

Edith Cowan University South West
Arts Graduates Catalogue
2013



Edith Cowan University South West Arts Graduates Catalogue 2013

Edith Cowan University

585 Robertson Drive Bunbury 6231

Western Australia

October 2014

Copyright © 2014

Copyright of the works remains the property of the respective authors and artists

All rights reserved

Design: Natalie Rykers

Cover images: Karri Trees I and Karri Trees II by Danielle McLachlan (Front)

Big Rock Exposed by Gina Crowley (Back)

Printed by: Dynamic Print

Editors

Dr Donna Mazza

Dr Vahri McKenzie

Dr Robyn Mundy

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Aksel Dadswell | 5 |
| Sally Murphy | 9 |
| Annie Horner | 12 |
| Danielle McLachlan | 16 |
| Luke Raynsford | 20 |
| Gina Crowley | 24 |
| Rachel McEleney Freebury | 28 |
| Natalie Rykers | 32 |
| Narrelle de Boer | 35 |
| Meagan Allen-Kingdon | 39 |
| Colleen Gillick | 42 |
| Jane Durkin | 46 |

The year 2013 marked the first wave of graduates in our newly designed Bachelor of Arts degree at Edith Cowan University South West. It also aligned with a large and enthusiastic cohort of Arts Honours candidates, exceeding numbers at our Perth campuses. While the graduates featured in this catalogue represent the transition from the Creative Industries to Bachelor of Arts degrees, they share creative talent, academic rigour, perseverance and passion.

We are rewarded by their numerous successes. For example, Danielle McLachlan's paintings, completed for her Honours research project, were shown at the Front Room Gallery of Bunbury Regional Art Galleries in a solo exhibition; Aksel Dadswell's short fiction was selected for an anthology published by Margaret River Press; Narrelle de Boer's expertise in literature and practice-led research qualified her to tutor undergraduates, with encouraging results.

Few accomplishments happen in a vacuum. In the case of our Honours graduates, the supervisory role of mentoring and critique is integral to the student's research journey. Visual arts supervisor Ms Susan Ecker, writing and literature supervisors Dr Donna Mazza, Dr Vahri McKenzie and Dr Robyn Mundy, all made substantial contributions to their students, several of whom are now undertaking postgraduate studies.

In 2013 we reinstated a popular tradition here at ECU South West by hosting a '9x5' art auction, a boisterous event that attracted students, staff and members of the public. Funds raised by the 9x5 were donated to Art Partners WA, and assisted in the production of this catalogue.

I congratulate our 2013 Arts graduates on their academic achievements and wish them outstanding success in future endeavours.



Lyn Farrell
Dean, ECU South West

Aksel Dadswell
Bachelor of Arts
Honours
2013 Graduate



The autumnal night wind stalked the
tree-lined hill with predatory relish

Aksel Dadswell

The Silent Architect

The following is an excerpt from the creative component of Aksel's Honours project, "The Silent Architect". The story spans the length of a year (beginning in Spring and ending in Winter) in the fictional, fantastical city of Brezse (pronounced "breeze"), and follows the protagonist, reclusive writer Alastair Mirthbark. Having just spontaneously murdered a disagreeable critic, Mirthbark discovers that he has a daughter he never knew existed, Annabelle, from a life he left behind across countries and years. With Annabelle's mother dead and nobody left to take care of her, the responsibility falls into the lap of a reluctant Mirthbark. As their relationship grows over the course of the year, a creature Annabelle inadvertently brought across the ocean with her grows too, transforming the course of, not only Mirthbark and Annabelle's lives, but the very foundations of Brezse itself.

AKSEL Dadswell is an emerging writer in the genre of Weird Fiction. His short story "Lamprey" was published by Margaret River Press in 2012, in the anthology *Fire: A Collection of Stories, Poems and Visual Images*, edited by Delys Bird. Following a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Writing and Literature, Aksel graduated with first class Honours in 2013. His thesis, *Chasing the Architect*, explored the sublime – traditionally the sense of awe and terror one feels when coming face to face with a vast and indefinable spectacle, particularly in the natural world – and its relation to the writer's creative process. He is currently working on his PhD novel, *Unpick the Stars*, which explores his favourite elements of Weird Fiction, cosmic horror, and the nature of monsters.

The Silent Architect

Part 3: Autumn

Brezse crawled with shades of red. As the nearby woods turned to fire, a conflagration of leaves drifted through the streets, chased in by the wind. They scurried down alleys, tumbled through the maze of dark stone, crackled underfoot. As if in response to this dry, heatless fire, the lamps lining the streets seemed to give off a warmer, bloodier light.

Pale chunks of cloud matter drifted in the sky, cycling through infinite forms as the high wind tore at them with meddling fingers. They almost glowed against the starless night, rearing over everything. Squatting in a patch of clean dark unencumbered by cloud for the moment, the moon grinned down on the city, all sharp and thin-lipped. It picked out the slick sides of buildings and the narrow, winding streets and the man, walking like he always did, with some clandestine thing driving the urgency of his stride.

Mirthbark's collar was up against the wind's toothy bite, the smoky autumn air stinging his nostrils. The age-worn notebook that made a nest of his inside pocket pressed against his chest. His eyes were pointed at the ground, but they were looking somewhere else entirely, his brow creased into deep thought.

A crumpled bit of paper blew up against his leg. Mirthbark progressed a few more steps, but when it didn't shift or blow away up the street, he leant down to pick it off and unfolded it. It was wet, and the ink had run in places, but even had it been less legible than it was, Mirthbark knew the gist of what it said. It was one of the multitude of cheaply printed handbills that had been spreading about Brezse since those first few sightings of the thing so many referred to as an angel. Mirthbark had heard the term before but given it no heed or credence.

Angels were theological devices, as far as he knew, and theological devices had no place in the realm of reality, in this world of flesh and blood and ink. Especially not in this city, where the last religious group to set its claws into Brezse's spine had burned the newborn industrial quarter to smouldering rubble. The church's attempt to swing the balance of power back to its traditional mindset had succeeded only in turning the population against it. Since then, the city had scrubbed any trace of religious meat from its bones. Brezse's culture had been autonomously atheist for the last decade. Until the religious sickness started to spread during the summer. Mirthbark, his expression curdled in disgust, ran his eyes over the handbill's smudged lettering. It was the same esoteric garbage as the others, speaking of an angel that walked the streets of Brezse, touching all those it met with the bounteous light of something these anonymous zealots referred to as the Architect. The handbill promised peace, tranquillity, a warmth kindled in one's heart and soul.

Mirthbark laughed, and it sounded odd and almost too high in the narrow tread of the empty street. He re-crumpled the handbill, stuffed it without much thought into his pocket. Whatever this angel was, it was no concern of his.

He continued on his way. He traversed the usual labyrinth of streets and backways, further out towards that narrow spit at the city's edge, until he found himself at the threshold of his usual haunt. The autumnal night wind stalked the tree-lined hill with predatory relish, but as usual down here in the ruins it was quiet, still.

Mirthbark stopped. Something was different this night. Something in the ruins was moving, something not compelled by the night wind. Something that perambulated, with limbs and eyes and some quiet kind of curiosity, of sentience.

Goose pimples budded up along his skin. He hovered, tentative, behind a piece of ruined wall. He peeked his gaze out from the hollow of an empty window frame. Flesh and shadow moved amongst the corpses of buildings. Mirthbark blinked, rubbed his eyes. He strained his gaze into the distant murk, trying to make out what could have been shadows mating with shadows, animated by the wind. But there, something pale perhaps, a blur moving against the dark. He might have thought it was a person, but no person was that tall. Whatever it was, angel or hallucination, the thing's movements were languid, as if it walked through water. There was a grace about it that Mirthbark recognised beneath the veneer of his terror. But it was too far away, and all he could make out were vague brushstrokes of moonlit flesh. The rest of it was sticky with shades of night.

Mirthbark edged closer. He eased his boots down on patches of quieter ground, avoiding rusted gears and chunks of obliterated masonry. He spied it again, lurking at the back of a gutted building. It was crouching now, moving its head in a smooth, rhythmic motion over its outstretched limbs.

Something long and wet brushed them with each caress of its head. Mirthbark shifted a little, crouched down near a ruined clock face. It was cleaning itself.

He edged forward a little more, shuffling in a clumsy lope. He had only the dark to hide him. He watched in a taut, terrified crouch, his wide-eyed gaze stuck to the creature as it licked its limbs clean of brick dust and bugs.

Mirthbark frowned. His mind itched. Perhaps he'd been exposed to too much religious propaganda of late. He couldn't be seeing this. He had nothing to compare it to, no previous knowledge of a thing of this shape, this nature. It was something he knew nothing about, something that had sprung up out of the dark that night to torment his rational mind. Without familiarity, without some kind of anchor to the rules that ordered his world, Mirthbark could not fully accept that he hadn't lost his mind.

Then, oblivious to his doubt, the thing rose, and there, at the edge of Brezse, where brick collided with shadow and moonlight tiptoed along rooftops, Mirthbark saw it. It stood there, in those world-nibbled ruins, under moon-cast shadows, its gaping eyes devouring the silvery lunar light.

It had the look about it as though its maker – whatever deranged artist that might be – had taken a person and re-sculpted the clay of their anatomy into some

strange and terrifying design. They had been hasty with the lipless gape of its mouth. Its face seemed unfinished; a sweep of broad contours and empty spaces. Its body had a similar design, too. Where a man was moulded around the angles and joints of his skeleton, the creature seemed too loose and curvaceous to have the same kind of underlying structure. Its limbs lacked any discernible joints, or even fingers or toes, tapering instead to soggy points. Two more limbs, scythe-shaped and vestigial, sprouted from the musculature of the thing's upper back. They flexed and twitched without any apparent agenda.

Mirthbark noticed some markings on its skin, lines that curved up its back, some coiling into tight spirals and others wending their way around other parts of its body, like a kind of organic map. Overall the creature looked too malleable, like a dark savoury jelly in the shape of an angel.

The beating of Mirthbark's heart was almost audible in the blanketing quiet. So this was the angel. It even had wings, or at least what might have been wings, before evolution had stunted, or perhaps myth exaggerated them.

It raised its head and sniffed the air. And then, slower, it seemed, than the growth of Mirthbark's fingernails, the creature, the angel, whatever it was, turned its head towards him. When he saw its eyes finally come to rest on him, crouched down there amongst broken stones and virulent weeds, something tugged so violently on a loose thread inside him that the whole weave threatened to unravel.

The thing blinked, cocked its slippery head. It looked at him, looked *into* him with that silent piercing gaze. Mirthbark, unable to avert his own reciprocal stare, gaped and looked back, immobile.

The angel's eyes were the Inspector's. Mirthbark tried to swallow, but the spit had turned to dust, his mouth to rough brick. He didn't know how, or why, but the creature had the Inspector's eyes. They looked at him, accused him, knew the minutiae of his crimes. He felt unfastened somehow, a crustacean shrunk and rattling inside its shell, his flesh unstuck from the outer carapace. Something was rising inside him, and outside of him, and all around and everywhere. All of the particles of the universe stretching up against gravity, and the trees trembling, and the sky tearing open, but all so neatly, everything disassembling with such a quiet sense of etiquette that you couldn't help but smile and acquiesce to it, and just let it all come apart.

A rustle, a scrape, a shift of some mass behind him. Mirthbark started, turned.

Annabelle stood behind him, eyes up, mouth slack, her small left hand clutching at the cusp of brick wall Mirthbark had so often sat upon during his hours of nocturnal solitude. She'd followed him here again, the same as she had before despite his request that she stay at home. But tonight was not the same.

His heart sank. He opened his mouth in an O of reprimand, of terror, but that was as far as he got. Something was moving at his back again. He felt the air shift behind him, as if the wind was trickling down from the hill above. Annabelle hadn't moved or breathed since he saw her. Mirthbark could see her eyes tracing the angel's progress towards them. He could feel the silence of its approach in his bones and his blood and his skin. He wanted anything but to turn around.

Of course he turned around.

The angel towered as it came. It was terrifying in its stride, but also graceful, and Mirthbark found himself admiring the beauty of the creature's design, until he saw the dull heavy pendulum of the thing's tongue, swinging with a kind of subconscious hunger, and felt a lump sticking in his throat.

It looked at him again, then, with those bright blue eyes, those accusing eyes. Mirthbark swallowed, and his body suddenly burst into movement, his actions clumsy as they tried to catch up to the long seconds of previous inertia.

Mirthbark had Annabelle by the hand, dragging her behind him as he ran and the creature pursued. But they didn't get far. Annabelle tripped, and he felt her hand slipping, and before he could halt or turn or re-establish his grip, she fell. His momentum carried him a few feet ahead before he was able to stop. He turned back, took a step forward to help her. He looked up.

The angel was inches from her, its face impassive, eyes burning bright. It leant groundwards, curving down towards Annabelle with its boneless back. The tip of its tongue brushed her with the lightest of touches. It extended one of its slick arms towards the girl's leg. The things on its back flexed and trembled. Mirthbark had a moment, then, inside his head, when the world seemed to grind to a halt. His thought process, his window of time in which to make a decision, to run or to help his daughter, ballooned out and eclipsed everything else. His gaze drifted. The tree-studded hill beyond this scene was still alive with wind and movement. The angel was grasping Annabelle's ankle with a soundless determination. Annabelle, equally silent, neither screamed nor cried out. She just looked up, her eyes louder than her voice could have been, howling at her father, begging him to unstick himself from whatever fugue had hold of him, begging

him to unstick her from the fugue that had hold of her ankle.

