



**figurehead**

Patrick Allington

**Presented as part of the requirement for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Discipline of English, University of Adelaide  
South Australia**

**October 2004**



## **Table of Contents**

Statement	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Synopsis	iii

## **Eschewing Legitimacy—An Exegesis Accompanying *Figurehead***

Chapter One: A Reluctant Exegesis	1
Chapter Two: Eschewing Legitimacy	18
Chapter Three: Evaluating Legitimacy	32
Conclusion	48
<b>Select List of Works Consulted:</b>	54
<b><i>Figurehead and Eschewing Legitimacy</i></b>	

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 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 photocopy.

Patrick Allington

15 October 2004

## Acknowledgments

My supervisor, Professor Thomas Shapcott, has been an engaged, wise and enthusiastic critic of both the novel and the exegesis. I particularly appreciate Tom's willingness to understand my particular motivation and to make his comments in that context.

Phally Hing has been extraordinarily generous with his time, expertise and experiences while engaged in the interminable (and barely begun) task of teaching me the Khmer language.

As a participant in the Discipline of English's mentorship programme, I was fortunate to have J.M. Coetzee read and comment on *Figurehead*. Professor Coetzee read the entire first draft and large portions of the second and penultimate drafts. I greatly appreciate his comments and criticisms, which have at all times been precise and revelatory.

I also want to acknowledge the influence of my supervisor from another time, Dr Lenore Coltheart.

In different form, parts of the exegesis appeared as review essays of Power's "A Problem From Hell" and Bizot's *The Gate*. Both essays were published in the online journal, *Altitude*, edited by Robyn Tucker and Emily Potter (see [www.api-network.com](http://www.api-network.com)).

I am indebted to the expertise and camaraderie of my peers: Anne Bartlett, Dr Tony Bugeja, Mark Caldicott, Julie Hanson, Jan Harrow, Dr Sabina Hopfer, Heather Johnson, Dr Angie Kingston, Christopher Lappas, Dr Don McMaster, Dr Glenda Mather, Brian Pike, Dr Ray Tyndale, Malcolm Walker and Dr Chris White. I acknowledge the support, expertise and interest of all of the academic and administrative staff of the Discipline of English at the University of Adelaide. I received a University of Adelaide postgraduate scholarship for the duration of this project.

I thank my family and friends for their interest, support and patience. Special thanks to Lim Kheang and to Catherine Crease.

Zoë Gill has been an engaged and thought-provoking critic. She is also a source of great inspiration because of her commitment to her principles, as well as her love of life, family and friends. In the best of ways, she challenges my assumptions about the real world and about my imaginary world.

## Synopsis

A version of the whole world exists inside every one of us. Or as the ageing leftist war correspondent, Ted Whittlemore, puts it, ‘To our experience, to our self-interest, we add the daily news. We conjure the rest.’ Although he lives in the Concertina Rest Home, in Adelaide, South Australia, Ted’s thoughts return to Southeast Asia and the Cold War, to many years of conflict and destruction in Cambodia, and especially to a Khmer Rouge leader called Nhem Kiry, widely known as ‘Pol Pot’s mouthpiece.’

As a reporter, Ted believes he should write what he sees. He doesn’t believe in objectivity—his or anybody else’s. He is contemptuous of Kiry’s ideology and morality, as well as his enduring international role through the 1980s and into the 1990s as the ‘public and acceptable’ face of the notorious Khmer Rouge. Ted is embarrassed by—but also wants to absolve himself from—his previous support for the Khmer Rouge, his personal regard for the younger Kiry and, more broadly, his romantic view of communism (although he will not abandon his high regard for the Republic of Vietnam). At the same time, he adjusts reluctantly to his sedentary life in Australia, and forges relationships with his family.

Ted presents his preferred version of events and people. But this brings him no closer to understanding Cambodia’s violent history nor to accepting that Nhem Kiry could have endured so long as an international figure. He resorts to writing a deliberately speculative history. He calls it ‘filling in gaps’: he describes events he did not witness and makes himself privy to the inner thoughts of Nhem Kiry and other characters. Finally, he resorts to writing on behalf of Nhem Kiry.

Although inspired by thirty years of recent history, *Figurehead* is a work of imagination set in a parallel world.

\*\*\*

Accompanying *Figurehead* is 20,000 word exegesis, *Eschewing Legitimacy*, in which I reflect on the nature of writing a politically-charged novel about modern Cambodia while also questioning the appropriateness of the exegetical act. Except for the conclusion, the

exegesis is written in the third person. While I took this approach initially for stylistic reasons, my observations of Eric the creative writing student incorporate issues relating to authenticity, writer and reader, point of view and narrative intent.

**Eschewing Legitimacy—An Exegesis Accompanying *Figurehead***

**Patrick Allington**

**Presented as part of the requirement for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Discipline of English, University of Adelaide  
South Australia**

**October 2004**

One couldn't help thinking his interest in the Killing Fields was hardly wholesome. But then, whose is?

—Hattie Osborne in Margaret Drabble's *The Gates of Ivory*

The opinion that art should have nothing to do with politics is itself a political attitude.

—George Orwell



## Chapter One: A Reluctant Exegesis

The pre-emerging writer, Eric, has written a novel, *Figurehead*, about modern Cambodia in the post-World War Two world.<sup>1</sup> Its narrator, Ted Whittlemore, is an ageing leftist journalist and war correspondent who returns to Australia due to ill health. Struggling with his memoirs, he writes his version of the Second Indochina War and the 'Pol Pot period' and, especially, the subsequent years of war and potential peace in Cambodia. He does so by focusing on a Khmer Rouge leader, diplomat and intellectual, Nhem Kiry.

Ted is contemptuous of Kiry's ideology and morality, as well as his enduring international role through the 1980s and into the 1990s as the officially palatable face of the notorious Khmer Rouge. Ted is embarrassed by—but also wants to absolve himself from—his previous support for the Khmer Rouge, his personal regard for the younger Kiry and, more broadly, his romantic view of communism (although he does not abandon his high regard for the Republic of Vietnam).

Ted agrees with the war correspondent and novelist Martha Gellhorn, who once said, 'Write what you see. I never believed in that objectivity shit.'<sup>2</sup> In *Figurehead* he presents his preferred version of events and people but this brings him no closer to understanding Cambodia's violent history nor to accepting that Nhem Kiry could have endured so long as an international figure. He resorts to writing a deliberately speculative history, which he calls 'filling in gaps.' He describes events he did not witness and makes himself privy to the inner thoughts of Nhem Kiry and other characters; finally, he resorts to writing on behalf of Nhem Kiry.

There exists a diverse collection of writing by non-specialist westerners about modern Cambodia. These include novels, such as Christopher Koch's *Highways to a War*, Margaret Drabble's *The Gates of Ivory* and William T. Vollmann's *Butterfly Stories*; a joint work by a journalist and a novelist (Jack Anderson and Bill Pronzini, *The Cambodia File*); the script of an epic play (Hélène Cixous, *The Terrible but Unfinished Story of Norodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia*); a performance monologue transferred to the page (Spalding Gray, *Swimming to Cambodia*); a split page 'dual' text containing short stories above and an

---

<sup>1</sup> This essay uses footnotes instead of in-text citations: sources are cited in MLA format as footnotes and all references are also listed in the *List of Works Consulted*.

<sup>2</sup> Carl Rollyson, *Beautiful Exile—The Life of Martha Gellhorn* (London: Aurum Pr, 2001) xv.

essay below (Brian Fawcett, *Cambodia—a Book for People Who Find Television Too Slow*).<sup>3</sup> Although the works are diverse in style and purpose they share with *Figurehead* a core characteristic: they are creative works about Cambodia and the west. Each work brings with it, both deliberately and accidentally, the preoccupations of an outsider looking at and into Cambodia. As a reader, and in the process of writing *Figurehead*, Eric has been drawn to these works because he has chosen to focus on the extent to which Cambodia's dire situation has been magnified and extended by regional and international factors, particularly the dynamics of the Cold War; and because each work has a primary aim of telling a story in an interesting way, separate from, and not necessarily consistent with, the aim of contributing to a body of written knowledge about Cambodia.

Eric does not consider the term 'non-specialist' to be pejorative (he enjoys and employs self-deprecation but there are limits). Rather, he differentiates writers whose primary intention is to create a narrative from those non-Cambodian researchers and thinkers who have set out to attain a comprehensive understanding of particular political, cultural or social aspects of Cambodian life. His point is not that *Figurehead* is barely researched. His attached *Select List of Works Consulted*, which he considers an appendix of the exegesis, collates a diverse range of primary and secondary sources by Cambodians and non-Cambodian specialists as well as the non-specialist outsiders Eric locates himself amongst. The bibliography also includes a number of fictional and non-fictional works which have influenced Eric and which, collectively, conform to no particular genre. While Eric's exegesis does not extend to a discussion of these texts he has used some of them as examples.

In his reading, Eric has not sought to engage with debates about the Khmer Rouge, or Cambodia, or Southeast Asia, or the Cold War, or the nature of diplomacy or journalism or the life of the leading Nazi, Albert Speer, or the political system in the US, or the enduring value of Evelyn Waugh's novel, *Scoop*, in order to become an expert on any of these subjects but so he could realise, and place upon the page, his impression of the sort of narrator he wanted Ted Whittlemore to be. Neither is he implying that western Cambodia scholars inevitably write stolid, uninspired prose. He agrees with Eva Sallis: 'Academic prose is an art form: it is a gross error to forget this. Some academics learn to mimic it, but all good research

---

<sup>3</sup> This is a representative list only. All bibliographic details for these titles are in the *List of Works Consulted*.

writers will tell you that it is an intensely crafted and creative activity.’<sup>4</sup> For instance, the American historian, David Chandler, produces erudite yet accessible research. Amongst a fine oeuvre, Chandler’s *Voices From S-21* handles with virtuosity and sensitivity the archive of forced prisoner confessions which serve as a reminder of the Khmer Rouge’s brutal capacities. The result is a piece of writing that serves as history, condemnation, memorial, and a reasoned but pointed philosophical inquiry into the capacity of humans to inflict suffering on other humans.<sup>5</sup>

While *Voices From S-21* is a creative work, Chandler does not surmise or imagine scenarios in order to pursue questions which elude academic or journalistic inquiry; he does not presume to create characters or to imagine the inner worlds of the people he writes about, whether victims or villains; he does not allow his historical or philosophical argument to be in any way compromised by the search for artistic expression. Although Eric does not adopt the terms ‘poiesus’ or ‘poietic history’, he thinks *Figurehead* conforms to aspects of David W. Price’s definition of certain novels which, ‘present us with the emotional, psychological, and intellectual dimensions’ enabled by the fictionalisation of scenarios and characters:

These strategies of poietic history serve to underscore the fundamental role value formation plays in determining what informed a course of action in the past and what informs the historian’s selection of evidence gathered together in a narrative that represents what took place in the past. ...

Rather than being held captive by the conventions of epistemology, the novel of poietic history provides the perfect discursive space for examining the past by presenting a series of representations of concrete particulars to universal conditions facing every generation. ...

They produce speculative novels of poietic history in that they expand the referential field of the past so as to provide the grounds upon which to construct a critique of that same past and, at the same time, imagine new possibilities for the future.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Eva Sallis, ‘Research Fiction,’ *Text* 3. 2 (October 1999), 1 October 2003 <<http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/oct99/sallis.htm>>.

<sup>5</sup> David Chandler, *Voices From S-21—Terror and History in Pol Pot’s Secret Prison* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> David W. Price, *History Made, History Imagined—Contemporary Literature, Poiesis, and the Past* (Urbana: U of Illinois Pr, 1999) 2, 3-4.

Eric does not think such novels replace history or render the search for facts and truth irrelevant. He agrees with Frank Moorhouse, writing as the 'Inspector-General of Misconception':

There is empirical evidence in reviews and discussion that a consistent set of meanings can be conveyed by a book and that, at the same time, every reading is a private and unique reading. This is not contradictory. We all bring the same and different things to a book—our shared socialisation and our highly personal experiences.<sup>7</sup>

Eric thinks that the novels Price refers to illuminate yet complicate the search for an agreed historical record. In particular, Eric finds that when such novels focus on the inner worlds of characters, they actually reflect for him the distinction between the world he is presented with and his suspicions about how the world might actually be. For reasons unclear to Eric, anybody living a public life is supposed to have ideas, and a life for that matter, which is consistent and logical to the point of perfection. In contrast, it is the contradictions and the messiness of an inner world which Eric finds liberating, even if such an inner world creates a whole new set of complexities.

2.

Because *Figurehead* is a PhD thesis Eric must submit a companion essay. But he does not want to write about himself and his novel, or about himself and Cambodia, or about his novel and Cambodia, or about his novel and other novels about Cambodia. He is already discomfited—has he disregarded one of his own laws of nature?—at having located *Figurehead* amongst a collection of other pieces of writing (he confesses pride in his dogmatism).

In part, Eric's objection stems from his belief that a novel should be judged solely on its final and public version rather than on its drafts or its accompanying notes or, for that matter, on what its author determines are its underlying ideas or ideals. Eric appreciates this comment by the American novelist, William Gaddis (1922-1998), who said,

There was a justice, Oliver Wendel Holmes Jr., who decreed all his papers be burned. He said, simply, I want to be known by the finished product. That is,

---

<sup>7</sup> Frank Moorhouse, 'An Inquiry into the Plague of Deconstruction,' *The Inspector-General of Misconception—The Ultimate Compendium to Sorting Things Out* (Sydney: Random, 2002) 239.

his opinions and dissent. He said, how I got there is no one else's business, and I [Gaddis] feel that way too...<sup>8</sup>

Another time Gaddis said,

I feel like part of the vanishing breed that thinks a writer should be read and not heard, let alone seen. I think this is because there seems so often today to be a tendency to put the person in the place of his or her work, to turn the creative artist into a performing one, to find what a writer says about writing somehow more valid, or more real, than the writing itself.<sup>9</sup>

Eric is not suggesting that a good writer is one who refuses to answer the front door (and, after all, Gaddis made both of the above remarks in speeches). Writers should (and do) write and talk and appear in public as often as they choose, whether to advertise their works or to engage in debate on any subject that concerns them. For example, Eric admires Gore Vidal, both as a writer and as a political and literary commentator, and he thinks Vidal cogently and wittily makes himself his own subject. However, he also notes that while the force of Vidal's personality is considerable the potency of his political-autobiographical approach stems principally from the fact that he is, or was, a member of the American 'elite' he frequently takes aim at.<sup>10</sup>

Conversely, Eric is sympathetic to the novelist Alice Walker, who recalls a persistent journalist who wanted to interview her about another (black female American) writer: 'He seemed offended that I would refuse to be interviewed by someone from the *Times* simply because I have nothing to say. Each of the four or five times he called (driving my assistant to even higher levels of exasperation) he'd concocted yet another reason for my refusal.'<sup>11</sup> Eric thinks that to turn the public persona of a writer (or an artist, dancer, politician, gardener, nurse or itinerant) into a simplified and stereotyped story—Alice Walker 'doesn't want to help another black woman writer'<sup>12</sup>—is itself indicative of the limited, almost automatic, public relations logic which, at least in part, *Figurehead* hopes to subvert. Eric thinks that to say, 'No comment' ought to be able to mean many different things, including nothing at all.

<sup>8</sup> William Gaddis, 'On receiving the National Book Award for *A Frolic of His Own*,' *The Rush for Second Place—Essays and Occasional Writings*, ed. Joseph Tabbi (New York: Penguin, 2002) 128.

<sup>9</sup> William Gaddis, 'On receiving the National Book Award for *JR*,' in *The Rush For Second Place* 122.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Gore Vidal, *Palimpsest—A Memoir* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> Alice Walker, 'This That I Offer You,' *Anything We Love Can Be Saved—A Writer's Activism* (London: Women's Press, 1997) 176.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.* 176 (this is Walker's summary of one suggestion the unnamed reporter made for her perceived intransigence).

Eric wants to qualify the remark that '*Figurehead* hopes to subvert'—and this, he maintains, is part of the problem of talking about his own work: how can he avoid falling into a crevasse which he can only climb out of by use of additional explanations, definitional musings, and all manner of qualification and backtracking? Eric does not think that trying to subvert society is the sole purview of the novelist. Rather, he thinks many members of a community engage in large and small, effective and fruitless, acts or thoughts of dissent. Novelists (or at least novelists writing the sort of novels which Eric is referring to here) happen to be conceited enough, and politicised enough, to think that their particular views—their alternative take on the world as well as the way they communicate it—are worth recording on the page.

The American novelist Don DeLillo writes,

Fiction does not obey reality even in the most spare and semidocumentary work. Realistic dialogue is what we have agreed to call certain arrays of spoken exchange that in fact have little or no connection with the way people speak. There is a deep density of convention that allows us to accept highly stylized work as true to life. Fiction is true to a thousand things but rarely to clinical lived experience. Ultimately it obeys the mysterious mandates of the self (the writer's) and of all the people and things that have surrounded him all his life and all the styles he has tried out and all the fiction (of other writers) he has read and not read. At its root level, fiction is a kind of religious fanaticism, with elements of obsession, superstition and awe. ...

Ultimately the writer will reconfigure things the way his own history demands. He has his themes and biases and limitations. He has the small crushed pearl of his anger. He has his teaching job, his middling reputation and the one radical idea he has been waiting for all his life. The other thing he has is a flat surface that he will decorate, fitfully, with words.<sup>13</sup>

Eric notes that having radical ideas, and engaging in dissent, is hardly the sole purview of the novelist (and DeLillo does not suggest otherwise). Nevertheless, to the extent that, as the writer of *Figurehead*, he places himself in opposition to what he sees as a standardised view of society, he reiterates that to then talk *about* the finished product not

---

<sup>13</sup> Don DeLillo, 'The Power of History,' *New York Times Book Review* 7 September 1997, 23 June 2004 <<http://www.nytimes.com/library/books/090797article3.html>>.

only privileges the method and the tools of writing over the product itself (whether that product is brilliant or banal) but does so in ways which, by needing to conform to a certain mode of discourse, tend to undermine the subversive act (however mild a subversive act it might actually be).

In any case, Eric does not want to be expansive in his (self) lauding of dissent. For one thing, his own 'dissent' is a very safe brand, coming as it does without personal hardship or danger, emerging out of an environment which has encouraged, indeed intellectually and financially supported, his endeavour. For another thing, Eric thinks the concept of dissent can itself be unduly comforting. Later in his exegesis, for example, he refers to Samantha Power's, *"A Problem From Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*.<sup>14</sup> This non-fiction book won Power the Pulitzer Prize for General Non-fiction 2003, and it won or was shortlisted for a number of other important awards. It was widely and mostly positively reviewed, many critics suggesting that it should be a standard text in its field, some even implying that it could become an influential part of the political and moral landscape it itself critiques. Eric thinks Power reaches nuanced conclusions while remaining, in the best sense, argumentative. But in the act of admiring *"A Problem From Hell"*, and in the act of being shocked by Power's relentless narrative, Eric can release himself, if he chooses, from considering the many complexities that Power does not (and cannot) resolve. In this context he needs to be able to disconnect Power's narrative of events from her conclusions and prescriptions, which are contestable and available for appropriation by readers adopting any number of theoretical and practical positions. For example, Eric considers Power's argument that genocide prevention should be seen as serving the US national interest:

If it was difficult before September 11 to get US decision-makers to see the long-term costs of allowing genocide, it will be even harder today when US security needs are so acute and visible. But security for Americans at home and abroad is contingent on international stability, and there is perhaps no greater source of havoc than a group of well-armed extremists bent on wiping out a people on ethnic, national, or religious grounds.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Several portions of this essay appeared, in different form, as, 'Playing Devil's Advocate: Reflecting on Samantha Power's *"A Problem From Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*,' *Altitude 21C* 4 (2004) <[www.api-network.com](http://www.api-network.com)>.

