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THESIS

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**FROM WAR TO WAR *featuring* FEMININE TORTURE**

By

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August 2016

*This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.*

*I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.*

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From War To War *featuring* Feminine Torture

Verena Heirich

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All other images personal documentation.

## Preface:

### To Coorabie or not to Coorabie?

It began with Coorabie,<sup>1</sup> but it all really started where my memory begins, in a small country town in North West N.S.W. called Coonabarabran. I grew up in a Mexican style Motel on the side of the highway (fig.1), my mother of Italian descent, my father, a migrant from Germany. About thirty kilometres outside of town lives my best friend still, on her family-run farm of some eight thousand acres. Between these two lifestyles is where I found myself. The strong cultural influence of my parents' background mixed with the artificial atmosphere of the motel contrasted against the small town farming community made it almost seem like being in an oddly placed theatre production. The ebb and flow of people passing through, travelling from place to place, all somehow finding this small town in which to stop over or stay a while, it was a truly fascinating environment to grow up in. It is from this eclectic youth that my practice has drawn most of its inspiration, following the themes of Transience, Liminal Space and Nomadic Movement.



**Figure 1: The El Paso Motel, Coonabarabran.**

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<sup>1</sup> Coorabie is an unincorporated town (one with no municipal council) in South Australia, which became the focus of my Honours thesis *The Coorabie Proposal* in 2012.

The transience of intense intimate relationships with not only people, but also animals, the liminality of manoeuvring between the lifestyles of hospitality and life on the land, and bearing witness to people travelling as though they might be nomads, never actually reaching a particular destination as they all moved on from our motel, on to some great unknown. This was how the themes of Transience, Liminal Space and Nomadic Movement first presented themselves.

Not surprisingly my employment has been in an industry which parallels these themes; hospitality. In 2012 I curated an exhibition *RU Being Served - The Anatomy of Hospitality* in Verge Gallery at the University of Sydney centred on these themes in the Hospitality industry, particularly the durational performance *An Indecent Serving (A laboured performance)* with Holly Grant, Allana McAfee, Lydia Brown and myself, and *Served with Donald Brierley's Beer Bottle Interventions* (fig. 2), in which, whilst dressed in wait staff uniforms, we proceeded to set and unset tables and chairs, reconfigure the gallery 'restaurant' and eat the canapés being served at the opening whilst our 'bar tender' Donald brought us tray after tray of shots each time I yelled "SERVICE!" through the gallery.



**Figure 2: *An Indecent Serving (A laboured performance.)* with Holly Grant, Allana McAfee, Lydia Brown and myself, and *Served with Donald Brierley's Beer Bottle Interventions*, Verge Gallery, University of Sydney, 2012.**

What proceeded was an unruly insight into the late nights in the hospitality industry, when everybody else has had their fun, wine, dined and finally are home in bed, we, the waiters, find our own space to unwind, which often involved alcohol, drugs or both, letting our minds become liminal as we left our transient industry and wandered like nomads looking for either a pub that was still open, some one's house or just anywhere we could drink and be merry at three in the morning. Much of this attitude and experiences are documented in my Masters project *From War to War*, which I will elaborate on in the Introduction, but first let us go back to Coorabie, in fact, let us go back further to 2011 and 'PSEUDO SPACE'.



**Figure 3: PSEUDO SPACE @ OCCUPY Martin Place, Sydney, 2012.**

In 2011 I was in my third year at SCA, and with the help of fellow students I founded PSEUDO SPACE (fig. 3), an underground experimental gallery run from my house that promoted the idea of an alternative viewing platform for artists, musicians and performers. It was a way around the traditional gallery structures and allowed for people to come together in a more relaxed and non-coercive environment to share and experiment with their work and ideas. PSEUDO SPACE was, in essence, the ground work for a larger idea of viable sustainable communities in rural and remote Australia. The strategy of opening my personal space as an area in which to extend an open invitation to the greater community provided a valuable research basis into the Transient Movement of people. It allowed me an



insight into how people might gather and express their ideas with comfort and security and the effectiveness of the means to motivate people to willingly participate.



**Figure 4: Verena Heirich, 'Reclaimed Unfamiliarity' from the series *Stick landscape paintings*, 2012.**

Coorabie became the nexus of my Honours project *The Coorabie Proposal*, it was, just as PSEUDO SPACE was, an alternative space from which the themes of Transience, Liminal Space and Nomadic Movement were actualised in three main artworks, *Stick Landscape*

*Paintings (fig. 4), The Shape of Australia (fig. 5) and the Lands-Cape (as tent fig. 5) & Nomads Fireplace (fig. 6).*



**Figure 5: *Lands-Cape* as tent and the *Shape of Australia* performance, 2012.**

I first came across Coorabie when I found a farm for sale called ‘Magpie Waters’<sup>2</sup> (fig. 7), it was five thousand odd acres, with a typical Australian homestead on the property, two salt lakes, sheds, equipment and all the trimmings at a price of only two hundred thousand (arguably pocket money for the amount of land). After some digging I discovered the reason for this was that Coorabie was an unincorporated town, which is one with no municipal council, rather an external body is allocated funds by the state government which are then distributed to these remote communities. A signpost on the Stuart Highway in South Australia states “You are now entering Australia’s Unincorporated Area”, almost like a veiled warning to proceed at your own peril; this is a service-free zone. *The Coorabie Proposal* was an incredibly elaborate and in depth project which explored a great many elements, from

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<sup>2</sup>‘Magpie Waters’, [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au) (accessed May, 2011).

the hypothetical freedom represented by unincorporated towns or sovereign states like Hutt River Province<sup>3</sup> in Western Australia, to the creation of culture and nationalism examined through the lens of Gayatri Spivak's definition of the Subaltern, which she describes as anyone who has limited, or no access to lines of social and cultural mobility.<sup>4</sup> In particular though, *The Coorabie Proposal* examined the iconographic representations and ideology of Australiana, the notion of the Outback, and the innate discrepancies that occur in a land so vast yet disparately populated that the mythology surrounding rural and remote Australia becomes so ingrained in our cultural identity that we believe without seeing.



Figure 6: *Nomads Fireplace*, 2012.

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<sup>3</sup> Hutt River Province in Western Australia seceded from Australia on April 21, 1970. It is a sovereign micro nation recognised in the UN. Presided over by H.R.H. Prince Leonard whom is said to be a 'keen supporter of the Arts,' their website (<http://www.principality-hutt-river.com/>) was chosen to be archived electronically as being of lasting cultural value and National significance by the State Library of Western Australia in conjunction with the National Library of Australia.

<sup>4</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Culture', *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: toward a vanishing point of the vanishing present*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P.,1999), 337.

This idea of believing the unseen image of the Outback was the inspiration behind my series of *Stick Landscape Paintings* that also reference Australian philosopher Jeff Malpas's explanation of landscape as ideological in that there is an implied separation and observation in the very notion of landscape, it has become our visual reference point for culture, which only became important and idyllic when people became divorced from Nature.<sup>5</sup> I painted the series of *Stick Landscape Paintings* on reclaimed canvases and pieces of board that I found on the city streets of Sydney, I used old house paint and a stick, and in my Inner West backyard whilst planes flew overhead I painted the representation of the way in which the image of the Australian Outback and landscape have become nothing more than an imagined reproduction of a popular idea and image.



**Figure 7: Magpie Waters, Coorabie South Australia.**

*The Shape of Australia* was a performance piece which invited the audience to partake in a re-imagining of the landscape, nature is after all not a static thing and as such *The Shape of*

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<sup>5</sup> Jeff Malpas, *The Place of Landscape*. (London: MIT Press, 2011), 17.

*Australia* comprised of large piles of earth, potting mix, compost from my backyard chickens, and a variety of seeds scattered throughout prior to the performance so the dirt had plant life at various stages of development. The performance then invited the audience to participate in creating the land and planting seeds, a shape much like the collective imagination of nationalism was constructed, but adding the sense of being able to modify that image by building something in the moment. And the *Nomads Fireplace & Lands-Cape*, were the vehicles of Nomadic movement to make the journey to Coorabee...

*There is a whole art of poses, postures, silhouettes steps and voices. Two schizophrenics' converse or stroll according to the laws of boundary and territory that may escape us. How very important it is, when chaos threatens, to draw an inflatable, portable territory. If need be, I'll put my territory on my own body...*<sup>6</sup>

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari state that even in Nomadic Movement, territory stipulates a place that is home,<sup>7</sup> and this is what the *Lands-Cape & Nomads Fireplace* provided. The *Lands-Cape* is a knitted robe in the colours of a sunset which transforms from a travelling coat to a reversible raincoat that can then unfold into a one person tent, and the *Nomads Fireplace* was built from beer bottles; discarded references to our national image, in a shopping trolley; the ultimate urban nomad, providing a portable source of warmth and cooking.

With all of these ideas and information and my Bachelors degree completed, I set off to further my research and investigation into rural and remote Australia, to track and document my nomadic venture into the great unknown with the aid of my *Lands-Cape* of course. This however required funds that I did not have, and in an economy that seemed to have people struggling, and a transient industry as my only source of income, it became increasingly apparent that it may take some time before I could manage the epic adventure to Coorabee and beyond.

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<sup>6</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (New York: University of Minnesota, 1987. Originally published in French under the title *Mille Plateaux*, Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1980), 353.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

If I was to be stuck in the city of Sydney I had to find a way that I could further my research in the urban environment, and if this mythology of Australiana and the Outback is produced in the cities, where would I find these occurrences in a way that also adhered to the themes of Transience, Liminal Space and Nomadic Movement? I immediately thought of our uniquely Australian 'event days' Australia Day and ANZAC Day, and quickly realised these icons of our culture and national identity centred on pubs. Across Australia, across the media, some form of booze, BBQ meats, trivia and drag queens and casual intergenerational gambling were the hallmarks of our tradition. This was the way I could find out more about the elusive Australian mythology, I would partake in one of the most iconographic and transient activities that crossed the boundaries between the rural and the urban. I would get pissed. I would journey across the city from pub to pub and observe how people participated and interacted in these transient places while their minds became liminal, and how they moved like Nomads in the pursuit of booze.

## Introduction:

### The Trialectic and the Novella

*In the end, nothing really had much importance. We destroyed ourselves. But in all honesty, I never thought we destroyed each other.*

-Francis Scott Fitzgerald<sup>8</sup>

For me *The Coorabie Proposal* was just the beginning. It began a process I could not have expected nor steer away from, in many ways I felt my only choice was a full and complete engagement with the themes and ideas of Transience that have shaped my practice. As outlined in the discussion of *The Coorabie Proposal*, my work leans heavily on the hallmarks of Conceptual Art offering up ideas and information as the nexus of the artwork rather than the purely visual aspects of the work. My Masters project consists of two main works, a video work plus installation *Feminine Torture (Fem. Tort.)* and a written document *From War to War (W2W)*, which is the remnant of a seven month durational ethnographic performance. Reframing the concepts allows for the familiar to be reviewed in a new light, and by working across a variety of different mediums throughout my practice whilst maintaining the same conceptual framework of the trialectic allows for a reflection and expansion of the premise opening up the field of research methodologies. Hence, what reflected transience in *The Coorabie Proposal* through sculptural object becomes a series of textual stutters, slurs and banalities.

In this paper I will discuss the process of *W2W*, its relation to the novella with reference to Deleuze and Guattari; the structure as a vehicle of performance and documentation; and the themes which have transposed from *The Coorabie Proposal* such as hypothetical freedom and authority. I will also discuss the video work *Fem. Tort.* as a response to *W2W*, as well as the crossover of stutters and ruptures, evident in both works, which will be discussed further in the themes of *W2W*. It is important to note that whilst this paper articulates the main features of my work, the written document *W2W*, (which for the purposes of this paper I will refer to as a novella, in the same fashion as Marcel Arland describes the novella, as 'pure lines right down to the nuances, and nothing but the pure

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 228.

and conscious power of the word'<sup>9</sup>) was intended to be read as an integral part of the thesis and the footnotes throughout *W2W* act as a guide for the reader in much the same way. However due to the constraints of the Masters degree, in particular the word count, the inclusion of the full novella as a continuation of the thesis has been rejected. Typically a novella has a word count of between 17,500 - 40,000 words, *W2W* occupies the higher end. For this reason only some sections of the novella have been included, and whilst this does disrupt the work itself in a manner that was not intended, I refer to a fabulous analogy used by American poet and English professor Craig Dworkin who describes how the mythological figure Echo, whom not only literally got the last word, but was also constrained by what she could say being able to only use the last words spoken, turned her restraint into her advantage by 'appropriating other's language to her own ends.'<sup>10</sup>

Whilst appropriation has long been a legitimate strategy in the visual arts, and *W2W* could in fact been seen as a transcribed echo of a durational performance, the authenticity of the performance I believe is hindered by an adaption of the work into composed snippets, and as such whilst the initial transcription or 'adaption' from the performance onto the page can never fully capture the liveness of the performance, it is as faithful as it can be to capturing the spirit and themes of the original work by leaving the novella wholly unadulterated. The only editing that touched the transcription was the process of deciphering the original handwritten text to produce a typed document, and this was done as a logistical technique for legibility. However, after careful consideration I have revised my thesis to adhere to a more standardised structure, the sections of the novella that are included are some of those used during the performance on the night of the exhibition opening. In this performance people were asked to follow the instructions on the sections of text, reading silently to themselves until reaching highlighted sentences which were then to be read out loud. This performance breathed liveness back into the text and allowed for the voice, noise and sensation of the pub scene, as well as its incoherence and transience, as people engaged in the performance for a non-specified time, coming and going as they pleased (fig.8). I have included an appendix of images relevant to the thesis, included in this appendix are scanned

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 215.

<sup>10</sup>Craig Dworkin, "The Fate of Echo." In *Against Expression: an anthology of conceptual writing*, ed. Craig Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2011), xlvii.



images of some of the original handwritten text, as well as the complete transcription of *From War to War* which can be read at the readers discretion.



**Figure 8: Performance reading of excerpts from *W2W*.**

## Chapter 1:

### ***From War to War: as Novella and Artwork***

It was Australia Day, 2013, when after some weeks of careful consideration I began a durational performance that the novella *W2W* documents. Initially the time parameters of the performance were to be from Australia Day, January 26th through to ANZAC Day, April 25<sup>th</sup> of either the same year (thus a three month performance) or through to the following year, making it a performance lasting fifteen months.

These two days, which I describe as ‘event days’ are the signifiers of a politics of recognition that is inherently one of violence, but also includes an assumption about the people involved, their beliefs and how they belong in society whilst simultaneously it sets up the story of those placed outside of this, those whom are implicitly left behind through the process of a collective identity which does not identify the whole community. Specifically, as Lindy Edwards states, the celebration of the arrival of white settlers as our National holiday which consequently had a disastrous impact on the Indigenous people, also sets them up to not only feel negatively about the day, but very acutely casts them as outsiders.<sup>11</sup>

The performance was to place myself in the role of ‘Ethnographer’, whom as Richard Ericson explains, is ‘well situated to suspend belief in what [his] subjects take as common place and common sense, and to analyse these common elements as functions of the ideological paradigms [his] subjects bring to bear on the objects in their world.’<sup>12</sup> By immersing myself in the Transient lifestyle of the pub scene, I became a character in my own performance, similar to how an ethnographer might engage in the ‘standard’ activities of the group in order to understand and appreciate cultural and social nuances. As such the relationship between the liminal mind and the transient environment is not only imperative to the realisation of the field of enquiry, but also completely unsustainable, as suggested by Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the unharnessed desires of the ‘mad person’. Desire is of course everywhere, it is all around us, the question put forth is, can we separate or choose to make a selection from the desires of the ‘mad person’? Not to denounce ‘false desires’,

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<sup>11</sup> Lindy Edwards, *The Passion of Politics: the role of Ideology and political theory in Australia*. (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2013), 104.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Ericson, Patricia Baranek and Janet Chan, “Research Approaches.” In *Crime and Media: A Reader*, Chris Greer (Oxford: Routledge, 2010), 59.

but distinguish within desires that which is annihilation of self, or annihilation of others, and that 'which pertains to the construction of the plane of consistency,'<sup>13</sup> and as such, whilst there is either a fascist use of drugs or a suicidal use, is there a possibility that another use could exist that might conform to the plane of consistency? In reality however, this durational performance was incredibly taxing both physically and emotionally, and subsequently after seven months I made my retreat from the performance, although the habit took much longer to step away from. Similarities could be drawn between this style of research to the artist Sophie Calle, in that her works allude to literature, journalism and anthropology, particularly in her 1979 work which became part of her exhibition *Talking to Strangers*, presenting documentation of photos and notes taken of people whom she followed around the streets of Paris.<sup>14</sup> Calle's use of text as art asks for something other than visual appreciation, but rather it engages with an imperceptible bodily engagement.

Experimenting with the use of language and text as a finished product or artwork is not altogether new in my practice and a work displayed at PSEUDO SPACE is made reference to within *W2W* (p160) as indicative to how text can be used and appropriated to change the original meaning of the words used. The work I refer to is a twelve page series titled *Dear Fellow Australian* which used text from a political campaign letter eliminating sentences and drawing focus to particular words to create an alternate premise for each of the twelve versions (see appendix of images). The negation of particular clusters of words to focus on the meaning and impact of singular words or phrases not only drastically alters the meaning, but highlights the importance of language, syntax and semantics.

This translates into the style of writing in the novella *W2W* and the slippage that occurs between the real and the imagined experience, and also occurs a result of the translation between the original documentation of the work, and the transcribed document; the novella. The presentation of art as text has a long history and Andy Warhol's invention of 'uncreativity' expanded into literature with his work *a: a novel* a document of cassette tapes

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 183.

<sup>14</sup> Sophie Calle, *Talking to Strangers*, Whitechapel Gallery.