He looked at her, locked eyes with her, saw all this in the elasticity of the drawn-out moment.

It didn't help. His mind remained chaotic, frenzied, a smear of shapes and colours and outcomes he could barely snatch at. In the arbitrary length of that moment the angel began to pull Annabelle towards it. She struggled, clawed

at the dirt, finally cried out for her father. It kept pulling her towards it, oblivious as the endless trundle of clockwork.

All the while, the angel uttered no sound.

Mirthbark tore at the glue that held his gaze to hers. His mind was a blur of wind and noise. He turned and ran, careening off into the compact darkness of the city streets.

A superb and necessary anthology of literature, images and commentary on our relationship to fire in its many manifestations. The works collected here are confronting, challenging, vital and also healing. We witness the destructive effects of fire, but also the visionary and pragmatic role it plays in our lives. These contradictions are often expressed through pain and respect. John Kinsella



Fire

*a collection of stories,
poems and visual images*

EDITED BY DELYS BIRD

Sally Murphy
Bachelor of Arts
Honours
2013 Graduate



My use of pairs in this way is inspired by Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*

Sally Murphy

**Extract from Sally's Honours thesis:
*Flipside: A Children's Poetry Collection
and Exegesis.***

Flipside is a collection of children's poetry, consisting of twenty-two pairs of poems, aimed at children aged between eight and ten years. The poems cover a range of topics, from every day childhood occurrences such as being woken by an alarm clock and riding a bicycle, to special events such as Christmas or life events such as breaking an arm, as well as topics from nature including insects and animals. Each pair explores contrasting topics, or two perspectives of the same or a similar event, inviting readers to consider life's flipside. The use of pairs in this way is inspired by Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*.

This creative work is complemented by an exegesis in the form of an essay which explores the theoretical basis for the project, the influence of Blake and contemporary poets including Steven Herrick and Joyce Sidman, and the rationale underpinning the writing and selection of poems in the final collection. Emphasis is given to reasons for including or excluding poems from the collection, as well as factors considered in determining the final arrangement.

SALLY Murphy is a children's book author, poet and book reviewer with thirty-five books in print. She has completed previous university studies in English, Industrial Relations and Education, worked as a teacher and in a range of customer service roles, as well as juggling the demands of raising six children with her writing career.

Sally's published works include verse novels, picture books, poetry and nonfiction for children, as well as books of educational resources for classroom use. Her work has won awards including the Children's Book category of both the Queensland and Western Australian Premiers' Book Awards.

In 2013 Sally returned to studies, enrolling in and completing the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) programme at ECU South West. She has since commenced doctoral studies in Creative Writing, with her proposed project comprising three works of poetry for children.

Extract from the creative component of the Thesis: paired poems from *Flipside*.

Prince

Father says
I must undertake a quest
so here I am
slashing through the forest
crashing through the forest
smashing through the forest
the thorny forest
surrounding the castle
where,
I am told,
is a princess
waiting to be rescued.
I'll slay the dragon
kiss the princess
then carry her home
on my white steed
where we shall soon be wed
and we'll live
happily
ever
after.
Still, I'd rather be at home
playing with my puppy.

Princess

Back off prince!
I can see you bashing
and crashing your way
through the hundred year forest
thinking you're going to rescue me.
If you get through
you'll want to slay my pet dragon
kiss me wetly on the lips
and carry me home on your smelly horse
and you'll expect me to be grateful.
If only you stopped and looked around you
you'd see those thorns are there to protect me.

Stop

My life is full of
school
and piano practice
and swimming lessons
and hurry up we'll be late
and have you done your homework?
and footy training
and karate
and take out the rubbish
and set the table
and cricket practice
and help your sister
and haven't you done that homework?
and brush your teeth
and basketball
and tennis coaching
and what do you mean you haven't finished
that homework?
and visiting grandma
and straighten that uniform
and sometimes I wish
I could
just
stop
and rest a while.

Stepping Out

Mum's got a new pedometer.
It counts every step she
walks
runs
paces
marches.
Now, instead of sending me
to get stuff from the laundry
or bring in the paper
or walk the dog
she goes,
which is great.
BUT
I really wish
she wouldn't march on the spot
in the checkout queue
just to get her step count up!

Sally's published verse novels

Pearl Verses The World

By Sally Murphy
Illustrated by Heather Potter

A moving illustrated verse novel about a girl dealing with isolation at school, and with her granny's illness at home.

At school, Pearl feels as though she is in a group of one. Her teacher wants her to write poems that rhyme but Pearl's poems don't. At home, however, Pearl feels safe and loved, but her grandmother is slowly fading, and so are Mum and Pearl. When her grandmother eventually passes away, Pearl wants life to go back to the way it was and refuses to talk at the funeral. But she finds the courage to deliver a poem for her grandmother that defies her teacher's idea of poetry. Her poem doesn't rhyme; it comes from the heart.

Toppling

By Sally Murphy
Illustrated by Rhian Nest James

A moving and triumphant illustrated verse novel about childhood illness and support for friends.

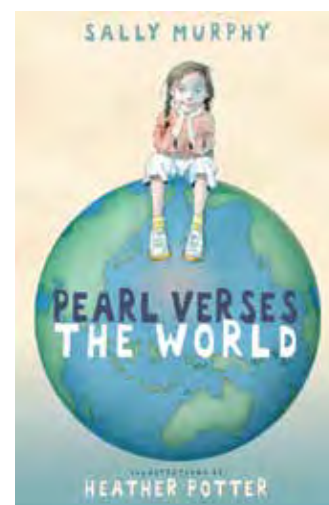
John is obsessed with dominoes, but not with playing the traditional game: he is obsessed with toppling. He spends hours setting up spirals, ramps, patterns and lines of dominoes, all for that satisfying topple. Beginning with a small push in the right direction, everything falls as it is meant to. When John's friend Dom falls sick and is diagnosed with cancer, it is John and his friends' worlds that fall apart. Can they face Dom and support him through this uncomfortable illness? It's hard for all at first but John and his friends find a way to comfort Dom and laugh with him again. They even find support and understanding from an unlikely source within their class, the school bully.

Roses Are Blue

By Sally Murphy
Illustrated by Gabriel Evans

A story about resilience and the importance of family.

"I have not got used to my new mum. Even though I love her (I absolutely love her), I miss my happy, painting, dancing, gardening, smiling mum." Amber Rose and her family are dealing with tragedy and change. But sometimes hope blooms suddenly.





Annie Horner
Bachelor of Arts
Honours
2014 Graduate

Annie Horner

I bellowed and scratched and kicked at Mrs Goodman who gripped my arm.

ANNIE Horner has recently retired from a long career in education and children's services. As a teacher she has taught across all age groups as pre-primary, primary and secondary teacher in the United Kingdom as well as regional and urban Western Australia. At a tertiary level she has lectured at Curtin University and Edith Cowan University in teacher education programmes and at Perth and South West TAFE campuses in children's service programmes. She has also managed/ directed childcare centres in Busselton and Bunbury. Other experiences have included working as an Inclusion Support Facilitator advising children's services about supporting children with special needs, teaching in a regional aboriginal school and teaching at a school for severely disabled children. She also experienced a short stay in the central desert working on a World Vision early intervention programme in several aboriginal communities. In 2012 she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Literature and Writing) from ECUSW and in 2014 was awarded a creative arts Bachelor of Arts Honours degree. Annie has now embarked on a PhD in writing at ECU South West.

A love of music, art and literature has been with me since childhood but as a young woman of the mid-sixties my vocational choices were simple: nursing or teaching. The 'arts' was decidedly risqué; it promised no security, income or success and could lead an innocent like me into serious trouble. I chose teaching—or had it chosen for me by a patriarchal society which saw teaching as a suitable occupation for a young woman until she married. I did marry in my early twenties and as a consequence I automatically relinquished my permanent teaching position and was instead employed as a temporary teacher who could be dismissed if a man needed the job. In those early years I earned two-thirds of a male's wage.

Things have changed.

Despite everything, my career was enjoyable. I felt that I made a difference for some of the many whom I taught over four decades. I learnt heaps along the way but now that I'm retired I do what I want. My passion for the arts can be indulged and that's just what I've been doing here at ECU. Literature and writing have been my focus and I continue to learn.

Some may still view the arts as a slightly 'fluffy' tertiary choice. I propose a different perspective. The arts provide many different ways of viewing the world and people in it. To understand how the human mind works in all its wonderful complexities, study the arts not psychology. The multitude of 'isms' related to

literary theory opened marvellous doors for me. At last I had frames through which to address all kinds of questions and balance and weigh many differing answers. There

are no definitive answers in the arts. Literature, painting, music, film, dance and theatre all remind us that life is not that simple. Artefacts show us that the quest to better understand ourselves and our world has gone on throughout the centuries. The arts are exciting and amazing and profound and at times confronting. They can reveal new understandings, evoke emotional responses, open up conversations and act as agents for change by challenging accepted norms.

A lifetime of reading has provided me with endless examples of great writing. Understanding literary theory has helped shape my own creative writing

attempts. My fascination with people and how they live their lives has provided me with limitless material. My writing is mostly fictional although it is often built from pieces of real people and real events. At times this has resulted in what some may call historical fiction and the opening from a story entitled *Shades of Mozart* which is about Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart exemplifies this:

She is grey and drawn. To be expected for a new widow. But, I must conceal myself. Although these scars may be mask enough, she could meet my eyes and see something familiar in their depths.

Strange how the eyes can give you away. Like windows into the soul, and she had nearly ten years to read my depths. What did she see? Or is there a curtain obscuring those complex inner workings? Can we ever really know another? There are those who claim they can. Those who say they know who I was and what was in my mind. Many who have told my story.

A child prodigy. An extraordinary musical genius. An eternal child. Frivolous and irrepressibly cheerful. A husband. A father. A Freemason and free spirit. A man for whom the world was a stage. A man who died penniless, prematurely and in mysterious circumstances.

At the age of thirty five they lowered me into the open pit many reported as a pauper's grave. Stitched into hessian and liberally sprinkled with lime to hasten the process of decomposition, I lay for days before the stench of rotting flesh crept into my nostrils and slithered into my consciousness. Putrid vapours. Blackness. Silence. A vortex spiralling me into deeper darkness.

Rising from the void, pain dragging me from the depths. The stench envelops me as a sudden rush of fluid gushes forward. The opening in my body allowing this escape must be my mouth. Am I still in my body? Is that what I visualise below me? A tear in the hessian reveals what looks like a hand. It appears to tremble. So slightly. Then stillness again. The wetness of the spilt fluid and the fierce, burning pain recedes.

It is a hand. My hand and it somehow finds its way to my mouth still coated in bile. Those once brilliant, nimble fingers are stiffened like claws. The swollen and suppurating tissue numb, yet tracing the similarly ruined flesh of my face. The lime has done its work.

Is this my judgement day?

Sometimes the work could be classified as memoir and as author I am included in the narrative. After the death of my father, I wrote such a piece entitled *Castles and Cathedrals*. This whole story included entries from school reports, a birth certificate, parts of a eulogy and lists posted on a fridge. Some of the material came from my father's stories which I had recorded towards the end of his life. By this time he was in a nursing home and his days were mostly spent revisiting the past. Binding all this material together was my authorial voice which was also the voice of a grieving daughter. This segment speaks of his youth:

His frailty is forgotten as he drifts back to his youth.

Joining the Surf Club was the making of me. I wasn't a very strong swimmer so I used to ride my bicycle from home to the Crawley Baths at Nedlands every evening after work in order to train and get my Bronze Medallion. At the weekend I rode my bike to City Beach and slept in the boat shed on Saturday night. We were on duty all weekend and there was no drinking or partying. We took our role very seriously. I loved the sun, and surf and camaraderie. The beach was my cathedral. Each Sunday families would bring a picnic tea to the beach and that's where I met your mother. Anyway, we got married in 1946.

As his eyes mist over I am able to see him as a young man left behind in war time. The production of trains at the Midland Workshops is deemed an essential service and as such no apprentices are permitted to break their contracts even to enlist as soldiers.

He is proudly marching; the blinding mid-day sun reflecting off the pristine white sand. A sturdy canvas belt with a heavy rope attached clings to his skinny frame; gawky thin legs protruding from the saggy, woollen one piece swimsuit. He sports a coloured cap with strings firmly tied under his eager clean-shaven jaw. Stepping in time with the flag bearer, his narrow chest is thrust forward as the Surf Lifesaver Team swaggers past the crowd. With so many of his mates away at the war, he is doing his bit back home. The honour of being the belt man, a real lifesaver at last, fills him to overflowing with pride and exaltation.

This segment of his impending death :

The staff settle him back into bed and I begin what I now know will be my last vigil.

His frail, birdlike fingers pluck at the thin covers. He is dozing, the oxygen mask covering his beaky nose. There is no flesh any more; just a cadaverous skull with a few wisps of baby hair. The mottled skin of the bony wrists are crisscrossed with protruding veins barely carrying their liquid load. He was a man who had never demanded much space and now takes up so very little.