<sup>15</sup> Samantha Power, *"A Problem From Hell"—America and the Age of Genocide* (London: Harper, 2003) 513.

Recalling that “*A Problem From Hell*” was first published in 2002, Eric might use this quote to support the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the ‘Coalition of the Willing’.<sup>16</sup> Or, by referring to Power’s description of earlier US support for Iraq, which the US deemed to be in its national interest, Eric might label the invasion a cynical attempt by the US to avoid its role in Saddam Hussein’s longevity, and he might choose to doubt whether the occupation, before and after the handover of sovereignty, served the US national interest, even in purely strategic terms.

Eric’s point is not to criticise Power for failing to be definitive. Rather, he notes that “*A Problem From Hell*” is a book of dissent and that its narrative partly focuses on dissenters, inside and outside of the US political system. But policymakers and the general public often dismiss dissenters, employing their alleged irrelevance or, conversely, their apparent radicalism, to reinforce the reasonableness of official positions. Dissenters might sometimes, simply, be wrong. Or, once they are known for their opposition, they might be called upon to express a contrary view (in the same way that a journalist expected Alice Walker to comment on a black woman writer). Dissenters might also act as a conscience by proxy, allowing someone like Eric to laud their courage and respect their principles and give thanks that such people exist. Eric’s concerned, informed passivity might even lead him to believe that reading, or even owning, “*A Problem From Hell*” itself represents a meaningful, substantial personal-political reaction.

In fact, Eric’s reaction to Samantha Power—or to David Chandler or Mao Tse-tung or William Gaddis or Albert Speer or Pol Pot—has been to write *Figurehead*. On the efficacy and the appropriateness of this response he has nothing to add. Rather than ask ‘Who is a novelist?’ or even ‘Who is this novelist?’ Eric thinks the more important question is ‘What is this novel?’ But to the last question he thinks he can only say so much before he transgresses onto the territory of readers. Here, Eric does not want to engage with either reception theory or reader-response theory: while he accepts that these would be legitimate directions for the discussion to follow he is only concerned here with describing how he reads (or how he thinks he reads).

When he accepted the National Book Award for *A Frolic of His Own*, William Gaddis agreed that he was not ‘reader-friendly’; he required the reader to work but he hoped that

---

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Derek Chollet, ‘The Age of Genocide,’ *Policy Review* August 114 (2002), 22 October 2003 <<http://policyreview.org/AUG02/chollet.html>>.



this allowed for a collaboration 'between the reader and the page.'<sup>17</sup> Eric thinks that *Figurehead* should stand or sink on its own merits. There should be no need for an appendix to explain or illuminate something that is designed to stand free. Indeed, he argues that the act of creating such an appendix undermines the balance and the intent of the principal work. Even if he allows that this view is precious—will he soon gnash his teeth and extol the creative act as if he was God or a scientist finding a new way to create life?—he maintains that the writer should not intrude on the territory of readers (of whom, he adds, he has so far had less than ten). In a collaboration between the reader and the page, the presence of the writer makes three: three's a crowd.

Eric does not have what Keith Harrison calls a 'deep distrust of narrative theory.'<sup>18</sup> Harrison writes:

For story-tellers, during certain phases of composition, an avoidance of self-conscious technique might offer needed emotional space, as well as possibilities of textual discovery; however, artistry in fiction means skilfully realizing informed expressive choices. The reader's sense that a superb novel feels magical derives from what is invisible: the writer's laboursome (and exciting) process of finding the linguistic rightness and the apt story-telling form to create that magic. I am convinced that, ultimately, novelists have to know about narrating. And within the profuse energies of thinking about literature in the last few decades, a place of much activity has been narrative theory.<sup>19</sup>

Eric agrees: he can report that the most complex and time-consuming aspect of the writing of *Figurehead* was the creation and the writing of Ted Whittlemore's voice as not merely partisan (consciously and unconsciously) but speculative in provocative and political ways. Eric required Ted to behave—that is, to write—in a manner which allowed him to overtly describe scenes he did not attend, be privy to the thoughts of other characters and, in the second part of *Figurehead*, to inhabit his idea of the inner world of Nhem Kiry in order to write on his behalf; in other words, to act essentially as an omnipotent third person narrator. Apart from intensive re-writing, during this period Eric sought the guidance of both novels

---

<sup>17</sup> Gaddis, 'On receiving...for *A Frolic*' 130.

<sup>18</sup> Keith Harrison, 'Narrative Theory/Creative Acts?' *Text* 7. 1 (April 2003), 1 October 2003 <[www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/april03/harrison.htm](http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/april03/harrison.htm)>.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

and of literary theory relating to point-of-view. Eric does not want to revisit this in detail, partly because the whole point of the exercise was that those explanatory parts of the novel should stand free from the tools Eric used to help produce them; and partly because setting down a theoretical methodology implies some sort of template whereas Eric thinks he will need to begin that process afresh when he commences a new novel with new narratorial parameters. Further, he does not want to engage in a debate over the use of what Stanislaw Baranczak neatly calls ‘manipulant omnipotence’:

But can we seriously impute authority to someone who is doing nothing except pushing and shoving others? In this respect, literature is not unlike basketball: the use of your elbows only covers up your sense of helplessness before a quicker opponent—in literature’s case, before the reality that evades definition.<sup>20</sup>

This complaint is directed at Ivan Klima’s novel, *Love and Garbage* (and, less so, at Milan Kundera’s *Immortality*) but it is precisely the sort of discussion that Eric prefers to avoid because, within an exegesis, to argue against Baranczak is, by extension, to defend *Figurehead*—and in any case, all Eric wants to say about *Love and Garbage* is that he found the self-absorption of the narrator to be a part of the novel’s appeal.<sup>21</sup>

Nigel Krauth links the role of the preface to a writer’s right to engage in further explanation:

In publishing their creative work with prefacing introductions, or by writing separate works specifically concerned with their own previously published or up-coming material, writers at least since Shakespeare and Milton have stepped beyond the position of dislocated creator, of otherwise-silenced author. In other words, they have provided their audiences with helpfully interpretive commentaries (see Shakespeare’s Chorus in *Henry V* and Milton’s ‘Argument’ throughout *Paradise Lost*). The creative writer is not separate from the culture such that she has only one voice to speak with. The creative writer is a legitimate expositor of her works; and she shares this with others. ... Plenty of writers have dared to disregard the unproductive notion

---

<sup>20</sup> Stanislaw Baranczak, ‘Life is Elsewhere,’ *New Republic* 29 July 1991: 38.

<sup>21</sup> Ivan Klima, *Love and Garbage*, 1986. Trans. Ewald Osers from the Czech (New York: Vintage, 1993).

that only others can explain their work, and have taken on the multiple role of—what is it?—writer who is also self-critic and self-reader.<sup>22</sup>

As a writer Eric is not, as Krauth suggests, mystified by, or scared of, the exegesis; nor is he 'embarrassed' to reveal his processes or disinterested in analysing them.<sup>23</sup> He is, however, perplexed by the purpose of recounting his methodology publicly—or as Krauth puts it, its 'appropriateness'—but he is happy enough to write about being perplexed, given that he believes this to be as valid a theoretical position as any other.

Eric is not arguing that he is right and that contrary positions are wrong. If a writer gains insight into their own work by making aspects of an exegetical project available in the public domain, and if some readers find such appendices useful and important, then Eric is pleased for all concerned. But he does not accept that such a utility can be imposed on a writer, or that the position that a formal exegetical response is unhelpful is inherently 'unproductive.' And when Krauth quotes Jeanette Winterson—'...if I could condense it into other words I should not have taken such care to choose the words I did'—in order to suggest that her position seems 'elitist and isolationist' Eric argues that Krauth goes beyond a legitimate disagreement with Winterson and instead derides her for having her own 'vision' of art and the artist.<sup>24</sup> In Krauth's defence, Winterson also writes, 'Unlike writers, academics draw a salary and this will not be taken away from them if they back a wild horse. They do not back wild horses; they record the virtues of nags long past their prime.'<sup>25</sup>

Eric does not plan on being mute. If one day he is lucky enough to be asked to a literary festival in Barbados or the South of France, he will go and he will read from his work and answer questions in an earnest but not too earnest tone. He agrees with Krauth that such behaviour would constitute an exegetical act. And he recognises that a 'reluctant exegesis' is no less exegetical than an enthusiastic one. Nevertheless, as a reader he wants, for example, to read William Gass's *The Tunnel* without having to first research Nazi Germany or, for that matter, the culture of American universities; he certainly does not want to have to know what Gass thinks about both subjects.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Nigel Krauth, 'The Preface as Exegesis,' *Text* 6. 1 (April 2002), 1 October 2003 <<http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/aprilo2/krauth.htm>>.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* quoting Jeanette Winterson, 'A Work of My Own,' *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery* (London: Johnathon Cape, 1995) 165.

<sup>25</sup> Winterson, 'A Work of My Own,' 191-92.

<sup>26</sup> William Gass, *The Tunnel* (1995; Normal: Dalkey Archive Pr, 1999).

3.

The question of self-explanation—or self-defence—becomes critical given Eric's subject matter. In part, *Figurehead* is a fictionalisation of recent Cambodian history, a history that is appalling, complex, contested and still unfolding. Any detailed adjunct to such a creation *by its author* might, with good reason, be labelled as justification. Eric recognises that some readers hold fundamental objections to the creation of fiction based on terrible events endured by Cambodians, or Rwandans, or European Jews or Gypsies, or Chileans, and so on. Beyond questioning methods or conclusions or aesthetics, a reader might challenge the motives of a writer regardless of the finished product. Is the creation of *Figurehead*, a fictionalisation of actual events, a misguided or even malevolent act? Certainly, Eric discomferts himself with some of the directions he follows, particularly when, for the sake of advancing the story or its themes, his characters act, speak or speculate in disrespectful or gratuitous or frivolous or ultra-Machiavellian or horribly violent ways.

In any case, Eric thinks it would be presumptuous and, more importantly, disingenuous, to presume that he could exonerate himself by engaging with this issue, as if acknowledging and participating in the debate could somehow absolve him from the potential disapproval of potential readers. Should Eric *make use of* the awful recent history of Cambodia for his own ends, however valid he might himself consider those ends to be? As the writer of *Figurehead*, Eric has no business participating in, let alone anticipating, a debate that belongs to readers, should there be any and should they be bothered to engage in such a way. He can say that, to the best of his knowledge, writing a gratuitous manuscript was not his intent. But on this question, and having gone ahead and written *Figurehead*, he should say very little more.

It is not that, speaking generally, he has no opinion (in fact, he is the most opinionated person he knows): as a reader he believes that fiction can unravel and re-complicate the world in distinctive and important ways, particularly when it applies itself to inner worlds, and particularly when it addresses the multiple layers of context which cloud perception and render elusive an understanding of one's own place in the world. He appreciates the (albeit breathless) description by the critic and novelist James Wood, who describes ideal fiction as, 'a free scatter through time, unpressed, incontinent, unhostaged;

surprised by the shock of its unhindered passage through frontiers it, and not history, has invented.’<sup>27</sup>

While Eric believes some fiction comes close, he does not think he has ever read, or will ever read, a novel which attains a truly ‘unhostaged’ state. As a reader, Eric finds that the fiction which most invigorates and disarms him *aims* for Wood’s description. Or as Kevin Brophy puts it, ‘Literature is not the place where anything is said, though it might be the place where anything could be said.’<sup>28</sup> The achievement of William Gaddis, at least so far as Eric is concerned, is that he releases himself from assumptions about American life but then binds himself to themes and characters and language which combine to create his satirical world; what he writes and how he writes it are entwined and complete but he remains a (willing and disciplined) hostage to his self-created parallel world. What Eric admires most about Gaddis is that his commitment to his narrative—to the world he creates on the page—is as close to absolute as seems possible. Gaddis does not flinch as he engages with big ideas; he is hilarious, even as he offers a new and disturbing description of American sensibilities and motivations; his writerly discipline enhances his imagination.

Having switched from discomfited writer to adoring reader, Eric does not think he will gain pleasure, or any particular illumination that he is aware of, from attempting an intricate discussion of the reasons why William Gaddis is a writer he admires. In fact, given that Eric persists in using Gaddis to prop up his own discussion, he believes it would be more relevant—and he, Eric, would be more at ease—simply quoting Gaddis for the pure joy of it:

—Money . . . ? in a voice that rustled.

—Paper, yes.

—And we’d never seen it. Paper money.

—We never saw paper money till we came east.

—It looked so strange the first time we saw it. Lifeless.

—You couldn’t believe it was worth a thing.

—Not after Father jingling his change.

—Those were silver dollars.

—And silver halves, yes and quarters, Julia. The ones from his

pupils. I can hear him now . . .

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Jennifer Schuessler, ‘God and the Critic,’ *New York Review of Books*, 17 July 2003: 30.

<sup>28</sup> Kevin Brophy, *Explorations in Creative Writing* (Melbourne: Melbourne U Pr, 2003) 218.

Sunlight, pocketed in a cloud, spilled suddenly broken across the floor through the leaves of the trees outside.

—Coming up the veranda, how he jiggled when he walked.

—He'd have his pupils rest the quarters that they brought him on the backs of their hands when they did their scales. He charged fifty cents a lesson, you see, Mister . . .

—Coen, without the h. Now if both you ladies . . .

—Why, it's just like that story about Father's dying wish to have his bust sunk in Vancouver harbor, and his ashes sprinkled on the water there, about James and Thomas out in the rowboat, and both of them hitting at the bust with their oars because it was hollow and wouldn't go down, and the storm coming up while they were out there, blowing his ashes back into their beards.

—There was never a bust of Father, Anne. And I don't recall his ever being in Australia.

—That's just what I mean, about stories getting started.<sup>29</sup>

Eric supposes that, in the context of the exegesis he is writing, quoting the opening lines of *JR*, half a page of 726 pages, is irrelevant. Nevertheless, the passage—emblematic of innumerable passages, by Gaddis and others—has inspired and emboldened him, not to mention prompted his envy.

Eric is a realist, when it suits him (he knows that the word 'realism' has specific literary and political definitions but he is referring to its colloquial meaning): he accepts that taking twenty thousand words to state his objections is like jumping in a river to stay dry. From his reluctance to write this essay, and in particular from his wish to avoid justifying *Figurehead*, emerges a theme common to novel and exegesis: he has written *Figurehead* consciously as an outsider, as a non-specialist, as a distant observer who while unconvinced of his own beliefs is adamant on the need for context. He emphasises the point that conflict in post-independence Cambodia—and the 'rationale' for conflict—has been regional and Cold War as well as local. However, in the act of embracing historical context, Eric could quickly lose sight of the plight of Cambodians living in a fractured society. In other words, discussing

---

<sup>29</sup> William Gaddis, *JR* (New York: Knopf, 1975) 3.

his chosen theme of context might cause him to fall into the same sort of cultural trap that he wants to identify: he cannot understand Cambodia unless he understand the Indochina Wars; he cannot understand the Indochina Wars unless he understands the Cold War; he cannot understand the Cold War unless he understands its combatants, which requires him to understand the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalin, Mao's triumph in China, the Sino-Soviet dispute, the rise of the US as a Superpower, the American Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution. Ultimately, if he could maintain concentration, he might be forced to debate the Big Bang theory with himself.

Historian Ben Kiernan states that by the early 1980s Cambodia had,

become an international symbol of disaster ... . A rock band called The Dead Kennedys ... included an ironic track, "Holiday in Cambodia." It pictured a place of oppression, "where the people dress in black," the peasant uniform of the Khmer Rouge years. ... Margaret Drabble's novel, *The Gates of Ivory*, portrays Cambodia as a symbol of disappearance and death.

Cambodia also became a political cliché. "Pol Potist" became an international insult, thrown at the enemy of the moment.<sup>30</sup>

A paradox emerges: if Eric uses Cambodia as a template for moral inquiry in an attempt to confront the human excesses and the mass violence of the twentieth century, or to explore his own individual ethics, or to surmise a collective Australian or western consciousness, he can mute the very point he was trying to make, which is the less absorbing and more uncomfortable recognition that the west, as with the People's Republic of China and the USSR, was directly involved in or implicated in many aspects of thirty or so years of war in Cambodia.

When Eric reads Gitta Sereny's *Albert Speer: His Battle With Truth* or Liu Shao-Chi's *How to Be a Good Communist* or Henry Kissinger's *Diplomacy*, believing they are central to *his story*, he deflects his attention from the suffering endured by Cambodians even as he attempts to comprehend, in a different way, the events which caused and allowed for that suffering. From his great geographical and experiential distance from Cambodia—Eric has lived most of his life in peaceful South Australia and was a happy five-year-old when the

---

<sup>30</sup> Ben Kiernan, 'Introduction,' *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia—The Khmer Rouge, the United Nations and the International Community*, ed. Ben Kiernan, Monograph Series 41 (New Haven: Yale U Southeast Asian Studies, 1993) 10-11.

Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh in 1975—he tries so hard to contextualise history that he might well miss the point altogether. Or as Tom Engelhardt says, ‘When the disaggregation of memory has reached a certain point, an emphasis on the complexity of history can itself become part of a larger kind of denial.’<sup>31</sup>

When Eric becomes absorbed in creating a man called Nhem Kiry, a fictional participant in crimes against real people, and who reports to Pol Pot, a fictional version of a real and reviled man, he risks turning the suffering endured by Cambodians, and the misrule of the Khmer Rouge, into his personal moral and intellectual puzzle. In another context, Elie Wiesel writes,

The Holocaust has turned out to be the latest attraction: it is “in,” so far as show business is concerned. There are docu-dramas, plays, musicals. Adolf Eichmann? An inoffensive officer with courteous manners. Hitler? Crazy. ... Suddenly the emphasis has shifted from victims to their executioners. They are being analyzed, dissected, explained: they are being shown to be “human,” sensitive to art and ideas; everything is done to make us understand them.

As for the victims, they recede into the background in supporting roles. The Jews? Pitiful characters, usually. Eternally afraid, weeping, sentimental, melodramatic; at times even irritating.<sup>32</sup>

Wiesel’s observation is well-aimed: even though Eric does not resile from his creation of Nhem Kiry, he recognises that he is ensnared in the conundrum of context he sets out to question. Still, he is reluctant to revert from his references to Nhem Kiry, a fictional character, to Khieu Samphan, the Khmer Rouge leader on whom Kiry is inspired. The degree of Khieu Samphan’s culpability in the crimes of the Khmer Rouge is a question that interests Eric as is, more particularly, the related but different question of whether the surviving Khmer Rouge leaders should be tried for crimes against humanity. But Eric does not want to use this exegesis to expand on various political or historical questions which interest him and which are barely touched upon even as they underpin *Figurehead*. Not that he rejects this

---

<sup>31</sup> Tom Engelhardt, ‘The Cartography of Death,’ *The Nation* 23 October 2000: 32.

<sup>32</sup> Elie Wiesel, ‘Does the Holocaust Lie Beyond the Reach of Art?’, *Against Silence—The Voice and Vision of Elie Wiesel*, Vol.2, ed. Irving Abrahamson (New York: Holocaust Library, 1985) 125.



approach as a general principle but it is not one that he personally favours and, in particular, it is not one that the requirements of the exegesis can do justice to.

More broadly, Eric wants to argue that context brings clarity, even if that clarity only makes obvious the extent of historical and political complexity (which makes it an untidy sort of clarity). At the same time, he has Ted Whittlemore express his confusion at how to argue that Nhem Kiry cannot or should not, morally or politically or legally, proclaim his personal innocence by invoking the historical circumstances in which he happened to live his public life. That Nhem Kiry could have participated in the crimes of the Khmer Rouge and that he could have retained a degree of international legitimacy are the two points that leave Ted Whittlemore confused.

