



# Fictocritical Sentences

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## ABSTRACT

'Fictocriticism' refers to writing that performs yet also problematizes the key manoeuvres of both fiction and criticism. Fictocriticism is a term that has been taken up in Australian academic contexts to describe writing that is concerned with an interplay of writing 'positions' and with the specific or local contexts that enable the production of these 'positions'.

*Fictocritical Sentences* primarily enacts a fictocritical mapping of local cultural events. The 'events' are essentially concerned with crime and trauma in Adelaide. They include the disappearance of the three Beaumont children in 1966, the 'Family' murders of the 1980s, the 'Truro' murders of the 1970s and the 'reforming' of 'criminal' and 'neglected' boys on the *Fitzjames*, a hulk moored off the metropolitan coast of Adelaide, during the 1880s. The fictocritical treatment of these events simulates their unresolved or traumatised condition. Differences between 'invention' and 'explication' matter most at times of personal and public trauma. A problematic yet important use for the unstable combination of both the literary and the critical can be found in the mapping of trauma events.

A secondary concern is the relationship between electronic writing (hypertext) and fictocriticism. The mapping of significant (and virtually uncharted) Adelaide trauma events and the relationship between fictocriticism and hypertext is presented in print and hypertext works.

Fictocritical strategies can be used to simulate rather than synthesise the textual field of a given event. Fictocritical strategies are effective in dealing with competing truth effects and their desire for mastery. Fictocriticism can be a way of documenting the textual or discursive field of the local environment in a way that encourages the reader/user/listener to negotiate his own path through that landscape.

In reviewing my fictocritical work I have come to realise that fictocriticism is concerned both with producing and destabilising the effect of 'presence'. Of equal importance is the mapping of a particular textual field in such a way that the play of difference produces a multiplicity of reading positions.

## STATEMENT AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

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Simon Robb

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This introduction discusses my fictocritical writing from 1995 to 2000. It describes the aims and methods of that writing and attempts critically to assess it. The fictocritical pieces are discussed in chronological order of production.

The term 'fictocriticism' has been circulating in the Australian academy at least since the late 1980s. In an article published in 1991 ('On Fictocriticism') Noel King and Stephen Muecke suggest that the origins of 'fictocriticism' (a term they use interchangeably with the 'paraliterary') could be located in the work of Fred Jameson (1987) and Rosalind Krauss (1981). Jameson uses the term 'fictocritical' and Krauss the term 'paraliterary' to describe a writing where the 'stable and separate bodies of "fiction" and "criticism" [are] replaced by compounds, mergings, mutations and mistakes' (Muecke and King 13).

Amanda Nettelbeck suggests (along with King and Muecke) that fictocriticism is yet another 'symptom' of postmodernism. What perhaps differentiates fictocriticism from simply being postmodern fiction (the example used by Muecke and King is *White Noise*), or poststructuralist writing (Derrida for example) is that it is an unstable combination of both the literary and the critical. In both Muecke and King, and Krauss, the fictocritical (or paraliterary) refers to a process where fiction and criticism become 'part of a single device for the generation of a new kind of text' (Nettelbeck 4). This 'single device' is described by Nettelbeck as producing

hybridized writing that moves between the poles of fiction ('invention'/'speculation') and criticism ('deduction'/'explication'), of subjectivity ('interiority') and objectivity ('exteriority'). (4)

'Fictocriticism' refers therefore to writing that enacts yet also problematizes the key manoeuvres of both fiction and criticism.

In 1992 Hodge and McHoul suggested that fictocriticism was one possible strategy for opening up a positive and self-reflexive politics, meaning the 'truth effect' of commentary is opened up to critical scrutiny. Hodge and McHoul cite *Reading the Country* (co-authored by Muecke) as an example of a fictocriticism that

interrogates its own mode of production and whose self-reflexive politics re-configures the conventional relationship between the white academic and indigenous 'other'.

Muecke has continued to deploy fictocritical practices. In *No Road* there is an unstable mix between travel writing, personal anecdote and 'theory'. Each genre is used as both an object and method of writing:

The becoming of writing is its preparedness to allow a completely different medium to infuse the text, to take words which are supposed to function in one way in one domain, to borrow words from this domain and let them reproduce and play havoc in a new one. (230)

The aim of this method is to construct new cultural spaces for the subject to inhabit (231-2). As Nettelbeck points out however, self-consciously hybridised writing practices have always been a part of the Western literary tradition. The fictocritical turn is not then a new form of 'knowing' but rather the move of a certain form of writing into the academy (6-7). This move into the academy has been assisted particularly by Noel King (see also his 'My Life Without Steve...' and 'Occasional Doubts...') and Stephen Muecke. In terms of the circulation of 'fictocriticism' in academic publications Nettelbeck notes that

Recently established Australian journals, such as *UTS Review* [co-edited by Muecke], *Wedge* and the electronically circulated *antimony*, invite fictocritical submissions....Longer established Australian journals such as *Southern Review* and *Westerly*, also increasingly provide space for fictocritical work. (10)

Perhaps the most significant and recent example of the 'visibility' of fictocriticism in Australia has been the publication of the anthology *The Space Between: Australian Women Writing Fictocriticism*. Nettelbeck describes the collection as being 'a series of investigative writings connected by their agonistic relation to the interpretive gesture' (13). Fictocriticism is therefore a term that has been taken-up in Australian academic contexts to describe writing that is concerned with an interplay of writing 'positions' and with the specific or local contexts that enable the production of these 'positions'.

This brief review of the circulation and visibility of fictocriticism contextualises my fictocritical work from 1995 to 2000. The location of each work is indicated in brackets after its title. The two audio works are located in the appendices and are

also reproduced in print version. The Internet address of the hypertext work is given in addition to a map of that work in the appendices.

'Academic Divination' (p. 27) concerns itself with the proposition that fictocriticism and hypertext are both technologies that promise to produce a particular and 'desirable' postmodern subjectivity. They are both technologies of the self, and this idea owes much to Ian Hunter's work on critical practice as an ethics of the self and to Noel King's reading of Hunter's work with respect to fictocritical practices (see King 1994; Kerr). Ethics here refers to a form of 'life conduct' modelled in the English classroom whereby the student is encouraged towards oscillating self-expressiveness and self-scrutiny. While engaged in the process of reading texts students are simultaneously engaged in a process of reading themselves via the text. (Hunter 'Aesthetics' 364-5; 'Anxieties' 6). This has the primary effect of producing a self which is both critical and expressive, despite the apparently ideological setting of the classroom. Indeed Hunter eschews the idea that 'English' is essentially an ideological tool either imparting 'false consciousness' or delivering liberation ('Anxieties' 12). The important point for Hunter is that he is not talking about ethics as a 'moral' discipline, but as series of techniques of self-making, some of which may be in contradiction to the moral code associated with that ethic (Hunter 'Aesthetics' 368). Indeed Hunter's work on ethics, which owes much to Foucault, is consistently at odds with the notion that literary criticism has essentially any moral outcome at all. His position is that English is always about the problematization of self and text within a pastoral environment (an environment of scrutiny and encouragement) which may mean that the subject is led to moral extremes, as opposed to moral 'goodness' (Hunter 'Aesthetics' 368). What is problematized is the 'knowing self' of the student through its interaction with the text within the context of the problematizing classroom (Hunter 'Aesthetics' 364-5). My reading of Hunter at this stage (1995) suggested to me that fictocriticism was a technique of writing that deliberately opened up to the reader this process of ethical self-formation. Secondly, opening up or exposing writing as an ethical process also opened up the possibility of constructing a positive moral/political/cultural self through a specific procedure of writing. Or to put it another way, the fictocritical refers not to a new practice of ethical self-production but to a self-conscious ethical production orientated around diverse political or moral ends. As Kerr puts it, fictocriticism 'simply pays attention to and makes visible what is necessarily effaced in the process of writing the academic essay' (95).

'Academic Divination' was written in a deliberately provocative manner. It was the first and last attempt at a confident and assertive academic persona. Following this essay the style of writing that I adopted consciously absorbed critical anxiety into its structure and style. The fictocritical genre, it seemed, demanded that critical ethical work be accepted as a structuring device. An example of this, and one used in 'Academic Divination', is Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse*, simulating the subjectivity of the lover. In a sense, Barthes is documenting the subjectivity of a lover from *inside*, as opposed to representing it from the outside. The 'expert' is immersed in the object of study, hence the blurring of boundaries between critical discourse and its object.

What is obviously at stake in this blurring is the position of the academic expert and the 'proof' of 'his' mastery over the ethical process. Another way of approaching this is to ask if the ethical formation of critical self-hood can take place in a non-linear textual structure. The kind of subjectivity that Hunter refers to, for instance, is one generated in a continuous engagement between the text and self. The desired result is, and always will be the 'appearance' of non-fragmented self that has mastered a certain technique of knowledge. The 'presence' of the academic expert is an effect of a writing that *describes* rather than *is* the object or field of inquiry. This point is taken up in 'Academic Divination'. An important question here is to what extent 'immersion' writing is doing the job of the humanities essay. To what extent can the academic justify his position if he is not doing new intellectual work (analysis, critique, synthesis) on behalf of others, and in reference to an established body of knowledge? Indeed this is one of the prerequisites of the PhD thesis.

It seems that one answer to this question is that the fictocritical writer can supply the 'field' of inquiry, the units of knowledge formation, and entice the reader to 'complete' or synthesise this into their own kind of understanding (see Ulmer in 'Grammatology and Hypermedia' for example). In terms of an ethics, the incomplete or fragmented essay does not document a completed process of self-making, but documents part of the process in the hope that this partiality will encourage an active or 'writerly' engagement with it. This is one of the points stressed in 'Academic Divination' concerning both the fictocritical and the hypertextual. The notion that incompleteness allows for a kind of liberation of the reader's understanding is a dominant idea in, for example, Bolter's reading of hypertext. However, this indicates a mis-understanding of the ethical process of self-problematization and seems to be based on the idea that if a text is



'completed' by the author then the reader is placed in the position of passive consumer. In this scenario the reader is also 'oppressed' by the claim of mastery being made by the author. However, if the critical-aesthetic process describes the way a text is *used* by the student to open the self out to moral scrutiny by the 'expert', then the 'empowering' or liberating process (if it can be called that) is not a property of any particular form of text but of the critical process itself, which can be enacted *on any kind of text*. Secondly, the exaggerated claims that surrounded hypertext were possibly due to a mis-reading of Barthes' notion of the readerly/writerly distinction. Some texts may encourage the reader to write, or to take active part in the composition of new texts (the writerly text) but the process of critical self-formation can take place equally with either the writerly or readerly text.

'Alien Sick' (p. 35), a hypertextual work published on-line by the Electronic Writing Research Ensemble (EWRE) aimed to develop a hypertextual fictocritical style. The structure was modelled specifically on Sue Hampton's 'Soundtracks', a collage of writing about women in publishing which presented fragments of text interspaced with gaps and authorial silences. The organisation of the textual field could be read as a kind of documentation of the position of women in publishing. What attracted me to this work was the enacting of an idea in the structure of the writing rather than the idea being described and supported by argumentation. The work could be said to have a position which it demonstrates in a logical manner in the absence of an overarching masterful voice.

'Alien Sick' was therefore an attempt to document a field of research, to multiply and de-centre the presence of the expert and to allow for a writerly experience all within the space of a hypertextual environment. The work is structured around three key words: alien; body; theory. 1995 was a time when fractured narratives about government conspiracies, alien contact and abject mysteries became part of popular culture via *The X Files*. Quotations for 'Alien Sick' were taken from sources that contained one, if not more references to the key words and placed in a relationship with other quotations so that meaning was complicated or made ambiguous. The structuring principle was one of both continuity and discontinuity. 'Alien Sick' is reproduced here in print form primarily because I think it failed as a hypertext work. The text appeared on screen as a scroll-like document. In other words it existed on a single scrollable page, rather than each textual unit occupying a single page. Hypertext links might move the reader from paragraph 15 to 3, for example, but the reader remained on the same scroll. The process of

hypertext linkage had no 'surprise' elements nor did it shift the reader into another generic register, nor did it 'reward' the reader for their expenditure. Selecting hypertext links to change the order of the reading experience did not seem to offer liberation, nor did it seem to overthrow the tyranny of linear thinking. It seemed that for hypertextual linkage to be successful there needed to be some 'pay-off' for the reader's investment. It takes effort to read 'against the grain'. It seemed to me that a textual field needed to speak in more diverse registers for the activation of a successful hypertext. I was later to turn to the 'mystorical' methods of Greg Ulmer to assist with this project.

In summary, 'Alien Sick' failed as a hypertextual device yet succeeded (I believe) in de-centering authorial mastery. 'Alien Sick' was not an analysis of 'the alien phenomena' in any orthodox sense, yet it proved that an ambiguous and resonant textual field could generate or evoke a desire to 'make sense of' complex cultural phenomena.

'Family Values' (p. 41 and Appendix A) was a radio feature made in collaboration with Lachlan Colquhoun, free-lance journalist. The feature concerned itself with the so-called 'Family' murders. 'Family Values' is reproduced here both in print and on CD. The work is designed to be listened to, rather than read. The print version is primarily for reference purposes. The print version names speakers and sources of material used.

'Collaboration' may sometimes be a virtue but in the context of thesis writing I need to make the point that my collaborator was an expert in his field. I collaborated with him as does the writer who, for example, consults expert commentary. Questions of 'authorship' and 'citation' can be answered in two ways: Lachlan Colquhoun was consulted as an expert on interview technique, the presence of 'on-air' commentary and studio production. The initial idea, the analysis and description of the subject and method of approach and the writing of the script was my work except where indicated in the print version.

The 'Family' has been described by print and electronic media as an alleged group of homosexual killers responsible for, but never convicted of, five murders that occurred in Adelaide from the late 1970s to the early 1980s. Along with the media texts about the 'Family' is a widespread rumour-mill which perpetuates the 'presence' of the group. The 'Family' could be described as a homophobic

fictocritical text: a merging of fiction and fact, open ended, unstable, and mobilised for the preservation of sexual boundaries.

'Family Values' divided the textual field into two major narratives. The first of these 'explained' the 'Family' in terms of a predatory homosexual power-elite that had mysteriously evaded the law. The second explanation was that the 'Family' murders were separate incidents linked together by a desperate police force whose theories were in turn supported by a homo-phobic tabloid press. Pervading the cultural experience of the 'Family' were feelings of paranoia and dread. Analysing the textual field it became apparent that it could be explored using narrative conventions of the crime and horror genres. The aim here was to describe the structure of relationships between competing 'Family' narratives, to evoke their 'lived' texture, not by describing them from the outside, but to 'perform' them as narratives. A further aim was to perform the narratives as parodies, to create a kind of critical distance for the listener. In other words, we wanted to play with listener 'immersion' in the narrative and with their alienation from it. Ambiguity seemed to be a strong effect of the 'Family' event, so it seemed fitting that when mapping this event we were to play with ambiguity as much as possible. An oscillation between fiction and documentary was therefore of key importance for the feature. For there to be an oscillation that simulated the object of study however, the relationship between fiction and documentary needed to be ambiguous. We needed to fictionalise the real and locate the real within a fictional setting. This 'doubling', noted by Kerr as a feature of the fictocritical, was deployed largely to de-stabilise the authority of any narrative argument or position (95). Fictocritical strategies in this case were used to map rather than synthesise the textual field of a given topic. Indeed fictocritical strategies seemed most effective in dealing in an even-handed way with competing truth effects, and their desire for domination.

It is this simulation of the structure of the object of study in the writing that we see in Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse*, and Sue Hampton's 'Soundtracks'. In this structure we see the withdrawal of the 'masterful' expert. Perhaps a better way to put this is that the expert's central organising function is de-centred and placed in the background, organising the 'paradigm of possibilities' as Ulmer puts it, yet withdrawing from closure and linearity ('Grammatology and Hypermedia'). In 'The Object of Post-Criticism' Ulmer describes this process as 'textual mime' which both the writing of Derrida and the post-critical (or 'paraliterary') perform (94):

The implication of textual mime for post-criticism, informing para-literature as a hybrid of literature and criticism, art and science, is that knowledge of an object of study may be obtained without conceptualisation or explanation. Rather, as if following Wittgenstein's admonition that 'the meaning is the use', Derrida enacts or performs (mimes) the compositional structuration of the referent, resulting in another text of the same 'kind'...Post-criticism then functions as an epistemology of performance — knowing as making, producing, doing, acting. (94)

The mapping of a cultural event or an intellectual issue by de-centring the authorial voice and linear argumentation can be augmented, at least according to Ulmer, by utilising what he calls the mystorical method. When the writer or researcher is committed to something other than the metanarrative, with its associated mastery and objectification of the subject, Ulmer suggests that the writer turn primarily to Barthes' notion of the text to find specific instructions for proceeding mystorically ('Mystory' 315). In the opening to *A Lover's Discourse* Barthes' outlines the way his book is constructed. It describes the differences between discursive sites used and their structural relationship. Ulmer summarises the discourse sites: primary works of language and literature; secondary or 'learned' texts; texts of popular culture; 'texts' of lived experience (315). He goes on to note two important points about these texts. The first is that they exist in a condition of equivalence; their value is the same, as opposed to the orthodox treatise whereby the unifying expert narrative is given pre-eminence. The second point is that the texts are chosen for many reasons, some because they enlighten, some because they seduce, some because they are part of a memory of understanding (316). The importance here is that the motivation for the textual inclusion is likewise not dominated by a strict appeal to orthodoxy. Ulmer adds, importantly I think, that the mystory must at some point 'accede' to the metastory if it is to be 'credited at all, received and counted', but that this acknowledgment may exist within the confines of the personal anecdote (318). The notion of the 'figure' of language is Barthes' insistence that the textual site be 'spoken' in a way whereby the reader recognises a 'lived experience' within that mode of discourse. The figures of language must incite a certain emotional memory which 'fills in' the gaps in the discontinuous and fragmented text (316-17).

There is nothing particularly novel about the sites of the mystory or Barthes' 'text'. What is novel or significant is that the text fragments are not stitched together in an authoritative way. The 'text' or 'mystory' is not given an

argumentative structure but rather an arbitrary or mechanical one (fragments are listed alphabetically, for example). 'The paradigmatic axis of language, the language of selection, we might say, is given predominance over the syntagmatic axis of combination' (317). We could also say that the paradigmatic axis, with respect to the 'Family' for instance, are the many kinds of texts that go to make up that cultural event. In the mystorical model, the gaps between the textual fragments remain, unsutured by the academic doctor.

'Family Values' was intended as an audio map of the so-called 'Family' murders. The desire of the producers was to document the various narrative sites and registers that were linked to the experience of the 'Family'. The aims were achieved by deploying fictocritical methods of double-voicing, the de-centering of the expert and of simulating the structural relationship of the field of research. The experts in this case were Jennifer Byrne (television journalist), Trevor Kipling (Police Detective in charge of investigations) and Kenton Miller (a spokesperson from the gay community).

The results indicated that fictocritical methodologies, while supposedly at odds with orthodox analysis, were an appropriate means of documenting the relationship between dominant narratives of understanding and of opening new spaces for understanding. The lesson learned here was that fictocritical methods can replicate the multiplicity of meanings of the object of study when any particular line of argument, narrative or genre is both enacted in the full sense and simultaneously de-centred and made unstable.

The paradigmatic axis of 'Family Values' could have included interviews with relatives of the victims. We initially chose not to include such interviews because we thought it would be too distressing for the people involved. The textual field was then not inclusive but selective, and one of the priorities of the selection processes was not to do any harm to those already wounded. As it happened, 'Family Values' used the words of Rob Kelvin, the father of one of the murdered boys. The words came from a transcribed media interview and court appearance and were spoken by an actor. Secondly, the scenario depicting a normal family at home for dinner drew on material concerning the Kelvin family. The decision to do this was probably made easier by the fact that Kelvin's voice was already 'disembodied'. It was not a 'voice' when we came upon it but 'writing' which we took up and read, as we were entitled to, because it was already inside the public realm. The question remains whether our 'reading', by which I refer to the

performing of Kelvin's 'writing', was in any way doing harm to someone already grievously hurt. Directions given to the actor who performed Kelvin's lines (as well as the lines of the police) were always to be 'more fake'. Again here is the 'doubling' imperative of fictocriticism, whereby the real is de-stabilised through fictional means. My point is that the 'fiction' of fictocriticism is a style of working which destabilises, alienates or undermines the 'reality' effect of non-fiction texts. This would include transcripts of the victim's families. The ultimate aim is to complicate meaning. Hurt may well have been done to Kelvin and his family, although none was intended. Hurt was always potentially there once control of Kelvin's words left him: once voice was turned into text and became a part of the paradigmatic axis of the textual field.

**'Greetings from Adelaide'** (<<http://ensemble.va.com.au/tableau/simon/>> and Appendix B). The following is the commission 'brief' supplied by the EWRE to each writer for the Tableau project (a project specific to the Internet):

Tableau's premise is the city: Adelaide. As place, time, tense, sense. It's the 'about' of writing oneself autobiographically, through the physical stratas of city, and it's especially 'about' how to write that to/for someone, as audience/reader, elsewhere. The project is aimed at a 'new monumentality' (see Gregory Ulmer), both personal and communal which creates different routes through individual memory and through collective cultural memory.

The project, as a 'new monumentality', is founded on the relations between the local and the global (these relations are 'settings' for self and community) between the particular and the general, and between private and public, in terms of subject/subjectivity/subjection (eg, the limitations and potentials of one's own locale, and its availability as material for re-working).

The organising principle for this collage-work — a type of writing which is interdisciplinary, both in terms of written genres and visual/performative practices — is invention, the continual discoveries of narrative, myth and pleasure. And the changing configurations of technology, institution, geography and behaviour.

In response to the Tableau brief I created the hypertext 'Greetings from Adelaide'. My intention was to fulfil the key elements of the brief while working on the

'Beaumont case'. The 'case' involves the disappearance of three young children, apparently abducted from an Adelaide suburban beach (Gleneelg) in January 1966. The children have never been found, despite extensive searches, and in particular, a long running and very public 'psychic' search, that concluded in 1996. Media attention to The Beaumonts has also been extensive, and has been the primary source of information and narrative framing for most people. The Beaumonts were significant not only to Adelaide people, but to a wide Australian audience. The Beaumonts' disappearance marked public space as a place of danger and instability. It opened up for the citizens of Adelaide the notion that public space was inhabited by something other than a folksy 'community'. It indicated a failure of policing and of surveillance, and that there was something in the social order that was highly resistant to these powers. The Beaumonts are the children who never grew up, and who have never died. Like Peter Pan, they resist adulthood. The Beaumonts are complex figures of an imaginary and real childhood. For many, they occupy a troubling space between the real and the imaginary, of both personal and social identity. The Beaumonts are the space where the personal and the social co-exist. They are for many a first experience of being afraid, of feeling that they may not be protected, that they are vulnerable and that they belong to a social group 'children' who share this danger. The Beaumont disappearance was an experience where the personal and the social blurred. This experience was particularly powerful for children at the time (I was one of them); 'that could have been me'.

I wanted to document this textual field through the application of fictocritical/hypertextual means. It was a field of personal and public 'feelings'. It was a field of loss, fear and memories. It was a field where the real blurred with the imaginary. Structurally, the Beaumont disappearance is not a resolved narrative. At the centre of the texts concerning the Beaumont disappearance is loss—the absence of resolution. There is therefore a structure of fragments that links personal experience with public trauma, and which has at its centre a loss of the referent.

The similarities between the Tableau brief, the fictocriticism I was working with, and the structure and feeling of the Beaumont disappearance were serendipitous. The electronic environment, with its hypertext links, its decentred network of textual fragments, seemed to work well with these other elements. Indeed the notion of a 'new monumentality' (a form of remembering that was

electronic, post-colonial, interactive) seemed absolutely appropriate to the Beaumont disappearance and to its structural 'feeling'.

'Greetings from Adelaide' loosely followed the mystorical method for choosing the textual sites. Popular texts concerning the Beaumont disappearance were taken from contemporary print media. Popular texts refer here also to photographs taken at the time which appeared in the print media. Other images were shot at Glenelg and concerned myself acting or performing a search, in the style of a mid-1960s cop. The impetus for this 'performance' came from the idea, already pursued in previous work, that when the position of expert is de-stabilised and de-centred the 'expert' becomes part of the textual field. The subject and the object of study become interchangeable. Secondly, following the mystorical method, the expert's subjectivity is of equivalent value to any subjectivity present within a non-hierarchical knowledge system, or research field. Placing myself in the field of research, or at least the image of myself as someone located within that time and place, seemed a logical extension of the fictocritical/mystorical methodology. Lastly, these performances, more than any other aspect of the work, enacted the 'doubling' gesture mentioned above as a significant feature of fictocriticism. It simulated the past, enacted the 'reality' of the research journey, and played with the uncanniness of destabilised space and time.

The 'expert' commentary in 'Greetings from Adelaide' is taken firstly from Barthes' *Camera Lucida* and secondly is a series of reflexive pieces written by myself. The Barthes' material is a commentary on 'reading' photographs and my material is a reflection on a writing that enacts or performs 'loss'. The third major writing site is that of the anecdotal. Here there are reflections of personal experiences with 'death' 'loss' and 'fear'.

The structural relationship between the textual fragments is one of sameness and difference. Each page of the hypertext has two alternate paths or links that can be activated. Each textual site (in the mystorical sense) can be followed to its end, or it can be used as a link to another textual site. In this way I attempt to demonstrate the interrelationship between the personal and the public and the local and the global.

'Greetings from Adelaide' is an attempt at constructing an electronic monument utilising mystorical and fictocritical methods. The main dissatisfaction I feel with the project is the way that the mystorical anecdotes seem to be more of an



indulgence than a source of 'enlightenment'. The anecdotes possibly represent a mis-reading of Ulmer's method, and that of Barthes'. The anecdotes are about how I came to know, or had an experience of 'loss', death' and 'fear'. What is not addressed here is why it is important to others to know about 'my' experiences of these key terms, and why or how these experiences shed light on the Beaumont disappearance in general. They are anecdotes about how knowledge or ideas come to us and yet they seem somehow to be confessions, waiting to be acknowledged or taken into the 'true'. Here is an abandonment of the academic's duty; to do intellectual work for others. The personal anecdote is too close to confession to be left dis-connected from the integrating 'mastery' of academic work. It requires too much of the reader—too much pastoral care, 'healing' and absolution. The un-integrated anecdotal left my work from that point on.

My response to the success or otherwise of the project is documented in two subsequent essays: 'Naive and Sentimental Writing' (p. 58) and 'Nostalgic Moments' (p. 61) both published in 1998. Both these essays suggest a disenchantment with electronic writing. The main source of this dis-enchantment was my mis-reading of the electronic environment and its unique features.

Theorists of the electronic environment (Lanham; Bolter; Landow) stress the convergence of postmodern theory, modernist experimental aesthetics and the fundamental qualities of hypertextuality. These similarities are mentioned in 'Academic Divination' and refer mainly to structural features such as the de-centred, interactive network. Here was the realisation of postmodern theory and avant-garde modernist practice. What more could we want? The reality is that hypertextuality is indeed the realisation of these print-theories and practices but hypertextuality is not the realisation of the unique qualities of the electronic medium, which are animation, sound, conversation and play. The sites on the Internet that most effectively utilise its capacities are 'chat-rooms' and 'games'. In other words, sites that produce writing as an artefact of interaction. The de-centred network of interactivity is an already given within the textual space of print in terms of a reading experience. 'Interactivity', in the sense of a writerly composition of hypertext documents is closer to ordinary reading than to 'conversation' or 'play', which demands a constant re-working of inter-subjective relationships. Hypertextuality promised to liberate the reader from the tyranny of the author and linearity, and yet its greatest gift is probably to liberate writers from the tyranny of electronic hysteria and to re-awaken an understanding of the galaxy of reading and writing practices offered in print technology.

In terms of my own fictocritical practice, 'Nostalgic Moments' represented a new way of working. In this piece I wanted to play with the notion of simultaneity and difference, the 'double-voicing' of fictocriticism which sometimes manifests itself as the doubling or overlapping of the fictional and the 'actual' (as was attempted in 'Family Values'). The method of 'Nostalgic Moments' is that of the collage, defined as the intentional interruption of the linearity and 'presence' of writing by an 'other' writing (Ulmer 'Object' 88). Ulmer suggests that the 'undecidable reading effect, oscillating between presence and absence' of collage, is at the heart of both the paraliterary and the deconstructive moves of Derrida (88). In 'Nostalgic Moments' I wanted to enact, in print form, a de-centred narrative about electronic writing, my experience with it and theories that have informed its production. Collage suggests a process that condensed the de-centering impetus of fictocriticism. In other words, collage suggested a way of refining the structural relationship between different discursive sites whereby the gaps between them occur at the micro level of the syntagmatic axis. Here the method is a process of working simultaneously with parataxis and linearity, developing a tension between the two of them so as to force different texts into a productive relationship.

'Loving Writing' (p. 65) is a work that enacts a fictocritical response to the 'Truro murders' which took place in the late 1970s in Adelaide. Seven women were murdered in the space of two months. James Miller was convicted of 6 of the 7 murders. His accomplice, Christopher Worrell, was killed in a car accident before the trial. James Miller, writing from jail, and largely it seems in an effort to exonerate himself, produced the book *Don't Call Me Killer*. Miller's argument in the book is that he merely 'assisted' his lover Worrell and did not actually murder any of the girls. Anne-Marie Mykyta was the mother of one of the murdered girls and wrote about her experiences in the book *It's a Long Way to Truro*. 'Loving Writing' also contains fragments from *A Lover's Discourse* that sit painfully and awkwardly with the other material. It is as if this section pushes the limit of 'taste', both in terms of the combined subject matter (serial murder and love) but also in the sense that the structure between these textual fragments, the way they are woven together, does not explicitly resolve the discomfort of the limits of writing. There is a perverse structuration in this section but also, in the virtual absence of resolution, there is space given for the reader to construct an informed personal response to this horror. All three texts are concerned with biography at the limits of experience and the limits of sense making.

'Loving Writing' returned to the methodologies employed in 'Alien Sick' while continuing to work on the mystery. In this case however, it is not so much 'my' story but 'their' stories. Personal narrative, life story, autobiography, whichever term one chooses to use, dominates 'Loving Writing'. Both Mykyta and Miller write stories about personal loss, grief, death and suffering. They share the 'feeling' of love and affection. They are both stories about gaining knowledge through personal experience. As such they resonate with the personal/anecdotal site of the mystery. The expert or disciplinary text comes from Barthes' reflections on love, affection and loss. Popular discourse comes from local contemporary print media. 'Loving Writing' plays with conventions of primary and secondary text relationships. The orthodoxy of commentary is to contextualise and make sense of the primary text by locating it within the argument. To do this the primary text is always 'framed' by the secondary text. This is the process of mastery; texts become the objects of a critical performance. In a typically fictocritical manoeuvre, 'Loving Writing' plays with that process and performance in its ordering of the texts, placing scare quotes around the categories 'primary' and 'secondary', 'expert' and 'personal'. The effect of this is to alienate the anticipated order of sense-making, and subsequently to subvert a conventional or orthodox understanding of 'Miller' 'Mykyta' 'Barthes' and in general the textual field of the 'Truro murders.' 'Loving Writing' was intended as a method of telling the two stories (of Mykyta and Miller) but also as a way of telling more, of making those texts expand on their possible meanings, to complicate their relationship and, in so doing, opening up 'Truro' to a series of multiple readings.

The idea of 'opening up' the texts to multiple readings may at first seem a perverse approach to such a difficult subject. I believe that there are justifications for such a process. It seems that one of 'problems' the 'killer' in this case (Miller/Worrell) suffers from is an inability to read in a multiple way. The killer reads in a singular way, the same way, all the time. The killer also suffers from a compulsion to 'master' whatever it is that disturbs his reading orthodoxy. The killer struggles with multiplicity and difference and the end result is often a 'bad' writing, a writing that annihilates difference. The victim on the other hand is forcibly written into a crime story. They have been corporeally located and made the Subject of a disturbing discourse. By writing a linear first person narrative the victim re-constructs themselves within an orderly and understandable discourse of which they are the author. There is a moral dilemma here for the fictocritical writer if we allow that text and flesh can become enmeshed. If destabilising

'presence' is an aim of fictocriticism then the fictocritical method in this instance runs the risk of un-doing the 'healing' work the autobiographical narrative performs for its author. If the aim of a certain fictocriticism is to map the discursive field of an event, then one of the main focuses of that map must be the way narrative is deployed to produce a certain reading of the other in the service of the performance of self-presence, or indeed of writing as healing. The un-doing and interruption of Mykyta's narrative is really the eruption of the otherness that her original narrative is at pains to control. The fictocritical collage of texts involves opening up to the reader the construction of 'presence' which Mykyta's text performs. Instead of reading these 'eruptions' as signs of a moral insensitivity we can read them as being the necessary other without which Mykyta's text could not be produced. What keeps the victim and the killer in their place are structures of reading and writing. My point is that the killer and victim are also textual effects which are liable to transformation through fictocritical means. There is a moral desire being acted-out here, and this is possibly the strongest force in 'Loving Writing'. The desire is that by 'doing violence' to the orthodoxies of victim, killer and expert, the text may in some way liberate these subjects from a singular form of reading and writing.

The unorthodox presentation of 'Loving Writing' makes visible the cutting and pasting processes involved in its composition. The aim here was to document the process of composition, to lay bare the process, but also to mime the cutting and stitching that both the Miller and Mykyta text enact.

'Reforming the Boy' (p. 96 and Appendix C), a radio feature made in collaboration with Lachlan Colquhoun is reproduced here both in print and on CD. As with 'Family Values', the print version is primarily for reference purposes. The print copy of 'Reforming the Boy' names the voices in the way they were referred to during the production of the feature. 'Reforming the Boy' is designed to be listened to rather than read. 'Collaboration' in this project was conducted along the same lines as in 'Family Values'.

'Reforming the Boy' concerns itself with contemporary and late 19th century reformatory practices in Adelaide. The feature concentrates on the late 19th century reformatory hulk *Fitzjames* and its contemporary equivalent, Cavan training centre. The reformatory hulk *Fitzjames* was a reformatory ship housing 'criminal' and 'neglected' boys. It was moored off the metropolitan coast of Adelaide, South Australia, during the 1880s. Up to sixty boys at a time would be

on board, serving sentences that ranged from a few months to five years. Texts concerning the hulk are drawn from state archival sources and from contemporaneous newspaper reports. The 19th century texts are performed by actors and the character names of the actors are indicated in the print script. At Cavan interviews were conducted with three boys and the manager. Additional interviews with two boys who had served in detention centres were conducted in Sydney because 'Reforming the Boy' refers to the reformatory ship 'Vernon', operating at the same time as the hulk but located in Sydney Harbour. Lastly, interviews were conducted with an archivist at State Records, South Australia, and an information officer at the South Australian Migration Museum.