Experimenting with creative non-fiction resulted in a work which mixed eco-critical theory with a creative narrative. I was cross about the cat haters! This segment from my piece entitled *A Cat Among the Greenies* demonstrates how theory and story are mixed:

I have an environmentally incorrect admission to make. I love cats. And much to my relief, so does Tim Flannery. I discovered this shared passion in his essay *Getting to Know Them* (2010) where he discusses the connectedness of human and other animal species. He reminds us that only two percent of the human genetic code differs from that of chimpanzees and that to know our animal relatives (both close and distant) is an important step to co-habiting harmoniously. This includes all species, not just the ones we think are cute and it means that humans can't have the best bits of the environment leaving a wasteland for other species; it must be shared. This requires a major paradigm shift from the anthropocentric position where humans dominate the earth to an ecocentric view where all living things and their environment possess equal importance. We may choose to position ourselves in the cornucopian camp where the belief that there is an overflowing supply of natural resources prevails, and that if there are any environmental problems the free market and technical excellence will fix them. Challenging this stance is that of the deep ecologists who demand immediate and radical change in the way humans co-exist with other species and relate to the natural environment. In our ongoing environmental debates it is evident that the underlying tension is that of culture versus nature and that this tension is fuelled by the polarised views held by humans.

... Death and decay is immediately apparent in our southwest idyll although many locals barely notice any more. Doe eyed kangaroos line the road in decomposing piles, smashed bones

poking out of the shrunken frames, as crows, eagles, flies and ants move in for a meal. Skeletons of trees killed decades ago by the rising salt stand like ghosts in the wetlands which grow saltier each season. Bobtail lizards, snakes, frogs and small marsupials lay embedded in the tarmac as the four wheel drive vehicles head towards the shore and the family enjoy the beauty of the landscape in air-conditioned comfort. The once vibrant family caravan park lies desolate and crumbling as the big developers squabble over how many hundred guests can be squeezed onto the space now destined as a luxury resort.

My most recent stories have been fictional yet once again derived from stories of real people experiencing real events. I have sought to tell stories about people who have been scorched by life. This segment from one of the stories entitled *number 24* tells of a four year old girl named Janet who has just been left to live out the rest of her childhood in a Children's Home. She does not know that her mother has just died and that she will never see her siblings again. She sees her father once some months later. Then never again.

Well, well. Let's go inside shall we and see some of the other children. Say bye-bye to your daddy now.

What was going on? What was this lumpy stranger talking about? We had come for a holiday *with* our dad. Why would he be going anywhere now?

Unless of course ...

Are you going to get mum now? I asked.

Dad looked queer. He kept staring at his shoes and fiddling with the change in his trouser pockets. His mouth seemed to be chewing at something but I knew it wasn't a chewy cos he said that was filthy stuff. He suddenly turned and disappeared out of the great big front door. The door swung closed with a thud but the sound got stuck like the needle in a record. Bang, bang, bang.

Bang.

Then nothing. No sounds at all. Even when my mouth opened. No scream came out. Suddenly the sounds came back with the dust motes whizzing in the morning sunlight coming through the stained glass windows. The motes danced all around me as I bellowed and scratched and kicked at Mrs Goodman who gripped my arm. The room was full of colour and noise and teeth and banging doors and nowhere in this chaos was my dad. Or even Billy and Sue.

Because now I was in a room by myself with a chair and a table and Belinda. I told Belinda that I was really alright and only a bit scared because daddy had gone away and where was Billy and where was Sue and that I want to go home now and my pants were wet and cold and even my socks had gone soggy. Belinda just watched with her wonky eye and rose-bud lips until I hugged her and fell asleep on the floor near the door which I couldn't open because it was locked.

I am continuing the writing journey and hope to complete a book of short stories in the future. Perhaps one day I'll attempt a novel. Only time will tell. In the meantime I'm having fun.



Danielle McLachlan
Bachelor of Arts
Honours
2013 Graduate

Danielle McLachlan

Practicing visual artist
inspired by Western
Australia's Karri Forest

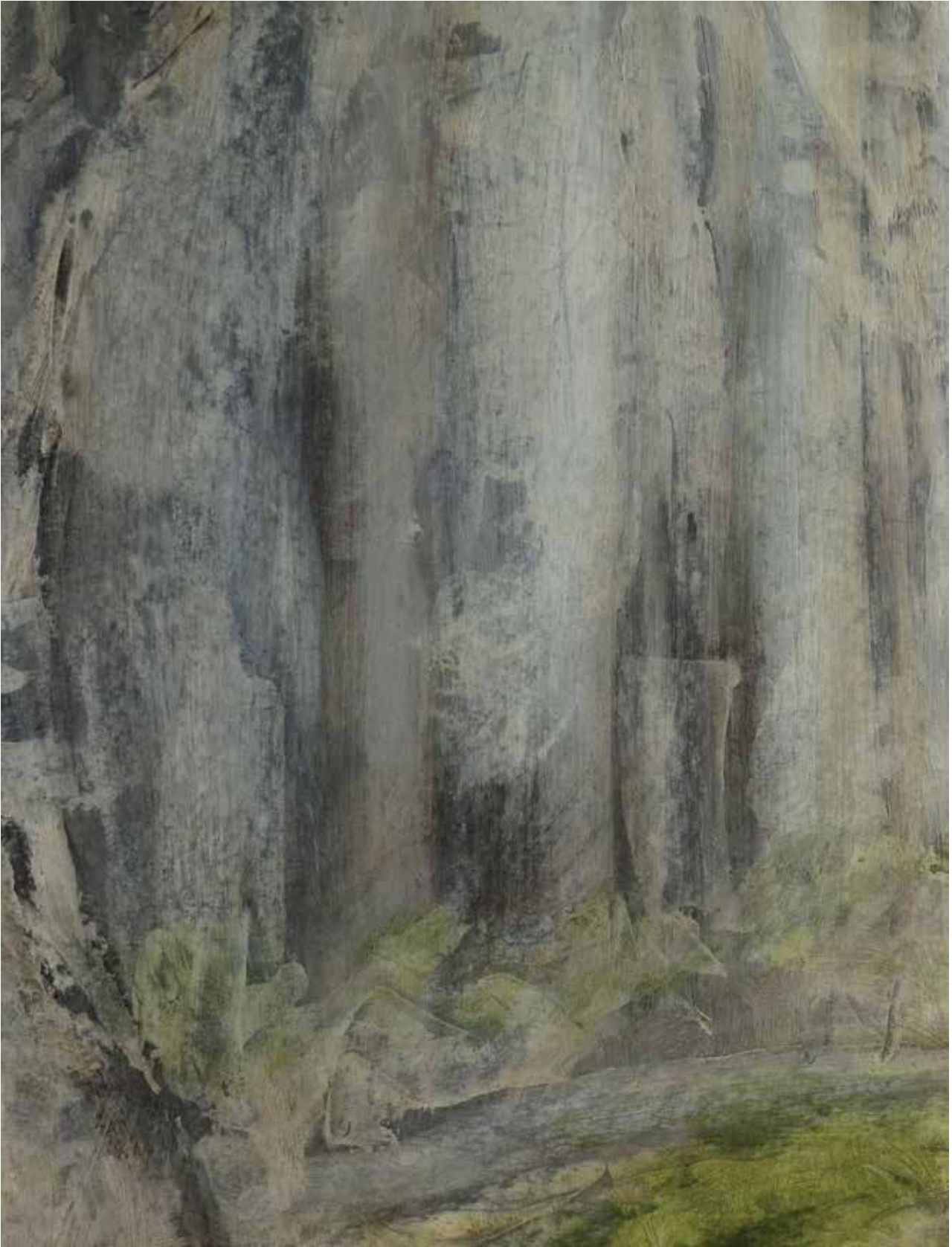
DANIELLE McLachlan is a practicing visual artist in the South West of Western Australia. She completed a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in 2013 at Edith Cowan University, Bunbury. In March of 2014 Danielle held her first solo exhibition entitled The Karri Forest in the Front Room at the Bunbury Regional Art Gallery. *The Karri Forest* near Walpole in Western Australia inspired her latest show. The area around Margaret River with its extensive lime stone caves, rivers, and unique trees will be her inspiration for another solo exhibition in 2015. Danielle enjoys camping with her family and friends in these exclusive areas of Western Australia. Painting her experiences from these special trips provides her with a better understanding of who she is and allows her to share her love of this unique region with others.



Karri Trees, oil on canvas



Karri Trees, oil on canvas



Misty Morning, oil on brown paper



Misty Morning, oil on brown paper



Stormy Day, oil on brown paper



A Valley View, charcoal on brown paper



Stormy Night, oil on brown paper



Stormy Day, oil on brown paper



Stormy Night, oil on brown paper



Stormy Night, oil on brown paper



Luke Raynsford
Bachelor of Arts
Honours
2013 Graduate

Luke Raynsford

The Absurd highlights the disconnection an individual feels when they can no longer create meaning within their life.

In 2012, LUKE Raynsford graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Literature and Writing) and in 2013 was awarded a degree with Honours. For his project, Luke chose to amalgamate his strong interests in literature and philosophy. His thesis, *And the Stage Collapses*, concerned the Absurdist nature of Vladimir Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading* (1938), which highlighted the overwhelming sense of irrationality and meaninglessness pervading the narrative. He is currently completing a Graduate Diploma of Education (Primary) at Edith Cowan University, Bunbury.

INTRODUCTION *And the Stage Collapses: Nabokov, Camus and the 'nostalgia for unity'*

Vladimir Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading* (1938) is certainly a product of its time. Written against the backdrop of the rise of Nazism in Berlin during 1934, Nabokov put aside his manuscript of *The Gift* (1952) and wrote *Invitation to Beheading* "in one fortnight of wonderful excitement and sustained inspiration" (Nabokov, 2011, p. 58). *Invitation to a Beheading* examines Cincinnatus C.'s disunity with the world when he is convicted and sentenced for the crime of "gnostical turpitude", a horrendous offence which lacks consistent definition. This judicial jargon, along with a cast of strange characters, destabilises Cincinnatus' sense of familiarity with the world. Cincinnatus experiences a feeling of the Absurd throughout the narrative, which he works tirelessly to resolve. He is the subject of ridicule while incarcerated and to escape such humiliation he begins documenting his memories and thoughts in a journal.

Cincinnatus refuses to repent and possibly avoid execution because he wishes to live authentically, outside the boundaries of a senseless world. Cincinnatus' desire for unity reflects dominant Absurdist themes surrounding meaning, purpose and death. Penner (1979, p. 29) suggests Cincinnatus experiences an "absurd initiation", so he may accept the "terms of his existence". He must confront the certainty of death and establish a sense of value in the remaining time before his execution. In his 1942 examination of the Absurd, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Albert Camus (2005, p. 16) suggests the individual human being exhibits "nostalgia for unity" with the world. Cincinnatus' inability to find unity with the world suggests a critical analysis of *Invitation to a Beheading* can highlight how it functions as an Absurdist text.

Invitation to a Beheading reflects the devaluation of human life which plagued Europe during the rise of Nazism in the 1930s. While Cincinnatus is sentenced to death on the very first page of the novel, much of the narrative concerns his experience on death-row in an ominous prison, of which he is the sole prisoner. Nabokov is concerned with how the individual is treated under such harsh and heedless circumstances, which is strongly suggestive of the reduction of human freedom during the war. The rise of the Nazi Party leading up to the war exemplified the methodical corruption of personal freedom, which was largely due to the party's political ideology and endorsement of totalitarianism. Curtis (1987, p. 4) comments on how a totalitarian state establishes widespread control over its citizens:

Totalitarian systems embody not only strong and arbitrary power but also the insistence on conformity of the whole society, mass mobilization, the subjugation of all classes to a dominant political group and attack on the 'enemies' of the system and on their ideology.

Curtis highlights the uncertainty of living in a totalitarian state which demands conformity and obedience to a central ideology. *Invitation to a Beheading* reflects a similar violation of personal freedom because of its focus upon an ominous government body with seemingly unlimited power. Conformity is demanded of its citizens, yet it is never specified what actions they may take to avoid persecution. Such ambiguity is reflected in Cincinnatus' conviction for the crime of gnostical turpitude, which fails to

Cincinnatus is sentenced to death on the very first page of the novel.

register a consistent and accessible definition throughout the narrative, though it is implied that it is a failure to conform. Parker (1987, p. 49) argues *Invitation* focuses upon "the lone individual and a society [which] demands conformity under penalty of death". Nabokov's exploration of Cincinnatus' experience on death-row for a crime he does not completely understand reflects the absurd treatment of the individual human being under the Nazi regime. In society and literature, the exploitations of the Nazi party led to a re-evaluation of the role the individual had in establishing meaning within their life.

In 1942, the Algerian-born French novelist and philosopher Albert Camus published a collection of essays on Absurdism titled *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Camus sought to respond to the growing societal anxiety concerning the large human casualties during the Second World War. In its modern context, Absurdism, or simply the Absurd, is defined as the "divorce between man and this life, the actor and his setting" (Camus, 2005, p. 4). Put simply, the Absurd highlights the disconnection an individual feels when they can no longer create meaning within their life. Camus' Absurdist critique reflects a pessimistic view of the world. However, his examination attempts to reach a positive end, as he states "I continue to believe that

this world has no ultimate meaning. But I know that something in it has meaning, and that is man, because he is the only creature to insist on having one" (Camus cited in Payne, 1992, p. 2). An individual's ability to rationalise assists in the ordering and structuring of their experiences; but when this capacity fails, the individual's perception of the world is displaced and the feeling of the Absurd reveals itself. The individual exhibits "nostalgia for unity" (Camus, 2005, p. 16), but this remains unsatisfied. For Camus, the individual and the world are incompatible. Although the Absurd had been broached before, most notably by Søren Kierkegaard in *Fear and Trembling* (1843), Camus' work responded strongly to Friedrich Nietzsche's declaration that "God is dead" (1974, p. 181), which anticipated a nihilistic future without metaphysical and moral truth. The *Myth of Sisyphus* offers a response to the feeling of the Absurd sparked by the rise of modernity and social anxiety around political conflict. Camus establishes disunity between the individual who demands meaning and the "absurd world" which fails to meet these expectations. Although *Invitation* (1938) was written before *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), I suggest the three main concepts of Camus' interrogation of the Absurd, "disunity/divorce", "alienation" and "Absurd Hero", can retrospectively be understood to function with Nabokov's novel.

