viewed through the lens of my memory 'stages', and in the interests of identifying a pedagogic value to the process - can those 'stages' be challenged? Could I reinvent my past self, and find the story from that alternative view? I align myself here with Jens Brockmeir's research, questioning the concept that memory is a form of storage - an archive of the past.⁹¹ If memory is fluid, drawing perspective from perception at the point of (present) experience, then could my past be fluid too?⁹²

I experimented, using big-pen and simplified mind map approaches, visualising scenes and characters in a non-linear memory-and-response association that altered my experience of that long-ago memory stage.⁹³

⁸⁸ Fisher, *Teaching Children to Think*, 143.

⁸⁹ Kroll 'Writing for Children and Young Adults', *Teaching Creative Writing*, 53.

⁹⁰ Cowan, *The Art of Writing Fiction*, 42.

⁹¹ Brockmeier, Jens. "Creating a Memory of Oneself: Narrative Identity." In *Beyond the Archive: Memory, Narrative, and the Autobiographical Process*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2015. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199861569.003.0006. Accessed 19 April 2020, <https://www-oxfordscholarship-com.winchester.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199861569.001.0001/acprof-9780199861569-chapter-6?rskey=JRMJRJu&result=4>

⁹² Freeman, Mark. "Rethinking the Fictive, Reclaiming the Real: Autobiography, Narrative Time, and the Burden of Truth." In *Narrative and Consciousness: Literature, Psychology and the Brain*, by Fireman, Gary D., Ted E. McVay, and Owen J. Flanagan, eds., edited by Gary D. Fireman, Ted E. McVay, and Owen J. Flanagan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2012. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195140057.003.0006. Accessed 12 April, 2020, <https://www-oxfordscholarship-com.winchester.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195140057.001.0001/acprof-9780195140057-chapter-6>

⁹³ Tony and Barry Buzan, *The Mind Map Book*, (London, BBC Worldwide Ltd, 2003), 132-138.



IMAGE 5.⁹⁴

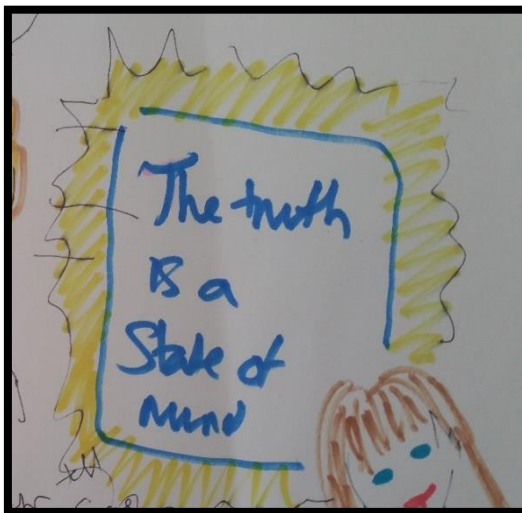


IMAGE 6.⁹⁵



IMAGE 7.⁹⁶

Lucy: What insecurities did you hide? What prompted your response? Had you never been praised? Was this your one moment to shine?

⁹⁴ Mindmap – reconstruction for altered perception.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

IMAGE 8.⁹⁷

My new perceptions recorded a shift from my limited self-view, to Lucy's experience of the event. Through this lens, I then 're-created' myself, asking new questions related not to what Lucy did, but why she did it. If I had had these thoughts when I was ten, a different story might have emerged. Something more empathic. Something more insightful.

There are complex mechanisms for archiving memory - there seem not only multiple memories of the same event,⁹⁸ but the brain itself dissects details; visual elements are stored separately to emotional, sound is separated from sense.⁹⁹ This goes some way to acknowledging the value of recreating memories through multiple approaches, and Csikszentmihalyi considers that: 'Being able to braid together ideas and emotions from different domains is one way writers' express creativity.'¹⁰⁰ I would argue it is, additionally, a way to evolve multiple narratives from a single event. Like a magical mirror view, we can be characters creating characters creating characters, all evolved from the past.

The past is a productive place. The author summons their child- self and they walk towards each other, meeting in that nowhere space; Brophy's great unseen. They find their story in the darkness and it steps out from behind an invisible door. The audience gasps. They never saw *that* coming.

Phantastic Motivations: if wishes were horses

My reflections around *Cheat* centred on a specific event. As I reposition the stage lights, I direct the beam away from a single identifiable occasion and instead interrogate the relevance of more

⁹⁷ Typed phrase from Mindmap reconstruction.

⁹⁸ Eagleman, *Incognito*, 126.

⁹⁹ Rubin, David C., and Daniel L. Greenberg. "The Role of Narrative in Recollection: A View from Cognitive Psychology and Neuropsychology." In *Narrative and Consciousness: Literature, Psychology and the Brain*, by Fireman, Gary D., Ted E. McVay, and Owen J. Flanagan, eds., edited by Gary D. Fireman, Ted E. McVay, and Owen J. Flanagan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2012. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195140057.003.0004 Accessed 30 April 2020, <https://www-oxfordscholarship-com.winchester.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195140057.001.0001/acprof-9780195140057-chapter-4>

¹⁰⁰ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Happiness*, (London, Random House, 2002).

random moments and emotions, searching through half-forgotten experiences, and remaining in the context of fictional narratives.

As a child, desperate for a horse of my own, I engaged in an equine-fantasy wherein I was sometimes the owner and sometimes the horse. I could gallop faster than I could run. When, in my adult-author mode, an editor asked if I would consider developing a series of 'horse' books, I nearly fell off my seat. 'I used to be a horse,' I said. Four titles emerged, each set around a gypsy boy with a gift for healing horses.¹⁰¹ My personal experiences, my research base, drew from 'horse-centred' sensory encounters, but here I shift focus to emotion. Studies show a correlation between the strength and affect of a memory, set against the emotional intensity of the original event. Both traumatic and happy events score equally: it is the connection with emotion that impacts on the depth of the recalled state.¹⁰² Most research that links to memory aims to uncover an element of truth; this importance assigned to either therapeutic or actualising of accounts - for instance the necessity for identifying life 'triggers' or establishing the facts of a crime. However, in creative work the focus shifts away from truth. Truth, in this context, is irrelevant. What matters for an author is the energy: the pulse of intention. I would suggest it is this energy, derived from emotion, that drives a fictional narrative forward.

Our emotional energy can propel us further than any carefully planned plot, or multidimensional character development. The concept does not refer only to one emotion, but more to a mix of low order emotions. Love, sadness, fear, joy, all create intricate scenarios and when Robert Olen Butler asserts that the state of 'yearning' is positioned at the centre of all successful fiction,¹⁰³ I propose that any of these primal responses can be attached to Butler's declaration.

Who, then, is it, that yearns? Writer? Protagonist? Reader? I suggest all three. I longed for a horse. Nicky longs for a horse. If there is truth in the view that a created character is an extension of ourselves, a facet we are normally unable to reach,¹⁰⁴ then Nicky is a twelve-year-old boy version of me. We have the same dream. I can feel his yearning. I am his yearning. If these emotions are

¹⁰¹ Judy Waite, *Horse Healer Series*, (London, Scholastic, 1999 - 2000).

¹⁰² Reisberg, Daniel, and Friderike Heuer. "Memory for Emotional Events." In *Memory and Emotion*, by Reisberg, Daniel, and Paula Hertel, eds., edited by Daniel Reisberg, and Paula Hertel. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2012. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195158564.003.0001. Accessed 25 April 2020, <https://www-oxfordscholarship-com.winchester.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195158564.001.0001/acprof-9780195158564-chapter-1>

¹⁰³ Butler, *From Where You Dream*, (New York, Grove Press, 2005), 202

¹⁰⁴ Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams*, 102

expressed powerfully enough, a reader will echo this longing. They may not want a horse, but they will know what it is to feel strong sensations. They will know what it means to crave.

Lamott touches on this importance of emotion, establishing potential for depths and layers in writing as she urges writers to escape their inhibitions: ‘... you must risk placing real emotion at the centre of your work. Write straight into the emotional centre of things. Write toward vulnerability. Don’t worry about appearing sentimental. Worry about being unavailable... risk being unliked.’¹⁰⁵

Lamott’s call for vulnerability resonates. If, as Elbow implies, the aim of a writer is to invite the reader not into their mind, but into their experience,¹⁰⁶ then this revealing of a more uncertain self is, arguably, where a writer’s potential can be found.

Butler goes further, also drawing us away from the mind while considering the writer as an artist, someone who sees the world through a sense of unfiltered curiosity. ‘Please get out of the habit of saying that you’ve got an idea for a story,’ he implores. ‘Art does not come from ideas. Art does not come from the mind... Art comes from your unconscious’.¹⁰⁷

Butler’s own passions are clear, but the premise of an unconscious place that art ‘comes from’ seems slippery and intangible.

Unconscious.

Instinct.

Memory.

Pre-conscious.

Imagination.

Ideas.

Conscious.

Should instinct come after unconscious, or are they aligned? Does memory come before pre-conscious, even while we are unaware of its presence? Neuroscience asserts that we become responsive to some ideas and not others, and ideas themselves do not become conscious in isolation, instead supporting each other’s rise into existence. ‘As a new idea climbs, it pulls similar

¹⁰⁵ Lamott, *Bird by Bird*, 226.

¹⁰⁶ Elbow, *Writing with Power*, 314-38.

¹⁰⁷ Butler, *From Where You Dream*, 13.

ones with it.¹⁰⁸ This seems a science-based explication of Csikszentmihalyi's 'ah ha' moment,¹⁰⁹ the point when the cluster of possibilities becomes the solution. Related research spotlights how creative individuals demonstrate unusual strengths in exploratory thinking and these systematic inroads into the science of creative process demonstrate how writers might shift between unconscious, defocused attention and a conscious controlled awareness.¹¹⁰

The notion of controlled awareness both intrigues and reverberates, suggesting a dream-type scenario where both the dream and wakened states engage in dialogue. Brophy articulates how dreams are a form of wish-fulfilment, and day-dreams perform the role of night dreams.¹¹¹ Atwood appears to endorse this in her suggestion that '... the art one makes as an adult supplies the absence of things longed for as a child.'¹¹²

Making connections with Atwood's theory, it seems possible to shift the conscious mind if not to the unconscious, then at least to the preconscious, in order to enter what Butler calls dreamstorming.¹¹³ Butler describes this phenomenon as a form of 'thinking around the novel', existing in it at 'one level removed from moment by moment writing'. The methodology seems something between waking and sleeping, and it is not a one-off activity - it can, and should, last weeks.¹¹⁴ In considering Butler's model, I can position *Horse Healer* as one long unbroken dreamstorm, with yearning at the heart of its motivation. I 'lived' Nicky. If Nicky needed to watch the moon rise, we went out at night, together. If Nicky went riding in a storm, I booked a riding lesson when forecasts predicted rain. All through this I was aware of Nicky, conscious of my unconscious in a waking dream, and it was not so much what he did, but what he felt, that passed between us:

'A quiet word made her stop instantly [...] another squeeze and she was cantering, moving like a dream horse, with a floating grace that had a magic all of its own.'¹¹⁵

'The horse stood very still, watching him with dark, liquid eyes, the colour rich and warm like melted chocolate.'¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁸ Eagleman, *Incognito*, 14.

¹⁰⁹ Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow*.

¹¹⁰ Paul Sowden, Andrew Pringle, Liane Gabora, L. (2015). The shifting sands of creative thinking: Connections to dual process theory. *Thinking & Reasoning*, Italicise journal title 21(1), 40-60. doi:10.1080/13546783.2014.885464, Accessed 2 April 2020, <https://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/1409/1409.2207.pdf>

¹¹¹ Brophy, *Patterns of Creativity*, 137.

¹¹² Margaret Atwood, *In Other Worlds* (London, Virago Press, 2011), 11.

¹¹³ Butler, *From Where You Dream*, 31.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 87.

¹¹⁵ Waite, *Eclipse*, 4.

¹¹⁶ Judy Waite, *Puzzle*, (London, Scholastic, 1999), 2.

'He was pearl white, and almost beautiful. But the bones standing out on his shoulders and back, and the moth-eaten look of his mane and tail, told Nicky that this was a horse who had been having a rough time of things.¹¹⁷

These processes are integral to active research. Engaging at an unconscious level while staying actively conscious of the dialectic is a means of not just understanding the research, but of experiencing it,¹¹⁸ and these mixings of rekindled emotion drawn from abstract past experience, conjoined with the dream consciousness, placed me inside the narrative. It is a form of Atwood's duality again¹¹⁹, but in Atwood's case the shift slips from one aspect of self to another, whereas my methodology blended self with character.

My linguistic choices here - dreams and shift and blend - are suggestive of a slow evolution of material, but in fact the process was intense, my imagination (whichever side of the boundary it lay) heightened and productive. The project was subject to tight deadlines. I had six months to complete all four novels. The luxury of procrastination was not an option, but, perhaps in the release of repressed desire, the Horse Healer series afforded a form of expression where I could 'blast the page and tell the truth'¹²⁰... not only does my protagonist ache to be with horses; horses crave to be with him:

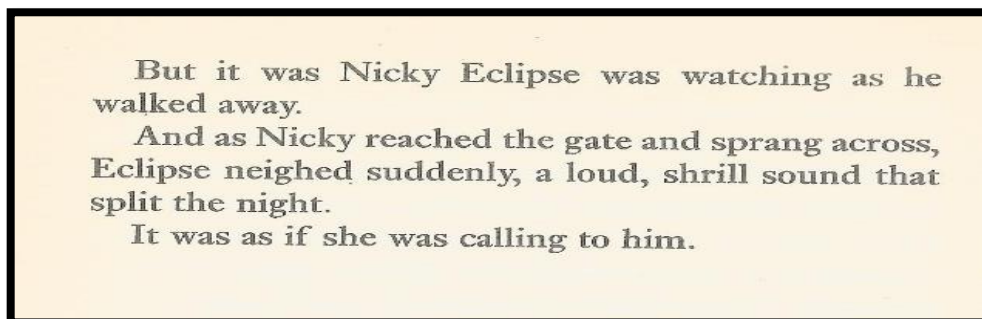


IMAGE 9.¹²¹

I have already alluded to the fact that this shifting was an essential process in keeping thinking fluent, and meeting deadlines, but there seems a relevance to teaching here too. Theoretical

¹¹⁷ Judy Waite, *Sapphire*, (London, Scholastic, 1999),1.

¹¹⁸ Dominique Hecq, 'Creative Writing and Theory: Theory Without Credentials' *Research Methods in Creative Writing*, 180.

¹¹⁹ Atwood, *Negotiating with the Dead*, 55.

¹²⁰ Ray Bradbury, *Zen in the Art of Writing*, (Santa Barbara, CA, Joshua Odell, 1995),152.