<http://www.whitechapelgallery.org/exhibitions/sophie-calle-talking-to-strangers/> (Accessed June 23, 2016).

transcribed word for word complete with stutters, stumbles and spelling errors,<sup>15</sup> this in conjunction with the 'nothingness' of Warhol's films such as *Sleep* has some parallels to the direction or 'plot' of *W2W* in which there is also a sense of the mundane, the trivial, the meandering and repetition of words and actions which ultimately results in a non-result, an arbitrariness of an end; an end of stamina, an end of ideas, an end of a page. In a fabulous twist of irony however, whilst the conception and production of *W2W* has roots in the ethos of Conceptual Art, which aims to avoid subjectivity, adhering rather to a pre-set plan and working within its limitations making as few adjustments or alterations during the process as possible,<sup>16</sup> the novella itself is rife with observation, which whilst detached at times the slippage between author and actor means that an emotional and subjective voice resonates. This can only be explained by the human aspect of becoming the performance 'machine'. As such, the occurrence of altered states and the 'disruptive' effects the novella may be aiming for are not ones which are created, crafted or fabricated through manipulation of the text or language, in fact it is precisely the opposite, the direct transcribing of the event is in itself the 'disruption'. It is the documentation of a durational performance of transient wanderings, mechanical, abstract, repetitive and banal. How is it that these nomadic journeys could be mechanical? As mentioned earlier, the human element still exists in me as actor/ performer, therefore whilst every determination and complete dedication was given to the project's parameters, one will still, as it turns out, inevitably fall onto the sheep trails regardless of how far one strays.<sup>17</sup> Also an unexpected result of the research, which is noted in a haze in *W2W* on p.119 "I could never find myself lost ... (FIND MYSELF LOST)" it seemed no matter how inebriated, nor how unfamiliar the territory, somehow I always managed to find my way home. This may be what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as Nomadic Movement when they speak of Lines of Flight and the particular elements which mark out territories in nature such as colour, lines and song.<sup>18</sup> The conceptual aspect of to this work lies in the

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Goldsmith, "Why Conceptual writing? Why now?" In *Against Expression: an anthology of conceptual writing*, ed. Craig Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2011), xxi.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Goldsmith, xxxi.

<sup>17</sup> Livestock will tend to always follow the same path through paddocks to get from one place to the other, this is usually the trail that is the fastest or most direct route to a source of food, water or shelter. And although when mustering livestock from one paddock to the next there will be animals that become separated from the herd once they find the trail of worn down earth they become almost machine, plodding with all the others in automation. See also Deleuze and Guattari's chapter on becoming-animal, *ibid.*, Deleuze and Guattari, 256.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 357.

narrative, that of Coorabie and the continuation of the journey in *W2W*, looking for a way to gain a different perspective, an alternate way of life and living, *that* is what the project began with as an idea. And whilst Nomadic Movement and Transience would be a viable way of life theoretically in rural and remote Australia, in practice, in cities, here in Sydney it most certainly is not conducive to a viable, productive or new way of living. To expand on the idea of 'viable living' also brings us to viable means of making and creating, as with PSEUDO SPACE creating a viable alternate platform to make and receive art, which I will discuss in the next chapter on studio practice.

## Chapter 2:

### Studio Practice: what is it all about?

PSEUDO SPACE brought the audience into the home, into the realm of the personal crossing over and merging with the workspace or studio space, as we know the relationship between art and talking about art making is all a part of the artist's practice and it certainly seems that there are no new areas of discovery to be made within art that cannot, or should not be able to be somehow or somewhere historically placed, even with the tendency modernist writing on art has to be ahistorical. When I say no new discovery I refer to the notion put forward by Thomas Crow that 'no artistic decision is free from the burden of historical and theoretical self-consciousness',<sup>19</sup> and yet whilst this is one school of thought, we also have acknowledged that art as practice, that is, the way in which what is produced, conceived and realised is equally as important to the work as the final result or articulation of the piece.

The concept of the studio and the studio space is not only about placement and our relationship to the world around us through architecture and being able to frame the space in which we work, create and live, but it is also used as a means to judge the content and inner motivations of an artist. Important, I have said, is the relevance of studio practice, and as such importantly I must state that for the past six years I have steered away from the studio spaces offered to me. If the artist's studio is the place in which the dialogue between artist and audience and creation begins, my realisation of its importance and therefore negation of any artificial structure began with the creation of a different studio. PSEUDO SPACE in 2011 became my studio, a doubling of life and work, gallery and studio, experiment and research. I have not kept a studio as an external facility to be accessed during business hours or kept separate from my person, and it seems that the logical deduction of this kind of studio space was to become a sort of walking studio, the performer and author of what transpired by a full commitment to practice. So then, how does one create a viable means of making work in a durational performance such as *W2W*?

In a work where the audience inadvertently engages with the performance and documentation by engaging with a person, that the presence of the 'audience' shapes the

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<sup>19</sup> Charles Harrison, *Essays on Art and Language*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), xiii.

performance and affects its direction is as relevant to the work as negating an idea of 'art as commodity'. Moreover, *W2W* looks to finding viable strategies for documenting such a work by the use of a transcription strategy that made sure that there was no intervention or heavy editing which would disrupt the authenticity of the performance. As art historian Charles Harrison says, 'the strongest justification for the study of art is that the occurrence of aesthetic oddness and intensity is uniquely revealing - revealing in a way that no other historical evidence can be - of our character and our potential as a species *in* history.'<sup>20</sup> As such the conventionalisation of all forms of representation is worth noting as it gives credence to my artistic and aesthetic choices, whilst remaining a performer I have been able to fulfil the intent of my work through an *ad hoc* and *Arte Povera* methodology, born not just from necessity but from a need of authenticity that could not come from a sense of Warholian deliberate manufacturing. The fact is that no spontaneous act of expression arrives as a polished piece of work, this is the readymade aesthetic combined with a knowledge of automation as the new immediacy of expression. This is then perhaps called stream of consciousness or automatic writing which emerged from Surrealism's main doctrines and essential points such as the importance of being open to the unconscious, rejecting censorship, the collective experience, acknowledgment of the significance of associating art with social and political life and the role of chance in allowing oneself to discover everyday beauty and marvels,<sup>21</sup> one of the main reasons I was so often lost wandering the streets at odd hours chasing a lofty cloud of fog through side alleys (fig. 9). However, *W2W* does have a specific thematic direction which has been touched on in this chapter and that will be discussed further throughout this paper, which leads us directly into the next chapter.

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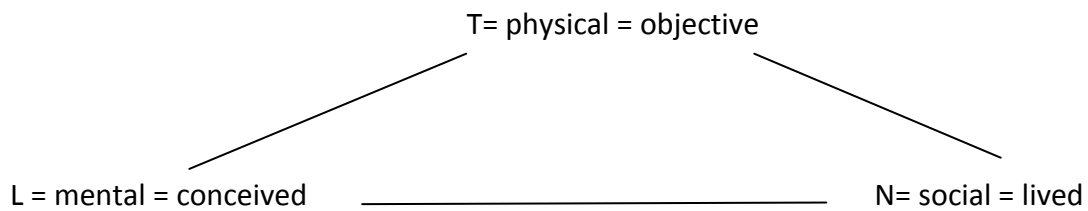
<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Harrison, xxi.

<sup>21</sup> Katharine Conley, *Automatic Women: The representation of women in Surrealism*. (United States: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 2.

### Chapter 3:

#### Henri Lefebvre and the Spatial Triad

Lefebvre's concept of spatial triad encompasses the interconnected processes of objective space, conceived space and lived space that is translatable as social space (lived), mental space (conceived) and physical space (objective).<sup>22</sup> Using this triad as a base, I overlaid my own interconnected processes of Transience, Liminal Space and Nomadic Movement, thus we see:



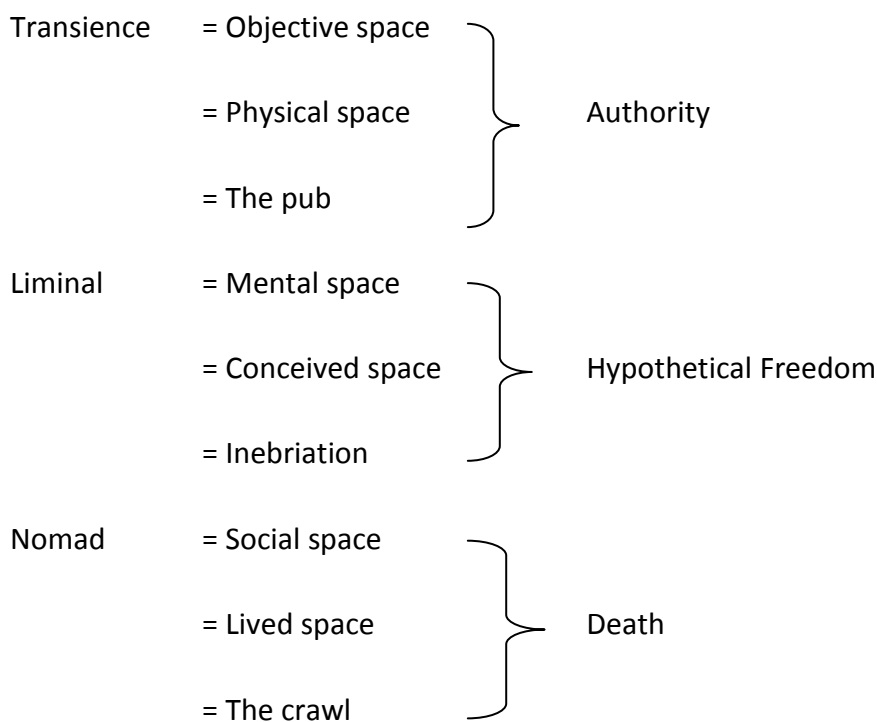
**Figure 9: somewhere off Parramatta road near a construction site, fog was rising up from below giving the appearance of a mystical bottomless well.**

<sup>22</sup> Christian Schmid, "Henri Lefebvre, the right to the city and the new metropolitan mainstream." In *Cities for People, Not for Profit*, ed. Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse and Margit Mayer (New York: Routledge, 2012), 51.



Lefebvre states that a space cannot be perceived unless first conceived in the mind, and a conceived space depicts, reflects and defines, and as such also represents the space.<sup>23</sup> Therefore the evocateur of the conceived space becomes the transient being, or the performer of *W2W* who engages not only in the spatial trialectics but also the transient overlay. To take this one step further, one must acknowledge as Lefebvre does, that geography does not play a passive role in social relations and in *W2W* this aspect is of particular relevance as it relates back to *The Coorabie Proposal* in the context of how the distortion of core themes is portrayed through the geographical lens of the urban and the Outback.

As mentioned in the preface, *W2W* is counter to *The Coorabie Proposal* in the geographical sense of city vs. country, as in trialectics theory, inside of everything is a seed of its apparent opposite. Thus the trialectics contains another layer in *W2W* which encompasses the themes of hypothetical freedom, authority and death, or:




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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 52.

## Chapter 4:

### Themes: Hypothetical freedom

The hypothetical freedom of *The Coorabie Proposal* was one that looked toward a reimagining of social structures with the potential for fundamental social transformations in a geographical space which could act almost as a 'clean slate' in that it was free from, or lacked access to, lines of social mobility, such as rural and remote Australia, or unincorporated towns, they are the essential definition of Spivak's Subaltern. But also the same hypothetical freedom Deleuze and Guattari attribute to the mad person or the schizophrenic, and the notion of 'becoming - imperceptible'.<sup>24</sup> This is the hypothetical freedom that occurs in *W2W* the 'mad person' engaged fully in the Liminal Space of intoxication, a surreptitious passenger on a motionless journey. A journey which is stationary in the choice of locals, liminal in the movement of mental states from sobriety to 'shit-faced'<sup>25</sup>, but as Deleuze and Guattari assert 'to become like everyone else is precisely becoming; for one who knows how to be nobody, to no longer be anyone. To paint oneself grey.'<sup>26</sup> The space of this hypothetical freedom creates apprehension and anticipation of forces beyond immediate perception.

### Authority

The theme of authority also includes the principle of responsibility, it is the rules and standards that dictate how we engage and participate in society. At first glance this relates directly to the urban pub/club scene in the way of bouncers, lock out laws, RSA (Responsible Service of Alcohol) and all manner of alcohol-fuelled behaviour, deviant or otherwise, however it goes a step further. It relates also to the right not to be displaced or discriminated against, these observations are annotated throughout *W2W* as it relates to women, homelessness and the unemployed. Unemployment, or rather the pursuit of employment, is a running theme in *W2W* and is looked at from the point of view of a means of social confinement and an 'untrue' and unfree existence. As social theorist Herbert Marcuse explains, 'society is still organised in such a way that procuring the necessities of

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 256.

<sup>25</sup> Common slang terminology for drunkenness, other examples would be: Sloshed, pissed, off [one's] face/ tits (this also refers to drug use), munted, sloppy. To name a few.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 218.

life constitutes the full time and lifelong occupation of specific social classes, which are *therefore* unfree and prevented from a human existence.<sup>27</sup> This implies that freedom of thought and speech necessarily remains a class privilege so long as this enslavement prevails. To remain enslaved must therefore result in a populous that exists in fundamental dissatisfaction. However, if dissatisfaction leads to pain and suffering, Arthur Schopenhauer suggests that *satisfaction* leads to ‘a fearful emptiness and boredom’,<sup>28</sup> these are, as French intellectual George Bataille states, life’s ultimate constituents, pain and boredom, and life swings to and fro between them<sup>29</sup>, which takes us on to death.

### **Death, desire and eroticism**

Marcuse states that ‘in a repressive civilisation, death itself becomes an instrument of repression.’<sup>30</sup> Repression, boredom and becoming-imperceptible play strongly throughout *W2W* particularly in relation to eroticism, it is tied to the idea of annihilation of self in a similar fashion to how becoming like everyone else *is* becoming. It is also becoming a line of flight, or pure abstraction, no longer having any form or expression of one’s own, which is the essence of ‘absolute deterritorialization’.<sup>31</sup> And whilst, as Marcuse states, the descent towards death is an ‘expression of the external struggle against suffering and repression,’<sup>32</sup> eroticism as Georges Bataille sees it, is the very desire to lose oneself without reservation, to plunge wholly and completely into the void, to use up all of our strength and resources and if necessary, place our very life in danger.<sup>33</sup> This is what eroticism demands of us, the greatest possible loss which is ultimately at the heart of what we want to lose ourselves and look death in the face.<sup>34</sup> Throughout *W2W* there is an oscillation between a sense of reckless squandering of self preservation and an intense, insatiable lust for erotic pleasure, which inevitably collide into despair. References to Soren Kierkegaard’s ideas on despair and losing oneself to a point beyond recognition are made within *W2W* (See Appendix pg.60).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*. (UK: Routledge, 1964),132.

<sup>28</sup> Jonathan Dollimore, *Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture*. (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 175.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Deleuze and Guattari, 221.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, Dollimore, 224.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>35</sup> Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*. (London: Penguin Books, 1989. Originally published in Danish under the title *Sygdommen til Døden*, 1849.)

The themes discussed so far can all be interwoven and are interconnected throughout *W2W*. It is necessary at this point to shed some light on the process and structure of the writing, in particular how the ruptures and breakdown of the structure play a fundamental role in the reading, comprehension and immersion in the narrative. This rupture, fracturing and even stutter is further demonstrated in the video work *Fem.Tort.*, which will also be discussed here and linked with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of ruptures and their argument on the novella.

## Chapter 5:

### Structures and process: Or, how to Explain What happens.

In order to speak about the processes and structure of *W2W*, some ideas and theories need to be considered. Firstly, the relationship between art and literature and the way in which, particularly in the case of abstract art, we are able to discuss the rules and processes of the artwork, secondly as mentioned in the previous chapter, a discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's chapter on the novella. These areas of enquiry will be directly linked and discussed in relation to the style, grammar, direction and intent of *W2W*. Language in and of itself can be viewed as abstract, with multiple interpretations, implications and contexts, as such style, poise and rhythm are pivotal to the piece of writing, which is what Wendy Dunn suggests when she says that so long as the audience comprises of experienced readers the subject matter or genre is not something one needs to be completely familiar with as the language itself should affect the reader in such a way that the relevance is ascertainable.<sup>36</sup> This is also the case when 'reading' the work of art, as the art critic or audience is asked how does one put a language to the visual if it is beyond representation. Robert Steiner suggests that 'ascribing significance becomes art readings invention of its own locus, so in a sense, nothing can fail to be resolved because the art reader already begins to understand what is being invented without knowing it as invention'.<sup>37</sup> *W2W* is an invention. As an artist, I consider my practice to be hinged on performance although the final result of a work may transform into something else, in much the same way that, for example, Jackson Pollock's paintings are performative gestures that take on the form and appearance of paintings, the drip of paint on a Pollock painting has every intention of being there and belonging to the work. Or as discussed earlier the nexus of conceptual art, as described by Sol LeWitt, is the idea itself, even if it is not made visual, the idea is as much a work of art as any finished product<sup>38</sup>, and as such, when art theorist Craig Dworkin coined the term 'conceptual writing' he was seeking to demonstrate that 'one could conceive of a theoretically based art that is

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<sup>36</sup> Wendy Dunn, *Critical Friends: The Real and Virtual support of Writers*. Lecture 1. (Swinburne University, 2013).

<sup>37</sup> Robert Steiner, *Toward a Grammar of Abstraction: modernity, Wittgenstein, and the paintings of Jackson Pollock*. (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992),70.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, Dworkin, xxxi.

independent of genre'<sup>39</sup> thus shifting the perception or reading of a particular work based on the merits of its structure, in the same way Steiner refers to Pollock's work mentioned above, and hence situating *W2W* as a performance piece of 'art as writing'.

Looking back on the works presented in *The Coorabie Proposal*, there is a performance in *the Shape of Australia*, gestures of the performative in the *Stick Landscape paintings*, and the invention for future performance in the *Lands-Cape*. *W2W* is no different from these in that at its heart, it is a performative work of art, traversing mediums into literature in one sense, that being the physicality of the object and the words, but remaining in the realm of art by finding and using transitions and ruptures in grammar and syntax to become something imperceptible. In this sense, the way in which we recognise, distinguish and critique a work comes down to the internal rules that the work itself dictates and its translatability, in effect, that it is able to provide a certain feeling in the viewer or implicate another vocabulary. Language is after all, always art's foremost audience because we are able to analyse works, as Steiner states, 'either as they call attention to the debts they owe outside themselves visually or to the debts language owes them... to this extent writing about art is writing art'.<sup>40</sup> This is not to say *W2W* is necessarily writing about art, though at times it is, but rather it is art as writing. I began *W2W* in 2013 as a documentation of the motions and gestures of the intent to transform myself, the performer, into a vehicle for random transient events, or what Deleuze refers to as 'becoming-imperceptible; in which the figure also disappears'.<sup>41</sup> This 'disappearing' became an essential part of not only the grammatical structure of *W2W*, but the very nature of how this investigation was carried out. As mentioned earlier the use of text in art is not new and neither is the idea of a type of conceptual writing, artists such as Hans Haake and Vitto Acconci employ writing as experiments with language, a manipulation of words, grammar and syntax, of how we read and comprehend by using radical textual strategies<sup>42</sup>. *W2W* is not an exercise in the manipulation and disruption of language, rather it is an experimentation and documentation of the disruption of a cohesive and logical person of sound mind testing the effects of a radical lifestyle change, one in which the merging of ideas such as Jacques

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., xxxi.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 249.