Invitation to a Beheading examines Cincinnatus' attempt to reconcile his morality and revolt against the irrational forces which dictate his life.

In addition to incorporating the key concepts of Camus' theory of the Absurd, a number of Absurdist literary techniques appear within *Invitation to a Beheading*. This assists in demonstrating a sense of disconnection and instability which pervades the text. Absurdist literature and theatre can be described as the "artistic expression of human beings' inability to find inherent meaning in their existence" (Gavins, 2012, p. 62). Much like its philosophical counterpart, the literary Absurd examines themes of disunity and alienation. Disunity, otherwise viewed as "divorce" or "separation", is a central theme in Absurdist literature and theatre. Rush (2005, p. 240) suggests

for writers who use absurdist techniques, the world is incoherent, illogical, nonlinear, and irrational. The laws of cause and effect don't operate, language ceases to have any inherent meaning, numbers and places are only arbitrary, and it all winds up being so horrible you can only survive by laughing at the absurdity of trying to find meaning where there is none.

Absurdist writers recreate the world as a strange and alien place, void of absolute meaning and stability. The absence of cause and effect is an important aspect of Absurdist novels because without narrative causality characters fail to recognise the basis of their suffering. *Invitation to a Beheading* reflects this irrationality, so that Cincinnatus is unable to establish unity and familiarity.

During the many interviews he participated in during his writing and academic career, Vladimir Nabokov offered a unique insight into his ideological approach to writing. While Nabokov may have held particular intentions as a writer, critical interpretation suggests that this is not exclusively reflected in *Invitation to a Beheading*. Often regarded as arrogant, Nabokov is confident and particular about his insights. Moynahan (1967, p. 13) argues "Nabokov always says exactly what he means, and is often most deadly serious when he seems to be making a joke or talking playfully". In his collection of book reviews and interviews, *Strong Opinions*, Nabokov demonstrates his vision and role as a writer. In an interview in 1962, Nabokov (2011, p. 4) suggests he is not "interested in groups, movements [or] schools of writing"; instead he is only interested in the individual artist. Additionally, Nabokov (2011, p. 14) states "I have no social purpose, no moral message;

I've no general ideas to exploit, I just like composing riddles with elegant solutions". While Nabokov attempts to guide the discussion of his novels away from being understood in strict social or political parameters, he is also known for defusing possible influences from other writers. In an interview in 1966, Nabokov (2011, p. 88) claimed that, among other writers, the works of Albert Camus meant "absolutely nothing" to him. While Nabokov would not have been consciously influenced by Camus' novels when writing *Invitation*, he is unable to admit their shared interest in individual freedom. Regardless of Nabokov's intentions and influences, my critical analysis of *Invitation* will offer an alternative reading of the text.

While Nabokov's comments are useful in attempting to understand his intentions as a writer, critical interpretation of his work suggests some inconsistency between the comments he makes publically and the theme and style of his novels. Margaret Boegeman has written extensively about the possible influences and definitive structural parallels between *Invitation* and Franz Kafka's *The Trial* (1925). In her doctoral dissertation "Paradox Gained: Kafka's reception in English from 1930 to 1949 and his influence on the early fiction of Borges, Beckett and Nabokov", Boegeman discusses, in part, the structural and thematic parallels between Nabokov's

Absurdist writers recreate the world as a strange and alien place, void of absolute meaning and stability.

Invitation and Kafka's *The Trial*. Boegeman highlights that Kafka "was obsessed with the dilemma of individual destiny" (1977, p. 289), while Nabokov concerns himself with the primacy of the individual (1977, p. 288). Both Kafka and Nabokov examine how modernity impacts the individual human being's ability to sustain a sense of identity and control within their life. The authoritative bodies which occupy each narrative reflect a ruthless capacity to dictate and shape every aspect of an individual's life. This is a central conflict which connects both Kafka's and Nabokov's work. Additionally, despite the parallels between the novels, and Nabokov's own assertion that he was unaware of Kafka during the writing of *Invitation* (Boyd, 1990, p. 415), Boegeman (1977, p. 289) argues that Nabokov is unable to admit influence even when he admires an author. In her essay "*Invitation to a Beheading* and the Many Shades of Kafka", Boegeman expands upon the parallels she made in her dissertation. She highlights the similarities between Cincinnatus and Joseph, such as the anonymity of their names, which isolates them from society, the mutual introverted examination of their charge (1982, pp. 110-111), and the continual references to theatrical metaphors (1982, p. 108). Importantly, Boegeman's comparison draws attention to the focus upon Cincinnatus' and Joseph's inability to determine and establish their own

Often regarded as arrogant, Nabokov is confident and particular about his insights.

identity before death dissolves this opportunity. Whether these parallels were intentional or not on Nabokov's behalf, they demonstrate similar attempts to interrogate the individual's chance at freedom.

The dehumanizing effects of the totalitarian state in Germany and Russia during the early 1930s positions *Invitation to a Beheading*, and its conception, within a climate of social upheaval. This ambiguity reflects the broader Absurdist position of demanding meaning from an unresponsive universe. Such uncertainty relates to the capacity to sustain personal freedom. Nabokov (2011, p. 7) states "... the grotesque shadow of a police state will not be dispelled in my lifetime", citing this as one of the reasons why he would not return to Russia from which he fled in 1919. In an interview with one of his former students from Cornell College in 1966, and perhaps as a retrospective comment, Nabokov (2011, p. 56) agreed that *Invitation* could "possibly" be read as the "totalitarian state becoming an extreme and fantastic

metaphor for the imprisonment of the mind, making consciousness, rather than politics" the subject of the novel. Cincinnatus' treatment within the jail is reminiscent of the concentration camps which emerged in Berlin during 1933. Due to a constitutional change, political opponents such as communists and social democrats were arrested and incarcerated in temporary prisons or concentration camps. These changes were permanent despite public perception that they were provisional (Geary, 2006, p. 39). *Invitation to a Beheading* draws attention to the ambiguity of political incarceration and the inability to sustain a feeling of purpose whilst imprisoned. While Nabokov's comments have suggested distaste for political novels, *Invitation to a Beheading* appears to be significantly influenced by the dehumanising nature of the Second World War. Totalitarianism initiates strict control over the actions and beliefs of the individual human being. Nabokov addresses Cincinnatus' response to a loss of freedom of thought and the restrictions which are afflicted upon his body.



Gina Crowley
Bachelor of Arts
Honours
2013 Graduate

I remember the soft and pale muted colours of the bush and the trees that were dark and wet

Gina Crowley

GINA was pleased and surprised to graduate from university in 2013 after leaving Blakehurst High School 37 years ago. She came to Perth in 1984 from Sydney for a holiday and stayed, attending Claremont School of Art for one year. After a long hiatus - raising a family and moving to the South West - she continued her studies at Collie TAFE then ECU South West campus. "I really enjoyed university at this stage in my life and I would recommend the experience to any aspiring mature age student," she said. "The honours program gave me a chance to interrogate my own practice and I learned a lot."

Gina lives in Noggerup, a quiet and isolated hamlet surrounded by state forest. This meant external study and long drives through the countryside to reach the ECU campus in Bunbury.

Her Honours thesis, 'My Car, My Studio: Plein-Air Impressions' was an investigative research project into the method of painting directly from nature during July and August, the coldest and wettest months of the year. From the relative comfort of her car, she sketched small watercolours at various sites in her local area, then focussed her research on Big Rock, located on the Collie River close to Wellington Dam. Gina captures the landscape in her thesis:

The unsealed gravel road was slippery and wound its way through old growth forests of Jarrah and Marri down to the old river valley. It had been a very cold morning and for a brief moment the sun came out and the wind died down. I sketched quickly, holding the small watercolour book in one hand while I stood, and drew only the most essential lines and smudged in shapes with my finger. There were pink rocks worn smooth and round by time and the river. I wondered at what it may have been like before the dam. I remember the soft and pale muted colours of the bush and the trees that were dark and wet. The sprigs of dark yellow wattle were the only intense colour. I could only sketch quickly with a pencil as it was too cold and windy to paint, so I concentrated on remembering the colours and the atmosphere of the place and any distinguishing characteristics that would help me to remember. The colours were soft, it was early morning in the middle of winter and the river water was icy cold.

The midwinter coldness emanates from her oil paintings that were inspired by her small watercolour sketches.

"... there is a deep connection forged between the painter and the landscape in both the mind and in spirit. Following in the Impressionist tradition, my own cultural identity is confirmed as an Australian painter... The car-studio provides a contemporary viewpoint for a traditional practice".

In 2013, on the retirement of ECU South West Dean Robert Irvine, one of Gina's paintings was chosen as a farewell gift from faculty and staff.

Gina enjoyed working in textiles where she produced some interesting work, including hand-printed and dyed fabrics.

In 2013 Gina graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree, majoring in the Visual Arts with a Writing minor. Her experience of working with Art Partners inspired a story concerned with disability and creativity - it was included in the 2013 student anthology *Anthill*.

Gina is following her passion by pursuing a career as an art teacher in the South West and painting the landscape from her car studio.



The road at Noggerup, oil on canvas



'Building No. 9': a farewell gift to
Dean Robert Irvine, July 2013

The colours were soft, it
was early morning in the
middle of winter and the
river water was icy cold.



Big Rock Exposed, oil on canvas



Rock Pools, watercolour sketch



Big Rock, watercolour sketch



Big Rock, watercolour sketch



Rachel McEleney Freebury
Bachelor of Arts
Honours
2014 Graduate

She sat in the garden and watched as her home disappeared in ash and smoke into the blue sky.

RACHEL lived in several countries before settling in Australia's south-west, where she attended ECU, completing a Bachelor of Arts in 2012 and Honours in 2014. She majored in Literature and Writing and finds inspiration for her writing in the beauty of the Australian landscape. She has been shortlisted for Fish Publishing Flash Fiction Award and the Gilgamesh Connections Contemporary Fable Award and her poetry was Highly Commended in the Glen Phillips Poetry Prize 2012. Her short story 'Angel' won second prize in the Down South Writers Competition and was published in their anthology Flying South. Her poem 'Pancakes for Lunch' was published by Peter Cowan Writers' Centre in An Alphabetical Amulet. Her poetry has also appeared in Perth on Trove's Poets' Corner.

Rachel McEleney Freebury

The Day the Rain Stopped Dancing

The American President Jose Hernandez was on television. 'We the American people are going to war on starvation. It is time to say enough is enough. No more will the people of Africa suffer. No more will their children starve.' The camera cut to Africa and green clothed US Corp personnel handing out bags of grain and then cut back to the President. 'The world has...,' Lily muted the television, sick of the constant rhetoric. 'You'd think some joker would've put something decent on a loop. Not out of date news. We all know what fools we were to believe the propaganda. No need to keep reminding us.' Lily changed channel, hoping that something would be on. 'Snow, static, and more snow. Of course only SBS were thoughtful enough to leave a constant reminder of our complacency. Why did we leave it so late?'

She got up and looked out the window into the grey, straight sheet of rain. It obscured the world and made it opaque. The forest in front was a disembodied blur, barely decipherable, a sublime darkness, waiting to suck up the house and everyone in it. Lily knew it was empty, devoid of life, yet it looked so foreboding, as if it had a life of its own and was going to exact its revenge on the world. 'We should've built an ark,' she said to Jase, her silent husband. 'Well, at least we won't go thirsty. Do you think it will ever stop raining?' The silence irritated her and sometimes she wanted to get in the car and leave, head north, maybe Broome. She wanted to see the sun and not a watered down, insipid glow through grey clouds. She longed for sun warmed skin and the smell of coconut oil and warm gentle waves that lap tenderly along the shore.

It had rained constantly for three months, the dam near the house was overflowing and for the first time ever the winter creek had burst its banks. The house was still dry and she was thankful she'd moved the wood under the verandah. 'I'm going out for a walk. I'll be back soon.' She sang as she walked through the rain. It was the only time she didn't feel alone. Somehow, being part of the outside world comforted her and made her feel like she belonged. Too often she felt like the world was a waterfall and she was afraid that one day she would get washed off. The bush was silent, the animals seeking shelter from the constant rain or their bodies decaying, dissolving into the earth. She longed to see some birds, to hear the beat of their wings and their cries of joy as they

his heels, out to conquer the world. One black haired, one blond, it was hard to believe they were her sons, they were so different. Their laughter filled the bush around the home, scaring birds into flight. 'What are you doing?' Lily asked, when she found them, barefoot sitting in a giant puddle, left over from the winter rains. 'Making rivers,' said Seth. 'Catching tadpoles,' said Harry. Lily crouched down, she could see the little black tadpoles trying to swim up river and escape their giant captors. The water vibrated with their efforts, but they didn't get very far. 'I think they are trying to escape,' she said. 'No, they're happy. See they're wagging their tails,' said Harry, not even bothering to look

river gushed and swirled away, leaving her questions unanswered. She turned and looked back at the house. She could see the grey smoke rise, before it blended into the grey, wet sky and disappeared. She wanted to keep on walking. Walking until she collapsed from exhaustion. Returning to the house was always difficult. Her prayers were never answered, the house was empty, her life was empty and the monotonous dance of the rain couldn't fill the silence.