¹²¹ Waite, scanned chapter-ending, *Eclipse*, 8.

discourse related to creative writing differentiates between that which *produces* creative work, and that which *informs* it.¹²² Through this exploratory immersion in process, and with a conscious eye on product, there is arguably a case for new thinking to evolve, where one theory becomes melded with the other. Perhaps a third pedagogic option will flutter up, like a flock of ideas swarming out from the magician's sleeve. Process and product will become interchangeable. What is *felt* will be as integral as what was *thought*. If science methodologies no longer stand as the 'gold standard of knowledge' that Robin Nelson suggests,¹²³ then the new knowledge that emotional responses contribute can potentially be measured in the context of reflection in practice not only for fiction, but for academic works: learners express and record the emotion at the same time as doing the work and the outputs are measured by the values and impacts identified.

I scan the auditorium for possibilities. The curtains close, a soft velvet boundary.

I am shut off from the audience. They are shut off from me. But, if we all stay very quiet, we may hear each other's dreams.

¹²² Dominique Hecq, 'Creative Writing and Theory: Theory Without Credentials' *Research Methods in Creative Writing*, 181.

¹²³ Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts*, 48.

Section Three: aligning the unconscious with place, plot and character

I went to a mansion
because I was writing a novel.
The mansion was not the novel.
The novel I was writing came from a dream.
The dream was not the novel.
The dream came from a memory.
The memory was not the novel.
I asked my dream to shift the memory.
The shift became the novel,
and I went to a mansion.

Staying Lucid: **dreams, cults and being consciously unconscious**

From Mary Shelley to Stephen King, dreams have often stepped out from the wings and presented themselves as material that can be consciously manipulated as fictional narratives.¹²⁴ Robert Louis Stevenson claimed that all his best stories came to him in dreams, discussing how he dreamt scenes, such as when Hyde¹²⁵ ‘underwent the change’ and how dreamt scenes were then consciously reworked into stories.¹²⁶ As with Stevenson, the ‘sense of living (rather than reliving)’ attributed to dreaming does not generally associate itself with narrative reasoning but instead [...] presents as a vivid, if incoherent, visual experience.¹²⁷

My experience took me somewhere different, engaging me with the Senoi method, wherein the dreamer enters the dream and has control over what happens.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Rebecca Turner, ‘Ten Famous Novels Inspired by Dreams’, *World of Lucid Dreaming*, accessed 12 December 2019, <https://www.world-of-lucid-dreaming.com/10-famous-novels-inspired-by-dreams.html>

¹²⁵ Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, (Hertfordshire, Wordsworth Classics, 1993).

¹²⁶ Robert Louis Stevenson, A Chapter on Dreams, *Scribner’s Magazine*, in Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams*, 258.

¹²⁷ Rubin, David C., and Daniel L. Greenberg. ‘The Role of Narrative in Recollection.’

¹²⁸ Jenny Alexander, *Writing in the House of Dreams*, (Book Depository, Five Lanes Press, 2017), Kindle ed

The memory that triggered my Senoi methodology also suggests control. As a young woman I backpacked around America and was almost seduced into joining a religious cult. The Unification Church, founded by Sun-Myung-Moon, would actively prey on young adults in its quest for recruits. Twenty years later I salvaged this encounter, consciously dabbling with a tabloid style approach wherein a sibling must kidnap her brother to free him from a cult's mind-deadening clutches.¹²⁹ The idea was not working. It felt pedestrian. Predictable. I wanted to explore alternatives and, instead of consciously 'daydreaming' possibilities,¹³⁰ I decided to engage the Senoi approach,¹³¹ trusting my unconscious mind to seek solutions.

In discussing the value of dreams as sources for inspiration, Jenny Alexander urges: 'Listen to the voice of your dream, weigh up what it has to say, and then make up your waking mind what you want to do about it.' Prior to sleeping, I imagined myself to be a narrator observing my young-adult self, letting my mind flicker between waking and sleeping, watching as I wrestled with indecision. I recalled how the lure of the cult had been strong. I felt the pull of it, tempted to see what it was like, convinced I was someone who could never be brainwashed. My consciousness slipped. The memory shifted and I was standing in a dream, hidden in a shadowy corner, observing a group of teenage girls make potpourri in a ramshackle barn. Dressed in beige, the girls were long haired, thin and pale. One seemed more in focus than the others. She appeared serene, lit by an inner peace. Shifting back to consciousness, my story-premise shifted too. My cult offering would be told from the serene girl's perspective, a character who believed their 'true cause' was the true cause.¹³² My Young Adult (YA) novel *Forbidden* had woken up.

True cause is the true cause. True cause is the true cause. The narrative retains this dream-like edge, the protagonist Elinor brain-washed, chanting as she drifts through a surreal landscape inspired partly by research into cults. L Ron Hubbard (once a science fiction writer) founded Scientology, the cult driven by the belief that humans have evolved from aliens.¹³³ Teachings connected to Heaven's Gate, which also put its faith in interplanetary interventions, led to the mass suicide of its followers.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Emine Saner, 'I was a Moonie Cult Leader' *The Guardian*, 3 September 2012. Accessed December 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/03/moonie-cult-leader>.

¹³⁰ Butler, *From Where you Dream*, 31,

¹³¹ Alexander, *Writing in the House of Dreams*.

¹³² Waite, *Forbidden*, 4.

¹³³ L Ron Hubbard, *Dianetics*, (Denmark, New Era Publications) 1999.

¹³⁴ Robert Anton Wilson, *Everything is Under Control: Conspiracies, Cults and Cover Ups*, (New York, Harper Perennial, 1998).

True Cause is the True Cause.

True Cause is the True Cause.

L Ron Hubbard lived in a mansion

Sun Myung Moon lived in a mansion.

I went to a mansion.

Ursula Le Guin identifies how ‘the practice of art is that we keep looking for the outside edge’¹³⁵ and in my quest for this edge I sought to move away from specific memories, and the more intellectual re-drafting of ideas, and instead place my focus on perceptions linked to place, and settings. As is typical with cults, followers live the sparse, simple lives depicted in my dream. The founders, however, are often excessively rich: fast cars and private jets and, of course, mansions.

I went to a mansion.

I went looking for ideas,
courting intuition.

Perception beyond intellect.

This focus on perception beyond intellect is articulated by Coles within a process she labels ‘guided intuition’. Coles essentially goes somewhere, looks, listens and thinks, reflecting that this experiential element of her research initiates an energy which combines sensitivity and awareness.¹³⁶

The immersive qualities associated with altered awareness were key to my methodologies and, mingled with the perhaps more abstract concept of intuition, there is a scientific grounding. Eagleman considers how we are programmed to be blind to much basic experience. Just because we are looking at something, doesn’t mean we notice it.¹³⁷ The majority of human beings live their whole lives unaware that they are seeing only a limited corner of vision at any moment.¹³⁸ From an

¹³⁵ Ursula K. Le Guin, *Dreams Must Explain Themselves*, (Gollanz, London, 2018), Kindle edition.

¹³⁶ Coles, ‘Forward, Wayward,’ Jeri Kroll and Graeme Harper, eds., *Research Methods in Creative Writing*, 158-161.

¹³⁷ Eagleman, *Incognito*, 26.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 21 – 24.

evolutionary perspective, this makes sense. The brain does not need to encode every detail, our conscious experience of seeing gives us a summary that enables us to interact logically, ensuring we see what we need to see - or at times, what we think we need to see.¹³⁹ However, this blinkered level of visual engagement has led to what Merlin Coverley describes as 'banalisation' - our everyday experience of seeing dismisses much that is familiar; our surroundings take on a drab monotony.¹⁴⁰

I went to a mansion.

I went to a mansion with Elinor.

Elinor went with me.

'My' mansion was a white, grade-two listed building with pillars and arched windows. The grounds were expansive. A lake. Stone statues. An imposing curved drive. The entrance hall housed more statues, the elaborately decorated walls were an art-piece. Oil on canvas. I heightened my awareness through observing all this not through my own, but through Elinor's eyes. I was enacting a version of Cole's guided intuition, experiencing place through the senses: listening, feeling, watching. This has resonance with Eugene T Gendlin's philosophy of 'felt sense', a process which draws from an immersion in what the body knows, separating instinct from intellect. Felt sense does not come in the form of thoughts or words or other separate units but as a whole-body experience.¹⁴¹

Elinor's whole-body response took in the grandeur. We walked slowly. This was a place to respect. A history of affluence, and power. Look - don't touch. Elinor did not touch - she was too awestruck to touch - but I did. I touched the ice-cold marble of the statues. The statues shivered. They watched me with blind eyes, their own felt sense. I was an intruder, my footsteps too loud on the marble floor.

It was here that my approach differed from both Coles' and Gendlin's. Coles' account of her research methodology suggests she does not start until she has left the 'somewhere' she has visited,¹⁴² and Gendlin's therapeutic intentions rely on discursive elements, a focus on how the

¹³⁹ Ibid, 76.

¹⁴⁰ Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography*, (Harpenden, Oldcastle Books, 2018), 17.

¹⁴¹ Eugene T. Gendlin, *Focusing*, (London, Ryder, 2003), 32-35.

¹⁴² Coles, 'Forward, Wayward' *Research Methods in Creative Writing*, 169.

experience felt. I realised I needed to include an attentive element within my process; to record the experience intellectually, even as I felt it. Passes to millionaire's houses are not two-a-penny; perhaps more million-to-a-penny, and I was unlikely to be able to return.

My previous experience with Horse Healer, walking alongside Nicky, connects to this process, but with Horse Healer I drew from past memory. With *Forbidden*, I created the semi-fictional present. My aim was to evolve a scene from Elinor's experience of this place, not mine, and shifting back into intuition, I let it unfold. As in the original dream, I watched- with Elinor, making notes:

Elinor introduced to new home after 'bonding' ceremony. Dress has a beaded silk bodice, the skirt falls from her waist. A white cascade. We are not alone. We follow her and Howard [fifty-year old cult leader] up the stairs of this mansion she has never been permitted to enter. It is hard to ascend this grand, curved staircase in a bridal gown. I feel her heartbeat of fear. She does not know yet what is to come, but she knows that whatever it is, she does not want it.

IMAGE 10.¹⁴³

Elinor does not want it, but I do. My interest in capturing setting in relation to her experience suggests a conflict with process, but Pope suggests authors might involve themselves in levels, or stages, that do not adhere simply to the unconscious/conscious interface but instead draw from overlapping fields of parallel processing.¹⁴⁴ By combining intuitive responses, heightened visual awareness, previous research and intellectual interpretations, my experience proffered up both essence and actuality:

¹⁴³ Waite, *Forbidden*, typed research notes.

¹⁴⁴ Rob Pope, *Creativity: Theory, History, Practice*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2005), 70 – 78.

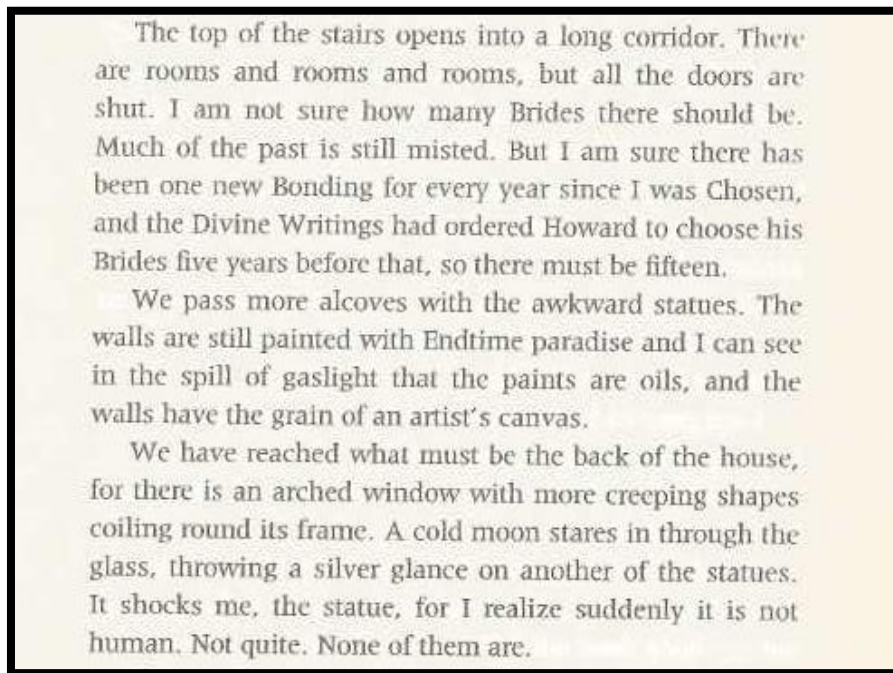


IMAGE 11.¹⁴⁵

Elinor is undermined not only by the mansion's opulent magnificence, but by its expectation of her. Things will not go well. Will Self alludes to the personality of the place itself¹⁴⁶ and although Self's concerns lie more in city spaces and journeying through districts, my methodology also articulates how settings have their own personifications.

Personification of place retains the dream quality; places that become people are surreal; made strange, and this context can be extended into the experiential element. When Andrew Cowan discusses the notion of 'making strange', identifying how to break free of cliché the writer must describe an object as if they are seeing it for the first time, an event as if it were happening for the first time,¹⁴⁷ I would argue that my own practice reflects a physical re-interpretation of this. I experience a sense of place as if I have never envisaged (for instance) a mansion before. As if I have never climbed stairs before. To engage fully, I must, as Butler says, live moment by moment,¹⁴⁸ experiencing emotion through movement,¹⁴⁹ letting the 'unconscious' feel, and the 'conscious' think.

¹⁴⁵ Scanned extract evolved from research notes, *Forbidden*, 119.

¹⁴⁶ Will Self, *Psychogeography*, (London, Bloomsbury, 2007), 11.

¹⁴⁷ Cowan, *The Art of Writing Fiction*, 163.

¹⁴⁸ Butler, *From Where You Dream*, 46.

¹⁴⁹ Dympha Callery, *Through the Body: A Practical Guide to Physical Theatre*, (London, Nick Hern Books, 2001), 148-149.

In identifying this unconscious/conscious fluidity, I consider potential for neural science to take the discussion around 'making strange' further. If, as previously discussed, consciousness comes online when something violates our expectation,¹⁵⁰ then this arguably is true of writing. If we make the natural feel strange, our senses will be alerted. There seems something to entice us forward. Or something to fear. Perhaps, then, it is not just the association with place, or with the role-played character, that has value in this form of active research. As Oatley intimates, written techniques of defamiliarisation rely on the creativity of the writer, and it is these unusual juxtapositions that bring the writing alive for a reader.¹⁵¹

With Oatley's 'defamiliarised' reader in mind, I analyse the following scene.