<sup>42</sup> Vito Acconci, *Language to cover a page: The early writings of Vito Acconci*. Introduction by Craig Dworkin. (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006), xv.

Derrida's 'unconditional hospitality'<sup>43</sup> and Deleuze and Guattari's schizophrenics free from social conventions, become strategies used to uncover how one might achieve an alternate lifestyle in a non-coercive rearrangement of desires. Though as the research shows, this is most certainly not the result, the hypothetical freedom in this experiment leads more or less instantaneously into coercion of and by multiple parties. To expand briefly on the notion of unconditional hospitality, Derrida presents rather poetically:

*Let us say yes to who or what turns up, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any identification.... invited guest or an unexpected visitor... a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female.*<sup>44</sup>

On the one hand, to say 'yes' assumes a moral and ethical responsibility to adhere to a principle of recognising that all beings which you invite into your presence must be accommodated accordingly, however the contradiction arises that any hospitality which is unconditional cannot exist without stipulations and laws lest it become ideological.

As mentioned earlier, the crux of this enquiry rests on what I have referred to as the 'Trialectics of Transience'; Transient Space, Liminal Mind, Nomadic Movement<sup>45</sup>, these are the 'rules' that govern the performance. In order to carry out this durational feat, I had to become one with, physically and mentally, become a part of this abstractness I sort out, thus *W2W* is in part auto-biographical in that the wanderings of the 'character' are actual. However, it is not reflection nor a story about past memories, rather it follows Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the Novella which is fundamentally about the act of forgetting.<sup>46</sup> The story is built and evolves around an element of 'what happened?' and places the reader in relation with something unknowable...

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<sup>43</sup> Jacques Derrida, In *Of Hospitality Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2000. Originally published in French in 1997 under the title *De l'hospitalité: Anne Dufourmantelle invite Jacques Derrida à répondre* by Calmann-Levy), 77.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Derrida, 77.

<sup>45</sup> The trialectic can be interchangeable in terminology, for example transience in the performance is directly related to the social space and liminality to the effects of substances on the brain. Hence Transient Space and Liminal Mind.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 214.

*I was craving intimacy as a desperate solution to a catastrophe I could not only not put my finger on, but somehow refused to accept a solution for - he came, like I knew he would, we could smoke and talk and drink for hours -*

*but tonight it would not be enough -*

*I remember having absolutely no reaction, I remember not saying a single word, I remember an idea, an ideology, a simple thought that we were all nothing but human beings living together in our own ways, that we each just want our own sense of peace and well being, that deep down it just could not be realistically possible to hurt other people-*

*to look at someone and with forethought and malice inflict harm on that person -*

*to know that you were doing so.*

*- Excerpt W2W pg.130*

This unknown is precisely the nature of Transience and is reflected in the style and grammar of *W2W*, the short staccato sentences, changes in rhythm and voice, hyphen breaks, font changes and at times broken grammatical style. These are deliberate techniques that deliver a necessary grammar for imagining, to not only formulate mental pictures and physical sensations, but a translation into literature; the language is the interpreter. Grammatical study is intended to scrutinize 'the relations between expressions and perceptions, cognition and truth content from the standpoint of each as distinct operations of language',<sup>47</sup> as such the stylistic techniques I have employed are used in order to establish a sense of detachment, uncertainty and slippage between the real and the imagined for the purpose of engaging the audience in the very sensation of Transience. However, grammar is not meaning in itself, it functions as an indicator of how meaning might be generated, which becomes important because of the 'fundamental forgetting' which is at the core of the novella. Marcuse refers to memory as fatalistic and the flux of time as society's greatest ally in maintaining law and order,<sup>48</sup> which is a direct contrast not only to the 'nothingness' of the imperceptible, but the way that the breakdowns and ruptures throughout *W2W* are consistently met with the themes of death, desire and eroticism.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Steiner, 17.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Marcuse, 137.



## Chapter 6:

### Influences: Film and Literature

The style and grammatical structure as I have discussed, play an important role in how we read, perceive and translate a work; whether it is visual, performative or written the producers' decisions and choices affect the outcome and readability of the final work. Film, for example, is a medium which has dominated entertainment it would be difficult to find a person who has not experienced television or film. Here I will discuss the main influences on my work of two feature films, Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*, and Richard Kelly's *Southland Tales*, and the novel by Russell Hoban *Riddley Walker*, how the use of distinctive stylist techniques set these works apart from their counterparts, and the ways in which either through themes, grammar or sense of disembodiment, these influences draw parallels to *W2W*. Aside from these films being an influence for my work, it is relevant to speak of film in this discussion more so than say an artist, as film, entertainment and technology are spoken of frequently throughout *W2W*, as the 'character' I become as the performance progresses at times becomes absorbed into a fantasy of visual images flashing before her eyes, paralysed on the 'floor sofa' after too much wine.

Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*, the story originally by Quentin Tarantino, has the protagonist's homicidal urges and psychology as the main conception and motivation of the story. However, Stone's film places the irresponsibility of the mass media glorifying the mass murderers front and centre. This was inspired heavily by the strong media attention surrounding violent crimes in America at the time (OJ Simpson, Rodney King, to name a few). Stone felt, as I think many do, that the media attention surrounding 'sensationalised' crimes had a massive impact on not only the way the legal system was able to operate, but also in the ultimate outcomes.<sup>49</sup> As such the film is told through an erratic mish-mash of visual storytelling, as though one were flicking through channels late at night and somehow the same story was being told over all the channels, from black and white, to sitcoms, to commercials, to vivid psychedelic hallucinations that seem only fitting for such frenzied visual transgressions.

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<sup>49</sup> Oliver Stone, *Natural Born Killers*. (Warner Bros, 1994). Directors Commentary (DVD extra).

This film depicts a couple, Mickey and Mallory, who come together through childhood trauma and become unstoppable, unforgiving killers, a clear reference to death, but also desire and eroticism are prevalent throughout, the desire the protagonists have for one another, the inability to quell their desires to rid the world of all those whom they feel stand in the way of their freedom and happiness, and of course Mallory, the female protagonist, with her insightful, downtrodden, cut-snake character, volatile and vicious but only in the way of a caged bear, which is so cathartically portrayed in the prison escape scene toward the end of the film, in which she plays a game of sexual “cat and mouse” with a guard who intends to have his way with her.

Stone describes the film as being ultimately ‘a very optimistic film about the future. It is about freedom and the ability of every human being to get it.’<sup>50</sup> This film has as much to do with freedom from persecution as with freedom from society and all that it expects of people, it speaks to the issues of responsibility and authority, themes also present in *W2W*, through the destructive and powerful force of the media which the protagonists ultimately destroy in their quest to disappear from the world and become ‘nobodies’ so they might lead a life of relative normality.

Wayne Gale: *“But wait, don’t Mickey and Mallory always leave someone alive? You know, to tell the tale?”*

Mickey and Mallory: *“We are. The Camera.”*

*Southland Tales* by writer/director Richard Kelly, aside from being one of my all time favourite films, is also an example of traversing mediums. The film is prefaced by a series of graphic novels of the same name, three in total which were originally to be part of the whole experience of *Southland Tales* as an interactive experience, also comprising of a website and several other elements that would intertwine with the graphic novels and the film, however this proved a far too ambitious undertaking, and whilst these works reference one another they also are able to be read as standalone pieces. Similarly, *W2W* and *Fem. Tort.* make reference to one another, and when put together the pieces do engage in

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

conversation which I will discuss further in the section on *Fem.Tort.*, but they can also be viewed independently, the translatability is not dependent on the other.

*Southland Tales* which is classified as a Sci-Fi thriller about the Apocalypse, set in an alternative history in Los Angeles, is a satirical commentary on the 'infotainment' industry and the military-industrial industry. It is a film so rich in information, narrative and content that even after several viewings new ideas come to light. There are several story threads that run through the film, some of which remain unexplained or unfinished, a spectacular sense of fracturing and rupture that comes about through the parallel universe that we discover is collapsing in on itself, and the political factions trying to take down 'the powers that be' that have corrupted the nation, censored the internet and destroyed the public's right to privacy because of the ever present and never-ending threat of terrorism.

The cast in this film is a direct example of the importance of the decisions producers make and how these affect the final outcome of the work. The cast were chosen because of their references to pop-culture with a diversity that could not have been achieved otherwise, from former WWE wrestler 'The Rock' Dwayne Johnson, the cult classic *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* Sarah Michelle Gellar and pop icon Justin Timberlake who narrates the film and also mimes a fabulously bizarre musical scene mid film to *All these Things that I've Done* by The Killers, who are also referenced by chance in *W2W*. Once again there is a stylistic mash up of film techniques which builds the sensation of 'what happened'. Though not frenzied in the in way of *Natural Born Killers*, *Southland Tales* employs a sort of fractured storytelling that encompasses all of the characters and their individual circumstances at the time in which we join the film, so even though it is narrated to guide the audience through, there is a distinct sensation that there is so much we already don't know, which makes the audience have to work to keep up with what is happening.

*Join us for an in-depth discussion of the penetrating issues facing society today. Issues like abortion, terrorism, crime, poverty, social reform, quantum teleportation, teen horniness and war.*

- *Krista Now*, psychic porn star played by Sarah Michelle Gellar.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Richard Kelly, *Southland Tales*. (U.S. :Destination Films, 2007).

Though in some ways, following all of the different story threads seems to almost not necessarily be the point, as though understanding what is happening will not help to stop the inevitable outcome, and yet there is an overwhelming sensation to want to untangle the mystery (I see this as a direct reference to the films of David Lynch which are mentioned in *W2W*), however the audience is but a passenger in an inescapable destruction.

As in *W2W*, understanding is almost irrelevant to the story, it is not about discovery but rather as Deleuze and Guattari say of the novella, it is intrinsically about secrecy and that there is not only nothing to be found, but also nothing to be concluded, it is about a dismantling of self, structure and society. This is the rupture which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the disruption of the past, in that the form of what happened no longer exists, or: 'My territories are out of grasp, not because they are imaginary, but because I am in the process of drawing them. Wars, big and little, are behind me.'<sup>52</sup>

Ruptures have been discussed thus far in relation to grammar, and a prime example of how this technique can be employed can be seen clearly in Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker*.<sup>53</sup> I have talked about how *W2W* finds a grammar of its own that becomes a function of the structure and slippage between the real and imagined, I have discussed the ways in which both *Southland Tales* and *Natural Born Killers* use filters, narrative techniques and stylistic changes in the visualization of their films to convey ruptures in their societies and protagonists. Now I will discuss how these ruptures take place in literature, specifically *Riddley Walker*, in which author Russell Hoban creates a whole new language and how this affects the way the audience receives and engages with the work.

Also classified as a Sci-Fi genre dystopian novel, it is set some 2000 years after a nuclear war that has decimated the world and developed societies; as such there is no civilization as we know it, no history, no books. Riddley Walker is a young man whom takes it upon himself to document the world as he sees it, as it now exists, with the amalgamation of church and state, a mythology based on the misunderstood and misinterpretation of the war and events leading to it and it is all interwoven with an old Catholic saint who is enacted in strange ritualistic puppet shows. The most fascinating part of this novel however is the language itself, it is an imagined language which is written in a mostly phonetic way

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 220.

<sup>53</sup> Russell Hoban, *Riddley Walker*. (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1980).

particularly in the spelling, as a futuristic estimation of how a language might progress, or in this case digress and devolve as a result of complete social breakdown or annihilation. How a new grammar would emerge from the dust. This specificity of the novel's phonetic and morphemic structure forces the reader to slow down. Key words, punctuation and sentence structures enable the reader to ascertain, sometimes at a glance, the plot or direction of a story. A popular example of this is the 'airport novel', stories which are fast paced with familiar plot themes and usually finished in one sitting, bestselling authors in this genre include Dan Brown and Clive Cussler.

In Russell Hoban's imaginary language, a sort of dialect of English though translatable in the sense that the reader gets used to the way in which Walker speaks, the lack of punctuation and 'misspelt' words forces the audience to become one with Walker's world, to suspend what we know of how things are to see how things are *now*.

*Seams like I ben all ways thinking on that thing in us what thinks us but it don't think like us. Our woal life is a idear we dint think of nor we dont know what it is. What a way to live. Thats why I finely come to writing all this down. Thinking on what the idear of us myt be. Thinking on that thing whats in us lorn and loan and oansome.*<sup>54</sup>

In a similar sense *W2W* employs disruptive grammatical structures in an effort to hold the audience's attention in order for them to be able to suspend their knowledge, belief or prejudices' on how the artwork or novella is read and received, but also for them to become capable of standing in the character's place and experiencing what is happening. Or as Tzvetan Todorov says, 'If I wish to communicate successfully with others, I must presuppose a frame of reference which encompasses both my universe and theirs.'<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>55</sup> Richard Wolin, *Labyrinths: Explorations into the Critical History of Ideas*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press), 194.

## Chapter 7:

### ***Feminine Torture; the video work - a response and a duality.***

Thus far I have written extensively about themes such as desire, death, rupture, authority and hypothetical freedom as they relate to *W2W*, however most of these themes and discussions throughout this introduction are also echoed in the video work *Fem. Tort.* Here I will discuss the style of *Fem. Tort.*, including setting, direction, video techniques and the idea of 'doubling'.

Deleuze speaks extensively on the notion of 'becoming' not as an assimilation or imitation of anything, but as what he refers to as a 'double capture', no longer binary machines or mechanisms, for example: Question - Answer. As such he stipulates that this could be what conversation is: the outline of a becoming.<sup>56</sup> This is how I perceive the relationship between *W2W* and *Fem.Tort.* as conversational. *Fem.Tort.* is a feat of physical endurance and determination to maintain the illusion of a calm, controlled and all together 'feminine' demeanour, reminiscent of a 'becoming-woman' to which as Deleuze says, the girl, whilst the woman-becoming is inherently also girl, she is the line of flight, she the girl is the abstract line, she is the haecceity; the very thingness of things.<sup>57</sup> Whilst below the surface the effort to maintain this begins to fail and the cracks appear as ruptures and stutters. If we look at this in terms of the way in which Deleuze speaks of how movement does not move from one point to another, but rather happens *between* two levels, as in a difference of potential;<sup>58</sup> so the stutter becomes this in-between space of the curtsy, neither up nor down but the potential to be both, to fall or to stand up again. This is the breakdown that is apparent in both works, the inevitable collapse, the grammatical slur and the in-between place in which this occurs; the Liminal space.

The potential of the Liminal space, which is neither one nor the other but could be 'both', speaks to the idea of 'doubling' or the line of flight that has been discussed as being the line of pure abstraction, this is where Deleuze and Guattari speak of the dismantling of one's self 'in order to finally be alone and meet the true double at the other end of the line.'<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II.* (New York: Columbia University Press,1987), 5.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, Deleuze and Guattari, 305.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, Deleuze and Parnet, 15.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, Deleuze and Guattari, 218.

*Fem.Tort.* provides this double, not in the performance itself, but in the image reflected in the mirror on the wall. This double, when she appears, is always upright.

*Fem.Tort.* was shot after the completion of the durational performance which became *W2W*, and is in a sense the abridged version of the novella, but also an atonement and catharsis. Also, a performance piece, *Fem.Tort.* employs a distinctive aspect of the theatrical in the staging, costume and framing of the piece. The costume, a black vintage 1960's dress is referenced in *W2W*, and whilst I have said that these works can be viewed individually, having knowledge of this particular reference is the knowing of a secret, which otherwise remains a mystery. The theatrical nature of *Fem.Tort.* is accentuated by the entrance onto 'set', in which I appear from behind the black curtain, take 'centre stage' and begin. The image itself from the camera is grainy and the colour washed out, which makes it appear as though it should be black and white or sepia, as though it is in fact old footage, the throw back to a 1960's mentality of women was quite prevalent in the media during the time of *W2W* and *Fem. Tort.* in particular from the Australian shock jock Alan Jones<sup>60</sup> "destroying the joint" commentary which then became the title of the backlash movement, publishing a book of the same name.<sup>61</sup> These attitudes towards women are pervasive throughout *W2W*, it is part of the fabric that make up both of these works.

So without further ado or explanation, the following are the performance notes *From War to War....*

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<sup>60</sup> Alan Jones is a Sydney radio shock jock whose comment on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2012 that women leaders (referring to former Prime Minister Julia Gillard and others) were "destroying the joint", a comment that led to an understandable backlash, as well as several publications including a book by the same name edited by Jane Caro.

<sup>61</sup> Ed. Jane Caro, *Destroying the Joint: Why women have to Change the World.* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2013).