'What shall we have for dinner tonight?' she asked. But no one answered and that silence ached inside her. Her cupboards were full. Packed to capacity with cans pilfered from towns up and down the coast, Albany to Bunbury and everywhere in between. Lily reckoned she had enough to last a few years. She picked up a can of lentils and examined the contents again. 'Can't be too careful. They stick GM stuff in the strangest of foods. Remember when they introduced that new GM grain to make cows grow fatter and they started exploding in barns? I mean any idiot would know that cows are supposed to eat grass and Mother Nature has ways of getting her revenge. I wish we could have a cow, such gentle creatures, with their big eyes and soft noses. And now they've gone the way of the dodo. My grandad had a house cow; she was so soft and warm.'

Peeping through the doorway Lily watched her grandad's hands rhythmically squeeze the teats. The milk streamed, plish, plish against the side of the metal bucket. His cap was on backwards and his head nestled in the crook between Soretos' back leg and her rotund stomach. The cow

They lined up at the door, five of them, all different colours and all wild.

flew overhead, but the sky was empty of life. Grey clouds hung lifelessly. They had nowhere to go, the world was dead and there was no one to see imaginary creatures in their abstract shape. She walked to the dam and watched as it flowed over the bank and into the bush behind; a deluge of rain and white clay gushing over tea-tree and scrub, creating its own river bed. The movement hypnotised her and soon she was oblivious to the world around her and sucked into distant memories of happiness.

'I'm finished,' shouted Seth and he bolted out the door. Harry was close on

at her as he dug the black dirt with his hands. His little fingers were fat and the nails crusted with dirt. 'We're going to make a dam, and a special home so the tadpoles can live there and then turn into frogs,' said Seth.

'You need to put your hats on or you'll get burnt.'

'Not yet, we have to finish the dam,' said Seth. Harry nodded in agreement, always loyal to his older brother.

'We didn't know what happiness was. Always rushing and wanting more,' said Lily to the river. 'Where are you going river? Will you take me with you?' The

casually flicked her tail as she chewed. The straw covered floor soaked up the cow shit and urine. The rafters were full of cobwebs, dusty, grey ones that hid black spiders. Without looking up, her grandad quickly flicked a teat and squirted milk at Lily. It was a daily routine and one that drew the stable cats close. They lined up at the door, five of them, all different colours and all wild. Lily had tried to catch a kitten once and ended up with it dangling by its teeth from her finger. She didn't go near them after that. 'Grab the dish for the cats, will ya Lily, it's at the back

Lily shook herself. 'Get a grip, way too much reminiscing about the good old days. I'm turning into a mad woman. I really need to get away from this place.' She wondered how long she could go on; she was spending too much time living in the past because she was afraid of the future. It stretched out in front, empty and desolate like the Nullarbor, littered with death along the way. It haunted her dreams, and her days were nightmares steeped in reality.

The rain danced a jig on the roof, the fire crackled, and unable to stand

'I'm definitely a weirdo now, Jase. Living with three plastic people and talking to them.'

door.' When she got back, the milk bucket was full of frothy milk and a few red cow hairs floating on top. Her grandad filled the cat dish. 'I'll take this up to your granny; you can milk till I get back.' He patted the cow and she turned and mooed after him. Lily sat down on the wooden stool. It was black with grime from years of sitting in the cowshed. Small hardened blobs of cow shit clung to the side. She leaned her head against the cow's side, so soft and warm. Comforting. Then she began to squeeze like her grandad did, trying hard to get a froth. Plish, Plish. The cow kept chewing; the soft hands of the child didn't bother her.

the silence she turned the television up, trying to block out the sound of emptiness. She tried to cheer herself up by mouthing in a bad American drawl the words to the interview she had seen a thousand times.

'GM 21 will revolutionise the world of farming. Producing two grain crops per season it will effectively bring the price of grain and its by-products down,' said Lily, as she mixed the ingredients for her lentil burgers. 'Originally developed as an aid crop for Africa, we soon realised its potential for the socio-disadvantaged in our own country. And of course other countries became interested.

China is the biggest importer of GM 21, followed by Africa and of course it is also exported to Europe and Oceania,' she said as she placed them on the pan.

'Why do you not allow other countries to grow the grain?' asked the reporter.

'GM 21 is an American development and originally we want to keep it on home soil and keep jobs in America. As you are aware, GenetaCorp is a very patriotic company and the components of GM 21 are top-secret. However, we are pleased to announce that GM21 will now be grown in several closely monitored regions outside America.'

'Bastards,' Lily shouted at the television. 'You killed us all. GenetaCorp played God for too long and look where it got us. Carson was right, we did it to ourselves, blindly following the spoon feeding government and their web of lies. Oh Jase, why did we sit by and let them do this?'

The Government had exalted the benefits of genetically modified foodstuffs with catchy slogans, 'Eat Your Way Thin,' 'Seven Vegies in One,' and Lily's favourite 'Preserve Yourself from the Inside Out,' — don't worry about chemicals for your face we'll put them in your food instead. The voices that had protested were ignored and then GM 21 was developed. GenetaCorp scientists inserted contraceptives into grain and then trialled it without approval from The Food and Drug Administration. Africa, so desperate for aid during one of the worst famines the drought stricken continent had ever experienced, gladly accepted the tonnes of grain. The grain was widely distributed and the black market boomed as it was smuggled across borders, contaminating everything along the way.

GenetaCorp were hailed heroes for their relief efforts and won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry and all the time they were playing God with people's right to choose to be parents. What no one realised was that Mother Nature doesn't like to be messed with and the grain mutated and cross pollinated with other strains and other crops. Mother Nature blew across the land and the seas, sending the death pollen everywhere and GenetaCorp no longer had control. Birth rates declined slowly, unnoticeably at first and then they started to plummet. Africa's birth rate halved and then other countries experienced similar trends. No one thought of GM 21 — they had no reason to suspect anything so insidious. When the DNA mutated again it didn't just stop people from reproducing, it shut down cells gradually, preserving people from the inside out. Just like the Government had claimed with previous genetically modified foodstuffs, but not how they expected.

'The Silent Killer' the media called it, 'Mother Nature at her Worst,' and the whole time humans had been to blame. Lily couldn't remember the last time she saw or talked to a living person. Jase and the boys had been silent too long. Sitting quietly, like wax statues from Madame Tussauds. Lily couldn't bear to put them in the cold dark ground, not when they looked so alive. Why had they been affected and Lily left to live all alone? Sneaking off to fast food joints with Dad when Mum wasn't around? Lily knew Jase had thought she was some weird hippy with her veganism and her refusal to buy genetically modified food. 'I'm definitely a weirdo now, Jase. Living with three plastic people and talking to them.'

Saying it out loud made her realise just how weird she was and it scared her. The thought that she would end her days alone, without ever seeing or talking to another human was terrifying. She used to crave solitude, now she hated it. Suicide crossed her mind many times. She could just take a pile of pills and drift off into oblivion. It seemed like a nice way to go, but it scared the hell out of her and she found it hard to let go of the life she had. So she was stuck, straddling an abyss of despair and hope, wondering if one day she would succumb to the silent killer.

She changed the channels again, a stupid habit. What was the point? Only SBS was still running and she knew that soon, whatever powered it, would slowly wind down and she would truly be alone. How much longer would the power keep running? She flicked through the stations, like Jase used to do. 'It's genetic, love,' he'd say. 'I'm sure they've done studies somewhere about it. We need to have the remote.'

'So why can't you tune anything in, if you are so in touch with your inner geek?'

'Because you do it so well,' he'd say and then he'd give her that big grin of his. She missed that grin and the sound of his voice and his smell.

She flicked through the channels so fast that she almost missed it. Did she see something or was her mind being cruel? She slowly flicked back, holding her breath. Afraid. A bright picture filled the screen and

she realised that somewhere, in this vast land, somebody else was still alive. As she began to weep, the rain stopped dancing its jig on the roof and a rainbow danced across the sky.

She walked outside and marvelled at the dash of colour in the once grey sky. Clouds were slowly picking up speed and she could see glimpses of blue sky behind them. She inhaled the cool air and felt it chill her lungs. Fear and sadness gripped her. She knew it was time to finally let go. Jase and the two boys sat inside, oblivious to the future. Lily dragged them one by one to her bedroom and laid them on her bed. Breathing heavily she sat beside them, stroking their faces in turn. 'I love you all so very much. And I wish I had gone with you. I don't know why or for what reason I didn't, but now it is time for me to go.' She kissed them gently and walked out of the room.

Outside the rainbow was getting stronger and the sky was bluer. Lily grabbed a shovel and went inside to the fire. The flames flickered and danced as Lily stuck the shovel into their heart. The embers glowed in the air as Lily walked to the bedroom, afraid she wouldn't go through with it. She stood looking at her sleeping family and then placed the embers between them. She stood and watched as the fire roared to life, dancing and twisting over the bodies, feeding its desire. The fire consumed the bed and her family slowly disappeared in red and yellow flashes. The heat drove her out and she sat in the garden and watched as her home disappeared in ash and smoke into the blue sky.



Natalie Rykers
Bachelor of Creative Industries
Honours
2013 Graduate

Natalie Rykers

A bilingual learning aid used to develop reading and writing skills in lower primary students of Namibia's most educationally marginalised group, the Ju|'hoan San.

NATALIE'S background is in the newspaper industry in which she worked for fifteen years, transitioning from advertising, to marketing and design, then onto management, spending the last three of those years as the General Manager of the *South Western Times*. During her annual leave Natalie travelled extensively and found a passion for volunteering in regions of Africa with projects focused on teaching English as a Second Language and with those who care for orphaned wild animals.

In 2010, after spending three months in East Africa, Natalie returned home, hung up her corporate wear and enrolled into ECU's Bachelor of Arts degree. Throughout her degree, Natalie continued her travels to Africa and began to use her knowledge and skills as a graphic designer to research and create literacy aids for her southern African volunteer teaching projects.

Inspired by the students and her passion for teaching English as a Second Language, Natalie completed her Honours in Creative Industries and Diploma of Education (Primary) in 2013, and currently works as the marketing manager and as a graphic design teacher at Manea Senior College.



Uganda, East Africa. Volunteering with Soft Power Education, 2010.

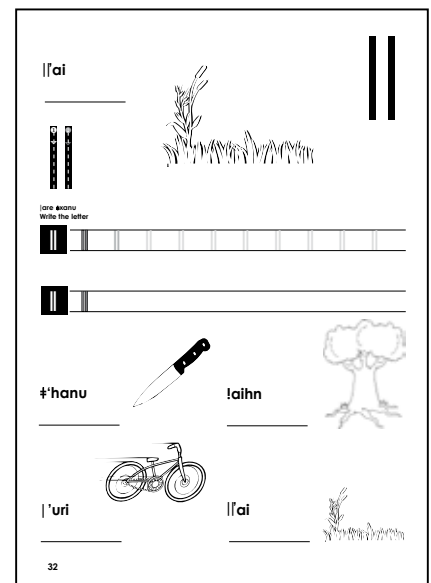
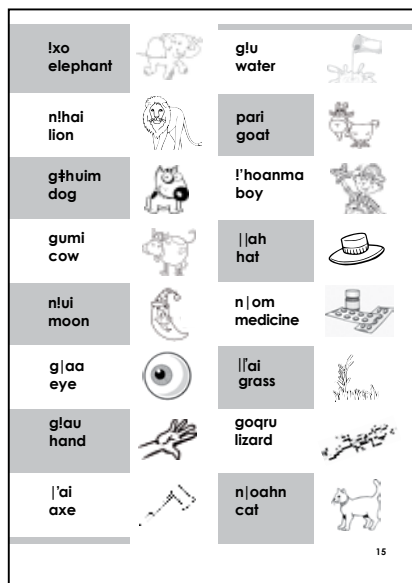
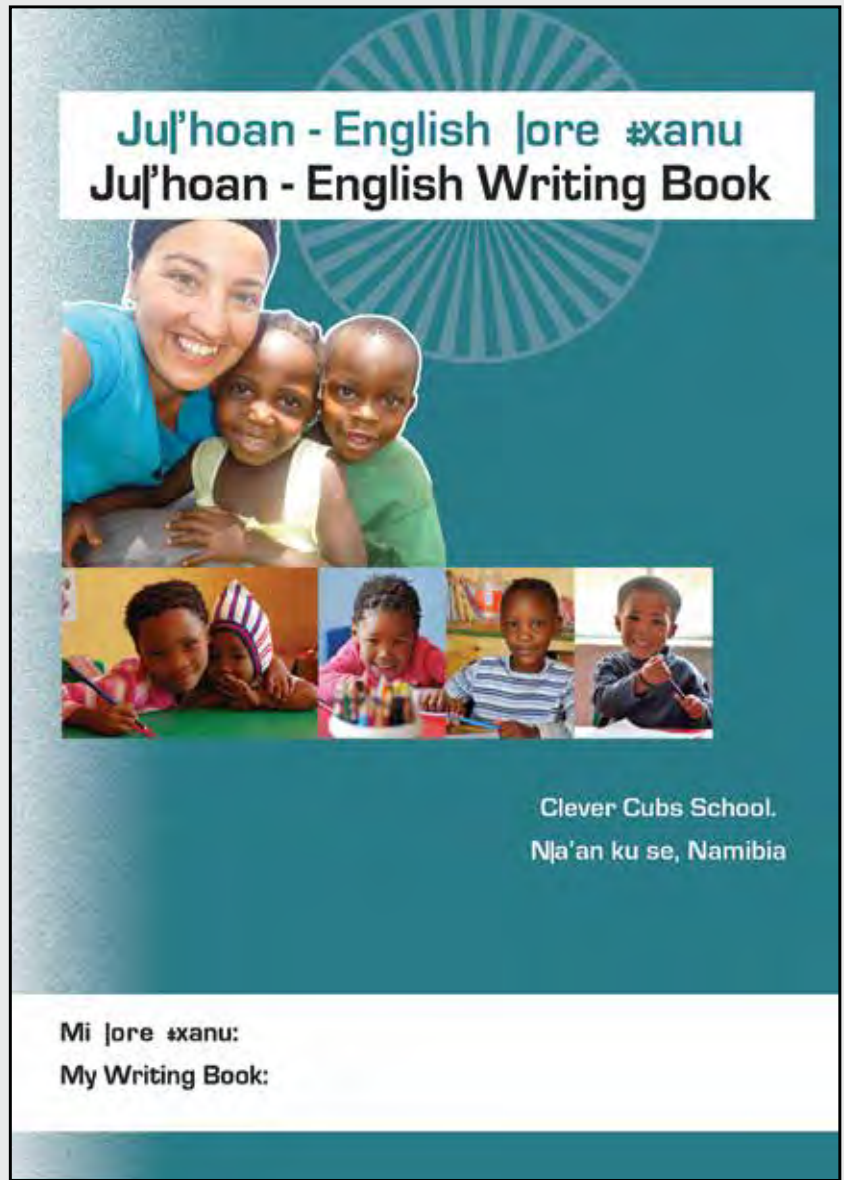


Namibia, Southern Africa. Volunteering with N|a'an ku se's Clever Cubs School, 2013.