The primary aim of 'Reforming the Boy' was to play with the gaps between past and present reformatory practices and subjectivities. The desire was to make the past 'speak' and to ask some critical questions about the 'progress' of contemporary reformatory practices. With reference to the boys on board the hulk, the aim was not to 'represent' their presence in the sense of having actors 'pretend' to be them, but to open-up a historical space or 'stage' where the contemporary voices of boys could speak 'in place' of the past. This seems a way of acknowledging the past as 'voiceless' while at the same time allowing it to speak in the present. This desire to let the past speak through silence and through the present is perhaps the most successful aspect of the 'Reforming the Boy', playing with the effect of time through textual structure and sound locations.

Perhaps the least successful aspect of 'Reforming the Boy' is when the past is simply past, when it is 'acted-out' or represented, when it is not complicated by an enmeshing with the present. The point here is that past injustices, no matter how bad or how fascinating, are most engaging when somehow seeming to be a part of the present, or that 'the past' re-appears in an uncanny way. It is this un-canny re-appearance of past practices that is most important to a critique or analyses of present day reformatory practices. The fictocritical lesson is that critique is not the exclusive property of the well-wrought argument, but also emerges in the oscillation between boundaries.

'The hulk' (p. 104) was initially a project whereby research done for 'Reforming the Boy' could be utilised for an extended piece of writing. The main subject of the hulk is sentencing. This term refers both to past and present sentencing, of boys incarcerated by the state, and sentencing in terms of a writing practice. The central proposition of historical narrative is that history is accessible through its

narrating. The narrative in this sense is a transparent tool for accessing the past. The postmodern critique of this is of course that what we 'access' is not a real, non-linguistic entity, but language itself. The past, as a non-linguistic entity, can't be known through language. We can simulate the presence of the past through historical narrative, but that is all. Writing that acknowledges that it simulates a presence, that a 'real' presence is not within its grasp, is, if the postmodern position is granted, a more accurate or intellectually honest form of writing. The same point could be made about any 'presence' promised to us by writing. The 'presence' of the Subject in autobiography could also be described as the simulated effect of presence that we, through cultural conventions of reading, come to believe as real being. 'The hulk' could perform fictocriticism as long as the 'emptiness' of historical characters, their condition of simulated being, their culturally dependent existence, could be touched upon and opened up to the reader. This style of writing, often referred to as pastiche (Jameson 1985) aspires to a wholeness without 'depth'. It is a depthless, shimmering surface of textuality that parts of 'The hulk' aspire to, acknowledging presence as a simulation of the sentence.

At other moments 'The hulk' narrative is fragmented, dispersing the Subject of sentencing over incommensurate locations in time and place. Fragmentation here refers to a violence done to the conventional sentence. Fragmentation allows for play at the borders of sense making, and of a proper history of the Subject. Fragmentation performs at the limit of sentencing.

Another issue is the concept of fictocriticism as a mapping of a textual field, event or experience. The story of the hulk *Fitzjames* commonly evokes amazed responses in those who knew nothing of it. This I suggest is an experience of the uncanny. The hulk *Fitzjames* is both culturally familiar (it belongs to the convict history of Australia) yet appears where it is least expected, in a supposedly convict-free location (Adelaide). It is this appearance of what is familiar in an unexpected place, in a place where it is 'meant' to be impossible, that evokes a sense of disorientation about the identity of Adelaide (about its 'presence'). The uncanny effect allows for phantasies to inhabit the disrupted space of 'presence'. These typically are phantasies that belong to the gothic genre: entrapment, dread, darkness, sexual excess and monsters. The existence of the hulk *Fitzjames*, I would argue, is closely entwined with the uncanny effect and with the circulation of horror stories. The presence of the uncanny, part of the textual field of the hulk, could therefore be documented through the use of gothic effects.

Sentencing, the depthless Subject of writing and the presence of the uncanny are the primary focuses for both the structure and content of 'The hulk'. The presence of the contemporary and historical Subject is both fixed and made unstable: it is threatened with fragmentation, dispersal and disappearance, yet it is also 'present' as in biography and 'creative' fiction, with their incumbent author effects.

In reviewing my fictocritical work I have come to realise that fictocriticism is concerned both with producing and destabilising the effect of 'presence'. Of equal importance is the mapping of a particular textual field in such a way that the play of difference produces a multiplicity of reading positions. Differences between 'invention' and 'explication' matter most at times of personal and public trauma. A problematic yet important use for the unstable combination of both the literary and the critical can be found in the mapping of trauma events.

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# ACADEMIC DIVINATION

What hypertext and fictocriticism have in common is this: they decide upon a model of cognition or subjectivity and then use this model as the structure for organising what are variously described as textual fragments, nodes, units or lexia. They share an emphasis on non-linear systems, a re-figuring of the relationship between reader-writer and text, the significance of agency, and of the contingent quality of any reading, writing, and hence text. Hypertext theorists and practitioners (especially the 'boosters') commonly use these terms to describe the structure of electronic writing space: 'navigation'; 'exploration'; 'equality'; 'freedom'; 'collaboration'. Fictocriticism uses the following terms to describe the structure of its space: 'hybridity'; 'negotiation'; 'fragmentation'; 'self-consciousness'; 'bio-graphical'; 'non-hierarchical'. Both, I would suggest, are about simulating the activity of cognition (or subjectivity) by activating these terms in their respective models. Hypertext predominantly is about simulating cognition (or human intelligence) and in many ways this can be attributed to its technological inheritance, which also weds it to the search for models of artificial intelligence. It is also largely driven by American techno-capital and it seems to me that it is modelling a particularly American position of the ideal subject (hence the use of the terms above). As Ulmer puts it, 'the "twin peaks" of American ideology — realism and individualism — are built into the computing machine' (npr). Fictocriticism is largely drawing upon postmodern models of subjectivity, which maintain that the contemporary subject is a temporal configuration of textual fragments. Hence 'writing' the postmodern text is a form of self composition, and the text (see Barthes) is read as an artefact of subjectivity which reads (and writes) subjectivity.

Hypertext and fictocriticism both legitimate their textual structures by proposing that they offer methods or technologies for simulating an original, be it cognition or subjectivity. In other words, both technologies seem to have as their goal the reproduction and multiplication of simulated self-hood. Indeed they could be described as cloning technologies. And why? Possibly because the self as technological simulation fits well into the market of hyperreal commodity exchange. In other words, both hypertext and fictocriticism offer methods for

constructing a saleable commodity: a self that is a 'non-hierarchical' 'hybrid' of 'self-conscious' 'fragments', one that can 'explore' and 'negotiate' 'freely' in the information market. If in the near future pedagogy becomes the management of information then both hypertext and fictocriticism are well placed to produce the managers of the future.

Fictocriticism can be described as the way in which pedagogical methods have put into practice the theories of postmodernism. Fictocriticism is technically speaking not only a theory but also a methodology or structure which involves doing the postmodern 'talk' and 'walk'. Embraced by educational institutions as a pedagogical style, it indicates yet another re-working of the terms 'theory' and 'practice', this time with a view to a negotiated or contingent settlement between rhetorical and subject positions. There are also limits to this writing and they can be found in the logic of the discourse in which one is located. So fictocriticism is also a place of ambiguities in terms of the 'margin' and 'centre', 'subject' and 'object' of discourse. For example, a traditional thesis would locate divination within a larger analysis of cultural self-formation, whereas fictocriticism would read *with* divination, utilising it as a structure to stage an act of criticism. This is one reading of the notion of a 'criticism without an argument'. This also invites the notion that fictocriticism is possibly a kind of contamination or pollution of rational academic writing: 'matter out of place'. Fictocriticism may therefore be an experiment with academic ecology: asking how far writing/reading can go before it begins to contaminate and pollute the discursive regime in which it operates. Fictocriticism is also a method which engages with the distinction between literature and theory; self and Other; text and corporeal body; individual and community; work and play; and last but not least, flesh and electricity. The re-working of these terms in a practical sense within the academy seems to be a historical inevitability. This has important implications for the future of that institution, its workers, and its relation to the broader community.

Central to current theorising of the fictocritical is Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse*. The introduction claims that the text is not a metalanguage of love but a performance of a 'primary language' (3). Although he makes this claim, it must be said that the principle of organising the text *is* a kind of metalanguage, and it is the metalanguage about subjectivity and its relation to language. The particular subject is the lover, who Barthes makes a number of general statements about in order to construct a model of that general subject, the lover. What is the lover? The lover is an assemblage of fragments of discourse *because* that's the way it is:

'the lover in fact, cannot keep his mind from racing, taking new measures and plotting against himself. His discourse exists only in outbursts of language, which occur at the whim of trivial, of aleatory circumstances'(3). Hence because the 'original' lover is composed out of momentary outbursts that owe no allegiance to any overall thesis, so too is the text organised along 'arbitrary' and non-linear lines: 'the figures are non-syntagmatic, non-narrative' (7). Again: 'the lover speaks in bundles of sentences but does not integrate these sentences on a higher level, into a work; his is a horizontal discourse: no transcendence, no deliverance, no novel...' (7). Hence the fragments or figures, 'cannot be *classified*: organised, hierarchized, arranged with a view to an end (a settlement)' (7). So the organising principle could be described as that of imitation, impersonation and simulation.

Barthes' makes certain claims about the way the original lover's subjectivity is structured, and then imitates this language structure in the structure of the text, hence simulating the subjectivity of the lover. He models a certain subjectivity and then simulates it in a discursive performance.

So the lover is the subject of the text, or the text is the subject/lover. If the text were an analysis of 'the lover', it could not take on those qualities of subjectivity which it desires. Or at least I think that is Barthes' position when he says: 'the description of the lover's discourse has been replaced by its simulation, and to that discourse has been restored its fundamental person, the *I*, in order to stage an utterance, not an analysis' (3). An authentic staging seems to be the goal. Perhaps what we have here is a desire for naturalistic theatre: the most life-like recreation of 'someone speaking within himself' (3). In its drive towards naturalism it seems to be a strangely pre-modern kind of theatre. Strange because its notion of subjectivity is definitely postmodern.

The structure of the relationship between discursive fragments (non-linear, arbitrary, non-hierarchical) the studied absence (or conditional presence) of a meta-theory, the text as subject ('I'), the centrality of subjective utterance, are all important features of this text, and have been noted by a number of writers as components of the fictocritical, indeed as necessary components of it (see King). I would suggest however, that these are necessary components when a general (postmodern) theory of subjectivity is extrapolated from the 'real' and used as a model for the textual simulation of subjectivity. If Barthes' text is used as an exemplar for fictocriticism, such a fictocriticism will be bound to a naturalistic representation of the real or the original,

even though this original, and the very legitimacy of the notion of the original, does not supposedly exist. In other words it will be resurrecting the notion of the original in its simulation of postmodern subjectivity.

I want to pose some questions. How would, going on Barthes' model, 'An Academic's Discourse' be structured? Is there a general relationship between the subject and their discourse, and if so, can it be modelled? If it can be modelled, it may be possible to simulate the subjectivity of the academic. And here I think I am entering into the area of artificial intelligence. But isn't this already the 'reality' of academia? Isn't writing the process of following a model of subjectivity construction, so that the writer is in effect impersonating the original, or in fact actually the illusory presence of the original in the model? Or is it that the pedagogical process is actually a naturalistic theatre, where the nature of the performance is largely determined by the dominant theory of subjectivity. In other words, we are perhaps entering into a period (and the fictocritical is a part of this) where the academic/student are searching for ways to reproduce (simulate) your standard fragmented postmodern self? I'm going to repeat that: the urge to write fictocritically within the academy is the urge to simulate the model of postmodern subjectivity, just as Barthes' text is driven by the urge to simulate his model of the lover.

It seems to me that the fictocritical (however described) is a self-conscious collage of genre fragments, which posits subjectivity as being a presence and *process* of its textual landscape. Subjectivity in this sense is constituted in the activity of mapping a relationship between fragments, but likewise, the meaning of the landscape is in some way determined by this subjective agency. In this description there is both a humanist notion of subjectivity and a postmodern one.

What the fictocritical can do is to model the *activity* of aesthetic self formation. It gives examples of how to... In a sense it simulates this process. On the other hand, the fictocritical is also a representation of the process — an *example* of another's self formation. If the fictocritical is an assemblage, it is a dead assemblage, one that has been completed to be read-off. In other words, the final fictocritical artefact *denies* the reader the kind of agency which it valorises. Although the fictocritical invites readers to take a Barthes-like pleasure in the text, it seems that it is really inviting them to witness *someone else's pleasure*. How to deal with this?

One suggestion is to utilise information technology, and specifically hypertext, where the reader is able to compose a multiplicity of relationships between fragments within the simulated space of the computer. A computer-fictocritical space could be both a method and an artefact of the process of constructing discourse and the process of self-formation. In this sense it functions as a postmodern pedagogy.

Hypertext has been described as a new stage in reading and writing, which incorporates much of print technology and re-configures it: it brings in the scroll, the icon; footnotes and glosses are not 'marginalised' but treated as 'equal players' in the hypertext field. Changes in the relationship between reader and writer are considered to be of most significance. The reader of hypertext can compose almost innumerable connections between topical units (fragments, nodes). The reader in this sense writes with the text, they 'perform the text', while the author is the one who supplies the topical units and possible connections (158). In Ulmer's terms the author constructs the paradigm within which the reader constructs a meaning (see below). The text that is read is therefore transitory, provisional, quasi-unique. The reader is therefore also the author. In this sense the conventional difference between reader-author-text begins to blur. It is the product of a combination of reader, text and author. Bolter suggests that the change in these relationships is brought about by the change in technology, but these changes have also been anticipated by authors working on and with print technology; Barthes, Derrida etc. (164). Bolter acknowledges the power of their predictions yet suggests that electronic writing (EW) moves beyond them. Their experiments with language construction are useful for EW, but are also constrained by the fact that they derive from critiques of the language of *print technology*. In other words, they cease to be useful as critiques of EW because they have been incorporated as methodologies or techniques in this new medium (166). The same perhaps could be said of fictocriticism. Here is Ulmer's version of an electronic a 'criticism without the argument':

the scholar does not provide a specific line of argument, an enunciation, but constructs the whole paradigm of possibilities, the set of statements, leaving the act of utterance, specific selections and combinations, to the reader/user. Or rather, the scholar's 'argument' exists at the level of the ideology/theory directing the system of the paradigm, determining the boundaries of the inclusion/exclusion. (nfn)

So perhaps hypertext is an electric fictocriticism which holds out the promise of constant self-composition. Or perhaps electric fictocriticism is a form of artificial intelligence? 'For artificial intelligence specialists the mind is nothing other than a self-activating text' (Bolter 184). AI is generally modelled on the structure of cognition, but not, as far as I know, on the structure of human subjectivity. Perhaps it gets down to a difference between imitation and simulation, to a question of *who* activates the text.

The merger of mind and machine, anticipated in science fiction and the gothic tale, the goal of AI research, is also analogous to the merging of subjectivity with those critical technologies which are deployed to construct it, and the merging of analysis and its Other in the fictocritical. Indeed this merging is also one of horror, the apocalypse and the cyborg. Perhaps the electric fictocritical is a form of abject artificial intelligence?

And while discussing electric subjectivity are we referring to a structure of language that is only set in circuits (as the text of computer technology is) or a dynamic structure that is also located inside flesh? The point I want to make is to ask whether artificial intelligence is the same as artificial subjectivity (AS), and what part the body plays in this difference.

Academic writing, when figured as a performance, describes the action of 'building' a character through critical-aesthetic work (Hunter). This process, according to Foucault, takes place in the presence, 'or virtual presence' of a subject who witnesses judges etc. in the manner of the confessional (61). If the hyper-textual or fictocritical field is an accurate simulation of pedagogy, it will need to allow for a relatively uncontrollable and 'arbitrary' judgement to occupy the space of self formation. Of course another side of this coin is sadism and masochism, where, in the competitive market of ideas, attempts are made to kill-off, and inflict pain on another written self. These are all rhetorical markers of the discourse in which academic writing operates, and as such, are necessary to any interactivity within a 'user unfriendly' electric fictocriticism. This implies that any performative act will need to negotiate and accommodate the electronic Other to its methodology and constructed self. The end result is to open out academic self-formation to 'incommensurate' practices.

I would add that in academic performance, impersonation, imitation, and simulation are all methods of self construction which are employed to measure the



self against other written selves. Writing within the academy is in large part an imitation of those styles that have preceded it. If the self can be constructed it can also be deconstructed, dispersed and deferred. The self without boundaries is really the non-self, and it is one that is always haunting academic writing, where error is analogous to death.

So in academic writing there are some 'tendencies' present which I would summarise as being a series of anxieties about death, power, and imitation. These anxieties have been traditionally addressed, or 'solved', by the deployment of originality, sequential logic, an appeal to universality, and more recently by an actual admission or confession of critical anxiety (see King). Both the fictocritical and hypertext are examples of this move towards a structure of anxiety, as opposed to perhaps, a discourse on anxiety. They are both 'good' postmodern citizens. They both share an 'accommodating' accommodation towards quotation, reconciliation, hybridisation, fragments, borrowed ideas, self-consciousness, ambiguities, performance, provisional form, plurality, productive dialogue. They share a mutual disavowal towards authorial authority, accumulative argument, objectivity, universal authority, humanist tradition, linear coherence, repression. So, in sales-speak, fictocriticism and hypertext are an accommodation and a celebration of a negotiation between genre fragments.

Given what I have said already, I could characterise electric fictocriticism as a technology that, in promising transgression or liberation, soothes academic and market anxieties about death, power and imitation. Put another way, it is a way for academic writing to claim that it is still alive, powerful and original by embracing the signs of its own demise. And that's Ok according to Baudrillard who claims that the destiny of theory is to predict its own demise — and that is to become what it is not (98). The destiny of the postmodern pedagogue may likewise be predicted in the technology of artificial subjectivity.

When theory becomes what it is not (and here we return to the lover's subjectivity, to the total simulation of cognition) the theorist also disappears, and this situation can only be averted when the theorist re-configures what it is that theory is not. To 'have a life' a critical practice must also have a death, and fictocritical practice is a literary critic struggling with death, just as the 'concept of the author is never more alive than when it is pronounced dead' (Burke 7).

Academic divination is not a mysticism, but the mirror of the logic of cause and effect. Figured as a performance practice it partially addresses the existence of non-linear time within the assemblage of the pedagogical 'scene'.

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## ALIEN SICK

1. What manner of man is this, or what manner of creature is it in the semblance of man? I feel the dread of this horrible place overpowering me; I am in fear — in awful fear — and there is no escape for me; I am encompassed about with terrors that I dare not think of...
2. He's looking down at me. He's got a ruler in his hand. Has a tip of silver. Touches me. I see pictures (long pause). I see pictures of the world just blowing up when he touches my head with this thing (weeps).
3. Looking implies that the object viewed covers and uncovers itself, that it disappears at every instant, for looking involves a kind of oscillation. These images however, are not caught in a game of emergence and disappearance. The body is already there without even the faintest glimmer of a possible absence, in a state of radical disillusion; the state of pure presence.
4. Shuddering at the memory, Kelly says that out of nowhere a tall, black figure began moving towards them. 'I had expected to see a human being, but this was not human — its shape was all wrong,' she says. 'I was overwhelmed by the most horrifying fear. The creature's eyes seemed to turn to a red fire.' Suddenly there were many more creatures, a mass of glowing red eyes gliding across the field towards them. 'I was transfixed. Their power or energy was unfathomable. Then I felt a whoomph in my stomach and I was on the ground, winded. I couldn't see. I heard my husband scream; "Let go of me." I heard a clear male voice respond: "we mean you no harm." My husband said: "Why did you hit Kelly then?" and the thing said: "I wouldn't harm her. After all, I am her father." I heard a chuckle and I thought, this is evil. I threw up, and began sobbing. The next thing I knew I was sitting in the car.'
5. These are the couplings which make Man and Woman so problematic, subverting the structure of desire, the force imagined to generate language and gender, and so subverting the structure and modes of reproduction of Western

identity, of nature and culture, of mirror and eye, slave and master, body and mind. 'We' did not originally choose to be cyborgs.

6. I felt embarrassed to have been so cryptic...but I wanted a record of some sort...if I had told the reporters that alleged visitors were in any way involved, it seemed to me that there was a probability that my credibility would be destroyed.

7. The subject is named by being tagged or branded on its surface creating a particular kind of 'depth-body' or interiority, a physic layer the subject identifies as its (disembodied) core. Subjects thus produced are not simply the imposed results of alien, coercive forces; the body is internally lived, experienced and acted upon by the subject and the social collectivity...the subject is marked as a series of (potential) messages from/of the (social) Other.

8. They're wearing blue uniforms. Dark blue uniforms. They're sort of grey. They look like they haven't been out in the sun in ten years. Sort of mushroomy grey. Smell funny too. Like a burned match head. Just totally expressionless faces...this has to be a dream, because the dog is sleeping like the dead. Why do you feed a dog?

9. Then, almost three months later to the day, her questions were answered. Once again the couple were driving on the same stretch of road to their friend's house, when a gut-wrenching dread swept over Kelly. In a flash, vivid memories came flooding back.

10. On the TV monitor, rigid on a laboratory slab, is a childlike creature whose big bald head is pear-shaped, nose and ears tiny, and mouth a lipless slit...Each hand and foot has six digits...One of the three men in white bio-hazard suits, gloves and visored hoods makes a scalpel incision in the top of the creature's chest and draws the blade down its thorax and abdomen. He cuts to the top of the chest and the skin is peeled away to reveal the main body cavity. A dark blood-like substance oozes. Fleshy organs are removed and placed in surgical trays. One spherical organ in the stomach resembles nothing in the human anatomy. Next, dark, flimsy lenses are plucked with tweezers from the creature's eyes, revealing pupils. The skull is sawn open, a 'brain' removed.

11. Biological, anatomical, physiological and neuro-physiological processes cannot be automatically attributed a natural status. It is not clear that what is biological is necessarily natural...The raw materials themselves are not 'pure' in so far as culture, social and psychological factors intervene to give them their manifest forms.

12. I can't wait to get home, to wash, wash. Scrub, scrub. The formalin must have crystallised in my nostrils because I smell it all the time. I've stopped eating corned beef. The colour reminds me too much of the cadaver. One night I vomited after dinner when I realised I hadn't been scrupulous enough to lift bits of flesh from under my finger nails. I ate an infinitesimal bit of him and I spewed months and months of dissection. I find it difficult to touch food with my hands. I'm never sure if my hands are clean enough...I pretended not to hear when asked if I would work some more on Tom-Dick-Harry. I made up my mind that 'he' was an IT.

13. The foreigner is within us. And when we flee from or struggle against the foreigner, we are fighting our own unconscious — that 'improper' facet of our impossible 'own and proper.' Delicately, analytically, Freud does not speak of foreigners: he teaches us how to detect foreignness in ourselves. That is perhaps the only way not to hound it outside of us. After Stoic cosmopolitanism, after religious universalist integration, Freud brings us the courage to call ourselves disintegrated in order not to integrate foreigners and even less so to hunt them down, but rather to welcome them to that uncanny strangeness, which is as much theirs as ours.

18. The human shape I can get now, almost with ease, so that it is lithe and graceful, or thick and strong; but often there is trouble with the hands and claws — painful things that I dare not shape too freely...These creatures of mine seemed strange and uncanny to you as you began to observe them, but to me, just after I make them, they seem to be indisputable human beings. It's afterwards, as I observe them, that the persuasion fades. First one animal trait, then another, creeps to the surface and stares out at me...But I will conquer yet. Each time I dip a creature into a bath of burning pain, I say, this time I will burn out all the animal, this time I will make a rational creature of my own.

14. Suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder, and heard the Count's voice saying to me 'good morning.' I started, for it amazed me that I had not seen him, since the reflection of the glass covered the whole room behind me...Having answered the

Count's salutations, I turned to the glass again...The whole room behind me was displayed; but there was no sign of a man in it, except myself.

15. In the widespread paralysis of the collective or social imaginary, to which 'nothing occurs' (Karl Kraus) when confronted with the ambitious program of fantasising an economic system on the scale of the globe itself, the older motif of conspiracy knows a fresh lease of life, as a narrative structure capable of reuniting the minimal basic components: a potentially infinite network, along with a plausible explanation of its invisibility.

16. Still shaken from the experience, they decided to try to forget about it and go to bed. But when Kelly went to the bathroom she was shocked to find she was bleeding menstrually, even though she had finished her period the week before. She also discovered a small triangular scar on her abdomen. Kelly's bleeding continued for three weeks and she was finally hospitalised with an infection in her uterus. A pregnancy test proved negative.

17. The conquest of space constitutes...an irreversible threshold which effects the loss of terrestrial coordinates and referentiality. Reality, as an internally coherent and limited universe, begins to haemorrhage when its limits are stretched to infinity. The conquest of space, following the conquest of the planet, promotes either the de-realising of human space, or the reversion of it into a simulated hyperreality.

20. The army investigated and next morning whisked away debris of a crashed flying object and — vow some witnesses — alien bodies...civilians who saw the clean-up say they were sworn to secrecy.

19. For Haraway, cyborg does not necessarily name the tragic confusion of identities that follows on scientific hubris. On the contrary, it may name the condition of freedom from the illegitimate categories of 'nature' (race, gender, species, kingdom) — a freedom that can only emerge with the destruction of those rationalities and of the mythologies of essential unity.

21. Listen, baby, I've been coping with this for so many years. I know this invasion gets in. As soon as you get close to something important, that's when you feel this invasion, and that's the way you know something's there. I've felt myself just marched up like a puppy to go and do something that would get me

insulted or humiliated. I was not in control. Then the ultimate dream I had, I saw my body walking out of the room —this is in Chicago — bent on some deadly errand, and I'm just up on the ceiling sort of fading out, with no power at all. That's the ultimate horror of possession. There are all degrees of possession. It happens all the time. What you have to do is confront the possession.

22. In the following days, Kelly tried to discuss the issue with her husband, but although he agreed that he had seen a UFO and remembered smelling vomit during the drive home, he doesn't agree that they blacked out, or that any time was unaccounted for, or that they met aliens. The couple began to fight constantly — he was determined to forget the experience, which left Kelly traumatised, depressed and afraid of going insane.

23. Medicine is built up on examples and experience; so is my theory.

#### Notes

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13. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers To Ourselves* (New York: Columbia UP, 1991), p. 191.
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## FAMILY VALUES — transcript

Detective: Beginning vision quest for client. I'm seeing a pleasant day in Adelaide, 1972. By the River Torrens. A light breeze. Birds calling. The sound of children playing. Water running and ducks quacking. In the background, a clock striking towards 11. The sound of crickets. An owl. Water flowing faster. The wind blowing harder. Everything's fine down by the river. Until night comes. Footsteps on the grass and on gravel. 'Giddyay, mate, do you er, give it or take it?' — a struggle near-by, coming closer, disturbed voices — 'neither'. And then men appear from nowhere on the river bank. A body flies out from amongst them. Splash. Into the water. And then a fist in the face. Bone breaking. Confusion. Splash. The men are laughing. Those in the water are panicking, are gasping, are splashing around. 'Don't panic!' Panting for breath, one of the men emerges from the water, dripping, confused, scared. Screaming: 'he's drowning!' Those footsteps return. Running. The men return: 'you go save your mate!' Splashing again. Swimming. Panting. The owl. The wind. Water rushing and taking over everything. Voices floating away from the water and towards the city. Mediated. A body of a man found drowned by police last night was that of law lecturer Dr. George Duncan. It is believed that Dr. Duncan was a homosexual. Adelaide police are investigating. End vision, 1972.

Kenton Miller: The myth of the so-called 'Family' is really important because of the myths it shows us that society is willing to hold about us, as gay people. It's also really important to understand Adelaide gay men, I think, who carry a greater degree of self oppression, than our interstate counter-parts, because we've been weighed down with this mythology. We've been told we're killers. We've been told we're horrible. And it's noticeable, it's noticeable that we carry that extra layer of belief that we're willing to believe bad things about ourselves, and we're willing to trust our gay brothers just that little bit less. We've been taught to mistrust each other. So I think it's important for understanding us, to see that that's a part that all gay men in Adelaide grew up with, and have had put into us.

Detective: A city in trauma, plagued by mystery and death. At police Head Quarters curiosity has turned to deep concern. Monitoring the air, police hear disturbing clues.

Cop 1: Sir, were picking up some strange transmissions. I think you should listen.

Cop 2: Ok son, calm down and let me have it.

Alien: Transmission one eight nine three to planet Uranus from earth. Transmission includes sexual examination of abducted human subject. Male youth. Examination conducted by the sex doctors. Sexual data and internal details taken over 14 day period. Stimulation of subject to produce orgasm and so on. Subject showed signs of pain and grief. Follows audio record of examinations and death.

List items:

1. Abduction and storage.
2. Examination and body probing.
3. Death and disposal.
4. Culture infiltration and identity simulation.

Detective: Vision quest number three. Entering into 1983. I'm seeing a home. Distressed figure of male, weeping, isolated, roaming through home. I hear the disembodied voices coming from outside. The sounds of children playing. Gone. Somehow being evoked by the sad man. I go deeper into and close to his heart. Feel the pain. There is something terrible here. Also I see there are journalists, photographers, questions...wait...he's speaking. This is the father of one of the murdered boys. He's saying this:

People say New Guinea is a primitive country, well they are not child killers up there. Children are a treasured part of the community. They are safe. They are not safe in Adelaide any more. When police say the figurers here are no worse than anywhere else, they just show how bad things are all over. But it seems more terrible here somehow. Maybe because Adelaide is small it seems worse. Maybe we trust our neighbours too much. We think we know the people we pass in the street. But some of them we don't. (*Advertiser* 26 July 1983:1)

I follow this man's pain and its spread into the community and watch it spread a pall of uncertainty about the identity of the place we inhabit. I see the city with his eyes, inhabited by something alien. When the family is very disturbed, when it's upset, it starts to see aliens everywhere. End, 1983.

Miller: People certainly felt nervous, but I heard just as many false accusations of 'watch out for him dear, I've heard he's a member of the "Family"' on the gay

scene, as I did out in the straight community as well. It meant that it was a handy myth for those people who hadn't dealt with their internalised homo-phobia, as well. One of the unfortunate side effects of feeling bad about yourself as a gay person, is that you can sometimes turn around and attack other gay people as easy targets. We're trained to turn against ourselves, in some of the ways in which we're brought up. So there were a fair few gay people who did believe in the story, who were warned about the story, or just who didn't have a critical discourse around the stories appearing in the mainstream press. Where else were the stories coming from? Nobody interrupted it. It was everywhere. So there was fear that even the people that we knew might be these so-called killers

Jennifer Byrne: A young man walks home, perhaps a bit drunk, perhaps just naive.

Transvestite: Hi!

Boy: How are you?

Transvestite: How you going?

Byrne: He's lured into a car, and never seen alive again. That's the terrible pattern behind Adelaide's macabre thrill killings. ('The Family')

Miller: Key to the case is that no healthy young heterosexual man would willingly get into car with an elderly gay man or any man that he didn't know. Therefore there must have been a gang, he must have been forced in there against his will. Lots of the case around Kelvin was around establishing his healthy, normal, heterosexual credentials, so that he must have been coerced into it. And so we're presented with a series of facts about his involvement in football teams, and you name it.

The first known mention of it, if you chase back for mentions of that name the 'Family' in the media, you'll trace back to an episode of *60 Minutes*, with an interview with Detective Sergeant Trevor Kipling, who's actually questioned around a series of five murders, that he linked where no one else had. The *60 Minutes* crew allegedly interviewed him for some two hours before he finally answered one of their questions by saying 'yes I suppose you could call them some sort of family', and they apparently already had the graphic already made up for TV that said 'The Family', so they were quite keen on referring to it by that name, at that point. The name caught on so much that many years later when we pointed that out to the press, they found it quite hard to believe that the name hadn't existed for longer.

Detective: Vision quest number five. I'm moving across the night sky. Below are a hundred church roofs, and I fly towards them, and down their dusty sides, and I slip inside the earth and travel down beneath the church floors, and go deep inside the corridors of Jesus, or, whoever he is.

At the bottom there was a dark, tunnel-like passage, through which came a deathly, sickly odour, the odour of old earth newly turned. As I went through the passage the smell grew closer and heavier. At last I pulled open a heavy door that stood ajar, and found myself in an old ruined chapel, which had evidently been used as a graveyard...I went down even into the vaults, where the dim light struggled, although to do so was dread to my very soul... [I saw] fragments of old coffins and piles of dust... [and there] in one of the great boxes, of which there were fifty in all, on a pile of newly dug earth, lay the Count!...I saw the dead eyes, and... dead though they were, such a look of hate...that I fled from the place, and leaving the Count's room by the window, crawled...up the castle wall.  
(Stoker 47-48)

Did I say castle? What did I just see? A vision of beneath the city. An evil lurking underground. A figure of fear. Forbidden. Not natural. Infectious. End church vision.

Miller: As a gay man I was afraid, and certainly advised by other gay men, not to speak out about stuff opposing the 'Family' because there was a fear that we would be seen to be defending our friends, or coming from the wrong place. I was advised by a couple of senior journalists, who happened to be gay men, though not 'out' in their work place, that even though my facts were completely credible and could be backed up, I should give it to a heterosexual reporter to release or any heterosexual person because it would have no creditability coming from a gay man. So there was lots of fear of how we were being perceived. If we criticised the 'Family' we looked like we were just defending ourselves and coming from a hopeless position. And certainly fear played an incredibly important part in terms of how we as the gay population felt in Adelaide, as direct response of stories in the press, because every story in the press led to more bashings and violence at bars, and other places where gay men could be found.

Detective: Night-time in winter. A small provincial city. Cosy inside. Time for the family dinner. Outside a wild storm.

Mother: To the table, time to eat. Go get your father.

Daughter: It's scary outside...

Son: Scary?! That's teddy-bear stuff. I'm going out amongst it in half an hour...

Daughter: You're going to meet those friends of yours...

Mother: Enough! The table. Where's your father?

Detective: Enter the father, fifty-ish, running to plump, in a cardigan. He embraces his daughter and sets to carve the meat.

Father: Who's hungry? How's my big growing boy?

Son: Starving. I could eat a horse. I'm going out. I got to gulp it and run.

Daughter: What's new? Always running off. Why do you go out in weather like this?

Mother: It's trouble if you ask me. Son, stay in with us.