## Chapter 8:

### ***From War to War: Performance notes.***

*INSTRUCTIONS FOR PERFORMERS: Please read the following pages silently to yourself at your own pace. Read the highlighted sections out loud as you get to them.*

#### **Section One.**

There certainly seems to be a great lack of foreplay in this kind of world, everything seems to have an instant result or promise of that. How can one derive any pleasure from what is deemed to result in a successful gratification – not much room or need for experimentation then right? But then maybe that's where fetish porn comes into play – I'm watching a girl being very thorough with another girl's foot – it's heavily stylised and choreographed but they play their roles so well it looks great. Unbelievable, I just poured myself a glass of wine and already there are two bar flies floating in it getting merrily intoxicated no doubt, happily I'm not averse to sharing and fish them out with the back of my pen, which is probably a lot more questionable than the flies. It's almost 5pm, the house is looking more or less spotless for the upcoming PS<sup>62</sup> show, it made sleeping last night particularly difficult – it felt like I'd just moved in – it did not feel like home, an interesting kind of thing, almost as though by relinquishing ownership or grounding in a space one loses that sensation of home – in some way I'm actually not upset about that – after all this place was always a place to pass through – counting the years – coming on to five years. It's a long time and yet nothing at all. I dreamt of home – an unmarked territory – something along the lines of the potential prospects of places like Hutt River or unincorporated South Australia – an endless expanse upon itself expanding into the horizon – into the sea – never did we stand without conviction that our home belonged to everyone and no one. We concentrate on the process of making and creating rather than ownership and work with what we have – all available resources, as the plants take root, the birds sing, the animals listen carefully – a living labyrinth takes shape with no beginning or end – a mutually

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<sup>62</sup> Pseudo Space was an underground experimental gallery which I founded in 2011. It was for new and emerging artists, musicians and performers held on the last Sunday of each month. The main objective of PS was to provide an alternative platform for creative people to show their works and engage with the local community. See appendix.



supportive framework. It's a wonderful idea anyway. Today is a quiet day, not quite sunny not entirely overcast, it has the feel of a peacefully uneventful day. The show is nearly done, only an hour or so left and I can close my front door on the public and tell them to fuck off, leave me alone, let me drink and sleep in peace – at the moment it's all I can think of – sleep.

It was 5am before I passed out on the floor sofa, now in the kitchen – still running through all the details of what needs to be done for the show – keep telling myself it's only a soft opening, the real shindig is on Sunday, Stalker Book estimates the turn out to be around one hundred people, god knows how they'll all fit in the house – either way my mind turns to the amount of food and beer that will be needed – mainly beer – and I wonder what will be more important, nothing worse than rank food sitting in the sun all day and then eating it after consuming too much booze – at least that ill feeling could be put down to far too much boozing – who's really keeping track anyhow. So we go to the pub rather than staying home and finalising the show for tomorrow – the conversation goes from cannibalism to stabbing the little man in the boat in the head with your tongue.

I stayed up until past two in the morning – watching a Hungarian film on SBS about a woman past her prime wanting to get pregnant – it's Good Friday and it seems it has been so long since I last took the time to write – these ideas and beautiful lyrical moments would come into my head – I'd keep telling myself I'd remember at some other point, but it's never the case. I was in bed but I got up – tripped over the same pair of shoes leaving the room as I did coming back in – then I turned the light on. You see the trouble was that I died that night – I remember – I fell asleep and I didn't wake up. I was not worried, I did not think of the world or what it might be without me, I did not have any concern for a potential future which I may never see, I simply fell asleep – and that was all – the second hand continued to tick, the light outside faded became dark and then light again. I did not mind that I may be here for an unspecified amount of time – a time frame which would extinguish any and all hope of last minute resuscitation. I did not die. I simply fell asleep.

## Section Two

....He took my notebook from me, as we sat across from one another in the middle row of the maxi-taxi our eyes locked unrelenting, returning each other's gaze double fold. He scribbled in the back. For a moment there was no one else; not younger brother; not friend learning German; not two random girls chattering endlessly in hopes to mask their discomfort and insecurity.

Ironically, it was their sudden silence and inquisitiveness at our moment that made us rejoin the pointless conversation in that cab.

A typical club in a typical area of Kings Cross, with the typical boys and girls; the standard fight that breaks out for some reason or another – and I am reminded of the last time I was in the Cross; with the crew from work – how the girl said she could get us in and get us free drinks because she 'knew' people.

She did manage to get us all in – only just.

And the free drinks?

One.

For her.

Which she did share – but really, what's the point. Either way I did find myself with the opportunity to make good on the daydream I was having on the bus earlier that day.

I wanted to play with a boy on the dance floor in unabashed sensual energy – let him slowly run his hands over my body whilst I arched my back into him – my arm reaching behind me pulling his head close into the side of my neck as we grind and sway. This boy was good for that, he seemed to understand the principle behind what we were doing – a way to release and express our energy and desire with comfort and no intent beyond those moments.

The girls disappeared - left their array of bags on the nightclub floor by us and vanished.

Then, so too did the boy.

He was looking rather pale and in a hurry to do something - I assume vomit, so I stood – looking around and losing interest in the situation rapidly – which to be fair, I'd had very little interest in going along with these people, to this place to begin with. After all, I could have been in my local pub – actually drinking – until 6am - and not have to deal with the crowds, dickheads and shit music. But alas – I was here and the boy had returned not looking much better. I tell him he'll be ok, he can come with me and I will look after him. After all, that is the one thing I cannot help but do – it's got very little to do with me really at all – help a brother out – is all it is – doesn't mean I owe them anything, doesn't even necessarily mean I like them – at all – It's merely a matter of responsibility, in any particular circumstance: if things get messy, someone needs to take responsibility – make sure everyone's ok; safe; taken care of; comforted.

The girls will have to deal with the consequences of bugging off, obviously I can't very well call them - not only is it too loud, but I dare say their phones are in the bags they've left at our feet – which I hope don't get stolen, but it's really not my problem right now. I guess sometimes people just want to shit on the footpath.

It's ridiculous o'clock.

I'm in the city at a club and nowhere near drunk – that's a problem.

I take the boy home with me, give him water and panadol and put him to bed. He cuddles up to me all night like an appreciative pet, kisses me on the cheek in the morning tells me he's lost his phone and if it rings and someone is speaking in French I should tell them to fuck off. I find his phone three days later tangled in the bottom of the bed sheets.

I've been feeling a bit unusual. Aside from a shocking tremor which makes it near impossible to hold anything, my head is foggy – light – my eyes blurry and for some reason I'm edgy, nervous, uncomfortable in my own skin – almost as though I am too aware of myself and my presence in the world - to be so aware of the people around you and how you interact with them – realising that you've lost your humour and personality momentarily, hearing yourself saying things and thinking: I have no basis for these comments – I am not convinced – I am not believing my own person at all, how can I therefore maintain any truth prospect of self.<sup>63</sup>

The problem here is I am exhausted and cannot stand the idea that I've no energy left in me to keep fighting, that I need to slow down

– stop –

take a break, and recuperate.

It makes me feel vulnerable and easily coerced. My sensitivity to the world around me is heightened to the point of dismay, not at any particular idea of tragedy, but to the feeling and sensation of being humans, jammed together in this city.

So isolated from each other,

So connected to everything.

I saw an old man, I was on the bus – it nearly kept on going right past him: the look on his face, some mixture of disbelief and shock – he took forever to walk the few metres to the bus with his walking frame – twisted and bent. He didn't pay the fare I noticed. He wore a navy sports jacket over tan slacks and an Australia flag cap, well worn and faded, much like himself. I could've helped him at some point I suppose, not that I think he really needed it, maybe I just felt guilty – mildly - that no one else did. I was expecting him to get off at the Paddo RSL – he didn't – I got off at the pub.

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<sup>63</sup> 'Absolute deterritorialization', as Deleuze and Guattari state, the line of pure abstraction, to have no identity or distinction within between content and expression. Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 156.

They were on the roof top — staff party: very hungry since yesterday. There is too much static, I thought of something beautiful on the way here, and completely forgot.

The drink is insufficient, so is the sunscreen they provide... Although ... at the Glenmore in the Rocks - it is something that is....

...too long of a break between thought processes and conversation - maybe I should pay attention at some point at least

- maybe somehow someone is confused at a point -

but really, the drinks are paid for - tightly - at \$1500 for an established establishment, what are they saving for? ...

The girls get drunk - the boys talk shop. I'm not sure where I should sit, but I sit with the girls and write. I sit with the girls, only waiting, writing in my book to pass the time no doubt. I could well decide that perhaps I fit in with these people more, or indeed I could make a conceded effort to connect; but why waste my time and theirs?

### Section Three

If ever I'd assumed I had something important to say it became lost in a myriad of thoughts, ideas, displacements and romanticisms, there was never - is never - a set point, a direction, as it were - there are lines, lines that travel so quickly it is as though one is travelling through time. They do not slow down or stop, for anyone, but flash past like shooting stars. I wait and watch for them, hoping every now and again to catch one - jump onto a stream - like a runaway hopping a train - to take you to a conclusion and back again before you can absorb the end. Only recognising upon your return that there indeed is an end - predetermined; perhaps - ultimate; defiantly. For what is an end unless it is indeed ultimate.

I end up in Newtown. I am desperate for work but they are unfortunately unable to facilitate that request – constantly. Although I’ve been called in tonight; not that I’ve nothing better to do – still need to get myself out of my committed responsibilities.<sup>64</sup> On my way to Newtown on a Tuesday night – walking – it’s 11:20pm but I can’t afford the cab – that seven dollars would be better spent on beer when I get to Kelly’s. I’m supposed to meet the younger girl – she sounds unduly supportive – in that stretched way that makes these encounters particularly painful, as though all that could have been said has been said in a million different ways each of which has been traumatic. Either way she tells me that in an unfortunate turn of events all the pubs are shut, yet I sit here at Kelly’s, it’s a little before 1am and I don’t flatter myself that I’ve been disrupted several times. One boy tells me that presumably it would be acceptable for this kind of behaviour in a cafe, or at least through daylight hours, I’m not completely unnerved about him trying to read over my shoulder as I write – I’ve nothing sensible to say and I dare say I’ve nothing particularly insulting to say about him at the moment. I’m sure he’d appreciate that. I half expect the younger girl to walk in at any point with enthusiastically apologetic utterances’ of – “babe! – here you are” – “I’ve been looking for you” – “tried to call” – and so on. Perhaps I shouldn’t be so hard on the girl, after all on the walk over it gave me time to think – that was really what I was after – but I needed to have somewhere to go, at least an end point, something so I was not simply walking out the door – in a haze – trying to be at peace with some sort of perspective of life – my life – how it may turn out to be the most bastardised version of reality, freedom and idealism – simply in a different nation – I’m not entirely sure how to contend with the situation of nationalism here, it seems to be something that is for the

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<sup>64</sup> ‘All liberation depends on the consciousness of servitude, the emergence of which is always hampered by the predominance of needs and satisfactions which, to a great extent, have become the individuals own. The distinguishing feature of advanced industrial society is its effective suffocation of those needs which demand liberation – liberation also from that which is tolerable and rewarding and comfortable – while it sustains and absolves the destructive power and repressive function of the affluent society. Here, the social controls exact the overwhelming need for the production and consumption of waste; the need for stupefying work where it is no longer a real necessity; the need for modes of relaxation which soothe and prolong this stupefication; the need for maintaining such deceptive liberties as free competition at administered prices, a free press which censors itself, free choice between brands and gadgets.’ Ibid., Marcuse, 9.

masses.<sup>65</sup> These boys that I've met at the pub, they've taken their time, they've tried – and now the lot of them...

*Then this bloke was here saying that he was here and now...*

*and didn't know that what he said...*<sup>66</sup>

...Exactly those things that he didn't tell me – at all – the other boys crowded round the table, the banter consumes the conversation but the interest mounts, unassumingly the handover takes place – wishful thinking on my part – the boys are beyond gone, but they try hard and I cannot help but be endeared for a moment too long. The pub is empty, it's past 2am and the arguments start, at least one of them has the presence of mind to move to another table, the concern is fleeting as they insist it is their business to know how I will get home – I will walk – that is the concern they tell me. The last few blocks to my house take forever. It's like I've got lead in my legs – not lead in my shoes – my entire legs are heavy to the point of struggle, it is 3:45am I am trying to get home, but this weight in my legs is difficult to contend with. I sit in the annex of an abandoned shop I am nearly home but I must stop, to sit, to write, to say – the pavement is the same – the chance to feel close to home is the same – the reality of sitting in the gutter, handbag in lap, writing these notes – is the same – so are the police that drive on by. I almost feel the need to call Wolverine, my therapist, aptly nicknamed I thought as at any moment I felt he could rip me to shreds. I get close to home and I already smell the burning, I was unsure as to whether I'd turned off the stove before I left –

I pace

– Faster than usual

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<sup>65</sup> 'Because a purely legal notion of citizenship can obscure deep inequalities, it is commonplace to define the concept of citizenship in terms of the realities of political and social life. If some sections of the community are so underprivileged in their access to employment, income, health services and adequate education opportunities, the question becomes: are the legally sanctioned rights and privileges of such people simply a camouflage hiding a deeper and more fundamental inequality?' Michael Hogan "Introduction." In *Equality and Citizenship under Keating*, ed. Michael Hogan and Kathy Dempsey (Sydney: University of Sydney, 1995), 7.

<sup>66</sup> At times during my travels people that I'd meet would write notes in my notebooks, often unreadable, mostly indecipherable, these notes are indented and in italics.

## Section four

...be easily explained away. I'm not sure yet whether the watch is a hopeful step backwards in time or a pre-emptive move forwards – it just stares back at me frozen endlessly – disregard for anything remotely momentary. I wonder what happens in each fragment of time directly around each device that follows it – in this place – my home – each time reader sits at a different interval, none of them read the same time – each room is like its own portal – of course it does make it slightly confusing when it comes to being elsewhere at a certain time, like work, or in this circumstance – dinner.

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*And I met Kearnsy...*

*I met the most amazing two girls.*

*Embraced me like I shouldn't have (Fuck birds).*

As horribly horrifying as it is to lose your phone, it is equally as frustrating watching other people prepare to be looked at – she would love to actually approach him, bitching about not getting heard – we kick around at Kelly's the younger girl,

she makes time and ( telephones.. helps me out.. )

as it were –

the Karaoke here is much like it is at other places at this time, they try hard,

and DAMN THEY ARE AWESOME!



In some way I'm there – no time for serious behaviour tonight.

Yeah, so I met Kearnsy, he talked about himself in third person for most of the night –

they talked Rugby – the Western Australian type – I had no idea,

no chance or even vague interest to engage

- something about the storm or the force, it's all the same either way.

At the moment I sit here with the chef boy, he left the shop, the drama unfolds at every turn and is ultimately irrelevant

- Jay leaves – we sit – apparently awaiting his return – their shit is questionable – I do make some attempts to make polite conversation, he misses the boys club – that's what they say.

I don't remember leaving there that night – earlier today I went through my camera – I was taking pictures of the paintings I'm working on at the moment - or trying to anyway – it's full, of a friend's holiday photos, pictures of the wing of the plane – riveting stuff – delete all?

Yes.

I may not be forgiven for that, after all one person's interpretation of the importance of the visual memories can never be aptly placed – it's probably why that same sensation of nostalgia can occur by the vaguest non-events – a smell – the way the light hits a street post – how the same song sounds different every time.<sup>67</sup> I got caught up on the way home it seems, these photos are of dark alleyways and graffitied roller doors, no wonder I don't remember leaving the pub – I entered a

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<sup>67</sup> A remembered event is infinite because it is key to everything that happened after it and before it. Ibid., Wolin, 69.

different world on the walk home, it may as well have been a different night all together – and I imagine I was more engaged with the nothingness of these dark back streets than the guys at the pub. The chickens are pecking at the painting doors of their fuck'n sick chicken house – it's falling apart at every turn which is to be expected from a temporary structure built of found materials in such a way that it can be deconstructed with relative ease. Although at this rate it appears the weather will sort that out for me as well. I've finally figured out how the little fuckers keep getting out – straight out the door – guess they watched Jed open it enough times to figure it out for themselves. It's been a relatively mundane day but not unproductive – the sky feels heavy – it seems like I should be waiting by the water somewhere and watch whatever unfolds – there is an overwhelming sensation of observation today suddenly accentuated by Jed's dramatic charge towards the chicken house. He lets out a desperate cry and runs back to me – fine – I'll let them out. Turns out the puppy just wants to chase them. The second they are out they go for his food – as per usual – the pup is ready for them; his menacing growl is very convincing – if you don't know him – no one's really worried.

### **Section five**

I'm looking forward to the prospect of spending eight hour a days on the phone asking people for charity with the full expectation of being hung up on all day – I think I answered that concern quite well in my interview though – I'm an artist, I'm more than used to rejection – comes with the territory. Although what I look forward to most is that after I've got my spiel down pat and don't need to concentrate on what I'm saying I'll have eight hours a day to sketch – the joys of multi-tasking – it really does seem perfect.<sup>68</sup>

I kind of wish I knew what the time is. I have more clocks now than before but it doesn't help. It's unbelievable that I've still not sent in the audit for the student union, the AGM was last week; change over to the new execs is done. The doggedly enthusiastic boy hounds me for a meeting at

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<sup>68</sup> In 2013, I used this experience to create the performance work *Two Months as a Telemarketer*, at Agar Dish in Woolloomooloo. See appendix.

9am the very next day – he never turned up – in my very hung under<sup>69</sup> state I was unenthusiastically disinterested as to why. I'd left Kearnsey on the sofa with Jed – just a regular night – though I woke up wearing a St. Christopher - patron saint of travellers - bracelet; it was something that I would normally adamantly reject.

I couldn't remember who'd given it to me, either the younger girl or the beautiful red head. Sifting through what had happened that night proved difficult then I remembered Kearnsey buying me a drink and asking me if I wanted to get smashed – oh yes – I do – they said nothing at the clinic yesterday about drinking, and it wasn't making me feel sick – however fragmented it made my memory was a side effect to be expected. I toyed with the large blue beads, the medallion was worn in places where it had clearly been rubbed, I couldn't help the sensation of protection and importance I felt from this object, also because it was handed to me as a gift; though I didn't know how – it's timeliness seemed excruciatingly relevant.

More wine and a friend would help – she'd be here around one-ish. I'd left my car in Newtown somewhere and I'd best get it before I start drinking again – though ol' mate is pretty keen to kick around on the sofa for an unspecified amount of time. He says he'd like to graffiti cows – curious – but he does live in Robertson so I guess that makes some sense – no – round here in Sydney, he says.

Oh ...- there's not really that many cows in Sydney.

He looks at me for a minute then pisses himself laughing and I realise he means spray paint pictures of cows – s'pose that does make more sense – more ethical too.

After all, buildings don't have feelings – cows do.