Eric obviously thinks the complexities of context are worth grappling with or he would not have written *Figurehead*. For Eric, the explanation of the historian, Inga Clendinnen, resonates: 'I have written neither for specialists nor for those for whom the Holocaust was a lived actuality, but for perplexed outsiders like myself, who believe that such perplexity is dangerous.'<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, he does not want to further defend his position; and he certainly does not want to crouch behind the explanation of an historian who wrote a very different book about a very different era. He does not claim that *Figurehead* is 'true' let alone 'definitive' in some objective sense. He does not suggest that by creating Ted Whittlemore and Nhem Kiry he has done anything more than speculate on the inner world of a left-leaning Australian war correspondent who in turn has speculated on history and especially on the inner world of a (fictional) Khmer Rouge leader. And the point is precisely that, at least so far as Eric is concerned: it is subjectivity itself—Eric's, knowing and unknowing, and Ted Whittlemore's, knowing and unknowing—which defines *Figurehead*.

---

<sup>33</sup> Inga Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust* (Melbourne: Text, 1998) 8.

## Chapter Two: Eschewing Legitimacy

An argument exists, so Eric understands, that a writer of fiction should not write about what he or she does not know. Eric has some trouble grasping the essence of this argument and so is reluctant to recount it, but he gathers that, for example, white men should not invent stories about black women, that homophobes should not write as homosexuals, that Canadians cannot know what Bengal tigers think, that no one should write about aliens unless they are themselves Martians or at least certified alien abductees, that all novelists should write only out of their own experience.

Eric is trying not to be flippant but he does not think he wants to write, or read, a novel about a thirty-three year old student writer sitting at a computer creating a novel, pausing occasionally to eat and drink and jog and re-introduce himself to his family and friends. And what if such a book, *The Banality of Banality*, was a raging success? What if a global book tour followed, and a hit movie, and a much-photographed relationship with a movie star? Then Eric would be obliged to write another book, this time about a thirty-seven year old writer, successful beyond his wildest dreams, sitting at a computer—probably a sleek, thin, offensively expensive laptop (by now, Microsoft will be sponsoring Eric)—writing another novel about writing a novel. He would probably be contractually obliged to get a drug habit, and collapse in the street, and rehabilitate himself in some hotel in Nevada with doors which lock from the outside, just to make the story interesting.

Eric is lying: he is trying to be flippant. He accepts that some appropriations are in practice complex and troubling; he thinks using Cambodia for his own creative and political ends could be one such example and he certainly does not think that his awareness of a western bias, and of *his* western bias, mitigates the conclusion that *Figurehead* might also be an example of the very cultural dominance that he is fond of criticising. If one potential question is, 'How do I reconstruct people's intimate details in ways which do not exploit nor appropriate?'<sup>34</sup> then Eric must respond that this was not his motivation and, if it were, he would not have written *Figurehead* at all.

Eric reflects on Leon Carmen, a white male who masqueraded as Wanda Koolmatric, an indigenous Australian woman and the author of a fictional memoir, *My Own Sweet Time*:

---

<sup>34</sup> Pieter Aquilla and Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, 'Truth or Fiction: Writing Narrative in Research,' *Text* 1. 1 (April 1997), 1 October 2003 <<http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/april97/aquilla.htm>>.

Wanda Koolmatrie was born in the far north of South Australia in 1949. Removed from her Pitjantjara mother in 1950, she was raised by foster parents in the western suburbs of Adelaide, where she went to school, leaving in 1966 and moving to the eastern states.<sup>35</sup>

In 1995 *My Own Sweet Time* won the Nita May Dobbie National Award for a first novel written by a woman. Reflecting on Carmen's hoax, and amongst making other points, Anita Heiss states,

I often argue that as a reader, if I were interested in reading a text on lesbian love I wouldn't choose a text written by a heterosexual man, but one written by a lesbian. I wouldn't want the perceptions of what a man imagines it might or might not be like to be a lesbian in love. I don't care. Nor would I find it relevant.<sup>36</sup>

Eric does not condone Carmen's deception but neither does he agree with this aspect of Heiss's argument. If, from the beginning, Eric Carmen had named himself as the author of *My Own Sweet Time* then Eric does not consider his manuscript to be any more inappropriate than, for example, Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang*, a novel in which Ned Kelly, a famous nineteenth century Australian bushranger writes letters to his daughter despite the fact that the actual Ned Kelly lived a different life to Carey's Kelly and, so the historical record suggests, had no daughter.<sup>37</sup> Eric believes that questions of legitimacy and authenticity, questions of truthfulness, are exactly what novelists engage with and play with. He believes that Carmen, having invented a new author for his speculation, eschews that engagement. Nevertheless—and here he again comes too close to self-justification—Eric recognises that if he was writing about Indigenous Australia rather than Cambodia his position would be as contrary as Leon Carmen's to this point by Alexis Wright:

In Australian literature we [Indigenous peoples] have remained almost invisible or often at the mercy of being misrepresented by others. And I include in this the bulk of academic writings and books about Aboriginal

<sup>35</sup> 'About the Author,' Wanda Koolmatrie, *My Own Sweet Time* (Broome: Magabala Bks, 1994) 216.

<sup>36</sup> Anita Heiss, 'Aborigines Taking Control of Their History,' *ANU Reporter* 8 April 1998, 15 October 2003 <[http://info.anu.edu.au/mac/Newsletters\\_and\\_Journals/ANU\\_Reporter/\\_pdf/vol\\_29\\_no\\_04/aborigines.html](http://info.anu.edu.au/mac/Newsletters_and_Journals/ANU_Reporter/_pdf/vol_29_no_04/aborigines.html)>.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Carey, *True History of the Kelly Gang* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2000).

people where most of our people would not have a clue what was written about them.<sup>38</sup>

Eric thinks Carmen's ruse is unacceptable because he has undermined his claim to be a novelist by linking his creative product to an author who did not exist; he has fabricated a legitimacy that he does not possess and, as Heiss and others complain, some readers saw the limits of his (her) knowledge of itself being a reflection of his (her) membership of the Stolen Generations, that is, an Indigenous person removed from family and community.<sup>39</sup>

Eric recognises that his position amounts to legitimising his own cross-cultural assumptions, biases and speculations. Given the content and the tone and the underlying themes of *Figurehead* he thinks it is disingenuous to pretend otherwise. He refers to Eva Sallis:

There is no way to be a writer and be comfortable. Seeking authenticity and authority for imaginative work is destructive and leads to writers lying about their names and antecedents and generates an even more authenticity conscious readership. Taken to a conclusion this trend is the death of fiction: we would only have life experiences, based on true stories and the illusion that people knew what they were talking about. Discomfort with lack of authenticity and lack of authority could easily dominate a readership which searches too rigidly for one's right to write.<sup>40</sup>

Eric repeats: he eschews the sort of legitimacy which Heiss advocates (although on the question of whether that makes his work in any way 'relevant' he thinks that that is solely up to readers). He is not Cambodian and he is not claiming (or faking, as Carmen did with regards to a Pitjantjara woman) to speak on behalf of, or to be privy to, Cambodian sensibilities. He was born in Adelaide, South Australia, the quiet, restrained city he has Ted Whittlemore retreat to. He can claim a partial Thai lineage —'It's only blood,' he says—which would be irrelevant except that it prompts the frequent questions, 'And you're Cambodian yourself, are you?' and 'How long have you lived in Australia?' It once also resulted in a

---

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Australian Society of Authors, *Writing About Indigenous Australia—Some Issues to Consider and Protocols to Follow: A Discussion Paper*, portfolio document, 19 February 2002 (revised 30 March 2004), 25 May 2004 <[www.asauthors.org](http://www.asauthors.org)>.

<sup>39</sup> Heiss, 'Aborigines Taking Control'; See also Sue Hosking, 'The Wanda Koolmatrie Hoax: Who cares? Does it Matter? Of Course it Does!' *Adelaidean* 21 April 1997: 2.

<sup>40</sup> Sallis, 'Research Fiction.'

woman asking his Anglo mother, who was holding Eric the baby in a shop, 'Will he eat normal food or will he only eat rice?'

Given that Eric is blessed with black hair, brown eyes and brownish skin—or as his very 'proper' maternal grandmother might have put it, 'He looks a bit foreign'—he is tempted to give himself a fake name: 'Hello, my name is Lim Ly; everybody calls me Ly.' He could go to readings and festivals and tell his unique story: 'My father was a bodyguard for Nuon Chea, the Khmer Rouge Brother Number 2, second only to Pol Pot. Family legend has it that my mother was Pol Pot's mistress, but she won't say a word...Maybe one day she'll trust me enough to let me tell her story.' Ly could wear his *krama*—his cotton scarf—everywhere he went. He could attend literary gatherings in a sarong wrapped under and tied between his legs. He could shave his head and take a camera crew to film him attending his local Buddhist temple, where he could chant on demand (he already knows how to mutter, so how hard can it be?). He could tell the world that his favourite food is *somlar tsis*. He could ruminate on the question of nature and nurture: 'I have been brought up to love peace and to embrace gentleness. But maybe I'm predisposed to awful acts. Only time will tell: watch this space but don't stand too close.' Eric shelves the idea: no one would ever fall for it and, anyway, what purpose would it serve? Personally, though, he thinks that it might make an interesting piece of fiction.

2.

In Chapter One, Eric asked if it was acceptable to use the history of Cambodia, and therefore the suffering of Cambodians, for his literary ambition. He concluded that he, as the writer, could not answer the question and should not try. Now he asks a different question: can he, through the agency of *Figurehead's* narrator, Ted Whittlemore, tell an authentic, truthful story? The answer is categorically, 'No', which Eric thinks is precisely the point. Eric would prefer that *Figurehead's* frontispiece disclaimer stood for itself. He wrote it as an artistic, not a legal, statement (excuse him for a moment while he rubs his chin, stares at the Milky Way, says 'Art Illuminates All,' and sighs in a melancholy fashion):

Although inspired by recent history, this is a work of imagination set in a parallel world. None of the characters, including those who share names with historical figures, should be mistaken for actual people. None of the events,

scenarios or dialogues I describe necessarily conform to an agreed historical record.

It is not that Eric has set out to systematically make *Figurehead* historically inaccurate or implausible. Indeed, he hopes that the bibliography which accompanies *Figurehead* indicates a diverse and detailed (if unavoidably disjointed) array of primary and secondary sources. In this context, he considers the disclaimer to be a positive statement which implies and introduces a different set of priorities from those which, for example, an historian, political scientist or journalist might focus on. On one level, his historical chronology of events, and the depiction of events, is undependable, not only because Eric has altered or invented specific historical snapshots to render them emblematic but because he has, throughout, simplified historical and political processes. On another level, he has conducted his research with the aim of having Ted tell his story, rather than so Eric could reach a definitive position about, for example, what happened in Cambodia and who was responsible, or whether surviving Khmer Rouge leaders should be tried, or whether Vietnam should have invaded Cambodia in 1979, or how much relative blame for Cambodia's long war should be attached to the Khmer Rouge or other Cambodian factions or the US and its allies or the USSR or China or Vietnam or France or the ASEAN countries.

More fundamentally (or, at least, more fundamentally so far as Eric is concerned) *Figurehead's* narrator, Ted Whittlemore, is a wilful and willing partisan who tells the truth as he sees it. This leads to unconscious biases (Eric's and Ted's) but it also includes deliberate speculations (Eric's and Ted's). Or as Ted puts it in *his* disclaimer:

Filling in gaps—that's what I'm doing. I still write what I see, as every decent reporter should, but now that I am sedentary I write what I see in my mind and what I see in Kiry's mind, in Sihanouk's mind, in Cornell's mind, in the mind of anybody who strays into my world. The world is constructed by—no, the world *is*—a series of episodes, snapshots, clichés, slogans, triumphs and tragedies, headlines. Everybody has their own history of the world, their own personal history. Everybody has their own history of Cambodia, a few lines or a lifetime. Everybody has a history of Angola, of Korea, of Iraq. We imagine the extras, the spaces between and the details within each episode...if we are not pre-occupied, or if we can be bothered, or if we are

compelled to form an opinion.

Call it conjecture, call it lying, call it a gratuitous fantasy, call it an avoidance of what communism became, call it a subverting of my own principles of reporting, this fleshing out of headlines. I call it a final act of resistance to the hegemony of the West. Information is as thin as the sheets of newspaper it arrives on, as invisible as the waves that carry awful images onto our television screens. To our experience, to our self-interest, we add the daily news. We conjure the rest: our lives depend on it, our society functions because of it, and we carry on happily so long as we don't notice that we do it.

While Eric is dismayed at the idea of quoting his own novel he's been staring upwards for several minutes now and the sky is yet to fall on him. He is tempted to refer any further questions to Ted Whittlemore, who proposed this philosophy but who does not actually exist. But he agrees with Kevin Brophy who, referring to the poet and surrealist André Breton, suggests that the proposition that, 'You cannot hold the poet responsible for the poem,' is an abdication of the 'troubling challenge' that comes from a writer accepting accountability for what he or she writes.<sup>41</sup> By eschewing legitimacy Eric is not attempting to distance himself from his creation but, rather, to accept any disquiet which might result as part of the effect he was trying to produce.

Eric's use of language, including the way in which Ted uses rhetoric and challenges other protagonists' use of rhetoric, is unavoidably and directly political. His starting point is that a version of the whole world exists within all of us and that each of us has a conception of the world that is unique. When he has Ted say that everybody has 'their own version of Cambodia, a few lines or a lifetime' the point he, Eric, is making is that the vaguely disinterested outsider—for example, the Australian who is somewhat informed and occasionally distressed by events in Cambodia (or Rwanda, or the former Yugoslavia, or Turkey)—is not so distant or uninvolved in Cambodia as he or she might (like to) think. This is why he has Ted live and write in Adelaide rather than in Southeast Asia. For one thing, Ted is reliant on the media and on his unlikely friend, Cornell Jackson, for the news that equips his imagination to carry on where his memory leaves off. For another, Eric wanted to

---

<sup>41</sup> Brophy, *Explorations in Creative Writing* 219

emphasise the outsider, the person who retreats to the comforts of the west, and whose preoccupations are personal as well as global. Ted is angry at the world but he is equally worried about forging a meaningful relationship with his granddaughter. Ted's Adelaide life, Eric wants to say, is directly connected to Eric's attempts to position himself somewhere in the dank space between how the world is and how the world presents itself.

Eric has attempted to recognise, in a detailed way, the gulf between the perceptions of westerners and Cambodians about Cambodia in the world. He is not claiming to have bridged that gap, or that his awareness of these fundamentally different perceptions renders the gap redundant, or that he has somehow elevated himself out of his own mindset and personal circumstances. Neither is he suggesting that he has not reached his own conclusions about Cambodia. Indeed, he uses Ted as a consciously and unconsciously unreliable narrator because that approach reflects aspects of the real world as Eric understands it. He wrote the earliest drafts of *Figurehead* in the voice of an omnipresent third person narrator, but he found this voice impossible to reconcile with the theme of 'filling in gaps'. He concluded that to depict Ted Whittlemore's version of the world required Ted to act as the first person narrator.

Eric does not claim, even obliquely, to speak on behalf of Cambodians, even if such an all-encompassing representation was possible. He has not lived in Cambodia. He has not spent a lifetime, as did his narrator, as a war correspondent and communist sympathiser, although he did, as a toddler, use his father's copy of Mao's *Little Red Book* as a prayer book when he played Holy Communion (his father was a Methodist Minister). Also, he can dimly remember writing a defence of Lenin, simultaneously a denunciation of Ronald Reagan, in Modern European History class when he was fifteen or sixteen. He thinks all of this is beside the point; he accepts, readily, that it is impossible that he has overcome his own biases and presumptions about how he thinks the world works (and how it ought to work), particularly since he spends so much of his time thinking about other people's biases and presumptions, and particularly since he has the time and the freedom to write and think about whatever he chooses.



When Eric has Ted Whittlemore write about 'filling in gaps' he, Eric, is thinking of the role which imagination plays in expanding his understanding of the world but also in allowing him to believe that he is better informed than he really is. Eric is not suggesting that imagination is the defining or even the most relevant aspect of an individual's perceptions but, rather, that it is one significant factor which, in a political sense, is under-considered. He is not suggesting that storytelling techniques are, or should be, the sole purview of writers of fiction. But he does argue that fiction offers another way of confronting, though certainly not overcoming, the complexities which flow from wanting to bridge the gap between how he thinks the geopolitical world works and how he hopes or fears it might work. In this context, the use of imagination for clearly fictional purposes might illuminate the reality, as Eric sees it, that he relies on his imagination to help for his opinion about the real world.

Eric recalls visiting Tuol Sleng, once a high school and later the site of S-21, the Khmer Rouge centre of interrogation and torture in Phnom Penh. Although he had first seen this place two years earlier he still felt surrounded by incomprehension when, hot, tired and probably slightly dehydrated, he wandered about the unkempt grounds and the plain rectangular buildings.

When Eric had finished looking at the cells and the photographs he bought two bottles of water and sat down on a bench under an open shelter near the entrance. A small tour group arrived, an assortment of westerners. They formed a semi-circle around a guide, who began speaking to them in English. 'The Khmer Rouge tortured them here and in the houses around here. That building there was for important prisoners; one prisoner to a cell. Men downstairs, women upstairs. That building contained mass cells. When they finished torturing them and making them write their confessions, they took them to Choeng Ek, outside of the city. They killed them. Now, please, follow me...'

A red-faced woman, perhaps forty years old, did not move away with the group. One of her companions took her arm and tried to pull her along. But the woman shrugged him off.

'Let me go,' she said.

'Come on. We'll go together.'

'Leave me be.'

'You'll be sorry later.'

'No! I'm waiting here. I don't want to see this.'

Eric witnessed a version of this vignette during his trip to Cambodia in May 2002. He first wrote about the reluctant tourist in his notebook later on that same day, scribbling the events of the day in his notebook while drinking a bottle of Angkor beer at a café on Sisowath Quay beside the Sap River. When he returned home he transferred his travel diary from his notebook to his word processor and proceeded to dramatise the S-21 story: he imposed a narrative tone, he re-worked his paraphrasing of other people's words and then placed those statements in quotations, implying that the guide and the woman and her friend uttered the precise words he assigned to them.

Eric repeats this vignette now because it tells a story which, at least so far as he is concerned, acts as a revelatory snapshot. But he also brought his interpretation and his preconceptions about Cambodia and S-21 and tourism to his witnessing and re-interpretation of the initial encounter. He found the woman's reaction at Tuol Sleng pertinent because he often heard tourists expressing disquiet or distress, and sometimes even the sort of consumer dissatisfaction that manifests itself in angry letters to Travel Agents, at the confronting aspects of sight-seeing in Cambodia. In this context, Eric did not himself know how to react to the history of S-21 or even to the concept of Tuol Sleng as a museum-monument.

But perhaps Eric concludes too much: perhaps the woman's reaction had little to do with the awful history of the site and more to do with the personal circumstances of her life. Or maybe she had a stomach-ache or was worried about a situation at home. Conversely, perhaps Eric saw too little: maybe the woman was German and found herself troubled by images of Nazi death and concentration camps; or perhaps she was a descendant of Soviet exiles who had fled Stalin's purges.

Eric argues that we can imagine anything but that we can also use our imagination to help avoid confronting anything. He considers the final paragraph of Samantha Power's book about US responses to twentieth century genocides:

George Bernard Shaw once wrote, 'The reasonable man adapts himself to the world. The unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.' After a century of

doing so little to prevent, suppress and punish genocide, Americans must join and thereby legitimate the ranks of the unreasonable.<sup>42</sup>

This challenge of imagining crimes against humanity, whether or not we define them as genocidal, is different for Eric than it is for Power, who has at least glimpsed first-hand the graphic reality of perpetrators targeting and killing innocent people due to certain racial, ethnic or religious characteristics. The fact that genocide is almost inconceivable to Eric's imagination should hardly surprise him. But to hide behind his remoteness is to deliberately suppress his imagination: not being able to believe is different to not wanting to know. As Power makes clear, the twentieth century, including the latter part of the twentieth century, was awash with politically motivated violence. To be required to imagine such violence, rather than to draw on personal experience, is a blessing with, unavoidably, political ramifications. In the meantime, if Eric feels removed from the decisions (and the deflections) of his political and diplomatic representatives, and if he feels helpless in the face of a newspaper headline describing political murders in a distant country, he might also have legitimate doubts that he possesses enough information to be sure of his reaction. Even if he accepts that his leaders are telling the truth, are they telling him everything? Is the media? Doubting these sources is a legitimate part of attempting to inform himself; but while his doubts fester, governments do react and respond, and they do so in his name. Eric does not want to claim the right to hide behind invention: although he used his imagination to write *Figurehead* there is nothing speculative about the mass violence of the Pol Pot period.