The Ju|'hoan - English Writing Book is the product of the research I undertook into Namibia's most educationally marginalised group, the Ju|'hoan speaking San.

It explored the educational situation of the Ju|'hoan San and showed that, while many endeavours have been undertaken by the Namibian government to develop literacy skills nationwide since it proclaimed English as its official language, the Ju|'hoan San have the lowest percentage of children attending formal education of any Namibian ethnic group and the highest drop out rate of those who do.

My thesis documented the underlying reasons for the Ju|'hoan San's marginalisation, explored the potential remedies, and reviewed the research on mother tongue and bilingual education strategies. This thesis accompanied the mother tongue bilingual Writing Book (pictured left), which is designed as an authentic literacy tool for the Ju|'hoan San classroom and is currently being trialed in a Namibian classroom.

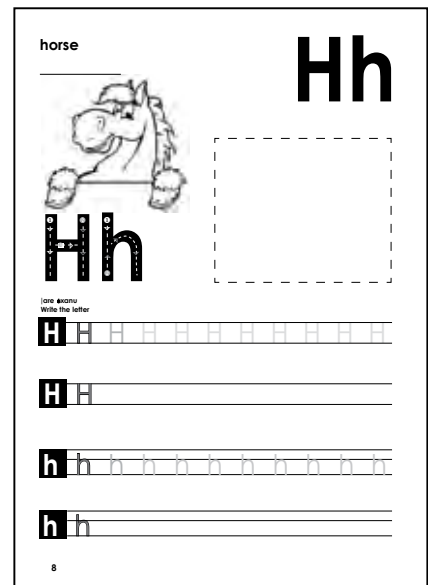
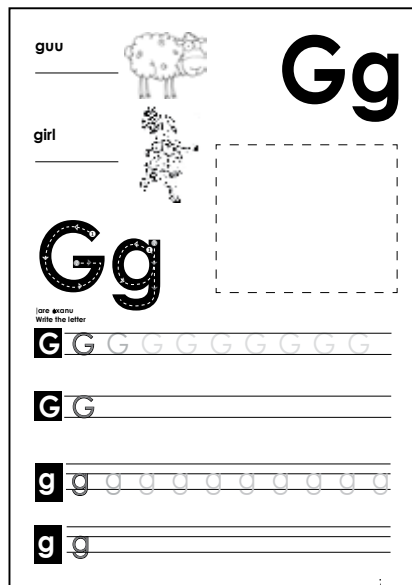
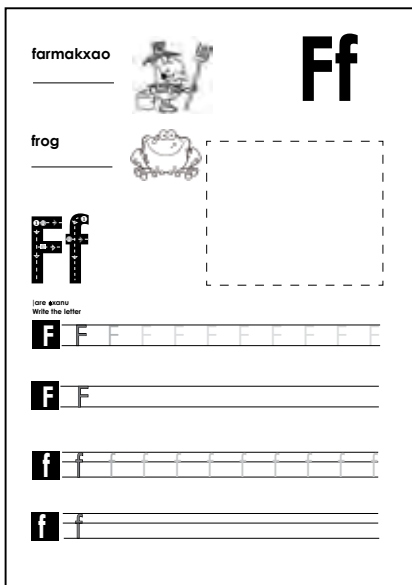


The centre pages (Ju|'hoan-English noun glossary) present familiar Ju|'hoan nouns in the students' mother tongue alongside the nation's official language. The last pages include examples of the International Phonetic Alphabet symbols used to depict the various 'click' sounds heard in the Ju|'hoan language.

Extract from Thesis:

At independence in 1990, Namibia chose English as its sole official language despite only a few citizens speaking it as a first language. The decision was well supported within the country as many saw it as an opportunity for a better future. However, despite the research and newly established language policies for schools that encouraged learners to be taught in their mother tongue from Grades 1-3 and English from Grade 4 onwards, failure rates in Namibian education are high and particular Namibian groups are educationally marginalised.

Namibia's most educationally marginalised group is the Ju|'hoan-speaking San people, who have the lowest percentage of children attending formal education of any Namibian ethnic group and the highest drop out rate of those who do. Research shows that the San's low rate of participation in formal education stems from a lack of resources in their home language and confusion with the foreign tongue in which they are taught.



Both government and independent literature indicates that access to mother tongue resources such as reading and writing materials underpins the ability for learners to develop literacy skills. However, due to the nationally insignificant number of Ju|'hoan speakers, and the perceived costs associated with developing home language curriculum materials, Ju|'hoan resources are scarce and the majority of Ju|'hoan learners have virtually no access to them.

The ideas that informed the creative component, a mother tongue-based bilingual alphabet Writing Book, are supported by academic and field research, are founded on a bilingual strategy and the published literature which suggests that learners who are taught in their mother tongue can succeed and employing a bilingual approach in the classroom has the potential to reduce their marginalisation. Initial indicators suggest that bilingual learning aids can assist reading and writing English skills in lower primary students of Namibia's most educationally marginalised group, the San.



2012 Namibia, Southern Africa.
N|a'an ku se's Clever Cubs School

Narrelle de Boer
Bachelor of Creative Industries
Honours
2013 Graduate



From the earliest imaginings to the writings of the first explorers and settlers, Australia has been imagined as a Gothic space shrouded in mystery.

Narrelle de Boer

“Sometimes things speak in a voice not their own”: Australian Gothic and Chris Womersley’s *“Bereft”*

More than just a set of identifiable tropes and motifs, the Gothic provides a means to interrogate that which is generally unknowable, uncomfortable, unspeakable or taboo. In Australia, the Gothic transformed to include anxieties that are distinctly Australian; the weird melancholy of the bush, the fear of the Australian landscape as an inhospitable and uncanny space and also Australia’s place in relation to Britain. The Gothic also manifests a lingering sense of loss relating to the sense of dislocation arising from the process of settlement, and the underlying anxieties about the landscape and whether or not Australia can ever be truly home.

‘Sometimes things speak in a voice not their own’ explores Australian Gothic in relation to a range of colonial Gothic texts including Marcus Clark’s *Human Repetends* (1872), Ernest Favenc’s *Doomed* (1899), and Mary Gaunt’s *The Lost White Woman* (1916). It also examines the Gothic characteristics of Chris Womersley’s contemporary novel *Bereft* (2010) within the Australian Gothic genre.

NARRELLE began her academic career at ECU where, despite her longing to study writing and literature, she enrolled in the youth work degree instead. After several years of working in crisis accommodation where she supported young people in the transition from homelessness to independent living, Narrelle decided to return to study to pursue her passion for literature and commenced the Bachelor of Creative Industries. She graduated in 2010 and was awarded the Faculty Prize for Creative Industries.

Already a lover of Australian literature, during the course of her study Narrelle developed a particular interest in the Gothic, and her thesis combines these fields, examining the Gothic tradition in Australian colonial and contemporary literature.

Narrelle completed her degree in 2013 and was awarded a Bachelor of Creative Industries with First Class Honours. When she is not teaching at ECU in Bunbury she can be found working on a fantasy novel with one of her teenage daughters and writing a collection of short stories about the experiences of a migrant family in Perth during the 1950s.

Introduction

Gothic...continues; it continues to engage with both new materials and new mechanisms of interpretation. Perhaps, then, it might not be absurd to say that part of the force of the Gothic is precisely that it continues: it continues, as it were, against the odds, with its apparatus in shreds, its diagnostics discredited, its authors – and critics – pilloried by the cultural police and made to look foolish by their own controversies; but it also continues unshakeably to provide us with images that, no matter how we shake our heads in vexation, woe or intellectual pity, will not stop pestering us. (Punter, 2012, p.7)

The Gothic just will not die. (Carrington, 2011, p. 293)

The Gothic is alive and well in Australia. Transplanted from Europe along with the colonisers and convicts, it is evident in our architecture, art, music, film, and of course, our literature. As the authors above suggest, the Gothic is an amazingly versatile form that continues to be relevant.

It is not surprising that the Gothic is a form that has implanted itself so firmly in the Australian imagination. From the earliest imaginings about the Antipodes in ancient times to the writings of the first explorers and settlers, Australia has been imagined as a Gothic space shrouded in mystery. For the early explorers and settlers, the land itself seemed to resist not only their European terms of reference, but also their efforts at settlement and exploration. As Schaffer explains:

in Australia the fantasy of the land as mother is one which is particularly harsh, relentless and unforgiving. Although desired within a framework of imperial and colonial ideologies as an object to be possessed, conquered and tamed, the Australian landscape in the nationalist tradition is also a loathed and feared plain of exile which threatens madness and defeat. (1988, p. 22-23)

Australia was thus not only a land of desire, but also anxiety.

As a site for Empire to cast off her criminals and other unwanted citizens Australia was particularly effective, not only in terms of distance from Britain, but also in relation to the landscape itself; the environment was such that prison walls were hardly necessary. Likewise, the explorers too, found that the interior resisted their efforts at mapping the landscape, instead finding it a place of enclosure and entrapment.

The presence of Aborigines only added to settler anxieties about the landscape. Terra nullius was a myth. Instead of an empty land, Australia was clearly inhabited, and Aborigines became the Other onto whom the settlers projected their fears. Given the nature of European experiences with the Australian landscape as an unhomely place, fear and anxiety have always been present in Australian fiction, and as such, the Gothic enabled colonial writers to engage in a “literary rendering of their anxiety of not belonging” (O’Reilly and Vernay, 2009, p. 7).

Key tropes in Gothic fiction in general include historical settings and subterranean spaces, doubles and binary oppositions, isolation and madness, the supernatural, monsters and undead characters, live burial,

the possibility of incest, family secrets and the return of the repressed. Gothic tales usually take place in a threatening space where secrets from the past return to haunt the characters, either psychologically or physically and the boundaries between the real and the supernatural are often seemingly crossed. Features that are particular to Australian Gothic include “a hostile environment, isolation, entrapment, pursuit and the fear of the unknown, and in particular the use of the uncanny whereby a harsh landscape renders the homely as unhomely” (Rudd, 2010, p. 105).

The use of the Gothic is not limited to colonial texts. Contemporary Australian writers such as Kate Grenville, Elizabeth Jolley, Andrew McGahan and Tim Winton, amongst others, have used the Gothic as a means to explore histories, events and anxieties that are often otherwise unspeakable or remain hidden. In light of this tradition, this thesis explores the Gothic in relation to Australia as an uncanny space. It also examines Gothic constructions of the Other, and the ways in which it is used to reflect the anxieties inherent in the colonisation process by considering a range of colonial Gothic texts including Marcus Clark’s *Human Repetends* (1872), Ernest Favenc’s *Doomed* (1899), and Mary Gaunt’s *The Lost White Woman* (1916). It examines in-depth the Gothic characteristics of Chris Womersley’s contemporary novel *Bereft* (2010) within the Australian Gothic genre.

What is Gothic?

A cursory examination of scholarly works pertaining to the Gothic will quickly reveal that despite the breadth of scholarship in the field that constitutes the Gothic genre, it is a concept that remains difficult to define.