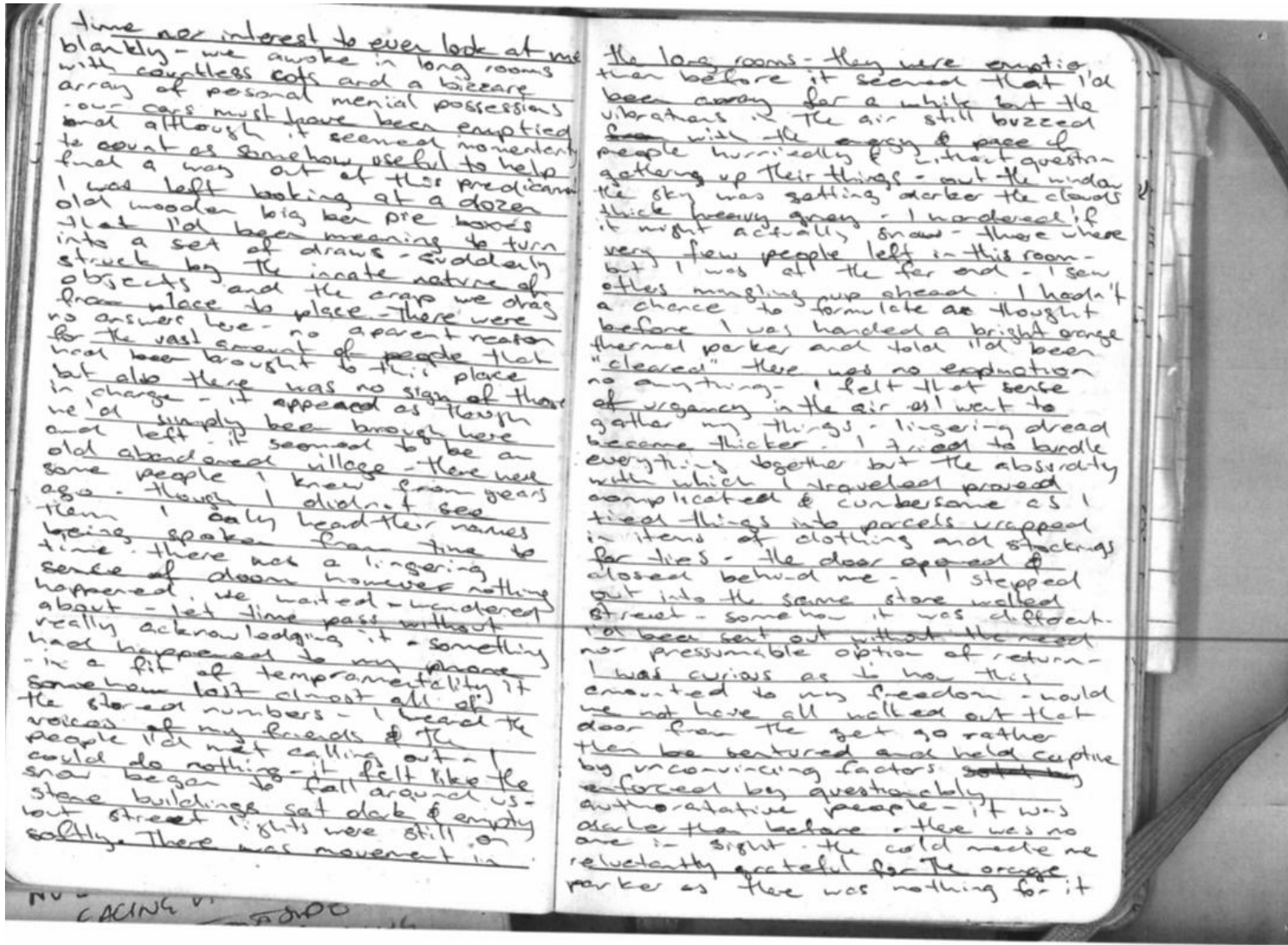
Charred bloated cows - caught in fences – upside down in burnt out paddocks.

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<sup>69</sup> Though most people refer to feeling 'hung over' the term has never meshed with the actual feeling as I have never felt 'over' anything in this state but rather very much 'under'. Under the weather; under a chair; under a grey fog waiting for the sweet relief of crawling out from under the haze.

They look more like pigs the way they are laying in the dust all their hair burnt off and about to explode – it's what happens in those kinds of extreme temperatures I'm told. The bush fires raged through the Warrumbungle's around Coonabarabran, I called my friend, my best friend, we grew up together – there is no apt term – not even that we are like sisters – she's more like my other half, a team player to the end regardless of the months or year that pass in between. Sometimes I hate that she's stayed home and that I had to leave – that I'm the one that calls home, she very rarely leaves the farm. Our parents did try to separate us a few times when we were young, I guess they were concerned that we'd get to dependant on each other and in a small town people do talk. Though kudos must be given to her folks and mine – though they really had little choice but to support our friendship, it was most certainly a challenge – especially after moving to Bowral in my early teens; the phone calls for hours on end –postage stamps for letters over twenty pages long – and every holidays the transfer –her with us for a week – me with her family for a week. It was like a continuation of how our time was divided as kids, alternate weekends between the motel and the farm. It was not a good year for anyone it seemed, the bushfires - though they'd come almost every year it seemed when I was younger - never ceased to be utterly devastating. What could I ever do?

Appendix 1: Handwritten notes - Images from the original document



+ So - your shit out.  
S Let I am ridiculously  
or horny - I cannot stop  
thinking about it -  
a ~~not about the draft~~  
v Just sex - I am infatuated  
- hot - bothered  
T naked but a bra  
a & something which  
is meant to resemble  
a dressing gown.  
That thing in my  
bathroom keeps  
+ ceasing - a checky  
reminds that  
even by myself -  
my head & thoughts  
will keep my entire

body occupied -  
if only I could find  
me some rice cock  
... hahaha! who am I  
kidding! Piece of  
cake - sweet & healthy  
goodness I can  
find without too  
much trouble -  
Although sometimes  
the boys get upst  
ever on the days (drugs)  
(Saying honestly is  
nothing an less  
it's h. . . AT







IT RE  
HEO LA  
I WATCH  
HME  
WAS  
MO  
WON  
FIM  
TT  
new ticket  
KRAU  
ICONK  
FOR A  
PETRO  
FOR A  
RAO N  
ALTHOU  
WITH  
A DESP  
HEAD N  
TUS W  
WINDO  
PENQU  
FA INI

They were  
some nights up  
I'll always be  
I would love  
positively have  
able to enjoy the  
days' anticipation

But it does  
not work  
I tried to be  
nice - I could  
not live my  
boy & deal with  
the structure -  
I got out of  
me - was I  
perfectly  
responsible for  
starting  
but - not

one - low does  
and gauge about  
it is unbalanced good  
point - my ~~of~~

~~of the~~  
~~of the~~

to die - they

about to enter  
- her friend  
I was - by all means  
increasingly  
the more - regretful  
the more  
she wants of him

in k  
regardless of how much she wanted  
him

despite appearances - fluorescent  
 lights and low voices - in  
 the type of register that  
 makes it seem as though  
 the lights themselves  
 emitted a continuous  
 low hum which filled  
 the room - but of  
 course - I'm not aware  
 of an impulse - just a  
 continuous, numbing  
 pulse - beating with  
 the rhythm of ~~my~~  
 miscalculated words  
 in perfect harmony  
 - I feel delusional - and  
 I'm not sure how I feel  
 about that. ~~and~~  
 → never really have  
 absolute comfort in  
 that - well - potentially  
 yes - it may be

questionable - considering my  
 history - bit seriously  
 (I am actually pretty  
 cool - I'm simply avoiding  
 instant fame via calculated  
 criminal activity but  
 channeling my opinions  
 in a more constructive  
 - though potentially  
 unsubsantiated - sector  
 of (society) - that can  
 at least help to clear  
 nostalgic dreams of  
 could have been's and  
 what where - either  
 way - you can't really  
 stop people talking  
 to you so wanting  
 to far that matter - really  
 I just want to make sure  
 I stay alive long enough  
 to finish this book -

5A  
Fl.

~~My 11 of 1900~~

Concord

Sept 10

*[Handwritten scribbles]*

*[Large, dense handwritten scribble covering the right page]*

8 09  
79 10  
80  
40  
with X2, X3, X4  
X5 or X10  
Cross this box  
KB

## Appendix 2: From War to War - The Novella

At twenty-eight, I sit here on the floor sofa in the front room, three twenty in the afternoon on Australia Day long weekend – playing with myself – thinking of genius. How the words seem to be so important and so bypassed all at the same time. I also wonder – whilst I write, whether I or anyone else would be able to read such scrawl. To you – good luck. Yes, that person still lingers – stays with – pushes... somewhere. What is there but to go with it – see what's 'crackin' – as it were. However, that is inconsequential. This is more than beyond me – I feel guilty simply being involved. Yes, the irony is not lost on me, as I will not write of such tragedy or rather, lack thereof, 'tis indeed all the same – we live, we die, we see (potentially) we et cetera.

So what – then what? Why for?

I tell you – exactly what?

Like I said, 'tis Strayla Day Cunt – and as it were, I was already three sheets to the wind. My plans are to head out Bondi way, on a rainy Sunday. This girl; the Bondi Bitch, she kills my world and yes, it is her very expression that I steal to describe my very lack. She'd be pissed if she saw me writing about her – fuck her – either way she'll be pissed.

Somehow things always come out.

I sleep with a married man. You think I don't realise his wife knows? Get this – not only knows – but calls me. What do I say? I tell her, it's not my problem, sort your shit out. Yet I am ridiculously horny – I cannot stop thinking about it – not about the Chef – just sex. I am inflamed, hot and bothered, naked but a bra and something which is meant to resemble a dressing gown. It had seemed to have somehow bypassed the act to become something else – the erotic porn star fantasy of hot, dirty sex

- stepped out the back of the pub, scrapping against the bare bricks as the aromas of ripe, rotting filth hung densely in the humid air, slapping across skin in waves that clung on like an uninvited third party. This tingle in my bottom keeps coming – a cheeky reminder that even by myself, my head and thoughts will keep my entire body occupied. If only I could find me some nice cock...

who am I kidding, piece of cake!

Some sweet shafty goodness I can find without too much trouble. Although sometimes the boys get upset - even on the drugs - when the illusion of hot, dirty sex with a stranger becomes more like something resembling a threesome with an open dumpster, pushed into its glory daze by the homeless guy who interrupts politely to ask for spare change. It was all reduced to a series of gestures, but put together it seemed to make the world shake as though the very foundation of existence would rupture along these fault lines that were being created unknowingly and yet intentionally – like there was a bridge between things – between worlds – but facing in two directions. I say honesty is nothing unless it's honest. Relaxation is a cop out. At least now anyways, maybe it's because I haven't eaten, or perhaps it's because I'm on my second bottle of wine – the cheap stuff. I've not paid rent for eight weeks I can afford no more - or less - I can afford nothing and yet I bought David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*<sup>70</sup> this afternoon. Money is irrelevant when it comes to genius.

It's still raining. Apparently it hasn't stopped. I got side-tracked on the way to Bondi and woke this morning in a nice house. It was sparsely furnished, in the midst of renovations. Paint splatters on the floorboards, a TV in the corner atop an old wooden cabinet. Seems I didn't get too far at all – in fact it appears I am just around the corner from my house. He's an odd sort; damaged, broken and beyond repair. Hopelessly distraught over the loss of the two women he'd ever loved and unable to move on – or simply not willing to. It seemed strange to me, but the physical manifestation of his trauma is compelling and I will not argue with him – he cannot seem to stop shaking – even as he

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<sup>70</sup> David Lynch, *Blue Velvet*. (De Laurentiis Entertainment Group, 1986).

walks me home I feel him shivering beside me. I am not overly concerned - he's a nice enough guy - I don't owe him anything. I need to make phone calls and apologize to her for not ever reaching where I was supposed to go last night. Turns out the girls went to the Cross<sup>71</sup> – a happy coincidence really as I didn't want to go to the Cross anyhow. She laughs her arse off – but of course you picked up some dude at the bus stop – she says, and to be fair who could say no to a nice big cock and a big bag of free coke? It's been a while – the coke that is – nice stuff too. I drink three bottles of his wine whilst he plays guitar – we fumble through lyrics to beautiful songs – he plays well and every now and again I think my singing may just be in tune. He does have a nice cock too and uses it well, seems he could go for days – sounds so nice, but I feel conflicted, after all – I've got shit to do.

He lays next to me, entwines his feet with mine, utters tragically his undying love for his ex-girlfriend – I'm not sure which one – but I dare say it matters little, either way I could do with a nap. Intimacy is a funny thing. Stranger still I guess when it's enhanced by a shitload of drugs. He tells me things that are so personal. Shows me his Pandora's Box of memories that haunt him – I think he just wants to be able to say it all out loud with someone in the room. I've always been pretty good at that – doesn't mean I care – I guess I just appreciate the concept of solitude in a crowded room. Perhaps that's why I frequent the local pubs to the point of consolidation with the carpentry. There is something particularly comforting about being in a room full of people and not having to engage with any of them.

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Two Twenty pm - Dr. Pending excuses himself awkwardly - all that beer will do that. He reckons maybe I should go get some more beer whilst he has his meeting, does sound like a good idea. Getting the car home is another issue altogether. He's already convinced me to park it on the sidewalk, it's not subtle at all, but apparently no one has ever been fined, how can you argue with that? I'll go get more beer, perhaps a Vietnamese roll too – haven't eaten yet today – also still

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<sup>71</sup> Kings Cross, Sydney, home of the strip bars, numerous clubs and often some form of drug related violence.

haven't paid rent – I really do need to get onto that, if only my attention span were longer than the immediacy of my present circumstances.<sup>72</sup> Guess I don't seem to mind too much about being that person that stops on the side of the road and sits in the gutter with two long necks at four in the afternoon to scribble down exactly the sensation that comes with being looked at by passersby with confusion, fear and arousal. I don't let these people get away with much, but meet their gaze three fold, quietly hoping one of them knows how to play – well.

Anyhow it doesn't seem to matter too much right now, seems I've managed to waste another day sitting around drinking and talking nonsense. I'm not even sure why I kick around here - the conversation certainly isn't sizzling with either wit or jovial banter - rather he sits there awkwardly trying to feel comfortable. Maybe it's that he has a wife and two kids that at times he wishes he didn't have so that he might indulge in the fantasies he has about me. Really all he wants to do is hold my hand. He's like a kid himself, nervously playing out this crush in his head, he buys me beer and offers no end of bizarre favours to help with my life and money issues. He's offered me a substantial sum of money, he says that he has some savings and he doesn't need it – that he'd be more than willing to donate it to the cause – the cause, it appears – is me.<sup>73</sup> Somehow he seems to have faith in my ideas to make something particular happen. And happen something will – doesn't something always happen? Whether it's good, works, or has anything to do with me is probably a different story. None the less I should get my car off the footpath and go home. I'm not sure what I'm thinking. I'm pretty tired and have got a whole lot to do before Monday. I said I can crack out a sixteen page article by Thursday, don't like the chances of that – well at least not the chances it'll be

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<sup>72</sup> Kierkegaard argues that 'this form of despair is: in despair not wanting to be oneself; or on an even lower level: not wanting in despair to be a self; or lowest of all: wanting in despair to be someone else, wanting a new self. Immediacy really has no self: it doesn't know itself and so cannot recognise itself either, and therefore usually it ends in fantasy. As the immediate person doesn't know themselves; they quite literally know themselves only from their coat, they know what it is to have a self – and here we have the infinitely comical – only in externals.' Ibid., Kierkegaard, 62.

<sup>73</sup> During 2012 whilst researching *The Coorabie Proposal* and running PSEUDO SPACE as a monthly event, I spoke with many people about the potential of viable sustainable communities in rural and remote Australia. As a result of this I had a number of enthusiasts whom believed I could make these ideas a reality and was offered money to purchase property, (sums of up to \$10,000). For moral and ethical reasons I did not accept any money from any interested parties.

any good. I've been called into work for the next few nights so no spare time is coming my way - of course I shouldn't complain - I do need the money that's for sure. Just seems like it would be helpful to get paid for all these other things I do – the things I've no choice but to do – in my world they are the important things, they are what matter regardless of the effort, time or how much I lose out - it's gotta be done – and it looks like I'm the one that's gotta do it – the S. Man says I'm egocentric enough to pull it off. The S. Man says a lot of things. I'm not entirely convinced about this whole thing anyway, I do not know the first thing about writing, aside from the panic it instils in me when I realise I've no idea what I'm talking about. Well not quite. I do sort of know, it just makes me sound like a crazy person – and not the generic kind. Rather that really frightening one - thoroughly convinced they're onto something - and will spend an awful lot of time and energy telling other people about it – convincingly.

I suppose I should probably think things through more than I do.

There is something about the immediacy of ideas which is so compelling for me – having said that the important thing to grasp here is – compelling for *me*. Honestly, if people are stupid enough to latch onto some of the brain vomit I have spewed, that's their own problem. Not mine. Responsibility - that's all I'm saying - aren't we meant to be responsible for Our actions, not their actions? I don't want to be that person who accidently starts a cult - that would just be unfortunate. The premise I believe was alternative space<sup>74</sup> – I'm not really sure how that became the principle behind stock piling weaponry.

Suddenly, I find myself in what was meant to be my shack in the middle of nowhere with a whole bunch of people around - looking at me keenly - perhaps awaiting instruction, or just another eccentric rant – how the bloody hell did this happen? I was just saying words out loud – I'm pretty sure I was mostly talking to myself... my bad.

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<sup>74</sup> The alternative space that was part of the idea behind *The Coorabie Proposal* and also PSEUDO SPACE.



The thoughts don't flow so well all the time, mismatched fragments of different ideas, none of which make too much sense, who am I to say what to go for and what to ignore, especially midstream – thoughts in process are best left to fiddle themselves out. The entirety of thought and life *is* process so who is to realise the conclusion of anything in that case? Though maybe that's the point: that there is no conclusion. That endless series of events, ideas, thoughts and circumstances work in collaboration to create perfect flux, potential for the continuation of non-coerced ideas – alternatives; ways around what exists as the paradigm of normality and social structure.

It's just an idea really – and I think that's the most important thing.

Ideas have movement, they can change, develop, expand – rather than become static and rigid like the delusions of fundamentalists. But even still, as I sit here scribbling in a tiny pocket book,<sup>75</sup> thinking I will have accomplished something great if I can fill up all these pages with words – who knows if it will be worth reading – if nothing else at least I've spent a whole lot of time doing something most will tell me is a complete waste of time. Time is nothing if not wasted by the sheer nature of it passing. It is the imprint it leaves behind which may counter its irrelevance. I wonder how long this will take – time wise.