Eric turns his attention to Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State from 1993-1997, who had a face too morose to be a politician in the age of television. When Christopher resigned from his position (not, in all likelihood, because of his face) President Bill Clinton inflicted on him a hug of thanks. If Eric remembers correctly—he thinks he does, but it was a momentary image on the seven o'clock news—Christopher turned granite-like with embarrassment. Clinton whispered in his ear, or so Eric now chooses to imagine, 'It's about the cameras, stupid: hug me back.'

Does Warren Christopher's face matter? Or, more correctly, does it matter what Eric remembers about his face or, more correctly still, how Eric now chooses to caricature him? Does it matter what Eric imagines Clinton said to him? Does Eric gain anything useful, and is

---

<sup>42</sup> Power, "A Problem From Hell" 516

he fair to Christopher, by extrapolating that a sour face fixed in place by overwork and worry (or perhaps because the wind in Washington D.C. is forever changing direction, or so Eric the meteorologist now decides) reflects a mind which lacks dexterity, vibrancy and plausibility?

Of course, these questions should be as inconsequential as whether Christopher prefers Coke or Pepsi (or, heaven forbid, neither). But to recognise that so much media-dominated politics is facile does not enable Eric to avoid the reality that he relies on the media for the vast majority of the information he collects in order to have a world view which he can, himself, take seriously. Warren Christopher's face is significant to Eric—for another person it might be Henry Kissinger's accent or Deng Xiao Ping's height or Margaret Thatcher's handbags—because he creates his worldview through a combination of information, interpretation and imagination.

The last of these—imagination—is troublesome but it is a recurring theme in discussions about war and crimes against humanity. As a newspaper correspondent in Bosnia in the mid-1990s, Samantha Power witnessed terrible scenes but still could not *believe* subsequent events. She suggests, 'Before it begins, genocide is not easy to wrap one's mind around. A genocidal regime's intent to destroy a group is so hideous and the scale of its atrocities so enormous that outsiders who know enough to forecast brutality can rarely bring themselves to imagine genocide.'<sup>43</sup> Or as the historian Inga Clendinnen wrote to help explain the aim of her book, *Reading the Holocaust*: 'I want to dispel the "Gorgon effect"—the sickening of the imagination and curiosity and the draining of the will which afflicts so many of us when we try to look squarely at the persons and processes implicated in the Holocaust.'<sup>44</sup> Or as US President George W. Bush said in his 2003 State of the Union address: 'Before September the 11<sup>th</sup>, many in the world believed that Saddam Hussein could be contained. But chemical agents, lethal viruses and shadowy terrorist networks are not easily contained. *Imagine those 19 hijackers with other weapons and other plans—this time armed by Saddam Hussein.* It would take one vial, one canister, one crate slipped into this country to bring a day of horror like none we have ever known.'<sup>45</sup> Or as Richard Brookhiser argued in his March 2003 assessment of George W. Bush: 'The unknown quality is

---

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* 95.

<sup>44</sup> Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust* 7.

<sup>45</sup> George W. Bush, *President Delivers "State of the Union,"* 28 January 2003, 10 November 2003 <[www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html)>. Emphasis added.

imagination—the imagination to foresee consequences, the imagination to be a wartime President.’<sup>46</sup>

For Eric, a man blessed by an ignorance of practical hardship, the primary connection to war and to crimes against humanity—in other words, the connection that gives his imagination its starting point—is the media. Sound bites are, it should hardly be necessary to repeat, simplistic and unreliable. Certain that no half hour explanation is ever going to be recounted on the six o’clock news, politicians employ language that amounts to marketing, not merely in the content of the message but also in the “selling” of the sound bite to the media, who can only “buy” so many quotes for any given bulletin. Eric thinks that no government spokesperson is ever going to explain an actual government position, with all its complexities and possibilities and pitfalls, on a television programme, or, for that matter, at a news conference. The function of a sound bite is to summarise, to appease, to deflect, to market in wildly simplified ways, a policy or action; if this affronts Eric as a receiver of sound bites—actually affronts him, as opposed to allowing him the comfort of feeling affronted—he has a responsibility, and in a country such as Australia he has the opportunity, to reject the primacy of this mode of communication. Unless, that is, he needs and wants his representatives to make decisions he himself would not make and that he himself does not condone.

In 1993, as Samantha Power recounts, Warren Christopher said this about the unfolding violence in Bosnia: “The hatred between all three groups...is almost unbelievable. It’s almost terrifying, and it’s centuries old. That really is a problem from hell. And I think that the United States is doing all we can to try to deal with that problem.”<sup>47</sup> Christopher managed to summarise considerable detail, and to signpost his position, in the short quote. When he said the ‘hatred’ existed amongst all combatants, he was also saying that he did not want, as a matter of policy, to hold the Serbs solely responsible; he certainly was reluctant to accuse them of genocide. When he said the hatred was ‘centuries old’ he offered historical context and so absolved modern participants, and the modern geopolitical system, from direct responsibility. When he said that the US was ‘doing all we can’, he absolved his

---

<sup>46</sup> Richard Brookhiser, ‘Close-Up: The Mind of George W. Bush,’ *The Atlantic Online* (April 2003) 22 October 2003 <[www.theatlantic.com/issues/2003/04/brookhiser.html](http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2003/04/brookhiser.html)>.

<sup>47</sup> Power, “A Problem From Hell,” 306.

government of the need, indeed the capacity, to do more; after all, if a problem comes from hell, the logical response is to pray.

Eric's point here—and, for that matter, his point in making Ted Whittlemore an unreliable narrator—is not to lambaste the media for failing to achieve neutrality or politicians for not telling him the naked truth. He believes media bias is widespread but also unavoidable; the false ideal of journalistic objectivity masks this while also, ironically, imposing a conformity which compromises genuine diversity of opinion, blocks historical or cultural contexts, and expects politicians to privilege style over substance.

Eric cannot abandon his reliance on the media any more than tie his shoelaces together before he runs a race. But neither is he comfortable submitting to this version of events, certain as he is that he is missing something (though uncertain what, exactly, that might be). Even as he makes imagination a part of the problem, he also believes that fiction can help to reveal the limitations of the worldview he mostly takes for granted. For this reason, *Figurehead* includes characters who retain their real-life names, notably Pol Pot, Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Henry Kissinger. All three of these are fictional creations of Eric's and although they are based on aspects of their known (although contested) public personas the principal point about them is that they emerge from Ted Whittlemore's version of the world. In the case of Sihanouk and Kissinger, Ted offers his own memories of personal encounters, merging what he actually remembers, what he would prefer to think happened, and his personal conclusions and speculations about each man's personality and politics.

Although Ted is eager to note his ties with both Prince Sihanouk and Henry Kissinger, he adamantly tells his publisher that he never met Pol Pot. Only in Part 2 of *Figurehead*, when Ted takes 'filling in gaps' a step further by appropriating the voice of Nhem Kiry, does Pol Pot appear as a character rather than as a well-hidden leader or as a metaphor for wilful carnage. At this point, Eric is imagining Ted who is imagining Kiry who is imagining Pol Pot.

The key simplification in this chain of imaginings, or at least the key so far as Eric is concerned, is Eric's imagining of Kiry. Eric has not set out to recreate the historical figure, Khieu Samphan, but to present a fictional character who is emblematic of a world which expects politicians to behave, and indeed sometimes to enact policies, in ways that privilege style over substance and obfuscation over plain explanation. But on this point, too, Eric

eschews legitimacy. He has not, in *Figurehead*, set out a systematic thesis, a body of evidence which leads to conclusions about the Cold War's impact on Cambodia. He is not arguing that such texts—for example, academic prose or works of investigative journalism—are 'objective' or that, from his reader's perspective, he must declare such texts to be 'right' or 'wrong.' But Eric claims a different sort of subjectivity: in *Figurehead* he deliberately magnifies, to the point of satire, the role of Nhem Kiry as Pol Pot's figurehead in order to suggest that he was serving the needs of the world by doing so.

### Chapter Three: Evaluating Legitimacy

For several reasons outlined in the previous chapters, Eric is reluctant to explain or interpret his own manuscript, *Figurehead*. He argues that he should avoid what he considers to be a reader's prerogative and, in particular, he believes it inappropriate that he should justify his approach (although, in turn, that should not indicate any embarrassment over that approach). However, he does not want to imply that readers should be held responsible for *Figurehead*; and he acknowledges that he has sharp opinions about Cambodia and the modern world; and he recognises that he has fashioned *Figurehead* hoping that readers will approach it in a particular way; and while he believes that there are no objective pieces of writing about Cambodia—that such a feat is not only impossible but undesirable—he also believes that there are established facts and a generally recognisable historical record.

Eric accepts that the distinction he is trying to make between Eric the writer of *Figurehead* and Eric the reader about Cambodia and the world has its complications. Initially and fundamentally, he disavows fidelity to an historical record: he is adamant that Nhem Kiry is not Khieu Samphan renamed and he asserts, for example, that *his* Pol Pot is not *the* Pol Pot. If Eric cannot make Ted Whittlemore convincing on this point he thinks that this undermines the whole premise of *Figurehead*—that everybody has an internal and unique version of the world which is formed, at least in part, by underlying motivations and by imagination. Conversely, he argues that one of the reasons he should not defend his own writing is that it is a reader's prerogative to interpret and judge a manuscript—but, again, he doubts *Figurehead's* effectiveness if a reader is unconvinced by the premises that Eric has tried to incorporate into Ted Whittlemore's narrative.

More broadly, Eric is presenting his opinion—his ideological position, even—of what constitutes ideal reading. He believes that readers should be engaged, active and sceptical and should recognise that any piece of writing contains subjective elements; further, this is inevitable and readers should embrace subjectivity. For example, he argues that there exists a reliance on the illusion of objectivity in journalism—a community as much as a practitioner's reliance—which could be relaxed if readers did not expect the impossible from journalists and editors (and media moguls, for that matter).



Eric cannot dictate how readers read. Therefore, the whole premise of *Figurehead* can potentially fall on the basis of a hypothetical reader—Eric calls her Sonia—not conforming to Eric’s preferences. Eric does not think this undermines his approach but he does think it means that Sonia might reject *Figurehead* on the basis of its underlying approach, even before she considers its content or aesthetics. She might not agree with the premise that she has a version of the world within her, or at least she might think that only someone who thinks in a predetermined way might describe the world by such parameters. Or she might decide that Eric explains the conundrum of context poorly or that his descriptions of Nhem Kiry are didactic or stereotyped or implausible (or all three). Sonia recently watched a television documentary about Africans living in appalling conditions, making rugs for the western market: she might identify something about Eric’s underlying assumptions that says nothing about Cambodia but reveals much about the privileged and individualistic life they both enjoy.

Still, Eric can only state that he wrote *Figurehead* hoping that the role that imagination plays in Ted Whittlemore’s descriptions and conclusions would be apparent. More broadly, he can state that *Figurehead* is, amongst other things, a plea for readers to read in a politicised way, taking account of the conundrum of context. But he cannot demand it. What he can do is demonstrate how he reads: how he read as he wrote *Figurehead*, with the context of the Cold War in mind, with the complexities of politics and language and information and aesthetics in mind.

As with Eric’s book, François Bizot’s *The Gate* is by an outsider.<sup>48</sup> However, Bizot possesses exactly the sort of legitimacy which Eric eschews: he is an expert on Cambodian culture, and he personally experienced the excesses of the Khmer Rouge.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, Eric assesses *The Gate*—as a reader he considers it his prerogative—and in so doing makes it the basis for a discussion that incorporates, in a different way, the themes and preoccupations that led him to write *Figurehead*: the importance of political context but also the complexities that stem from privileging context; the illusion of political objectivity and the illusion that objectivity is ideal; the importance of language in political discourse.

---

<sup>48</sup> Parts of this essay previously appeared, in different form, as ‘Reading and Reacting to Cambodia: A Review Essay of François Bizot’s *The Gate*,’ *Altitude 21C* 3 (2003) <[www.api-network.com](http://www.api-network.com)>.

<sup>49</sup> François Bizot, *The Gate*, trans. Euan Cameron from the French (London: Harvill Pr, 2003).

2.

The assassination of Allende quickly covered over the memory of the Russian invasion of Bohemia, the bloody massacre in Bangladesh caused Allende to be forgotten, the din of war in the Sinai Desert drowned out the groans of Bangladesh, the massacres in Cambodia caused the Sinai to be forgotten, and so on, and on and on, until everyone has completely forgotten everything.<sup>50</sup>

Milan Kundera's often-repeated sentence questions the capacity of second-hand witnesses to maintain focus on the myriad troubles and tragedies in the world. In common with many other writers and commentators, Kundera leads Eric to reflect the fact that individual or community concern is finite, transient and, in the west, often driven by the media or by popular culture. Eric sees two related but distinct levels of complexity. First, Eric does not, will not and never can give his attention to every crisis and imbroglio; he cannot know, nor attempt to know, everything. This does not indicate apathy (Eric hopes) nor merely his inevitable inability to grasp all issues, but also the obscured difficulties in beginning to address the layered and usually tangled contexts that might make him 'informed' on any given issue. He relies on the summaries of others, hoping they are 'neutral' and 'comprehensive', even 'universal', when they cannot be. This becomes more critical, Eric suspects, when he engages with writing which appears—through profound observation or intricate reasoning or luminous language—to overcome, on his behalf, these difficulties of context. For while Kundera's statement is stark and thought-provoking in isolation, Eric thinks it is more powerful when returned to the novel from which it came, and to the context and the detail of the Czech malaise that inspired Kundera's anguished reaction.

As with Kundera's novel, François Bizot's *The Gate*, a memoir of his Cambodian experiences, traverses the ground between local and international anguish. *The Gate* is resonant and haunting. It is accessible while making no concession to simplification. A strong moral voice underpins the narrative, or as Richard Eder puts it, 'If Bizot's

---

<sup>50</sup> Milan Kundera. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. 1981. Transl. Aaron Asher from the French (London: Faber, 1996) 9-10.

understanding wavers, particularly in the first part, it is tribute to a sensibility that insists on discerning beyond what can finally be understood.<sup>51</sup>

For all these reasons it is tempting to conclude that *The Gate* is 'definitive'. Or as the English journalist, William Shawcross, writes in a short review, 'If you only ever read one book on Cambodia, make sure it is this one.'<sup>52</sup> But Eric is left with a conundrum which stems from Kundera's observation of forgetfulness. If he decides that *The Gate* explains Cambodia like a manual, he misleads himself, and he misreads and diminishes Bizot's considerable achievement. But if he commits to (or submits to) contextualisation, he complicates matters so considerably that he might invent new ways of forgetting. He might forget that Bizot's focus is, albeit through the prism of his own inner world, the inexplicably cruel and incompetent society the Khmer Rouge inflicted on Cambodians.

Shawcross also said that *The Gate*, 'reads like a novel and it sears both the conscience and the heart.'<sup>53</sup> While he perhaps only meant to infer that it is wonderfully written, Eric is perplexed by such analogies. It seems to him to wrongly equate storytelling narrative with fiction, a curious point given that, Eric thinks, Shawcross himself is a writer who frequently employs such techniques.

*The Gate* is not a novel but it is a narrative of recalled events and Bizot is explicitly aware of having dramatised his story. In the acknowledgements he explains that he has written *The Gate* from his wife's viewpoint: 'Although I did not have to invent any of the events, characters, feelings, conversations, or landscapes that I describe here, I had to make them come alive through writing and imagination and in so doing create an optical instrument whose effects on the reader eluded me.'<sup>54</sup> In particular, Bizot resorts, with fine effect, to storytelling techniques such as metaphor and dialogue. He also uses individuals—himself, Douch, others—as a means of presenting a convoluted and violent, contested and evolving, Cambodian, regional and Cold War story.

While reading about Cambodia and the world, Eric has not encountered any *single* narrative or interpretation, no matter how persuasive in a moral, political or artistic sense, which is not overwhelmed by the complexities of Cambodian-world history. In turn, as a

<sup>51</sup> Richard Eder, "'The Gate': The Executioner's Soft Side,' *New York Times* 20 April 2003: Section 7, 13.

<sup>52</sup> William Shawcross, 'Escape from Year Zero,' *Sunday Telegraph* 19 January 2003, 20 June 2003 <[www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2003/01/19/bobiz19.xml](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2003/01/19/bobiz19.xml)>.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Bizot, *The Gate* 285-86.

distant receiver of facts, opinions, rhetoric, ideologies and soundbites, Eric accepts that the Cambodia he learns about is bound by the limits set by and set upon the collector-interpreter of any research he chooses to engage with, as well as its mode of communication. He also recognises that he brings assumptions of his own to any conclusions he then makes. He embraces a nagging doubt when he considers Bizot's version of Cambodia (or Kundera's version of Czechoslovakia) even when he cannot fathom with precision the details of that doubt. *The Gate* does stand alone, it does speak for itself, it can and should be read without the need for an attendant library; but it is also nothing more than one evocative and brilliant glimpse of Cambodia.

A scholar of Buddhism, fluent in Khmer, François Bizot was captured by the Khmer Rouge near Oudong in 1971 and held for three months in a prison-village in the foothills of the Cardamom Mountains. His chief captor, Douch, then a young communist called Kang Kech Ieu, came to believe Bizot's pleas that he was a scholar not a CIA Agent. Remarkably, almost inexplicably, Douch secured Bizot's release. But his two Khmer colleagues, Lay and Son, remained at the camp; many years later Bizot learnt that shortly after his release the Khmer Rouge killed them. Several years later, when the Khmer Rouge controlled all of Cambodia (Democratic Kampuchea, 1975-1979), Douch ran S-21, the Khmer Rouge centre of interrogation and torture in Phnom Penh.

In April 1975, the chaotic time when the Khmer Rouge claimed Phnom Penh and ordered the city's evacuation, Bizot, along with many foreigners and Cambodians, retreated to the French embassy. In the days that followed, Bizot acted as an interpreter and go-between while French and Khmer Rouge authorities negotiated evacuation of foreigners and argued over the status of Cambodians seeking refuge within the embassy. He also—uniquely—gained regular permission to leave the embassy compound to search for both food and stray foreigners, and so witnessed the emptying of Phnom Penh.