Abrams suggests that the Gothic refers to literature that “develops a brooding atmosphere of gloom and terror, represents events that are uncanny or macabre or melodramatically violent, and often deals with aberrant psychological states” (2009, p.138). Extending this idea, Punter and Byron consider that Gothic can be viewed as a psychological argument, a way in which repressed fears are represented in textual form (2009, xviii-xix). Mulvey-Roberts suggests that the Gothic is “an uneasy and eerie dialect between anxiety and desire...that is preoccupied with gaps” (1998, xvi). Smith suggests that the term means different things in different contexts (2007, p. 2), whereas Bloom argues that the Gothic is a “feeling” (2010, p. 4). Spooner and McEvoy simply assert that there is no single, straightforward answer to the question “What is Gothic?” (2007, p. 1). The point I wish to make is that this difficulty in defining what is meant by the term Gothic in itself characterises its ephemeral and unstable nature. Perhaps viewed best as a mode rather than a genre given that its defining characteristic is its capacity for reinvention (Warwick, 2007, p.6), the Gothic is a loose tradition which emerged (in an English literary context) in the late eighteenth century with writers such as Horace Walpole (*The Castle of Otranto*), Ann Radcliffe (*A Sicilian Romance*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*), M.G. Lewis (*The Monk*) and Charles Robert Maturin (*Melmoth the Wanderer*) in response to the values of the Enlightenment.

A Short History of the Gothic

Historically, Botting (2000, p.30) suggests that the Enlightenment was based on the ideas of Greek and Roman writers of the classical tradition, ideas which were seen as civilised, humane, cultured, virtuous

Gothic tales usually take place in a threatening space where secrets from the past return to haunt the characters.

and harmonious. He argues that eighteenth century writers liked to refer to their present as ‘modern’, distinct from both classical antiquity and the feudal past, which resulted in a shift in the meanings associated with the term ‘Gothic’. Up until then Gothic had referred specifically to the Goths, a Germanic tribe who settled in much of Europe from the third to the fifth centuries AD (Smith, 2007, p. 2). During the eighteenth century however, given the lack of knowledge of the history of the Dark Ages, or even about medieval history (Punter and Byron, 2009, p.7), the word ‘Gothic’ referred to all history that preceded the mid-seventeenth century. Furthermore, it came to be associated with everything that was opposite to those ideals that formed the basis of the Enlightenment; if the Enlightenment signified modern reason and civility, the Gothic signified the chaotic, barbarous and supernatural past. More than this:

The utopic mirror of eighteenth-century gothic history...delivers a sense of discontinuity through inversion and distancing, but also allows for a perfected reflection, an idealisation of elements of the past and the establishment of a continuity with the present... (Botting, 2000, p.5)

Hence the Gothic darkness of the past allowed the reason and virtue of the Enlightenment to shine more brightly. The Gothic came to represent the

mysterious Other, the dark shadow that enabled self-definition. To explore the Gothic was to explore the unknown and the incomprehensible.

It was these eighteenth century reconstructions of a somewhat fantasized past that provided the context for the emergence of the Gothic as a literary mode. The Romantics in particular challenged Enlightenment notions of rationality, positioning the importance of the imagination over science, arguing that “the complexity of human experience could not be explained by an inhuman rationalism” (Smith, 2007, p.2). There is a tension between the Gothic and Romantic traditions however, with many Romantic poets campaigning against the Gothic, (ironically) at a time when they were producing their most Gothic-style works. Samuel Taylor Coleridge in particular was criticising the Gothic style whilst at the same time producing such works as *Christabel* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. The Romantics sought to distinguish their ‘superior’ and ‘Transcendent’ literary works from “the lowly, vulgar Gothic”, which fed Britain’s “degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation”, whilst at the same time appropriating and veiling their Gothic “borrowings” (Davison, 2009, p. 166-167). Despite the complexity of the relationship, Davison suggests that “the intense interfacing between the Gothic Novel and Romantic writing resulted in a powerful and hugely productive synergy that fuelled both literary developments “ (2009, p.5).

The value of feeling over reason that characterises both Gothic and Romantic writing is intricately linked to a sense of the sublime. The sublime is the “moment the subject feels overwhelmed by their experience of nature, the majesty of which suggests the presence of a divine creator” (Smith, 2009, p.183). What is crucial in Gothic literature, however, is that this feeling is also accompanied by terror. This concept is based on Edmund Burke’s idea that the capacity to experience terror is an essential component of our humanness; it is also inextricably linked to a fear of death. Instead of the sublime leading us to dwell on our place in a world of natural wonders, it instead reinforces our feelings of mortality and smallness in the universe. These ‘transgressive’ and frightening feelings are the most powerful that people are subjected to, and therefore the most sublime. Furthermore, the Gothic challenges the Enlightenment conviction that man can understand his own circumstances by giving voice to the fear (terror) that this is not possible – instead, because of the very nature of our transience we are fated to “a life of incomprehension, a life in which we are forever sunk in mysteries and unable to escape from the deathly consequences of our physical form” (Punter and Byron, 2009, p.12). Hence the Gothic was (and is) a mode with which to explore and convey these fears. As Bloom asserts:

[t]he gothic was not merely a playground for the imaginative, it was also the very foundation of a new sense of the imagination. It was not merely a set of exterior devices to have cosy inglenook adventures, but a mechanism for describing not only the workings of the mind, but also the mind in relationship with the supernatural, the universal and the divine. The gothic, therefore, perforce dealt in and the painful in ways that no other form of art could do. (2010, p. 4)

In other words, the Gothic provides a means to interrogate that which is generally unknowable, uncomfortable, unspeakable or taboo.

Since its inception, the Gothic has mutated, adapted and become firmly embedded into Western culture and beyond. When describing Gothic literature, Mulvey- Roberts says:

This hot-house hybrid is constantly mutating, making new growths out of old as in its propensity for parody and pastiche. What remains consistent...is the retention of a ‘singular moral function – that of provoking unease’. This inflection of Gothic as un-ease or dis-ease invites comparisons with the pathological. Having taken up residence in its host, the Gothic replicates itself like a virus. (1998, p.xxii)

This replication is of course evidenced by the genres spread beyond Europe in the nineteenth century. As the British expanded their sphere of influence into the colonies so too did the Gothic’s reach extend; firstly into America (where it is particularly recognisable in the works of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne), and then further afield into those other countries that constituted The British Empire. Furthermore, not only has the Gothic spread into places far and wide beyond the shores of its original home, but its mutability has allowed it to adapt itself to the local conditions of wherever it lands; hence the Gothic motifs inherited from the Old World have been readily transported and reinvented in the New. One such country that clearly exhibits the propensity of the Gothic for adaptation and reinvention is Australia.

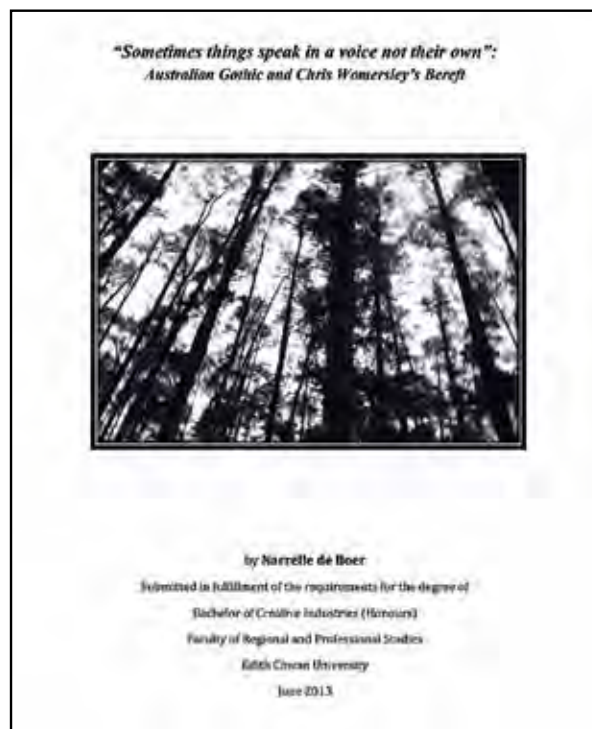


Image used with kind permission of Sarah Mills

Meagan Allen-Kingdon
Bachelor of Arts
2014 Graduate



I wonder, does she even realise she has begun to rock? The girl dips forward and back, in time with the tick-tock of Grandmother's clock.

Meagan Allen-Kingdon

Under the Clock

Vivian is the first to make contact. As the girl enters the doorway of our bedroom, Vivian floats forward and traces a long fingernail across the collar of her sweat dampened shirt. The girl flinches, and spins around so quickly her ponytail turns into a blonde whip. Vivian ducks to avoid the flying locks, purely out of habit. Lucy, who has just manifested through the floor, does not want to be outdone. Lucy firmly plants herself in front of the girl, placing her freckled hands on her slender hips. The girl passes through Lucy's body. It takes a moment for the full impact of Lucy's cold presence to register. The girl gasps and shudders. There are tears welling in her eyes. Lucy giggles, and wraps her arms around her waist.

"Ah! It feels like pins and needles. Do you remember what that feels like?" she asks Vivian.

It hurts me when they do that. They talk to each other like I'm not here. It's been so long since the accident, how can they still be mad with me? I focus my attention on the girl, so I cannot dwell on the lump in my throat. In my head, something clicks. Now I

recognise this 'house guest'. She's the new girl at school. She's only been waddling by our house for three months. There is not one ounce of character in her cheap spectacles, acne-ridden face or thick rolls of baby fat. I know she will spend the entire night adjusting her clothes, which have obviously been designed for someone smaller than she. There is almost nothing to distinguish her from the hundred other 'guests' who've broken into our home. She is just one more outcast who hopes surviving a night with 'the Dahl sisters' will win her some respect.

Over the girl's head, Vivian flashes a grin to Lucy, who returns her smile tooth for tooth. Their eyes dance with malicious glee as the girl skitters to Grandmother's rocking chair. She does not hesitate to sit down, heavily. She disturbs the dust, and it spreads across the room in a storm. I scowl and adjust myself, running my hands along my knees and thighs to ensure my skirt and petticoat are touching my pillow. I should balk at the idea of sitting on this dirty floor without it.

MEAGAN Allen-Kingdon started her writing career young. At the age of five, she dreamed up a fantasy epic, and then nagged her mother into scribing it. She read the story to every person who came to the house until the little book was 'lost' in a bout of spring cleaning. When she was in high school, she was published in a school poetry competition. This victory set her on the path of literature study. She has since been published in *Vortex33*, an online newspaper run by ECU South West journalism students. One day she hopes to branch into young adult novels, and looks forward to where her literary career will take her.

Of the many things Mama has had to spank me for in my life, dirtying myself was never one of them. I fully believe that cleanliness is next to godliness. To last a whole day entirely unblemished will always be my constant aspiration.

Vivian and Lucy move side by side. They make a show of turning their backs to me to whisper their next plan into each other's ears. Their kittenish games are only just warming up. But I am not allowed to play. Not with them. The last time I tried to join in was twenty years ago. They slapped me away. I can still hear them screaming at me. "You'll ruin the game. You won't listen and you'll ruin it. You ruin everything!"

My ears burn thinking about it. So this is my punishment: eternal timekeeping. Not that it matters to me, of course. I stopped caring so long ago. I turn my eyes towards Grandmother's cuckoo clock. The brown hand is forever moving onward with a slow, methodical march that I have to watch. The clock strikes the rusted 12 and soldiers on. I raise my pointer finger to the old, smelly wallpaper and tear off one small strip. The scratch is so small, yet the sound clashes with the tick of the clock. The girl turns in the chair, placing her feet on the seat and curling slightly, peering through the chair back's wooden slats to stare into the darkness of my corner. She cannot see me where I sit, ankles locked and legs folded, by Grandmother's clock. Her eyes dart around the room, and Lucy and Vivian begin to walk circles around her.

Vivian darts forward like a striking cobra and hisses into one of the girl's ears, "Little pig!" The girl flinches and whips around, and Vivian dances out of her reach. The dust that floats through the air does not touch her; it

would not matter a bit if it could. Nothing could ever hide Vivian's beauty. Mama had tried often enough. I had heard her lamenting, time and time again to Papa how quickly Vivian was growing up. I think Mama was deeply afraid that Vivian would fall prey to some fancy beau who would leave her disgraced, like Mama's own younger sister who we are not supposed to speak about. But the dowdiest frock or the most reaching bonnet does not dare sully the beauty of Vivian. She always was, and always will be the fairest of us all.

"Ugly." Lucy says, bowing at her waist so her posture becomes a perfect inverted L, just the right position to pour her acid straight into the girl's unprotected ear. It had always been difficult for people to believe that Vivian and Lucy were twins. While they have matching features, they seem ill fitting upon Lucy. As though Lucy was made by some unskilled craftsman who had wished to make an

The girl flinches and whips around, and Vivian dances out of her reach.

effigy to Vivian, but had spun her hair out of red wool, made her eyes from dry marbles and used clay for her skin because no porcelain was available.

"Such a dirty little thing," Lucy continues, her lips to the girl's ear, smiling through her snarl. "You ought to be back at the orphanage, or cat house. Tell me, where do they put ugly, unwanted things these days?"

If the girl is listening, she is good at hiding it. Sweat- no sorry, perspiration (Mama had always told me that only common labourers sweat. Girls perspire, and Gentlewomen glow) has turned her hair a darker shade of blonde than when she had first arrived.

The large hand of the clock marches on and I scratch once more piece of wallpaper away. The noise makes the girl whimper. Of course, she cannot see me in my corner of shadows, can she? And because she cannot find the source of the sound she looks down, presses her chin into her chest and wraps her tanned arms around her waist. I wonder, does she even realise she has begun to rock? The girl dips forward and back, in time with the tick-tock of Grandmother's clock. Under her breath, she hums a song. I believe I've heard it played on the radio (the few occasions I can persuade it to work.) Something about being bullet proof? Her hums descend into mumbles that are drowned by the tick of the clock. I will give her this much; she has lasted... seven minutes longer than my sisters' other play things.