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I had a friend whom I desperately wanted as a lover. He'd spent the past ten years writing a novel, a month ago he moved to England. I'm not sure he understood my ambition for him. I feel it must have been quite obvious though. It was only three weeks before he was due to leave forever, what better circumstance to have all the intensity of the most amorous of love affairs with the full knowledge of its impending conclusion – we had nothing to lose – one could of course argue we would have each other to lose – but to pass up the opportunity to fall completely in love for five minutes or five years seems to be lost on people, we are too afraid to give completely to another

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<sup>75</sup> This reference is to the physical books that are the original documentation of the performance, which whilst linking the item and research methodology is also signalling a decent into a state of chaos and madness.

person for fear of heart break or time wasted – I can say that I loved them all – mostly; in some way – even the ones whose names I can't remember? Or didn't bother to ask for? Well maybe I cannot presume to have quite such noble intentions. In fact sometimes the intent was to go out and find some poor boy to abuse – thoroughly – and they probably thought they liked it, for a little while anyway. They get confused otherwise, sometimes aggressive - if they feel emasculated – taken advantage of – in short, raped. Maybe it was just the feeling of the tables being turned. That this was a distinctly female type of problem – and we knew this from the bus shelters and pub bathrooms – the images of splayed legs with ripped panties twisted about the ankles brandishing a slogan of perhaps thinking twice before having that next drink. It was indeed a jungle out there and we were still the prey. The instincts of our male oppressors it seemed could not easily be suppressed, which led me to believe that perhaps these advertising campaigns were targeting the wrong audience. And maybe they should focus on the pack mentality of these libido driven males, encourage them to look out for one another, keep each other in check, and maybe even be that mate that walks your drunken mate home to make sure nobody gets inadvertently assaulted. The slogan would read: “Be a Mate – Don't Rape.”

I get to the Grand Hotel in the Rocks. The stature of the place is clearly lost on me when I advertise my invitation..... We cruise through the city heading to the Cross. I've met up with the boy who works in the Outback and his boys. The girls in the back want to go home - but the authenticity of the randomness cannot be accounted for – I need to stop writing I dare say...

*I feel like my energy is being sucked dry - all I want to do is climb into a hole with my 1.5 litre bottle of corner shop piss and drink myself to oblivion.*

*It sounds so comfortable.*

My head is swimming once again – I've no answers – nor (stories?): Jed is in a state – I'm not helping – why?

I've no money ... (he is ... I feel responsible?) Jed is restless – beyond restless – and has been for weeks, I can't stop him biting – he bites until he's raw.<sup>76</sup>

....He took my notebook from me, as we sat across from one another in the middle row of the maxi-taxi our eyes locked unrelenting, returning each other's gaze double fold. He scribbled in the back. For a moment there was no one else; not younger brother; not friend learning German; not two random girls chattering endlessly in hopes to mask their discomfort and insecurity.

Ironically, it was their sudden silence and inquisitiveness at our moment that made us rejoin the pointless conversation in that cab.

A typical club in a typical area of Kings Cross, with the typical boys and girls; the standard fight that breaks out for some reason or another – and I am reminded of the last time I was in the Cross; with the crew from work – how the girl said she could get us in and get us free drinks because she 'knew' people.

She did manage to get us all in – only just.

And the free drinks?

One.

For her.

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<sup>76</sup> As discussed in the introduction, the text change is the ruptures that are occurring as the descent into the liminal mind progresses.

Which she did share – but really, what’s the point. Either way I did find myself with the opportunity to make good on the daydream I was having on the bus earlier that day.

I wanted to play with a boy on the dance floor in unabashed sensual energy – let him slowly run his hands over my body whilst I arched my back into him – my arm reaching behind me pulling his head close into the side of my neck as we grind and sway. This boy was good for that, he seemed to understand the principle behind what we were doing – a way to release and express our energy and desire with comfort and no intent beyond those moments.

The girls disappeared - left their array of bags on the nightclub floor by us and vanished.

Then, so too did the boy.

He was looking rather pale and in a hurry to do something - I assume vomit, so I stood – looking around and losing interest in the situation rapidly – which to be fair, I’d had very little interest in going along with these people, to this place to begin with. After all, I could have been in my local pub – actually drinking – until 6am - and not have to deal with the crowds, dickheads and shit music. But alas – I was here and the boy had returned not looking much better. I tell him he’ll be ok, he can come with me and I will look after him. After all, that is the one thing I cannot help but do – it’s got very little to do with me really at all – help a brother out – is all it is – doesn’t mean I owe them anything, doesn’t even necessarily mean I like them – at all – It’s merely a matter of responsibility, in any particular circumstance: if thing get messy, someone needs to take responsibility – make sure everyone’s ok; safe; taken care of; comforted.

The girls will have to deal with the consequences of bugging off, obviously I can’t very well call them - not only is it too loud, but I dare say their phones are in the bags they’ve left at our feet – which I hope don’t get stolen, but it’s really not my problem right now. I guess sometimes people just want to shit on the footpath.

It’s ridiculous o’clock.

I'm in the city at a club and nowhere near drunk – that's a problem.

I take the boy home with me, give him water and panadol and put him to bed. He cuddles up to me all night like an appreciative pet, kisses me on the cheek in the morning tells me he's lost his phone and if it rings and someone is speaking in French I should tell them to fuck off. I find his phone three days later tangled in the bottom of the bed sheets.

I've been feeling a bit unusual. Aside from a shocking tremor which makes it near impossible to hold anything, my head is foggy – light – my eyes blurry and for some reason I'm edgy, nervous, uncomfortable in my own skin – almost as though I am too aware of myself and my presence in the world - to be so aware of the people around you and how you interact with them – realising that you've lost your humour and personality momentarily, hearing yourself saying things and thinking: I have no basis for these comments – I am not convinced – I am not believing my own person at all, how can I therefore maintain any truth prospect of self.<sup>77</sup>

The problem here is I am exhausted and cannot stand the idea that I've no energy left in me to keep fighting, that I need to slow down

– stop –

take a break, and recuperate.

It makes me feel vulnerable and easily coerced. My sensitivity to the world around me is heightened to the point of dismay, not at any particular idea of tragedy, but to the feeling and sensation of being humans, jammed together in this city.

So isolated from each other,

So connected to everything.

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<sup>77</sup> 'Absolute deterritorialization', as Deleuze and Guattari state, the line of pure abstraction, to have no identity or distinction within between content and expression. Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 156.

I saw an old man, I was on the bus – it nearly kept on going right past him: the look on his face, some mixture of disbelief and shock – he took forever to walk the few metres to the bus with his walking frame – twisted and bent. He didn't pay the fare I noticed. He wore a navy sports jacket over tan slacks and an Australia flag cap, well worn and faded, much like himself. I could've helped him at some point I suppose, not that I think he really needed it, maybe I just felt guilty – mildly - that no one else did. I was expecting him to get off at the Paddo RSL – he didn't – I got off at the pub.

They were on the roof top – staff party: very hungry since yesterday. There is too much static, I thought of something beautiful on the way here, and completely forgot.

The drink is insufficient, so is the sunscreen they provide... *Although ... at the Glenmore in the Rocks – it is something that is....*

*...too long of a break between thought processes and conversation – maybe I should pay attention at some point at least*

*- maybe somehow someone is confused at a point -*

*but really, the drinks are paid for – tightly – at \$1500 for an established establishment, what are they saving for? ...*

The girls get drunk – the boys talk shop. I'm not sure where I should sit, but I sit with the girls and write. I sit with the girls, only waiting, writing in my book to pass the time no doubt. I could well decide that perhaps I fit in with these people more, or indeed I could make a conceded effort to connect; but why waste my time and theirs?

The concept was lost on the young girls from the small town Catholic school too. No doubt the conversations I was having now were very similar to the conversations I had when I was a child -

I say: but my friend – she will come out and play – I'd rather play with her, no offence at all. But still – they don't like it – ever. They make their proposition: if you don't play with us at recess, then you cannot play with us at all. A pointless and useless argument, never followed through with anyhow -

*These people are talking to me - not concisely - nor do I to them, but what do you want.*

*- "lesbian biatches" - was just yelled - might be entertaining.*

*And it doesn't work, the (perv) he tries to help, I dare say I cannot make sense right now but regardless I try.*

*Drinks: they are a thing, I said.*

*Take your time - write if you would like to, he says.*

*- for mere time imagined.*

We had a moment last night, my journal and I. I thought I'd lost you – the biggest sense of calm panic overwhelmed me – I thought of what had been lost that day; my friends' creative process; as she was downloading documentation of my work over the past year, and in her haste deleted the files that were hers off both the camera and my computer – a moment of lapse – we'd spent the day together, the longest time I believe we've spent - we spoke in absurdity, of circumstance, of the feeling of being perpetually alone and constantly sought after. I thought of him – my mind would not let me get away from it, but which him was I pinning for exactly? I thought of the boy briefly who'd left again for Outback Queensland on another stint working on the pipelines.

We'd met a month or so ago at a pub, I'd finished work – it was one of my boss's birthdays, I stood waiting at the bar. This boy stopped and looked at me – I considered for a moment an imaginative way to tell him to fuck himself sideways - and then decided to maybe at least let him say a word or

two first. The bar carried on serving, ignoring the two of us as we became an island just offshore from the mainland of the bar, people flowed around us like water whilst we stood and spoke of something. His main proposition was how could one person be quite so attractive. My main query was what exactly did he do in Outback Queensland on the pipelines? Move the wildlife he tells me – out of the way of the pipeline, I am beyond intrigued – I want to know more – however this is not the place for such an in depth probing for information.

I want to know more.

I'm not sure I know how I feel about the whole situation. Something about him speaks to relevant research material – I dare say he would not find that at all flattering – nevertheless he leaves for the Outback in three days. It's too bad really, he seems somewhat delightful – when we lock eyes and he tells me; sometimes you meet people that you instantly click with – I am only mildly suspicious but quite entertained by his audacity, so I don't argue the point – and besides, we're square – for whatever reason I made a point of that. Found him in the crowd - after I'd finished the drink he'd bought me back at the table with my work colleagues – and bought him a drink, handed it to him with a nod and left.

I thought of the Chef for a moment too long I think and it made me sad. Somehow I'd not only managed to convince myself that I didn't care, but simultaneously have become incredibly involved in this man's life, world and circumstance. What does it matter that I know when he puts his daughters to bed? Why do I know his daily routine? Why am I in-between his secrets with his wife and his work? He's been contacting me daily, telling me these things, somehow I've become entwined, intrigued, incipient – I imagine him inside me – my curiosity runs wild as I wonder what happened with work – what is happening potentially as we speak. He says he is handing in his resignation. I do not mind being a catalyst. I am glad that he's changing his world, he is making plans for his future; he will lose those extra kilos, go after his dreams and desires. Good for him – so you should. After all, no one can do those things for you – change your circumstance, make your



world better – for yourself – for your daughters – for your wife. I casually consider suicide. A walk seems like a good idea in the meantime, or rather a stagger, the realisation occurs to me now – of the six bottles of wine I bought yesterday three of them are missing. Well not so much missing as they are empty. Jed and I leave the house at ridiculous o'clock I stumble and sway, Jed stays some paces before me but keeps time and care, his intuition of my states is something that will remain a mystery to me and I will always be indebted to him for that. I consider the likelihood of a welcome reception at my former partners' house, after all I am supposed to see him in the morning to do my laundry.

I decide it may be best to call first, I have wandered - or attempted to wander to his house several times in a similar state at similar hours – the result often being my getting lost in the back streets of Marrickville with the sun coming up, blisters on my feet, and no clue how to get to his house let alone my own. He doesn't even live in Marrickville. Either way he does not answer tonight and a police van is idling behind me. I suppose they picked up on the tragedy exuding from me, or perhaps considered taking issue with Jed not being on a lead, but they do nothing. I find myself standing in the middle of a side street staring blankly at this boy on a push bike before our mutual recognition kicks in. I'd had an argument with this boy one night last year.

I was showing him photos of my *Nomads Fireplace*, an object for nomadic travel to rural and remote Australia – a shopping trolley with beer bottles as walls put together with clay and wire.

The most amazing fireplace ever put together in a shopping trolley.

This boy - he sounds like he knows what he's talking about. He tells me he has an opinion but then reneges – I have an opinion, but because it's art I cannot have an opinion – he says – sorry, but a shopping trolley cannot be art, at all – ever.

Well, fine – I was of the opinion that this boy had some idea of what he was talking about – as it turned out I was left dealing with a conversation entailing his ideas of having an opinion about art:

but because it is art he says he cannot have an opinion – I shrug – I thought I was going to be in a position where this was going to be a conversation. It was not. As it turned out he had no idea what he was talking about – nor why he would argue the point. But still, he says: sorry, a shopping trolley can never be art – fair enough. One month later he turns up with the girl at my grad show, declaring his admiration, awe and etc. It makes little difference to anyone – myself particularly – but that’s ok we didn’t much mind.

*We have a moment where Jed answers the door whilst no one is there. We walk outside considering the circumstance of no one on the street – simultaneously think that speaking out loud to oneself in front of one’s house – may be potentially somewhat bizarre – and so may be referring to oneself as a collective even though you are an individual.*

*Maybe outside the walls of this house people don’t need to know that – but – they do.*

And once again I am at the pub, a different one. Jed is having a nap and I had a wonderful discussion with Kevin – I’ll never meet him again, so I dare say he won’t mind me using his name. Although I had done so countless times, I walked the streets of Leichhardt tonight, and as much as what was not happening then; the other side of the street seems to be alive – very much so – granted my basis of comparison may be skewed as I’ve not been around these places for a while; ‘tis the suburbs – regularity as an ideal. I sit at one of the local pubs with Jed, he’s just watching now – now that I’m alone - doesn’t take long – I get over it. So does he. I consider the idea of another beer at the place that we are in, it’s a wonderful place, facing Norton street open to the road where one can sit and watch the traffic, but do so with dogs and children – I had this conversation with good ol’ mate Kev tonight, it was one I’d had before and I reckon he had too as we recalled a well versed discussion to one another about how the pubs had changed - how they weren’t what they used to be - a place you could bring your dog and your kids - it wasn’t like it is in the country you see - folks don’t mind,

they're not all caught up with being fancy and serving tiny food. Too much loud music, that's what he reckoned...

There are people mingling outside the Stag.<sup>78</sup> The smell of the joint they are smoking is far too enticing for me to pass up so I casually idle by them with Jed at my heels – but of course I'd like to stay and chat – the man with the long white hair is on stage in five – of course, it is Wednesday, muso's jam night – they are adamant, I must come in and watch them play – but of course I will – there is no doubt about that – but I must drop the dog home first, it's not far I'll be back by the time you start playing.

I stroll in, the place is packed. I'm not worried about being there by myself; I pull up a chair at a table by a stranger; he doesn't mind. The bands are playing. They are incredible - all I can think is how I must talk to them and hear them play again, but I reckon I'm probably far too hammered to pull off that conversation without sounding like a groupie, after all I've been drinking all day and I don't even need to get up for them now – some guy strolls past asks what I'm drinking and returns promptly with the refill then buggers off back into the crowd – I can almost feel the perplexion mixed with curiosity coming from the stranger beside me. People know me around the pubs here, there's plenty to choose from and these people tend to be quite good about me – for the most part they'll leave me be – occasionally wandering over to offer me a drink or acknowledgement. I like the atmosphere here tonight, there is a definite feeling of community and comradery – a particular sense of exaltation – and although I may actually be the youngest person here by far I feel more connected to their energy and spirit – their bullshit toward my presence is limited. I'm not convinced I know how it comes about then that I end up going back to Lenny's apartment – it's a shitbox. Lenny and I met years ago round the pubs; he's a scrawny weasely kind of person, easily excitable and has trouble keeping his hands to himself regardless of success. He is relaying a diatribe about how we belong together and his endless pining over me from the first time he met me, he makes grand sweeping

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<sup>78</sup> The Bald Faced Stag, Leichhardt cnr Parramatta Rd. Sponsored PSEUDO SPACE during its operation.

statements about the importance and relevance of these admissions, how it has been countless years since he last uttered these words: will you go out with me?

I suddenly remember why I'm here – he said he had pot – that explains a lot, although he still hasn't come good on it. I notice the bowl sitting on the crappy IKEA table in the tiny lounge room in which we sit in the dark – I try to be subtle – I don't want to hurt his feelings and then I'd miss out on the pot too – I change the subject to pipes and lung capacity, he gets the hint, it's strong stuff too.<sup>79</sup> After how much I've drunk today I'm surprised I don't pass out then and there. He manages to convince me to take a nap with him in his bed – I may have even fallen asleep if he'd stopped talking for a second, but either way it doesn't take long before I'm out the door, there is no possible way Lenny could convince me to stay, try as he does – I want out – quickly – I don't bother turning the lights on as I make my way down the numerous flights of stairs – Outside – for a moment I stand there as it occurs to me all at once where I am. I'm not at all far from home, which is a relief as I realise I'd not thought about getting home beyond getting out of Lenny's shitty apartment.

I've never enjoyed the idea of staying with these other people I meet, sleeping in stranger's houses – but I open my house to anyone and everyone anytime. This girl from Bondi, she says I've spent too many years on the side of the highway, she loves to give me shit she finds it endlessly entertaining. We spend an awful lot of time together at the pub – before work – after work – on days off. She tells everyone she drinks too much; she is after all an addict.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ernst Junger asserts that there is a risk in drugs shaking our fundamental existence of time; depending on the narcotic or stimulus, we stretch or compress time. In turn, the traversing of space is connected with this factor, the endeavour to increase the motion and the rigidity of the 'magic world'. Ernst Junger, "Drugs and ecstasy." In *Ecstasy: In and about Altered States*, ed. Paul Schimmel and Lisa Mark (Los Angeles: Calif, 2005), 215.

<sup>80</sup> Socrates hailed delirious activity as a gift from the gods, a form of extreme love, a utopian impulse for connectivity and humanity in a materialistic consumer culture. Chrissie Ihes, "Double Vision." In *Ecstasy: In and about Altered States*, ed. Paul Schimmel and Lisa Mark (Los Angeles: Calif, 2005), 139.