Part of the the interest in Bizot's story is that he personally encountered the Khmer Rouge in 1971 and 1975. But *The Gate* is also extraordinary because Bizot has, years later, summoned from himself a narrative as luminous as it is disturbing. He has created painfully beautiful and spare prose, at odds with the awful, misconstrued ideology and methods of the Khmer Rouge. And Bizot's descriptions of Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge often extend to observations on the human condition: 'The Khmers Rouges instinctively knew the age-old

law without trying to understand it: a man is killed more easily than an animal. Is it a tragic result of his intellectual development? How many crimes might have been brought to an abrupt halt if he had been able to bite to the very end, as cats or pigs do?<sup>55</sup>

Early in the book Bizot presents a metaphor of a gate:

From among my memories there comes up today the image of a gate. It appears before me and I recognise the pathetic hinge which was both a beginning and an end in my life. It is made of two swinging panels, which haunt my dreams, and wire mesh welded on to a tubular frame. It closed off the main entrance to the French Embassy when the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh in April 1975. <sup>56</sup>

The gate separates the world, and the foreigner's privileged capacity to evacuate, from the enclosed and secretive Democratic Kampuchea regime, its radical, inflexible and violent communist-Utopian ideology. Some of the most harrowing passages of the book occur when, in 1975, French embassy officials—with Bizot as a deeply and directly involved translator and intermediary—could no longer resist Khmer Rouge demands that Cambodians, eminent and otherwise, leave the embassy grounds:

Several hundred people were gathered here, opposite the Cultural Department in front of the parked cars. They stood in a column, their bundles at their feet. Then this most terrible of processions got under way, everyone doing his or her best to smile. But it was an affected smile, the sort we give while biting our lips, when we are seriously ill, for example, and don't want to worry our loved ones. For those who stayed behind, the worst thing was having to conceal our own sadness from those who were leaving. Surrounding the Khmers, hordes of men who had not wept for many a year were pressing up against them, spluttering, coughing, sniffing and turning round to take deep breaths.<sup>57</sup>

Bizot's gate finds a companion in *The Gates of Ivory*, Margaret Drabble's novel that begins on a bridge linking Thailand and Cambodia:

---

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.* 69.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.* 9.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.* 199.

Many are drawn to stare across this bridge. They come, and stare, and turn back. What else can they do? A desultory, ragged band of witnesses, silently, attentively, one after another, they come, and take up the position, and then turn back. ...

Good Time and Bad Time coexist. We in Good Time receive messengers who stumble across the bridge or through the river, maimed and bleeding, shocked and starving. They try to tell us what it is like over there, and we try to listen.<sup>58</sup>

Some of Drabble's witnesses relay the stories of 'Bad Times' to their distant compatriots: 'The dead and the dying travel fast these days. We can devour thousands at breakfast without toast and coffee, and thousands more on the evening news.'<sup>59</sup> But the 'stumbling' messengers cross the bridge not to bring information, as if filing a story, but to live; the people inside Cambodia, in the space and time between Bizot's gate and Drabble's bridge, work too hard and eat too little, and die from hunger or illness or ideology.

Drabble's reference to 'Good Time and Bad Time' itself has a history. One of her witnesses—"That young man with curly hair is the son of the British Chief Prosecutor at Nuremberg"<sup>60</sup>—is William Shawcross. His book, *The Quality of Mercy*, which Drabble identifies as a key source, is a work of political journalism on the food crisis in Cambodia in 1979-80, following the Vietnamese invasion that pushed the Khmer Rouge to the country's far west.<sup>61</sup>

Shawcross's book is also burdened with the subtitle, *Cambodia, Holocaust and Modern Conscience*. In the prologue, he bemoans the modern thirst for information and the corresponding dissipation of knowledge and perceptiveness. Shawcross quotes George Steiner, who wrote that while Jews 'were being done to death' in Treblinka,

the overwhelming plurality of human beings, two miles away on the Polish farms, 5,000 miles away in New York, were sleeping or eating or going to a film or making love or worrying about the dentist. This is where my imagination balks. The two orders of simultaneous experience are so different, so irreconcilable to any common norm of human values, their

<sup>58</sup> Margaret Drabble, *The Gates of Ivory* (London: Penguin, 1991) 3.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.* 4.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.* 3

<sup>61</sup> William Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy: Cambodia, Holocaust and Modern Conscience* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1984).

coexistence is so hideous a paradox—Treblinka *is* both because some men have built it and almost all other men let it be—that I puzzle over time. Are there, as science-fiction and Gnostic speculation imply, different species of time in the same world, ‘good times’ and enveloping folds of inhuman time, in which men fall into the slow hands of living damnation? ... On the fake station platform at Treblinka, cheerfully painted and provided with window-boxes so as not to alert the new arrivals to the gas-ovens half a mile further, the painted clock pointed to three. Always.<sup>62</sup>

Shawcross uses Steiner to reinforce Milan Kundera’s complaint against our forgetfulness, making use of the same quote that Eric began this discussion with,<sup>63</sup> and continues: ‘But memory is being destroyed in democratic societies as well. Our sense of impotence seems to grow in direct proportion to the spread of our knowledge. And so, in self-protection, does our sense of indifference, or at least our ability to recall, to identify.’<sup>64</sup> Eric empathises with Shawcross’s concern but he also bemoans our reliance on journalists—prime amongst Drabble’s ‘witnesses’—to deliver him this information which so befuddles him. He might apply his concerns to, for example, Shawcross’s *The Quality of Mercy*, which mixes in ways Eric often finds confusing, reportage and research, philosophising, the narrative of a reporter pursuing a story, memories of childhood, and political observation.

The historian Ben Kiernan complains that William Shawcross ‘abstracted the country to a figment of the Western mind.’<sup>65</sup> In common with a number of critics, Kiernan quotes part of this paragraph from *The Quality of Mercy*, in which Shawcross apportions blame for the politicisation of the international response to Cambodia’s 1979-80 crisis:

[Sir Robert Jackson, the UN Secretary General’s personal representative] tended to place the principal blame on the superpower confrontation to which the Cambodians were prey. Some aid officials and journalists blamed the donor nations, particularly the United States. It is true that their casual acceptance of what was a fundamentally Chinese strategy to rebuild and

<sup>62</sup> George Steiner, ‘Postscript,’ *Language and Silence - Essays 1958-1966* (London: Faber, 1967) 181-82, quoted in part in Shawcross, *Quality of Mercy* 13.

<sup>63</sup> Note, however, that Shawcross quotes from Michael Henry Heim’s translation from the Czech rather than from Aaron Asher’s 1996 translation from the French (see footnote 50).

<sup>64</sup> Shawcross, *Quality of Mercy* 12.

<sup>65</sup> Kiernan, ‘Introduction’ 12. Note that since the publication of *The Quality of Mercy*, Ben Kiernan and William Shawcross have engaged in a lively (and sometimes mutually disrespectful) debate over Cambodian political issues. See, for example, ‘An Exchange on Cambodia,’ *New York Review of Books*, 27 September 1984: 63-65.

support the Khmer Rouge exhibited at best a loss of memory and lack of imagination, at worst a cynicism that will have long and disturbing repercussions on international consciousness. But it is surely also the case that throughout this stage of Cambodia's agony, Vietnam, not the United States, was the leading actor in Indochina and that Vietnam therefore bears the principal, though not the exclusive, responsibility for the continued crisis today.<sup>66</sup>

While Shawcross's bare purpose is to name Vietnam as predominantly responsible for Cambodia's 1979-80 malaise, this paragraph also evokes memory, imagination and cynicism. Noting Shawcross's concern for 'international consciousness', Kiernan replies that, 'The repercussions on Cambodia itself are of course an entirely different matter.'<sup>67</sup> Eric thinks Shawcross's intention resembles his own: he is trying to understand Cambodia's predicament by assessing regional and global contexts. While Eric does not think that *The Quality of Mercy* is an attempt to understand 'everything', he does think that Shawcross's tone implies that his views are authoritative and that they are the sole 'natural' endpoints of his research. Eric does not believe that any writer's output can match such an ambition—that is, no writer can have a country's history conform neatly and absolutely to his or her thesis. Perhaps for this reason Shawcross resorts to drastic language to summarise his position: 'Cambodia is a dismal drama'; 'those years of warfare [1970-75] saw the *destruction* of Cambodian society and the rise of the Khmer Rouge from its ashes'; 'The continuation of the Khmer Rouge undoubtedly represents a dreadful failure of *political imagination* and a denial of *memory*'; 'When the Soviets shot down the Korean 747 in 1983 not only did they refuse to apologize (*this was perhaps the most terrifying element of the whole disaster*), but they also tried to shift the blame to the United States.'<sup>68</sup>

Grant Evans complains that Shawcross uses certain storytelling techniques as an evasive tactic:

The basically political nature of *The Quality of Mercy* is not immediately apparent because Shawcross deploys a detailed narrative technique to lay out

<sup>66</sup> Shawcross, *Quality of Mercy* 415.

<sup>67</sup> Kiernan, 'Introduction' 12

<sup>68</sup> Shawcross, *Quality of Mercy* 415, added emphasis; 49, added emphasis; 356, added emphasis; 423, added emphasis. See also Ben Kiernan, 'Review Essay: William Shawcross, Declining Cambodia,' *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 18. 1 (January-March 1986): 58; Serge Thion, *Watching Cambodia—Ten Paths to Enter the Cambodian Triangle* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1993) 218-221; Grant Evans, 'William Shawcross's Cambodian Crusade,' *New Left Review* 152 (July/August 1985): 122.



events. 'Telling a story' gives the book an illusory objectivity that frees Shawcross from the obligation to analyse, and so his political opinions can be slipped in unsubstantiated. ...

What is most frustrating about Shawcross's reliance on narrative is that he leaves his contentions scattered, hidden and largely unargued throughout the text.<sup>69</sup>

Evans argues that Shawcross avoids discussion on how western donor states use aid for political purposes, while charging Vietnam for doing precisely that, and is therefore, 'standing aloof from the actual politics of aid.'<sup>70</sup> Here, Eric does not want to enter the debate between Shawcross and Evans about the legal and moral legitimacy of Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia (Evans is supportive of Vietnam).<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, Eric agrees that Shawcross sometimes takes cover behind the notion of journalistic neutrality, a feat much more difficult to sustain across the length of a book than half a column. Personally, he thinks that Shawcross would better serve his argument if he more clearly acknowledged that he had constructed *The Quality of Mercy* to support his political propositions. However, he does not think Shawcross should be expected to abandon his ideology or his conclusions on the basis that, at least so far as Eric is concerned, he lacks Bizot's mastery of language.

Kiernan suggests (and regrets) that Shawcross's understanding of the initial post-Khmer Rouge period is 'now disseminated as an ideology of Cambodian affairs.'<sup>72</sup> Kiernan quotes, then comments upon, one reviewer's assessment:

Discussing a new book produced in Finland, *Kampuchea: Decade of the Genocide*, a British reviewer recently wrote that "23 Finns, the country's best and brightest, supported by five research groups ... a little army ... with amazing balance reach the same conclusions as Shawcross operating on his own." This statement is indicative of the Western media's reception of William Shawcross's *The Quality of Mercy*. What greater praise can one offer, than to regard a book not as merely balanced (or even amazingly so),

---

<sup>69</sup> Evans, 'William Shawcross's Cambodian Crusade' 123-124.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.* 121-122.

<sup>71</sup> See Grant Evans and Kevin Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War—Indochina Since the Fall of Saigon* (London: Verso, 1984).

<sup>72</sup> Kiernan, 'Review Essay' 58

but as the yardstick for assessing balance in the conclusions of armies of others?<sup>73</sup>

Kiernan then engages in a critical assessment of Shawcross's thesis, but here Eric is concerned only to make the point that if *The Quality of Mercy* has become a standard reference then it is readers, not Shawcross, who privilege it in this way and it is readers, not Shawcross, who attach objectivity to *The Quality of Mercy* by their own assumptions about journalistic neutrality. Margaret Drabble, in an article about her 1989 visit to the Site 2 refugee camp on the Thai border, says,

I had read Oxfam reports (notably Tony Jackson's *Just Waiting to Die? Cambodian Refugees in Thailand*, July 1987) and historical analyses (notably William Shawcross's *The Quality of Mercy*), but nothing could prepare one for the scale or the mood of this strange limbo.<sup>74</sup>

Drabble also nods respectfully to Shawcross in the text of *The Gates of Ivory* but Eric thinks one of the most impressive aspects of her novel—an achievement he thinks Shawcross's book and indeed Drabble's non-fiction piece about Site 2 lacks—is that she grapples with historical and political issues that are complex and appalling without attempting to resolve or simplify them; and that her narrative uses individuals to tell the bigger story, and to reflect on the messiness, without implying that those characters are able to tell the full story. In a compelling scene in Phnom Penh, the novelist Stephen Cox, a central character, meets a Japanese photojournalist, Akira, 'a serious drinking man' who,

slags off the Russians and Gorbachev and Hun Sen and the puppet Vietnamese. None of them is serious. The Khmer Rouge, says Akira, are serious people.

When Stephen demurs, as he does from time to time, Akira performs a disconcerting about-turn. ... There are Khmer Rouge weapons in a US depot in Thailand. Munitions come from US companies via Germany, Belgium, Singapore. 'You lot,' he says, 'you support for wrong reasons. You hate, and you support. That is mad. I admire, and I support. That is logic.'<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, quoting Jonathan Mirsky, 'What Really Happened in Kampuchea?' *Times Educational Supplement* 26 October 1984: 22.

<sup>74</sup> Margaret Drabble, 'Killing Time: A Visit to a Cambodian Refugee Camp,' *Harper's Magazine* April 1989: 69-70.

<sup>75</sup> Drabble, *Gates of Ivory* 228.

Stephen is in Cambodia on his own journey of self-discovery: although he has plans to write a play about Pol Pot he is not thinking about the Khmer Rouge but about the Khmer Rouge and himself. Akira's position fascinates him:

And, as he sits there late one night after a last cognac, he knows that this is what he came to find. He came to find the last believer. A breath of hope stirs like a sweet corrupt poison in his entrails. It is as though Akira were telling him that God, after all, is not dead, and salvation is still on offer. History is reprieved, the dead did not die in vain, the dry bones will live.

The immensity of this utterly impossible hope reveals to him the immensity of his depression, of his prolonged mourning for the death of the dream. So, he had, once, after all, hoped. He had, once, after all, believed that the future would be better, better *in kind*, than the past. Now, caught out in utter faithlessness, in the sin of despair, he salutes the mad Akira, who continues to defy all evidence, all reason, all history. Akira is mad, but he is divinely mad. He proclaims social hope, like a latter-day prophet. He defines Stephen as a man who has for ever lost his faith, who has come here to the graveyard of his own past. Stephen has recanted, but Akira has not. [...] Stephen has dwindled into reason.<sup>76</sup>

In *The Quality of Mercy* William Shawcross also adopts the storytelling technique of using individuals as a means of telling a bigger story—in other words, as a way of cutting through the context in a comprehensible way. Grant Evans argues that when Shawcross focuses on an individual he,

obscures the fact that the basic thrust of US policy was dictated by its desire to reverse the political situation in Cambodia. He does this by focusing on the figure of Morton Abramowitz, the US Ambassador to Thailand (recognized by reviewers as the book's 'hero'), whose opinions on some matters were less hardline than Washington's, and who was later removed from his post for this very reason. In this way the conduct of US policy is made to look less single-minded than it was.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.* 228–29. Drabble's emphasis.

<sup>77</sup> Evans, 'William Shawcross's Cambodian Crusade' 121–122.

Shawcross recognises that the US position, reflecting a wider foreign policy debate, 'was confused and confusing.'<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, Eric agrees that one consequence of Shawcross's use of individuals is to humanise what are often faceless representatives of government or bureaucracy, hidden behind official documents and press releases. Serge Thion complains bluntly: 'At times, it seems almost to be a fairy tale, with the complete absence of the CIA, and no American military roving along the border.'<sup>79</sup> Shawcross writes:

Abramowitz is an unusual diplomat. Like his friend Richard Holbrooke, who was then the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, he spurns elegant diplomatic dress and formal diplomatic manners. He is far more accessible than most ambassadors both to journalists and to his own staff, even junior staff. He is remarkably candid, he has extraordinary energy, is perpetually restless and rarely suffers foolishness, inefficiency or contrariness gladly. Once, when a journalist asked him what questions might be interesting to put to the Thai Prime Minister General Kriangsak, Abramowitz shouted, 'Give him hell for not doing enough for the border.'<sup>80</sup>

Having quoted Abramowitz's defence of US policy towards the Khmer Rouge after 1979, Shawcross concludes, 'It always seemed to me that Abramowitz understood and was troubled by the moral ambiguities of the problems.'<sup>81</sup> Eric is happy to accept Shawcross's conclusion but he still wonders if Abramowitz was the correct person to question. He might add other cautions. Abramowitz consented to interviews by Shawcross: had he declined, Eric wonders how his significance would have altered in the narrative? Even if Eric believes Shawcross's task to be entirely neutral, which he does not, did Abramowitz offer his viewpoint purely to serve Shawcross's desire to understand or was he also justifying his work and advertising his political position? By what means and for what reasons does Shawcross include only some parts of the Abramowitz interviews? Eric repeats that none of these cautions, in isolation, invalidate the aspects of the book that deal with Abramowitz: very little could ever be written if they did. But he argues that these cautions should overtly frame his reading of *The Quality of Mercy*, irrespective of his own political preferences.

---

<sup>78</sup> Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy* 98.

<sup>79</sup> Thion, *Watching Cambodia* 218.

<sup>80</sup> Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy* 178-79.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.* 355-56.

Beyond any specific criticisms of Shawcross's construction of argument or use of language, Eric argues that any *single* narrative or interpretation, no matter how persuasively self-aware, is inevitably overwhelmed by the complexities of Cambodian-world history: that is, acknowledging context is not the same as overcoming it. In turn, as a receiver of facts, opinions, rhetoric, ideologies and sound bites—as a reader, listener and viewer—Eric tries to recall that the 'Cambodia' he learns about is bound by the limits set by and upon the collector-interpreter of any given piece of research. He also recognises that he brings assumptions of his own to any conclusions he then makes.

No less than William Shawcross, François Bizot employs storytelling techniques to advance his narrative. The heart of *The Gate* is the complex relationship that developed in 1971 between Bizot and his Khmer Rouge captor, Duch. Nic Dunlop and Nate Thayer reported in 1999 in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* that Duch was alive. A convert to Christianity, he expressed regret for the Khmer Rouge atrocities. For his former prisoner he had a message: 'My friend Bizot will be happy to know that I have changed my ideas, my ideology.'<sup>82</sup> Duch now sits in prison, as the Cambodian government and the United Nations haggle over the terms of a Khmer Rouge trial which may or may not occur:

In the depths of his prison, my one-time persecutor awaits trial for crimes against humanity. He can brood over that period of his youth when murder, pillage and lies were not only permitted but commendable. Setting off with a flower in his rifle and a heart filled with hope, he had thrown himself into a primitive world filled with horror. Here, the dangers of war were slight in comparison to the dangers of revolution; in the most demanding confrontations, the warrior never stopped being wary of his neighbour. He was a child venturing among wolves: to survive, he had drunk their milk, and learned to howl like them, and let instinct take over. Terror, from that moment, became all-powerful. It seduced him by putting on the face of morality and order.<sup>83</sup>

Bizot reconstructs numerous conversations between the two men. The most memorable of these is a debate in which Bizot, emboldened by impending freedom,

---

<sup>82</sup> Nic Dunlop and Nate Thayer, 'Duch Confesses,' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 6 May 1999: 18-20; Nic Dunlop and Nate Thayer, 'Chief of the Sinners,' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 6 May 1999: 22-23.

<sup>83</sup> Bizot 268.

questions the creation of Khmer Rouge ways: 'Is there some ideologist among you, constructing a revolutionary theory based upon the myths and rules of the Buddhist religion?'<sup>84</sup> Later, he asks Douch if prisoners in the camp are beaten. Douch explains that the prisoners were mostly spies:

'Just one of these traitors could jeopardise our whole struggle. Do you think they're going to reveal what they know of their own free will?'

'But who does the beating? It-'

'Ah!' he cut in. 'I can't stand their duplicity! The only way is to terrorize them, isolate them and starve them. It's very tough. I have to force myself. You cannot imagine how much their lying infuriates me! When I cross-examine them and they resort to every ruse to avoid talking, denying our senior officers potentially vital information, then I beat them! I beat until I'm out of breath.'<sup>85</sup>

Two paragraphs later Bizot writes about his feelings of affection towards Douch. More tellingly, Bizot recalls stumbling while walking, blindfolded, to freedom: 'But it was clear from his shock and the anxious way he helped me up and enquired about the bump on my head that Douch had, in our relationship, gone beyond the bounds of basic courtesy, and was holding out a connection from soul to soul, a wider friendship, larger than the circumstantial fellowship that had arisen between us.'<sup>86</sup>

Douch comes to life in *The Gate* as a person, rather than as a name synonymous with atrocity. This is due to Bizot's use of dialogue, which must be, so long after the event, a combination of what Douch said and what Bizot remembers, then crafted into exchanges suitable for a literary memoir. The language has been converted from Khmer to French and then, for Eric, translated into English.

