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28

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abstract

My PhD thesis is comprised of two components, a creative and a critical. The creative component is in the form of a novel, titled *28*, written in the first person by one of the main protagonists, known as Scribe.

During one of his visits to the hospital, where his son lies in a comatose state, Scribe is wandering the corridors when he happens upon a young woman with the intriguing name of 28, a patient being treated for a nervous breakdown. 28 becomes the catalyst for Scribe to begin writing a journal, recording his past and present experiences interlaced with the quirky stories that 28 tells at each of their encounters. As their relationship develops, so does the Scribe's writing, setting both on a course of self discovery. When the truth of 28's identity is revealed, the relationship takes an unexpected turn.

The novel is comprised of twenty-eight chapters, each relating to a year in 28's life and a day in the life of Scribe. Plot is deliberately relegated in this character-driven, psychological study that sets out to confront issues of life, death, morality, and the creative process, issues that insist on surfacing as inescapable forces in the characters' lives.

For the critical component of my thesis I have adopted the essay form, discussing the writing process and how that process affects a cathartic experience for the writer and subsequently the reader. In exploring that process the essay highlights the writer's ability to enter a very crucial creative space, or state of mind. The term 'entering the fictitious' is used to describe that process. It is suggested that the fictitious arena offers immense

creative freedom and endless possibilities, allowing fiction to enter into a discourse in a way that non-fiction is often unable to.