Whilst Deleuze writes on Spinoza; 'the body is the main locus of knowledge, open to phenomenal occurrences of the world. There is a parallelism between mind and body in that what affects the body affects the mind yet respectively determines their individuality and freedom.' Midori Matsui, "Legitimacy of the plane of immanence." In *Ecstasy: In and about Altered States*, ed. Paul Schimmel and Lisa Mark (Los Angeles: Calif, 2005), 171.

I have the tremors – really bad. Just a mild bout of severe emotional trauma. It’s Valentine’s Day; I’ve made it to work by the skin of my teeth – I could barely hold the steering wheel I was shaking so violently – my mind drifts in and out of reality as I wonder in a state of delusion whether I am actually still driving on the road on the way to work at all – after all the power of the mind is remarkable – I consider the possibility that I may have indeed already collided with oncoming traffic, the police would arrive shortly clarifying the situation. Smoke floats gently from the engine I lock eyes with no one as the wheels keep turning no longer on the road slowly coming to a halt. It cannot be the case however, my state of panic is far too real and perpetual unlike the calm reality of the crash where the circumstance has played out and now beyond personal control – I wish I could be calm like that – the energy and concentration it takes to keep my hands firmly gripped on the wheel and my mind on the road;

Traffic;

Proximity to other vehicles;

Spatial awareness of my own vehicle;

My speed – which is as slow as possible without standing still

– how I wish I was standing still right now – it would be so much safer –

Speed cameras,

Turning traffic,

Merging traffic,

Five lanes into three into two,

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And finally, according to Diedrich Diederihsen, drugs are supposed to enable insights that are either prevented by society (variant of the hermit) or prevented by the wrong kind of society (variant of liberation). Both cases involve a search for meaning and insight, a quest it seems, that only has importance for an artistic or intellectual elite. Diedrich Diederihsen, “Divided Ecstasy.” In *Ecstasy: In and about Altered States*, ed. Paul Schimmel and Lisa Mark (Los Angeles: Calif, 2005), 188.

Parked cars,

Traffic lights,

keeping my foot fully compressed on the brake, use two feet to be sure, use the handbrake just in case – sheer dismay at the realisation that I still need to reverse park on a busy Woollahra street.

I made it. Though I hadn't given much consideration as to how I was actually going to be functional – I can barely walk.

I'm cursing whatever ridiculous thought decided I would wear stiletto heels tonight, but it's ok – must pull myself together – focus – concentrate – I'm already exhausted.

I take my usual seat by the wall – the younger girl brings me food and tea, she wants to help, she also wants to move in with me – but we'll get to that. I try to pour myself a cup which proves to be impossible, someone will help, definitely not the Bondi bitch. Boss man yells at me, he acts his part – poorly – an attempt to cover his indifference with forceful censure, my not being to the doctors is his point of reference, though at no point does he suggest I take the night off.<sup>81</sup> Not that I would I desperately need the money – I did pay some rent the other week – now I believe I'm only five weeks behind. The Chef comes right for me – he's a mountain of a man – his embrace swallows me up and I am shaking like a leaf, he holds on for a moment longer then looks me dead in the eye – I wish he wouldn't. He asks me what's wrong. I cannot concentrate – I want to curl up in a ball – I wouldn't mind if he held me then, but there are too many people here and I'm in no state to maintain any kind of disavow of our situation – I can hardly form sentences. I tell him again I cannot concentrate and try to avoid his gaze – please just leave me alone – he tells me I need to look after myself, the platitude grates and I try not to cringe but it hurts my eyes. The Bitch is focused on her world and dramas as per usual, I know all I have to do is tell her exactly what's going on and she'll leave me be – after all she says – what's the point in friends if you can't take the piss out of them? A

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<sup>81</sup> 'Under the rule of a repressive whole, liberty can be made into a powerful instrument of domination.' Ibid., Marcuse, 9.

sentiment I happen to agree with. Still it takes a day before I tell her I hadn't had a drink that day. She looks at me with the most emotive mixture of horror, disgust and disbelief, it's truly fascinating – as are her rational and helpful statements of inflicting violence on me if I don't 'sort myself out'; not that I can talk, she adds.

We have some drinks after work that night – my hands are steady – and I'm exhausted again, the younger girl somehow manages to get herself completely hammered and is making absurd statements – eyeing me off, pointing at me knowingly – as though the things I have told her are weighing her down to the point she can no longer take it. She looks as though she might explode. I watch her with great curiosity but I am not overly concerned. The Chef takes me home – we talk about his wife, she's kicking him out he says – it's about time – I'm bewildered as to why she kept him so long, she calls me on occasion to ask where her husband is – I tell her blatantly I will not play their game – it's not my problem – still now somehow it feels like it is. Something has changed, a shift in expectations perhaps, I'm suddenly terrified that he might want more from me – a place to stay? Look after his kids while he's at work? I've no real issue with the guy but this is more problematic than I'd anticipated – delirium sets in....

*I remember walking on the footpath towards a stadium, a police vehicle in its raucous haste tips an armoured car. It crashes onto the footpath inches from my person I am almost crushed to death by impenetrable steel security. In shock I watch the police keep driving, on the footpath, watching me in the rear view mirror – they do not stop. I head towards the turnstiles when I am stopped – the police – they want me to give an interview, the local news crew are here, they'd just like a brief account of what has happened.*

*They are watching me closely, waiting for my answer.*

I've no idea what they want I don't know who they are – but they seem to know me, and then it happens;

They address me – by name – full name – they seem particularly interested in the company I keep.

I am polite but confused; I tell them I need time to think about it, I'll consider it. The boys are waiting for me and the policemen watch as I join them and move straight to the centre of the pack, we enter the stadium and head straight for the little chapel in the centre of the park. The Chef is getting married. His fiancé wears a blue dress, the ceremony is quick – very quick – they kiss then exit stage left into the afternoon sun down the well trimmed path, but they don't go far – or at least not the Chef.

He sends his new bride away, he needs to be sure she will comply without hesitation, and she does not disappoint. The small chapel undergoes a radical transformation from wedding ceremony to funeral. The funeral is for his 'real world' wife's mother – it all seems perfectly reasonable.<sup>82</sup>

....I haven't slept for weeks. I consider the circumstance for a moment, I hold no judgement – how can I – I've been no different. I have had lovers when I should have been faithful.<sup>83</sup> I always knew when I was heading for trouble. How does one reject a connection so strong – even if it is

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<sup>82</sup> The character or transient being /observer/ the unrestrained participant; although other individuals become represented as fragments of gestures (making reference to the ruptures in transient third space), the character 'I' relates to Deleuze's 'becoming-imperceptible; in which the figure disappears.' Creating ruptures in representation by breaking 'the habit of 'making sense' or 'being human'. Simon O'Sullivan, "From Stuttering to Stammering to the Diagram: Deleuze, Bacon and Contemporary Art Practice," *Deleuze Studies* 3 no.2 (2009), 249 <http://www.simonosullivan.net/articles.html> (accessed July 2, 2014).

<sup>83</sup> 'To despair over one's own sin is the expression off sin's having become or being about to become internally consistent. For here despair has to be understood as a willingness to weaken oneself so far as to listen to anything at all concerning repentance and grace.' Ibid., Kiekegaard, 135.



momentary – to give to another so completely – or at least allow for the possibility.<sup>84</sup> I walked home from Strathfield, well, from the house I woke up in to the train station it took about forty minutes – it took forever and simultaneously nowhere near long enough. I cannot remember why I was so disheartened, I thought about the fickle nature of people in the city, it hurt my sensibilities. Although the postman was truly delightful as he gave me directions to the station, for some reason or another my high school boyfriend came to mind. We spent seven years together, it was wonderful really – he could very well have been the love of my life – but then I suppose it's always that way with the first serious relationship, growing and learning each other neither one has expectations or comparisons – maybe that's what makes it – but perhaps it's also what makes it so volatile. I remember the first time I saw my lover. I was living in Wollongong I'd been working in a family owned restaurant that had a bit of a dodgy back story but I'd been out of work for about five months and I couldn't bare it any longer, regardless of whether the paintings had been taken out to be cleaned and the father had taken the golf clubs home on that particular night that the shop burnt down. It was such a shame they couldn't find the chap who'd cleaned and locked up that night – he'd left to go on holidays and didn't think to tell anyone where he'd gone or if he'd be back. It was a family affair this shop, the son was in charge and he had a temper to rival the best of them, it's something I think I'll never understand – how these people can scream at the top of their lungs across a crowded restaurant and then berate staff for what they deem to be 'unprofessional'. Regardless, by twenty two I was managing that shop and it wasn't small, not that it mattered – a blind retarded monkey could do that job with its hands tied behind its back – or at least that's what I tell people – of course that's only true when that monkey is in fact me. It seems like a terrible idea to have me in a managerial role, not because of the workload or responsibility, but because as it would turn out I would seem to

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<sup>84</sup> Bill Beckley postulates that there is no greater object than sex for those of us susceptible to the pull of beauty, as sex bestows in us such a powerful and silent instinct that continuously draws us toward one another, without which, we may retain our 'savage independence.' Bill Beckley, "Introduction: Generosity and the Black Swan." in *Uncontrollable Beauty: Towards a new aesthetic*, ed. Bill Beckley and David Shapiro (New York: Allworth Press, 1998), 4.

be somewhat of an aggravator.<sup>85</sup> The job always gets done – but I get bored. I’ve nothing better to do and to be reasonable, the staff are treated poorly, paid not Award Rate but sly half cash deals to lower the amount of superannuation and holiday pay for the family. When it’s slow I stir the staff and I rally – I tell them it’s quite simple, all that needs to happen is a mass staff walkout on a busy Saturday night – simple – effective – unrealistic. But never the less, I just cannot stand the assumption of authority that subsequently takes the piss – but I stayed there, despite myself – for four years.<sup>86</sup> I saw this man. He’d started working behind the bar perhaps two odd weeks before hand; he’d grown up in the area more or less and knew some of the other boys working there from school. I watched him late one night, I’d had the boys stay back to set up for a function – moving tables – unlocking and opening the heavy concertina doors – I thought to myself as I watched him; there is no way you can get yourself into trouble with this one – there is nothing at all attractive about him. It never occurred to me that I was inspecting him so completely and trying to convince myself there was nothing I wanted – he was like a bear – he would later be referred to as my ‘Cadbury gorilla’, when the commercial of a man in a gorilla suit playing drums to Phil Collins *In the Air Tonight* became the hit sensation for Cadbury chocolate,<sup>87</sup> it was not him, not actually – but rather on account of him being incredibly hairy – it was like a vest – and he was or presumably still is – a drummer – a very talented one at that. I occasionally made it to one of the local pubs to watch his band play; talented though he was it wasn’t the band that impressed me. It was his hopelessly wistful romanticism – I thought he could save me – the way that a knight does, that he would be

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<sup>85</sup> ‘Capitalist development altered the structure and function of the two basic class structures (bourgeoisie and proletariat) that they no longer seem to be agent of transformation. Rather the overriding interest in maintaining and improving on the status quo unites the former antagonists with the most advanced areas of contemporary society. Thus without a demonstrable agents of social change, there is no ground on which theory and practice, thought and action, meet; making alternatives appear to be unrealistic speculation and commitment to them a matter of personal (or group) preference.’ Ibid., Marcuse, xiii.

<sup>86</sup> ‘People do not know they are repressed because they do not know the extent to which they are so, the worker will be the worker because they have no time to be otherwise. Inequality has to be ‘believed’ to exist and therefore must be lived or endured by those whom are aware of it, subsequently to free oneself one must become less aware of exploitation and more in tuned to self delusion.’ Jacques Rancier, *The Method of Inequality: interviews with Laurent Jeanpierre and Dork Zabunyan*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 5.

<sup>87</sup> Cadbury’s Gorilla commercial, 2007. [https://www.google.com.au/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&rlz=1C1SKPC\\_enAU379AU379&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=cadbury%20gorilla%20comercial%20site%3Ayoutube.com](https://www.google.com.au/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&rlz=1C1SKPC_enAU379AU379&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=cadbury%20gorilla%20comercial%20site%3Ayoutube.com) (accessed July 22, 2016).

strong, dedicated and take care of me, that his love for me would go past the poems that he wrote, the sentiment he gave me, the songs we became so entwined in it was difficult to imagine they were written about anyone or anything other than us. We became so lost in our perpetual state of longing that when we finally had each other we didn't know what to do. We reached depths I cannot imagine reaching again – in our letters – conversations on the phone until five am or until we fell asleep – not to mention the glory that was to be known as 'hobo toe'. Wollongong was a strange place, too small to be significant it seemed for a city, certainly too big to be a town but it was an odd combination of both, a seaside country town spread over a great distance. The university had a good reputation but finding a job was much harder than I'd expected even with an abundance of experience – I tried a few different things, I even took a job going door to door in Port Kembla asking people to switch electricity companies, I lasted about three days – that was the year my grandfather died.

I'd always liked my grandfather, for as long as I could remember he'd had trouble with his lungs. He had an apparatus in the back of the house, he would disappear from time to time and I would go looking for him, I'd find him sitting solemnly with his machine the mask to his face helping him breathe – he would always tell me it wouldn't be long now – until he was dead. I never did quite know what to say to that but it didn't cause me grief – he was so matter of fact and sorry for himself – I found his vulnerability endearing and I appreciated him for it – he never sent me away, but he never made me stay and keep him company, I wondered if he ever found my curiosity unnerving. He would take me to the roof above the garage, there is a grape vine that still grows there, they had all kinds of trees, plants and beans – there were always a lot of beans – I didn't enjoy eating them quite so much, but picking them was always fun. The grapes would be turned into wine, occasionally as a child when having dinner at their house in Glebe they would let me try some – everyone was most insistent on that fact – perhaps because it was homemade, perhaps because they were Italians – I never enjoyed it, it tasted like a combination of Metho and vinegar although somehow they were able to distinguish the more subtle flavours behind it, I never quite believed them. My mother told

me a story about that wine, how she had kept some bottles of it under her bed for years, she'd been gone from the house for some reason or another for an extended period of time, perhaps on holidays with a girlfriend, upon her return she'd found her stash of homemade wine gone. Her parents informed her that it was indeed quite wonderful – aged just right – like a fine port, just delicious.

My former partner; he worked with trees, but I pictured him as a cowboy, he was somewhat younger than me, something that made me ever so slightly uncomfortable, but he seemed to maintain an undeniable character of manliness. He believed that I believed him. I wanted him to be exactly what he was trying to portray – maintained his ego – listened to his ridiculous ideas – they were wonderful in their audacity and unattainableness but they were ideas, ideas that cared for no boundaries, ideas that had no presupposed limitations of the workings of the world but rather managed to find a space in which – if eccentricity had its way – a glimmer of viability may exist. We spend a lot of time discussing the possibilities of rural and remote Australia the abundance of land and what one could do with it – perhaps solar.<sup>88</sup>

If ever I'd assumed I had something important to say it became lost in a myriad of thoughts, ideas, displacements and romanticisms, there was never – is never – a set point, a direction, as it were – there are lines, lines that travel so quickly it is as though one is travelling through time. They do not slow down or stop, for anyone, but flash past like shooting stars. I wait and watch for them, hoping every now and again to catch one – jump onto a stream – like a runaway hopping a train – to take you to a conclusion and back again before you can absorb the end. Only recognising upon your return that there indeed is an end – predetermined; perhaps – ultimate; defiantly. For what is an end unless it is indeed ultimate.

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<sup>88</sup> One of the less known ideas behind *The Coorabie Proposal*, is the prospect of land regeneration that led me to the idea to build a living labyrinth from a variety of hardy, drought resistant plants, which would act as a wind break and eventually assist in making the soil manageable and healthier. Because my former partner worked as an arborist, I felt with his help, I could get one step closer to actualizing this idea.

I end up in Newtown. I am desperate for work but they are unfortunately unable to facilitate that request – constantly. Although I’ve been called in tonight; not that I’ve nothing better to do – still need to get myself out of my committed responsibilities.<sup>89</sup> On my way to Newtown on a Tuesday night – walking – it’s 11:20pm but I can’t afford the cab – that seven dollars would be better spent on beer when I get to Kelly’s. I’m supposed to meet the younger girl – she sounds unduly supportive – in that stretched way that makes these encounters particularly painful, as though all that could have been said has been said in a million different ways each of which has been traumatic. Either way she tells me that in an unfortunate turn of events all the pubs are shut, yet I sit here at Kelly’s, it’s a little before 1am and I don’t flatter myself that I’ve been disrupted several times. One boy tells me that presumably it would be acceptable for this kind of behaviour in a cafe, or at least through daylight hours, I’m not completely unnerved about him trying to read over my shoulder as I write – I’ve nothing sensible to say and I dare say I’ve nothing particularly insulting to say about him at the moment. I’m sure he’d appreciate that. I half expect the younger girl to walk in at any point with enthusiastically apologetic utterances’ of – “babe! – here you are” – “I’ve been looking for you” – “tried to call” – and so on. Perhaps I shouldn’t be so hard on the girl, after all on the walk over it gave me time to think – that was really what I was after – but I needed to have somewhere to go, at least an end point, something so I was not simply walking out the door – in a haze – trying to be at peace with some sort of perspective of life – my life – how it may turn out to be the most bastardised version of reality, freedom and idealism – simply in a different nation – I’m not entirely sure how to contend with the situation of nationalism here, it seems to be something that is for the

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<sup>89</sup> ‘All liberation depends on the consciousness of servitude, the emergence of which is always hampered by the predominance of needs and satisfactions which, to a great extent, have become the individuals own. The distinguishing feature of advanced industrial society is its effective suffocation of those needs which demand liberation – liberation also from that which is tolerable and rewarding and comfortable – while it sustains and absolves the destructive power and repressive function of the affluent society. Here, the social controls exact the overwhelming need for the production and consumption of waste; the need for stupefying work where it is no longer a real necessity; the need for modes of relaxation which soothe and prolong this stupefication; the need for maintaining such deceptive liberties as free competition at administered prices, a free press which censors itself, free choice between brands and gadgets.’ Ibid., Marcuse, 9.

masses.<sup>90</sup> These boys that I've met at the pub, they've taken their time, they've tried – and now the lot of them...