Douch also comes to life because of the complexity Bizot recounts of a young Cambodian man with an apparent sense of honour, an inquisitive mind, and a sense of humour, who is committed absolutely to an extreme ideology. But Eric thinks that Bizot's version of Douch, however finely realised, owes added resonance to Douch's subsequent role as head of S-21, as does the burdensome irony of this observation: 'My freedom, obtained

---

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.* 110.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.* 114-15.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.* 131.

after a hard struggle, had become a sort of personal success for him, spurring on his career as a revolutionary.<sup>87</sup> Douch is not solely a character in *The Gate* but a man whose life story is now dominated by his brutal, fatal extraction of ‘confessions’ in the service of the Khmer Rouge. It is precisely because of this that Bizot’s descriptions of him form the heart of the book. Perhaps Bizot has defined Douch accurately; perhaps not. In the end, it is his—Bizot’s—story, his narrative, his interpretation of Douch’s actions and words.

Eric concludes that one of Bizot’s achievements—in a literary as well as political sense—is that while he is persuasive and learned he never feigns objectivity. On America, for example, he writes:

But their irresponsibility, their colossal tactlessness, their inexcusable naivety, even their cynicism, frequently aroused more fury and outrage in me than did the lies of the Communists. Throughout those years of war, as I frantically scoured the hinterland for the old manuscripts that the heads of monasteries had secreted in lacquered chests, I witnessed the Americans’ imperviousness to the realities of Cambodia. Yet today I do not know what I reproach them for more, their intervention or their withdrawal.<sup>88</sup>

Bizot’s political stance here is clearly connected to his melancholic reaction to Cambodia’s fate. He recounts what is true for him. As a reader, Eric thinks he might follow Bizot’s example by not assuming that all Bizot tells him is all he needs to know.

---

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.* 130.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.* 5.

## Conclusion

Once, when I was twenty-three years old, I wrote to a friend who was living abroad: 'I've enrolled in a PhD in Politics.' Even then I sensed that my decision was ill-considered. Continuing straight from Honours, my rationale amounted to, 'They're going to give me a scholarship to sit around and read and write.' My suspicions proved correct: the PhD later shrank and became a disjointed M.A.; I felt (or perhaps I hoped) that the finished thesis, which was half the length of the initial project, was barely written by me at all.

As I now remember it I was discomfited as I wrote the letter, probably because I was anticipating a disdainful or at least ambivalent response from my friend, whose opinion I valued. I cannot remember exactly what I said but I suspect it consisted of a mix of earnestness, jargon and grand expectations. If I'm lucky most of it was illegible (my handwriting can be appalling). I do, however, remember my enthusiastic summary: 'I'm going to be George Orwell.'

I don't know exactly how a person goes about *being* another person—not in real life, at least. In any case, I am now reluctant to add to the use of the legacy of Orwell, particularly given that so many politically-motivated writers and political thinkers, arguing from disparate perspectives, have appropriated Orwell for their own purposes. As John Rodden identifies, the qualities of Orwell's best writing have somehow become entwined with the sort of human being he is remembered as:

... clarity, simplicity, honesty, plainness, vigor, passion. Even some of the most prominent champions of Orwell's work have maintained, often with regret, that he was much more important for how he lived than for what he wrote. ...

Certainly Orwell's ubiquity during the early 1980s in classrooms and academic journals, in the press, and on airwaves was incontestable; but no extended discussion has dealt with the making of his extraordinary public reputation and its attempted "claiming" by numerous political and commercial interests, with how Orwell has come to represent so much in a personal way to intellectuals both of the Left and the Right, and with how his rhetoric and vision have so deeply penetrated our consciousness that they



have been assimilated, often without attribution, into the Western political lexicon and imagination.<sup>89</sup>

I'm not sure what I meant when I said, 'I'm going to be George Orwell,' but I hope I didn't mean anything so grandiose as that my life would be romanticised and linked inextricably with my oeuvre, as if I *was* my books. I hope I did not mean that I wanted to imitate, reproduce or dogmatise the politics espoused by George Orwell, which, as Peter Davison points out, should always be recalled in the political contexts of Orwell's age—'the twilight of Imperialism, the Depression, the Thirties, the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, and the post-war Labour Government.'<sup>90</sup> I hope I did not think that I could, somehow, crystallise Orwell's complex and changeable beliefs into something portable and instant, and then praise him in order to praise myself. I hope I did not try to train my writing style to imitate that of Orwell's. And I can categorically say that I did not imagine myself going to war to fight for a cause I believed in passionately, as Orwell did in Spain.

In his essay, 'Why I Write', Orwell said:

... I do not think one can assess a writer's motive without knowing something of his early development. His subject-matter will be determined by the age he lives in—at least this is true in tumultuous, revolutionary ages like our own—but before he ever begins to write he will have acquired an emotional attitude from which he will never completely escape. It is his job, no doubt, to discipline his temperament and avoid getting stuck at some immature stage, or in some perverse mood: but if he escapes from his early influences altogether, he will have killed his impulse to write.<sup>91</sup>

Orwell identified four reasons (apart from making money) for the impulse to write—'Sheer egoism,' 'Aesthetic enthusiasm,' 'Historical impulse,' and 'Political purpose'—and he went on to discuss the creative tension apparent in his self-appointed task to 'make political writing into an art.'<sup>92</sup> All of this resonates with me. In particular, when writing *Figurehead*, I endured a creative tension between advocating a set of political principles and arguments while also writing a speculative story that aimed for aesthetic success. I say 'endured' because

<sup>89</sup> John Rodden, *The Politics of Literary Reputation—The Making and Claiming of 'St. George' Orwell* (New York: Oxford UP, 1989) x.

<sup>90</sup> Peter Davison, 'General Introduction,' *George Orwell—The Complete Works*, ed. Peter Davison, Vol.10, *A Kind of Compulsion* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1998) xviii.

<sup>91</sup> George Orwell, 'Why I Write,' 1946, *George Orwell—The Complete Works*, ed. Peter Davison, Vol. 18, *Smothered Under Journalism* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1998) 318.

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.* 318.

this was one of the main mechanical challenges of creating *Figurehead* but it is also true that this creative tension was exactly what I sought when I decided to write the story from the partisan perspective of Ted Whittlemore.

The preceding chapters, which I intended to be cumulative and therefore to act as a single essay, reflect on the nature of writing a politically-charged novel about modern Cambodia while also questioning the utility and the appropriateness of the exegetical act. These two primary aspects of the exegesis intersect frequently, for my principal concerns about writing an exegesis stem in precise ways from the subject matter and the approach I have taken to the creation of *Figurehead*. Therefore, I hope that this 'reluctant exegesis', as I call it in Chapter One, emerges as constructive rather than merely contrary.

I created Eric out of exasperation. When I began writing I searched in vain for a voice and a tone and a style of narrative which would enable me to fulfil the requirements of the exegesis. I wanted to write in a casual and even irreverent way because the discussion I had in mind was not compatible with a formal piece of critical writing. Further, I wanted to position myself, in however mild a way, in opposition to the concept of writing about myself. At the same time, I had a set of ideas and ideals to advocate which, for me, were complex.

My preference for a casual tone did not come only from stubbornness and a desire to subvert the whole project I was reluctantly engaged in. Rather, I thought it was crucial to write in opposition to absolutes. Given that I was writing about myself I wanted to undermine my own position with self-doubt, indeed self-deprecation, and in particular to reiterate that while I could 'believe' all sorts of things I could 'prove' very little. This approach did not lend itself to a formal discourse. One way I describe *Figurehead*, independent of its Cambodian context, is of a fictional character—Ted Whittlemore—who thinks about *his world* in overtly political ways but whose ideas, beliefs and ideology are not necessarily consistent, logical or upstanding. Similarly, as the creator of *Figurehead* I take a political position with regards to creating a parallel world without claiming to be consistent, logical or upstanding. While I am reluctant to be prescriptive my broader political argument here is that this inner world commotion is more realistic than, for example, a politician who must never contradict himself or herself and who is obliged to publicly avoid shades of grey for fear of being labelled indecisive, inconsistent or weak.

Initially, I intended to abandon Eric once I had located an appropriate exegetical tone. His unexpected retention as the observed writer reflects his usefulness in emphasising the arguments I wanted to make about authenticity, about writer and reader, about point of view, and about narrative intent. In particular, at times there is a tension in the text—hopefully a playful and ironic tension—which I did not always plan for but which emerged from the particular narrative approach I took. For example, I found myself at one point writing about the opinions of an invented novelist, Eric, on the Wanda Koolmatrie hoax, in which a white man, Leon Carmen, pretended he was an Indigenous woman and, in doing so, achieved publication and acclaim for a novel, *My Own Sweet Time*. Eric, who does not exist except in my imagination, concluded that Leon Carmen should have claimed authorship of his novel. And Eric, who does not exist, reiterates that the Khmer Rouge leader, Khieu Samphan, is not the same person—and was never meant to be the same person—as the fictional character, Nhem Kiry.

\*\*\*

Early twenty-first century Cambodia is a layered and complex society damaged by, yet emerging from, decades of warfare. Cambodians continue to pursue ways to come to terms with or at least mute the psychological, cultural, social and economic legacies of war but especially of the excesses and incompetencies of the Khmer Rouge during the Pol Pot period (Democratic Kampuchea, April 1975 to January 1979). Although this exegesis is political I have not presented a position on various key political issues relating to Cambodia: for example, I did not canvass the legal, political and moral questions relating to a possible trial of surviving Khmer Rouge leaders, including Khieu Samphan, for crimes against humanity. I have argued that the problems of modern Cambodia need always to be viewed in their regional and Cold War contexts but this conclusion remains consistent with any number of political positions.

Similarly, although I have made use of a range of theoreticians, I do not intend this exegesis to be an essay of literary theory. I favour the definition proposed by the historian Inga Clendinnen in *Reading the Holocaust*: ‘These are essays in the strict sense of the word—personal explorations along self-made paths, not progressions down the well-signed highways of academic scholarship.’<sup>93</sup> However, this should not mask my debt to a range of

---

<sup>93</sup> Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust* 8.

theoreticians and researchers, political as well as literary, although in turn that acknowledgement does not imply that I think any of the authors cited would necessarily approve of the way I have appropriated their work.

In this context, Estelle Barrett is right to recognise that those writers who choose to pursue a creative act while simultaneously undertaking postgraduate studies must expect to be challenged as to whether the creative product also conforms to the requirements of 'research and the knowledge economy in general.'<sup>94</sup> However, I am discomforted by the idea that 'the creative arts exegesis can operate as valorisation and validation of creative arts research'<sup>95</sup> or that 'The promotion of the exegesis as a significant part of the creative PhD has been, I think, the key reason why the creative PhD has been allowed into Australian universities.'<sup>96</sup> I have consciously avoided the implications of this debate, as identified by Tess Brady:

We are still surrounded by a large number of colleagues from other disciplines who are unaware of the nature of our work and who think, for example, that a novel can be written in the summer break. That this belief is so prolific is an indication that we have not taken the trouble to deconstruct our research and process and to publicise that deconstruction.<sup>97</sup>

I believe that when a student/writer comes to write and research an exegesis the debate about the legitimacy of creative writing within the academy must be placed aside. Otherwise, all exegeses will become education policy documents. Nevertheless, I hope that this exegesis—even when it is irreverent or casual, even when it argues against the concept of the exegesis, even when it doubts that a theoretical approach is the only way to intellectualise—will also be read as a positive statement in favour of the Creative Writing PhD.

*Figurehead* is a speculative novel about Cambodia and the west. In this companion essay I have located myself amongst a disparate group of non-specialist westerners who have written about Cambodia. Nevertheless, in eschewing legitimacy, and in acknowledging the conscious and unconscious biases underlying my approach, I have tried to avoid retreating

---

<sup>94</sup> Estelle Barrett, 'What Does it Meme? The Exegesis as Valorisation and Validation of Creative Arts Research,' *Text Spec. Issue* 3 (April 2004), 4 June 2004 <<http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/speciss/issue3/barrett.htm>>.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Krauth, 'The Preface as Exegesis.'

<sup>97</sup> Tess Brady, 'A Question of Genre: De-mystifying the Exegesis,' *Text* 4. 1 (April 2000), 2 October 2002 <<http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/april00/brady.htm>>.

behind the complexities that I raise in order to justify either my methods or my final product. Rather, having argued that objectivity is both illusory and a false ideal, I conclude that I cannot judge my own subjectivities.

### Select List of Works Consulted—*Figurehead and Eschewing Legitimacy*

This bibliography contains a variety of primary and secondary sources which I present as a single alphabetical list. However, I have also included a second list, which records various resources (media outlets, newsagencies, databases and so on) which I have made general but extensive use of.

In Cambodia family names tend to precede given names. As such, for example, Khieu Samphan is listed under 'Khieu' not under 'Samphan, Khieu.' There are exceptions to this: for example, Loung Ung has westernised (that is, inverted) her name and therefore is listed, 'Ung, Loung.'

'An Exchange on Cambodia.' *New York Review of Books* 27 September 1984: 63-65. 'An Example of Counter-Revolutionary Propaganda: The "Interview With Khieu Samphan" that Never Took Place. *News from Kampuchea: Journal of the Committee of Patriots of Democratic Kampuchea* 1.5. December 1977: 6-10.

'Brother Number Two Enjoys Retirement.' *BBC Correspondent*. Reporter Phil Rees. 15 March 2002. Transcript. 6 July 2002 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/correspondent/1874949.stm>>. 'Paris Conference on Cambodia—Final Declaration (30 August 1989).' *Speeches and Statements*. Sp.St/LON/104/89. Paris: 1989.

'Raking over the Bones.' *Dateline*. Reporter Michael Cody. *SBS*. 29 August 2001. Transcript. 3 September 2001 <<http://www.sbs.com.au/dateline>>.

'Senior Khmer Rouge Leader Claims Innocence in New Autobiography.' *Channelnewsasia.com* 12 February 2004. Transcript. 26 February 2004 <[http://channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp\\_asiapacific/view/70746/1/.html](http://channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/70746/1/.html)>.

'Special Issue: Samdech Sihanouk's Inspection Tour of the Cambodian Liberated Zone.' *China Pictorial* 6. Peking (1973).

Abrams, Floyd. *Kampuchea After the Worst*. New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1990.

Allington, Patrick. 'Playing Devil's Advocate: Reflecting on Samantha Power's "A Problem From Hell": America and the Age of Genocide.' *Altitude 21C* Issue 4 (2004). <[www.api-network.com](http://www.api-network.com)>.

\_\_\_\_\_. 'Reading and Reacting to Cambodia: a review essay of François Bizot's *The Gate*.' *Altitude 21c* Issue 3 (2003). <[www.api-network.com](http://www.api-network.com)>.

Aquilla, Pieter, and Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli. 'Truth or Fiction: Writing Narrative in Research.' *Text* 1. 1 (April 1997). 2 October 2003 <<http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/april97/aquilla/htm>>.

Agee, James. 'Comedy's Greatest Era.' 1949. *Agee on Film—Criticism and Comment On the Movies*. Intro. David Denby. New York: Modern Library, 2000. 392-412.

- Amin, Samir. *Accumulation On a World Scale—A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment*. Trans. Brian Pearce. New York: Monthly Review, 1974.
- . *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization: The Management of Contemporary Society*. London: Zed Books, 1997.
- Amitav, Archarya, Pierre Lizee and Sorpong Peou. *Cambodia—the 1989 Paris Peace Conference, Background Analysis and Documents*. Toronto: Centre for International and Strategic Studies, York U, 1991.
- Anderson, Jack, & Bill Pronzini. *The Cambodia File*. New York: Doubleday, 1981.
- Armstrong, John P. *Sihanouk Speaks*. New York: Walker, 1964.
- Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *Cambodia: an Australian Peace Proposal—Working Papers Prepared for the Informal Meeting on Cambodia, Jakarta, 26-28 February 1990*. Canberra: AGPS, 1990.
- Australian Society of Authors. *Writing About Indigenous Australia—Some Issues to Consider and Protocols to Follow: A Discussion Paper*. Portfolio document (19 February 2002, revised 30 March 2004). 5 May 2004 <www.asauthors.org>.
- Baranczak, Stalinslaw. 'Life Is Elsewhere.' *New Republic* 29 July 1991: 36-39.
- Barrett, Estelle. 'What Does it Meme? The Exegesis as Valorisation and Validation of Creative Arts Research.' *Text Special Issue 3* (April 2004). 4 June 2004 <www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/speciss/issue3/barrett.htm>.
- Barron, John, and Anthony Paul. *Peace Without Horror—the Untold Story of Communist Genocide in Cambodia*. London: Hodder, 1977. First pub. as *Murder in a Gentle Land*, 1977.
- Becker, Elizabeth. *When the War Was Over—Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge Revolution*. 1986. New York: Public Affairs (Perseus Books Group), 1998.
- Bekaert, Jacques. *Cambodian Diary—A Long Road to Peace 1987-1993*. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1998.
- . *Cambodian Diary—Tales of a Divided Nation 1983-1986*. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1997.
- . 'The Return of the Khmer Rouge.' *Southeast Asian Affairs 1993*. Singapore: Insitute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993. 130-146.
- Bell, D.S., & Eric Shaw. *The Left in France: Towards the Socialist Republic*. Nottingham: Spokesman, 1983.
- Berry, Ken. *Cambodia From Red to Blue: Australia's Initiative For Peace*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998.
- Bizot, François. *The Gate*. Trans. Euan Cameron. 2000. London: Harvill, 2003.
- Boucher, Richard (State Department Deputy Spokesman). *US Department of State Daily Briefing #117*. Washington, D.C. 20 August 1992. 3 December 2003 <dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/briefing/daily\_briefings/1992/9208/117.html>.
- Bowden, Tim. *One Crowded Hour—Neil Davis Combat Cameraman, 1934-1985*. 1987. Sydney: Collins, 1989.
- Brady, Tess. 'A Question of Genre: De-mystifying the Exegesis.' *Text* 4, 1 (April 2000). 2 October 2003 <www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/april00/brady.htm>.

- Brown, Ian. *Cambodia—An Oxfam Country Profile*. Oxford: Oxford, 2000.
- Brookhiser, Richard. 'Close-Up: The Mind of George W. Bush.' *The Atlantic Online* April 2003. 22 October 2003 <[www.theatlantic.com/issues/2003/04/brookhiser.html](http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2003/04/brookhiser.html)>.
- Brophy, Kevin. *Explorations in Creative Writing*. Melbourne: Melbourne U Pr, 2003.
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *Power and Principle—Memoirs of the National Security Advisor, 1977-1981*. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1983.
- Burchett, Wilfred. *At the Barricades*. Melbourne: Macmillan, 1981.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Passport—An Autobiography*. Melbourne: Nelson, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Second Indochina War—Cambodia and Laos Today*. London: Lorimer, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Sihanouk: The Proud Prince.' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 14 November 1975: 11-13.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The China Cambodia Vietnam Triangle*. Chicago: Vanguard, 1981.
- Burgler, R.A. *The Eyes of the Pineapple—Revolutionary Intellectuals and Terror in Democratic Kampuchea*. Saarbrücken: Verlag Breitenbach Publishers, 1990.
- Burleigh, Charles. *The Living Mekong*. Sydney: Angus, 1971.
- Bush, George W. *President Delivers "State of the Union."* (28 January 2003). <[www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html)> 22 October 2003.
- Caldwell, Malcolm, and Led Tan. *Cambodia in the Southeast Asian War*. New York: Monthly Review, 1973.
- Cambodia Year Ten—A Special Report By John Pilger*. Videocassette. Dir. David Munro. Writ & narr. John Pilger. London: Central Independent Television for ITV, 1989.
- Cambodia—Kampuchea*. Videocassette. Dir. and writ. James Gerrand. Narr. Stuart Littlemore. Sydney: Gerrand, 1988.
- Cambodia—The Prince and the Prophecy*. Videocassette. Dir. & writ. James Gerrand. Narr. Stuart Littlemore. Sydney: Gerrand, 1988.
- Cambodia—The Situation of Children and Women*. Phnom Penh: UNICEF, 1990.
- Cambodia—Year One*. Videocassette. Dir. David Munro. Narr. John Pilger. London: Associated Television for ITV, 1980.
- Carey, Peter. *True History of the Kelly Gang*. St Lucia: U of Queensland Pr, 2000.
- Carnegie, Dale. *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. 1937. Sydney: Angus, 1962.
- Castro, Fidel. 'H.E. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, opening address.' *Addresses Delivered at the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, Havana 3-9 September 1979*. La Habana: Editorial De Ciencias Sociales, 1980. 3-17.
- Chanda, Nayan. *Brother Enemy—the War after the War*. New York: Collier, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Ghost At the feast—Khmer Rouge Decries UN Aid, Blocks Peace Process.' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 2 July 1992: 8-9.