I am trying not to cry. I am lucky, so lucky, to be Chosen for all of this. Except I cannot feel it. I cannot feel that luck has brought me here.
Bad Thoughts. Bad Thoughts. There is a door to the right and Howard's dry-leaf hand grips the handle. The door swings open soundlessly. This new room is white. White walls. White carpet. And in the centre, a huge white bed.
I suddenly do not want to step inside this room. I do not want the door to swing shut behind me.¹⁵²

There is a juxtaposition in emotion, and a surreal organic hand. The white walls are suggestive of virginity - relevant in the light of what is about to take place - and offer contrast from the vivid opulence in the rest of the mansion. There is a suggestion of danger too, a threat. This scene is a manipulation of the heightened responses evolved through the mansion research. Heightened awareness challenges our brain's propensity to ignore what it does not need. We have habits of seeing, failing to look at what surrounds us because we assume we already know what is there.¹⁵³ This defamiliarization of visual stimulus informs the written content¹⁵⁴ and what changes is not the experience, but the perception of it, and this 'making strange' impacts both writer and, ultimately, reader.¹⁵⁵ 'Feed it [the visual system] the right inputs and it will construct a rich world for you.'¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ Eagleman, *Incognito*, 141.

¹⁵¹ Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams*, 76-77.

¹⁵² Waite, *Forbidden*, 120.

¹⁵³ *The Art of Looking*, John Berger, presenter, BBC4. November 6, 2016.

¹⁵⁴ Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams*, 74-76.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 77.

¹⁵⁶ Eagleman, *Incognito*, 24.

This rich world enables new ways of seeing.¹⁵⁷ It's not what we see, but *how* we see. The rabbit is out of the hat, but unlike the walls of my *Forbidden* scene it is not white. It is black. The magician holds the creature aloft and its eyes are slanted. The eyes of an alien. Made strange. The magician smiles and bows to the crowd, but his own eyes are already scanning the horizon. He has new tricks to master.

Method Writing: **the rigours of role-play**

People. People. More people. They don't look at me as they move along London's winter streets. People edging between people. People striding. People strolling. Checking maps. Checking phones.

They don't look at me, a middle-aged female whose only accelerated feature is, arguably, her teen-green air-max trainers, bought for the occasion from a charity shop. Someone else's shoes. 'Before you judge a man, walk a mile in his shoes' is a phrase ascribed to developing empathy and compassion for others, but thriller writer Ian Rankin describes how his experience of creating fictional characters goes beyond stepping into someone else's clothes: writers must climb inside their character's skin.¹⁵⁸

This pre-requisite for a writer's immersion in character has been at the core of my own creative development, engaging me with dialectical approaches in a quest to create flawed, multifaceted characters appropriate for the more complex themes applicable to a Young Adult target reader. As I continued to experiment with the shift between unconscious and conscious, I evolved a new form of appropriation wherein I inhabited not just Rankin's interior approach to engagement with characters, but external sociological and geographic environments. I went 'on location' with my characters, experiencing not only places - as with *Forbidden* - but the ley-lines of plots, as I travelled.

This methodology took on a particular resonance in my writing of *Trick of the Mind*.¹⁵⁹ In this dual voice narrative both protagonists, Matt and Erin, are opposite in temperament and intent; my conscious aim was to evoke reader inference through these opposing perspectives as their differing positions evolved.¹⁶⁰ Erin was relatively straightforward. She craves success as a stage magician, and

¹⁵⁷ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (London, Penguin Books, 1972).

¹⁵⁸ Ian Rankin et al, *The Writing Life, Authors' Speak* (British Library Sound Archive, 2011).

¹⁵⁹ Waite, *Trick of the Mind*.

¹⁶⁰ Yorke, *Into the Woods*, 225

her obsessions around learning her craft perhaps draw something from my own integrity related to writing.¹⁶¹ However, I struggled to get to know fifteen-year-old Matt Mason. Matt is an awkward young adult for whom magic is not a skill to be learnt, but a psychic energy he is unwittingly gifted with. In trouble with the law, and home, and everywhere else, Matt runs away to London.

The act of running away threw up a host of questions. How much money would Matt have? Where would he sleep? Who might he meet? With a synopsis already approved by the publisher, I created my own author's tourist guide, identifying places in London where Matt might go. I knew London well, but my London was tinged with the razzle of theatres, painted with galleries, tainted by the commercial lure of Oxford Street. To capture that bleak-mid-winter of a homeless existence I climbed inside Matt's skin and ran away myself, experiencing his responses to the physical environment.

Responding creatively to a physical environment connects with contemporary interpretations of psychogeography. Ackroyd's *London: The Biography* positions the whole city as if it were a character.¹⁶² Self walked, and wrote, his way from London to New York, seeing familiar places from an altered perspective.¹⁶³ Iain Sinclair finds the hidden language of the city through its wasted places, and wasting people.¹⁶⁴ Polemic, sometimes political, these collections that have evolved from 'urban wanderings' seem a mix of memoir and travelogue, triggered by the sub-culture of place.

I, too, was seeking out sub-cultures. I took as much money with me as Matt had with him, therefore spending only what he could afford. I visited places I had identified from my ley-line of plot points: River Thames, Covent Garden, Soho, Waterloo. My approach was arguably more aligned with Iain Sinclair's shift from 'wandering' to 'stalking' where, in *Lights Out for the Territory*, Sinclair surmises that he knows where he is headed, but still does not know why.¹⁶⁵

Sinclair here identifies a reflective awareness: the need to be mindful of sensations whilst not forming concrete opinions or controlling outcomes.¹⁶⁶ I interpret this as an openness to perception, the whole experience a blank page where the writer has a basic knowledge of what will be written, but has opened out all possibilities, with curiosity as the presiding premise. My curiosity was to be collected by scrawled observations in a notebook, diatribes evoked by my own altered awareness and re-envisioning of place.

¹⁶¹ Lamott, *Bird by Bird*, 105.

¹⁶² Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Concise Biography*, (London, Vintage, 2012), 1-2.

¹⁶³ Self, *Psychogeography*.

¹⁶⁴ Iain Sinclair, *Lights Out for the Territory*, (London, Granta Publications, 1998).

¹⁶⁵ Sinclair, *Lights Out for the Territory*, 75.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 158.

However, in contrast to the psychogeographical approach, I aimed for my observations to be not mine, but Matt's. The wind was bitter, sleety rain, close to Christmas. I drew from both weather and seasons as I improvised actions and conversations, shivering in Matt's skin and then stopping for coffee at the same time as freewriting the scenario in my notebook.¹⁶⁷ The scene below reflects Matt's voice, his rejection of his family and new sense of isolation exaggerated by the more tawdry qualities of the season:

This all-night café appeared like a naff kind of vision... There were cardboard angels hanging from the ceiling and they all swayed about and bashed into each other as I pushed through the door.

"What d'you want?"

"Coffee, please."

The woman served me without looking at me. She wore these dangly Christmas tree earrings that lit up every other second. I reckoned she was my mum's age. Mum. Mark. I didn't want to think about them.

It was good to be inside. I sat by a window that had been sprayed with this silver frost. A string of girls in tight short skirts and fast clipping heels went past. Sometimes cars slowed right down and drove beside them. Sometimes the girls got in. This fight broke out across the street. There was shouting and swearing and I heard glass breaking. I made that coffee last a long time.¹⁶⁸

My notes collected the passers-by, the fight, the implied reference to sex-workers. The café - which would have welcomed my middle-age self (despite the slight eccentricity of boys' trainers) - is not welcoming to a dripping wet adolescent. To encapsulate the experience from Matt's perspective, I needed to shift between my conscious and unconscious awareness with a deliberate intent.

Conscious thought operates on a response that can be described as 'fast thinking', categorised by Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman as System One. Fast thinking relies on unconfirmed beliefs that require minimal depths related to content. System Two makes an appearance when the task requires a more in-depth or accurate response.¹⁶⁹ These systems echo something of Elbow's assertion that the writing process demands two skills: creative and critical. The creative element delights in the gathering of ideas, whilst the critical sifts through the possibilities, shaping and honing

¹⁶⁷ Elbow, *Writing with Power*, 13.

¹⁶⁸ Waite, *Trick of the Mind*, 111-112.

¹⁶⁹ Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 3-15.

those that are the best fit for the task.¹⁷⁰ However, I was arguably adding an additional dimension; as I scribbled my notes I was not only *thinking* Matt's experience, I was combining my visual awareness of setting alongside *feeling* his emotional response.

Eagleman explains how seeing does not happen in our eyes, hearing does not happen in our ears, nor smelling in our nose.¹⁷¹ Life is an illusion, at any moment, what we experience as seeing relies less on the light streaming into our eyes and more on what is going on inside our head.¹⁷² Viewed in this context, I can identify how my shift from self to Matt, operating between states of pre-reflective and reflective self-awareness,¹⁷³ enabled an altered response to those tawdry angels; those flashing earrings.

In reflecting on this process as a means of garnering empathy, I consider the evolution of *Trick* as an experiment in drama, as much as in writing. Matt (and I) left the café and walked back out into my revised persona of London's sub-culture. We were looking for a hostel where Matt could find shelter. Stopping to give change (and, in fact, my gloves) to a young man who was begging in a side street, I found my next scene. The young man - Danny - who also became a character in the book, invited me to use his 'bash' (the terminology for a makeshift home - in his case a cardboard box) as research. Matt (and I) abandoned the search for a hostel and followed Danny's directions to a city within a city.

A cardboard city.¹⁷⁴ London's homeless had evolved their own sub-secret community under the arches at Waterloo Station. Their homes were shacks, a mash of cardboard boxes and corrugated iron, plastic sheets and planks of wood. Having consciously collected them in my notebook, I later recycled the imagery, positioning them all in a disused carpark behind a derelict tower block:

We were standing among this mass of shacks, some under the tower block, some outside... They looked pretty junky too – all bodedged together with cardboard and planks of wood.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ Elbow, *Writing with Power*, 7.

¹⁷¹ David Eagleman, *The Brain: The Story of You*, (London, Canongate, 2016) 41.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 57.

¹⁷³ Jen Webb, *Researching Creative Writing*, (Suffolk, Frontinus, 2015) 158.

¹⁷⁴ Greg Whitmore, 'Observer Picture Archive', *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/apr/15/cardboard-city-16-april-1989> Accessed 21 November, 2019.

¹⁷⁵ Waite, *Trick of the Mind*, 144.

Cardboard City became integral to the London sections, as did the fire we all huddled around when the night grew bitter:

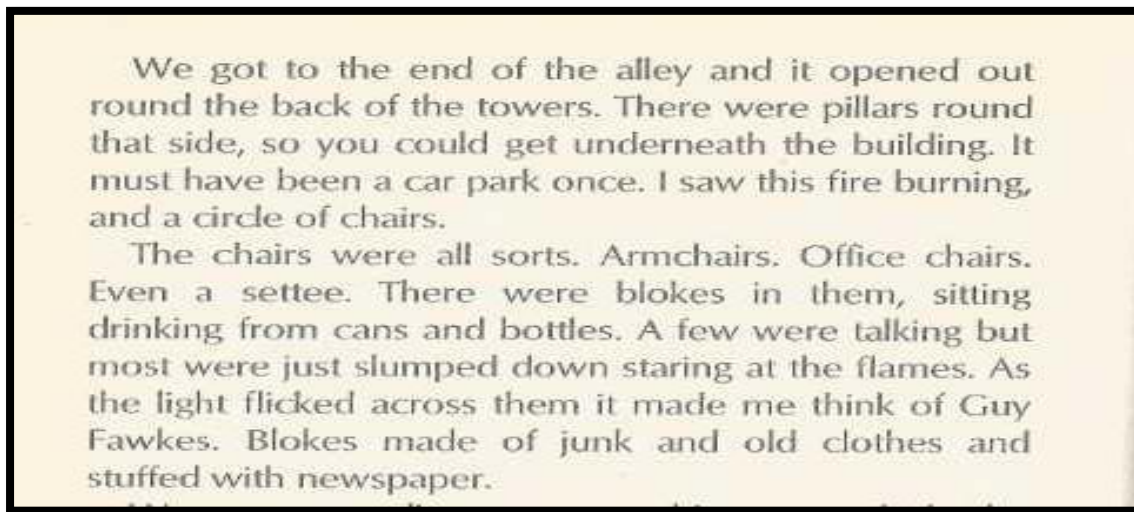


IMAGE 12.¹⁷⁶

The visual detail in the above extract evokes not only my recycled setting, but additionally an emotional response to down-and-outs made of junk. People who are trash. Thrown away. There is a merging of rhetoric and image to manipulate emotion; a conscious and unconscious duality evoked by character perspective. My *Trick* research took me beyond the writing, placing me as an actor in my own performance. I can identify ways this practice has a resonance with Stanislavski's method acting.¹⁷⁷ This method involves actors 'becoming' their characters both on and off the stage. However, there are clear distinctions between that which is relevant for drama, and that which connects with writing. Thomas W Hodgkinson describes how he evolved a character who was hiding in a small space. Hodgkinson consequently put himself in that character's position by writing from the inside of a cupboard.¹⁷⁸ With Hodgkinson's experiential scenario, there are connections with immersive role play techniques, but the difference is that the actor deploying Stanislavski's method is immersed in the characterisation, blurring the edges between themselves and the part they are inhabiting. Hodgkinson retains the authorial element of himself at the same time as he identifies

¹⁷⁶ Scanned sample *Trick of the Mind*, 143-144.

¹⁷⁷ Konstantin Stanislavski, *Building a Character*, (5th ed) (London and New York, Bloomsbury, 2013).

¹⁷⁸ Thomas W. Hodgkinson, 'A New Literary Movement: You have Method Actors, so why not Method Authors?' *The Independent*, (2016), <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/a-new-literary-movement-you-have-method-actors-so-why-not-method-authors-a6847201.html> Accessed 25 September, 2019.

himself in role. This echoes my own methodology, and reflects the duality of character and writer, a physical as well as neurological crossing over between unconscious and conscious applications.

This crossover, melding character role-play with writing, can perhaps be more accurately titled 'method-writing,' and my interpretation of it takes the shape of a one-woman show with no advance script and no audience. Matt's observations - my observations - demonstrate something of the transient nature of creativity. This is not a 'writing-up' which is quantifiable, but a 'writing alongside'.¹⁷⁹ There is a quiver of magic here; that strike between science and art where something empirical becomes something abstract and unclassifiable. My method-writing enabled a focused but ad-libitum experience not repeatable in exact form nor measurable as a defined technique. Yet, it produced tangible results.

In evidencing such results through the following extract, Matt's 'magical' powers are just starting to be recognised. He does not believe in them himself and thinks it is time to move on, but a companion tells him that others in the (homeless) group think he is special. They like him. As I absorbed this scene, observing Matt's reactions, I was able to find my way deeper into his psyche. No one had ever told him he was 'liked' before and I experienced Matt's rush of senses, overwhelmed by a moment of kindness, at the same time as I was consciously observing the relationships between the cardboard-city-dwellers who clearly respected and supported each other:

'Doesn't matter, mate. The point is, for whatever reason, people are starting to believe in you. And that goes for me too. I think you're different. And I like you.'