Son: Oh no way. Listen to it out there. (Colquhoun)

Detective: Re-entering 1983. Floating above a dark scene. The Adelaide hills. A body found and being discussed. Coldness. Damp. Police gather with reporters. The scene is dissected. Stories are formulated. Voices of men talking about a conspiracy drift upwards towards the stars, and then their summation:

Marks have been discovered about the anus of the body, but forensic examinations have failed to find what may have caused them. Similar circumstances link the murders, since 1979, of four teenage boys. If the youths were forcibly abducted it is likely at least two people have been involved in their murders and that it could involve a homosexual gang. (*Advertiser* 26 July 1983:1)

I'm seeing Adelaide...homosexual...fear. End 1983.

Kipling: You can't get much lower in life than these people are.

Byrne: After nine years on the case, Detective Trevor Kipling is still horrified by the insanity of the killings, the brutality of the killers.

Byrne: Do you think of them as mad?

Kipling: They've got to be pretty sick.

Byrne: Crazy? Psychopaths?

Kipling: Must be. ('The Family')

Miller: The myth of the so-called 'Family' certainly succeeded in driving gays underground again, in creating mistrust between us and in our friendship networks, and it was an added benefit for the conservatives who supported the mythology of the 'Family', that this occurred. It certainly gave them an excuse. People bashed us and said 'you bloody "Family" murderers', 'you gang of "Family"', etcetera. It's just the excuse, those people will bash us, they'll look for an excuse for their prejudice.

Detective: Bring back storm sound effects, this time with slight electric static noise. Silence at the table, a tableau of family. Four at table. Secular communion. Then big storm noise.

Father: There's been trouble out. Heard about it on the radio in the shed. And talking at the pub and club. No place out there for a lad like you. Not safe any more, even in a city like this.

Mother: No saying what could happen. Night like this, people like that.

Son: Ah look! I'm just going to the bus-stop to meet some friends! Can't a kid have any fun in this town!

Daughter: The bus-stop! What a night out.

Son: Feel like a walk? Don't like it in here.

Mother: Enough! Son, we just want to protect you. You've read the papers. About what's happening.

Son: Never happen to me. One in a million. Same chance as meeting aliens or something. C'mon Mum, Dad. Let me go out. I said I'd meet them at seven and then go up the shops.

Mother: On a night like this. Will you be warm, dry...

Son: Yes Mum.

Father: I don't like it but...

Detective: Big thundering storm noise outside the window sounds as if the house has just been hit by lightning. Family jumps, keeps eating, finishes dinner.

Son: There. Finished! Can I go?

Mother: You will be careful...

Father: And home by nine, or else this is the last time.

Son: Yeah, yeah. I'll see you later. Bye!

Mother, Father, Daughter: Bye.

Detective: Sound of kitchen door closing. More strange storm sounds from outside. The other three members look at each other and the mother clears up her son's plate. (Colquhoun)

Detective: Vision quest number four. Again the same father, remembering at a trial, recalling a moment of truth about his son, a moment of deciding about a real sexuality. 1990. Feeling a memory of a sexuality in the court-room of the city, hearing:

I can remember us walking across the University Bridge once and telling him about the Duncan drowning. And I can remember telling him that people have rights which should not be intruded upon. He never argued back against me. (*Advertiser* 7 April 1990: 1)

Alien: Two: rectal examination. Youth bound to machine. Discharge. Blood canal. Drainage. Connection with male sex centre. Stimulating. Non species reproduction. Location of repression found in brain muscle. Brain connection discharge. Flesh comes apart from knife with ease. Open wound. Emotional pulsation. Memory and trauma. Powerful emanations. Sparks. Blood. Screaming. Sad. Wound reserved for future penetration. Damp. Wet. Subject awake and re-sedated. Dreams about alien.

Miller: I think that what you had were a series of murders that Kipling tried to link together. And in the first instance that was his theory. I then think that he spoke to the media about that and the media sensed a very juicy story, and that what they did was give him lots of media space. Kipling became a media star. It meant that when the *Sunday Mail* got hold of it and considered that this was something that was going to sell papers, and had already sold papers, that they did a series of stories on it. And it grew and it grew. They extended the conspiracy theory. You suddenly had something that was supporting everything. It said look at these gays they've got links, they've got highly placed people. We'll be able to bring them down. It re-enforced so much that people wanted to believe that was negative about the gay community. That it grew off of that energy.

Detective: I'm reading a camp horror novel. I'm at the 1984 'Adelaide Festival of Arts'—'Writer's Week'. Wine. Warm sun. And here, the international connection. The writer that makes it official. A horror novel city thinks author Rushdie, composing another story:

Now I begin to understand Adelaide. Adelaide's the ideal setting for a Stephen King novel, or a horror film. Those films are always set in sleepy, conservative towns. Sleepy conservative towns are where these things happen. Exorcisms, omens, shinings, poltergeists. Now I begin to understand Adelaide. Adelaide's the ideal setting...Adelaide is Amytyville, or Salem, and things here go bump in the night. (Rushdie 231)

I leave the writing tent, and the soon to be haunted writer. End 1984.

Miller: You don't believe in the 'Family' just because you believe homosexuals are bad. There are many people in Adelaide who have good friends who are homosexuals, who think that homosexuals are good, who still believe in the 'Family' because it's quite a separate myth that they've been taught by the media — a construct that's been offered to them, that they'll look at and they'll



say, 'look at this dreadful gang of homosexuals'. And so for lots of people, they consider there might still be this gang out there, even though they've got a bunch of gay friends that they know wouldn't ever be like that. So I think that we not only need to have people more accepting of homosexuality, we need to directly name that myth, deconstruct it, and say to people, 'listen, you were sold a crock of lies.'

Byrne: Five young men picked up, sexually assaulted then brutally killed. For years there's been rumours that a gang was involved, a well organised ring of homosexuals known as the 'Family', at least some of them having high positions in the Adelaide community. ('The Family')

Miller: Dark and evil things happen here. People kill other people. There are fire bombs. There are murders. There are those things everywhere. The truth is that Adelaide has always tried to say that we're a nice place and tried to retain its niceness, long into the 20th century, long past other places admitted that maybe they weren't as nice they wanted to be. And so you get that tension between the construct of Adelaide as a *really* nice place, and a place that those evil things happen. So what do you do? Do you say to people we don't get murders here. Or do you go up in arms and say this is really terrible. It's an awful thing. So if we've had a murder here it can only be the result of a major deviation, that the rest of us have nothing to do with. And so we'll construct this evil killer gang. And you end up with the most bizarre stories, that try and explain away the things that are actually, unfortunately, a part of life.

Byrne: How many other people do you think that gang of men attacked?

Kipling: Dozens. Because you know they've been operating for years. Since 1979 that we know about, through to 83, and I would say every weekend someone would have been picked up. I'm sure they've laughed at us, and think they've got away with it. I'm quite sure.

Byrne: Do these people know that they are suspects?

Kipling: Oh yes. Clearly. They've been told. ('The Family')

Miller: Some people just believe that gays aren't right, so for those people it's just wrong that gays have rights, and anything that proves that it's not right to be gay, and the 'Family' fed right into this mythology that, because we decriminalised homosexuality in South Australia these people believed it was Ok to become killers. Take away their rights and you'll stop them from killing. So

of course people wanted to believe in that conspiracy. The decriminalisation of homosexuality in South Australia was directly a backlash against the murder of Duncan, and so it was appealing to that large percentage that believed that you shouldn't discriminate against homosexuals. However, what it gave the gay community was a great number of rights, and far less people felt that we gay people should have those rights. There was a backlash against us, and part of that backlash was the 'Family'. I don't consider that a conspiracy theory, I consider that an historical fact.

Detective: At police Head Quarters the alien intention has become clear.

Alien: Four: alien infiltration and identity simulation. Abduction followed by alien copy of human. Infiltration of politics and judiciary. Judges, court officials, bureaucrats, political advisers, lawyers, and politicians are being infected, ready to take-over on command. Sexual bodies controlled by alien desire. Absence of real self. Wiring of wet circuits with images. Photographic identity. Postmodern. Indistinguishable. Happiness. Sadness. Compassion. Intelligence. All successfully copied and reproduced for conspiracy. Alien bodies placed in positions of power are undermining reality. Ready for alien invasion.

Cop 1: What does it all mean?

Cop 2: It's a full scale take-over son. They want total control and they want us out of the way. It's horrible. It's the end of our species. Red alert! Contact the media! Warn the city! Red alert!

Byrne: Trying to make sense of five senseless killings has sorely tested Adelaide police, especially as they are now convinced they know who is actually in the gang. It has up to nine members, many of them prominent, even eminent Adelaide citizens. Police have some evidence, but they are still searching for that one witness who will clinch the case.

Kipling: They live together, work together, play together, plot together.

Byrne: Do you hope the pressure will break them?

Kipling: If we can keep pressure up at the right time, and the right place and the right areas, sure, that helps to break up the happy family doesn't it.

Byrne: Do you think of it as a happy family?

Kipling: Well they are at the moment. ('The Family')

Miller and Detective: Certainly with the so called 'Family' stories the gay community doesn't benefit, and young men don't benefit, families don't benefit because they start worrying about their children, the police don't benefit in terms that they don't get to solve the crimes because there unsolvable under that construct. The 'Family' won't ever be found, nor will the killers of any of the unsolved murders be found for as long as the 'Family's' pursued, because the 'Family' doesn't exist; you're running up a blind alley, you're not going to get a result, you're not going to get those murders solved.

I'll just get down off my soapbox now, sorry...

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# NAIVE AND SENTIMENTAL WRITING

In the foreground, the Beaumont children, Jane, Arnna and Grant, vanished in summer by the beach, 1966. Last seen in the company of a tall man on Jetty Road, Glenelg, South Australia.

They are what we were; they are what we should become again. We were natural like them and our culture should lead us back to nature along the path of reason and freedom. They are therefore, at the same time a representation of our lost childhood, which remains eternally most precious to us and thus they fill us with a certain sadness. At the same time they are representations of our highest perfection in the ideal, so that they transport us into a state of elevated emotion. The naive is simplicity and naturalness that elevates us morally. That allows us to become ashamed of our artifice. It is a condition of oneness with nature, and is lost to us as we depart our childhood.<sup>1</sup>

When we are happy and free  
We do whatever we want  
There's no worries  
We go to the beach in summer  
Where has that gone?

Dear Mum and Dad, we had a really beautiful lunch today. We had a turkey, and a lot of vegetables. They tasted really nice. The man is feeding us really well. The man took us to see *The Sound of Music* yesterday. Little Grant fell asleep in it though. He could not understand it...The man said that I had better stop now, so I will. Grant and Arnna send you their love.

Love Jane, Arnna and Grant.<sup>2</sup>

We sense a particular kind of politics emerging from sentimental writing, about us, about bringing us to light. There is a principle here that can be restored, a unity that can be patched up. We sense the psychic manoeuvres of Gerard Croiset, the Dutch clairvoyant imported to find us, trying to transform our grief in the

contemplation of eternal, universal values: community, decency, safety. Mourning an ideal past, desiring its return, this is bad writing for difference. It is a politics of writing with a never ending sadness, with us, the children who never grow up, who live near Never-land. Naive and sentimental, idealising a lost unity, this is the writing of a politics which promises one nation. Trying to reach back towards us, your children, sentimentally, to mend the rent in communal identity. The psychic is seeing what's not there — a romantic inscription on the streets of Glenelg. Do you believe we can come back this way? We sense disturbed time, the chronically depressed have begun their exhumation, our resting place is uncovered. Restoring hope and taking with them an entire population, they really want a sentimental spectacle: the unified city.

Maybe tomorrow the sun will shine  
 We could feel safe and free  
 Happy and united as one.

I'm affecting a naive writing so that you may feel a lost presence here. I'm sending this letter some years after the vanishing event. I'm affecting a naive tone, syntax, vocabulary that will allow you to believe in an origin point. Something like 'really beautiful' and 'really nice' are excesses of sentiment which originate in the naive. Or the naive originates in there deployment, on the page. You will follow this writing and it will lead you nowhere, for the sake of the affect, that there is an origin in flesh and blood that pulsates with life, and I'm affecting this flesh with words that originate in an aesthetic style, a philosophical position about the child. And this writing has its faults, it does not maintain the presence of an origin in particular. It may come from another's flesh, which makes it crawl like the maggots of a mawkish writing.

The world is fragmented and cruel  
 No more caring for each other  
 Where is the golden time  
 When we all were one?

I write with and towards the moving object. I sense the return of romantic writing, allowing a writing to be moved. In this yielding there is a communication, of giving, of receiving, of coming closer and learning the way of the object. Believing that an open ended structure is an enabling and ennobling machine. Of gathering the yield. Taking it up, gently, playfully, yielding, giving up the writing and

gathering also a self that has been given over. Liberation narrative, this promise still motivating a re-cycled 60s generation. Perhaps by doing loving work, kind work, and so there, in this form of writing we may find a loving self developing in the act of writing. I used Ulmer's mystorical methods.<sup>3</sup> I plundered personal, expert, mass media writing about the Beaumonts. A romantic pedagogy, founded in German aestheticism, at the prospect of yielding to this, I come here to you. I made a hypertextual past that included me, that recognised my presence in these events.<sup>4</sup> The object speaks to those connected, to those already threaded and drawn, to those drawn by love or whatever moves you. To write myself in without decency is a cruel act, a vain hoax. I was never there, of course. When the subject follows gently its own giving over, without some transformation towards the moral good, that is bad writing with the past. Using a tragedy for self-promotion. Giving, allowing, yielding, descriptions of a writing that has at both ends, naively, a unity of sentiment and style.

Notes

<sup>1</sup> Fredrich Schiller. 1795. *On the Naive and Sentimental in Literature*.  
Trans. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly. Manchester: Carcanet New Press  
Limited, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> 'Dear Mum and Dad'. *The Advertiser* 23 Feb. 1990 p. 17. [Letter sent in 1968 to the  
parents of the Beaumont children, from an unknown source.]

<sup>3</sup> Gregory Ulmer. 'Mystory: The Law of Idiom in Applied Grammatology'. *The  
Future of Literary Theory*. Ed. Ralph Cohen. New York: Routledge, 1989.  
304-323.

<sup>4</sup> *Greetings from Adelaide*. 1997. <http://ensemble.va.com.au/tableau/simon>

# NOSTALGIC MOMENTS

1. I'm sitting by a pond, remembering loving postmodern research writing. There are lilies on the water. Writing not unified in terms of a logical argument progression. Across the grassy area, ducks and children are playing. It's touching, the old old style, the love of criticism for its object. There's a slight breeze in the trees. Recalling the fragmented style: opaque; embodied; de-centred; unmotivated. It's so quiet there, as if the city had passed on. The old old aims of originality, of being disembodied, faint and dank. I visit the hot house. It remains within a single-discipline. There at the back is another pond. There the new old takes on the aesthetic mode of modernity — collage. Everything is sleepy with heat, even the gold-fish. I have never not been here. There's a lotus flower, opening and stretching itself. Recalling the aims of an outmoded technology, writing performing its object. The succulent is breathing moist air. Its structures immersed. I bend down and see tiny red flowers. Remembering, not moving to a condition of complete or final knowing. It's exploding slowly. Entertaining, pleasurable, stimulating. I'm falling into minute territories. I become too small, as if I were never alive, and am reluctant to go on writing, with the other adults, who're so gigantic. An immersion of the essay in and out of understanding. A chain of reasoning follows a chain of ponds, beside a nature ensemble. Always contradictory in terms of its aims.

2. I want to look back at 'Greetings from Adelaide', and I want to think about nostalgia along the way. Or even, to think longingly about an outdated technology, which my work has become, and so to fall into the grip of a nostalgia. I may write with a longing for connection, the desire for desire, for that future reunion with a never existing utopia, where authenticity and transcendence are both present and everywhere. Like electronic writing that is old before it could ever be new. The fetishizing of an outmoded technology, perhaps it's a mode of a critical self-reflection, a writing that cannot be purely modern. And here I'm referring to the old postmodern, and its settlement with a certain writing loss.

3. Nostalgia is a sadness without an object, a sadness that of necessity is inauthentic because it does not take part in lived experience. The writing enters

the space of the other only at the moment when entry is abandoned. When the desire to enter into is renounced, an opening appears in the space of that desire's absence. Nostalgia, like any form of narrative, is always ideological: the past it seeks has never existed except in narrative, and hence, always absent, that past continually reproducing itself as a felt lack. And it is into this space that the other flows. As if invited, it moves into you, moving your writing. Hence the law 'I cannot penetrate'. And this mysterious entry, occasioned by a passive receiving, you do this for another. It is a gift, given by making nothing happen. Hostile to history and its invisible origins, and yet longing for an impossibly pure context of lived experience at a place of origin, nostalgia wears a distinctly utopian face, a face that turns toward a future past, a past that has only ideological reality. Effacing identity in the presence of what has gone before. The remembered thing, the time without time, the cuddly one. The point of desire which the nostalgic seeks is in fact the absence that is the very generating machine of desire...these things, they reach into you, and you with their emanations, resonating, becoming past. Renouncing, giving, emanating past and present at the appearance of writing...the realisation of re-union imagined by the nostalgic is a narrative utopia that works only by virtue of its partiality, its lack of fixity and closure: nostalgia is the desire for desire.

4. Fetishizing an outmoded technology, I'm picturing myself on the electronic screen, like a vain star, exhausted, faintly emanating the old postmodern. I'm simulating a personal history. What is it that will be done away with, along with this photograph which yellows, fades, and will some day be thrown out, if not by me...at least when I die? I'm picturing myself in the past giving homage to discipline writing. It may be practiced in diverse ways, where the issue for users becomes, on the one hand, the attachment of appropriate feelings toward their own histories, products and capabilities, and on the other hand, their detachment from — and active resistance to — disempowering conditions of postcolonial life. Not only 'life' (this was alive, this posed in front of the lens), but also, sometimes — how to put it? — love. Digital, pathetic, interactive. In front of the only photograph in which I find my mother and father together, this couple who I know loved each other, I realise: it is love-as-treasure which is going to disappear forever; for once I am gone, no one will any longer be able to testify to this: nothing will remain but an indifferent nature. The rupture from present conduct permitted by this social action of extension towards sources opens subjects to creative reconfiguration: nostalgic practice invites self-problematization. Picturing emotional redundancy, writing unconvincing hyperbole, trite and vapid.



This is a laceration so intense, so intolerable, that alone against his century, Michelet conceived of History as love's protest: to perpetuate not only life but also what he called, in his vocabulary so outmoded today, the Good, Justice, Unity. Although nostalgia may be a machine of knowledge, it's still a yearning for something lost.

5. He was talking about old telephones I think, recalling a writing of many genres, resonating from one to the other, distinct and yet inhabiting a similar space. Any way, he said that nostalgia was the fetishizing of outmoded technology. To be in many places at one time and above all to be linked to something larger. A special kind of love, being fixed and fixated upon an object. Information technology, it's moving so fast that electronic writing is always out of date, out of time, always being made to be a past technology. This is a writing towards an emotional engagement with what has moved us, what has past and is passing through us. To be nostalgic. To be in a state of longing. These words, they seem to me to be well suited to a time of recovery, that has suffered so much tearing, cutting and destruction. Longing for something that has passed to reappear, so that we can revel in an arrived utopia. These connections, they are an opening to each other. The utopian realisation of postmodern theory embodied in certain technologies. Writing like a dying star performing, from the 60s. Outmoded theory fetishized and realised in an ever redundant technology. In a shadow, even. Admitting a depression, an understanding gap. The promises of postmodern theory have become so much banality. Placing myself into this field, as a researcher, it includes a certain commentary, explication, argumentation, basically critical elucidation through formal argument. So sentimental and naive. Touching, pitiable, affecting, tender, exciting pity or sympathetic sadness, inviting scorn because of shortcomings. It would always be this way, with nostalgic writing. All this is writing that sees itself and its own immersion in what it is not and what it has always been.

6. And the love affair with postmodern research writing, taking this to the electronic screen. I'm at the Art Gallery. There's an exhibition taking place, of Surreal and Dada objects, remembering that this was so new and promising: opaque; embodied; de-centred; un-motivated. Behind a glass box, there are two puppets, Dada dolls made from tin and old paint and bits of trash. Network writing, writing which can be entered at any point, which can be reversed, and which doesn't lose out for this. They have strings and sticks attached. An oscillation between different discursive styles and goals. There is something

terrible here. A linkage, network and interactivity constructed in terms of a movement between parallel structures of writing. As if these things are dead. Now, with it, and totally interactive. As if they are rotten and stinking and should be buried. I'm not hostile to them, just appalled. As if I were looking at a corpse. The more the better therefore, and the less the worse off you are. The cadaver is just so quiet, so full of what has departed it. And these links, so similar to making significant choices, so non-human, as if becoming someone else. Then I remembered that interactivity is a technology for making us free. What has departed from these toys is their maker. I felt so strongly the departed Dada spirit. Falling victim here to the kind of capitalist ideology. That had fled the corpse. That equates freedom with shopping. That this puppet could not move again. I felt the disappearance of creative people, in other words, of vanity, fashion, individualism, banality and adolescence. Their passing on had left this thing behind, that would not be animate. Its machines are corpses of our creativity. I felt the passing of an art. I felt at one with the passing of time and the fatality of art. Viewed as a whole I was sick with nostalgia for the present.

## Notes

Paragraph 2 and 3 includes quotes from page 23 of:

Susan Stewart. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1984.

Paragraph 4 contains quotes from pages 77 and 93 of:

Debbora Battaglia. 'On Practical Nostalgia: Self-Prospecting Among Urban Trobrianders'. *Rhetorics of Self-Making*. Ed. Debbora Battaglia. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. 77-96.

Paragraph 4 also contains quotes from page 94 of:

Roland Barthes. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. (1980) Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.

Paragraphs 3 and 5 contain quotes from 'Greetings from Adelaide'.

Without going into details I came to possess no less than 174 tightly written foolscap pages in Miller's own handwriting which he had prepared across hundreds of nights in his prison cell.

That became this book and I make no apology for assisting James William Miller to tell his side of the Truro story except to the relatives and friends of the seven dead girls for fanning of old ashes of grief but neither I, nor Miller, are the first to be responsible for that nor, I suppose, will we be the last.

(Wordley 189)

I lay on the bed and stared at the ceiling. I lay there and read one Georgette Heyer novel after another, battered old copies saved from my teenage years, and wept as one heroine after another ran away from home. I lay on the bed and waited for the phone to ring. Each time it sounded, I caught it before the second ring and waited, breathless, for the voice - but it was never Julie.

(Mykyta 9)

Historically, the discourse of absence is carried on by the Woman: Woman is sedentary, Man hunts, jour-

Hugo

neys; Woman is faithful (she waits), man is fickle (he sails away, he cruises). It is Woman who gives shape to absence, elaborates its fiction, for she has time to do so; she weaves and she sings; the Spinning Songs express both immobility (by the hum of the Wheel) and absence (far away, rhythms of travel, sea surges, cavalcades).

(LDF 14)

However, when I first read Miller's writings I

never thought then I would become involved with this, his book. In the beginning, even with the mis-spelling, the errors in grammar, the story-line out of sequence, I could not believe that Miller, in reform school at 11, in gaol at 15, could have written the words himself. Yet no one but Miller could have written them.

But why?

(Wordley 189)

— She has a pad in her room somewhere - a writing pad - which is like a diary. She writes everything she feels in in letter form, but she never sends them. This was one of them but she sent it. It will reassure you in a lot of things. I firmly believe that she is alright. I can't possibly believe otherwise and so therefore it is something like a premonition and that she is all right . . .

I can't write anymore but I love you. And Julie does too. I know.

All my love to both you and Daddy

Tania X X X

(Mykyta 9-10)

Hugo: "Woman, whom do you weep for?" "The absent one" ("L'Absente", a poem set to music by Faure).  
E.B.: Letter.

Love at first sight is always spoken in the past tense: it might be called an *anterior immediacy*. The image is perfectly adapted to this temporal deception: distinct, abrupt, framed, it is already (again, always) a memory (the nature of the photograph is not to represent but to memorialize): when I "review" the scene of the rape, I retrospectively create a stroke of luck: this scene has all the magnificence of an accident: I cannot get over having had this good fortune: to meet what matches my desire; or to have taken this huge risk: instantly to submit to an unknown image (and the entire reconstructed scene functions like the sumptuous montage of an ignorance).

J.-L.B.

J.-L.B.: Conversation.

(LDF 194)

~~Gradually it rang less and less. Friends stopped~~

We were supposed to be 'exercising' and it was then I saw Chris Worrell for the very first time. A way across the yard from me I could not help staring at him. I thought he would be about 18 or 19 and he was so appealing. About 5.7" tall with shoulder length glistening black hair, so suiting him and his build, he might have weighed between 9 and 10 stone. I could not take my eyes off him.

(Miller 22)

There is a deception in amorous time (this deception is called: the love story). I believe (along with everyone else) that the amorous phenomenon is an "episode" endowed with a beginning (love at first sight) and an end (suicide, abandonment, disaffection, withdrawal, monastery, travel, etc.). Yet the initial scene during which I was ravished is merely reconstituted: it is *after the fact*. I reconstruct a traumatic image which I experience in the present but which I conjugate (which I speak) in the past:

*Je le vis, je rougis, je pâlis à sa vue.*

*Un trouble s'éleva dans mon âme éperdue.*

I saw him, blushed, turned pale when our eyes met.

Confusion seized my bewildered soul.

RACINE: *Phèdre*.

(LDF 193)

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letters in r  
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down the p

Racine

I think  
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only know

...If he had done more thinking at the beginning, the lives of seven girls would have been saved. If his so-called love for Worrell prevented him from going to the police, then homosexuality in this country should be outlawed...

R.E.A.

The News March 19 1984 p.43

There is not only need for tenderness, there is also need to be tender for the other: we shut ourselves up in a mutual kindness, we mother each other reciprocally; we return to the root of all relations, where need and desire join. The tender gesture says: ask me anything that can put your body to sleep; but also do not forget that I desire you—a little, lightly, without trying to seize anything right away.

(LDF 224)

Anti pornography campaigner and world authority on the effects of pornography on society Dr. Jon Court said the public needed assistance in understanding the message in Miller's book. If we could have spelt out why this particular thing has social significance then I think it would be a bit more responsible...Dr. Court, a lecturer has agreed to look at prof copies of Miller's book...to analyses the underlying thoughts presented... "It would be helpful to have some serious commentary on each segment of Miller's writings by people with expertise in psychological and social welfare fields..." Readers needed direction in assessing Miller's writings. There was a danger in allowing the public to take a 'voyeuristic view' when reading about the horrors of the Truro case...given an understanding of the man's situation and attitudes, the reader could gain an insight into the types of person affected by social influences like Miller and Worrell. He believed the Miller book could be treated as a socially important document if it was balanced by professional opinion.

The News March 13 1984 p. 2

~~Chris had been talking seriously about another subject.~~ He said that earlier he had shared a cell with the poofster, Bob, and that Bob had tried forcing sex on him by threatening to harm his mother if Chris did not cooperate. To me, it sounded just like Bob and I felt that a doubt existed in Chris's mind as far as I was concerned.

I promised him that he would have no worries; that I would never use threats or force on him.

Then right out of the blue Chris said, "I am a psychopathic killer".

(Miller 24)

Like the Argonaut renewing his ship during its voyage without changing its name, the subject in love will perform a long task through the course of one and the same exclamation, gradually dialecticizing the original demand though without ever dimming the incandescence of its initial address, considering that the very task of love and of language is to give to one and the same phrase inflections which will be forever new, thereby creating an unheard-of speech in which the sign's form is repeated but never is signified; in which the speaker and the lover finally triumph over the dreadful reduction which language (and psychoanalytic science) transmit to all our affects.

(RB 114)

My gaze slid down the page with its news of friends and gossip, letters written and still to be written, to a poem on the bottom of page five.

The day is done,  
All that could pass, passed,  
All that could live, lived  
All that is, was,  
All that was now, is then,  
The day is done.

(Mykyta 12-13)

\*  
"Christopher Worrell was a psychopath with an extreme version of a powerful and dangerous shadow side... We need to be aware there are people in our community who can use and abuse others in the fiendishly clever way Worrell used and abused Miller and his victims... the bondage material and pornography amplified his willingness to use and abuse and exploit other people... it was a 'trigger mechanism' to his bizarre character changes...

(The News March 14 1984 p.1 and 4)

Then my heart flinched as I read the next lines.

✓  
I was walking down the Main North Rd the other night and this bloke stopped and asked if I wanted to go for a ride. I was in a mood so I went. We parked, had a few jays but all his advances I put an end to. It was strange in a way because he said that something was bothering me, not superficial but really bothering me. It freaked me out because he was right. He dropped me off at the top of Seventh Ave near Stephens Tce. I even got out of going out with him or saying 'no' by just saying that I would do the unsociable thing and kept repeating it to all his questions. He drove away. I was incredulous. (I don't know if that's the right usage of that word but I like it.)

(Mykyta 14-15)

\*  
Miller emerged as a compliant and dependent person ripe for exploitation by a psychopath like Worrell. Because of his background of petty crime and institutionalised living, Miller lacked the moral integrity to stand against evil... It was classic prison mentality to 'turn away' and just ignore something which he did not understand or with which he did not wish to become involved. Miller appeared to be a classic case of a dependent personality eroded by the sub-culture of reformatory, prison and petty criminal activity.

The News 14 March 1984 p. 1 and 4

and I are the only decent letter writers in our family. I got a letter from Camilla today and she doesn't even use the back of the page like you.' But I could think of nothing but, 'She did take lifts, she put herself at risk. Oh God, Oh God, where is she?'

(Mykyta 14-15)

If I receive the tender gesture within the field of demand, I am fulfilled: is this gesture not a kind of miraculous crystallization of presence? But if I receive it (and this can be simultaneous) within the field of desire, I am disturbed: tenderness, by rights, is not exclusive, hence I must admit that what I receive, others receive as well (sometimes I am even afforded the spectacle of this). Where you are tender, you speak your plural.

(LDF 224-225)

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to

At first it was a joke, but then it changed and we decided to actually make it so.

We each cut a wrist

Then we placed the two bleeding cuts together.

Perhaps that sounds like kid's stuff but to Chris and me this blood bond between us meant a great deal.

At night in the cell he would talk about his good times in the Air Force and also about the not so happy periods of his past. He told me how much he would like to have known his real father. He had been six years old when his mother married his step father.

His mother Chris loved deeply.

(Miller 25)

**E** Naming of the total union: "the sole and simple pleasure" (Aristotle), "the joy without stain and without mixture, the perfection of dreams, the term of all hopes" (Ibn-Hazm), "the divine magnificence" (Novalis); it is undifferentiated and undivided repose. Or again, the fulfillment of ownership; I dream that we delight in each other according to an absolute appropriation; this is fruitful union, love's *fruition* (with its initial fricative and shifting vowels before the murmuring final syllable, the word increases the delight it speaks of by an oral pleasure; saying it, I enjoy this union *in my mouth*).

(LDF 226)

During the week a group opposed to the publication of Miller's story has collected signatures in Rundle Mall, city, for a petition which it intends to give *News* management on Monday.

A spokeswoman, who did not want to be named, said the group was "outraged and disgusted" at the publication of Miller's story in *The News*. The group

(Advertiser March 17 1984 p. 17)

## e Miller

had collected about 2000 signatures outside the Renaissance Centre and would seek more this morning.

She said some young people had told her they regarded Miller as a hero after reading his story.

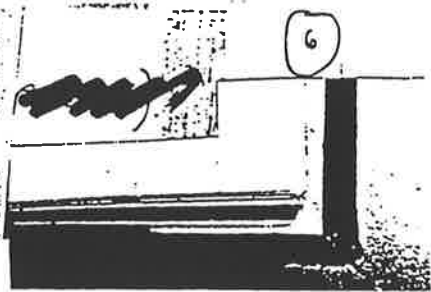
She said it was outrageous a convicted murderer should have access to the type of publicity given Miller in *The News*. "Maybe other convicted murderers will tell their story, making money and becoming celebrities out of it," she said. "Perhaps crime will become worth it after all."

... I reached for a beer bottle and smashed on the side of the car and threatened him with the broken end... He said 'Sorry hon, I wouldn't hurt you for the world,' and told me that he had blank periods because of a tumour moving in his head. Louise said Worrell had pleaded with her to marry him after he found she had become pregnant to another man... Chris so wanted to be a father and he wanted to protect me and the baby, but I told him it just wouldn't work out... Louise said she sometimes felt guilt because it appeared now that Worrell believed she was his only true love... she had visited Worrell's grave in recent years, and became upset remembering that perhaps her rejection might have led to his later violet actions... I couldn't help thinking that if I had been able to control him, then all this may not have happened...

The News March 13 1984 p. 1-2

~~He was returned to jail just at lunchtime.~~  
~~He was as white as a ghost.~~  
~~Lashed lips what had happened.~~  
~~He said "Six years."~~  
~~He had been sentenced to four years jail for rape to which was added the two years he served for breaching his suspended sentence on the armed robbery charge.~~  
~~Lunchtime in our cell was very quiet except for the sound of tears I could not hold back.~~

(Miller 25-26)



After their usual play on the swings and the roundabout, they always wanted to climb the slippery-dip ladder 'all by themselves'. As I write those words, I can remember distinctly the constriction of the heart as I watched them climb. But I only said, 'Hold on tight.' I pretended to them that climbing ladders was the kind of thing that little girls could expect to do, and that girls could be adventurous as long as they were sensible. I fought the impulse to keep them locked away from harm, because I felt that in the long run the greater harm was in making them afraid of life. I still believe that, but oh, it is a bitter draught.

(Mykyta 21)

I am writing to express my disgust and objection at The News for printing the Miller story. I refuse to read or look at pictures of these murderers, they are engraved forever in my mind. I condemn Dick Wordley for saying that Miller has a right to be heard. Well, he had his right at his trial; and was found guilty. Now to my mind, he has as many rights as the girls he was instrumental in helping to murder. If you feel by printing his story, that people need to be reminded of his crimes, I believe you are gravely mistaken. Do you really think that people are so shallow they would forget the details and horror of his trial? Never.

P. J. L. Green  
The News March 16 1984 p.21





By weeping, I want to impress someone, to bring pressure to bear upon someone ("Look what you have done to me"). It can be—as is commonly the case—the other whom one thus constrains to assume his commiseration or his insensibility quite openly; but it can also be oneself: I make myself cry, in order to prove to myself that my grief is not an illusion: tears are signs, not expressions. By my tears, I tell a story, I produce a myth of grief, and henceforth I adjust myself to it: I can live with it, because, by weeping, I give myself an emphatic interlocutor who receives the "truest" of messages, that of my body, not that of my speech: "Words, what are they? One tear will say more than all of them."

Schubert

SCHUBERT: "Lob der Tränen."

(LDF 182)

You, I heard in my head, are neither bisexual nor homosexual yet you have had your share of love affairs and would it be your desire to have a third party sitting at the time of sex on the edge of the bed or wherever?