- \_\_\_\_\_. 'When Words Don't Matter--Sihanouk Says His United Front Initiative Is a Ploy to Deflect Power From Khmer Exiles, China and the Khmer Rouge.' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 6 March 1981: 14-18.
- Chandler, David P. *Brother Number One—A Political Biography of Pol Pot*. 1993. Boulder: Westview, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Facing the Cambodian Past—Selected Essays 1971-1994*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Tragedy of Cambodian History—Politics, War and Revolution Since 1945*. New Haven: Yale U Pr, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Voices From S-21—Terror and History in Pol Pot's Secret Prison*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000.
- Chandler, David, and Ben Kiernan, eds. *Revolution and its Aftermath in Kampuchea: Eight Essays*. Southeast Asia Studies Monograph Series 25. New Haven: Yale U Pr, 1983.
- Chandler, David P., Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, eds. *Pol Pot Plans the Future: Confidential Leadership Documents From Democratic Kampuchea, 1976-77*. Trans. David P. Chandler, Ben Kiernan & Chanthou Boua. Southeast Asia Studies Monograph Series 33. New Haven: Yale U Pr, 1988.
- Chhang, Youk. Personal interview (Documentation Center of Cambodia, Phnom Penh). 14 May 2002.
- Children of Krsousar Thmey*. Videocassette. Dir. Marcus D'Arcy. Narr. Jack Thompson. SBS Television. 1994.
- Chollet, Derek. 'The Age of Genocide.' *Policy Review* 114 (August 2002). 22 October 2003 <<http://policyreview.org/AUG02/chollet.htm>>.
- Chomsky, Noam. *American Power and the New Mandarins*. 1969. London: Penguin, 1971.
- Cixous, Hélène. *The Terrible but Unfinished Story of Norodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia*. 1985, 1987. Trans. Juliet Flower MacCannell, Judith Pike, & Lollie Groth from the French. Lincoln: U of Nebraska Pr, 1994.
- Clendinnen, Inga. *Reading the Holocaust*. Melbourne: Text, 1998.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. 1902. London: Penguin, 1988.
- Davies, Paul. *War of the Mines—Cambodia, Landmines and the Impoverishment of a Nation*. Photog. Nic Dunlop. London: Pluto, 1994.
- Davison, Peter. 'General Introduction.' *George Orwell—The Complete Works*. Ed. Peter Davison. Vol.10. *A Kind of Compulsion*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1998. xvii-xxvii.
- De Nike, Howard J., John Quigley, & Kenneth J. Robinson, eds. *Genocide in Cambodia—Documents From the Trial of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania Pr, 2000.
- Dee, Jonathon. 'The Reanimators: On the art of literary graverobbing.' *Harper's Magazine* June 1999: 76-84.
- DeLillo, Don. 'American Blood—A Journey Through the Labyrinth of Dallas and JFK.' *Rolling Stone*. Australian Ed. December 1983: 72-76, 79.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Libra*. London: Penguin, 1988.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Mao II*. London, Cape, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'The Power of History.' *New York Times Book Review* 7 September 1997. 23 June 2004 <<http://www.nytimes.com/library/books/090797articles3.html>>.
- Democratic Kampuchea. *Minute of the Standing Committee. The Front. 11 March 1976*. Ed. David Chandler. Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number: D7562. Online posting. *Camnews*. 15 October 2001. 18 October 2001 <<http://cambodia.org/news/>>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'The First Session in the First Legislature of Kampuchean People's Representative Assembly, April 11-13, 1976.' *Documentation Center of Cambodia*. Unofficial trans. Bun Sou Sour, nd. 11 February 2002 <<http://welcome.to/dccam>>.
- Deng Xiaoping. 'Replies to the American TV Correspondent Mike Wallace.' *60 Minutes (CBS)*. [Transcript altered]. 2 September 1986. 15 October 2002 <<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/c156ohtm>>.
- Desowitz, Robert S. *The Malaria Capers—More Tales of Parasites and People, Research and Reality*. New York: Norton, 1991.
- Downie, Sue, & Damien Kingsbury. 'Political Development and the Re-Emergence of Civil Society in Cambodia.' *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 23.1 (2001): 43-64.
- Doyle, Michael W., Ian Johnstone & Robert C. Orr (eds). *Keeping the Peace: Multidimensional UN Operations in Cambodia and El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge U Pr, 1997.
- Drabble, Margaret. 'Killing Time: A Visit to a Cambodian Refugee Camp.' *Harper's Magazine* April 1989: 69-72.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Gates of Ivory*. London: Viking, 1991.
- Duiker, William J. *Ho Chi Minh*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000.
- Dumas, Roland. 'Statement Delivered on 30 July 1989 By Mr H.E. Roland Dumas Minister for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic Co-President of the Paris Conference on Cambodia.' *Speeches and Statements*. Transcript. Sp.St/LON/84/89, 1989.
- Dunlop, Nic, and Nate Thayer. 'Chief of the Sinners.' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 6 May 1999: 22-23.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Duch Confesses.' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 6 May 1999: 18-20.
- Ebihara, May Mayko. *Svay—A Khmer Village in Cambodia*. Diss. Columbia U, 1968. Microfilm. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1971.
- Eder, Richard. "'The Gate': The Executioner's Soft Side.' *New York Times* 20 April 2003: Section 7, 13.
- Engelhardt, Tom. 'The Cartography of Death.' *The Nation* 23 October 2000: 25-34.
- Ester, Helen. *Vietnam, Thailand, Kampuchea: A First Hand Account*. Canberra: Australian Council for Overseas Aid, 1980.
- Etcheson, Craig. 'Khieu Samphan on Affairs of the Heart (Includes the 26 Precepts of "Brother Khieu Samphan Theory").' With trans. By Lay Putheara. *Phnom Penh Post*. 11 November —27 December 1998. 12 May 2001 <<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/TXT/comments/khieu.htm>>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Rise and Demise of Democratic Kampuchea*. Boulder: Westview, 1984.

- Evans, Grant. 'William Shawcross's Cambodian Crusade.' *New Left Review* 152 (July/August 1985): 120-128.
- Evans, Grant, and Kevin Rowley. *Red Brotherhood At War—Indochina Since the Fall of Saigon*. London: Verso, 1984.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin White Masks*. 1952. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. London: Granada, 1972.
- Fawcett, Brian. 1986. *Cambodia—A book for people Who Find Television Too Slow*. Vancouver: Talon, 1990.
- Fear and Hope in Cambodia—An Independent Report Written and Narrated by William Shawcross*. Videocassette. Dir. Isabelle Abric. Writer William Shawcross. New York: United Nations Television, c.1993.
- Fest, Joachim C. *Speer: The Final Verdict*. Trans. Ewald Osvers and Alexandra Dring. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2001.
- Front Line*. Videocassette. Dir. David Bradbury. Writ. David Bradbury & Bob Connolly. Sydney: AFC, 1979.
- Galbraith, John Kenneth. *The Affluent Society*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1958.
- Gaddis, William. *JR*. New York: Knopf, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'On receiving the National Book Award for *A Frolic of His Own*.' *The Rush For Second Place*. Ed. Joseph Tabbi. Penguin: New York, 2002. 127-131.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'On receiving the National Book Award for *JR*.' *The Rush For Second Place*. Ed. Joseph Tabbi. New York: Penguin, 2002. 122.
- Gass, William. *The Tunnel*. 1995. Normal, Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press, 1999.
- Gottesman, Evan R. *Cambodia After the Khmer Rouge—Inside the Politics of Nation Building*. New Haven: Yale U Pr, 2002.
- Grant, Jonathon S., Laurence A.G. Moss & Jonathon Unger, eds. *Cambodia—The Widening War in Indochina*. New York: Washington Square, 1971.
- Grant, Margot. *Bamboo and Barbed Wire—Eight Years As a Volunteer in a Refugee Camp*. Mandurah: DB, 2000.
- Gray, Spalding. *Swimming to Cambodia—The Collected works of Spalding Gray*. London: Picador, 1987.
- Greene, Graham. *The Quiet American*. 1955. London: Heinemann, 1973.
- Gunn, Geoffrey C., and Jefferson Lee. *Cambodia Watching Down Under*. IAS Monograph No.047. Bangkok: Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1991.
- Haas, Michael. *Cambodia, Pol Pot, and the United States—the Faustian pact*. New York: Praeger, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Genocide By Proxy—Cambodian Pawn on a Superpower Chessboard*. New York: Praeger, 1991.
- Halberstam, David. *The Making of a Quagmire*. London: Bodley Head, 1965.
- Hall, Tim, photog. *Cambodia: A Portrait*. Text John Hoskin. Hong Kong: Elsworth, 1992.

- Harrison, Keith. 'Narrative Theory/Creative Acts?' *Text* 7, 1 (April 2003). 1 October 2003 <[www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/aprilo3/harrison.htm](http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/aprilo3/harrison.htm)>.
- Hawk, David. 'Tuol Sleng Extermination Center (Cambodia).' *Index on Censorship*. 15. 1 (1986): 25-31.
- Headley, Robert K. Jr., and Kassie S. Neou. *English-Khmer Phrase Book*. New York: Field Operations Division, Office of General Services, United Nations, 1991.
- Heder, Stephen. *Pol Pot and Khieu Samphan*. Centre of Southeast Asian Studies Working Paper 70. Melbourne: Monash U, 1991.
- Heder, Steve, and Judy Ledgerwood, eds. *Propaganda, Politics and Violence in Cambodia—Democratic Transition Under United Nations Peace-keeping*. London: Sharpe, 1996.
- Heder, Stephen, with Brian D. Titlemore. *Seven Candidates for Prosecution: Accountability for the Crimes of the Khmer Rouge*. War Crimes Research Office, Washington College of Law, American University and Coalition for International Justice: 2001.
- Heiss, Anita. 'Aborigines Taking control of Their History.' *ANU Reporter* 8 April 1998. 15 October 2003 <[http://info.anu.edu.au/mac/Newsletters\\_and\\_Journals/ANU\\_Reporter/\\_pdf/vol\\_29\\_no\\_04/aborigines.html](http://info.anu.edu.au/mac/Newsletters_and_Journals/ANU_Reporter/_pdf/vol_29_no_04/aborigines.html)>.
- Hildebrand, George C., & Gareth Porter. *Cambodia: Starvation and Revolution*. New York: Montly Review Pr, 1976.
- Hillerman, Tony. *Finding Moon*. New York: Harper, 1995.
- Him, Chanrithy. *When Broken Glass Floats—Growing Up Under the Khmer Rouge*. New York: Norton, 2000.
- Hosking, Sue. 'The Wanda Koolmatrie Hoax: Who Cares? Does it Matter? Of Course it Does!' *Adelaidean* 21 April 1997: 2.
- Hou Yuon. 'The Peasantry of Kampuchea: Colonialism and Modernization.' Ben Kiernan & Chanthou Boua, eds. *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942-1981*. London: Zed, 1982. 34-68.
- Hu Nim. 'Land Tenure and Social Structure in Kampuchea.' Ben Kiernan & Chanthou Boua, eds. *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942-1981*. London: Zed, 1982. 69-86.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Planning the Past: The Forced Confessions of Hu Nim (Tuol Sleng Prison, May-June 1977, 105pp., Handwritten.)' Trans. Chanthou Boua. *Pol Pot Plans the Future—Confidential Leadership Documents from Democratic Kampuchea, 1976-1977*. Eds. Ben Kiernan, David P. Chandler, & Chanthou Boua. Monograph Series 33. New Haven: Yale U Southeast Asia Studies, 1988. 227-317.
- Huffman, Franklin E., & Im Proum. *Cambodian Literary Reader and Glossary*. New Haven: Yale U Pr, 1977.
- Huffman, Franklin E., with Im Proum. *Intermediate Cambodian Reader*. New Haven: Yale U Pr, 1972.
- Huffman, Franklin E., with Chhom-Rak Thong Lambert & Im Proum. *Cambodian System of Writing and Beginning Reader with Drills and Glossary*. New Haven: Yale U Pr, 1970.

- Ieng Sary's Regime. *A Diary of the Khmer Rouge Foreign Ministry, 1976-79*. Trans. Phat Kosal & Ben Kiernan with Sorya Sim. The Cambodia Genocide Program and the Documentation Center of Cambodia Joint Translation Series No.1. 7 May 2001 <<http://www.yale.edu/cgp/resources.html>>.
- Igout, Michel. *Phnom Penh Then and Now*. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1993.
- Imam, Vannary. *When Elephants Fight—A Memoir*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000.
- Inglis, Fred. *People's Witness—The Journalist in Modern Politics*. New Haven: Yale U Pr, 2002.
- International Federation of Journalists. *IFJ Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists* nd. 9 February 2004 <[www.ifj.org](http://www.ifj.org)>.
- Ith Sarin. 'Life in the Bureaus (Offices) of the Khmer Rouge.' Timothy Michael Carney, ed. *Communist Party Power in Kampuchea (Cambodia): Documents and Discussion*. Data Paper 106. Cornell: Southeast Asia Program. Dept of Asian Studies, 1977: 42-55.
- . 'Nine Months With the Maquis.' Timothy Michael Carney, ed. *Communist Party Power in Kampuchea (Cambodia): Documents and Discussion*. Data Paper 106. Cornell: Southeast Asia Program. Dept of Asian Studies, 1977:34-41.
- Jackson, Karl D., ed. *Cambodia 1975-1978: Rendezvous With Death*. Princeton: Princeton U Pr, 1989.
- Jacob, Judith M. *Cambodian Linguistics, Literature and History: Collected Articles*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1993.
- Jarvis, Helen, compiler. *Cambodia*. World Bibliographic Series. Vol.200. Oxford: Clio Pr, 1997.
- Jensen, Carsten. *I Have Seen the World Begin*. 1996. Transl. Barbara Haveland from the Danish. New York: Harcourt, 2000.
- Johnson, Bryan. 'A Parody of a Prince for a Sad Land.' *Globe & Mail* 20 February 1981: 8.
- Johnson, Lyndon B. 'President Lyndon B Johnson's Address to the Nation Announcing Steps to Limit the War in Vietnam and Reporting His Decision Not to Seek Reelection, March 31, 1968.' *Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum* 22 May 2004 <<http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/680331.asp>>.
- Jones, Christopher. 'In the Land of the Khmer Rouge.' *New York Times* 20 December 1981: 70.
- Kamm, Henry. *Cambodia—Report From a Stricken Land*. New York: Arcade, 1998.
- Kampuchea Dossier I*. Hanoi: Vietnam Courier, 1978.
- Kampuchea Dossier II*. Hanoi: Vietnam Courier, 1978.
- Kampuchea Dossier III—The Dark Years*. Hanoi: Vietnam Courier 1979
- Ke Pok. 'Autobiography of a Mass Murderer.' *Phnom Penh Post* 1-14 March 2002. 5 March 2002 <[www.phnompenhpost.com/TXT/current/stories/autobio.html](http://www.phnompenhpost.com/TXT/current/stories/autobio.html)>.
- Keeley, Edmund. *A Wilderness Called Peace*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985.
- Kenner, Hugh. *The Counterfeiters—An Historical Comedy*. 1968. Baltimore: The John Hopkins U Pr, 1985.

- Keown, Damien. *Buddhism—A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford U Pr, 1996.
- Kevin, Tony. 'Cambodia's International Rehabilitation, 1997–2000.' *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 22.3 (2000): 594-612.
- Khieu Samphan. *Cambodia's Economy and Industrial Development, for Doctorat in Economics*. 1959, Paris. Trans. & intro. Laura Summers. Data Paper 111, Southeast Asia Program. Ithaca: Cornell U, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Cambodia's Recent History and My Successive Stances*. Published in Khmer. Phnom Penh: Ponleu, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Khieu Samphan Speech at Sixth Nonaligned Summit Conference.' (*Clandestine Voice of Democratic Kampuchea in Cambodian to Kampuchea*). 15 September 1979. *Daily Report. Asia and Pacific. FBIS* [microform]: H2-H5.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Khieu Samphan's Statement on Formation of Kampuchean Coalition Government.' *Xinhua News Agency* 062256. June 1982. 21 March 2004 <<http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/>>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Message From His Excellency Khieu Samphan, Former DK Head of state, to His Excellency Hun Sen, Royal Government of Cambodia Prime Minister (Letter of Surrender).' *BBC Online Network—BBC News* 26 December 1998. 3 April 2002 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/242670.stm>>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Speech by Khieu Samphan at Bangkok Conference on Cambodia, 25 July 1987.' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (Voice of the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea in Cambodia)* FE/8631/A3/1, 28 July 1987. 9 February 2004 <<http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/>>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Translation of Khieu Samphan Letter to Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh.' 26 June 1997. *Phnom Penh Daily* 6 July 2001 <[phnompenhdaily.com/wb39.htm](http://phnompenhdaily.com/wb39.htm)>.
- Kiernan, Ben. *How Pol Pot Came to Power—A History of Communism in Kampuchea, 1930-1975*. London: Verso, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Introduction.' *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia—The Khmer Rouge, the United Nations and the International Community*. Ed. Ben Kiernan. Southeast Asian Studies Monograph Series 41. New Haven: Yale U, 1993: 9-32.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Introduction—Conflict in Cambodia, 1945-2002.' *Critical Asian Studies* 34. 4 (2002): 483-495.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Put Not Thy Trust in Princes: Burchett on Kampuchea.' *Burchett Reporting the Other Side of the World 1939-1983*. Ed. Ben Kiernan. London: Quartet Books, 1986. 252-69.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Review Essay: William Shawcross, Declining Cambodia.' *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 18, 1 (January-March 1986): 56-63.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'The Inclusion of the Khmer Rouge in the Cambodian Peace Process: Causes and Consequences.' Ed. Ben Kiernan. *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia—the Khmer Rouge, the United Nations and the International Community*. Southeast Asian Studies Monograph Series 41. New Haven: Yale U, 1993: 191-272.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Pol Pot Regime—Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*. New Haven: Yale U Pr, 1996.
- Kiljunen, Kimmo, ed. *Kampuchea Decade of the Genocide—Report of a Finnish Inquiry Commission*. London: Zed, 1984.