I just sort of stared at him then. After a minute he went sort of swimmy and out of focus and it was because I was crying, which was a pretty naff thing to do. But I couldn't help it. No one had ever said stuff like that to me before. I pressed my eyelids with the back of my hand. 'OK,' I gave him this sniffy sort of grin. 'I'll stay'.¹⁸⁰

Matt stays. He has friends. Not the friends his mum would want for him. Not the friends he thought he wanted. Friends who have been where he is going, and who touch at the core of him. I began this discourse by reflecting that although I had known and understood Erin, I had not known Matt. Yet,

¹⁷⁹ Ludivine Allegue et al, eds., *Practice as Research in Performance and Screen*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 27.

¹⁸⁰ Waite, *Trick of the Mind*, 163.

as Butler suggests, through performance and improvisation the writer recomposes and reincorporates that which was already known.¹⁸¹

So, perhaps I did know Matt. Had known Matt. What I had not known was how to find him. Coverley expresses how the urban wanderer is governed by the dictates of his unconscious mind.¹⁸² The unconscious mind does not need to go wandering, but when the conscious mind leads it through city streets, looking for stories, the capacity for new thinking is enhanced. Iain Sinclair expresses this when he reflects on his experiences of a psychogeographic approach:

It's opening up your system to the world, making the skin porous, letting all the impressions pour through and charging circuits to be able to write. And the burning of neural pathways is when you've established a set of pathways in the head. To go somewhere new is to feel the brain is being remapped, in an interesting way. And you hope that by doing that, a new form of writing might emerge.¹⁸³

I am always searching for new forms of writing. I am always searching for new ways to find those forms. They lurk in the unconscious, and immersion in both character and place has enabled me to lure them out into conscious awareness.

People. People. More people. They didn't look at me as I emerged from under the arches at Waterloo station. My teen-green Air-Max trainers carried me forwards, up the steps towards the trains. People. People. More people. They didn't look at me, and they didn't look at Matt either. But we looked at them.

¹⁸¹ Butler, *From Where You Dream*, 98.

¹⁸² Coverley, *Psychogeography*, 24.

¹⁸³ James Campbell, 'A Life In... Iain Sinclair', *The Guardian*, (1 November, 2013), Accessed 15 February 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/nov/01/iain-sinclair-interview>

Meditation: creative practice – all in the mind

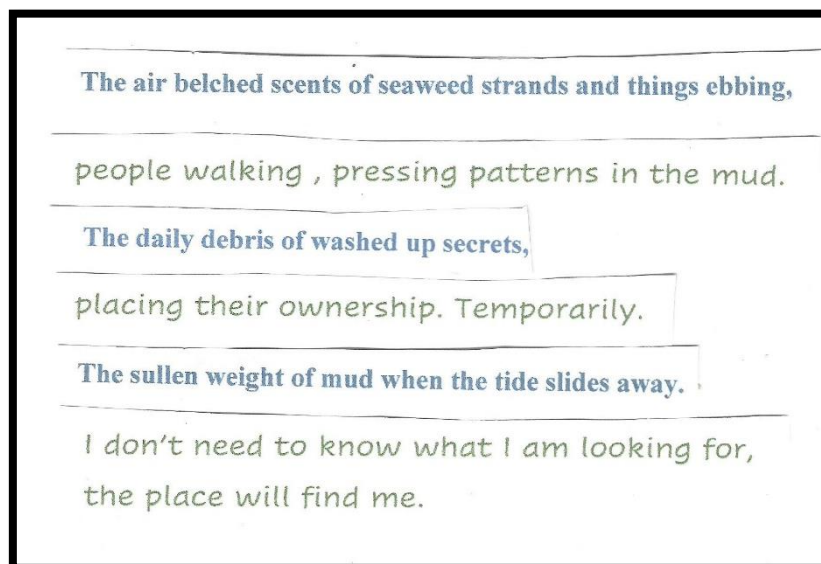


IMAGE 13.¹⁸⁴

If techniques discussed in the previous sections can be positioned against psycho-geographic responses related to character, setting and plot, this section shifts focus to the evolution of a fictional narrative aligned with purposeful meditation, specifically underpinning unconscious, preconscious and conscious processes aligned with the writing of the 60,000 YA novel *Game Girls*.¹⁸⁵

Augusto Corrieri considers how writing about one's own work can be debilitating, suggesting that in order to re-energise reflections around creative experience, one solution is to steep 'the self into itself'.¹⁸⁶ This resonates not only with the meditative processes I regularly engage, in order to access creativity, but offers an imaginative means to access reflexive practice. Yet, steeping self into itself was not, of itself, valuable in the context of this thesis. What I sought was to steep *myself* into experiences related to one specific character in *Game Girls*: eighteen-year-old Fern.

¹⁸⁴ 'Cut-ups' poem created from extracts of *Game Girls* and meditation notes.

¹⁸⁵ Judy Waite, *Game Girls*, (London, Andersen Press, 2007).

¹⁸⁶ Augusto Corrieri, 'A Conjuring Act in the Form of an Interview', *The Creative Critic*, 88.

Combining a re-connection with the original text and fresh experiential engagement around character and place, I could search for Fern by contrasting the old with the new. I aimed to not only explore who Fern was, but *why* she was... but this was not finding Fern for the sake of finding Fern. Identification of the 'why' offered up potential insights into both a practical and pedagogic relevance to more holistic and mindful methodologies, identifying habits and practices that demonstrate control over creative process.¹⁸⁷

My conscious process began with - somewhat appropriately - a game. It is a thinking game, a word game. I re-read Fern's scenes in *Game Girls*, copying every line or phrase associated with a specific environment.¹⁸⁸ This environment was the non-fictional River Hamble, the tidal waterway my fictional Fern lives beside. The river walk was one I trod and re-trod through all the *Game Girl* drafts, evolving Fern's character and backstory, and the initial approach that saw me 'steep' myself back in the narrative was preparation for a more holistic and intuitive level of research.

¹⁸⁷ Grace R. Waitman and Jonathan A. Plucker. 'Teaching Writing by Demythologizing Creativity', *The Psychology of Creative Writing*, 287-315.

¹⁸⁸ *Game Girls* extracts.

Thinking about Fern: extracts from Game Girls

Secrets Dangers Tides Moods

Boggy black holes beneath the riverbed.

I saw a dog there once and it didn't stand a chance.

The sea has lost its glittered shine.

Bog soft riverbed

Fringes the edge of the riverbed. The tide is out, and the air belches a stench of seaweed and things rotting

The daily debris of washed up secrets, the sullen weight of mud when the tide slides away

Sludgy and smelly.

Strange, almost prehistoric, mud-slimed view.

Ancient wreck with its ribbed wooden frame that juts out of the sludge like a dinosaur bone.

The tide has been drained further now, the riverbed glossy, stranded wood and water plants smudged up in the slime.

The wind screaming. Black water.

There is a quiet splash that could almost be forgotten.

IMAGE 14.¹⁸⁹

These re-written phrases in the box above were next exposed in a process that would see them interrogated consciously, then preconsciously, 'bent back on themselves' through a form of meditation.

There is no single methodology connected to meditating, but the primary motivations aim to either disassociate the mind for a sense of abstract freedom, or to purposefully focus for a specific outcome.¹⁹⁰ My aim was the latter. Through engagement with concentrative or 'mindful' meditation

¹⁸⁹ *Game Girls* extracts.

¹⁹⁰ West, Michael A. "Traditional and psychological perspectives on meditation." In *The Psychology of Meditation*, by West, Michael A., ed., edited by Michael A. West. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2012. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198521945.003.0001. Accessed 20 March 2020, <https://www-oxfordscholarship-com.winchester.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198521945.001.0001/acprof-9780198521945-chapter-1>

around my sample extracts, I sought to actively manipulate enhanced perception.¹⁹¹ The ‘game’ next was to revisit Fern’s places in person, re-walking the local river path and connecting her environment with my own heightened, mindful awareness.¹⁹² I was looking for Fern in the swell of water; the grace of swans, moods and mud and mire.

This mindful methodology triggered a multitude of observations - I will call them ‘collectings’ - gathered by writing a stream of consciousness response first to visual detail, then increasingly to more sensory associations as I sought to collect phrases and reactions:

The water is grey-heavy, restless, urgent
I have never seen the tide so high perhaps I am in danger, but I will [stay] anyway
The wind gathers and whips up secrets

IMAGE 15.¹⁹³

Urgent, dangerous secrets. Ackroyd, in referring to the unconsciousness of place, reflects on how ‘...certain activities seem to belong to certain areas, or neighbourhoods, as if time were moved or swayed by some unknown source of power.’¹⁹⁴ Ackroyd’s reflection that places themselves can be mysterious, uncanny, and controlling, suggests a form of personification; yet my conscious responses to the River Hamble are not dark and doom-laden. Although I am heedful of the pull of the tide; the power of water, my memories of the place - and I have many - are of summer picnics with my children, dog walks, boat rides. Yet, my unbidden language could almost have been the tag line associated with the original *Game Girls* publication. Urgent, dangerous secrets. The instigating meditative methodology of focusing on extracts from the book took me back not to the narrative itself, but to the aura of the narrative, and all the ebb and flow of *Game Girl’s* dark sub-text.

This sub-text is layered with threat and menace. Three girls are bewitched by a toxic possibility, their choices driving them towards a bad, mad end.¹⁹⁵ Told in present tense, third person, multiple voice, each girl - Alix, Courtney and Fern - move through a story-line in which they set themselves up as sex

¹⁹¹ Delmonte, Michael M. ‘Meditation: contemporary theoretical approaches.’ *The Psychology of Meditation*, Accessed 20 March 2020, <https://www-oxfordscholarship-com.winchester.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198521945.001.0001/acprof-9780198521945-chapter-3>

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ ‘Collectings’ – notes from meditation.

¹⁹⁴ Ackroyd, *London*, 661.

¹⁹⁵ Waite, *Game Girls*.

workers. Alix, who instigates the idea and draws the others in, sees herself as the user rather than the used. Courtney suffered sexual abuse from her father. Fern is the naïve underdog who seeks friendship and reassurance.

Fern's character may be naïve but the setting, newly observed in the context of my collectings, seemed anything but.

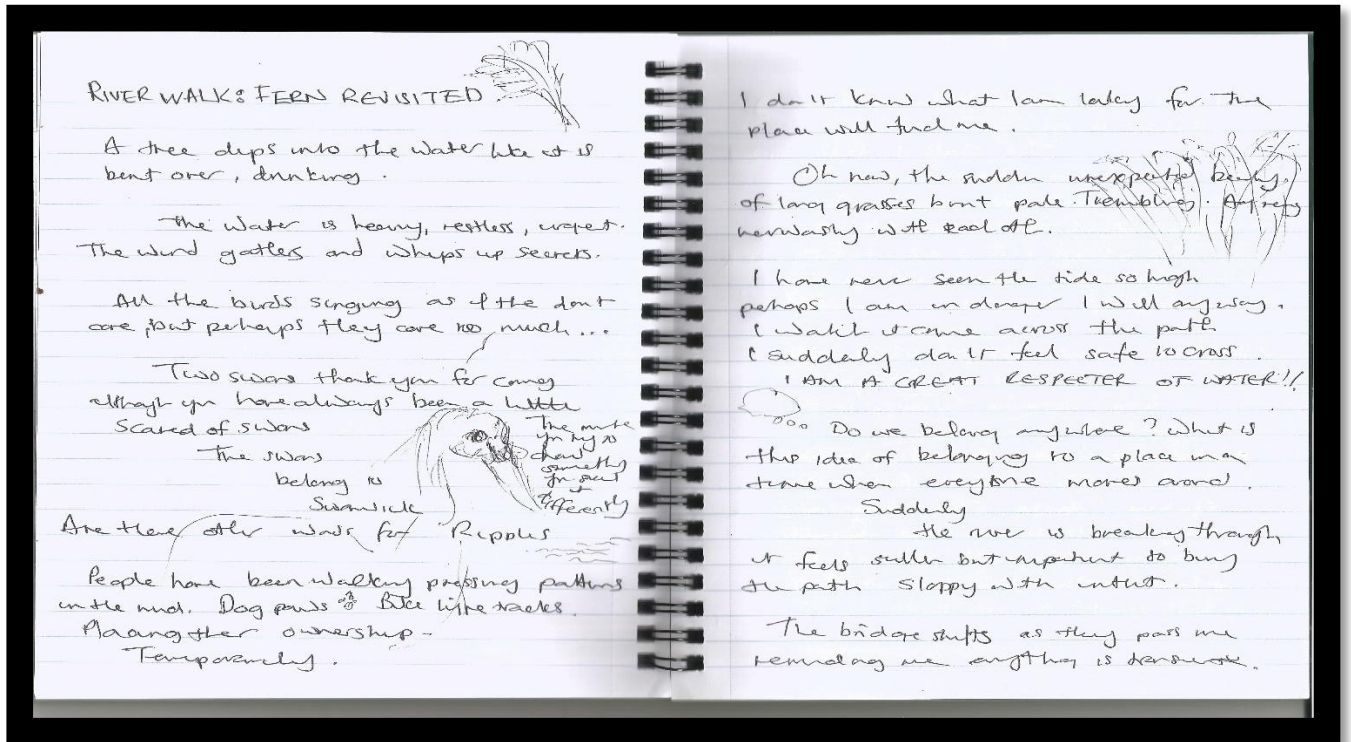


IMAGE 16.¹⁹⁶

The water appeared threatening. Trees screamed and long grasses nodded and trembled 'agreeing nervously with each other'.¹⁹⁷ As the sensory personifications emerged, I reflected on the attribution of temperaments and intentions to place. Why is a place menacing? What makes it so?

The setting, of itself, was not menacing and walking, used with intent as a meditative process, is more generally perceived as an insightful communion with nature. Julia Cameron's enthusiastic observation that 'life sings in our circuitry as we invite it in by venturing out into it' captures something of the more customary experience but my focus was not on Cameron's breathing and

¹⁹⁶ Sample 'The Collectings' notebook.

¹⁹⁷ Cut-ups 'collectings' with *Game Girl* extracts.

pace-rhythms, heightened listening and enhanced observations of nature¹⁹⁸ *per se*. I stayed tuned to character, seeing what was known through that altered viewpoint, enabling me to evoke ‘thoughts without words’,¹⁹⁹ reacting to place not only with a visual artist’s sensitivity²⁰⁰ but with a fixed intent to re-enter the unconscious processes that evolved *Game Girls*.