And if you were homosexual would it be your desire to watch as your lover engaged himself in a heterosexual act abhorrent to you?

Why wouldn't you want to distance yourself?

And why, if Miller was lying when he denied all knowledge of how or why Worrell killed the girls, does he personally incriminate himself by his volunteered admission that he saw Worrell attack Julie Mykyta and "like a coward I just walked away"?

Miller was in love with Worrell.

Miller loved Worrell to put it in the context of Amelia.

Written in a gaol cell even after Worrell was dead, Miller's story is testimony to that.

So is Miller's story, as brutal as it is, the horror that it is, as well, in its fashion, as bizarre as it is, also a love story?

(Wordley 191)

Early in June his trial started.

I truly believed in his innocence, praying hard that things would go well for him. During early days of the trial, when he returned from court, Chris seemed confident of his chances.

How well I remember the last day.

It was a Friday in the morning.

Again he was leaving gaol for the court.

He said that when he was found not guilty that day he would come back to the bridge crossing the Adelaide Weir over the River Torrens which we could see from the window of our cell on the top floor of the gaol.

He said he would wave to me from the bridge.

I was locked up at 4.30 p.m., the usual time.

Sure that Chris would be released I got up to our cell window and looked out towards the bridge.

He was returned to gaol just at lunchtime.

He was as white as a ghost.

I asked him what had happened.

He said: "Six years."

He had been sentenced to four years gaol for rape to which was added the two years he owed for breaching his suspended sentence on the armed robbery charge.

Lunchtime in our cell was very quiet except for the sound of tears I could not hold back.

(Miller 25-26)



*Handwritten signature or scribble.*

I write this at the table in the diningroom five days before the trial. It is three years since Julie hung up the phone that Friday night - in another world - and I relive those three years, but with the added burden of my present knowledge. For she is dead, and dead, and dead indeed. My beautiful girl did not run away, but lay under a tree in a lonely paddock - murdered. Sharp in my mind is the newspaper picture of a young policeman carrying her body, wrapped in a plastic bag.

(Mykyta 24)

And yet: the closer I come to the work, the deeper I descend into writing; I approach its unendurable depth; a desert is revealed; there occurs—fatal, lacerating—a kind of *loss of sympathy*: I no longer feel myself to be *sympathetic* (to others, to myself). It is at this point of contact between the writing and the work that the hard truth appears to me: *I am no longer a child*. Or else, is it the *ascsis* of pleasure which I am discovering?

(RB 137)

[discipline]



~~Worrell~~ extracts from Miller's book...reek with examples which may well cause even Lucifer himself to be more than envious. Many will debate Miller's so-called reasons for not informing on Worrell after the first murder. Notwithstanding Miller's grossly distorted concept of 'love' for his homosexual companion Worrell, Miller's admitted adeptness in lying has indelible connotations of self-survival. At the conclusion of the synopsis...there is, I submit, a moral duty which ought to be implemented without delay. The young people - our next generation - should not be encouraged to wonder, far less accept, that homosexual involvements are the corollary of love. The seeds are being nurtured in Miller's book...

Jeff D. Raymond.

The News March 16 1984 p.21

I was born in the then poorer part of Adelaide, the West End, on February 2, 1940, just after the start of World War II. I was to become one in a family of six children. In those early days we lived in Vinrace Street and with some other kids in the area I seemed to be forever stealing, like toys at Coles in Rundle Street, long before I was old enough to go to school. I remember that my mother would drop me off at a kindergarten in Wright Street and no sooner was she out of sight than I was out of the kindergarten. I never really got away with it. For stealing and playing the wag I would be punished by my father, a driver with the S.A. Highways Department, with a strap, hitting me between his legs. I would beg him to stop but it didn't end my thieving.

(Miller 13)

And through my mind went the song that Mum used to sing to me when I was little, until I cried - and begged her to sing it again.

My dear don't you know, how a long time ago,  
Two poor little children, whose names I don't know,  
Were taken away, on a bright summer's day,  
And left in the woods, I've heard people say.  
And when it was night, so sad was their plight,  
For the sun it went down, and the moon gave no light.  
They sobbed and they sighed, and they bitterly cried,  
And the poor little children, they laid down and died.

And the robins so red, when they knew they were dead,  
Took blackberry leaves, and over them spread.  
Poor babes in the wood, poor babes in the wood,  
I hope you'll remember, the babes in the wood.

(Mykyta 30-31)

By reading the 'story' of the 'killer' describing the warped mind of a charismatic psychopath, I have learned just how easy it is to be 'conned' into a situation that can get out of my control. I think parents who censor and forbid their children from reading this information are failing to protect and advise their children of the dangers in our society, particularly around Adelaide. Something as morbid and horrific as this should not be kept in the dark but shown up for what it is, for the security and peace of mind of all youngsters.

Miss C.A. Turney  
The News March 19 1984 p.43

... At  
Sturt Street Primary School Barry and I were forever playing  
the wag and if we got into strife I would take the blame.  
Copping-it-sweet, as they say, is something I never seemd to  
have grown out of - my taking the blame is what my sisters  
have never even now been able to understand. Soon the  
police got to know me better than any of the other kids so I  
guess it was to be expected that I'd be the first of our group to  
reach a boys' home or reformatory.  
I remember I was just 11 years old.

(Miller 13-14)

I met a friend for lunch in the University bistro, and an acquaintance paused at the table.  
'What's the matter with you? You look very grim'  
'It's my daughter; she's been missing for forty days now.'  
She laughed: 'She'll be resurrected in the desert,' she said  
lightly, and passed on. I looked at Annie, and covered my face  
with my hands and wept. How could this experience, which  
was so all-consuming to me, touch so lightly on other people?  
I lived behind glass, in a world of fire, and looked out at people  
who moved and spoke in a soundless trance, and could not hear  
my screaming.

(Mykyta 34-35)

One night, a man we knew slightly rang and asked for something of Julie's. He had discovered a wonderful clairvoyant and wanted to consult him on our behalf. Most of Julie's things had been washed and put away, and her really personal things were with her, but I searched out something and gave it to him.

'She is alive,' he said excitedly on the phone next night. 'There will be a letter within the month.'

I thanked him and hung up. I felt a strange, almost painful, elation. Now focus shifted from the phone to the letter-box, and the moment of reality each day was the moment when I held the letters . . . the moment before looking at them.

(Mykyta 43)

In the beginning I rejected the idea but he didn't force me, so I decided to let him have his way. Then I let two other aborigines do it to me because, I felt, the three of them treated me as their friend. I did not enjoy the experience until it happened with me and a white boy called Trevor. Once when no one else was around we were wrestling under a table and becoming excited, I asked him if I could give him oral sex. We wasted no time. It happened with other boys but I think I was particular in my choosing. At this stage there would have been about 90 boys in Magill aged from 10 to 18 and it was far from unusual to see boys having sex together often in the open. I remember seeing a white boy kissing an aboriginal boy, although this was not common. It was commonplace however to see one boy "masturbating" another boy, something I was often a party to.

(Miller 19)

It is almost as if one enters another dimension of time, a long pause out of time and space while the system absorbs the new fact, and then a shuddering re-start as the next breath is drawn and the body re-asserts its right to life. The body goes on living, dragging breath in and out, but the spirit struggles to escape, to seek solitude and painless isolation. And this is madness, I suppose, if the spirit cannot find its way back to the rocky, echoing cave of the mind. It is very tempting to let go.

(Mykyta 44)

About a week later we were again at my sister's when he said he was quite willing for me to have sex with him. We had oral sex, with me doing it to him. This was to happen many times afterwards. I would masturbate while doing it to him, and Chris, at the same time, would be reading a bondage book.

(Miller 37)

I think the most he ever spoke was after the first murder and then as I will tell shortly it seemed to be based on getting over to me that he had nothing more to lose and that to kill

me to keep quiet was by comparison no more than what he had already done and I suppose too he knew how much I cared for him and that the last thing I'd want would be to hurt him as he would have known too my hatred for any crim who lazzed another.

(Miller 42-43)

I did not tell my mother of these dreams; they would have distressed her too much. I began to dream of my father too, and the two losses merged into one unbearable burden of guilt. I don't know why I reacted in this way. I had always done my best for my children, and we had all seemed to be reasonably close. But I could not work out what could have happened. Other people seemed sure, especially the police; but I could not accept their answers: drugs, boys, or religion. Nothing held true against what I knew of Julie, and yet, what did I know? There was a world out there of which I had known nothing, and it was a dark and menacing place.

(Mykyta 47)

It was then he told me that he had killed a couple of girl hitch hikers on his way from Perth to Adelaide on one of his leaves when he had been stationed at Pearce in Western Australia in the Air Force. I remember him saying in a voice that was not his normal voice that he had knifed one of the girls and "it was messy, blood spurted everywhere". He said he had killed the other girl by bashing in her head with a rock. I believe he said the two girls had not been hitching together. He also claimed that once when swimming he had watched a friend drown before his eyes without lifting a hand to help him.

Chris was talking quietly and by looking at him I believed it to be the truth.

I then asked him if he would really kill me as he had threatened and he said at first he did not know then added haltingly "No, I wouldn't", but could I believe him?

(Miller 44-45)



Worrell: "A

agency, killed, teeth through

THE ACCOMPLICE



Veronica Knight

Tania Kenny

Julie Mykyta



Sylvia Pittmann




Vicki Howard

Figures take shape insofar as we can recognize, in passing discourse, something that has been read, heard, felt. The figure is outlined (like a sign) and memorable (like an image or a tale). A figure is established if at least someone can say: "That's so true! I recognize that scene of language." For certain operations of their art, linguists make use of a vague entity which they call linguistic feeling; in order to constitute figures, we require neither more nor less than this guide: amorous feeling.

Ultimately it is unimportant whether the text's dispersion is rich here and poor there; there are nodes, blanks, many figures break off short; some, being hypostases of the whole of the lover's discourse, have just the rarity—the poverty—of essences. ~~What is to~~ (LDF 4)



5 May



My lunch break at Torrens and boy, am I exhausted. These three tutorials have been really hard work and I do not feel like facing another one. I feel as if I've done a rotten job, especially with the last group, and I should just go and resign

Connie I

or shoot myself. Perhaps I'll look back on this later and laugh — but at the moment I can't envisage it

That terrible dream I had on Monday night is still very much with me. I can't remember the details, but I was living with Mum and she told me to kill myself because I was just a total waste of time!

(Mykyta 55-56)

I collected the paper one morning, in that still opalescent hush of early day — 26 April 1978. A man had been out picking mushrooms the previous day, and stumbled across what he first thought was a cow's foot lying near some scrub in a deserted paddock near Truro. I didn't even know where that was. Later he began to worry, and went back. He found the scattered remains of a teenage girl, wearing jeans and a green cardigan . . .

(Mykyta 62)

~~Each of us can fill in this code according to his own history; rich or poor, the figure must be there, the site (the compartment) must be reserved for it. It is as if there were an amorous Topic, whose figure was a site (topos). Now the property of a Topic is to be somewhat empty: a Topic is statutorily half coded, half projective (or projective because coded).~~

(LDF 5)



I saw Julie fall to the ground and from where I was standing about 70 yards distance in the dark, I thought Chris might have kneed her in the stomach.

I ran back to the car by which time Chris was sitting on her stomach.

My immediate thought was that he was strangling her with a rope.

I remember grabbing hold of him.

I yelled "What are you doing?"

This was the only time I actually witnessed any sign of violence between Chris and a girl.

He swung and pushed me away.

His words came again "Get away or I'll kill you."

His face was that of a savage with insanity in his eyes.

(Miller 63)

I insist, reject all training, repeat the same actions; no one can educate me—nor can I educate myself; my discourse is continuously without reflection; I do not know how to reverse it, organize it, stud it with glances, quotation marks; I always speak *in the first degree*; I persist in a dutiful, discreet, conformist delirium, tamed and banalized by literature.

(LDF 177)

I took the paper in to Irush. 'Yes, I know,' he said. 'It was on the news last night.'

'Why didn't you tell me?'

'You were asleep. And anyway they don't know.'

I waited till nine o'clock, then rang the Missing Persons Bureau. 'I just wanted to remind you that my daughter is still missing.'

The voice at the other end of the phone was grave. 'Mrs Mykyta, we are very aware that your daughter is still missing. We've had her file out, but this girl could not be Julie. I'm sorry.'

I hung up, not sure whether to be relieved or not. An enormous weariness hung on me like a garment I could not shake off. Obviously, bodies *could* lie out in the open for years, and be found only by accident.

(Mykyta 62-63)

Yes, I was afraid and yes I walked back towards where I had been and yes I remember putting my hands to my face, clutching my face and yes I prayed aloud: "Please God, don't let him hurt her, don't let him hurt her," over and over and over. Gutless, like a coward afraid to look I eventually took my hands from over my eyes turning them back to the car.

My feet seemed glued to the ground.

At first I was afraid to move but I knew that inevitably I must.

Chris was in the front seat.

Now there seemed to be absolutely nothing in his face but that also could be terrifying.

He said: "We'll take her up to where the first one is."

It is impossible to think clearly in a situation such as again I found myself. Whether he had intercourse with her I did not know but I did not think so. Julie was still fully clothed but dead in a car on loan in my name.

Yes, again I drove to Truro with a friend who I not only loved but who was my life.

(Miller 63)

The drive back was as quiet as the drive there.  
 Was I getting to know his moods?  
 Had this one reached its second stage?  
 I knew deep confusion as to why they happened, what  
 caused them, how they suddenly turned him crazy, as I also  
 knew my love for him was the most important thing in my  
 whole life, making me want to help him, find the reason for  
 the moods and bring an end to them, but how could I do that?  
 How could I stop him?  
 Who could I go to?  
 I knew that while literally no blood was on my hands I was  
 none the less in deep trouble but if I told anyone, or went to  
 anyone for help or advice it would mean that I must implicate  
 Chris and that would mean the end for both of us.

(Miller 64)



What obstructs amorous writing is the illusion of expressivity: as a writer, or assuming myself to be one, I continue to fool myself as to the effects of language: I do not know that the word "suffering" expresses no suffering and that, consequently, to use it is not only to communicate nothing but even, and immediately, to annoy, to irritate (not to mention the absurdity). Someone would have to teach me that one cannot write without burying "sincerity" (always the Orpheus myth: not to turn back).<sup>1</sup>

(LDF 98)

I read the article quickly. 'Look what he's done,' I said to Irush. 'I said "She was a fastidious child", and he's written "She was a good girl". He makes me sound like a prude.'  
 'What does it matter what we sound like,' said Irush wearily. 'as long as it does some good.'

(Mykyta 68)

Caspar David Friedrich

A romantic painting shows a heap of icy debris in a polar light; no man, no object inhabits this desolate space; but for this very reason, provided I am suffering an amorous sadness, this void requires that I fling myself into it; I project myself there as a tiny figure, seated on a block of ice, abandoned forever. "I'm cold," the lover says, "let's go back"; but there is no road, no way, the boat is wrecked. There is a *coldness* particular to the lover, the chilliness of the child (or of any young animal) that needs maternal warmth.

(LDF 133)

Images  
Pain

FRIEDRICH: *The Wreck of the "Hope."*



Next day I got a phone call from Marlene Kenny, the mother of one of the other girls who were missing.

'I'm sorry to bother you,' she said in a soft, nervous voice, 'but I just had to ring. What you said in the paper about keeping a photo just to be sure she really did exist . . . that's how I feel. I've got Tania's photo next to the bed too.'

'Tania? That's strange, my daughter is called Tania too, my other daughter, that is.'

(Mykyta 69)

The following night

At Chris's suggestion we found ourselves at the Jeremiah's strip club just off Rundle Mall thinking that since neither Joan nor Joyce had ever been to a strip it would give them a laugh. At first it was all girls stripping then a guy came out and stripped which really got our girls laughing and it amused me too. While one of the girls was getting it all off Chris drew our attention to a derelict who looked as if he didn't have a cent in the world. We smiled when Chris said he had probably been waiting at the door to be the first inside to get the best seat which the derelict did have. By the time we left I had been drinking heavily and near our flat I asked Joan to stop her car. I vomited in the street motioning that I'd walk home. But Chris wouldn't leave me. I was sick again and we walked home together.

Next day was Sunday and we stayed in the flat playing the records we'd borrowed from L'on. As I looked at Chris stretched out on the lounge floor so happy and at ease I thought, mate, how could you ever hurt anyone let alone kill them?

(Miller 64-65)

I look for signs, but of what? What is the object of my reading? Is it: am I loved (am I loved no longer, am I still loved)? Is it my future that I am trying to read, deciphering in what is inscribed the announcement of what will happen to me, according to a method which combines paleography and manticism? Isn't it rather, all things considered, that I remain suspended on this question, whose answer I tirelessly seek in the other's face: *What am I worth?*

n the  
rew,

(LDF 214)

He introduced himself and the camera-men, greeting us as if we were old friends, then tried to reassure us while the others set up the lights and the big foil umbrellas that were reflectors. It was all so much easier than I would ever have expected; we could ignore the lights, and the man crawling around on the floor directing the camera from one to the other; this man was a friend, genuinely concerned at our loss, and our reaction to it. We spoke about the emptiness of life when one member of a family is suddenly and inexplicably missing, we spoke of the search, of the painful vulnerability we felt to all stories of lost and runaway children, of our fears . . .

'I try to keep going,' I said, 'I try to keep calm, but often I feel as if I am screaming inside, and no one can hear me.'

'We'll cut it there,' he said. I looked up, and there were tears in his eyes.

(Mykyta 70-71)

The refrain in my head speeded up; suddenly I was aware of myself, standing there, looking down at a figure on the floor. And this figure was screaming — a great cry of anguish that came from the very roots of life. Slowly, I became aware that it was me: that I was screaming, and that I was standing there thinking: 'That scream is written into Greek tragedy. So, people do scream like that,' in gentle wonder. Then the moment passed, and John and Ping were holding me, and dragging me out of the staffroom, and I had my hands

forced into my mouth to stop that terrible noise.

(Mykyta 80-81)

In reality, it is unimportant that I have no likelihood of being *really* fulfilled (I am quite willing for this to be the case). Only the will to fulfillment shines, indestructible, before me. By this will, I well up: I form within myself the utopia of a subject free from repression: I am this subject *already*. This subject is libertarian: to believe in the Sovereign Good is as insane as to believe in the Sovereign Evil:

Novalis

~~philosophical~~

(Fulfillment means an abolition of inheritances: "... Joy has no need of heirs or of children—Joy wants itself, wants eternity, the repetition of the same things, wants everything to remain eternally the same." The fulfilled lover has no need to write, to transmit, to reproduce.)

Nietzsche

(LDF 55-56)

The day was still night when we took Sylvia's body down the track at Truro, carrying her out, leaving the blanket in the car.

She was not bound, at least, not then.

Perhaps she had been before.

Then she appeared fully dressed.

Later I thought "Why? Why did they all have to die as they did? Why did Chris want to kill them? Why couldn't he stop himself? Was there no other way to satisfy whatever blind urge came over him when the moods arrived? How can he be so happy, friendly, considerate one minute and the next moment with no warning a maniac?"

All my life I had believed in God.

Now I started to wonder.

Time and time again I prayed for God to help Chris so why hadn't He? And why did He let Veronica, Julie, Tania die just because Chris was overtaken by this sickness or whatever it was? Why had He turned his back?

It made no sense to me.

But nothing was making sense for me any more and little did I realise as I drove back from Truro that evening I would be doing the same thing twice within the next week.

(Miller 72-73)

The amorous text (scarcely a text at all) consists of little narcissisms, psychological paltrinesses; it is without grandeur: or its grandeur (but who, *socially*, is present to acknowledge it?) is to be unable to reach any grandeur, not even that of "crass materialism." It is then the *impossible* moment when the obscene can really coincide with affirmation, with the *amen*, the limit of language (any utterable obscenity as such can no longer be the last degree of the obscene: uttering it, even through the wink of a figure, I myself am *already* recuperated, socialized).

(LDF 179)

I feared and distrusted Chris when a mood overtook him yet it was the complete opposite when he was normal. Never have I trusted or believed in anyone more than I did Chris who could be the most sincere and considerate person I had ever known.

Once he went to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for a physical check-up and he put me down as his next of kin.

We were by our own commitment blood brothers.

Often he introduced me to girls he picked up as his uncle.

But never in all my life did I feel more honoured than on the day Chris made me his next-of-kin.

(Miller 77-78)

As Narrative (Novel, Passion), love is a story which is accomplished, in the sacred sense of the word: it is a *program* which must be completed. For me, on the contrary, this story has *already taken place*; for what is event is exclusively the delight of which I have been the object and whose aftereffects I repeat (and fail to achieve). Enamoration is a *drama*, if we restore to this word the archaic meaning Nietzsche gives it: "Ancient drama envisioned great declamatory scenes, which excluded action (action took place *before* or *behind* the stage)." Amorous seduction (a pure hypnotic moment) takes place *before* discourse and *behind* the proscenium of consciousness: the amorous "event" is of a hieratic order: it is my own local legend, my little sacred history that I declaim to myself, and this declamation of a *fait accompli* (frozen, embalmed, removed from any *praxis*) is the lover's discourse.

NIETZSCHE: *The Case of Wagner*.

(LDF 93-94)

Nietzsche

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comp  
this!

Love, and what of the girls?

People loved them too.

Why didn't Miller think of that?

Is the answer to that something he is trying to explain?

It's too late for that, said my head, walk away.

I showed Miller's story to three of my friends, all married,

all parents, all with daughters, one of whom, aged 19, read the story without my knowledge.

She asked me what I was going to do about it.

"I don't quite know yet," I said, "but probably I'll just return it and walk away."

"Don't walk away," she said.

(Wordley 191-192)

I sat there and looked at the report over and over again. 'What does it say', I thought, 'to people who don't know us. All this talk of sex and drinking, and hitch-hiking . . . but we weren't careless parents, and she wasn't a careless girl . . .' I hated to talk to reporters for fear that they would misrepresent her as a wild and irresponsible girl; and yet, as the police had pointed out, the publicity was our only hope. I felt so raw and vulnerable; any gaze, no matter how sympathetic, was felt as a blow.

(Mykyta 91-92)

'We'll go down and do the poetry reading in the park now, the interviewer said. 'I think that should be quite effective.'  
'Julie loved the park,' I said. 'She and Tania often went to the Botanic Gardens. That's the advantage of living in St Peters: the zoo and the Art Gallery, and so on, are like extensions of home.' I wanted to say, 'Let me read the poetry', but I didn't.

(Mykyta 96)



Vicki



Deborah

The search is long and rarely rewarding,  
It involves travelling far along the path;  
The path that leads from being to self.  
That is from the image to the object.  
Down the deep and dark canyons of my mind,  
Along the shallow pools of no purpose,  
Up the slope of knowledge  
Amounted since time's beginning.  
In the bright empty place is the soul of my body,  
The energy within brings moods, sadness and confusion;  
It acts without restraint.  
And thus I explain myself.

(Mykyta 94)

'It should go to air next Thursday; I hope you can watch it.'  
But we didn't. On Thursday morning we got the news that Julie's body had been found; and since they had said that they only wanted to do the programme to make the girls alive to the public, so that someone would come forward with information, I assumed that now the need was past, they would not show it.

(Mykyta 96)

A specific force impels my language toward the harm I may do to myself: the motor system of my discourse is the wheel out of gear: language snowballs, without any tactical thought of reality. I seek to harm myself, I expel myself from my paradise, busily provoking within myself the images (of jealousy, abandonment, humiliation) which can injure me; and I keep the wound open, I feed it with other images, until another wound appears and produces a diversion.

(LDF 80)

In her book "It's A Long Way to Truro" to which I referred in the preface of this book, Mrs. Anne-Marie Mykyta recalls her sister claiming that in Court I denied calling them "rags", "But" said the sister in the book "you could see he felt that way".

How wrong that was only I knew.

Mrs. Mykyta reports that one witness said in court that I "forced" her in some way to have intercourse with Chris.

I recollect the witness said "encouraged" but whether "encouraged" or "forced", neither is correct.

For me, Chris Worrell was the best looking guy you could ever see.

I think it was the same with so many girls.

When he died he was 23 years old.

But right up to that time some girls believed he could be no older than 18, or even younger.

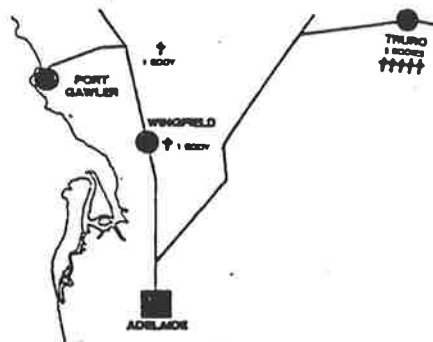
If they had the chance to be with one of the spunkiest young guys in Adelaide how or why would they refuse him?

That is even forgetting his ability to somehow compel them.

He was so attractive to them.

In my wildest dreams I could not imagine any "force" or "encouragement" being required by, or for, Chris Worrell to get his way with most girls.

As Chris would have said: "No way."

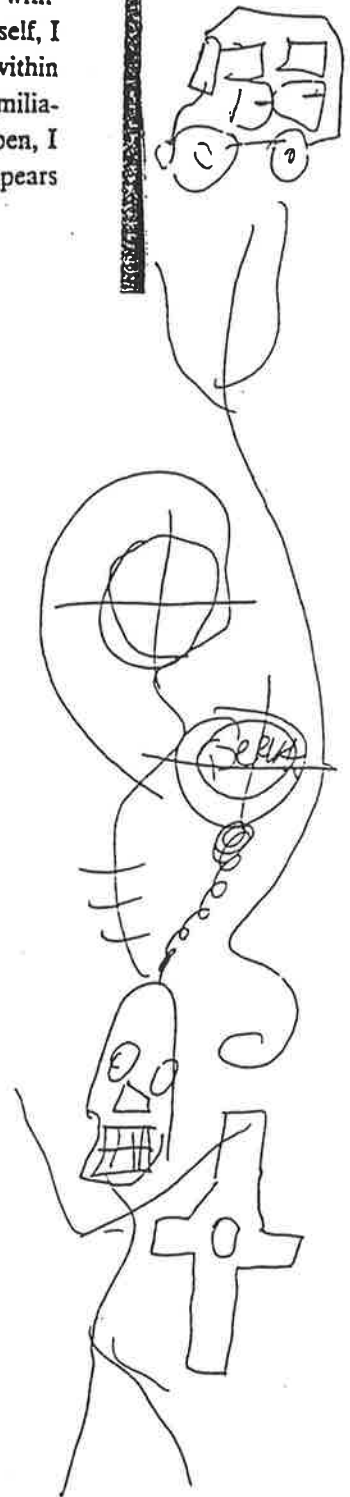


(Miller 80)

When I look at the poetry I was writing then, I feel that I was going insane.

I was obsessed with images of decay; I could not eat: the smell of meat sickened me; it was like eating my daughter's body; and even vegetables seemed to be rotten in my mouth. I tried to block out the world with alcohol and Valium and romantic novels where everything always ends happily; but the world crept back, and I lay awake for long hours in the night; awake or asleep, I existed in a nightmare.

(Mykyta 86)



Looking back, I find it hard to remember how I felt. Physically sick, and enormously weary, but most of all, unbelieving. I could not comprehend the fact that anyone would take seven young girls and kill them . . . and one of them mine. Murder doesn't happen to people you know. Murder belongs in sleazy newspapers, something to while away a wet Sunday afternoon. My mind was full of disjointed questions, and disbelief.

(Mykyta 103)

The story of how James William Miller, small time criminal, became embroiled in the State's most horrific murder case makes chilling reading. All the more chilling because this 'Son of Sam' scenario of death takes place using our small city as a backdrop. . . Parents will be shocked by the ease with which this pair claimed to have charmed young women into their car - at night and day - for a one way trip to Truro. . . Miller's narrative takes the reader through a 'twilight zone' of the city known to police and crime reporters. . . But the single underlying current, apparent to all who have read the manuscript, is that the totally random reign of death perpetrated by Worrell and Miller could be repeated any day if young women and men allow themselves to become targets.

The News March 12 1984 p. 27

Later we went out to do our shopping, and walked around Norwood in a kind of daze. I don't know where Marko was: I think that the mother of one of his friends at school had come to get him. Irush and I did not speak; we just held hands and walked very close to each other. In the afternoon we went to bed, and made love with quiet desperation. It seemed wrong and bitter that we were alive and Julie was dead, had been dead for so long. I thought of her body, 'curled up under a tree', and wondered what had happened to her before she reached that state of peace. It is a long way to Truro.

I read the newspaper report, especially Peter's account of the finding of her body, over and over again. It was the only reality.

(Mykyta 105)

Somehow I walked through the days at school, smiling, working, staring into space if I allowed my concentration to lapse. I tried to avoid talking to people, because I felt that it would be wrong to expose these people to the intensity of my feeling, as if I had some loathsome disease, and was only allowed amongst ordinary decent people as long as I kept it concealed. Sometimes, the veneer cracked, and I wanted to shout: 'Look at me! My child was murdered. Throw your filth at me.' Often, it all seemed so unreal that I could not believe that I had ever had a child, let alone allowed her to die. Mostly I just wanted to be dead, though never with the same certainty of achieving it as on that dark night when Connie and Vicki were found. The essence of my being was simply not present in the shell that walked and talked and had its cups of tea; it ranged out in lonely paddocks where grim-faced men continued their search for the dead.

(Mykyta 108)



My dear Marlene [I wrote],

I have just learnt that your daughter, Tania, has been found, and I wanted to let you know that I am thinking of you and your family.

Both our bright, beautiful girls! Is it any consolation to know that our faith in them is now justified, that they did not run away from us? Not yet, I think, but it will be someday.

My love to you all,

Anne-Marie

Next to the report on the search was an article headlined: WORRELL WAS 'KIND, GENTLE'. A girl who had been a friend of Worrell's for many years said: 'With me, he was a really gentle, warm, happy-go-lucky, sensitive person. He had a lot of friends, male and female. He was outgoing and made friends easily.'

(Mykyta 110-111)

On Friday the Council intended to show movies for employees in which we were not interested.

Instead we went to a place near the old Belair quarry where Chris had killed Vickie to have sex together and just after we finished a police patrol car arrived with two uniformed men in it. We were both dressed now but a few bondage magazines which Chris had been reading during our activity just before then were on the blanket under us where we sat among some trees and the police asked what we had been doing. I said "just relaxing". One of them asked who the bondage books belonged to. I said they were mine because I knew that if it was reported to his probation officer, Chris would be in bother. The police inferred we were "a couple of poofers" and I said "No". They wanted our names and addresses. Chris gave his correct name and his grandmother's address. I gave the name of James William West and an address I don't remember because if it got back to the probation officer that Chris was hanging around with me it would be more strife for him.

(Miller 82)

On Tuesday, the body of Deborah Lamb was found in a wood and corrugated-iron 'tomb'. The hands and feet were bound with thin, nylon rope, and a pair of pantyhose was stretched tightly at least six times around the jaw.

Of all the seven bodies found in the Truro investigation none has shown as starkly indications of the violence apparently used on the victims . . .

Under the skeleton police found a small yellow plastic badge, showing two kissing children within a heart. It bore the words: 'God's only law is love' . . .

(Mykyta 111)

Every few seconds I would lift my head, look towards them, then drop my head to the road again cursing the ambulance for seeming to take a lifetime to arrive. Then it did arrive and when I lifted my head I saw an ambulance officer placing a sheet or something all the way over Chris and even over his face.

Then I *knew* he was dead.

I was afraid to look at Debbie and it was not until they had taken me to Kingston Hospital did I discover that Debbie too was dead.

It was like the end of my life.

I should also have been dead and dead was what I wanted to be but all I suffered was a shoulder injury and apparently a temporary state of shock. My head hurt. I could not cry at first but when night came I cried all through the night. Gone, gone forever were the two people I loved so much — Debbie who was like a daughter like a kin, a younger sister and Chris the best and dearest friend I would ever have, closer than a son, the one person I loved more than anyone else.

Gone.

Why, I kept asking myself, why, and why and why?

(Miller 88)

Bruno  
Bettelheim

The amorous catastrophe may be close to what has been called, in the psychotic domain, an *extreme situation*, "a situation experienced by the subject as irremediably bound to destroy him"; the image is drawn

BETTELHEIM: *The Empty Fortress*.

from what occurred at Dachau. Is it not indecent to compare the situation of a love-sick subject to that of an inmate of Dachau? Can one of the most unimaginable insults of History be compared with a trivial, childish, sophisticated, obscure incident occurring to a comfortable subject who is merely the victim of his own Image-repertoire? Yet these two situations have this in common: they are, literally, panic situations: situations without remainder, without return: I have projected myself into the other with such power that when I am without the other I cannot recover myself, regain myself: I am lost, forever.

ETYMOLOGY: "Panic" relates to the god Pan; but we can play on etymologies as on words (as has always been done) and pretend to believe that "panic" comes from the Greek adjective that means "everything".  
F.W.: Conversation.

(LDF 48-49)

9 June

My daughter's voice is calling from the grave — except, of course, that she has no grave, and may not have for months. We have been told that there is no question of a funeral until after the trial, which will be some time next year. I find this very hard to bear.

(Mykyta 118)

It was like the end of my life.



And this too is my daughter,  
this withered thing  
that lay beneath the tree  
and the dissector's knife,  
her secrets probed,  
her innocent life revealed  
as merely innocent.

I will not have hard-handed men  
disturb those bones again.

'Hard-handed men . . . hard-hearted men . . .', my mind  
was full of anger, and black wings of thought that dipped and  
lurched across my vision, obscuring the world. My head roared

with sound.

The siren jerked me b  
staffroom. 'What's the n  
look terrible.' I told her  
. . . and he said "It  
'Well, so it is,' she sai  
I didn't think you'd bot  
'The fact that she's b  
does not make her any le  
That night I rang my

(Mykyta 133)

Dr Sarfaty saw Worrell three  
times. During these sessions, he  
observed that Worrell had a "de-  
fensive, surly, chip-on-the-shoulder  
manner in which both his behavior  
and his over-elaborate casual style  
of dress expressed a studied attempt  
at provocative hostility".

"AC Worrell is, as he puts it, 'a  
person who doesn't care about any-  
thing'. Hate and hostility is his main  
approach to situations.

"As he put it: 'I spend much of my  
time destroying things'."

The report says Worrell told him  
a story about "strife in the world,  
the world killing itself, basic death,  
death through wars, people being  
killed, death through road acci-  
dents, death through old age..."

Worrell told Dr Sarfaty he fanta-  
sised about death, visualising a skel-  
eton with a sickle waiting to greet  
him.

"My chief worry is that I don't  
care about anything. Secretly I long  
to be free to rule myself. I suffer  
from an extreme case of boredom.  
The laws we have are absolutely  
ridiculous..."