More time passes. Vivian has begun stamping, and striking the chair above the girl's head. Lucy just keeps pouring bitterness into the girl's ear. I've added

three more marks to the wallpaper tally, and I am bored again. I wish... despite myself... that they would let me play. Just to wrap it up quicker. Lucy and Vivian are so... vain. They always drove Mama to distraction, and sorely tested Papa's patience. They are five years my senior and they are more childish than me, the baby of the family. I just want to get back to what really matters: finding Mama and Papa. I just want things to be the way they were. I want Mama to teach us to embroider handkerchiefs. Even if she had no patience with the twins, I was becoming good at it. I want to hear Papa lecture us about our 'rambunctious manners' and smuggle us sweets when Mama

Her hums descend into mumbles that are drowned by the tick of the clock.

isn't looking. I want us all to go to the ocean again, like we did every summer.

It makes my heart ache to think of the ocean now. If we could go one more time, I will be so well behaved. I will make sure not to forget my swimming costume. I will not sneak away while Mama and Papa nap. I will not make Lucy and Vivian come and fetch me. I will be so good. I know if we could all go to the ocean one more time we would find Mama and Papa there. They're waiting for us, I know it. I just want everything to be how it was. Don't they understand that? The five of us again, the Dahl family, together forever and ever and ever. But we'll never be the same again. Not while Lucy and Vivian insist on being petty.

"Your friends sent you here to die, you know." My eyes are boring into the back of the girl's head. I want the force of my voice to propel her out of our house. My voice sounds larger than I am. It cracks while I speak. It matches how I feel. "That's what your friends want. Do you think winning this game would make them like you? You're truly tragic. A sad, stupid, silly little bitch."

I'm standing now. I am so angry I do not even mind my skirt when I stand. Vivian and Lucy have stopped to watch me. Yes, look at me, Lucy. Look at me Vivian. Let me in. Don't ignore me anymore. I'm so tired of it. Just stop. Vivian begins to step forward, but Lucy stops her with a raised hand.

"Even if they did let you into their little club..." my voice has become quiet, but I feel as if I'm roaring. "You know it's only so they can bully you at their convenience. You'd let them do it to? Wouldn't you? You disgust me. You should run home. Not that it really

matters where you go." I raise my hand to Grandmother's clock. I can feel my eyes stinging with tears. I just want her to go. I want my family back. I want them back, but I ruined them, and they don't want me.

"Nobody cares about you." I slam my palm against the clock face. The gears click once more, and then stop. The sudden silence engulfs the room. It is supremely effective. The girl stops rocking. She looks around her, confused. Her pulse is throbbing in her throat. And for the first time, her wide eyes meet mine and I know she has seen me.

She does not begin to scream, not at first. She stands and staggers, gasping. The gasps become squeals, and the squeals become mumbblings as she reels out of the room, and backwards down the stairs. "Nonononononononononoooooo... Mummy. I want my... help... mummy!" and then she starts to scream as she runs for the kitchen, and the broken window that will deliver her to the sanctuary of the outside world.

Vivian and Lucy chase her down the stairs, howling and whooping like savages. Their teeth flash, and their eyes match their screams; hungry and bright with victory.

"Ha! You run fast, for a butterball!"

"You've soiled your trousers! You soiled your trousers! You filthy little shit!"

They don't stop crowing until the girl's heel clears the window pane. Then they laugh. Oh god, however are we related? Surely I was switched at birth. But I'm smiling. I'm smiling while tears run down my cheeks.

Vivian and Lucy return to the room, grinning zealously. I brace myself; I know I am not allowed to play the game. Still smiling, they pounce on me. I prepare myself for a slap or a hail of pinches. I do not expect this warm twofold embrace. The tears in my eyes dry up immediately.

"Little Ashley," Vivian coos. "You've won! Your first round of 'Scare the house guest'! With no coaching from me! The reigning champion!"

Lucy rolls her eyes, and crosses to the wall. She does not mention that her victories flank Vivian's two to one. Has too much sense and tact. There is an air of pride about her as she carves my name beside this latest tally. Then she re-joins our group hug. It has been so long since they've embraced me I almost begin to cry again. I did not realise how much I had missed... this. No... I did not realise how much I had missed them.

I wonder what we must look like? As we fold around each other and sink to our knees. Are we like a beautiful statue of angels? Pressed together like we are, with our varying shades of red hair, long white arms and matching white dresses? Or are we simply too horrid? We must be, to cause so many people to run screaming from our house. Perhaps we are still the corpses that the lifeguards dragged from the sea. Bleached grey with wide lost eyes.

I do not know how long we sit together. I'd long ago stopped listening to Grandmother's infernal clock. It ticks on and on, as dust swirls around and through us, refusing to settle.



Colleen Gillick
Bachelor of Creative Industries
2013 Graduate

Colleen Gillick

Colour is my greatest form of expression and drawing expertise and design are an integral part of the artistic process

COLLEEN is a practising artist who is involved in the local visual arts community at many levels.

During her studies in Visual Arts at ECU, Colleen was the elected member of the Bunbury Society of Artists who represented that group on the City of Bunbury Collection Committee. She was involved in the selection and acquisition of artworks by renowned Australian artists, established and emerging artists in the South West. The Collections Committee also initiated the acquisitive Bunbury Biennale through the Bunbury Regional Art Galleries, which showcases artists from around the state. Colleen has been Assistant Art Director for the Capel Fest Art Classic and her works have been exhibited at the Bunbury Regional Art Galleries.

Colleen's interest in visual art is diverse and during her studies she has developed her visual art skills in both traditional practice and digital media. The use of colour is her greatest form of expression and she believes drawing expertise and design are an integral part of the artistic process.

She has sold a number of her works locally, interstate and overseas and continues to embed her immense appreciation of the natural environment of Western Australia into her artworks. It is her inspiration.



Paperbark tree, ink on litho paper. Highly Commended in Artgeo Trees Exhibition (2011).



Untitled, mixed media



Self portrait, pencil and ink



'Dot', oil on canvas



Jane Durkin
Bachelor of Arts
2013 Graduate

A small boy with a sweet smile carrying a wooden box tapped her arm

JANE has been in the food industry for over thirty years and after creating Wild Fig Jam in 2002 she has discovered more new and exciting directions. Jane wanted to expand her Spanish language skills and travelled extensively for two years where she discovered a village in the Sierras de Alcaraz in Spain. Intrigued with the food, cultural differences and idiosyncratic villagers, she was encouraged to write about her experiences under the genre of 'food and travel memoir'. In order to improve her writing skills, Jane commenced undergraduate studies at ECU in 2004, majoring in Literature and Writing. It took her nine years to finally achieve her Arts Degree. From catering to accommodation and teaching Spanish food she now combines these favourite loves with a fresh mix of food and writing. All the while she has been committed to working on her story about the village, running her accommodation and cooking school business and now resides in both Perth and Yallingup.

Jane Durkin

The Harder You Work, The Luckier You Get

It was the last day in Delhi and she had done it. She had survived three weeks of 'Intrepid Unplugged', even though she was 60. It was the Indian experience she has waited for all her life and she had got through the stomach problems, coped wonderfully with the other travellers, some of who were half her age. She climbed the long, high path to the fort in Jodhpur, and was not left behind. She amused the travel group playing bongo drums after succumbing to the harassment of a poor student on the streets of Jaipur. She had laughed more than she could remember and, whenever she opened her mouth to speak, members of the group egged her on for more fun, just as if she were in the school play ground. She was alive again.

As she lay there in Hotel Perfect, watching a cockroach slowly making its way towards the door, she reflected on this last day. She had spent the time taking photos and going to her favourite street stall to eat the delicious food.

"I have returned. Nearly three weeks travel in India. Have you kept my room?"

The concierge looked concerned as he searched the desk top to confirm her booking. He looked up and said. "Oh yes Madam, I remember you." He licked his finger then flipped the page.

"Do you?"

"Oh, yes madam."

She thought he was going to laugh, acknowledging his insincerity, but he repeated. "I remember you. I remember you were too afraid to go into the street?"

“Was I?” She saw his lip purse.

“Yes. That first day, you asked me if it was safe. You were so afraid.” He handed her the key.

“Really?”

She had forgotten.

She had a little money left so placed a 500 rupee note aside for the taxi to the airport. The remains would be spent on cheap jewellery and books, if she could find a book shop. The Indian writer, Aravind Adiga had just won The Booker Prize and she wanted to take The White Tiger home with her, wanted to remember reading it in India. A perfect finish to the last day.

She tucked her bag firmly under her arm and smiled as she jumped over a pothole filled with thick dark goo. It was the smell that made Delhi difficult, the roads were bad enough but the smell. Her cough had started again, a dry throat cough that she put down to pollution.

After several hours she was exhausted, her cough was worse and she'd had enough. She tired easily shopping alone in Delhi, the constant harassment became overwhelming. Street Walla's seemed to

fat woman in a red sari. They gathered around the chair-less table eating together, coming and going in their own time.

“May I join you?” The Iranian woman said to her as the old man walked away, leaving most of the food on his plate.

“Where are you from?” The woman's eyes met hers. “Are you French?”

The Iranian woman was beautiful. “No, no. I am Australian. I leave tomorrow. Last day.”

“I am from Iran. Tomorrow I leave too. Do you like your holiday?”

“Very different, yes, and now I have spent all my money. Just enough left for the taxi. I feel bad with so many people begging.”

“No, don't give it. They never leave you alone if you give.” She picked up the last of her chapatti and swished it around her plate to soak up the juices.

“No! I don't give. I have been told if you do you never have peace again.”

The Iranian woman laughed and walked away.

She stood alone to finish her meal. In half an hour she would be back at Hotel Perfect and would bathe, read and relax in her room. Along the way she was harassed by beggars, old women selling silver bracelets, a street stall Walla selling saris and men rushing from their shops to drag her inside. She kept walking, not allowing eye contact. She only had 10 rupee left in her purse.

“Please madam, please madam. I have a family and look, look at my arms. Look madam I must feed my family.”

The voice was soft and gentle, the English good. There is a lot of information released in someone's voice. She wondered what he had done to deserve this: a beggar on the streets of Delhi, a beggar with both hands chopped away.

Intrigued with food and cultural differences

smell exhaustion the way she smelt Delhi. It was time to be ready for what her fellow travellers called *rip off alert*.

Returning to Hotel Perfect, she passed the corner takeaway surrounded by people standing as they ate their meals. The rich looking red dhal bubbling away on the stove made her stomach rumble. She spent the remains of her money on a fast food Indian dinner. The tall round table was surrounded by people of various cultures: a beautiful Iranian woman, an older Indian man who slurped slowly, a young married couple and a short

"Please madam, look what has happened to me, you must help me."

She didn't make eye contact, she kept walking. Her emotional distance surprised her as much as her newfound ability to cut them off.

A small boy with a sweet smile carrying a wooden box tapped her arm.

"Madam, you want your shoes cleaned. Madam, I do very very good job for your shoes."

He wore a clean shirt, shorts and sandals with broad straps. In his eyes she saw a sweet ten year old smiling at her. He pulled at her shirt.

"Madam, I do very good clean, now, your shoes. You want?"

There was 10 rupee left in her purse. It wasn't enough for her to buy anything worthwhile. What could be better than giving it to a small boy who worked for his supper? She admired the industry of these small boys, earning at such a young age. India encouraged entrepreneurs right from the start.

"How much?"

"Very cheap, only 20 rupee, very cheap?"

"No. I have only 10 rupee left."

"Ok, ok. I do it." He smiled again. So young and so wise she thought.

"Ok, you can clean them," she said, smiling as he beckoned her to sit on the pavement near the book Walla's stall.

Beside them a mangy bitch fed three puppies. The boy was quick to act. He placed his box next to her and before she blinked he had used the boot cleaner and several creams. Then he showed her the scratch at the side of one boot and covered it with his special black paint. He decided the shoes needed more work and started cutting pieces of black foam to line the centre. He worked fast and well. Crowds gathered, mostly men, staring at her legs, feet and ankles. Some whispered amongst themselves. Dark stares grew as the boy scrubbed, rubbed and cut away.

After two or three minutes the job was complete. Her shoes glistened with Delhi's dark air. She coughed again and sipped at her bottled water. The bitch got up and joined in the staring. She started to feel vulnerable sitting all exposed by the road side.

"That 200 rupee." His little face looked up into her eyes and she realised a great performance was about to begin. She didn't see deceit or mistrust, she just saw a proud young boy cheating her to make his way in the world. She understood his determination to make a rupee. She knew that she should question him.

"No, no. Too much, you said 10 rupee."

"Looke, looke, you see I do." He pointed to the lining, dying, cleaning. "You must pay."

"Too much! You should have told me."

"You pay." He was almost shouting at her.

The crowd grew in the street squalor. They were here for the finale. She knew she only had 10 rupee in her purse, the 500 note was tucked away for the taxi.

"I have no money, only 10 rupee."

"No, no you pay me now," he shouted.

She turned to the book Walla to check. "This boy wants to charge me 200 rupee. I said I only had 10 what should I do?"

"You just give him 100. That's fair."

"I haven't got change, I've only got 500 rupee."

"No problems, I will change it for you."

The problem was fixed. The boy got half his final asking price. She paid the initial price. The crowd shuffled away as she stood there amazed. They had watched the full performance and she waited for her applause.

On the way back to Hotel Perfect she noticed the sign out the front of the school next door. It said: The Harder You Work The Luckier You Get. She smiled.