Where did all the darkness come from? Thoughts without words move to words without thoughts, and I engaged in a ‘Bowie-esque’²⁰¹ cutups process, merging the original text with the new collectings:

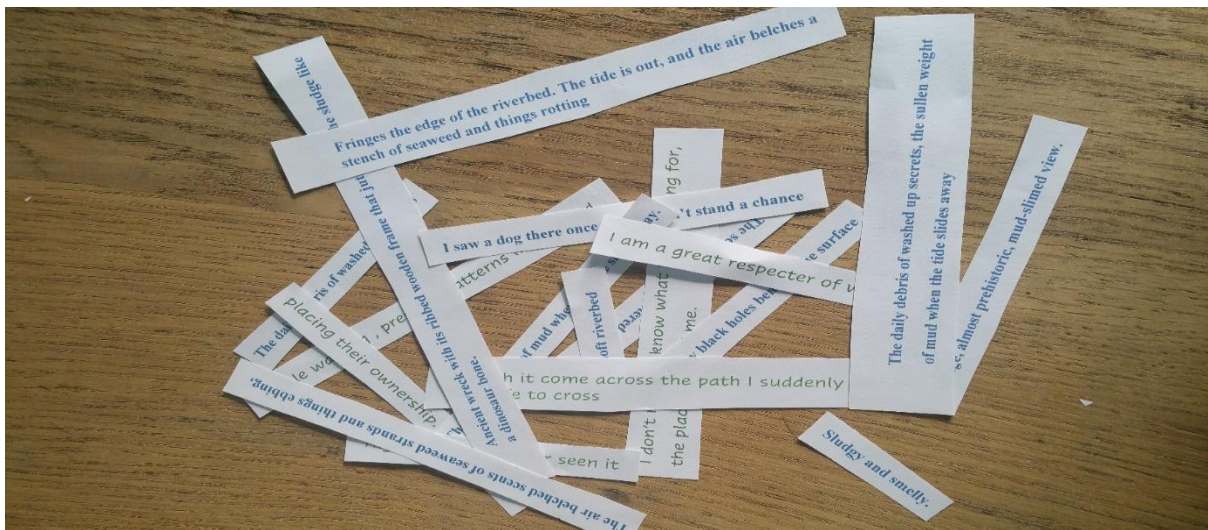


IMAGE 17.²⁰²

The sea had lost its glittered shine.
The water is heavy, restless, urgent.

IMAGE 18. ²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ Julia Cameron, *The Vein of Gold*, (London, Pan Books, 1997) 28-29.

¹⁹⁹ Robert Fisher, *Teaching Thinking*, 4th ed. (London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 15.

²⁰⁰ Berger, *Ways of Seeing*.

²⁰¹ Alan Yentob, ‘Cracked Actor’ [David Bowie] in *BBC News* accessed 3 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nIW4EbxTD8>.

²⁰² Typed and cut-up extracts from *Forbidden* and ‘The Collectings’ notebook.

²⁰³ Cut-up sentences alternating *Forbidden* and ‘The Collectings.’

RESTLESS WATERS

The sea had lost its glittered shine.

Highest level I'd ever seen it.

I watch it come across the path

and suddenly don't feel safe to cross.

Boggy black holes beneath the surface.

I saw a dog there once and it didn't stand a chance.

I am a great respecter of water.

IMAGE 19.²⁰⁴

Bowie refers to the cut-up process derived from his own journals as a form of modern tarot,²⁰⁵ and in my connection with the technique I was looking backwards, in order to look forward. The darkness, the menace in Fern's settings (both the original and the new) arguably derive partly from fragments of memories unrelated to, but re-associated with, this stretch of the River Hamble. These memories and their attendant emotions are mostly visual; research based around an individual's ability to 'relive' an experience reported that those 'relivings' that scored most highly were those that engaged with a strong visual image.²⁰⁶ Picking through the fragments of recollected associations, I conjure strong visual relivings of my own: I watch myself aged fourteen, out on the beach at Burnham-on-Sea, a dog running past the sign that says 'Danger: Sinking Mud'. Here I am mid-forties, another sign - a poster displayed at every bus-stop and newsagents' window in my local area, a teenager gone missing, his remains later washed up on a beach in Dorset.²⁰⁷ That's me -

²⁰⁴ Poem from 'Collectings' and *Game Girls* cut-ups.

²⁰⁵ Yentob, *Cracked Actor*.

²⁰⁶ Rubin, David C., and Daniel L. Greenberg. 'The Role of Narrative in Recollection.'

²⁰⁷ Becky Barrow, 'Mother of Missing Boy Insists He is Alive', *The Telegraph*, 2003, Accessed 17 March 2020, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1417644/Mother-of-missing-boy-insists-he-is-alive.html>.

wellington boots as I wade along my own lane, our houses flooded by high tides in the early 1990s. *I am a great respecter of water.*

I next merged these water-sodden visual memories with Fern's own emotional state, evolved from characterisation and back story: 'All her life Mum had been weighing her down with worries.

Worrying about strangers. Stray dogs. Playing by the river. Stand back, well back from the train.'²⁰⁸

Fern's mum, in her nagging protection, has produced a worrier, someone who prefers to merge with the background rather than risk being raised above the parapet. In this *Game Girls* context, and through my active-research and analyses of both the original and subsequent phrases and imagery, I acknowledge that Fern herself is a personification of place; place is a personification of her. Fern makes clay figures from 'the boggy brown sludge', creating an imagined world for mud-dwellers beneath the river.²⁰⁹ She evolved from the landscape; returns to it at the end: 'There is a quiet splash that could almost be forgotten.'²¹⁰ Both personas could be described as organic, flowing into each other. Yet, with the concentrative meditation characterised by an increased permeability of constructs to new ideas,²¹¹ this heightening of emotion and awareness enabled not only mind and memory, but arguably a more primal instinct, to interact with the narrative.

Instincts are complex, inborn behaviours that do not have to be learnt. They are inherited reactions, generally thought to be outside of, or perhaps despite, cognitive rationalisation.²¹² Instincts are 'the hunch'. The gut feeling. Yet, here, I separate this experience from my previous reflections around whole body learning, my previous focus more connected to self or character development. Instead I lean outward to evolutionary reactions to specified territories.²¹³ Instinctive responses to settings can deem identified places as esoteric.²¹⁴ Mysterious. Sacred. Invisible 'lines of force'. Malignant. Malicious. I return to the question: why are some places menacing? What makes them so? Eagleman discusses how, as we experience key events, the brain transmits the experience to the whole body. The '... feeling becomes associated with the event'²¹⁵ and, as Self expresses, 'The body's awareness is so much more plangent than any mere mind.'²¹⁶ I would add to this that such physical reverberations are not framed by time, or one individual's existence and I contemplate on how much intuition

²⁰⁸ Waite, *Game Girls*, 138.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 109-111.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 316.

²¹¹ Michael M. Delmont, 'Meditation: Contemporary Theoretical Approaches.'

²¹² Eagleman, *Incognito*, 86

²¹³ Eagleman, *Incognito*, 82

²¹⁴ Richard Mabey, *Nature Cure*, (London, Vintage, 2005).

²¹⁵ Eagleman, *Incognito*, 68.

²¹⁶ Self, *Psychogeography*, 61.

derives from inherited memory. A primal reaction to floods and bogs. Angry Gods wreak devastation. Our ancestors evolved healthy fears, in order to survive.²¹⁷

This sense of a primal, psychic connection with landscape, then, combines my meditative river walk with my own remembered and instinctive associations, but these are not enough. A writing self needs to emerge, taking an interpretive approach, gaining new knowledge by repositioning for new perspectives - in this case, Fern's. This heuristic interpretation can then be evolved more formally,²¹⁸ offering reflexive writing methodologies that recreate long-buried moods and emotions evoked in a past act of writing, whilst enabling insights for both present and future interrogations.²¹⁹ The approaches embrace a conscious manipulation of the unconscious, achieved through mindful meditation²²⁰ and incorporating my own interpretation of Burroughs' word-associations and cut-ups.²²¹

As Hecq states, creative writers are particularly sensitive to their own unconscious processes,²²² and my search for Fern suggests a framework through which such processes can be activated. When authors embrace more holistic styles they experience their own work not from an observer's perspective, viewing their creations from a distance, but as Stewart identifies, 'from within.'²²³ The connection with Stewart's place within, aligned with my re-interpretation of Corrieri's equivalent 'steeping' of the self into itself,²²⁴ demonstrates how material which was originally evolved more intuitively can be consciously reconstructed, orchestrated and controlled.

I have re-awakened Fern not so much as a character, or a setting, but as a methodology.

Fern is active-research, and instinct. She is the mysterious pulls and powers of place. She conjures my own associations and takes shape through unconscious reflexes and conscious manipulations. Perhaps, like the river and the nature all around it, she is her own ecosystem:

Fern takes the shortest route back to *River's View*, hurrying along the coastal path that fringes the edge of the river. The tide is out and the air belches a stench of seaweed and mud and things rotting. She is always drawn to it – fascinated by the moods that tug

²¹⁷ John Reppion, ed., *Spirits of Place* ((Brisbane, Daily Grail Publishing, 2016).

²¹⁸ Webb, *Researching Creative Writing*, 200-201.

²¹⁹ Ibid, 2002.

²²⁰ Ellen J. Langer, *The Power of Mindful Learning*, (Cambridge, MA, Da Capo Press Perseus Books Group, 1997),

²²¹ Hawkins et al, *William Burroughs :Cutting up the Century*.

²²² Hecq, 'Creative Writing and theory: Theory Without Credentials',

²²³ Robyn Steward, *Creating New Stories for Praxis*, Practice as research, *Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiries*, 124

²²⁴ Corrieri, 'A Conjuring Act in the Form of an Interview', *The Creative Critic*.

and pull at the water. The daily debris of washed up secrets, the sullen weight of mud when the tide slides away... half walking, half running, she hits the quieter end of the path. Normally she would stop here, taking in the strange, almost prehistoric, mud-slimed view. Today she presses on, passing the ancient wreck with its ribbed wooden frame that juts out of the sludge like old dinosaur bones. She rounds the final end that curves up past the rotting jetty, and leads on to *River's View*.²²⁵

Dark magics, indeed.

²²⁵ Waite, *Game Girls*, 26.

Section Four: creative process and practice in school-based scenarios.

*Imagine a funfair in the classroom
Invite dragons to school
Let pupils travel through time.*²²⁶

Time for Change: re-imagining the imagination

There seems a clear value in the development of relationships between artists and educators, the artist's role being one that can 'engage and inspire each child... challenging conventions and routines, and opening up perspectives on what children are capable of making and expressing'.²²⁷ *Wordtamer*, an 80,000-word non-fiction publication, is my contribution to this role. The monograph was developed with the intention of re-interpreting my author techniques for a schools'-based curriculum, underpinned by extensive research into a national decline in motivation with regard to writing and imagination,²²⁸ seemingly aggravated by a reluctance to embed genuine creative-practice within educational policy.

I would argue that this resistance is, in part, due to beliefs that not only might creativity be 'elusive' within the frame of pedagogic requisites, but that creative outcomes are more challenging to qualify, and therefore to assess. As Robin Nelson expresses, science gives us hard facts: experiential process gives us 'liquid knowing'.²²⁹

²²⁶ Waite, back-cover introduction, *Wordtamer*.

²²⁷ Anna Craft, *Creativity in Schools: Tensions and Dilemmas*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2006), 145.

²²⁸ Sue Horner, (nd) *Magic Dust that Lasts*, www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Writers_in_Schools.pdf Accessed November 15 2019, <https://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/publication/magic-dust-that-lasts-writers-in-schools-sustaining-the-momentum/>

²²⁹ Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts*, 48 - 70.

Education in relation to literacy is, therefore, more comfortable with the 'hard facts' relating to secretarial skills which are easily identified: grammar, punctuation, syntax, structure.²³⁰ I had engaged in active-research for over fifteen years, going into schools and supporting pupils perceived as under-achievers in the context of literacy and writing,²³¹ evolving an interactive website²³² and identifying alternative, cross-curricular approaches to literacy in education.

These scenarios painted the backdrop to the stage *Wordtamer* stepped out onto, my ambition for creativity related to education being one that would incite spontaneity, curiosity and risk-taking. My intentions were to encourage associations and insightful outcomes that would emerge, Houdini like, into the diamond dazzle of the spotlights.

However, these outcomes would not transpire from simple re-interpretations of my creative practices, trimmed and shaped to fit neatly into existing educational agendas. I was dealing with unconscious and preconscious processes based on my own experiences. I needed to adapt methodologies to reflect a child's world view and the ways a younger mind might interpret such material. My initial personal 'experience-connections' have been traced through my autobiographical time-line linking emotion with significant encounters, regardless of whether I accessed these through dreams, meditations or psychological, therapy inspired associations. A second knowledge source has been established through active-research, instigating experiential methodologies that intentionally create new knowledge, innovating or, arguably, manufacturing encounters that become fixed memories.

One educationally focused re-interpretation of these new-knowledge sources relates to a role play experience. This modified method-writing activity, such as I cultivated in the evolution of my YA titles, connects literacy with dramatic techniques evolving character and setting. These cultivations are pivotal to this thesis, and in this section I demonstrate links between my earlier practices and methodologies and evolving new knowledge applied within a schools' context.

²³⁰ Judy Waite, Wordtaming and the Funfair of Ideas, *The International Journal for the Practice of Teaching and Creative Writing*, 12.1: Accessed 5 November 2019, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14790726.2014.959975>.

²³¹ Judy Waite, Blank in the Mind, *Writing in Education*, (2014) 64, 15-21.

²³² Judy Waite, www.wordtamer.co.uk, Accessed 19 March 2020.

The Role of Role-Play: **character development and the confines of school.**

Current research demonstrates that the adoption of multiple role perspectives in extended classroom drama can contribute to the quality of writing.²³³ These approaches are generally applied to existing published works, such as the class-reader - a text all pupils might read together, or stories conversant to most learners. With many teachers not perceiving themselves as creative,²³⁴ to take a recognisable narrative offers a secure platform from which creativity can, and does, evolve.²³⁵

However, *Wordtamer* suggests a more writer-centred approach, with pupils evolving their own original characters. The methodology is still within the scope of the average classroom, and *Wordtamer* initially identifies an activity wherein the teacher offers a collection of scarves hats, ties, waistcoats and gloves.²³⁶ The simple act of draping a scarf around the shoulders or putting on a bow-tie can be transformative, pupils 'become' someone else and evolve scenes for stories.²³⁷ This replicates Hilary Mantel's experience of characters evolving internally: the protagonist inhabits the physical body as well as the intellectual space of the mind.²³⁸

The act of inhabiting the physical body then widens the scope to engage pupils in not only method-writing techniques, but to demonstrate participants' awareness of role, situation and context.²³⁹ It is (mostly) not possible to invite pupils to walk the streets as a runaway in London, or to climb staircases in millionaires' mansions, but in true Rankin-role-play-style they can get under the skin of their character through suggested settings, connecting emotion with imagination. Pupils share commonalities drawn from their own memories: what it is to buzz with anticipation; to be angry; to be scared; to be joyous. *Wordtamer* activities extend to immersive and interactive experiences.²⁴⁰ Visual, aural and tactile learning styles²⁴¹ are embedded within each role-play activity, and these establish settings, narrative atmosphere and interaction. Children experience places differently from adults, and visual images that inform settings allows the construction of information from their

²³³ Teresa Cremin, 'Creatively Engaging Writers in The Early Primary Years,' eds. Teresa Cremin, David Reedy et al, *Teaching English Creatively*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2015), 81-83.