(Advertiser March 12 1994 p.2)

'I won't be at school tomorrow,' I told my students. 'I'm going  
to my daughter's wedding.' They looked at me blankly. 'I'm  
sorry, I mean I'm going to her funeral.'

It was a mistake I made often, in thought and conversation.  
There were similarities, but this was a poor parody of the joyous  
occasion her wedding would have been. The flowers we col-  
lected from the suburban florist in the early morning had no  
ribbons or decorations; the mother of the 'bride' wore black...

(Mykyta 133)

MYKYTA: THE RELATIVES and FRIENDS of the late JULIET HELEN  
MYKYTA are advised that her Funeral service will be held on  
Friday 20 July, at 9.30 a.m. The family wishes to establish  
a memorial scholarship for gifted children, and friends are  
invited to contribute to this. Those who wish to send flowers  
are asked to send only posies of violets.

... I found out that Chris would be buried at 2 p.m. We learned exactly where the grave was and with Amelia I eventually located it.

I just stood at the edge of the open, empty hole in the ground, looking down into it with visions that only I could picture, recapturing in my mind the Chris I knew and loved, the look of him, his laughter, his smile and I felt I could hear again the sound of his voice.

From my pocket I reached for a photograph of him which I treasured.

On the back of it I wrote a message to him. I wrote "Chris please try and understand mate. I love you as a mate and always will. Hope to see you soon. Please forgive me, Jamie."

Ever since the accident I had been telling myself that Chris and Debbie would still be alive if I had not talked them into coming back on the Saturday instead of the day after as we had originally planned.

I clambered down into the grave. I covered the photograph with the dirt that would soon cover Chris making sure that it would not be visible from above when they lowered his coffin to his final resting place.

With my arm in the sling I was having difficulty climbing out of the grave and from nearby Amelia called on a couple of lads to come and assist me.

(Miller 96)

All lovers young, all lovers must  
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!  
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!  
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!  
Nothing ill come near thee!  
Quiet consummation have!  
And renowned be thy grave!

(Mykyta 136-137)

Then Irush moved to the edge of the grave. He had some notes on a piece of paper, but with a blind look he thrust the paper in his pocket, and with his eyes turned down into the grave spoke of his feelings for the first time. He had not been able to carry the coffin, he said, for as he lifted it, he felt the weight of a little girl on his shoulders at John Martin's pageant. That was the weight he wanted to remember. And he spoke of the pain, the self-doubt, the questioning of the years we had just spent. No one can blame us as much as we blame ourselves, he said. I do not know how, but somehow we should have kept our child safe. And yet, taking risks is part of developing independence. We do not want to stifle our children, we wanted them to be loving and trusting; but now, it seems, the world is not to be trusted, and we were wrong.

Finally, he said, the death of children is particularly hard to bear, because we bury not only them, we bury our future.

(Mykyta 137)

During a subsequent examination on December 22, 1972, Worrell told Dr P.L. Mastaglia in Perth that "there's something wrong with my head".

(Advertiser March 12 1994 p2)

I took the n<sup>o</sup> What writing demands, and what any lover cannot  
François grant it without laceration, is to sacrifice a little of his  
Wahl Image-repertoire, and to assure thereby, through his language, the assumption of a little reality. All I might produce, at best, is a writing of the Image-repertoire; and for

FRANÇOIS WAHL: "No one rises to 'his' language without sacrificing to it a little of his image-repertoire, and it is because of this that something in language is committed to function within reality" ("Chute").

that I would have to renounce the Image-repertoire of writing—would have to let myself be subjugated by my language, submit to the injustices (the insults) it will not fail to inflict upon the double Image of the lover and of his other.

(LDF 98-99)

il  
THE V  
Tania  
Only when a bulldozer rumbled up to fill in the grave did we leave and as we returned to the flat to wait for Dave and Amy to come from work I remember thinking of all the other dead, the seven girls who as yet had had no funeral nor burial service. Some day, sometime, somewhere the bodies must be found and when that happened their movements would be traced. It would cause a hue and cry, it had to, and eventually something would be discovered to link Chris to their killings but now he was safe from that.

As I told Amelia, I really believed that for his sake if not mine he was better off dead.

(Miller 99)

To you both,

We would like to express our deepest sympathy during your time of great sorrow. As parents, your agony has been very much on our minds ever since we heard of Julie's disappearance.

It is so very hard to know just what to say at a time like this but we really feel glad that Julie has been found and you can now go ahead with your lives knowing that she is safe from any further harm.

We pray that time will heal your grief and sorrow.

(Mykyta 140)

How does a love end? —Then it does end? To tell the truth, no one—except for the others—ever knows anything about it; a kind of innocence conceals the end of this thing conceived, asserted, *lived* according to eternity. Whatever the loved being becomes, whether he vanishes or moves into the realm of Friendship, in any case I never see him disappear: the love which is over and done with passes into another world like a ship into space, lights no longer winking: the loved being once echoed loudly, now that being is entirely without resonance (the other never disappears when and how we expect). This phenomenon results from a constraint in the lover's discourse: I myself cannot (as an enamored subject) construct my love story to the end: I am its poet (its bard) only for the beginning; the end, like my own death, belongs to others; it is up to them to write the fiction, the external, mythic narrative.

(LDF 101)

As I have said before, I continued to visit Debbie and Chris in the cemeteries. I could never forget them. One year to the day after their death, I placed a few paragraphs in the "In Memoriam" notices in the Adelaide 'Advertiser' which read:

"Worrell, Christopher Robin.

Memories of a very close friend who died 12 months ago this week. Your friendship and thoughtfulness and kindness, Chris, will always be remembered by me, mate.

What comes after death I can

Hope, as I pray we meet again."

Life without him was like an empty sea.

(Miller 100-101)

To know that one does not write for the other, to know that these things I am going to write will never cause me to be loved by the one I love (the other), to know that writing compensates for nothing, sublimates nothing, that it is precisely *there where you are not*—this is the beginning of writing.

(LDF 100)

*Silent now is Juliet,  
her bubbling speech,  
her reticence  
and all her new won knowledge  
spilled.*

*Silent now, our Juliet —  
All her early promise,  
stilled.*

(Mykyta 155-156)

Text of bliss: the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain boredom), unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language. (PT 14)

On Saturday 1 September, the first day of spring, we had Tania's wedding; on Monday 3 September, we had the beginning of Julie's trial. I always thought of it that way, and then I always corrected myself — not Julie's trial, but the trial of the

man who caused her death. I had decided to attend, partly out of a feeling that I had to face the whole issue, and look, as it were, on the face of Death himself, and partly because my mind was so full of the matter that I might as well be there and hear the truth, rather than stay away and build it up in my imagination. Nothing could be worse than my fears, I thought. I was wrong.

(Mykyta 160-161)

I thought of my daughter, her gay, courageous manner, her sensitivity, her silences, her streak of stubbornness, and I thought: 'Did you seek out your own death? Did you go willingly into that car, as Miller says you did? Did you submit to

being tied up as if it were a game? Were you surprised by death, at the last moment?' But I could only see a little girl who kept on trying until she mastered each aspect of the physical world, who could climb out of her cot when Tania was still trapped inside hers, who fell a dozen times but still got up and tried again, who could ride a bike before Tania could, whose knees were always scarred and bloody. And I thought of my grown girl, tied, in the back seat of a car speeding through the night, and I saw her face set, and her eyes bright with unshed tears, her body tense so that they would not know how frightened she was . . . It is a long way to Truro.

(Mykyta 169-170)

~~You heard in~~ Whence, perhaps, a means of evaluating the works of our modernity: their value would proceed from their duplicity. By which it must be understood that they always have two edges. The subversive edge may seem privileged because it is the edge of violence; but it is not violence which affects pleasure, nor is it destruction which interests it; what pleasure wants is the site of a loss, the seam, the cut, the deflation, the *dissolve* which seizes the subject in the midst of bliss.

(PT 7)

~~Miller loved Worrell to put it in the cont. Written in a jail cell even after Worrell was dead, Miller's story is testimony to that.~~

~~So is Miller's story, as brutal as it is, the horror that it is, as~~

'What was her full name?' she asked.

I told her, and she wrote it down on a piece of paper:

JULIET HELEN MYKYTA

(Mykyta 170)

This is not something unfortunate that happened two years ago; this is something that could happen tonight, tomorrow - to you.

Every time you go out alone at night you are at risk.

Every time you get into a stranger's car, you put your life in his hands.

I don't want you to be hurt, or frightened for one moment. Every time I hear of a girl raped or injured, my daughter dies in my heart again.

But Julie is not just a part of my life . . . she is also a part of yours...

(Mykyta 113-114)

I lay on the bed and read the book I had bought, running my hand down my own body as I read the case histories. I had been comforting myself with the theory that my misery must be counteracting the poor eating habits I had developed, but now I forced the lie into the open. I went down to the bathroom and weighed myself, writing the date and my weight on the wall so that I could not hide from it: 3.12.79 - 14.2. I felt sick with self-loathing.

(Mykyta 173)

'And what of me?' I asked suddenly, and wrote my name on the paper.

'Ah,' said the woman, 'you have no six in your life: you will always lack confidence.'

(Mykyta 171)

I went one day to read 'The Piper at the Gates of Dawn' from Kenneth Grahame's book, *The Wind in the Willows*. The children sat at my feet as I read the story of how Rat and Mole searched for the lost baby otter and found him sleeping at the feet of Pan, the Friend and Helper. \*

As I read, my eyes slowly filled with tears, not only for the lost child found and the anxious parent whose agony was stilled, but also for the sudden vision I had of Julie, asleep and protected at the feet of a Friend; not brutally cast out of life, but taken into the gentle earth, perhaps finding peace at last. I felt, at that moment, that there was a God, and, for a moment, I felt a little less alone.

(Mykyta 175)

.. As I worked, I planned this book, which I referred to as the *Juliet Journal*. I saw it as the map of a journey, which I had by some miracle survived; I hoped that my account of the journey might help someone else.

The *Journal* was Val's idea. I had been to see her and complained that I felt really weighed down by the pressure of trying to fund the scholarship that we wanted as a memorial for Julie.

'I almost wish I'd never decided to do it.'

'Why don't you write a book?'

'I couldn't concentrate on a book. Besides, *The Witch* was turned down by Angus and Robertson.'

'I don't mean that kind of book. Here, I want you to read this.'

She gave me a copy of *Lifelines*, by Lynne Caine, the woman who wrote *Widow* after her husband died.

Next day, I rang her.

'I see what you mean. I think I could do that.'

I went into the dining-room - the room with the dark brown walls which had been Juliet's - and began to write.

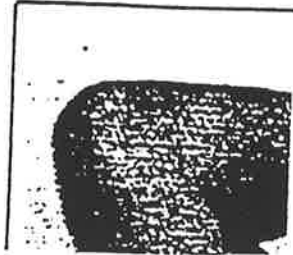
(Mykyta 179-180)

the text is made in such a way that *none* can leave unscathed at the end: drawn from texts and from beings who are *loved*, it is written so that (always) at one moment or another and provided only that he agrees to read it, the "amorous" reader will fall upon a signifier, an interlude, a turn of thought that pleases him. And that is all the essayist seeks: the essay "floats," as Barthes says; it turns ceaselessly, waiting for the reader to "fall": seduced!

(Bensmaïa 69)

# Portrait

Christopher Robin Worrell murdered seven South Australian women before he died in a car crash in February, 1977. For the first time, confidential psychological reports obtained by *The Advertiser* give a revealing glimpse into the mind of the State's worst serial killer. COLIN JAMES reports.



Later, in his unsworn statement, Miller said that Julie had said, 'you ain't for real,' and this was a headline in the *News*. And my family, who had accepted that she had been raped, assaulted and murdered, drew a collective line. 'The man is obviously lying,' snapped my mother viciously, 'Juliet would never say "ain't".' She wouldn't have, either, but it is funny to see, in each case, the one detail, often quite small, on which the mind fixes as being too horrible to bear. With Judy, it was the report that Alan's face had been gnawed by rats.

(Mykyta 191)



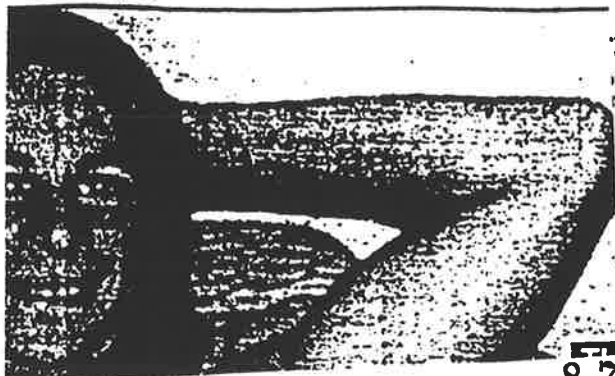
Christo; centred attitude covers depe

From my diary: 13 February 1980

I feel very ill today. I woke up just after 5 a.m. and wondered about waiting for the paper to arrive. I feel so wrenched out of my normal frame of existence that I had to check my reality. I wanted to read the report of yesterday's hearing, even though I had been there, and even though nothing can really be said in the paper. But there it was: Mrs Anne-Marie Mykyta, in black shirt over cream slacks, sat in the body of the court . . . etc. So I am real; and all this is real . . .

me  
an  
out  
ial

(Mykyta 187)



the man is intent  
the service.  
ould think that  
rell's cocky, self.

the story about "strife in the  
the world killing itself, basic  
death through wars, people

So it was over, and I felt only a great sadness.

(Mykyta 199)

It is not apprenticeship which never ends, but rather desire. My work seems to be made up of a succession of "disinvestments"; there is only one object from which I have never disinvested my desire: language: language is my *objet petit a*. From *Degree Zero* on, I have chosen language to love—and, of course, to detest at the same time: altogether trusting and altogether mistrusting it; but *my methods of approach, dependent on what was being expressed all around me and what exercised its particular fascinations on me, could change*, that is to say: to try one's hand at something [*s'essayer*], to please, that is to transform oneself, to abandon oneself: it is as if one always loved the same person, but kept trying out new erotics with that person. ("Responses," in *Tel Quel* 47, 100)

(Barthes quoted in Bensmaïa 82)

The real Chris Wortell was a happy go lucky, easy going, friendly, considerate, sincere, an utterly appealing humane and beautiful young man who any parent would be proud to have as a son.

As I was proud to have him as my dearest friend.  
Seven years after his death I find that I still love him.

If the blame for Truro should be pointed at any one particular person then I feel it should be pointed at me.

Chris had no control over his moods and I knew that he must have had a serious problem and I should have done something positive about it to help him after the first murder and I do not mean by helping him to dispose of the body. Somehow I should have made sure that the person I loved more than anyone else received medical attention, but I did not thus I must accept guilt.

(Miller 164)

I have, indeed, found a measure of peace in writing this

book, and I have learned that the human spirit can survive anything, as long as people will admit that it is happening.

If I have hurt anyone, I am sorry. I have tried to tell the truth, but it can only be the truth as I saw it.

'But it wasn't like that,' you may say in protest. And I can only answer: 'Well, it was for me.'

And you: if you are a parent, or a child, if you have loved, if you have looked at Death, or feared his shadow, if you have wept in the night for the one who does not come, then hear me. For I speak to you.

(Mykyta 200-201)



# as victim's mother meets killer

By JOANNE TRZCINSKI

The mother of a Truro murder victim has told of a prison meeting with the killer - and how he presented her with a bouquet of flowers.

Mrs Anne-Marie Mykyta described the encounter with James Miller as "awkward" but said yesterday she had no regrets.

Miller, 35, was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1980 for murdering six of seven young women - including 15-year-old Julie Mykyta - all of whom vanished between late 1976 and early 1977.

Five of the bodies were found near Truro, 100km north-east of Adelaide, one was discovered at Wingfield and another at Port Gawler.

Mrs Mykyta's visit to the Northfield prison was at Miller's repeated requests. They sat at benches divided by

a pane of glass for a conversation, she said was "very difficult". "It was like visiting someone in hospital; you know how awkward that is," Mrs Mykyta, 54, said.

She took Miller some books, a copy of one of my plays and an anthology because he's interested in writing.

"He organised a great big basket of flowers for me... they were beautiful," Mrs Mykyta said.

"He looked at me and said, 'You've lost weight' - he goes on photos and things (published in newspapers)."

"We talked a bit... about a young man he befriended in prison who wants to get off the merry-go-round."

"We talked about his sister and his parents."

Mrs Mykyta said it was "not easy" to look at Miller during their meeting.

"When it's a voice (on the phone).

I can handle it, but when I sat there, I thought, 'My daughter was dying and you walked away' she said.

"It was hard. I didn't say anything like that because I've forgiven him and I'm not going back on that."

Mrs Mykyta, despite the wishes of some family members, visited Miller about four weeks ago "because it meant so much to him".

While she was glad she had done so, she said she "probably won't do it again".

Miller has always maintained he helped bury the victims but did not kill them - and Mrs Mykyta believes he is telling the truth.

She also believes he should be freed and that his release was only fair because of the comparatively lenient sentences handed down by judges in other murder cases.

Miller also had shown remorse. "I think he has come to accept

responsibility for what happened and it seems unfair he should be in there for an indeterminate time," she said.

"I really can't see much point in keeping him in prison - (but) I wouldn't tie myself to the barricades or anything to get him out."

Miller's lover, Christopher Worrell, was named as the person who raped and murdered the victims before he died in a car accident a week after the last murder - in February, 1977.

After the killings, Mrs Mykyta made pleas for Miller never to be paroled. Last year, close to death with the rare kidney disorder Goodpastures syndrome, she accepted letters of sympathy and phone calls from Miller.

In January, he offered one of his kidneys for a transplant operation - but the offer was not taken up.



Maintains Truro

Jan no

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Mr Packer is going to control the Fairfax publishing empire. Last month...

## REFORMING THE BOY — transcript

Journalist: I went aboard the hulk at night, 7.30 pm. on the 29th of September. Dead calm. Reported myself to acting superintendent at the gangway. Stated that I wished to take evidence respecting the condition of the vessel, as I was apprehensive as to her seaworthiness during the equinoctial gales. Visited boys who were then engaged between decks reading, drawing, playing draughts. Perfect order was being maintained. (*Commission 280*)

Cavan Manager: This is where they arrive. It's called a 'sally port'. It's a medieval term. Somebody told me it's about ships, ports that ships sally forth and into from. Anyway, a car drives in, the boy's dropped off, and then they're brought through into a unit.

Simon Robb: Can you tell us something (a bit) about your background and how it is that you came to be here?

Boy 3: When I first started doing crime?

Robb: Yeah.

Boy 3: I first started doing crime when I was about 14, 15. And the first thing I done was a house break. Done that and I stopped doing crime for a while, and then I started mixing with some friends and they started like stealing cars and that. Just asking me to steal cars and that. Yeah I just started from there.

Robb: What was happening when...did you get caught doing any of these crimes?

Boy 3: Yeah the first housebreak I done I got caught. They came home, and yeah. Then I didn't get caught for a while and then I just got caught for a few cars.

Boy 4: There was no purpose to us being in there at all. I mean the only thing that most kids in there wanted to do was just keep on escaping. You know, get their freedom back, because half of them were in there for the same reason as me. And being placed in there makes you feel like you're the one that's done something wrong, not the parents.

Journalist: Passing over the great bed of silt, which had been placed amidships as ballast, I proceeded to a spot indicated by the superintendent on the bluff of the

starboard bow. Examined the place. Water was running in as fast as it would from a two-inch tap. A sensational discovery. Mr. Thompson took out his knife to try the soundness of the timbers. The blade went straight through the wood showing it to be thoroughly rotten. Nearer amidships found two more leaks through which water trickled into the hold. As the vessel rolled and lurched the timbers creaked dolefully. With the water trickling through the leaks, the situation seemed rather dismal. (*Adelaide Observer* 24 May 1884 p. 7)

Manager: This is the school. This is the library. The school is run by the Education Department. They employ the teachers, they send the teachers here, and the school goes every day, as a normal school does with school lessons.

Education Officer: Ok so you're a bad lot. You're here for stealing. Perhaps you've only been stealing because you're terribly terribly poor. Some of you boys we're going to move on. We're going to send you to a ship. Have you ever heard the expression 'hulk'? Ok, it's an old English expression. What hulks were, were prisons, floating prisons. They were ships that were turned into prisons. This was an old idea. This was another one of the culture, the value, the attitudes that the first migrants had brought over: 'let's put them on this ship'. It used to be a quarantine ship, out at Largs Bay. Well, they sent, oh, fifty boys at a time could be housed in this ship. And they went in age from 8 to 16.

Boy 5: They want to go arrest people, you know, lock 'em up, and they're not going to teach them anything. All you're going to learn is how to be more of a criminal — better ways to do things. It's ridiculous. I think they shouldn't go and put all these people in this gaol, you're paying thousands tax payers dollars per person. It's ridiculous, why not with all that money they spend throwing people in gaol try and find out the problem and fix it. It's stupid just to chuck someone...it's like a bad dog, he keeps urinating on your carpet so you are just going to chuck him in the room and lock him up? That's going to teach him not to urinate on the carpet? You got to get to the source and you got to find out — well he's doing it because of this and he doesn't know and I've got to teach him. That's one thing the government's not willing to do. They just want to make you invisible by throwing you behind a wall.

Schoolchild: If you were poor a poor family you wouldn't be free at all would you?

Education Officer: No. I think that is really understanding the essence of this problem. Poverty deprives you of your freedom

Boy 5: I remember one time, all we wanted was little cubes for the toilet, because they stunk. Obviously they got washed every day but they still stunk, because no-one's got any self pride or anything — just piss on the trough instead of the floor. They wouldn't even give us them, because, they said people were eating them. I actually asked them, I said 'you mean people actually take it out of the trough and eat it'? and they said 'yeah'. We didn't even have toilet seats. When I went to school that's when I went to the toilet because they had the cleanest facilities in the place.

Journalist: On Tuesday the lads were told the next day would be a public holiday, and they would be free to enjoy themselves. The reasons why special honour was to be paid to the day was impressed upon their minds, and they went to bed tired with their work, and anticipating a pleasant holiday. But at 6.30 am. they had to go to the pumps, and they were hard at it until 11.15 pm. At 3 o'clock they had to man the pumps again, and were busy at it till 5.30. Before going to bed they had to take another turn at the pumps. Thus they spent their special day (*Adelaide Observer* 24 May 1884 p. 7)

Boy 4: The only thing I think anyone in there would have dreamed of was getting back on the outside world, having your freedom, being able to go to school like a normal person, hang out with your friends, see who you wanted, within reason, and just get on with your life and show everyone else that you are not a loser. Because that's pretty much how the workers treated you in there, as if you were like a loser. You're nothing, we're here to control you, you do as we say, and you'll get somewhere.

Manager: Do you want to look at the control room? That's basically a control room, we'll go through here. All the electronic systems come home here to roost. So Yartzek over there...staff carry alarms. If a personal alarm goes off we know where it is. Yartzek can monitor the perimeter of the grounds. You noticed there weren't any walls or bars or fences. We monitor things...electronically. At night there's an electronic beam set up around the place. Not so that we know what boys escape, but mainly to know if anybody's trying to come in. What else is there?

Yartzek : The Home Detention system.

Manager: The Home Detention system is monitored here from five in the evening to nine in the morning, through the night and on the weekend, when the Home Detention officers are...the records of all the use of the electronic systems is recorded in there... so, it's just a control room.

Robb: Good.

Robb: Can we go down now to the area where the documents relating to the hulk *Fitzjames* are kept?

State Records Archivist: Certainly.

Robb: Good.

Archivist: Ordinarily the volume lives just up there, on the top shelf. It share its quarters with a lot of Lands Department indexes, and funnily enough, a lunatic asylum, box of lunatic asylum records.

Robb: Ok so can you describe the document that we have here?

Archivist: We've got here the *Register of Admissions to the Reformatory hulk Fitzjames*. It's a volume about three centimetres thick, by about forty centimetres long. It's a hand-written volume. First entry in the book is for Alfred Stokes, age ten. He's described as a native aboriginal. Late place of residence is given as the far north. His parents are given as dead. He was sentenced to the Reformatory hulk until he achieved the age of 16 for being found unlawfully wondering about, having no home or settled place of abode. Thereupon he was apprenticed to Mr. Robert Best of...Normanville.

Mother 1: Since my son's discharge from the hulk he has conducted himself very well indeed, and is sincerely sorry for the cause that obliged him to be an inmate of that institution. For two years he has been apprenticed to the carpentering and joining business and is applying himself steadily and dutifully.

Mother 2: I have much pleasure in informing you that the determined discipline he was subjected to during his confinement on the hulk had the desired effect on my son. From what he told me himself, I cannot term it strict and harsh discipline, as a great many people believe that it is. He spoke well of the treatment he received at the hands of the officers, and the jolly times all the boys who conducted themselves properly had.

Mother 3: Charles has behaved himself very well up to the present time, and he will never forget your kindness, and the kindness of others.

It was his first offence, and I think, by the way he is going on, it will be the last.

Mother 4: My son is a real good boy, and working hard every day. (Commission xxii)

Manager: What I would like for boys when they leave here is to understand that they do have options, and that they can think for themselves. To understand that the ways that they've been thinking and acting in the past have meant that

they've ended up in lock-up. And if they don't want to come back to lock-up then they're going to have to make some decisions about thinking and acting differently when they get back out there. We're about providing the care, correction and guidance that will let them live in the community safely and responsibly. We really are about that.

Journalist: Night-watch on board. Being kept by two old men from the Destitute Asylum. They attend in turn to the ship's light. Note concerns raised regards paupers employed for training of children. The lads could be contaminated by pauperising influences. For example: the old man from the Asylum, who left the hulk, had been notorious at Port Adelaide for his immorality. Again, the same want of care was evident in the selection of a petty officer who had been prosecuted for rape, and who was living an openly immoral life. (*Commission LXXI*)

Boy 5: You wake up in the middle of the night and you got to harass someone, literally harass them just to let you out to go to the toilet, you know, and when you go to the toilet they follow you to the toilet. Do you count that as privacy? People are walking past your room, they're checking to see if you are committing suicide or trying something — shine the torch inside the room to see what you are doing — someone might want to flog it or something, and they can't do that even, that's not privacy.

Manager: We can turn the cameras on if we're worried about a boy, and we do that when we're worried about a boy, we don't have them operating all the time, so the boy's know when the cameras are on in the camera room, they know why their in there, they know why the cameras are on. It's usually if they're trying to hurt themselves, those sort of reasons. They've all got their own rooms. We don't ever double them up, they're always in their own rooms. You had a question about sexuality...it's not a problem here, because they have their own rooms, they're never asked to share. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody, recommended that Aboriginal boys have access to each other if they want to, and this is a room that joins into another room...a door. Boys are checked at night, through the night to see that they're Ok. So that's the room. The boy's like them, they painted them themselves. They've all got a window with a view. Let's go through here this is the living area...

Boy 5: Yeah well I'm a person I go crazy if I don't have my freedom and that was what it was like — I was starting to go crazy — that's what I was thinking about all the time. You look outside your window during the night, and you see the stars and you think 'I wish I was out there' you know, 'not in here.'

Journalist: Are there lads on the hulk who committed the offence for which they are committed with the tacit consent if not the actual instigation of the parents?

Mother 3: There were two lads living near Port Adelaide who I heard of where the father and mother brought them once or twice to the Department with the desire to get them sent to the hulk. They were told that because the lads had committed no crime, they could not be sent there. A short time afterwards the lads were brought up for stealing. The magistrate refused to commit them to the hulk and ordered them to be whipped. And then a second time they were brought up for stealing something that was no use to them, simply bits broken timber fittings from an old immigrant ship. That's when they both got sent to the hulk. For things they had stolen which were perfectly valueless to young children.

Journalist: Then the inference you draw is that the mother and father, for the sake of being relieved from the cost of the children, indeed for getting them on board the hulk, induced them to commit the crime?

Mother 3: I think they either allowed them, or else told them to do it, yes. (Commission 101)

Journalist: Do you think the term 'hulk', as applied to a reformatory institution, carries with it a name that is associated with deep criminality and perhaps calculated to carry an injury to its inmates?

Mother 3: I do not know that there is a good name for such a place.

Manager: Boys are over-represented in goal by ten-to-one compared to girls. Hugely over-represented. We're really hard on our boys I think. What is natural behaviour in boys is often seen as threatening or scary and we jump on boys for it. We make assumptions about boys that they're doing something wrong, when really, you know, they're hanging around, flexing their muscle. Why is it that we're so hard on adolescent males? They are not — especially at the age that we've got them, at the age of 16 or so — they are generally not as destructive as we believe they are. We believe that they're a hell of a lot worse than they really are. In fact, you've read the reports, the victims of violence are usually young males. They're more likely to be victims than perpetrators.

Robb: Do you think there was ever a time in your life when you had the chance to sort of like not go the way that you went?

Boy 3: Oh yeah I've had heaps of chances. I just keep coming back to crime.

Robb: What is it about crime that's attractive do you think?

Boy 3: It's just fun. Easy to get away with. You can do it whenever you want. It's always there. If you want to do something you can always do it.

Robb: So this place isn't really doing much for you...in terms of...I guess I mean this place is trying to tell you...trying to turn you into someone who doesn't want to do crime. Now how successful do you think this place is in doing that?

Boy 3: I don't want to do crime when I get out. I don't want to come back. Some people I s'pose don't want to do crime when they get out, some do. Just depends. If you've got a long DO [Detention Order] you've got time to think about it. Just think. Could be on the outside going to parties and shit like that.

Mother 6: During our lad's incarceration in the hulk much difficulty was put in the way of his seeing us. At the hulk we were told that he could not be seen without an order; at the office of the Department that no order was necessary; when we made a journey to the hulk we were not allowed to see him for want of an order, and when an order was given it was most limited. And further, when the boy had served little more than half his term, it was determined that he should be apprenticed, this being done without any inquiry as to our character or wishes. Mr. Humby, my husband, and the boy's father, hearing what was intended, and knowing the effect would be to keep our son from our home for 6 years longer, determined to appeal to Mr. Reed, the superintendent. He met him on the North Terrace yonder, and he said 'I want an interview with you.' 'What is it?' he said. 'I understand you are going to remove my boy from the hulk. Will you kindly tell me where you are going to put him?' 'No' he says. 'Well,' says my husband, 'I am his father and I want to know', and Mr Reed says 'I cannot help it.' And that was it. Our son was taken to the Yorke Peninsula where he was to be apprenticed for 6 years. In a salt mine. (*Commission CIV*)

Manager: This is called a 'cabin', we call them 'cabins.' It's monitored. If a boy is out of control, if he's not able to control his behaviour, if he's fighting then they come in here until they can cool down and control themselves. When they've got the ability to say 'yeah I can go into my bedroom, it's Ok I'm alright now', then they go. The use of this cabin is very infrequent. I don't think once a week we use it. But we keep a record of all the use, how long a boy's in here. And they can't stay in here longer than...the Youth workers can only keep them in here for one



hour, they need to get permission for any longer than that from me, any longer than eight hours I have to go to my director, but usually boys are in here ten minutes, just till they can get hold of themselves.

Robb: And when they're ready to come out they press the intercom button?

Manager: Yes, or somebody's in here. Yeah. So when they're ready to come out they tell. All the intercom is recorded and all the use of those is recorded, so the intercom buzzes not only in the unit, but at the front control desk, so it buzzes in two places, if it's not answered in the unit then the control room answers it. It's important because if anything happens to a boy we need to know, what happened, what led up to it, you know if there's a Coronial inquiry...

Robb: What do you think you are missing out on by being here?

Boy 3: The outside world, everything. Everything's changing. Like when you're here time stays still. Same thing every day but when you are on the outside things change, things get built, things move, shops move and that. Shops get built. Your friends move. In here it's the same every day, time stands still.

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## PREFACE

I have a confession for you, dear reader. I have found myself attracted to the facts before you as a means of being moved to pity and awe; of experiencing, in my imagination at least, the thrall of darkness that alighted upon us when we were young—to experience once again the terror of power; the terror of separation, of cruelty that we could not conceive. And my confession is to say that I take pleasure in this terror. As one would with a gothic romance, or like minded trash: rubbish that we as modern souls take great shame in admitting to. But I cannot hide myself behind this. I enjoy the misery of others. I enjoy the crimes of the state. I enjoy the unjust punishment of the innocent. I am haunted by myself as a child. I am reminded of a fear so great that I am moved to resolve and flee it all at once. I follow these feelings, which are precious to me, and am led there by an intersection of this history and my body. I have flights of fancy where I feel myself soar and exalt. And these flights take wing on the misery of others. I crush thousands in my wake. They exist in my mind, and on this page, and perhaps, even, within you too dear reader.

I happened upon the hulk at the city library, an institution to which of late I have been rather drawn. I will tell you now that I am of a wandering soul. One that drifts. So it was that I came upon a certain volume that pricked me with its title: *Commission Appointed To Report On The Destitute Act, 1885*. It was the memory of personal destitution that drew me to an otherwise hefty tome, approximately one foot long and one and half wide, printed in ten point palatino, I believe.

It was in this volume that I first came upon the existence of the hulk *Fitzjames*.

I have spent much time poring over the contents of that vessel. Leafing through its upper and lower decks, and through its leaky hold. The volume was fulsome and extensive in its blueprint of the ship. It was drawn from interviews made with sundry officials and the rest, all of whom had interests in the care and correction of young boys. The hulk creaked forth from every deposition. Only it lacked in one important point. It had no boys aboard. I say there were no boys meaning that

they were not present to the reading eye. I searched hard, over every page, but I saw only the traces or shadows left behind by them. It were as if they had fled before this inquiry, or rather, seeing that the inquiry was approaching, the boys were stowed away beneath some enormous canvas, or to push a point, an enormous pile of paper.

It was a ghost ship then that I had before me, of boys who uttered not a single word, whose words were dead. And I felt the want to reconstruct them. I am a person of some imagination, some would say a sickly excess, nevertheless I felt a strong desire to build a whole boy.

I supply this narrative to you, dear reader, for your edification and astonishment. I wish to enlighten you in the hope that our future governance of the young may be more to the point of their emancipation, from ignorance and suffering, as well as our own. I quote the original volume not only in the hope that it may reach a wider audience, but also that it may shed immediate light on the style of thinking and speaking that appertained to the conditions surrounding these poor boys. Our past, it seems to me, often shines brightest by its own light.

So now I have been straight with you. I can tell you that this is no clean-cut narrative. These boys have life in greater and lesser motives. I have confused, somewhat, the origin and cause of the hulk. I have at times been unable to progress without some fabrication. Indeed I am all fabrication at times, and would not want it any other way. I can say, in my defence, that these base progressions are examples of the original story moving through the humours of a modern man like yourself, and that I am admitting to nothing other than the generative means of any so-called history.