- Kissinger, Henry. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ending the Vietnam War—A History of America's Involvement in and Extrication from the Vietnam War*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *White House Years*. Boston: Little Brown, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Years of Renewal*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Years of Upheaval*. Boston: Little Brown, 1982.
- Klima, Ivan. *Love and Garbage*. 1986. Trans. Eward Osers from the Czech. New York: Vintage, 1993.
- Klintworth, Gary. *Vietnam's Intervention in Cambodia in International Law*. AGPS: Canberra, 1989.
- Koolmatrie, Wanda. *My Own Sweet Time*. Broome: Magabala Bks, 1994.
- Knightley, Phillip. *The First Casualty—The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Kosovo*. 1975. London: Prion, 2000.
- Koch, Christopher. *Highways to a War*. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1995.
- Krauth, Nigel. 'The Preface As Exegesis.' *Text* 6, 1 (April 2002). 1 October 2003 <<http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/april02/krauth.htm>>.
- Kundera, Milan. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. 1981. Trans. Aaron Asher (from the French). London: Faber, 1996.
- Lenin, V.I. *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism—a Popular Outline*. 1916. Moscow: Progress, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The State and Revolution*. 1918. Trans. Robert Service. London: Penguin, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *What is to Done?* 1902. Trans. Joe Fineberg & George Hanna. London: Penguin, 1989.
- Levene, Mark, & Penny Roberts, ed. *The Massacre in History*. New York & Oxford: Berhahn Books, 1999.
- Lind, Michael. *Vietnam the Necessary War—A Reinterpretation of America's Most Disastrous Military Conflict*. New York: Free Pr, 1999.
- Liu Shao-Chi. 1939. *How to Be a Good Communist*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1964.
- Lizée, Pierre P. *Peace, Power and Resistance in Cambodia—Global Governance and the Failure of International Conflict Resolution*. London: Macmillan, 2000.
- Lustbader, Eric. *Black Heart*. 1983. London: Harper, 1993.
- Mabbett, Ian, and David Chandler. *The Khmers*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
- Manguel, Alberto. *News From a Foreign Country Came*. London: Harper, 1991.
- Manne, Robert. *The Shadow of 1917—Cold War Conflict in Australia*. Melbourne: Text, 1994.
- Mao Zedong. *Mao Tse-Tung Unrehearsed—Talks and Letters 1956-71*. Ed. Stuart Schram. Trans. John Chinnery & Tiejun. London: Penguin, 1974.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Quotations from Mao Tse-Tung (The Little Red Book)*. Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1967.
- Mao Zedong, and others. 'Message from Chairman Mao Tsetung, Chairman Chu Ted and Premier Chou En-Lai to Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Prime Minister Penn Nouth and Deputy Prime Minister Khieu Samphan, April 17, 1975.' *Great Victory of the Cambodian People—Warmly Congratulating the Patriotic Cambodian Armed Forces and People on the Liberation of Phnom Penh and all Cambodians*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1975. 1-3.
- Marks, Stephen P. 'Elusive Justice for the Victims of the Khmer Rouge.' *Journal of International Affairs* 52. 2 (Spring 1989): 691-718.
- Marston, John. 'Metaphors of the Khmer Rouge.' May M. Ebihara and others, eds. *Cambodian Culture since 1975—Homeland and Exile*. Ithaca: Cornell U Pr, 1994. 105-118.
- Martin, Marie Alexandrine. *Cambodia—A Shattered Society*. 1989. Trans. Mark W. McLeod from the French. Berkeley: U of California Pr, 1994.
- Mason, Linda, and Roger Brown. *Rice, Rivalry, and Politics—Managing Cambodian Relief*. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame Pr, 1983.
- McIntyre, Kevin. 'Geography as Destiny: Cities, Villages and Khmer Rouge Orientalism.' *Comparative Studies in Society & History* 38.4 (1996): 730-58.
- McMillen, Donald H., ed. *Conflict Resolution in Kampuchea: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Indochina*. Brisbane: Griffith University, 1988.
- Meisner, Maurice J. *Marxism, Maoism and Utopianism: Eight Essays*. Madison: U of Wisconsin, 1982.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Humanism and Terror—An Essay on the Communist Problem*. 1947. Trans. John O'Neill. Boston: Beacon, 1969.
- Mertzl, Jamie. *Western Responses to Human Rights Abuses in Cambodia, 1975-80*. New York: St Martin's Pr, 1996.
- Mirsky, Jonathan. 'What Really Happened in Kampuchea?' *Times Educational Supplement* 26 October 1984: 22.
- Mo, Timothy. *The Redundancy of Courage*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1991.
- Moeller, Susan D. *Compassion Fatigue—How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death*. New York & London: Routledge, 1999.
- Moorhouse, Frank. 'An Inquiry into the Plague of Deconstruction.' *The Inspector-General of Misconception—The Ultimate Compendium to Sorting Things Out*. Sydney: Random, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Dark Palace: The Companion Novel to Grand Days*. Sydney: Random House, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Grand Days*. Sydney: Macmillan, 1993.
- Morris, Edmund. *Dutch—A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*. New York: Random House, 1999.
- Morris, Stephen J. *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia: Political Culture and the Causes of War*. Stanford: Stanford U Pr, 1999.
- Muskie, Edward S. *Exploring Cambodia—Issues and Reality in a Time of Transition. Findings and Recommendations From the Visit to Thailand, Vietnam and*



- Cambodia Undertaken By Former U.S. Senator and Secretary of State Edward S. Muskie*. Washington D.C.: Center for National Policy, 1990.
- Mydans, Seth. 'Two Khmer Rouge Leaders Spend Beach Holiday in Shadow of Past.' *New York Times* 1 January 1999: Sect A., 1.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Under Prodding, 2 Khmer Rouge Apologize for Cambodian Anguish.' *New York Times* 30 December 1998: Sect A., 3.
- Mysliwiec, Eva. *Punishing the Poor—The International Isolation of Kampuchea*. London: Oxfam, 1988.
- Neuringer, Sheldon. *The Carter Administration, Human Rights, and the Agony of Cambodia*. New York: Edwin Mellen, 1993.
- Normand, Roger. 'The Teachings of Chairman Pot.' *The Nation* 27 August/3 September (1990): 198-202
- Norodom Sihanouk. *Prisonniers des Khmers Rouges*. Paris: Hachette, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1979. *War and Hope— The Case for Cambodia*. New York: Pantheon, 1980.
- Norodom Sihanouk, as related to Wilfred Burchett. *My War with the CIA—The Memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk*. 1973. London: Penguin, 1974.
- Nuon Chea. *Statement of the Communist Party of Kampuchea [CPK] to the Communist Workers' Party of Denmark, July 1978*. Recorded & transl. Peter Bischoff. Edited, abridged, annotated Laura Summers. Documentation Center of Cambodia. May 2001. 11 February 2002 < <http://www.dccam.org> >.
- Orwell, George. 'Why I Write.' *George Orwell—The Complete Works*. 1946. Ed. Peter Davison. Vol. 18. *Smothered Under Journalism*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1998. 316-321.
- Osborne, Milton. *Before Kampuchea: Preludes to Tragedy*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sihanouk—Prince of Light, Prince of Darkness*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994.
- Page, Tim. *Another Vietnam—Pictures of the War From the Other Side*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Derailed in Uncle Ho's Victory Garden—Return to Vietnam and Cambodia*. London: Scribner, 1999.
- Peang-Meth, Abdulgaffer. *Cambodia and the United Nations: Comparative Foreign Policies Under Four Regimes*. Diss. U of Michigan, 1980. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1981.
- Perlmutter, David D. *Visions of War—Picturing Warfare From the Stone Age to the Cyber Age*. New York: St Martin's Pr, 1999.
- Perry, Roland. *The Exile—Burchett: Reporter of Conflict*. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1988.
- Picq, Laurence. *Beyond the Horizon—Five Years With the Khmer Rouge*. Trans. Patricia Norland. New York: St Martin's Pr, 1989.
- Pilch, Imogen. *Prospects for the Neutralisation of Kampuchea*. Australia-Asia Papers 43. Nathan, Qld: Griffith U, 1988.
- Pilger, John. *Distant Voices*. London: Vintage, 1992.

- Pilger, John, and Anthony Barnett. *Aftermath—The Struggle of Cambodia and Vietnam*. New Statesman Report No.5. London: New Statesman, 1982.
- Pilz, Christel. 'Khieu Samphan: Giving Up on Socialism?' *Asia Record* 1.7 (October 1980): 13.
- Pin Yathay, with John Man. *Stay Alive, My Son*. New York: Free Pr, 1987.
- PoKempner, Dinah. *Cambodia At War*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1995.
- Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge*. Videocassette. Dir. Adrian Maben. Paris: Films du Bouloi, 2001.
- Pol Pot Files, 1975-1977— Comprise Selected 1975-77 Correspondence to and from the Prime Minister of Democratic Kampuchea and General Secretary of the Ruling Communist Party of Kampuchea, Pol Pot, Alias Brother Pol, Alias Comrade Secretary, Alias 870, or Brother 87*. Trans. by the Cambodia Genocide Program from the Santebal archives at the Documentation Center of Cambodia. 7 May 2001 <<http://www.yale.edu/cgp/resources.html>>.
- Ponchaud, Francois. *Cambodia Year Zero*. Trans. from the French by Nancy Amphoux. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977.
- Power, Samantha. "A Problem From Hell"—*America and the Age of Genocide*. 2002. London: Harper, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Phnom Penh Dispatch: Barely Trying (Bringing the Khmer Rouge to Justice).' *New Republic* 8 May 2000: 16-18.
- Powers, Richard. *The Time of our Singing*. London: Heinemann, 2003.
- Press Office of the Royal Palace, Cambodia. *Modern Cambodia*. Phnom Penh: Press Office of the Royal Palace, c.1950.
- Price, David W. *History Made, History Imagined—Contemporary Literature, Poiesis, and the Past*. Urbana: U of Illinois Pr, 1999.
- Public Enemy Number One*. Videocassette. Dir. David Bradbury. Sydney: AFC, 1984.
- Radzinskii, Edvard. *Stalin*. Trans. H.T. Willets. London: Septre, 1997.
- Raskin, Marcus G. Raskin, and Bernard B. Fall. *The Viet-Nam Reader—Articles and Documents on American Foreign Policy and the Viet-Nam Crisis*. New York: Random, 1965.
- Raszelenbeg, Patrick and Peter Schier, with Jerrfy G. Wong. *The Cambodia Conflict: Search for a Settlement, 1979-1991: An Analytical Chronology*. Hamburg: Institute of Asian Affairs, 1995.
- Ratner, Steven R. *The New UN Peacekeeping: Building Peace in Lands of Conflict After the Cold War*. New York: St Martin's Pr, 1995.
- Riddle, Tom. *Cambodian Interlude—Inside the United Nations' 1993 Election*. Bangkok: White Orchid Pr, 1997.
- Ridley, Jasper. *Tito*. London: Constable, 1994.
- Roberts, David W. *Political Transition in Cambodia 1991-99—Power, Elitism and Democracy*. New York: St Martin's Pr, 2001.
- Rockoff, Al. *Photography Exhibition*. Foreign Correspondent's Club, Phnom Penh: May 2000.

- Rodden, John. *The Politics of Literary Reputation—The Making and Claiming of 'St. George' Orwell*. New York: Oxford U Pr, 1989.
- Rollyson, Carl. *Beautiful Exile—the Life of Martha Gellhorn*. London: Aurum Pr, 2001.
- Romein, Jan, with Jan Erik Romein. *The Asian Century—A History of Modern Nationalism in Asia*. 1956. Trans. R.T. Clark. London: Allen & Unwin, 1962.
- Sallis, Eva. 'Research Fiction.' *Text* 3. 2 (October 1999). 1 October 2003 <<http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/oct99/sallis.htm>>.
- Samuels, Andrew. *The Political Psyche*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Sar Sarun. *The Khmer Mentality (Proloeng Khmer)*. 1973. Trans. Kua Cham, 1997. Further editing Vannareth Lamm & William Snyder 2003. 2 November 2003 <[www.khmerinstitute.org/articles/art12html](http://www.khmerinstitute.org/articles/art12html)>.
- Schanberg, Sydney H. *The Death and Life of Dith Pran*. New York: Penguin, 1985.
- Schier, Peter, & Manola Schier-Oum. *Prince Sihanouk on Cambodia—interviews and talks with Prince Norodom Sihanouk*. Hamburg : Institut für Asienkunde, 1985.
- Schlink, Bernard. *The Reader*. 1997. Trans. Carol Brown Janeway. London: Phoenix House, 1999.
- Schuessler, Jennifer. 'God and the Critic.' *New York Review of Books* 17 July 2003: 30-31.
- Schwab, Orrin. *Defending the Free World—John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and the Vietnam War, 1961-1965*. Westport: Praeger, 1998.
- Schwarz, Daniel R. *Imagining the Holocaust*. New York: St Martin's Pr, 1999.
- Sereny, Gitta. *Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth*. 1995. London: Picador, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Into That Darkness—From Mercy Killing to Mass Murder*. London: Andrew Deutsch, 1974.
- Shawcross. *Cambodia's New Deal—A Report by William Shawcross. Contemporary Issues 1*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Deliver Us From Evil—Peacekeepers, Warlords and a World of Endless Conflict*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Escape From Year Zero.' *Sunday Telegraph* 19 January 2003. 20 June 2003 <[www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2003/01/19/bobiz19.xml](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2003/01/19/bobiz19.xml)>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Quality of Mercy—Cambodia, Holocaust and Modern Conscience*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sideshow—Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia*. 1979. London: Fontana, 1980.
- Smith, Frank. *Interpretive Accounts of the Khmer Rouge Years—Personal Experiences in Cambodian Peasant World View*. Madison: U of Wisconsin, Center of Southeast Asian Studies, Occ. Paper 18, 1989.
- Solarz, Stephen J. 'Cambodia and the International Community.' *Foreign Affairs* 69.2 (1990): 99-115.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Like the West, Asians Cherish Democracy.' *Insight on the News* 16 January 1995: 7.

- Solomon, Richard H. *Exiting Indochina: U.S. Leadership of the Cambodian Settlement and Normalization with Vietnam*. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000.
- Someth May. *Cambodian Witness—The Autobiography of Someth May*. 1986. Ed. James Fenton. London: Faber, 1988.
- Soneath Hor, & others. 'Khmer Proverbs & Adages.' *Khmer Institute* 2003. 7 November 2003 <<http://khmerinstitute.org/>>.
- Speer, Albert. *Spandau—The Secret Diaries*. Trans. Richard & Clara Winston from the German. London: Collins, 1976.
- Staub, Ervin. *The Roots of Evil—The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence*. 1989. Cambridge: Cambridge U Pr, 2000.
- Steiner, George. 'Postscript.' *Language and Silence—Essays 1958-1966*. London: Faber, 1967. 180-193.
- Stuart-Fox, Martin. *The Murderous Revolution—Life and Death in Pol Pot's Kampuchea, Based on the Personal Experiences of Bunheang Ung*. Ill. Bunheang Ung. Sydney: APCOL, 1985.
- Summary of the Conclusions of the Meeting of the Five Permanent Members of the Security Council on the Problem of Cambodia*. Sp.St/LON/9/90. Unpub. Paris, 1990.
- Swain, Jon. *River of Time*. London: Minerva, 1996.
- Thayer, Nate. 'Day of Reckoning.' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 30 October 1997:14-17, 20.
- The Friends Who Tried to Empty the Sea: Eleven Cambodian Folk Stories*. Transl. David P. Chandler. Centre for Southeast Asian Studies Working Paper 8. Melbourne: Monash University, 1976.
- The Killing Fields*. Videocassette. Dir. Roland Joffé. London: Goldcrest Films, 1984.
- The Last God-King—The Life and Times of Cambodia's Sihanouk*. Videocassette. Dir. & writer James Gerrand. Narr. Stuart Littlemore. Sydney: Gerrand, 1996.
- Thet Sambath and Adam Piore. 'The Final Chapter—The Veil of Secrecy is Lifting on the Last Days of the Khmer Rouge.' *Cambodia Daily* 8-9 April 2000. 12 June 2002 <[http://www.camnet.com.kh/cambodia.daily/selected\\_features/final\\_chapter.htm](http://www.camnet.com.kh/cambodia.daily/selected_features/final_chapter.htm)>.
- Thion, Serge. *Watching Cambodia—Ten Paths to Enter the Cambodian Tangle*. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1993.
- Thiounn Prasith. 'Autobiography of Thiounn Prasith.' 25 December 1976. *Cambodian Genocide Project, Yale University*. 10 August 2003 <<http://www.yale.edu/cgp/resources.html>>.
- Ung, Loung. *First They Killed My Father—A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers*. Sydney: Flamingo, 2000.
- United Nations. 'A UN Historical Perspective.' Background doc. World Forum Against Racism, NGO Forum. Durban, Sth Africa, 28 August-1 September 2001. 7 September 2001 <[www.racism.org.za/NGOFORUM\\_nav\\_background.htm](http://www.racism.org.za/NGOFORUM_nav_background.htm)>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict*. Paris: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1992.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Report of the International Conference on Kampuchea: New York (13-17 July 1981)*. New York: United Nations, 1981.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The United Nations and Cambodia 1991 - 1995*. Blue Books Series, Vol. II. New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1995.
- United States. *Hope for Cambodia: Preventing the Return of the Khmer Rouge and Aiding the Refugees: Hearings & Markup Before the Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundredth Congress, Second Session, on H.J. Res. 602*. Washington, D.C.: Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, June 30 & July 28, 1988.
- Vickery, Michael. *Cambodia 1975-1982*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Kampuchea: Politics, Economics, and Society*. London: Pinter, 1986.
- Vidal, Gore. *Lincoln*. New York: Random House, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Palimpsest: A Memoir*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1995.
- Vietnam—A Television History*. Videocassettes. 13 Episodes. Boston: WGBH, 1983.
- Voice of Democratic Kampuchea*. 'Is This a Constitution?' *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* FE/6674/A3/1. 16 March 1981. 9 February 2004 <<http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/>>.
- Vollmann, William T. *Butterfly Stories*. New York: Grove Press, 1993.
- Walker, Alice. 'This That I Offer You.' *Anything We Love Can Be Saved—A Writer's Activism*. London: Women's Press, 1997. 175-178.
- Warner, Denis. *Reporting South-East Asia*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1966.
- Waugh, Evelyn. *Scoop—A Novel About Journalists*. London: Chapman & Hall, 1938.
- Whitaker, Donald P., and others. *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)*. Washington: U.S. Government Printer, 1973.
- Wiesel, Elie. 'Does the Holocaust Lie Beyond the Reach of Art.' *Against Silence—The Voice and Vision of Elie Wiesel*. Vol.2. Ed. Irving Abrahamson. New York: Holocaust Library, 1985. 124-127.
- Winterson, Jeanette. 'A Work of My Own.' *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*. London: Johnathon Cape, 1995. 165-192.
- Williams, Maslyn. *The Land in Between—The Cambodian Dilemma*. Sydney: Collins, 1969.
- Year Zero*. Videocassette. Dir. David Munro. Reporter John Pilger. London: Associated Television for ITV, 1979.
- Yun Shui. 'An Account of Chinese Diplomats Accompanying the Government of Democratic Kampuchea's Move to the Cardamom Mountains.' Trans. Paul Marks. *Critical Asian Studies* 34. 4 (2002): 496-519.

Advertiser (Adelaide)

Age (Melbourne)

Agence France Press

*Associated Press*

*Australian*

*Australian Kampuchean Quarterly (Sydney)*

*BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*

*Cambodia Times*

*Cambodia Today*

*Cambodian Genocide Program (Yale University) < <http://www.yale.edu/cgp/>>*

*Camnews. Online posting <<http://cambodia.org/news/>>*

*Daily Report. Asia and Pacific (before 1987) and East Asia (after 1987). FBIS: Foreign Broadcast Information Service (US)*

*Far Eastern Economic Review*

*Globe and Mail (Toronto)*

*Khmer Institute <[www.khmerinstitute.org](http://www.khmerinstitute.org)>*

*Kyodo News Service*

*New York Times*

*Phnom Penh Post*

*Searching for the Truth (Documentation Center of Cambodia, Phnom Penh)*

*Sydney Morning Herald*

*Washington Post*

*Xinhua General Overseas News Service (Beijing)*