²³⁴ Waite, *Wordtamer*, 54-66.

²³⁵ Teresa Cremin and Terry Locke, eds. *Writing Identity and the Teaching and Learning of Writing*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2012).

²³⁶ Waite, *Wordtamer*, 94-95.

²³⁷ Ibid, 94-95.

²³⁸ Hilary Mantel et al, *The Writer's Life*.

²³⁹ Kelly Freebody and Michael Finneran, 'Drama and Social Justice: Power, Participation and Possibility', eds. Michael Anderson and Julie Dunn, *How Drama Activates Learning*, (London, Bloomsbury, 2015) 47-63.

²⁴⁰ Waite, *Wordtamer*, 32-33.

²⁴¹ Andrew Pollard, et al, *Reflective Teaching in Schools*, (London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 59.

independent viewpoints, exploring both ideological and sociological aspects related to place which can then facilitate new emotional responses and perspectives.²⁴² The role-play aspect enables participants to experience real-life-situations that are no longer confined to the classroom, but to the place prompted by the visual stimulus, a school-based re-envisaging of going somewhere ‘in role’ and interacting with setting.²⁴³

Pupils also experience an emotional investment in their character, engaging with their thoughts and experiences: the character - and even the emerging narrative - evolve as a potential ‘friend’.²⁴⁴

Having experienced this in my writer-mode - Nicky, Elinor, Matt, Fern *et al* were all in some sense ‘friends’ - I would suggest that through such emotional investment the learner makes the learning process their own,²⁴⁵ instilling both agency and motivation within the development of their story.

Through this mix of unconscious, preconscious and conscious combinations pupils engage with dystopian towns or faraway lands, the past or the future, travelling as their character through imagined terrains, notebook in hand. Method-writers within a whole new, schools-based creative process.

Non-Linear thinking: **maps of the mind**

Method-writing gives pupils characters to care about, and the notebook of ‘collectings’ enables a first physical record of the process evidence. A further adapted process which provides visible evidence utilises maps as a tool for evolving stories, either identifying place for the role-play characters to exist in, or as a separate means for exploring narrative.

Pupils are generally familiar with mapping storylines,²⁴⁶ but my approach, as with the role play, invokes a more unconscious slant. In developing *Forbidden* I mapped out the space and place where

²⁴² Kaye Johnson, ‘Processes, Possibilities and Dilemmas’, ed. Pat Thompson, *Doing Visual Research with Children and Young People* (London, Routledge, 2008), 76-89.

²⁴³ Michael Anderson and David Cameron, ‘Drama and Learning Technologies to Affinity Spaces and Beyond’, eds. Michael Anderson and Julie Dunn, *How Drama Activates Learning*, (London, Bloomsbury, 2015), 237.

²⁴⁴ Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams*, 101.

²⁴⁵ Leslie Safran, ‘Creativity as ‘Mindful Learning: A Case for Learner -Led Home-Based Education’, *Creativity in Education*, 81.

²⁴⁶ Pie Corbett, *Jumpstart! Story Making*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2009).

my character's cult existed, identifying scenes, settings and character details extending from the geographic location.²⁴⁷



IMAGE 20.²⁴⁸

In my classroom-based re-interpretation of this, pupils are introduced to collective mind mapping techniques, incorporating colours, symbols, pictures and words, making associations that connect settings with characters as they explore the potential for ideas.²⁴⁹

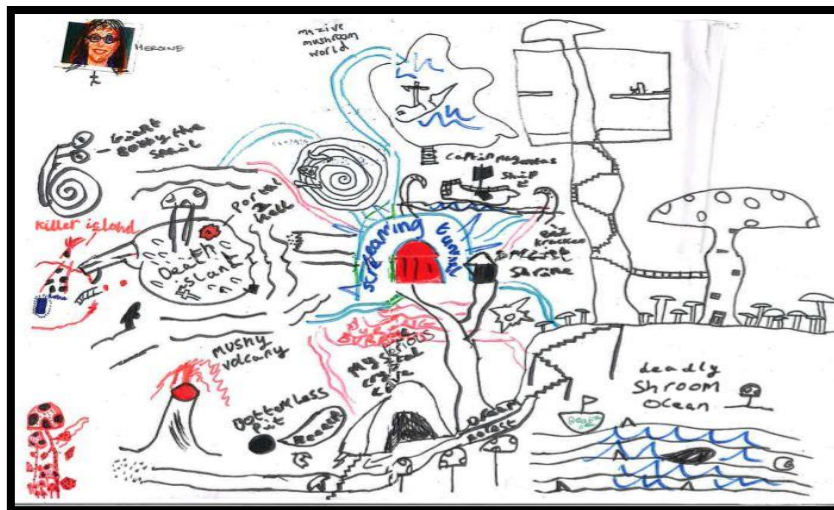


IMAGE 21.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ Waite, *Forbidden*.

²⁴⁸ Original Mindmap evolving *Forbidden*.

²⁴⁹ Buzan, *The Mindmap Book*.

²⁵⁰ Pupil collaborative Mindmap in *Wordtamer*, 104.

These associations are a way of communicating with the unconscious, essential as part of creative process and, as Cressida Cowell suggests, '... if you insist on only using the conscious brain as your guide you prevent yourself from achieving the impossible.'²⁵¹ The activity situates learners within the duality of artistic process²⁵² in context with themselves as writers, and validates ideas within the framework of the emerging stories and each other's input.²⁵³

This form of mental literacy breaks away from the linear thought processes evident in the previous more traditional note-taking activity,²⁵⁴ offering a reflective as well as a playful space in which pupils work both collaboratively and intuitively.²⁵⁵

Children's and YA writers take play seriously, offering, as it does, obvious links with young readers but additionally - and arguably more importantly - it communicates experiential perspectives that underpin moral, cultural and social issues. These values - again often invisible as a subtext -- position process as a practice that is both entertaining and thought provoking.²⁵⁶ *Wordtamer* mind maps provide relevance within literacy-based learning criteria yet induce an activity that offers scope for erratic and impulsive outcomes. With engaged pupils no longer blocked or fearing failure, I would claim this methodology has measurable merit within the challenge of changing educational paradigms.²⁵⁷

The measure can be attributed to the ensuing, more conscious, shift from ideas to developed drafts. Alongside the evolution of role-played characters for whom pupils now have a deep personal association, and the vibrant mapping of places and scenes, original stories emerge, bringing, again, *new* knowledge which, of itself, has scope for recording artistic practice not only in writing, but in a wider philosophical context.²⁵⁸

Richer, more detailed, the content of these narratives can still be assessed in context with identified literacy attainment levels charted through voice and style; influence of character, and the value of descriptive settings to genre and plot.²⁵⁹

²⁵¹ Cressida Cowell, 'First Steps: Our Neverland', ed. Huw Lewis-Jones, *The Writer's Map: An Atlas of Imaginary Lands*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 2018), 80.

²⁵² Brande, *Becoming a Writer*, 43-54.

²⁵³ Michael Rosen, *Did I Hear you Write?* (Nottingham, Five Leaves Publications, 2002), 25.

²⁵⁴ Tony and Barry Buzan, *The Mindmap Book*, 44-51.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 112.

²⁵⁶ Brophy, *Patterns of Creativity*, 136.

²⁵⁷ Ken Robinson, 'Changing Education Paradigms', TED video, 2010, **11:41**, Accessed March 12 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcdGpL4U>

²⁵⁸ Julie Robson, 'Artists in Australian Academies', *Practice as Research in the Arts*, 131.

²⁵⁹ Bell, 'Characterization', *The Creative Writing Coursebook*, 95-101.

Secretarial skills such as voice and grammar then overlay the creative outcomes, ensuring the experience is multi-modal and relevant.²⁶⁰ *Wordtamer* moves process from the invisible to the visible, each final stage connecting teachers (and learners) to language choices, rewriting and editing.²⁶¹

It appears liquid learning can spill out solid results, if we know the right way to pour.

Keeping it Quiet: **silence as pedagogy**

List of Essential Equipment:

Dimmed lights.

LED candles.

Paper.

Pen.

Visual imagination.

Teacher instruction: 'Listen for the sound of a feather falling.'

Robinson ascertains that, in order to improve education for the emerging generation, systems need not to be reformed, but '*transformed*'.²⁶² This is endorsed by Ellen J. Langer, who considers that no amount of changing standards for testing, developing curricula or enhancing budgets will make any difference unless teaching and learning are approached more '*mindfully*'.²⁶³

Mindful methodologies in schools are generally associated with wellbeing,²⁶⁴ but my adaptations of such processes link more established meditative approaches with the focused and purposeful

²⁶⁰ Judy Waite, Wordtaming and the Funfair of Ideas, *The International Journal for the Practice of Teaching and Creative Writing*.

²⁶¹ Waite, *Wordtamer*, 47-50.

²⁶² Ken Robinson, *Creative Schools*, (London, Penguin, 2016), XX.

²⁶³ Langer, *The Power of Mindful Learning*, 3.

²⁶⁴ Helen Lees, *Silence in Schools*, (London, Institute of Education Press, 2012).

evolution of ideas for creative fictions.²⁶⁵ This evolution requires a level of scaffolding; the embedding of behaviours which will act as a foundation to facilitate creative process. The stage needs setting up to ensure the act of mindful meditation can embrace all aspects of the performance.

This setting up begins, as with the role play experience, with visual stimuli, usually derived from multi-media learning tools such as short videos, screen images or PowerPoints which suggest scenarios, establishing potential for stories through note-taking, mind maps and the collaborative discussion of ideas. Pupils are led through these material processes by the teacher; ideas remain raw and undeveloped, merely rehearsals of possibilities up to the point where the room is next designated as a silent-zone.

Silence can be, initially, a challenging experience. Classrooms are inherently noisy places; a cacophony of teacher instructions, questions and answers, discussions and chatter.²⁶⁶ This hub-bub can be effectively manipulated by the *Wordtamer* silent visualisation methodology,²⁶⁷ adapted from my own meditations and utilising philosophies drawn from Lee's analysis into the benefits of 'strong silence'.²⁶⁸

Strong silence, in Lee's context, embraces Csikszentmihalyi's notion of 'the zone'²⁶⁹ while addressing aspects of Robinson's visions of new, effective and motivating teaching environments.²⁷⁰ With budget a constant constraint within education, one magical ingredient is that silence is a free resource and, an additional sprinkling of gold glitters with added enchantments - the practice demands no physical reconstructions of space. There is no complicated or time-consuming shifting of furniture. Pupils are simply required to sit still, to not speak, and instead to focus on a visual element of their evolving story.

Mental visualisation of an object, or image, engages most of the brain's circuitry.²⁷¹ This results in a 'freeing up' of the thinking process. Silence invites altered perceptions, engaging learners with a heightened, focused experience. The mechanisms of the mind behave differently in this silent zone, enhancing mental and emotional clarity.²⁷² There is, additionally, an element of 'fast-forwarding' the

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 79-81

²⁶⁶ Teresa Cremin and Debra Myhill, *Writing Voices*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2012), 197.

²⁶⁷ Waite, *Wordtamer*, 71.

²⁶⁸ Lees, *Silence in Schools*, 66-75.

²⁶⁹ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow*.

²⁷⁰ Ken Robinson, *Creative Schools*, 231 – 238.

²⁷¹ Stephen Kosslyn, 'Mental Images and the Brain', *Cognitive Neuropsychology*, 22 (2005) 333-347 accessed 13 April 2020, <https://www.tandfonline.com/winchester.idm.oclc.org/action/doSearch?AllField=kosslyn&SeriesKey=pcgn20>

²⁷² Langer, *The Power of Mindful Learning*, 119.

potential for ideas, as individuals react to image faster than to the written word.²⁷³ Through this combination of image, altered awareness and connections with emerging stories, pupils are effectively creating new experiences in the mind, and these offer a powerful stimulus for writing.²⁷⁴

I have frequently utilised such visualisation as stimulus within my fictional writing methodologies, and the approaches are reminiscent of those practised by other authors. David Lynch, who establishes meditation and visualisation as key drivers for his own inspirations, considers that ideas are like fish: stay in the shallow water and you will catch the small ones, but if you dare to dive deeper, these 'fishy thoughts' will be strange, captivating and compelling.²⁷⁵ King has devised a practice labelled 'hypnotic recall', accessing sensory memories through visualisation techniques that focus on place.²⁷⁶ The creative and educational value of visualisation, meditation and silence therefore seems evident, circling back to the original intent of connecting artists with educators.²⁷⁷

These artistic connections invite a combination of Nelson's 'hard facts' merged with 'liquid learning'.²⁷⁸ Meditative mind-state activated through silence reflects a physical embodiment of preconscious neural activity,²⁷⁹ and in this dream-space pupils experience altered perceptions that free them, in that moment, from pressures to both achieve and conform.²⁸⁰ This liberation enables empowerment whilst nurturing curiosity and this in turn illuminates the consequent writing. My initial research demonstrated that part of the issue is not imaginative writing *per se*, but pupils' beliefs that they have no ideas.²⁸¹ What shifts with the silence methodology are the levels of awareness and openness to new information, and these in turn impact on the motivation to write, and the confidence that what is written is of value.²⁸²

Literacy can, quite literally, be 'lit' from within. If the central work of schools relates to the facilitation of learning, and not measurement of skills and rigid assessment, then Robinson's call for *transformations*²⁸³ can be answered, at least in a small part, by dimmed lighting, an LED candle, and a moment of quiet.

²⁷³ Michael Michalko, *Cracking Creativity*, (Berkely CA, Ten Speed Press, 2016).

²⁷⁴ Fisher, *Teaching Children to Think*, 2nd edn, 193.

²⁷⁵ David Lynch, *Catching the Big Fish* (New York: Torcher Penguin, 2006).

²⁷⁶ Stephen King, *On Writing*, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 2001), 204.

²⁷⁷ Anna Craft, *Creativity in Schools, Tensions and Dilemmas*, 145.

²⁷⁸ Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts*, 48-70.

²⁷⁹ Lees, *Silence in Schools*, 110.

²⁸⁰ Leslie Safran, 'Creativity as Mindful Learning', eds. Anna Craft et al, *Creativity in Education*, (London, Continuum, 2001) 80-83.

²⁸¹ Judy Waite, Blank in the Mind, *Writing in Education*, (2014) 64, 15-21.

²⁸² Ken Robinson, *Creative Schools*, 78.

²⁸³ *Ibid*, XX.

'Listen for the sound of a feather falling.'