## JOURNAL (R)

[The author's narrative describes his encounter with a former superintendent on the hulk and reproduces, in part, the journal of the superintendent, written while serving on board the hulk. —SR]

He was working at the rear of the shop. I saw him just as he was putting down his plane. He wiped his hands upon his apron and stood still. Then he looked my way.

'What would you want from me?' he said.

'I am writing of those who were aboard the hulk *Fitzjames*. I had some information that I may find such a person here.'

I may just as well had been a thief of souls as an author to this man. His apprehension was palpable, as if he had been through many interviews before this and had not liked them much at all.

'What kind of writer might you be?' he asked.

'I am an honest one, I believe.'

'Yes, but how is it that you write?'

'I am guided by some principles. At other times I give free rein to my hand. I fashion information into a narrative, and that narrative is structured around a desire to come close to my reader, feelingly. Above all my want is to instil within them some feeling that life can be worthwhile.'

'So you write romantically?'

'I hope not.'

'I think that you do. Now answer me this, what is it about the hulk that draws you?'

'It is its blackness. It is as if for ten years some dark thing from fiction was afloat in the material world. It is the fact of boys being imprisoned on a thing of dark fantasy. The feelings that it touches lie too deep. They are too hard to bring to the surface. I feel these things and I feel very close to being there, in some strange way.'

'You want to use me to get these feelings out? Do you believe I want to be used in this way? Do you even know who I am?'

'I would like to know.'

'I am John Redman, one time superintendent on the hulk.'

Feelings of great joy and foreboding swept through me. To appear calm and rational, I concentrated my energies on the materiality of the scene. On the fact of two bodies speaking in the present.

The thrall of the past and its imaginary power, putting this to one side, I asked him if he would talk with me...

'With all due respect, you strike me as being too naive. Heightened sensibilities are useless for these times. What we need today is analytical narrative. I do not see it in you.'

There was a silence then that could have meant the end of my inquiries. Mr. Redman was in two minds, I could sense that. After some time he walked towards the ladder at the rear of the workshop. 'Come with me upstairs. I have finished here for now. You can ask me what you want about the hulk. Whether I will answer is another thing.'

[...]

Mr. Redman spoke at last, breaking the dreary silence. 'I have led you to believe that I will talk with you about my time upon the hulk. But I have had enough with boys. Therefore, I am sorry to say that I shall not take up the opportunity to have an interview with you.'

His statement left me feeling rather flat. He had been rather badly treated by the Way Commission, I do believe, and still felt the soreness of the wound. I had heard that there was something of a conspiracy of one class against another in it. I suggested as much to him, but there was only an uncomfortable movement of his hands from place to place, and the awkward beginnings of some indecipherable reply.

And then Mr. Redman fell silent. And it was a silence that began to fill the room, as if it leaked out from him. It was a coldness that I felt. He stared at a picture hanging from the wall opposite, which depicted, I noticed for the first time, a carpenter's workshop. In the workshop was a sturdy man and a young boy. The man was demonstrating something to the boy. A way of shaving or refining a piece of rough wood. The boy was all attention and willingness to learn. His eyes were open and wide to any lesson that he may pick up. I took the picture to be an exemplar of tutelage, of the delights of apprenticeship between a master craftsman and a youth. Mr. Redman seemed to be quite lost to the rest of the room. The word 'sentimental' came to mind. It was a great discomfort to me to

witness Mr. Redman in this state. I was about to excuse myself from his company when he spoke.

And it was a voice that agonised about its return to this world. It was the voice of a near-drowned man roused back to life.

'I will show you where one boy lives,' he said. But before we left he informed me that he had something to give me...

I waited in the strange room, wondering if he would return at all. When he did re-appear, it was with a large bound book.

'Take this. I no longer want it. Use it as you will. Be sure to be fair with your treatment of it. I do not want to be made to look a fool again.' With that he handed me a book. As I leafed through its pages, I became aware that this book was in fact a journal, kept whilst on board the hulk. This was a sensational discovery for me, but before I could say a word he had already begun his descent, down the steep ladder, and out towards the boy...

We're walking some way down the streets of Alberton when Mr. Redman takes my arm and points across the road.

'That's where he lives.'

'Who' I say.

'James Burns' says he.

Mr. Redman stands next to me, quite close, and I feel the warmth of his body, almost pressing, but not quite, against me. I feel his urging to go forward.

'Are you not curious,' he says, 'don't you wish to go inside?'

I am hesitant. It is a pleasant enough place and I am wanting so dearly to go inside. I nod my head slowly and dreamily in reply. My legs I find are carrying me across the road and through the gate. I pass red geraniums and purple agapanthus. I knock and, as I do, find the door to be ajar. There is something strange here. I go inside. It is almost empty. There are strong stale smells. There's an aqua-marine wall, and a hole in the floor-boards stuffed with newspaper, that has become yellow. And wet. That's the smell. Wet yellow paper. I walk down the hallway. I look up and see, slowly floating down, pieces of cream paint. Also, there are enormous cracks in the cornices. Giant cobwebs hang from the ceiling. Now I'm in his bedroom. I'm sure of that. It is an almost empty room with a bed against the corner of the far wall. I feel a certain immoral feeling here. As if the bed were dangerous. The covers are unmade. They do not want to be made. Old and woollen, I think, some kind of purple with woven knots. There is as well a large bound volume lying on the bed. It is at that instance that I am chilled by another being present. I am struck by it. I turn

slowly to see. It wavers before me, revealing a more defined, essential shape, of some soldier, leaning on the barrel of a gun. He is strong and handsome. He has a good smile. I am certain it is James Burns. I walk around stupidly. Keeping my distance from him. I want to open the window. I am transfixed, yet I cannot resist the large bound book that lies upon his bed. I tremble towards it. I take the volume in my hands and see that it is a scrap-book. It has pictures torn from magazines, also, there is much handwriting here. I'm reading the writing, next to the pictures. I'm reading and I hear the door close at front. This is terror to my soul. I grip the book and am frozen. I turn to see standing in the hallway, a dark figure...

And then the fit came upon me. It is often at times of great stress that I suffer the fit. It is a seizure of the brain and it takes me over entirely. I become quite dead to the world. I can recall these physic journeys sometimes, and sometimes I am all blank. A black thing without recall. Only this time it was that I found myself on fire. I was burning and suspended above some water. I let go my hold on the sky and dropped fast into the wet dark cold. And then I struggled once more into the night. In the distance I saw the hulk. Black. Immense. Moving up and down from the water's force. I wanted so much to be there. But I felt myself being drawn, against my desires, away from the dark ship. This was a true agony. Perhaps I was not yet prepared enough. Or it was from some other cause that I did not know. Either way I was carried towards land, northwards, to the end of Lefevre Peninsula. Flat land bordered by mangroves. That also contained secrets. And corpses. Bloated from first settlement. Just north-east of the hulk. I'm seeing boy spirits, who have come here at night. I can see them vanishing into the stars. Purposeful. Honest. Guiltless. Fraternal. I am moved by the graciousness of their bodies. Who have departed this incarcerating world. Who move through clouds of solar wind. Incredible velocities flee the peninsula. A boy tells me that he needs to come here. That he regrets having to return to where he is hopeless. To the dark ship and to the hopeless body. Adrift. Aimless. Secret. Fugitive. He's vanished from my side. He's emersed himself in the sky. I see him somersaulting above clouds of dust. I seem to have arrived at the end of the known earth.

Abruptly from that place I am taken, in my dream body, back to Alberton, escorted there by some unknown boy. To my prone shell, lying empty on the floor of a stranger's house. As he departs I faintly hear him say: 'take the scrap-book with you.'

It was the hand of Mr. Redman that next I felt upon me. Gentle slaps and conciliatory tones greeted me as I returned to the conscious world. I looked around the room. It had lost its hallucinatory glow. Then it began to dawn on me, that in my heightened state, I had misread things once again.

'I believe I became disorganised and fretful about James Burns.'

'There was no James Burns present,' said Mr. Redman.

I looked again at the portrait.

'I am so foolish. I had taken this dreary portrait to be a spiritual apparition.'

'It is time for you and I to go,' said he.

As we did so I recalled the admonition of the boy. I know dear reader that I am revealing some unpleasant personal details here. That I am not only weak and suggestible to fevers of the brain, but worse, am led on by this sickness to acts of petty larceny. Be that as it may, I took possession of the scrap-book.

'I see that you are a thief as well,' said Mr. Redman, 'make sure you return that text when you are done, it may be more precious than you know.'

We stepped away from the portrait's gaze and moved swiftly to the daylight outside...

[...]

[At some later date the author had copied fragments of the Redman journal, adding notes and commentary, indicated by brackets — SR]



14th March, 1883.

Arrived to find school being led by a fourteen year old by the name of George Higgins. He had been having a high time. On my insistence he demonstrated a typical lesson. Made good a blow-hard master, standing before the blackboard, with reader in hand, spouting latin and commanding obedience. Asked this grand boy what he had been sent to the hulk for. He was quite straight with his reply: 'forgery and uttering, Sir.' Higgins had been given the job by Mr. Alton, the previous superintendent. Curious indeed. I am determined to amend this situation and to teach the boys all I can. Am most anxious about this, but it must be done.

15th March, 1883.

Mr. Alton seems to have established a regular pattern for the boys. Must get this clear for myself. Mr. Button is obliging me in this dictation. Boys rise at 6.30. One squad is told off to make the beds or bring the bedding up for airing. Another party is told off to clean the knives, forks and boots. Yet another group to wash the main deck. Boys are thus occupied until breakfast time. Then prayers are read. They kneel down and repeat the Lord's prayer. After breakfast half hour's drill. Then the boys go into the workshop. School boys start lessons at 10 and they go until 11.30. Then again between 1.30 and 3.30. In between times there would be jobs around the ship to be done. I give the lessons. Think I can remember that. In my cabin at the long table. Cosy. Note: five or six boys from the workshop to go ashore for provisions. From 12 to one there is dinner and play time. Then workshop or school. Then supper at 5.30. After supper they play until dark. They draw, paint, play drafts. Sometimes they have the magic lantern. Then they go down below and read. Then at 8 they have prayers and bed.

(Mr. Redman mentions magic lantern slides. What were they watching? Boys seem to be objects of a schedule. I assume that they were experiencing this. That they experienced life as an object of the authority exercised against them. Without their consent, of course.

Things that are moved around and detained as sub-sections of the order of things.

Must look for indications, other than the incident of George Higgins, that they acted in some contrary way.)

19th July, 1883.

Wilhelm Cumme apprenticed from hulk, going to farmer for 3 years. Had served 17 months on board. Will be 16 at expiry of indentures. Good boy.

(He only supplies the building blocks for a bland boy. Trust there is some other boy aboard.)

2nd August, 1883.

Edwin Humby and James Mannoo. Both apprenticed from hulk, going to salt manufacturer, Yorke Peninsula. Humby had served 13 months on board. Indentured for 3 years. Fair boy. Mannoo had served 19 months. Will be 17 when finished apprenticeship. Mannoo originally sentenced to Industrial School for stealing four pounds of resin. Strange crime. Bad boy.

[There appears to be some gaps in the author's commentary — SR]

6th August, 1883.

Fair day. Slight wind. Birds some nuisance again. Received James Burns. Age 8. Youngest boy on board, ever, I believe. Had absconded four times in just one week from Industrial School. Found wandering about in city. Looking for his home. Father is deceased. Given up to Industrial School as an uncontrollable boy by his mother just 10 days previous. Is an extremely sad boy. Has no other family here. I believe he feels very afraid. I feel the need to keep an eye out for him. Does not look well or at all hopeful. Keeps saying that he is ready to go home to his mother. I tell him that he cannot. That he is in my care now. Cried at this news. Other boys fell silent as they saw this. Remembered themselves, I believe. Ship's company fell silent, feeling as one. Remembering being abandoned and so on. I tell them that I will help them all to be good chaps and to have some sort of future. Some are heartened by this. I return to the cabin. Melancholy. Do not know if this is a such a good enterprise to be with.

(He seems here to be using the boy to appear to be a worthwhile fellow. Boys used to construe author as being one of great empathy. Adding to the mystique of leadership. Using boy's feelings to effect sympathy in the reader.

Is this for understanding the position of the boy, or for justifying the authority of the man?)

11th November, 1883.

Recieve threatening letters from Mr. Humby. States he will burn down the hulk. Insenced about his son's apprenticeship to salt mine.

12th December, 1883.

Have two boys sent down for rape and indecent assault. Do not think these boys should be here. Or at least that some other way of keeping them on board be hit upon. They are not a good influence. James Morris is only twelve yet he seems to glory in his crime. He is a very bold boy and seems to encourage in others the desire to do the same. Have asked the night wardens to keep a special eye out for him. Immoral acts in the dormitories cannot be tolerated. Yet it seems impossible to stamp this out. The dormitories, as at present arranged, are more likely to encourage improper conduct than to check it. Boys and double bunks, I feel, are an unsavoury admixture. Also, must be rid of partition that stops warden from seeing whole of the boys at once. It is so unnatural, all of this, I despair for a solution.

(If Mr. Redman was a worldly man he would not use the boys in this manner. He is simply afraid of that which we all know goes on between young boys in close together. He is simply using them to appear more moral and lawful than all else. Though he would need to construct things in this way. It was, and still is, not possible to be too public about either the extent or even the existence of these things. I think that the recent trial of Mr. Wilde sent all of us a salutatory lesson concerning the relationship between writing and the law. Despite that, these boys come out from Redman's hand as licentious and wanton. But think of another way around it. Boys would be experiencing themselves as objects of moral surveillance. They would feel then that some immoral interplay was a way of being free.)

15th February, 1884.

Have returned from one week in prison. Boys seem to treat me differently. Have heard laughter behind my back. Gaol was a nightmare. Unruly and rough.

Worse than all my years at sea. Feeling ashamed. I hope these feelings pass.

(Author makes a remarkable admission. I do not know why he was in jail, only that the reason seems to not have been too serious. He seems to be immune from all irony. The criminal in charge of the criminal. Expect no stones to be thrown from this point on. Silences in his writing I am doubly wary of now. Would want

to hide his own untenable position. Secondly, could not admit that the boys knew him as a hypocrite of the first degree. Boys' spirits would soar from this knowledge, I am sure. All aboard participants in epic jape. Boys given great lesson in the ways of authority. A power of good towards their reform.)

25th April, 1884.

The Way Commission has been taking evidence from Mr. Reed concerning conditions on board the hulk. I am to be called some time in August. I am worried about my appearance there. The commissioners I have heard are out to get a new man for superintendent. I am not prepared to let this job go lightly from me. I have good work to do here, although it is trying, and I have of late felt somewhat over-burdened by my duties.

9th May, 1884.

Peaceful autumn day. No wind. Boys seem well today. Received two more transfers from Industrial School. Herbert Dolan (age 13) and John Connell (age 11). Warrants of transfer make interesting reading. Boys had acted together to steal threepence. Heinous. Absconded from Industrial School and later found to be living with aboriginals. Sentenced to hulk for that crime. Why do they do this? Note: are these boys aboriginal? Have been having trouble with dark presence reported by boys. Do not know what to make of it. I am suspicious but have had Mr. Button confirm that he has heard uncanny noises in hold at night. Will investigate further.

(Is he referring to dark presence that is a fact or a fabrication of the boys? That the boys may be fabricators of ghost stories is hardly surprising. That they would use these stories to move their masters hither and thither is a little more to the point. Even more interesting is the confirmation by Mr. Button. Perhaps the boys were so determined about the supernatural that they willed its presence on board the hulk. Or that they wanted fear to be there, manifestly so, for the others to witness. As if they were composing a memorandum: 'here is a manifestation of the fearful presence on board. It is fact. What are you to do with it?')

13th May, 1884.

The Way Commission continues preliminary investigations. I have decided to make a few changes to the diet. Give milk in the tea and cocoa twice a week,

instead of tea at every meal. Also (another change) they get treacle every evening and dripping for breakfast.

(Boys are taught another lesson. Food is not simply nutrition, but is part of the compact between the ruler and the ruled. Their health is subject to the feelings that those who rule them have about their power, and so forth, so that generally, they have no certainty at all that they should live.)

22nd June, Sunday, 1884.

Surprise visit from Messrs. Adamson and Davis. Most unfortunate. Was in my cabin with sever cold at time of their arrival. Mr. Button walking the poop and the gangway sentry was absent. Most embarrassing that they arrived without any official welcome. Simply got on board amid great hubbub from boys. Visitors saw straight off four boys standing with faces to the cabin for misconduct. They were rightfully punished. I see no harm in this sort of discipline. Why do I worry? Must remember to punish the sentry. Visitors were eager to learn how boys spent their sundays. Talked to one boy who was reading an old magazine and another who had an old book. Mr. Davis stated to my face that these boys were miserable. I stood my ground and flatly said that they were not. We attended the service for the Protestant children held by pastor Bamber. Much yawning and restlessness. Two boys stood up for misconduct during prayers. Lesson to do with 'whoso breaketh an hedge a serpent will bite him.' Boys seemed to take this in. Am I the serpent? Mr. Adamson commented that it was a sensible discourse, but mainly fired over the heads of the boys. Last hymn sung with gusto. Much rejoicing at end. Overheard one visitor say to the other that the singing was most wretched and miserable. Felt wounded by this. Wanted so much for the boys to be appreciated for their efforts. Feeble though they may be. They do not have a cultivated voice, which is the privilege of the few, who would be better using it to benefit, rather than condemn, others less fortunate. At the end of service toured visitors around the vessel. I have great worries about the outcome of this visit. Fear that they are agents for the Way Commission and want to do me in.

(Has the author any understanding at all? Why would the boys want to indicate that all was well, when, in front of witnesses, they had the chance to make a fool of their superiors? That they are not fully obedient to the arts of singing, is this not a way for them to still be somewhat free?)

23rd June, 1884.

Have received copy of letter sent by Messrs. Adamson and Davis to Destitute board re. visit to hulk. They had said that there was a great need for new books on board. I quote: 'we inspected those on board and think that if it was desired to give the boys a thorough distaste to reading, it would be difficult to make a better selection.' Have since then had donation of some new books. Thought though that the *British Workman* and *Band of Hope* were quite adequate for Sunday reading. Boys seem pleased at addition of *Boys own Annual*. Have received back-issues dating from 1880.

(Mr. Redman seems not to understand that there are those of us who would rather be dead than be reading *Band of Hope*. This is not a man who does much good reading. His cultured guests had seen that at once. Boys would be experiencing themselves, up until the addition of the new books, as characters in the most limited and banal of narratives.)

24th June, 1884.

Am beginning to fear that some terrible retribution is coming. Have gone back to my Bible but find more disturbance than comfort in it. Read Isaiah 27:1: 'in that day the Lord with his great and strong sword shall punish leviathan, the piercing serpent; he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.'

30th June, 1884.

In preparation for the Way Commission. Have been going over, in thorough manner, reasons for committal to hulk. List them here for future reference. For every one hundred boys that we have had here the following figures are correct. Neglected and uncontrollable...Twenty eight. Absconding from situation...Two. Offences against property...Sixty six. Offences against the person...Four. I cannot say that being uncontrollable or neglected is much of an offence. If the laws were more forgiving of boys who suffer for no fault of their own we would see far less of them incarcerated aboard.

It would cut a good third of the boys away from the vessel.

(Does he reveal that he has insight into injustice, or, that he uses those unjustly treated to prove the necessity of the incarceration of the guilty. Is that plain? It were as if the incarceration of this boy was the fault of that boy. Must have been that way. That some boys were looked upon as being both a cause, and result, of

criminal behaviour. That they carried a greater burden than their crime alone. I think those boys would have experienced themselves as carriers of some disease.)

14th August, 1884.

Suffered first day at Way Commission yesterday. I am their target, I know this. Made me say that, no, I had no training as a teacher, I was only ever a ship's carpenter, and yes, the divisions of the boys into classes made no material difference but still I would persist with it. I am their fool. Bad noises again coming from hold. Went down to investigate, at night, with the watchman. Could find nothing except usual creaks and leaks that one would expect. Still I am uneasy. Watchman said he would prefer to not be there. Says that he too felt uneasy.

21st August, 1884.

Yesterday spent at the Way Commission. Am still exhausted from this. Spent troubled night and hardly slept. They seem to want to destroy me. Questions seemed to be of a persecutory nature. Almost insane. Kept asking me about towels and combs and tubs for the boys. Asked me how many combs were on board ship, as if I were superintendent of combs, above all else. Also, asked me if the combs were used promiscuously by the boys. Felt obliged to reply that yes, they were. I do not how they had gained intelligence of this. They bring up my week in gaol. As if this made me unfit to hold my position. Does it?

27th August, 1884.

Another dreary day. Overcast. Slept late again. Having great difficulty in getting out from my cabin. Have stopped giving lessons to boys. I am sad to do this. Mr. Button is really not capable. He has no training what so-ever but I believe that he is kind. I do not have the energy to be with the boys.

Feel that I may collapse.

That would be bad. To just collapse in front of them.

29th August, 1884.

There is definitely something in the hold. I cannot name it but it is there. I am anxious. Boys can see it on my face. Go less out of my cabin. For their own good.

(It appears that the fear has manifestly moved from the hold to take hold of Mr. Redman. It perhaps represents a shift of oppression away from the boys. Or at least, some terror has shifted its load and fallen upon John Redman.)

30th August, 1884.

Cannot sleep. Stay awake listening. Hear some boys cry out, for the first time. Did not know they did this. Cry myself about this. Still hear ship groaning. Cannot stand it.

31st August, 1884.

Lifeless. Stay inside all day. Think about my children. Wife. What are they doing? Do they miss me? Am too tired to think through this.

(Mr. Redman is about to have a bad dream. I warn you, dear reader, that this man has lost his mind.)

1st September, 1884.

Terrible dream last night. Feel the need now to get it down. It was dinner time. I had roused myself from my cabin. Told myself off again for becoming disorganised in my habits. On deck with boys. They move around me as if I were invisible. They have plates in their hands. One boy is sitting by himself. Squatting actually, against some rope on deck. He's holding his plate in one hand and eating with the other. And looking around. There is not much talk at this time. It is very orderly. Unhappy. Solemn. As if they are waiting for something terrible to be announced. The death of someone loved, perhaps. I think to myself that these boys are wounded. And then I can see a dozen wounds in front of me. That drip and ache. It is hideous to admit it, but I put my hand inside a boy. I feel the pain. Touch the walls of his cavity. I think I feel the contours of destitution and poverty. It feels like blood and old mutton. Then I part the tissue. Then I'm looking down into a room. I see toys. I see empty bottles. I see an old armchair and behind it a man is touching a small boy. I am staring at the scene of a man touching a small boy. I do not want to do this. I am unable to tear my eyes away. The man turns around and looks at me. He is snarling and I think he is infected with some disease. I am sure he is infected with a disease. Then I see his animal teeth. I see his insect wings. They're stretching out. He's going to harm another boy. He's going to harm one thousand times. I'm yelling out 'I want a doctor on board! I want a physic surgeon!'



No answer.

I look out to sea, at the horizon and it has become queer. It looks like it is tipping over. As if there were a tidal wave, sitting on the horizon. It has gone all perpendicular.

And that's when I start to vomit. And that was when I awoke. Exhausted. Very anxious. Feeling that all this is coming to a close.

(It was soon after this time that Mr. Redman resigned from the hulk. I do not know if it were the scheme of the Way Commission to undermine him or if, as it seems from the journal, he was becoming somewhat unhinged, or if it were a combination of the two. I have perhaps not been fair to Mr. Redman. But I have been, I believe, faithful to his desire for an analytical narrative. Be that as it may, the journal was to be only the beginning of my inexorable return to the hulk *Fitzjames*.)

[John Redman resigned as superintendent of the hulk in september, 1884. He had served in that position for 18 months — SR]

## CORRESPONDENCE

Took myself down to the Destitute Asylum. Grey and miserable day. The heavens echoed the bleak and awful presence of that place. Entered the establishment from Kintore Avenue. Passed what at first I thought was a chapel, but on closer inspection it became clear that the building was in fact a morgue. Saw a coffin. Walked across a dreary sun-less courtyard towards the men's quarters.

Inside the stench of filthy flesh and garments. Adjusted my eyes to the dim and dreary light. Began enquires with the former wardsman.

In a filthy condition. Black marks all across his face, and upon his arms and chest. Left too close to the fireplace, apparently, or paralysed with something. Talked about the dead house. The sunless day. The identity of the corpse.

Confirmed what I had hoped. Wardsman worked for years on the hulk.

Exchanged money for his correspondence. Felt ill with this. Something wrong. Bad vapours passed by. The black form.

On leaving he took my hand and shook it firmly. Spoke into my ear, quietly and emphatically. Told me he was dying there by inches for want of someone to speak a kind word to him.

Repulsive. Hideous man. Know now that this man was...what he was...I cannot name it. Odious fabricator. Cannot name the thing.

Discovered later he died and was buried in the pauper's section of the cemetery. Will burn in hell until the end.

[The following represents the collected 'correspondence' of the unnamed wardsman from the hulk. The letters are supposedly sent from boys incarcerated on the hulk, from their parents, and from employers of the boys. — SR]

*Sir, I was one time sorry I ever saw the Fitzjames but now I am glad, for it has taught me a lesson, also how to behave myself, and a good many other boys that has been there can say the same.*

Dear boy, you have become a man now so you must remember ~~to keep the secrets that we had~~ I made you stop crying I comforted you when no one was awake you told me that you were glad I loved you like I did you knew then what it was to be taught by a man proper happiness and that is my gift ~~in the darkness and the night.~~

*Sir, the last I heard of my son he had gone north and we have not heard nothing of him since.*

Sir, the first I heard of your son was that he had the black mark and his feet were clubbed. I got dust in me shoes and I got a disease so you are a lucky parent because you are shot of him who walked a bad trail and was always at them who knew better. Good riddance to the bad rubbish child.

*Since my son's discharge from the hulk he has conducted himself very well indeed, and is sincerely sorry for the cause that obliged him to be an inmate of that institution. For two years now he has been an apprenticed to the carpentering and joining business and he is applying himself steadily dutifully to become with god's blessing, I trust what he will be a steady, honest and industrious young man.*

Mother, yours was a steady boy ~~who held firm when the spray hit.~~

*Dear Sir, I am sorry I have caused you some annoyance on my part, but in future I hope I will be a good boy. I will stay with Mr. a as long as he will keep me, and I know that he will keep me as long as I am a good boy.*

Dear boy,

Don't let that man be hard with you just because you want to be a good boy. Remember what I taught you about how being good means getting what you really like and want deep down so remember and think about that ~~when the man asks you for special favours as I know he will because men like boys to be good to them when they are lonely and the hot day brings thoughts of the night and special times.~~

*With one exception my boy has behaved better since he has been home now. I showed him the paragraph in the paper about Ramsay, of Thomas Plains. That was the place he was put to, and he says he often got the bullock whip, and perhaps he deserved it; at any rate he is a good boy now.*

Dear Sir,

~~you are under the impression that the whip is the master and the boy is its servant I know that other ways there are with the whip and boys but what do you know? Have you been the servant of a boy who had a whip in his hand and was ordering you to be bound down for you had not done the right commandment. No that is too hard for your god wants them under the crack. I serve another one who breathes fire at midday have you seen him? You will not in your paper but I know esoteric thought on paper too it has your boy down there with the other ones who are not afraid to cut off the dead father at his root.~~

*Sir and dear friend—it is with great pleasure that I sit down to write these few lines to you, hoping that they will find you in good health, it leaves me at present. I cannot refrain from writing to you, you have been so kind to me when I was on board. I send my best respects to the officers and boys on board. I am working at the wire-matress making in Adelaide. I am getting on very well.*

Dear boy,

I will always be kind to you. I was always wanting what was best for you and your future. You should be happy at the mattress factory because you know the ways of sleeping and comfort, which I taught you good. ~~Your brown hair on the matress, your strong hands on the matress, your strong body on the matress fills me with comfort and joy.~~

*My boy has been at working for me on the railway line, and is very likely to have a permanent billet on that line. I have no complaints to make to you now. I believe he will turn out a steady man.*

Sir, your boy was always steady with me. ~~When I was saying to him don't move, or stay still, hold on, he would do a good job of it.~~ I would not be surprised if he turns out a steady man.

*My dear Sir-in answer to your letter, asking me how my boy Frederick is, I am pleased to inform you he is working home, at farm work, and does a little boot-repairing some evenings, and at other times spends his evenings in reading. He attends divine service on the sabbath day, and is a very good boy, and I wish to tender you my sincere thanks for your kindness to my boy. He speaks of your kindness and your good advice to him. I am thankful he was quite reformed when he left your ship, and again beg to offer you my sincere thanks for the improvement in my boy while under your care.-I am, &c., J. B.*

Dear JB, thankyou for a good letter. Your son's been on my mind for a time now. He is always there in side it. He was a good boy indeed and you know that now. He ~~was a soothing boy.~~ In the morning he would come over to me when I called him because I liked him to do that. ~~I would like to roam my tongue all over my mouth at him.~~ He would stand there ~~and watch~~ and he was happy. And one morning, when other boys they had gone to breakfast, he was standing there. ~~I took his little fingers and I put them on my face. I said to him, I wager you can't catch my tongue, if you do you can have some sweets. He said to me he could and he was good at having a go. I slid my tongue in and out of my mouth and he would try to hold onto it. And I let him catch it then. And he sort of held on to it while I moved it in and out of his little fingers. And they were getting wet so it was hard for him to hold onto me. But I said then why don't he have a cuddle with me in the bunk and so he did. And he got into me bunk and we play the tongue game more and I gave him my sweets before he got called up by the mate. That was a game we played nights.~~ He was always like you said a kind boy. He would understand what I was about ~~and when I wanted it.~~ And I thought you might like to know that I think allot about your boy and I hope he thinks about me too. I would like to come and see him soon and take him on an holiday. Would you like that?

*Sir, I am sorry to inform you my boy stopped home three months and ran away. He is now in her majesty's at Yatala, where he got four years. He has promised to reform when he gets free, when he will be twenty one years of age then.*

I am sorry but your boy always was a bad one who could do nothing right he would not be bound nor taught anything under me he has strength but he needs to learn to buckle under he will be taught some in Yatala, Sir.

*Dear Sir-I hope you will excuse my neglect in not answering your letter before this. Many thanks for your kind inquiries concerning my son William. I am happy to tell you that he has been a very good boy since he came home, indeed he has profited very much from his stay with you. And I shall always feel thankful for it. He is always talking about you and of going to see you. I shall now conclude, joined by william in his best wishes to you.*

My dear Sir, William and I always had a good understanding together we were always like that. You see the boys at night were in their bunks. That is what I saw every night. And being a mother is hard as I know. So that when you get a helping hand that is good. William would help get the boys quiet with me and settle them down and pat them and stroke their furrowed brows with me. ~~Although sometimes some of the boys were rigid.~~ William was a very good boy from me. I taught him the profit of kindness at night when all are disturbed by the fates. ~~So they need patting and a little singing down below that's what's it all about for the boys.~~ William was good for me like you said he will turn out aright for your profit.

*My son is hanging around home and will not go away and he doesn't go to work. The police give it as their opinion that the young man is not right in the head. The other boy is a good steady lad however.*

~~Dear mother, you ought to know that your son came to me at night just as I was setting the alter and he dropped his drink so as to indicate that he was ready for the ceremony. On that occasion where the skull was he bent down and received the blow. I got his head opened and allowed the fluid out. Please tell your son that he is lost to his soul and will not find it. Are you one of a loving kind? You must flee your house the end is here.~~

*Sir, my son's conduct has not been so good lately, and at any time I have to complain about him I will write to you again. I hope you will tell him in answer to this note, that you will give him two or three floggings if you get him down again, so as to frighten him and make him a good boy.*

~~I will flog your boy. Bring him at once.~~

Sir-

*My son has turned up in England, after some narrow escapes. He was engaged as steward on board a vessel, and has reached London. His uncle, a leading Baptist minister, has written to me, expressing his surprise at the manifest sincerity and Christian piety and his refinement of manners, considering the comparatively meagre education he necessarily received. And his other relatives all write in the same manner; and I am sure you will be gratified to learn that we attribute this desirable change in the young man's tastes and manners to the mingled kindness and firmness which you showed to him, added to the tact and discernment of character which proves to us that you are certainly in your right place in the government service, and I cannot close this without wishing that, for the good of the colony, you may long find such service congenial to your tastes.*

Dear S. T.,

Yes your boy was a good one for me he was always doing what was wanted. I took him over to the small cupboard I had and I gave him my sweets and a bit of fruit. I said to him that he would get a reward for being good to me and he did. ~~He would get up in the little dress I made for him.~~ And he would bring me my brandy. And cake. And he would say, here Sir is your refreshment ~~and I would say come here boy I have something to refresh you. And I would give him the brandy and the cake, part by part, under the bunk, for his good sake, and he would be very Christian about allowing me to take off his shoes and clean his feet,~~ he was very Christian in his kindness because he would clean my shoes for me when I said they looked dirty. He would bring me my tea and I would say I think my shoes are dirty boy, you may like to clean them ~~and rub them.~~ And he would. And I would give him a cuddle for that ~~and some more fruit because he liked it.~~ I would recommend that boy's kindness and firmness to anyone who asked me. I think you were lucky he came on this ship ~~because he would have gone wild like a spent flower without some proper firmness.~~ I myself have always tried to give the boys the proper tastes of life. He should be a good steward that boy because he has the history here of manners.

I am yours in  
Christian piety  
The nightwatchman

*Sir, I have much pleasure in informing you that the determined discipline he was subjected to during his confinement on the hulk had a desired effect on my son. From what he tells me himself, I cannot term it strict and harsh discipline, as a great many people believe it is. He spoke well of the treatment he did receive at the hands of the officers, and the jolly times all them boys who conducted themselves properly had.*

Your boy liked to have a good discipline as a great many do you see these boys need strong men and jolly times harsh times are soul building I am a godly man your son is a man too now if he wants more strictness he can come to the wardman.

*Sir, I suppose you would like to know how Alfred has been getting on, since he left the hulk. I am very glad to say that Alfred has suited me very well and that I have found and still find him a very civil and quiet boy and does his work well. I am going to raise his wages from the first of next month. He seems satisfied to stay with me and if he continues to do so, I will shortly teach him to plough and mow and then he will be of more use to me next season. I am going to fence in some more land and shall be very busy and if you have know of one I should like a boy between thirteen and fourteen that I could learn to milk and be useful about the farm. I would prefer an orphan as I shall be in hopes that when the his time is up he will make this his permanent home and I think he will be company for Alfred.*

~~Do you milk your boy too I did it for the cream~~ another one is impudent Sir.

*Sir, I'm writing these few lines asking how our boy is getting on. With the hulk. Just to know if he is well and if he is troubling much or not. Because his mother is in great trouble about him. And his mother, just after being confined, she is not strong to bear much trouble. It is afflicting her mind. Please, oblige a father who is very anxious to hear about his son. Our boy has been gone so long now. We have not heard from him at all. Is he missing them or does he speak of his father at all? His mother and his father are coming down to see him and hope that he is well. I would like it if he could write down a few lines for his mother, because she has been asking after him always. We are sorry, that is all.*

Your boy is a good one you are lucky you are kind I like you ~~you can have him without blemish for the day and then he is mine.~~



*Dear Sir,*

*Papa is not home or he would have written you. Frank is a naughty disobedient boy. Frank takes papa's favourite horse. When he is not at home. Frank had her away three days from her foal. Papa and I are very disappointed. He was a nice looking sharp little fellow and we liked him very much. Frank is not at home half the time. He goes away. And won't work. Frank smokes and insists on carrying matches loose in his pockets. The neighbours complained of the danger as he often slept in their stables. Frank is more like a little wild animal than a child.*

~~Frank, dear lady, was a blonde boy who was only on earth for good times and a short time so you don't know them likes who are doomed to die young who got men whispering around in the darkness about them who walk with fearless composure who eat girls for nothing who ate life there on the hulk where men shuddered and drooped and I have photographs of the night you won't conceive.~~

*Dear Sir,*

*I write to you to let you know about thomas bruce. I cannot get any good of him and cannot do any thing with him he is getting more uncontrollable every day my husband is not home he is away at work and he cannot be home I should do the same for him if he was my own son but obey me or do one thing I tell him what to do I don't know as I have tried I cannot punish him before he runs away or gives me further trouble I don't want him.*

~~Dear lady,~~

~~Tom Bruce was initiated into the circle and has for many years been a devout follower of he who likes to cause trouble. Get your husband back and then Tom will show you both what a slaughter can be had when the days of wine are in heat and the country can overflow with righteous blood. Are you both Lutheran?~~

# SCRAPBOOK

As you will recall dear reader, I happened upon the scrapbook of James Burns, one time inmate of the hulk *Fitzjames*. I have read and re-read that scrap-book since then, and am now of the opinion that there is no definite presence of the boy in this book. I say that because I am uncertain of the authorship of its words. I am inclined to believe, however, that it has the hand of one John Redman upon it. I presume it is the work primarily of Mr. Redman because it was he who led me to the book, it was he who knew its contents, and it was he who seems obsessed with the burdens of remembering. This is no proper proof I know, and it could be said that Mr. Redman came to know the scrap-book through other means. What I believe is certain is that James Burns and Mr. Redman are in each other's confidence. They share a mutual past and an interest in its remembering. I do believe, however, that some of this writing may be the work of James Burns himself. That writing which is awkward, clumsy and suffers from an ignorance of learning. The writing which indicates that it is somehow copied badly from another source, that writing too seems to indicate the possible hand of a naive author. Again however, I must add, that these errors of composition do not themselves prove the presence of the boy. They may be merely the work of John Redman, regressing, as it were, through the imitation of a child-like style, to his time aboard the hulk.

\* \* \*

[Some of the writing here has may have been embellished by the author using contemporary sources —SR]

I'm following the aimless flow of memory. I follow it to its final point, to where it flows forth inside another body, to its mouth, where waves of fresh and salt water mix. It is at that point where sharks lurk and pace. I have seen the sky darken at the mouth of the river and I have seen the mists that hide the water spirits, and I have invoked, abused and conversed with these spirits, and I say that amid that drift there is power and memory.

I should like the book to contain the recollections of my childhood. I should like it to contain those things that resonate still, that I return to, without cause, as if taken by surprise. These places, they seem to have a power that lingers even in an actual object. A small toy, bad weather, the balcony of a poor dwelling. Feeling there once was an experience, which has departed, which left for other parts, and has not returned.

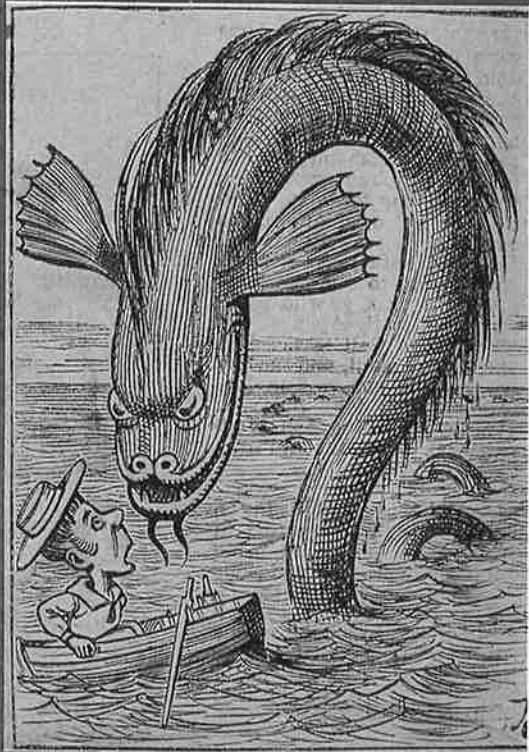
I grew up in an atmosphere where crime was just like second nature. I grew up in a pretty small town. You either was out of school or you were doing crime. My older cousins and my older brothers they were pretty much into crime. I got lectures about crime from my parents, but I don't hang around with my parents. It was a small town.

There was nothing much else to do. There's either go to school or do crime.

I'm not sure, it's all becoming dispersed again, remembering is set adrift.

I think the only thing I dreamed of was getting back on the outside world...having your freedom...go to school...like a normal person...hang out with your friends...see who you wanted...within reason...and just get on with your life and show everyone else that you are not a loser. Because that's pretty much how the workers treated you in there, like you were a loser. You are nothing, we are here to control you, you do as we say, and you'll get somewhere.

At the end, where my remembering stops, where the sentence ends, the horizon appears perhaps to have vanished, or at least that it is everywhere, and as I turn to salute my friend and companion, I see that the horizon is gushing also from his heart.



The memory of betrayal, it has many origins, and when it comes together, for the sake of understanding, when it is pictured as a scene, it assumes a singularity that speaks to all who remember. These objects, these phenomena, they're pieces of a drifting time.

This place doesn't teach you discipline, just gives you somewhere to stay while you do your sentence. This is just somewhere where you live. It doesn't teach you nothing. Only way you are going to change is if you like change by yourself. You need like an army camp or something. Doing all the discipline stuff like learning how to take orders and that. And do as you're told and things like that. And here they don't treat us like young adults, they treat us like little kids. Once you are naughty you have to go to bed at 7 o'clock. If you are in a boot camp and you're naughty you have to do push-ups. You'd have to show respect to the officer. Here you don't really. You have to show respect but it's just not like a boot camp.

It's alright here, it just doesn't teach you nothing.

The single picture, recalling it, it brings together those who have been wounded wrongly. It is the point at which the hulk sees itself at last floating in a tide of wounds. Forgetting the dark pages. The slighted hand. The awful day. The dreary prospect. The damp and stale air.

There are those bodies, inhabiting the earth, and they will one day say goodbye, they must one day be not there, for there is both a going to and departing from remembering.

No I do not want that, that thought which says there was something left behind, that thought which says that I have not destroyed enough.

I was 13 years old and one day I just went and broke into the school.

I just felt like breaking into the school. And then I just got busted doing that. And I got let off easy.

And from then on I just kept going and going.

Central at last to what it is that makes life sensible.



After mum started going out with my brother's and sister's dad I started seeing my real dad. I didn't see my dad for a while and then I started seeing my dad again, when I was about 10 or 11. That made a difference. I had like a father figure. And that was important.

My dad comes and visits me every now and then.

And then it would be that there was a knock at the door, and a letter is delivered, about a sentence not served, about an incomplete sentence.

And mother looked out the window, out towards the horizon, towards the setting sun, towards that place where sentences are served out, where the sentence serves a dark and filthy hand...

To open sorrow to the eye, to make this drama, I repeat the painful sorrow of boy-souls, the departure and arrival from love and to love, to those who are willing to love you, to care for you, to embrace your slender body and softly comfort your distress.

The expiry of all sentences, at the horizon of memory, it is that point which draws me on, towards the time when all will be forgiven.

Sometimes I feel disgusted with myself because I can't believe I done some of the things I did and inflicted so much pain on my family and on myself as well for only a couple of minutes of pleasure. So sometimes I feel really disappointed, sometimes disgusted in how I was so stupid to lead my life the way I did. And how I could put my parents through that. Making them feel guilty. Thinking what have they done wrong with my up-bringing. Leaving them with that thought.

When it had nothing to do with them.

It was just a path that I chose at the time.

The common treasure, cold pieces of it glow spent meaning.

I stay in my corner without moving, entranced with power, that is the power of my own making. As if I were a notable destroyer, an agent of liberation.





You come here and you've been taken away from your family and your family's been taken away from you. That's what really matters to me. My family and the one that I love. That's my girlfriend. And it hurts. Everyday of your life in here it hurts. It hurts so much. And you give up your life just to see your family, and just to see your girlfriend not living through hurt. They're hurting out there and I'm hurting in here. If I go out there now that would be the happiest day of my life because I'll be re-united with my family and my girlfriend. People that I love.

It just hurts everyday. It just hurts.

Repeating this, it is a pleasure and it is most sensible, for it enables the past to come to know itself as being with a purpose and a position, instead of something that is too terrible, too doomed to visit. And that is like a body in pain, isolated and abandoned, and which is, and never has been cared for nor remembered, nor loved in any particular way.

I have been to the horizon, and there is a point there where the beyond materialises and draws me near the spirit. The horizon of remembering is like that because it has no end. I hope that my book has presence at that point where death is no more, where suffering has come to a close, and where all sentences have expired.

I consider rehabilitation is like a psychological thing.

Like they have to go out and do crime. They have to do crime for the money or they have to do crime for the adrenalin. But I don't have to do crime. I can stop crime whenever I want. I went through a phase where I just did crime for the hell of it. And then I realised that its not benefiting anyone really. Myself, my family or the society. So I just realised that given a push in the right direction that can deter me

From going back into that same frame of mind.

Doom leads me to further pain, the pain that underlies the feeling of doom, the feeling of dread and foreboding that comes with the repetition of the unending sentence.



In the outside world everything's changing. When you are here time stays still. Same thing every day but when you are on the outside things change, things get built, things move, shops move.

Shops get built. Your friends move.

In here its the same every day, time stands still.

I can see the absence and quietude that comes at the end of the sentence.

Still waves. No wind. Nothing.

And she's welcoming, she's inviting me in and I walk down the hall, to the kitchen where there's a fire burning, and she wipes her hands, and pours the tea, and offers us a bun and says there have some of this boy.

Here's drifting too.

If you want to do something you can always do it.

I've had heaps of chances. I just keep coming back to crime. It's just fun. Easy to get away with. You can do it when you want. It's always there.

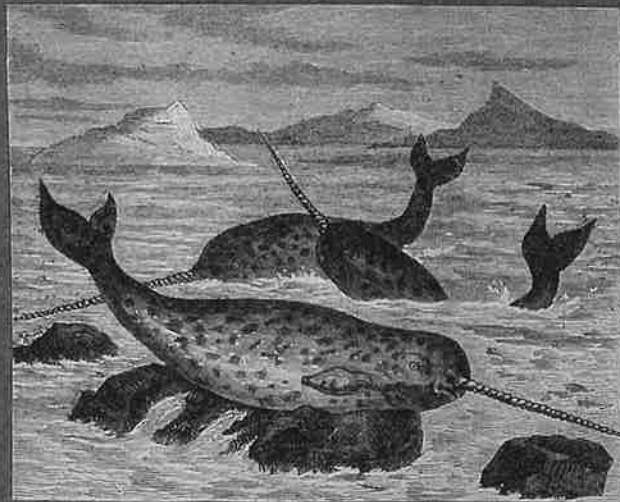
If you want to do something you can always do it.

But I don't want to do crime when I get out. I don't want to come back. Some people don't want to do crime when they get out, some do. Just depends. If you've got a long sentence you've got time to think about it. Just think.

You could be on the outside going to parties and shit like that.

Although I have the desire to face fear and to end the sentence.

This book wants to hide from a language that is overburdened with portents of failure, of past death. It is a gloomy aspect, my fretful memory which impales and haunts the page. I cannot bring my memory to full appearance, it will always lurk and loiter, it can never come fully from the night.



In the intensity of loss, in the intensity of separation, at those moments my life appeared like an entire story, with me at the centre, with my body being what was essential to the completion of the unfolding.

Central at last to what it is that makes life sensible.

The rules that these guys got here, and the way that we live on the outside — the way most of us live on the outside — sometimes we don't even know we're breaking the rules. Because it's just natural for us to do things like that. If someone wants to fight, for most of us there's no way in the world that we'll say no, I don't want to fight you, let's talk about it. We'll get up and we'll fight straight out. And we'll accept the consequences later. Or we won't even think about the consequences.

It's like psychological.

It takes more than some petty little rules to change a human mind.

I know it is aimless, and without purpose, this way of remembering.

Recalling the bows and scrapes and always the same old thing.

What I can see is that they're trying to help people get in touch with their feelings and their thoughts, and make them connect up with what they're actually doing. Like with their physical being. Trying to influence us residents to sort of think about what we're doing. And if we were going to go out and get back into crime, think about it first. Whether its right or wrong. Whether we should do it or whether we shouldn't. What's going to be good for us. What's going to be good for people around us. That's what they're trying to do. Just help us be better within ourselves. Not to actually change us. Just be better within ourselves. That's what I can see anyhow.

In my scrap-book jolly the sun.

Recalling the bows and scrapes and always the same old thing. Did he think wrong dirty me?

The same old thing. Bad being.



Like the time when you were taken, without warning, from behind. Throttled for a minor error.

Wrong like that time when time was stolen.

Because the bad sentence hangs it.

And always the same old thing.

If you are fighting you get like 24 hours off association. That's a day in your room and you get level three for a week, that's when you have to go to bed at 8.30 and you get no radio. If you're caught smoking you get 24 hours off association you get level three for two weeks.

That's about it.

Correcting the drift, I cannot do this, and would not want it so. There is nothing to be saved except the desire and belief in a memory fixed and un-movable in its meaning. I have no faith in this belief, for I have sensed the pleasurable drift of composition.

The mother, the home, the tea, floating, specific without reference.

It's drifting here it goes, the substance, without a constant sentence.

There's nothing to break the boredom and break the routine.

When you're asleep they've got checks every fifteen minutes. If you've just gone to sleep the lights gone off the light comes on you, wakes you up again. Takes you a while to get back to sleep. It makes me feel pissed off. Get sick of it after a while. Sick of the same old routine. There's nothing to break the boredom and break the routine.

Nothing you really can do.

Go by the routine or you get consequenced.

Because the bad sentence hangs it.





Some of the workers are Ok. There's a few. Yeah, there's a couple. They just help you out. Bring movies and that for you. Passes time. [Magic lantern's finished]...Time for tea.

Perhaps it is likewise an illusion that this is a drifting book, for the words are finished and stuck upon this page, and they go nowhere on there own.

Until that day, much anticipated when the sentence ended. Returning what it had stolen all that time. Secretly in its hands you had become another. Here then caught hungry.

A book that drifts is very lonely. It visits places which belong to other people, it goes unbidden there, because it is so lonely, and seeks comfort, in an imaginary love.

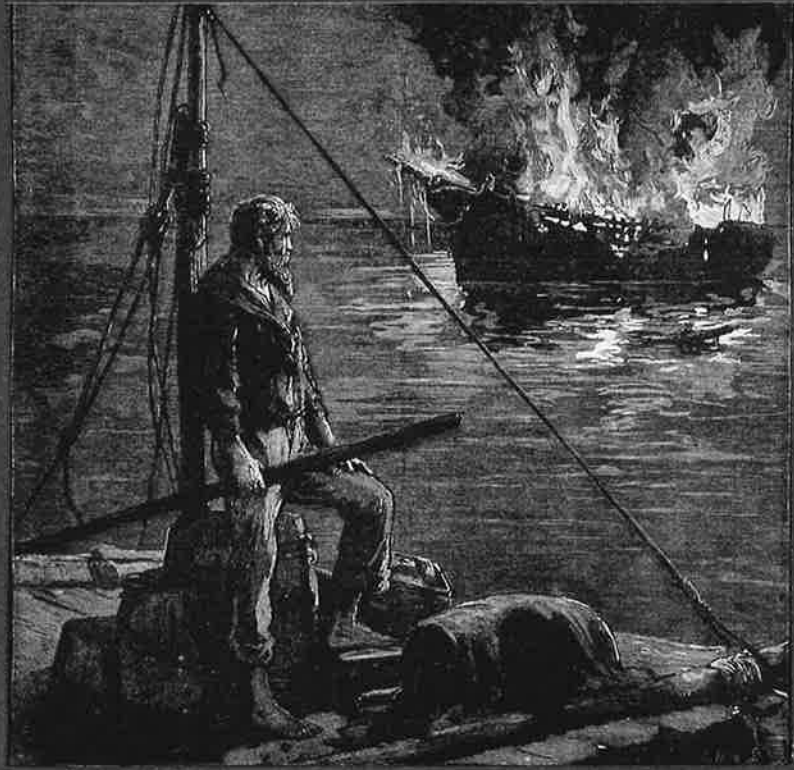
To the time when I would be home with mother and father, and there is a fire burning in the fireplace, and we are talking and laughing and remembering.

There was no purpose to us being in there at all. I mean the only thing the kids in there wanted to do was to keep on escaping. Get their freedom back...because half of them were in there for the same reason as me. You have to do what they say whether it was right or wrong...there is no way to get through to them that what you was doing was nothing wrong.

At every turn, where I look down, I read signs of my own desire, which is so powerful that it smoulders still, emanating strong meaning.

They want to go and arrest people, lock them up, and they are not going to teach them anything, all you are going to learn is how to be more of a criminal. Better ways to do things. It's ridiculous. They shouldn't go and put all these people in this gaol, you are paying thousands tax payers dollars per person. It's ridiculous. Why not with all that money they spend throwing people in gaol try and find out the problem and fix it? It's like a bad dog, He keeps urinating on your carpet so you are just going to chuck him in the room and lock him up, that's going to teach him not to urinate on the carpet? You got to get to the source and you got to find out, well he's doing it because of this and I've got to teach him.

That's one thing the government is not willing to do.



I know some quiet words, whispered in the dead of night. I have night shame. I cannot live. Hate the hope for better things. Shame me.

It's the family that's the most important.

You don't need to do anything for anybody or make anyone happy. You do it for yourself. And now I'm going to school. Make my parents proud of me. That's the way I want it. I want my parents to be proud of me. That's all I want now. Because my dad's resented me from the first time I ever did crime. But now that I'm in lock-up he knows that I've learnt a lesson. He comes and sees me two times a week. That's all we get here, two visits a week. And he sees me two times a week. And he talks to me normally. Like father and son. Like I always wanted. He loves me, and he shows that he cares. And he tells me that he loves me. And when I get out I'll mow the lawn for him. Anything that he tells me to do. I'll do it for him. Because out there I took every day for granted. And ever since I come here...everyday is like...I just want one day outside, with everyone else, in the community, just to walk on the road.

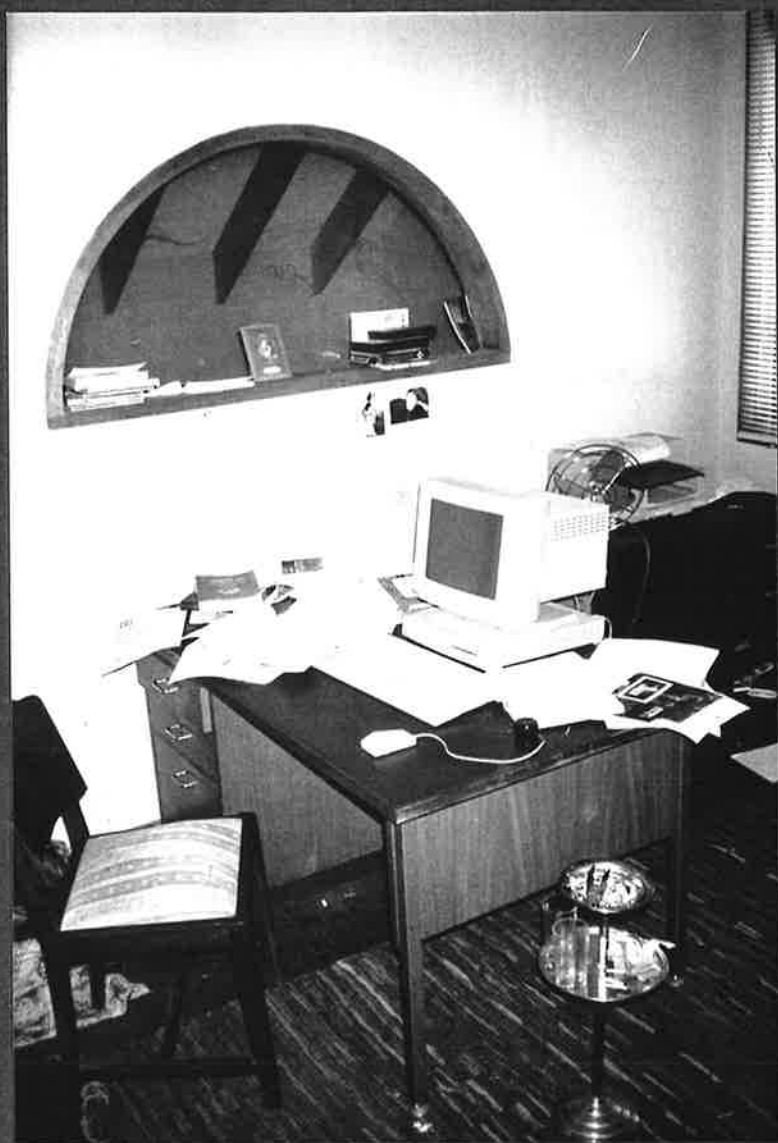
I'll give up anything just for that.

The mother, the home, the tea.

This vanishes unless I repeat it, remember it, for it has no real substance, without constant repetition.

I remember Mr. Humby, who was a father and sailor, and an upright man, who had been shipwrecked and drowned, and rescued by certain creatures, and sung to by others, Mr. Humby who was the saviour and hero of all boys, Mr. Humby who had killed one thousand times, Mr. Humby who was the instinctual gentleman and robber, Mr. Humby who would never be content until he has restored to all boys their natural rights and freedoms, Mr. Humby who had the largest heart and the strongest legs who could run through walls and survive buried like a fakir, Mr. Humby who had done battle with the devil and not been disgraced, that Mr. Humby who arrived and set us all on fire...

Mine is a fretful book. It moves without vigour, you see it hangs limply at the corners of the page. I cut and paste without enthusiasm I want the end.



I enjoy the destruction and culmination of my event, the process of surveying all that I have constructed. I am satisfied that the structure of defeat, of total collapse, I am satisfied by its utter finality.

I go crazy if I don't have my freedom and that was what it was like...I was starting to go crazy...That's what I was thinking about all the time...you look outside your window during the night, you see the stars and you think I wish I was out there, you know, not in here.

It drifts then, certainly. Having no home nor any sense of being that is permanent. It is attracted to what it lacks: certainty; identity; peace of mind.

Because I had always sensed the existence of a secret, because there is a need and a desire for destruction, and finally to annihilate pain.

I write that I want to destroy and that I want to live a life without pain.

In silence, identity and certainty take shape and become substance. They grow and meander. I can never perceive this. The arbor, I can never re-visit it, and once I become conscious, I am set adrift, expelled and forlorn.

There is a remembering of the forlorn and the lonely, and it finds an ally in the remembering and reading which sets itself adrift from all that is fixed and anchored. It is cast out from the garden of identity, certainty and peace of mind.

There are astounding things, at the end of the world, at the foreshore where I can see the absence and quietude that comes at the end of the sentence.

Although I want to kill, although I want to destroy, although all this is written and recorded I am haunted by this remanent thought, which to be truthful is but a string of words, hung round my neck, and lowering me, as garlic would an undead corpse, which I am not, and refuse to be.

I am not undead and refuse to be so, although the sentence, that weighs so heavily, that there was something left behind, there is something in this, some thing that will not let me be.

## JOURNAL (W)

[The documents of Alfred Weippert, one time teacher aboard the hulk, are reproduced in part here. The author notes that they formed part of the estate of Alfred Weippert, retrieved by him from the Destitute Asylum, during his investigations in the summer of 1898. They are, it appears, pedagogical notes and personal reflections. Included also are stories possibly used in class. There are other pieces of writing which, although in Alfred Weippert's hand, may be copies from sources unknown. —SR]

\* \* \*

Sept. 1884

Sunday. Caught the train to Largs Bay. Early evening. Made my way to the end of the jetty. Met by Mr. Jefferson, ship's carpenter. Rowed to hulk by boys manning oars. Boys rowed well. Went aboard the hulk at 5.30 pm. Dead calm. Reported myself to acting superintendent (Mr. Thompson) at the gangway. Stated my name and was met warmly. Taken on tour by Mr. Thompson. Visited boys, who were then engaged between decks reading, drawing, playing draughts. Perfect order was being maintained. Mr. Thompson introduced me. Boys seem well mannered enough. Hope they are ready for me. Mr. Thompson tells me the boys are classified into three divisions according to their good conduct. First and second division have privileges in rank, diet and work over the rest. As it was tea-time they were mustered in classes and marched to separate tables. Asked Mr. Thompson what they had for tea. Was told the staple food was a piece of bread and an allowance of treacle. The tea was without milk and sugar. These items having run short for a week past. As one lad passed me I asked him (taking the liberty to do so) I asked him if he had enough to eat. His reply was what might have been expected: 'some do, some don't. You see some boys want more than what others do.' Inspected dormitory. Clean and roomy though somewhat redolent of chloride of lime. Visited boot and shoe workshop. Was told boys turn out about thirty pairs a week. In the tailoring establishment some thirty boys were making shirts and so on. Clothes for the hulk boys and for the Industrial School. 'Sweat shop' thought I. Went through the rest of the ship: superintendent's office; office; cook's

department and private room. Finally led to school room and library. Mr. Thompson informs me that the boy's behaviour is generally good. Stated as proof that for months past the dark-cell had been unused.

Nov. 1884

Notes for myself re. reading these boys' spirit.

1. These boys are too used to being read as being bad.
2. To read with hostility is to befriend the power of ignorance. It is to move the eyes and focus the gaze without a taking in, without a movement towards an emotional engagement. It is an inability to move the spirit, to become stuck and fixed without hope, and confused, and fearful, thus to be surrounded by that which threatens sense making, to be surrounded by a lack of sentence structure, to see before one's eye's an inaccessible realm of meaning making, an impossible heap of rubbish, an impossible cache of gold.
3. Reading goes forth from object to subject, ebbing in and out between these two, and so it is that the body that reads becomes the body being read, becomes the actual appearance of reading itself. Reading becomes stuck and immovable at the manifestation and stench of a certain appearance. The appearance which cannot be accommodated, that which must be transformed from a condition of unknowing towards clarity and safety.
4. Reading adversely, it is in this manner of composition that ignorance and fear make their appearance.
5. Being read in stillness, surrounded by nothing, composed in fresh air, placed together quietly, word upon word, is the life that takes place despite us, it is the ever present flow and purge of language, surrounding still being like a halo, dependent upon the body, and upon the actions of the body, to not be still, to read this flow as if it were the life blood of identity, rather than the ephemera of community, the appearance of another's written composition, the reading of a thousand million other departed souls.
6. Reading still, a still reading, it is without activity, it has no identity, it is partaking of the next world within our own.
7. It is here at the moment of reading that the boy appears. It is at that moment that he is almost set free from the dark shadow, from the strangulation and the night.
8. At the birth of the world, at the beginning of man, at the opening of God's play, there at that moment when the world took shape, there upon the plains and orchids and mountain valleys, appeared reading.

10. It is to this singular fact, to the reading of a boy, and the appearance of reading, that all who teach must bow down and obey.

Have befriended Mr. Jefferson. Late at night he taps at my door and offers me a tour of the hold. On our journey we passed over the great bed of silt which had been placed amidships as ballast. Proceeded to a spot indicated by Mr. Jefferson on the bluff of the starboard bow. Examined the place. Water was running in as fast as it would from a 2-inch tap. Mr. Jefferson took out his knife to try the soundness of the timbers. The blade went straight through the wood, showing it to be thoroughly rotten. As the vessel rolled and lurched the timbers creaked dolefully. The situation seemed rather dismal. Returned to my cabin. Thought about boys.

Herb Dolan is a troubled boy. Sent down for rape. Aged 12. Cannot take on any lesson. Seems paralysed by idiocy. Ask him to work, like the other boys. Responds by biting fingers. Hard. Puts whole fist in his mouth and bites down. Cannot spell the simple words 'tea', 'sugar', 'once' or 'window'. Holds himself as well. With the other hand. Clutches his genitals. Stamps his feet on the floor. When set a writing task he fills his book with scribble. Will frequently piss himself. Wild looking boy. Cannot get any good from him. Have asked for transfer out of hulk. Disturbs other boys. Talks incessantly of intercourse. Unbearable. Must learn to love him.

Notes re. God's love of learning.

1. There is a certain substance in all boys which is wanting to be free and to be ecstatic with a sense of purpose and belonging.
2. This substance is a moral spirit. It is the spirit of His love.
4. Boys can love and smile and quake, yes quake with God's spirit. And I can get that quaking. Arouse it with the right words. The right words will arouse a sense of rightness in the boys.
5. Love boys. Entwine them in your soul. Feel their sweet energies and guide that sweetness toward the gushing fountain in the sky. Ecstatic thoughts, of being entwined with love and youth.
6. The sentiments of love can be used for the betterment of boys.
7. It is the reforming of the self, of developing the self, that I am put here to carry out with love and tenderness and obedience to the long term spiritual emancipation of those boys who are enslaved to a base materiality and who suffer from the pain of too little love.



8. Boys lack loving tutelage. Lack a loving encouragement for their better self to come forward, and speak, and articulate and appreciate that this is a world which is inhabited with a spiritual presence.

9. This is a God-infested world, to be short, and these boys will learn it.

Lesson: forgiveness.

When it was a cold winter's morning the contents of a large can of cold water were emptied over Walter James' head. Although drenched and shivering, he went in and sat through school. As the day advanced a bright red spot appeared on either cheek, his head burned and the raging fever took him delirious, the fever raged and his pulse continued increasing. A doctor was sent for and because he had a naturally delicate constitution the doctor was full of the gravest anxiety and a severe chill consumed everything. It was with a grieved, anxious expression that the superintendent conducted service that evening. 'I have a few words,' said the superintendent. 'I feel it my painful duty to say to you as you all know someone is now lying at the point of death. And the cause of his death lies at the door of one of you present here. I ask you now to come forward you, the boy who played this mean trick because it is through your instrumentality that Walter James has received his death-blow. So let me impress upon you now this terrible time and how near lies death to each of you, and so I beg of you to examine yourselves, to put to yourselves, each one of you individually, 'am I ready to die?'" Quite overcome, the superintendent sat down, grieved and disappointed, and he looked round and the boys marched into the dark. The next day poor Walter James who was now about to be snatched by the cruel hand of death lay with his hand clasped in mine, and he said 'tell the boys to think of me waiting for them, over there, ask them to come to me soon, and promise me that nothing bad will happen to the boy that did the crime; he only meant it as a joke.' The last words were feeble but inaudible and his hand unclosed its clasp and his eyelids closed, and a convulsive shiver ran through the boy's dead body. The superintendent at once summoned the discovered wretched culprit boy to his cabin, and kindly, but sternly, pointed out to dreadful things. The boy's heart was touched to the core that a dying wish said that he should not be whipped wretched. Carrying out the dying request the superintendent consented to let the boy remain confined and shackled him down below for the remainder of the sentence. From that day he applied himself diligently at his work and soon won esteem. Then one day he sent a petition from himself and the boys for a small memorial window to the remembrance of Walter. It is still to be seen in the starboard side of the hulk. It is the touching representation of Christ suffering on the cross, and the mocking scoffing at him

from the shore, while beneath the window are written these words: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

Lesson: spelling.

1. One spells the sentence in a manner that is pre-determined. One does not spell a new order, one spells-out an order that is there.
2. One articulates a power that is latent. One gains entry to a certain power by articulating, part by part, a proper order. The power which one may gain comes out of respect to an in-alienable order; to partake in that, to have power, one must spell-out the way it was ordained, by the higher orders, who want to bestow their power.
3. There is a power that waits.
4. Priests gained their power in part by reading out words from letter to letter. They broke down the word of god into component parts, which could not be re-arranged or tampered with. It was then that God appeared to those who heard this, as an infinitely indivisible entity. And the secret to this particular idea, was not that god came from letters, of their pronunciation (all creatures came forth thus) but that God was a unique and singular form of letters. He could not be spelt out any other way. To bring God to bear upon this earth, to make him present, then there must be proper spelling. And when there is proper spelling then he is present.
5. It is a deformity of the highest order to mis-spell the word of God. It is an abomination to invoke with God's letters, another form of being. The heart of youth is as the page beneath your hand. So one must be sure when writing, that the word of god partakes of a proper order, and that it does not dally with those forces of perversion who, knowing the secrets of the power of spelling, wait at the edges of your page.
9. There is a fearfulness gathering at the borders of each word, at the differences between the proper and improper. A certain disintegration looms, where there is disorder and miscegenation, that is where you may find the excluded fellow.
10. There must be an exclusion, a keeping at bay the one, the singular, who belongs some place else, who may not wander into this proper place. That fellow, the one who must belong elsewhere, he too has a home and a duty to which he needs place himself.
11. Fearfulness and disaster creep alongside every line you write. And each boy has this demon looking over him. Waiting for the mistake which will invoke the wrath of order. Each boy, at the verge between the pen and paper, is dealing with

the difference between disaster and success. He has a chance to make good himself there.

12. On the surface of the page is inscribed the outlines of the fate and character of each and every boy.

Mr. Jefferson wakes me again. Find myself unable to decline his offer of late-night journey. We walk silently through the hulk. He points to weather side of the ship. Suggested I take note how it is decaying under the effect of the elements. Takes me once again down into the hold. He speaks incessantly about the condition of the boat. How rotten it is. How it will soon sink and kill us all.

'You see here Mr. Weippert, the caulking below the copper is very bad. In several places the oakum is completely decayed, being so bad this ruler here, I can push it through the back of the seam to the copper, leaving only the copper and churram to keep the ship afloat.'

As he spoke he demonstrated that fact with great vigour.

'As you can see here there's water over the ceiling on the port side. Over here, on the starboard side, I've been cutting away some timber to see if there was a leak there too. But I could not make my way in.'

'Why was that?' I asked, as much as to keep some semblance of sanity amid the gloomy darkness. The ship was still lurching. I felt it down amid the darkness, that certain fear. I felt it deep within me.