Conclusion: Knowing the Unknown

My positioning of this thesis alongside metaphors of ‘mysterious magics’ was not a whimsical choice, having partial connection to active research I undertook with magicians Derren Brown,²⁸⁴ Duncan Trillo,²⁸⁵ and others, whilst writing *Trick of the Mind*. Both Brown and Trillo showed me their secrets. Coins that turn into eggs. Cards that disappear, then reappear somewhere random, identified by my signature. This visible evidence was supported by notions of invisibility and when Erin says ‘Magic has always been a starry cloak for me to hide behind. People notice the tricks, but they don’t notice me,’²⁸⁶ I can equate this not only to writing and the reader’s immersion in narrative rather than author, but also to the invisibility of process that underpins elements of my contribution to new knowledge. The crossovers between performance magic and writing evolve from relatable methodologies and these, combined with still-prevalent perceptions that writing is some form of ‘spooky art’²⁸⁷ have all contributed to the metaphysical elements of my reflective interrogations. I have striven to know the unknowable: at the same time as my upturned ‘Queen-of-Hearts’ was triumphantly flourished, I found the ‘Jack-of-Spades’ – identified by my signature – crumpled in some shadowy, long forgotten corner.

Magicians are performers; they create personas. Authors create personas too – for themselves, and for their characters. Drama and role play engage writers of all levels in instinctive responses, drawing from altered awareness, creating new memories memories distinct to characters rather than autobiographical sensitivities. Levels of awareness shift between the character of the writer, and the writer of the character the two meeting in that place of slippage: each finding new memories, and new things to say.

Memories make links with emotion, and research demonstrates that correlation with emotion creates the strongest memories.²⁸⁸ Linking together memory, emotion, and instinct through practice as research embeds a psychological perspective, connecting the psychology of the writer, and the psychology of the writing.

This psychological perspective engages aspects of self, and in my reflective interrogations I have sought to identify patterns, in terms of process, applied to my cited works. Subconscious processes

²⁸⁴ Derren Brown, Accessed April 20, 2020, <http://derrenbrown.co.uk/>

²⁸⁵ Duncan Trillo, Accessed April 20, 2020, <http://www.duncantrillo.co.uk/>

²⁸⁶ Waite, *Trick of the Mind*, 36.

²⁸⁷ Norman Mailer, *The Spooky Art: Some Thoughts on Writing*, (New York, Random House, 2003).

²⁸⁸ Reisberg, Daniel, and Friderike Heuer. "Memory for Emotional Events." In *Memory and Emotion*.

link to picture-book publications. Conscious connections with memory and emotion are explored through selected middle-grade novels. Specific experiential and meditative practices underpin the YA titles. These combined methodologies explore the space between hard facts and liquid knowing,²⁸⁹ acknowledging the value of holistic and intuitive practice as research, whilst aligning with visible creative writing enquiry. The resultant combinations enable informed engagement with process and product, evolving qualitative and quantifiable pedagogies and outlining multidimensional approaches that offer original approaches to writing, and teaching.

These methodologies merge with, and enhance, more visible research investigations. The domains of the writing process often begin with immersion in primary and secondary material - works of fiction, works about fiction, and works of non-fiction that informs the fiction. There are experiments with narrative voice, style, and structure. Publisher and market-needs position emerging fictions within a frame that holds its own explicit criteria. Additionally, field-based practice as research may include physical places and settings: visits to mansions, cities, the banks of a river. It can extend to interviews with specialists such as horse-whisperers, cult leaders and, of course, magicians.... Yet, I concur the alternative methodologies I am identifying are located in less conventional approaches, and this has long been the aspect of creative process I am most drawn toward.

To think in less conventional ways, the brain needs to change focus. Looking harder and longer at something in the same direction will only produce predictable ideas.²⁹⁰ When the familiar becomes strange this alerts the senses. Conscious responses are triggered by intuitive practices that afford new ways to 'make strange' the familiar. Experimentation with perception enables this shift, a new way of seeing, a breaking away from habits and assumptions through practices that engage instinct and intuition as a means to shift the unconscious towards the conscious, creating new knowledge not only for the individual, but within the concept of process itself. Shadowy corners, secret signatures and neglected places can all be aligned to that permeable boundary between the conscious and unconscious,²⁹¹ yet even psychologists lament that 'we lack the intellectual wherewithal to understand consciousness.' Further, Papineau identifies a fear that 'the human mind is limited in ways that will permanently bar us from understanding the mystery [of the conscious mind].'²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts*, 48-70.

²⁹⁰ Waite, *Wordtamer*, 57.

²⁹¹ Brophy, *Patterns of Creativity*, 49.

²⁹² Papineau, David. "Introduction." In *Thinking about Consciousness*, by Papineau, David.. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2003. doi: 10.1093/0199243824.003.0001, Accessed 20 April 2020.

Yet, understanding how conscious states are activated by the unconscious is key to exploring creative process, alongside the development of viable teaching pedagogies I have set out to evolve and evidence. While even established authors make statements such as 'I don't know what I am doing until I have done it',²⁹³ I have aimed to challenge such perceptions of enigmatic ambiguities. Nigel Krauth, exploring domains and creative process, argues that the unconscious is overrated. It is '[...] a maverick and unreliable contributor to the writing process.'²⁹⁴ Krauth may be right. That is probably why I am drawn to it. But I make a leap of faith here - in the same way that Krauth asserts spaces and places can be manipulated to prepare the mind for writing,²⁹⁵ so, I believe, can the unconscious mind. My research suggests the unconscious mind of itself is not unreliable: what remains indistinct are the various interpretations of process linked to imagination.

In my role of author in schools, I often begin a session asking pupils what they believe imagination to be. Answers are invariably along the lines of 'imagination means being able to do anything you want,' and, 'something you think of that isn't real.'²⁹⁶

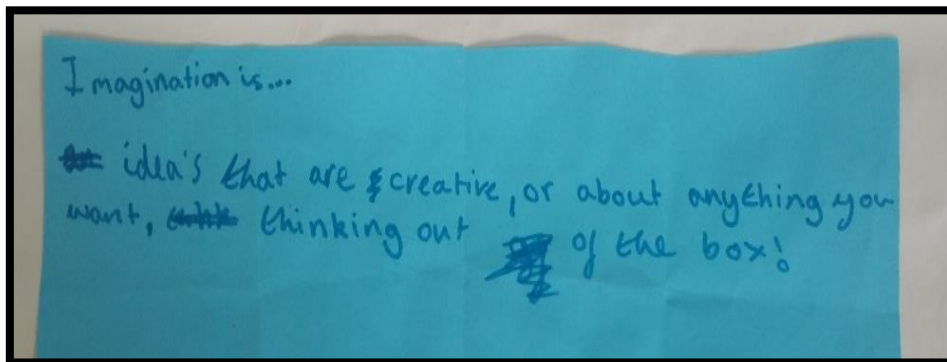


IMAGE 22.²⁹⁷

²⁹³ Dominique Hecq, 'Creative Writing and Theory: Theory Without Credentials,' *Research Methods in Creative Writing*, 185.

²⁹⁴ Nigel Krauth, 'The Domains of the Writing Process,' *Creative Writing: Theory beyond Practice*, 194.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 194.

²⁹⁶ Pupil comments, Schools' Cluster Event, Liss Junior School, 2015.

²⁹⁷ Original comment.

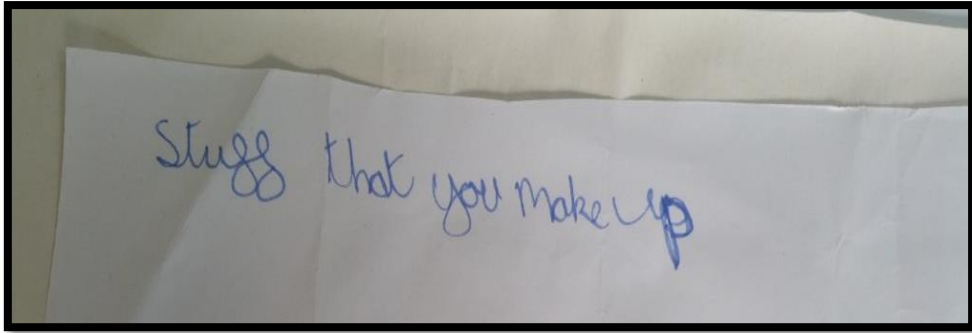


IMAGE 23.²⁹⁸

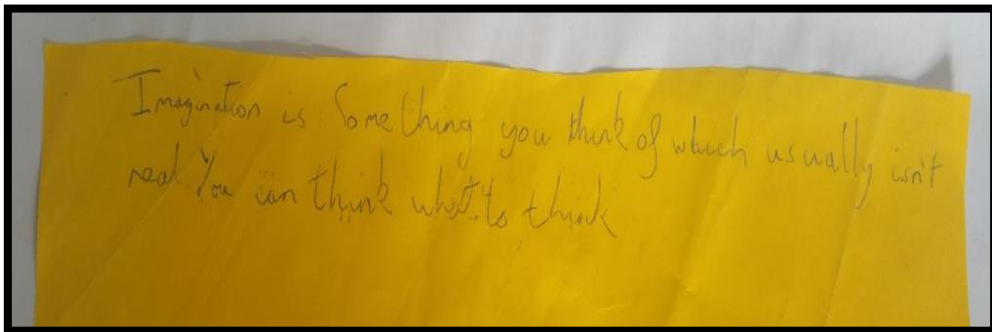


IMAGE 24.²⁹⁹

At university level, those pupils perceived as creative, who have done well in imaginative pursuits in school, are arguably still no closer to ascertaining the creative processes ten years later. A first-year cohort of creative-writing students on a module entitled '*Creativity*' were asked to place the following in order of their understanding of creative process:

Unconscious.

Instinct.

Memory.

Pre-conscious.

Imagination.

Ideas.

Conscious.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Word-list, 'Creativity Module, Dreaming Ideas – Surrealism and Making-Strange.' University of Winchester, March 2020.

Not one of the ten resultant lists had these states in the same order.

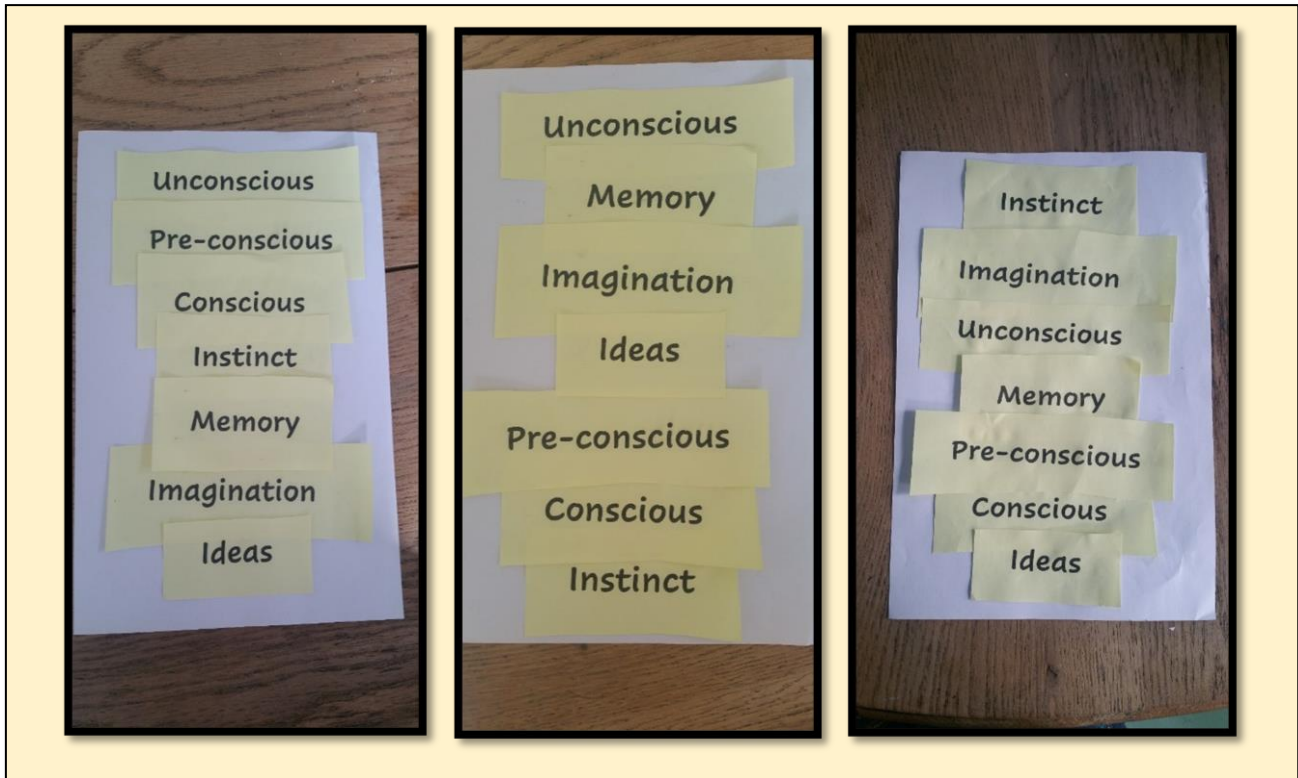


IMAGE 25.³⁰¹

Psychologist George Miller has written that ‘consciousness is a word worn smooth by a million tongues,’³⁰² and this small experiment suggests the same for ‘unconscious, pre-conscious, imagination, ideas...’

What order should they form in? Is there actually a ‘right’ answer?

Models such as the Wallis³⁰³ and Czikzentmilhayli³⁰⁴ stages have credibility in their content, but the staged elements they identify arguably need recognition of a non-linear complexity, and

³⁰¹ Samples student lists.

³⁰² George Miller quoted in Brophy, *Patterns of Creativity*, 35.

³⁰³ Graham Wallis *The Art of Thought*, (Tunbridge Wells, 2014).

³⁰⁴ Mihaly Czikzentmilhayli, *Creativity*, 79.

acknowledgement that creative process evokes a stopping and starting: a 'survival of the fittest' process wherein some ideas never make it past the boundary.

I am back to the boundary again, and the elusive quality of that moment of insight; a '... quivering edge when something is happening.'³⁰⁵

It is this edge that I have endeavoured to scrutinise, re-envisaging and reconceptualising through reflexive methodologies that made former invisible elements cognisant. That crumpled 'Jack of Spades'. The shadowy corner. How did my signature get there? My 'hey-presto', or perhaps 'ah ha' moment, that addresses this question is an articulation of critical research: a combining of experiences, locations and actions, re-remembered and re-positioned. New insights emerge alongside this altered scrutiny. If the signed 'Jack of Spades' was there all along; then I just hadn't seen where I'd dropped it. An act of creative remembering needed to occur,³⁰⁶ and from this there evolves a form of self re-invention which informs the autobiographical aspects of fiction.³⁰⁷

Autobiography is memory, and memory is experience. My reflexive conclusions do not suggest that ideas are magic stars plucked from the night sky, but rather that what might appear as instinctive, or innate, responses are born of unconscious influences and pre-existent knowledge drawn not from remembered experience, but the experience of memory.

If the experience of memory is what makes imagination, then imagination is not 'anything I want' or 'something that isn't real'. This has resonance with literacy within education, aligning with my research into reluctant writers for whom the notion of writing 'anything they want' produces a state of panic: a blankness of mind.³⁰⁸ They do not need to dream anything new. They need to actively draw from their unconscious. The experience of memory is a magic star within our grasp. It orbits the imagination and the preconscious. It leaves its silver trail across instinct and ideas. There is no linear order, but we can see its journey. There is linear order, but the trail slips out of sight.