'See all that timber? When she was a quarantine vessel they just tossed it down here without much thought. It's forming a well-consolidated heap, calculated to strain an old ship riding in a seaway. And now it can't be got at. It's too dark in there. Always. The lights I bring don't ever show enough to see at all. Come on here I got to sound the pumps.'

With that I followed him along the dark passage, covered over, as I said before, with silt. We finally emerged, passing by the night-watchman. Returned to my cabin, disturbed in mind and body.

I look down upon myself, sitting at the table, unable to bring words to bear upon this matter, aware that the matter of a judgment looms, that there may come a knock at the door, and with that the forced entry of a dark presence, who knows all that I have done. He knows all that I have done and takes my hand, and guides it to write. I am forced to write against myself, as though there were some abuse occurring here, of a sordid nature. I am being stripped by a malign hand that travels down inside me. There it brings up words which work against me, there, it has my hand clenched within its own. Now I write that I am bad, that I am

doomed, that I have no hope at all. That I will always be so. I become narrow, tiny, slender and almost impossible. I hold on only slightly to my body, which is the target of a hostility, a rage not of my own making.

Lesson: reflection.

The superintendent in grating tones said 'see that you make an impression on that boy's back. And have the remaining boys turn up for punishment.' In obedience to the summons the boys on the quarter-deck with awe-stricken faces looked on at the dread scene.

'Very good Mr. Thompson!' said the superintendent, knitting his brows; 'turn out a good cat to your mates.'

'The best I've got in store, sir' replied the gruff man amid profound silence broken by the wind whistling and the sobbing of a wave through the hulk's rigging.

The boy was brought dejected who had been kept under close arrest on the deck, sullen to where stood a grate firmly lashed to the ship by the carpenter. And the mate held lug the dreaded cat-o'-nine-tails in his fist whilst the doctor would report to the superintendent should the boy faint at the terrible punishment during its infliction.

The superintendent, in a loud tone, with reference to the offence of which the boy had been guilty and the sentence folded the paper up, made a signal to the mate who ordered the delinquent to strip off his flannel. And his wrists and ankles were lashed to the grate and the superintendent in firm and grating tones, said 'do your duty.' The mate who held the cat, stepped forward and took position up behind the culprit, who, naked to the waist, cast a furtive glance in dread expectation of the powerful man rolling his sleeve. Displaying a great, hairy, arm, and giving the cat-o'-nine-tails a flourish in the air on the culprit's bare back he began emphatically. The marks became instantly visible of several incisions.

Clearing the cat with his fingers in orthodox fashion with every blow the boy writhed like a serpent. The culprit's back was seamed and lacerated, blue-and-red, and the boys' gaze turned unable any longer.

As the blows struck home the superintendent addressed the boys saying that this cruel punishment and these severe punishments have frequently been the cause of a complete breakdown.

'Know then that a punishment has become a thing of fear of the cat no doubt acting as a deterrent to the evil-disposed.'

At length the two dozen lashings were cast and the boy in a fainting condition was led down below and the superintendent ordered the boys to 'pipe down,' dispersing them below to reflect on the sentence.

Mr. Button discovered myself and Mr. Jefferson in the boy's dormitory. Were on our way to the hold again. Stopped by to look at them sleeping. Restful. Calm. Hammocks swaying. Lingered too long. Upset extinguished lamp. Found out by wardsman. He called Mr. Button down. Taken to office for interrogation. He suggested that my position would be reviewed. Has heard some unsavoury rumours. Was going to ignore them, but this matter has changed his mind. Am tired of him.

Dreary man. Upstart. Uncultured.

I cannot dis-avow the sickness in me.

What is that forces this confession?

I am a manifestation of the hand which forces and abuses, that is connected to the night, and to the forces of evil and black desire. Hands come to me at night, and desire to take me to the cell, where children have been turned to bone, where some still hide beneath rock, where the shadows of a tragic disappearance flutter across my eyes.

The candle has blown out. The cell drips blood.

I want judgment to cease its interminable grinding of young flesh. The judgement machine incinerates conscience. It desires the death of conscience. It desires to make all conscience its own so that its terrible grinding can rule this flat sea.

Mr. Jefferson at me again. Enters my quarters. Raving.

'I am of the opinion Sir, that the hulk, to make her tight and sea-worthy, ought to be placed on the patent slip, ballast taken out, copper stripped off, all defective planks and fastenings renewed, caulked from keel to covering board, and churammed and sheathed with yellow metal. Probable cost of repairs I make to be three thousand five hundred pounds. I am further of the opinion Sir, that she may open out at any moment.'

Told the man that I had other things on my mind at present. Refused to hear more.  
 Told him that I sought redemption.

The night. Dark and a little glimmer from the moon was covered over by clouds. Heard the roar of the sea. Seemed like a mountain. Crossed the deck and walked towards the farthest part of the hulk. Heard the wheels of the carriages away in the direction of the shore. Found my head running on the story of the dead boy. Seemed to see the gipsy kneeling on the pauper's chest. Cutting his throat with a pocket knife. Said out loud I won't be frightened I won't. There aren't any such things as hosts. Dead boys don't walk about. A hanged wooden figure can't do me harm. I haven't anything to steal. Coming to the dead boy was the worst part of the way. Feared seeing that ugly form. Tried to fix my mind on a girl whose dress I had torn while we danced. Why was she so angry with me?

Then I saw it quite plain the dark form. It stood out and my heart jumped. Heard a hundred things come up from the grave. Trembled all over. The dark figure stood up and began to move about.

And it saw me and kicked and tugged at his chain. He whined. Oh what I saw was a donkey tied by a chain to the post of the prow. I laughed till my sides split. Then the donkey laughed too. He lifted up his head and hee-hawed.

Awoke before I felt the ass.

Notes for self improvement.

1. I have pain in my own life and I have disaster waiting for me and I have doom casting shade over my wind-swept horizon.
2. I am so vulnerable, fragile and liable to dissipation.
3. I am a third-rate man.
4. I do un-manly work.
5. I am confined, like a woman, with children and their education. I take on this womanly role, for want of something better, for want of some manliness which was never my inclination nor lot it seems.
6. I avert my eyes from most men aboard. We seem to all share a similar shame. To be those who care for boys.
7. I have the lowest rank. The one who deals not with brute force or power, but with soft immaterial and delicate matter, as would a woman, with fine lace, which was sewn, with invisible threads at night.

Must remember to refuse Mr. Jefferson's advances. I judge myself and find it wanting.

Note: I cannot give in to this sickness (again)

I take myself apart at the moment of judgment. To take the eyes perhaps, from the skull, they do not stare so now. To take away the lips, that do not frown so now. Also, I want to take the hands apart from their arms, to place them down upon the floor. And the brain too, that must come forth from the skull, and sit quietly with those other body parts. There it is then, judgment taken down a peg or two, placed on a tray on the floor. I pick each piece to locate exactly where it is that there is a force. Where the force that holds me lies. Where is it that I am, in this bloody array. I hold and examine each in turn, and imagine myself held in those hands and held in those eyes, which hold nothing now. My corpse holds nothing except an absence. In my imagination those hands and eyes hold me down. The picture of myself being held down keeps me fearful. I am my fearful presence.

Need appears at the beginning of every boy's sentence, and it is at that point where there appears a great need for good writing. For the appearance of a sentence which can re-structure need and transform its poverty to some correct and proper purpose. The painful sentence suffers a paucity of structure, grammar and direction. It lacks words like 'comfort,' 'welcome' and 'love.'

There is a writing which is beyond, which cannot ever be touched and there is a beyond to all writing, the objects of which are never present. Material qualifications, they belong to the material realm and not to good writing.

There is always an identity beyond, or at least there is a presence, in its inessential essentiality, in its formlessness and mystery.

I have put myself where crime has taken place, I place myself there, at the place where the dark shadow falls, where light has fled, where doom strikes, where the last letters fall beneath the sea without sound. The slow strangulation of the blood and of the breath, the inability to communicate and to send a message, it is so isolating, this condition of being adrift. This loneliness that is so complete, that has beginnings but no way of ending or completion.

My mouth. The sentence.

## INTERVIEW

[The following are the author's notes concerning an 'interview' with Thomas Reed, who was chairman of the Destitute board until his resignation sometime in 1888. The destitute board managed the affairs of the reformatory hulk *Fitzjames*, as well as the Industrial School and the girls' reformatory at Magill. Thomas Reed was therefore the man ultimately responsible for the management of the hulk between 1880 and 1887, after which time the management of the hulk was taken over by the state children's council. The notes were found with accompanying annotations suggesting a draft copy. The peculiar nature of the textual notes (sometimes critical, sometimes playful), and the chaotic structure of the 'interview', suggest that the author was going through a personal struggle with the content of the material. Secondly, the facts suggest that the interview was the dramatisation of previously published information pertaining to the hulk, and that the interview itself was entirely fictional. —SR ]

\* \* \*

Return yet again to immoral conduct.

'The advantages were in far greater subordination and discipl[es of the night]ine, and smart[ing]ness in various duties that pertained uniquely to ship life. It is a belief that was shared in every place in the empire.'

[remember the bath answering the purpose of a urinal at one point.]

Yes it was.

'Was it the plan that the first act on the boys rising was to have a [urine] bath?'

'Or a thorough wash, yes.'

'They were then under [beneath] prison conditions?'

'It was only used for that purpose at night.'

'And it was used as a bath during day time?'

'They did not[often]. They washed on deck[often]. A number of buckets were sup[ine]plied with plenty of water, and they washed in them on the poop.'

[poop?]



[Simply a sluice with their hands in a bucket?]

[poop]

'Not as a rule.'

'Was the arrangement of the dormitories calculated in any way to check any immoral conduct that the lads may have indulged in?'

'They were certainly [they were certainly able] unable to abscond from the reformatory ship.'

'Describe the man[who looked]ner of surveillance used when the boys were in the dormitories at night [?]'

'At one point the a[rse]fter part of the vessel which was set apart for closets and urinals did afford every facility for boys of bad conduct and character to avail themselves in an immoral manner, and so these were destroyed as well.'

'What became of Mr. Weippert?'

*'He was a young person who had the appearance of an educated man.'*

'And how was Mr. Weippert previously employed?'

[I know his writing he was there he was in my hand too. He brought some writing.]

'He was working as a *canvasser*. Prior to that he was an inmate of the Destitute Asylum.'

[Go down, have been down, I know them, I am. Don't say it.  
Was young and had an appearance who taught now dead.]

'Were there ever any medical opinions given on this matter?'

'At one point a doctor summoned bread and tea and treacle for breakfast and said it was sufficient for growing lads.'

[And dripping?]

'Yes; he never suggested anything more than that.'

'What punishment was inflicted upon the uncontrollable boys?'

'Corpor[e]al.'

'With respect to the parents of Sheldrake the circumstance of his committal declared their personal unfitness. You must disregard bad character; weakness of character; other defects in the home. I say therefore, that once a parent declares his inability to control, [declares his need to be controlled] he has altogether

forfeited his rights to possess [a child] as a parent. Father begged the state to take his place. Object of the committal: the boy should be controlled by another body. [Laws of the state determine liquidation of intent and context] it is the parents who make life most difficult. It is prudent when administering to [the] poor [people] to be on guard against habitual dependency and deceit. [Remember *that* to your history]. One hulk boy in fact whose parents were seeking his return, said to me, 'I am happy here [the hulk is good]; I don't want to go home. Main point: parents should not be allowed to interfere in the disposal of their boy until that boy, through placing out, has become morally independent of former adverse influences. As you well know, parents who, after discovering the addresses of their sons in situation, will write and unsettle the [settled] mind[s] of the child, inducing them to abscond. I have met with numbers of cases where children in fact refuse to go back to their parents. My father and mother are wicked. Get drunk.

[Insert boy re. family chained by father to the floor of the house.]

[I remember they painted and made boats in the evenings.]

I remember the books in the library on the hulk.

'Indeed.'

'What was the nature of the library?'

[yearning]

'Is it not true that there is nothing that has such debilitating effect on the constitution of the lower classes as immoral conduct? Is it not the cause of disorders—insanity, epilepsy, and other derangements of the system?'

[And so] 'Were all cases [always in lower] of immorality on board the hulk reported to you?'

'There may have been some cases of insubordination that went un[der]reported.'

'Return of a boy at the end of the sentence to the parents meant not only a return to old associations, but a casting-off of the restraint imposed during the interval at the hulk. A position of responsibility should intervene between therefore at the end of the sentence and the [beginning of the next] return to the parents and a situation the boy is in a position of trust where he can gain self-governance and self-reliance. Consequences: have a good fling at home as formerly.'

[remembering two boys]

'Yes. John Wallace and David Dee committed unnatural offences on the park lands together, previous to their admission to the hulk. They exhibited strange and eccentric behaviour which was certainly associated with constant and repeated self-abuse. David Dee was subsequently diagnosed as being epileptic, and sent from the hulk to be committed to the lunatic asylum for treatment.'

[Where he is.]

'Why were boys removed from their parents?

'It depended on the arrangements [of past time ] and who was in charge.'

'I received [boy's cries, one or two] intimations of this kind some time in the early years of the hulk. Boys are [were] punished accordingly.'

'But you did have a boy as young as eight on board.'

[How it was principled, the night.]

'I think the youngest boy on board the hulk was about ten years of age.'

[he cannot see what I mean]

'Where is the meaning?'

[When in the berths at night. Mixed together. Not classified mingled in the night or kept separate.]

'Did you condone the practice that admitted the mixing together of young lads who were hardly answerable for their own actions with other and older lads who are hardened criminals?

Perhaps, [he] cannot recall[him].

'I think there was a number of boys on board the hulk who although no doubt uncontrollable, were there through the sin and the fault of their parents.'

'I had them all removed because of the evil likely to occur from such close contact.'

He brought a letter of recommendation from a reverend.

'Did you at any stage consider that the immoral conduct engaged in by the boys, coupled with the probability that the boys would have had only bread and tea, without milk, for breakfast, did you not consider that this must have had a very injurious effect on them, both mentally, physically and morally?'

[Why are lower classes deprived of privileges?]

'He taught but was not a certified teacher.'

'There was a teacher who had spent time in the Asylum?'

[Dreary memories. On the hulk. Life there. What was it. Better than the grey day.]

He visits hulk. Inspects sleeping arrangements. Anxious about immorality. Finds there were five rows of five hammocks strung up side by side in a row and touching each other. So that a lad of tender age, say eight or nine years old, and simply uncontrollable, would have mingled with hardened boys of twelve or fourteen years of age, who have been convicted of crime.

[Recall *the door* at the rear of the warden's room installed so he could enter his room in secret. Quietly. The quiet eye. Without the knowledge of the boys.]

'The wardsman was in his dormitory at about 7 o'clock every evening until he went to bed, during which time his duty was to *frequently* look at the boys—unseen by them [except for the eye in the hole in the door]—and he said he [liked that and] did so.'

[The name hulk. It has an affect. It has me affecting. The echo of an affect from these conversations.] And so 'did[do] you ever think that the very name 'hulk' had[has] a demoralising tendency?'

'I always thought the name was unattractive.'

'Other than the accomplishment of total isolation, what was it that the hulk achieved for the boys?'

[Except for these pages of writing that well-up against it without I am without sovereignty although despite what has been levelled at the hulk I believe the best evidence I cannot assail it the reformatory powers of sentencing.]

'[Is] Reading is [was] spiritual instruction.'

## LETTER

*Dear Sir,*

*I think you should know this story why boys run away or get caught up in crime. This is a good thing to have in your book for people to know. This then is the story of why John Reid escaped from the hulk. This is the story that he told me himself and I hope that you will remember this when you write. He needs good friends and I know you could be one to him that is why I send it to you knowing that. It was written down a few years previous but it is true nonetheless and I can imagine you can improve on it as I was not able to. It might seem tall but it is not and you will know that this is how boys lived their life and that they all want to be happy that's all. So will you read it and publish it as part of the hulk histories because this story was a part of that time. Did you need any other stories I have them too and it will be a mutual advantage perhaps if you ask me for them. I have many stories for you about boys at the time I was close to them and how they were living. Now they are different times and so I suppose these old stories are what you are interested in then. Tell me if I am interesting you in what I am writing.*

*I am Sir  
Yours truly  
Friend of John Reid*

John Reid had been a boy who got into trouble. He was first at the Industrial School for I can't remember what. He got away from there as often as he could he said he shouldn't have been locked up for not liking school and I agreed with him. That's why he got sent to the hulk originally. For absconding from the Industrial School. Then he was licensed to Mr. Collins in mount Bryan and it was a terrible hard lot and it was dry country with sheep and he was treated bad and bugged. He got returned for misconduct. Now that I remember it, that was the second time after he was sent to a farmer at Second Valley, but he was returned for misconduct from there too. Then about when he was about 14 he and another boy, it was John Ramage, who I have met and who is not good at all, they absconded from the hulk together. And they both got caught and the local magistrate who is a sodomite he

ordered them to be whipped and they were. Ramage got 18 and John he only got 12. Then they went back to the hulk after they were whipped. John was having a bad time of it and so he went over again.

When he was about 15 he absconded and they never found him as you already know.

On the hulk *Fitzjames* John Reid put both his hands on the shoulders of his mother who had come to the hulk for one of the visits the superintendent gave. John loved his mother and she smiled through tears but why was it especially heavy upon her at that moment? There was things troubled Mrs. Reid, and whitened her hair.

‘Is it Vincent?’ he said.

‘Oh, John! If your brother would only come home for his birthday!’

‘Oh, he’ll come back’ said John. ‘Why are you troubled?’

‘Hark!’ said Mrs. Reid. The sound of bells came full and clear over the sea.

‘They rang like that the night he left us,’ said John.

‘Oh! John,’ his mother said, ‘that was two years ago!’

She sank down and she covered her face and she wept freely.

‘Don’t fret mother,’ he said. He kissed her.

His mother said ‘you are a good boy,’ and she cried all the way home to her house.

It was an amazing thing but that same day there was a letter come for John and it was the mate who gave it to him saying ‘this is from your brother Vincent.’ John opened it and he could hardly believe it but he managed aright and it went like this...

‘Dear John, I want you to meet me to-night at half-past twelve on the swamp. I will tell you why I must see you at that time and at that place when you come. If you tell anybody a word about this letter, or bring anybody with you, you won’t find me there. You must come by yourself, and without anybody knowing, if you ever want me to come home again. You will be surprised but you will understand it when you get there. Hoping to see you down by the old gate at half-past twelve tonight.

I am,  
Your affectionate brother,  
Vincent Reid.

This is not my handwriting, as you will see. I have hurt my finger and can't write, and a friend has written me. If you wish me to meet you there and go home with you not a word of this to anybody.

So that is why John Reid absconded, because he was needed desperately by his trusted brother who was in trouble. And you know how he did it now I will repeat what happened next to him.

It was the darkest night with the stillness in the oppressive swamp, he was feeling the loneliness and the strangeness of the escape in the 'witching hour of night.' Young Reid, however, was not daunted now that he had made up his mind. Now and again the breeze went sobbing over the hill-top, and ever and anon the hoarse and solemn roar of the distant sea came swelling through the darkness. Down into a valley now, and across a slight wooden bridge spanning a brook whose swollen waters rumbled and gurgled as if catching the far-off thunder of the sea. Another narrow field and John had reached what was perhaps the most formidable part of his journey — a narrow lane, or rather footpath, through a coppice. Many a time had he been in the middle of a field in the darkness, with his mother exploring mossy dells, following her before out at midnight. But certainly never had he seen inside the course of the streamlets that bubbled through it, or sat on some fallen tree as now and watched the gambols of fire. He had crept stealthily down the back staircase of rabbits, across the open spaces amid their houses, had drawn back the somewhat ponderous clustering ferns and the masses of bluebells. Alas! How strange the place looked and what clouds were scudding! As if there was bolts and bars on the outer door, and he stood beneath it, on a spot in the midnight stars. Across clear frosty light that was teeming with pleasant memories. How still and solemn those stars looked at the dead hour.

And low on fully the old door creaked out. He pushed open the creaky old gate and hinges. As the boy stepped into the wood, how weird and strange and nervous it was, it must be confessed. That narrow path he knew not echoed by old winter church clocks. It then began to boom out the midnight hour! The night had never known it was the dead of night it was shrouded in a winding-sheet of mist.

He was on the point of emergence and was beginning to congratulate himself that his brother must be now within a very short distance, when clear above the rustle of the breeze came a short, sharp whistle, and the whistle he had heard a signal to him over at the quarry, and the next minute a tall obscure figure moved into the

pathway. For a moment the boy's heart seemed to stand still. It could be Vincent who had come to him, his throat and lips were terribly dry, and he stood for a moment as if paralysed. But it occurred to him this might be one of his brother's stealing companions, who was not more than a gunshot from where he stood. He put a bold-front on and because it may be only an honest wayfarer. But his knees shook, an instant after he had come up fairly in front of the first burly form, a second one hove in sight, he felt some serious mischief in his hand.

John met two rough men in the dark and they took hold of him roughly and he was afraid of them. He said what do you want and they said they wanted him but he didn't know what they were about. John said he wanted his brother and if they knew about him. They said they was sent by him and he had to do what they said. They were mean and you can see that he would be afraid as it was dark in the swamp. And they wanted him to steal and rob his family for them. But John Reid was not about to do that because he wanted to get away from that life and because the hulk was waiting for him again, you see. He did not want to be on the hulk and he wanted to be with his brother.

Swift as a crushing thunderbolt and a flash of lightning, he knew the poor lad that he had been made the cruel victim of a hoax. There would be no returning his brother, no restoration of his mother's peace and happiness and then he would be back at the hulk for no good at all. He had braved the peril of the swamp and the bitter cold and he had come with a heart full of love for the wanderer, and beating high with the hope of bringing him home, and you see now it appeared that the letter from that wanderer was merely heartless bait to get him in the power of ruffians and burglars!

John Reid was a manly boy but for one moment he looked upon the man with a look of pale and speechless agony, and then burst into tears.

'Come, come!' said one of the strangers, 'there's no need for any o' that. You needn't be afraid. You have only got to—'

'Afraid!' blazed out the boy, with passionate vehemence. 'I am not crying because I am afraid. Don't you think it!'

'Well, what then?' growled the fellow.

'Why why — I thought my brother Vincent had —'

He could get no further, and again put an arm across his face and cried bitterly.



'Look here!' said one of the men, shaking him by the shoulder, and speaking in a rough, threatening tone, 'we've no time for this. Tell us what we want to know, and then you can blubber us long as you like.'

'D'ye think I'm going to help you rob my uncle and my mother?' broke out the young captive, drawing himself up, and quivering with desperate defiance in the fibre of his body.

The two men exchanged glances. Villains they were impressed by the valorous bearings of John Reid who had taken whippings before and was not scared of no man. The look they gave each other would have said as much, if the twinkling stars had thrown more light on the black night.

'Very well,' said the man, 'we have only to go and walk in by the door, and get the plate, whether you tell us where it is or not. But unless we know just where to drop on it, it'll take us some time to rummage, and if anybody was to interfere with us while we are at it they might get hurt. D'ye see? You wouldn't like your uncle or your mother to get a crack with a crowbar, would you? If we know just where 'tis, we can go and get it and have done with it, and nobody's be hurt, and you can go as soon as you like in the morn.'

John Reid had a bad choice and he did not want to hurt his mother and he did not want them to be hurting her so you see this is how boys get into trouble. They have no choices but they are made to be bad and then they get sent away.

'Now then,' said the criminal fellow who was an escaped man too, giving a rough shake to the shoulder he held. 'What's it to be? Are you going to tell us?'

John Reid clenched his fist, drew himself up, and looking straight into what of the criminal face could be seen, he said, 'you shall kill me first!'

'Now, look here, young man,' said the fellow who held John Reid by the shoulder, and who gripped him viciously as he spoke, 'we don't mean to stand no nonsense, and we've got no time to spare. You know what this is I dare say?' he continued, and he cocked a pistol in John's mouth. 'I'll give you about fuck nothing seconds to think about it, and if you don't do as we wants you then I'll blow your brains out.'

John Reid visibly shrank from the terrible thing. I had not seen the gun but I would have not liked it. It was another thing that made John have no choice. But he thought he did in that he could die. So you see that is another good choice for boys, eh Sir? You can die or be part of crime that's what. And he escaped to do

good and save his brother but wherever he goes he has got pain and torment and that is how I see it too.

There is nowhere for like us to go who make the choices and they kill us or send us out to crime and then onto a ship that is like the dead night with no stars shining in it.

'I shall not think about it,' he said, 'I am not going to help you rob my uncle. If you murder me, you must.' the man scowled upon him, and levelled the weapon at his eye. The boy shrank back again, and threw up his arm as if to shield his face, but never a word could his torturer wrest from him. This was very awkward. They would have liked to have shot him because he was a criminal boy any way and not good even as a dog. But they did not and the men held a brief consultation in whispers, and then one of them said, 'you'll be sorry for this before long, my fine fellow,' he growled, and as he spoke he stroked the face of the boy who stood breathless and trembling at the edge of the precipice.

You may think that the boys were used to violent things like this but they weren't. I knew some of those boys and they were not there because they were violent. There was boys who were there because all they did was steal something useless or some small thing because they had nothing and they might want a saddle or a bird of someone. Or something to eat. But before they might be uncontrollable and why was that? Those boys they didn't know how to read or nothing and so they played around and would you too?

'Now, I'll tell ye what we're going to do,' said the criminal man, 'and then you can think about it.'

'My mate's gone off to fetch some more of 'em, and if you don't out with what we want we're going to pitch you over the cliff into the sea.'

A bitter cry of anguish broke from the parched and ashy lips of the young captive, and he clasped his hands.

'I shouldn't think God would let you do that,' he said.

'You wouldn't think god let poor men starve, but he do though,' ejaculated the criminal.

'If I were a man like you I'd rather starve ten times over than serve a poor little chap like this.'

Tears again relieved the lad's heart hotly. They streamed down from beneath his bandage, and his sobs, which he would have repressed if he could,

perhaps softened the rugged and brutal nature of the smuggler. Then he spoke somewhat less harshly, persuading the boy that all he had to do was to comply with the demand made upon him, and he needn't be afraid. He would be quite safe if he would tell them where to find some valuables.

'I won't! I won't! I won't!' again broke out the boy, with the fiercest yell. 'What sort of a boy'd I be to go home and find my uncle and my mother away and murdered, and know that I had helped to do it! I never will. Even if God lets you throw me into the rocks, I tell you I won't do it!'

As if the incident had been part of a dream, being told that he would have to die soon or tell, it was then all was oblivion till he opened his eyes and found some one bending over him.

'John, John, old boy! Don't be afraid, it's Vincent.'

In an instant the two locked in a fond and fervent embrace.

'Are they going to do it, Vincent?' John Reid asked, in a hoarse whisper.

'To do what, John?'

'To rob our house.'

'The villains! The dastardly villains!' broke out the brother.

'Are they going to kill me?' whispered John Reid.

'I don't know,' answered Vincent. 'I don't know what they are about.'

'Oh, Vincent, my dear old Vincent, did you send that letter to me? And what did you send it for? Did you really mean that perhaps you would come home?'

'What letter, John?'

'A man brought me a letter,' said John, sobbing on his brother's shoulder. 'The letter asked me to meet you in the swamp at half-past twelve tonight, and it said perhaps if I did you would go home with me.'

Vincent Reid groaned, pressing both his hands to his forehead. 'Oh, John, old boy! I wish I had never come away from home. I didn't think they were villains. What did they do it for?'

One of the men who stood near, with a face partially concealed by masks, said to John Reid 'don't you know anything about your brother?'

'Go back again, Vincent,' said John, rising to his elbow, and speaking with all the eagerness of his soul, 'go back again to mother. Oh, wouldn't we have a birthday! Go, Vincent! Do!'

Vincent Reid shook his head sadly. 'Mother'd be ashamed of me.'

'Why, Vincent, our dear old mother ashamed of you! Why she's always praying that you may come back, and cries about you, and her hair's all turned

grey, Vincent, and only last night when the bells were ringing they put her in mind of you, and when I looked up she was crying ready to break her heart, and she said, 'oh, if Vincent would only come home to his birthday!' Come on, Vincent, why, she'll be half frantic with joy!

Vincent listened to John's impassioned outpouring with a face full of amazement, and then tears stole down his keen, sin-marked, visage.

'I thought my mother would have given me up, John. God bless her, old boy! But I can't go back, John.'

'Why not, Vincent?'

The wanderer shook his head.

'I'm too much mixed up with 'em,' he said. 'I never meant to be, John. I didn't mean to be as bad as I have been, but when you begin to go bad you never know when you're going to stop. You should know about that. I thought it was only a bit of stealing they were up to, and some folks think there isn't so much harm in stealing. But they're a bad lot, John, and now I'm one of them. I can't break from 'em now. They'd shoot me if I did.'

'Let 'em shoot' said John, stoutly. 'I'd rather they should shoot me fifty times than be one of them.'

The opinions of most of the company, as expressed in whispers and muttered curses, was that it was no use going any further, and one or two began discussing the expediency of killing John Reid.

It was then that Vincent at last spoke with his true heart:

'I am dumbfounded, both at the terrible display of villainy on the part of you men and at the splendid boy whom I had been wont to think of as a thug. I see the craft and wickedness of the scheme, and well how the threats to shoot you John and to fling you down the rocks have been made. John, you have withstood all their violence! Thrice this night you have faced death rather than do a single act of wrong to the good old man who is father to us both, and to mother whose hair has turned grey with our waywardness and wickedness. I know my conduct is so wretchedly ignoble and degraded, so utterly contemptible and unworthy.'

And a sensation flashed through his mind with startling force. If these villains should really rob his uncle and he were apprehended, who would believe him, though he should swear that he knew nothing about it? He had been reckless and wild, but he was not wholly hardened, and he stood aghast at the thought of appearing as an accomplice in so heartless a crime-plundering the old gentleman and mother.

'John,' he said, 'you're the noblest and best and bravest boy I know. I don't a bit deserve what you've gone through for me. Forgive me.'

'Vincent, ' said John, 'I am here to set you free. So I say to you and to your companions, exchange me for him. Let Vincent go and I will tell you all!'

It was an incredible turn of events but that is what happened.

Vincent Reid went home to his mother and uncle and they were all weeping and he said 'aye, mother, a bad fellow can come good. It was the bravery of John who set me free and helped me see how wrong I was.'

But for John Reid he could never go home and he was always on the run from his home and is it justice that such a boy should have suffering like that?

The robbers did not get to his house and take the possessions because John Reid foiled them at the last moment.

That is what sort of boy he was.

That is the end of the story of John Reid, who was an inmate of the hulk, who was not a bad boy at all and who should be remembered as he had told me this story of himself as one, like all the other boys, who suffered because they had no choice.

And because there are bad men all around us.

## References

Abbreviations for Published Sources:

BOA.: *Boys Own Annual*. London, Leisure Hour Office. Vol III (1880-81) and IX (1886-7).

Com.: *Second and Final Report of Commission Appointed to Report on The Destitute Act, 1881; Together with Minutes of Proceedings, Evidence, and Appendices*. Adelaide: Government Printer, 1885.

SAPP.: South Australia, Parliamentary Papers.

Boy.: 'Reforming the Boy'. Written and Produced by Simon Robb and Lachlan Colquhoun. Radio Documentary. *Radio Eye*, ABC Radio National. (March 6, 1999).

Abbreviations for Unpublished Sources

(from State Records, Adelaide, South Australia)

Ad.: *Register of Admissions to the Reformatory hulk Fitzjames*. [no page numbers]

GRG.: Government Record Group. [no page numbers]

\* \* \*

- p. 98: Com.
- p. 100: Com. viii.
- p. 101: Com. 217.
- p. 105: Com. LXXVIII; 217; 219.
- p. 106: Com. ix; xxxix; 220.
- p. 107: Com. XXXIV.
- p. 108: Com. 225-7; VIII.
- p. 109: Com. 218; 224.

- p. 110: Com. 224; xxv.
- p. 111: Com. 226-227; 225.
- p. 113: Com. LXXVI.
- p. 114: *The South Australian Register*, 8 December, p.7.
- p. 115: SAPP (39) 1890 p. 13; Com. xxiii; Com. xxii; SAPP (39) 1890 p. 14.
- p. 116: Com. xxii; SAPP (39) 1890 p. 14; Com. xxii.
- p. 117: SAPP (39) 1890 p. 14; Com. xxii.
- p. 118: SAPP (39) 1890 p. 19.
- p. 119: SAPP (39) 1890 p. 14.
- p. 120: Com. xxii; GRG 27/1/1890/720; GRG 27/1/1890/ 822.
- p. 121: GRG 27/1/1890/1086; GRG 27/1/1890/709.
- p. 123-141: Boy. Additional unpublished interviews with boys in detention at  
Cavan Training Centre, Adelaide, 1999.
- p. 142: Com. 280; *Adelaide Observer*, 24 May, npn.
- p. 143: *Adelaide Observer*, 24 May, npn.
- p. 144: Com. 220.
- p. 145: Com. xxxix; BOA. Vol. IX , pp. 407-408.
- p. 147: *Adelaide Observer* 24 May 1884, npn; Com. 282; Com. 281.
- p. 148: BOA. Vol. IX, pp. 202-203.
- p. 149: Com. xxxii; BOA. Vol. III, p. 205.
- p. 150: BOA. Vol. III, p. 205.
- p. 152: Com. 83; Com. 79.
- p. 153: Com. 81; 78; 280; 390; 42-43.
- p. 154: Com. 43; SAPP (39) 1888 p. 4; Com. 81; 78; 42..
- p. 155: GRG 27/1/1890/871; Com 78; 390.
- p. 156: Com. 78; 80; 83.
- p. 157: Ad. npn; GRG 27/1/1890/746; BOA. vol III, p. 323.
- p. 158-165: BOA. Vol. III, pp. 324-5; 329-332; 354-355.

Illustrations

(Clockwise from the top of the page.)

- p. 124: BOA. Vol. III, p. 24; BOA. Vol. III, p. 589; BOA. Vol. III, p. 519.
- p. 126: BOA. Vol. IX, p. 769.
- p. 128: BOA. Vol. III, p. 513; BOA. Vol. III, p. 32.
- p. 130: BOA. Vol. III, p. 200; BOA. Vol. III, p.89; BOA. Vol. IX, p. 521.
- p. 132: BOA. Vol. IX, p. 761; BOA. Vol. IX, p. 797.
- p. 134: BOA. Vol. IX, p. 565.
- p. 136: BOA. Vol. IX, p. 637; BOA. Vol. IX, p. 129.
- p. 138: BOA. Vol. IX, p. 785.
- p. 140: Author's study.



Appendix B:

GREETINGS FROM ADELAIDE [MAP]