This slippage brings me back to that 'quivering edge' and the continuing reflection on my writing self. Writing is not *just* memory. It is not *just* experience. The conjoined experience of memory is significant but there remains the mysterious 'something else'. If 'literature begins when a third

³⁰⁵ Emma Cocker, 'Writing without Writing', *The Creative Critic*, eds. Katja Hilevaara and Emily Orley, (London, Routledge, 2018) 53.

³⁰⁶ Paul Carter, quoted in Kroll, 'The Creative Writing Laboratory and its Pedagogy', *Research Methods in Creative Writing*, 107.

³⁰⁷ Kannemeyer, J. C. (2012) *J.M. Coetzee A Life in Writing*, (Amsterdam, Scribe Publications, 2012).

³⁰⁸ Waite, Blank in the Mind.

person is born in us that strips us of the power to say 'I'³⁰⁹ then I suggest that something new is born in that act of letting go and the unconscious steps into the limelight.

This moment of illumination requires a prepared mind, and I have sought to demonstrate ways such preparation can be magnified by active approaches. This magnification engages holistic practices, synthesising unique outcomes that in themselves connect writers, teachers, and learners with alternative creative and critical pedagogies. Through experimental and experiential research, distinct methodologies have evolved that recognise connections with intuition and psychology: these connections have been made tangible. They can be identified, replicated, and modified for either teacher or pupil needs. Throughout this thesis I have positioned myself as teacher and pupil. I have been writer and character. I have become a place, immersed myself in process, and beckoned the past into the present. These explorations into practice as research; the re-envisaging of approaches related to subconscious processes, and the consequent impact on the writing that subsequently emerged, form my original contributions to knowledge.

Ends.

³⁰⁹ H  l  ne Frichot, 'Instructions for Literature and Life', *The Creative Critic*, 144.

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Submitted Works

Longer titles have been submitted in full, as original hardcopy publications, but if preferred need only be read as extracts relevant to the Context Statement. A brief synopsis has been provided for each publication, and are outlined individually in the following appendices.

Appendix 1

Eclipse

Chapter 1 pp 1-8

MG Novel

Full synopsis for context:

Nicky is a twelve-year old boy from a Gypsy family who have been forced to abandon the travelling life and settle in one area. Nicky is a 'horse-whisperer' - he has a gift with horses and can make deep connections with them. However, against a backdrop of prejudice and false accusations, Nicky's ability to tame and heal horses is not always recognised, or welcome. Nicky forms a secret bond with a beautiful black horse, Eclipse, and creeps out to ride her at night. However, the danger of discovery is ever present, and with local horses being attacked by an unknown assailant, both the police and the horse-owning community are on high alert. The assailant leaves a sprayed graffiti mark on the attacked horses, and this is interpreted as the letter 'N'. Peers from school, Edward and Bretta, get suspicious - Bretta has seen Nicky on one of his secret rides – and they report Nicky to the police. Edward owns Eclipse and already has a deep dislike for Nicky. Edward's father is a respected horse-trainer, he is ambitious for his son's success in the world of show-jumping and was training him for the Olympics, but a recent accident has left Edward on crutches and unable to ride. He has plenty of time to undermine Nicky. He wouldn't want his father spotting that Nicky has more talent than him.

Nicky is released due to lack of evidence, but is grounded by his father, who is furious that his son has brought the family to the attention of the authorities. Unable to bear the confinement he runs away, finding his grandfather and other relatives, with whom his own parents are in conflict. His grandfather returns him to his parents, and Nicky later discovers who the true horse-assailant is when he catches Edward about to attack Eclipse. Edward has been faking his bad leg, and reveals a pathological hatred of horses as he has been forced to ride, and succeed in the horse-world, all his life. Following a fight where Nicky is badly beaten, he is discovered by Bretta and she exposes Edward to the police. Nicky is injured - he is now the one on crutches, but he is also vindicated, and welcomed to Edward's father's yard. Recognising Nicky's 'whispering' talents, he gives permission for Nicky to ride Eclipse. And Nicky, unlike Edward, will not be deterred by crutches and a bad leg.

Appendix 2

Forbidden

PART TWO: Chapter 21 - 25 pp 111-133

YA Novel

Full synopsis for context:

Fifteen-year-old Elinor has grown up in religious cult *True Cause*. She is content in her life, which is framed by the cult's rules and expectations. Followers live a meagre existence, dressing according to a strict code, their diet controlled and their housing basic. Connections with the outside world are forbidden. There are punishments, which include public whippings and expulsion from the cult, for those who deviate from the rules. The cult is led by the 'Master' Howard, who believes a great apocalypse is pending from which only *True Cause* members will survive. He is supported by Rael, his second in command. Rael is the one who undertakes to deliver the various punishments.

The cult's elite live in a mansion. This is also where Howard lives. He believes he has alien forbears and special powers. Howard must marry multiple young women from within the cult, in order to pass his powers to a new generation of Followers. Elinor is one of the 'chosen', and she must bond with Howard on her sixteenth birthday. She sees this as a privilege... until she meets Jamie.

Jamie, an 'outsider', meets Elinor when she has strayed further than she should in the cult's woodland estate. She is both repelled and fascinated by him, afraid of his views but compelled to keep hearing them, and they begin a secret and dangerous liaison. Battling with these new feelings she undergoes a 'brainwashing' therapy and Howard decides she must become his bride earlier than her sixteenth birthday. Elinor is bonded with Howard and moves to the elevated role of Bride, living with the other brides at Howard's mansion. She strives to comply with the expectations of how she must behave, but memories soak through -fragmented memories of a different life. She slowly realises she hasn't always been a True Cause Follower. She gets glimpses of long ago moments. A boy. A birthday party. A brown toy bear.

Elinor discovers that Howard and his Divine Writings are faked, and nothing in the cult is what it seemed. She wants to turn to Jamie for help but discovers he has had his own agenda. He has been working for an organisation called Cultwatch, which exposes manipulative and abusive cults. She is devastated and no longer knows who to trust. It is Rael who supports her. He wants her to lure Jamie to a secret meeting place. He persuades her that Jamie's interest in the cult is because he really wants to be a member. They just have to help him let go of his old life.

Elinor agrees to help Rael. A meeting is arranged but Jamie doesn't come. Instead, she finds her old bear, placed in the woods as if someone is waiting for her to find it. She realises Jamie was the boy who gave her the bear for her birthday. Jamie helps her to escape. He had been looking for her for years. Elinor struggles to exist in the outside world, as she feels she has no purpose.

Howard, convinced by Rael that the apocalypse is imminent, gasses himself and the other brides. Rael does not die. He disappears, having transferred all the cult's funds to his account. Elinor realises she has a purpose. With Jamie, she can help de-programme her fellow followers. She, more than anyone, knows what it was like to be a member of True Cause.

Appendix 3

Trick of the Mind

(Not chaptered) pp 104- 178

YA Novel

Full synopsis for context:

Told as a dual voice narrative, the main characters are sixteen-year-old Erin and seventeen-year-old Matt. They have grown up in a socially disadvantaged area called Leigh Cove. Erin, capable and methodical, is obsessed with learning stage magic, and has ambitions to be one of the few female magicians. She attempts to teach Matt some basic tricks but awkward and lanky, dyslexic and demotivated, Matt is clumsy and slow to learn. Unlike Erin, he doesn't know what he wants from life. It is his younger brother, Mark, who has all the talents. Matt is also bullied at school, singled out by Billy Owen, a local gang leader. The gang hang out at a ruined castle on the edge of the town.

Everyone sees Matt as 'weird', and even his mum says he has been a 'magnet attracting trouble all his life'. However, strange things happen when Matt is around. Magical things. Healing and mind-control. An uncanny empathy with others. Just his touch brought a dead pigeon back to life, and the two become inseparable.

Erin develops a crush on Matt, but Matt sees her only as a friend. He has a hopeless, unrequited passion for Kirsty, a popular, feisty teenager who hangs around the castle. She is also Billy's girlfriend. Kirsty is unkind to Erin, but she flirts with Matt, increasing his interest in her and evoking jealousy in Erin.

Following an argument at home, Matt runs away to London and lives rough. He finds new friends among the homeless, in particular a girl called Sarah and a boy called Dan, who protect him. He also catches the attention of café owner Annie when her brain-damaged daughter, Ella, seems more aware when Matt is around.

Meanwhile, back at Leigh Cove, Erin is desperate for Matt to call and feels hurt and rejected when he doesn't. Then Kirsty goes missing, her body later found by Erin in the castle moat. The police are looking for clues, and suspects. Erin begins to question why Matt *really* ran away...

Still in London, Matt's only means of earning money is busking, and he tries out the magic tricks Erin taught him, but it is his 'strange magics' that draw attention. With the pigeon, Pox, on his shoulder, he circulates an area around Covent Garden, gaining a strong following. During one of the Covent Garden busking acts he is arrested on suspicion of murder. Erin has provided sufficient evidence for the police, 'tweaking' the facts slightly through her anger about Matt's rejection. After all, it *could* have been him.

It is Sarah who stays in touch with Matt while he is awaiting trial in a detention centre, building imaginative ideas about Matt's future... a 'mind magician' with the scope to have a following of thousands. Hunched in his cell, Matt doesn't believe this is a future he will ever step towards.

Tormented by guilt, Erin revokes her statement to the police... she has also remembered scenarios where Billy was abusive to Kirsty and knows she has done Matt a great injustice. Billy was more than capable of harming - even killing - his girlfriend. Matt is released. The 'Mind Magician' scope opens up after all. But who is Matt really - and where do those strange magics come from...

Appendix 4

Game Girls

(Not chaptered) Fern's scenes pp 1-14; 35-31; 54-59; 69-73; 89-94; 109-113; 122-127; 132-138; 141-149; 162-167; 182-185; 198-204; 211-215; 222-224; 241-247; 251-259; 272-278; 297-302; 306-310; 310-316; 317-345.

YA Novel

Full synopsis for context:

Alex's mother sets her up in a house in leafy suburban Britain when she moves abroad. Alex needs to finish college, and, with no mother to stop her, decides there is a better way to make money than working in the local fast-food takeaway. Sex-services provide a much higher hourly rate. She draws in Courtney, already damaged from abuse at the hands of her father, and Fern. Alex and Courtney are streetwise and outwardly confident. Fern, whose parent's guest house is on the river's edge, is quiet, artistic, and lonely. The river itself is her solace; the landscape, the smells and the wildlife. There are strong tides, though. Dangerous undercurrents and a boggy shoreline. It is a place where it would be easy to disappear.

Alex throws a party for her eighteenth birthday, and Fern develops a crush on Alex's brother, Aaron.

The girls begin to slip into prostitution when Alex invites boys round to the house, promising the others this will be the only time, and it is a chance to earn good money... except it isn't the only time. Business grows. The girls, with their secret brothel which now attracts men of all ages, get increasingly involved and take greater risks.

Away from the brothel, Alex develops a relationship with Hugh, a rich business-man - much older than her. Courtney finds friendship, and love, from a student she met at the beach. Fern's obsession with Aaron is squashed when, at another party, she sees him with his girlfriend.

There are more clients at the brothel. Alex sees them as business deals. Courtney, who has learnt to switch off, is emotionally distanced from the experience. It is Fern who is constantly traumatised.

Hugh suggests Alex joins him for the summer, sailing the world in his luxury yacht. The brothel has served its purpose and Alex no longer wishes to continue it - after all, it's not something she would like Hugh to find out about. The girls offer their services for one last night, but Fern is badly beaten by her client. Alex realises they can't call the police. The brothel would be exposed, she would be in trouble with the law, with her mother... and worst of all, she would lose Hugh.

Persuading Courtney that they must get Fern back to her parents, the girls carry the semi-conscious Fern to Alex's car. They will concoct a story about what happened. The tide is high, the weather wild, and there is no sign of Fern's parents at the guesthouse. Alex suggests they are in but have moved the car somewhere else, fearing floods. She tells Courtney to go and find them. From the back seat, Fern sounds weak, begging for help.

Courtney, heading back from the house without success, sees Alex dragging Fern away from the car, away from the house. There is a small splash as Alex pushes her into the river.

Fern's body is not found. Courtney battles with her terrible secret. Alex joins Hugh, the yacht setting out on a summer's day. Hugh leaves Alex in charge while he goes to get champagne, and then stops, puzzled. A police boat is chasing them, its lights flashing...

Appendix 5

Wordtamer

Monograph, creative writing in education. pp 3-12; 67-71; 85-98; 99-107.

Full outline for context:

In identification of the struggles within education related to performance driven learning, and with many pupils turning away from both reading and creative writing, this publication seeks to establish creative practices within a class-based setting. Based on extensive research into literacy skills, pupil engagement with creative writing tasks and teachers' pressure to focus on skills needed to pass tests, *Wordtamer* aligns creative writing with broader lifelong skills related to empathy, communication, imagination and creative approaches to problem solving.

The material explores existing professional creative writing practices, adapting and evolving methodologies that enable teaching to achieve mandatory goals, yet also to incite imagination, creative curiosity and motivations related to literacy and writing.

Wordtamer is structured in three distinct sections:

Part One: This section discusses key issues related to creativity and creative writing within education, using evidence drawn from active research in schools, and established theory, to identify challenges and explore potential outcomes. Methodologies that draw from cross-curricular learning are introduced, merging writing with art, drama, geography, cultural debate, social and emotional responses, experimentation and experiential practices.

Part Two: This section identifies core craft skills related to the development of character, setting, plot and dialogue, all linked to the writing of fiction yet aligned with established current curriculum needs. There is an additional focus on writing with pace and atmosphere, all underpinned by kinaesthetic approaches to learning. This section also explores the advantages and challenges of working in silent spaces, the collaboration of ideas, and the importance of constructive feedback. The content draws from a range of author experiences related to evolving original fiction, reinterpreting methodologies such as role play, freewriting and world-building as relevant activities for the evolution of creative writing tasks for pupils.

Part Three: This section comprises a selection of ten templates, evolved through focused active-research projects, that offer a frame for creative writing activities that can be utilised for half a day, a week – even a term. The ten activities connect to clear genres and writing aims and motivations: Myths, legends, fantasy, science fiction, dystopia, crime, the 'moral' tale, contemporary narratives and stories that deal with world-issues all connect with Part Two, combining craft skills with genre and creative approaches. Evolved for a range of learning levels and abilities, the content offers escalating challenges for young writers as it moves through material suitable for lower primary up to that which connects with needs for secondary-school levels, and beyond.

Pitched primarily for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 teachers, the content additionally has value for teachers and lecturers of creative writing at all levels, including independent writers seeking inspiration and support for their own writing needs.

The book links with a website www.wordtamer.co.uk, which is a free school resource.