*Then this bloke was here saying that he was here and now...*

*and didn't know that what he said...*<sup>91</sup>

...Exactly those things that he didn't tell me – at all – the other boys crowded round the table, the banter consumes the conversation but the interest mounts, unassumingly the handover takes place – wishful thinking on my part – the boys are beyond gone, but they try hard and I cannot help but be endeared for a moment too long. The pub is empty, it's past 2am and the arguments start, at least one of them has the presence of mind to move to another table, the concern is fleeting as they insist it is their business to know how I will get home – I will walk – that is the concern they tell me. The last few blocks to my house take forever. It's like I've got lead in my legs – not lead in my shoes – my entire legs are heavy to the point of struggle, it is 3:45am I am trying to get home, but this weight in my legs is difficult to contend with. I sit in the annex of an abandoned shop I am nearly home but I must stop, to sit, to write, to say – the pavement is the same – the chance to feel close to home is the same – the reality of sitting in the gutter, handbag in lap, writing these notes – is the same – so are the police that drive on by. I almost feel the need to call Wolverine, my therapist, aptly nicknamed I thought as at any moment I felt he could rip me to shreds. I get close to home and I already smell the burning, I was unsure as to whether I'd turned off the stove before I left –

I pace

– Faster than usual

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<sup>90</sup> 'Because a purely legal notion of citizenship can obscure deep inequalities, it is commonplace to define the concept of citizenship in terms of the realities of political and social life. If some sections of the community are so underprivileged in their access to employment, income, health services and adequate education opportunities, the question becomes: are the legally sanctioned rights and privileges of such people simply a camouflage hiding a deeper and more fundamental inequality?' Michael Hogan "Introduction." In *Equality and Citizenship under Keating*, ed. Michael Hogan and Kathy Dempsey (Sydney: University of Sydney, 1995), 7.

<sup>91</sup> At times during my travels people that I'd meet would write notes in my notebooks, often unreadable, mostly indecipherable, these notes are indented and in italics.

– trying to get home.

That smell – it puts me in a panic.

I rush.

Jed is happy, excitable as usual for no reason other than my being home, the casual contemplation of suicide becomes a haze - momentarily beyond rational – simultaneously beyond obscurity – at least the recognisable kind.<sup>92</sup>

I can only laugh, there is nothing more to be bothered with. It's almost one in the afternoon on a Friday and I'm not too proud to say I've done nothing – dishes – laundry – I just got up to another lacklustre day, which is unfortunate – it's beautiful outside. Clear and blue. For some reason it seems to put more pressure on – as though I must somehow engage with the very essence of cloudless blue skies – I'm not completely sure how to do that, but the very thought of it is beyond distracting I've so much paperwork to do, tedious phone transfer issues, gallery maintenance – yet it seems that I should not do any of those things until the issue of dealing with the outdoors has been solved – I brushed Jed.

I saw a picture on Stalker Book<sup>93</sup> last night of a girl I went to primary school with and her son, it was like one of those photos in the photo frames at the post office fabulously alive and happy to instil the delusion that perhaps a child would be the answer to all of my problems – how morally reprehensible – and probably socially too whilst we're judging. Really I was just momentarily looking for a way out, so I didn't have to think anymore – about myself – my ambitions – my work – living on the cusp of social engagement and looking for a better way, not to demonstrate through politics or

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<sup>92</sup> Blindness (in this sense delirium or altered states of intoxication) is the idiosyncratic characteristic of madness, to diverge knowingly from reason, in the 'grip of a violent passion, is to be weak'; but to deviate with confidence and conviction that one is following it, is to be what is called mad. People fear suicides as they fear madmen. Catherine Hoffman, "Dancing to Ollie's Tunes: The Rhetoric of narrative stutter," *Style* 43, no. 3 (2009), 359, in Penn State University Press <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/style.43.3.357> (accessed July 2, 2014).

<sup>93</sup> Facebook; referred to as 'stalker book' for the simple reason that the entire point of the social media platform was as a way to keep tabs on people, just in case they did something worth interfering with.

social reform – but through Art – yes – congratulations to me.<sup>94</sup> There are coin bags of money still sitting on the table between the paint and the sewing machine, but it's not my money and the torn pieces of paper with barely legible scribbling accounts for only about a quarter, I don't get paid nearly enough to deal with this – I don't get paid. I was convinced to take on the role of student union treasurer last year, ambitious as we were to do all those fantastic things one can do with the union's money it was problematic getting people enthused in anything more than beer. It also didn't help that joining the union had absolutely no benefits for anyone at Art school – mainly because our campus was in Rozelle – the old psychiatric hospital – main campus was in Camperdown, not terribly far but I think most people found the idea of travelling twenty minutes for ten percent off their coffee somewhat redundant. It became quite clear fairly early on that the union was seriously flawed, it seemed we were too far from main campus for them to actually give us any useful support, regardless of how much they complained about wanting to be more active with us – I lost interest very quickly and resolved my position to being primarily about writing out cheques for booze. Clouds have come over perhaps that's a sign, freeing me from the dilemma of being responsible for wasting yet another day of wondrous potential – inside, or rushing from place to place – the paper work, a years' worth of cheques for booze and other paraphernalia, the things one needs to run galleries, film nights, performance shows. I could have kept up with it, been organised, but then what fun is that – funnily enough I actually do enjoy this side of the job – the audit – balancing the books, accounting for the money. Really I like numbers not that I'm particularly skilled at maths – in fact as soon as it was no longer a prerequisite in high school I dropped it – actually in my senior years of high school I didn't go to any classes except Art and English. I did for about the first six months before it occurred to me that the whole exercise was pointless, I was bored beyond imagination and the distinct feeling that I was wasting precious time was more than I cared to have

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<sup>94</sup> There is an apparent distinction between natural and artistic beauty. The reason why artistic beauty seems 'superior' is because it was "born of the spirit and born again", artistic beauty in a sense, is an intellectual product rather than a natural product, therefore whilst things might look quite alike they may have very different meanings and identities. Arthur C. Danto, *The Abuse of Beauty: aesthetics and the concept of art*. (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 2003), 29.



happen. I went through the proper channels, stated my intentions, made a viable argument and proposed a more than acceptable solution which was accepted from the top and then squabbled about. In the end I simply didn't go to my classes. I spent my time working on a short film and researching my interests. I also spent some time in psyche ward; but we'll get to that. I walked out of three of my HSC exams not even half way through, yet I still passed with flying colours – not that I much cared about the outcome, I had accomplished what was important for me, taken consideration for my work, the rest was just filler – grey matter – I still haven't started on that paper work. On the plus side, at least it's still Friday, and it will be all day. But I'm not going to get to it today, I've got to go to work tonight and the Bondi Bitch wants me to pick her up from film school on the way through – we'll have a couple of beers before we start – I feel like some wine, I'll have to go across the road. My dad has been calling – more frequently than usual, asking if I'm in the shit with my money – I tell him no - constantly – after all I still have money to buy wine – and food occasionally. I have a sudden urge to start smoking again. I figure that way I'll cut down on my food costs, I won't need to eat quite so much if I'm smoking, or I could take up heroin – it's probably similar – it's been 187 days – although there is a questionable image in my head of me having two cigarettes at the pub. I was hammered the other night and remember very little – I'm not sure I simply dreamt it or not. From what I hear it seems it was an entertaining night. I took my friend out to the Royal, he'd called said let's get trashy, and came over with a bottle of vodka. He had a glass whilst I opened my second bottle of wine, when I prompted him to have another he informed me he'd driven over – clearly he didn't think it through to well – I kept drinking. At the Royal everybody knows me. Seems they're all out tonight, my friend is curiously impressed though I'm not sure why, we head to Norton's – that's the last I remember – he later tells me that I offended some poor boy by telling him that I'd completely forgotten he existed, I have no idea who that boy could be, so for all accounts maybe he doesn't exist – my friend and I then proceeded to have an in depth discussion about socialism, and ways around our current socio-economical system – I am bewildered – did I actually form sentences?

I do not recall any of this at all, nor do I remember how I ended up falling asleep on the sofa in the kitchen – at least I got home – always a bonus.

I'm curious about my reception at work tonight. I called the Chef the other night – it seems I called at a bad time – he hung up so quickly I could feel the panic exude from the telephone. I wonder if he was in bed with his wife, he did sound half asleep – I laughed – it was the perfect moment – a solidifying moment of truth that I couldn't help finding incredibly entertaining, a realisation that we were in fact both liars – using one another for selfish gratification, there was nothing more really beyond that. No responsibility. No longing for sentiment. I felt as though a weight had been lifted – I didn't matter in this circumstance – my involvement only extended as far as my own whimsy and lust – I did not have to engage any further. What a relief. It is an odd thing that I cannot quite put my finger on, as though I become absorbed by other people's expectations and subsequently lose my identity and freedom – potentially has something to do with the nature of desire and one's own desire to not only obtain – but maintain desires<sup>95</sup> – perhaps I have fetishized my own desires for an intimate relationship. I thought to myself the other day that I wanted to be with a man like Gomez from the Adams Family. I could definitely pull off Morticia - that would be my man – an eccentric, fanatically devoted, but all together self sufficient so as not to meddle with my work – in short another fabulous freak not too unlike myself – certainly doesn't seem irrational – well...

It's late – been a big day – maybe had a little too much weed. A film just finished, something about survivor memoirs, I only got the last five minutes – a well bolted door in an apartment, a man goes to the door opens it and picks up the filthy little girl – the biggest smile on her face – he picks her up and then a tribe of small children run through this well manicured, proper apartment – a mortified wife in the kitchen watching a horde of children charge past covered head to toe with the filth of the world and not terribly disheartened or broken – but enthusiastic, collaborative and curious. Time

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<sup>95</sup> What connects death with desire is volatility; the implication being that all existence is governed by an endless process of change that is inseparable from an inconsolable sense of loss, a loss that is somehow always beyond the loss of anything in particular. Ibid, Dollimore, xiii.

stalls for a moment between *Faith No More* on Rage to the all night weather world watch – I get a terrible sense of panic – it takes a moment before I realise – it’s just an ad – an ad – for ABC NEWS ACROSS THE GLOBE – five second snippets of footage from around the world; I am so intrigued – the cinematography is stunning, it’s sharp, edgy, dramatic, foreign. From one nation to another – political struggles – uprisings – people wanting more meat on hamburgers. I notice I’m actually sitting up – ears tuning in to each piece of information, and then the panic, there is so much – but they are only sound bites and I need more information – but about what? And to what end? How can I find the right to judge the politics, social standards, murders, rapes of the whole world – ever? Any structure is ultimately a group of people doing their best to get along and mediate reasonably to no one’s disadvantage. I wanted to forget the whole thing. I thought, I’ll never be able to study this quickly, enough to come to a reasonably educated rational that engages with all aspects of culture – and repression – fundamental to the nations in question. It was just too much. I had to take some time – get over my fear – it was, after all – simply an ad, about the news, and how good for the ABC’s credibility – globally – to show what the nations local radio / TV station has done for furthering our involvement in the world at large. It’s a fascinating kind of thing, this media engine, the culture industry,<sup>96</sup> that strange mingling of people with no skill or talent of finesse or aptitude – selling a national image – one which is apparently to take into consideration the 21 million other people that live here.<sup>97</sup> But there really is no time for that kind of thought – and really what’s the point, it’s only people’s point of view and so forth, everyone has got that choice, depending of course what playground you’re in. Some things change, like the world – and economics – and political powers, opinions both socially and culturally –but really – in the scheme of things you’re gonna hang out in the same playground with the same group of friends – and think you’re awesome – and get other

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<sup>96</sup> Marcuse argues that the shift of social needs into individual needs has become so effective within highly developed areas of contemporary society, that any distinction between the two appears purely theoretical. He questions as to whether it is still possible to ‘distinguish between the mass media as instruments of information and entertainment, as agents of manipulation and indoctrination?’ Subsequently presenting us with what he considers as advanced industrial civilisations most troubling aspects: ‘the rational character of its irrationality.’ Ibid., Marcuse, 10.

<sup>97</sup> As referenced in the introduction, Malpas states that our national image only became relevant when we became separated from nature. Ibid., Malpas, 17.

people to think you're awesome – until you dudes end up in a biff and leave the rest of us thinking; surely there's a better way to do this kind of thing.<sup>98</sup> Besides, somehow it's all connected to belonging, and – also, ownership. Funny how these dualities always come back hard and fast as platitudes, we are indeed in our story telling stage as some cultural theorists would postulate.<sup>99</sup>

I thought about mutiny.

I thought about Europe and how so many people travel, it seems to me that in some ways Europe does seem to have that same affect of instant gratification, not unlike TV; there is a wealth of history, culture and information compressed into a small land mass that it becomes so accessible especially to a world which tries to assume borderlessness<sup>100</sup> and globalism and it fits quite well with the attention span we have. I guess the really unfortunate thing is that our geography resists this kind of repression – I'm sorry – compression – on a large scale – therefore we are left with densely populated cities that are not even dots on the land, hanging right on the edge of the seas as if the enormous, vast and seemingly barren land is still something to be feared, uninhabitable, unusable, sparse, and in a word – not nearly entertaining enough. I'm not convinced though, I mean look at Hutt River Province for example, a sovereign state in Western Australia seceded from the Commonwealth in 1970. It is a sheep station with its own borders, currency, constitution –which I printed out months ago but have not had the time to read – it just sounds like such a wonderful place – its own nation – and why the hell not.

I was going through my phone and found a message from this guy, a school friend of one of my mates.

I'd been spruiking an idea of revolution – it was an experiment of sorts – I talked around the pubs by the end of the night I'd have a crowd of people all keen and willing – for what I'm not sure. The idea

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<sup>98</sup> During the political climate of the Julia Gillard – Kevin Rudd – Tony Abbott era.

<sup>99</sup> Bruce Petty, *Global Haywire* (Australia: Entertainment One Films, 2008).

<sup>100</sup> Capitalism is borderless but it must maintain borders in which to cross border trade. Borderlessness is a state which requires borders to be there. The other type of borderlessness is unconditional hospitality. *Ibid.*, Spivak, 56.

was that if one could cause a stir for change by offering nothing more but the idea of revolution – it would prove two things, one - that people are sheep – but two – that if people were that willing to go along with the thought alone they were not satisfied with the current state of things, even if they didn't necessarily know what that was.<sup>101</sup> Turns out this guy – I'd talked his ear off – he said he was in the army, though apparently a lot higher up than people realised – that's what his message read – he said he was 'down with my shit' - I nearly wet myself. Then he did it. Put his offer on the table, showed his dedication to the cause, a strong belief in me – that I was indeed right – the person for the job.

He said: you have the party – and I will provide the army.

Now I felt like wetting myself but for another reason. I lose faith in people's commitment to progression and become disgruntled by organisations far too quickly to be at the helm of a political party anyways – not to mention too easily distracted to lead a rebel army – I'm not sure this guy had really thought the whole thing through properly – it did occur to me however that were it all true, he would potentially be a useful person to know – it also occurred to me that perhaps I really shouldn't talk to people – at all. I remember when I was in hospital – the second time – I had admitted myself – I couldn't trust myself not to drive off the bridge on the way to work every afternoon. They had given me some strange rules about interacting with other patients. I wasn't to spend much one on one time with individuals. I was not to be alone with another patient. I was not to go into their rooms, and if I did the door was to be open at all times. I thought it was odd but I figured it was simply generic rules about interacting that everybody gets in psyche ward. It was not. I was having a giggle with the smokers about those rules – well – at least I was giggling. These ladies just looked at me til one of them asked what was wrong with me – borderline personality and dissociative disorder

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<sup>101</sup> 'Anthropological materialism' according to Walter Benjamin, is linked to extraordinary states such as situations of danger which originate from the child's natural helplessness; in the warrior's confrontation with the danger of being killed; and for those intoxicated by the loss of self. The culmination of which appeared as the surrealist efforts to dismantle limitations that caused the art and life to be separate, subsequently creating a realisation of what it might mean 'to win the energies of intoxication for the revolution.' Ibid., Wolin, 62.

I said – but I don't think it's that much of a problem – it just occasionally wants to kill me, fine really, we get along great for the most part – they avoided me.

I found that odd as well, after all as far as I could tell I hadn't done anything particularly wrong at all – perhaps sat in some thoughts a moment too long.

I ended up befriending an incredibly severe schizophrenic – he was wonderful – so amazingly curious. We spent every afternoon in the smoking courtyard, my mind would always be on the open door to the street – walking out each minute but never leaving, we would sit there choking down cigarette after cigarette, he wore the same thing, always head to toe in camo gear – perhaps it made him feel safe that no one could see him. We had an in depth discussion one day about the elation caused by investigating at length those things that one finds interesting and drives curiosity and fascination – things like your own insides – how the blood is pumped around your body – the way the brain controls every single move, twitch, thought – how sometimes the desire to see your insides becomes so strong it seems like a viable solution – to alleviate this curiosity – to get a blade, open up your forearm, and have a good look. At this point a man stood up and left – he said this was no place to discuss such things – surely he didn't mean the hospital, but then I can't think what he was otherwise talking about – so we discussed veins.

I decided not to leave the house for a while. That might be best for everyone involved. I'm not sure what the time is – it's still daylight but it's appearing to fade – or it could just be overcast. I check my phone – I know it's wrong, it's out by about half an hour or so I think but I'm not sure – ah! – but I also know that the kitchen clock is in front by an hour or so also – I could in fact deduce from these times precisely the exact time to the minute – I would then of course check it - and be right.

The kitchen clock has stopped.

It reads two.

Phone reads seven.

Great.

Well, looks like it's sometime between two and seven. I'm not going to check. I don't really care what the time is.

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There certainly seems to be a great lack of foreplay in this kind of world, everything seems to have an instant result or promise of that. How can one derive any pleasure from what is deemed to result in a successful gratification – not much room or need for experimentation then right? But then maybe that's where fetish porn comes into play – I'm watching a girl being very thorough with another girl's foot – it's heavily stylised and choreographed but they play their roles so well it looks great. Unbelievable, I just poured myself a glass of wine and already there are two bar flies floating in it getting merrily intoxicated no doubt, happily I'm not averse to sharing and fish them out with the back of my pen, which is probably a lot more questionable than the flies. It's almost 5pm, the house is looking more or less spotless for the upcoming PS<sup>102</sup> show, it made sleeping last night particularly difficult – it felt like I'd just moved in – it did not feel like home, an interesting kind of thing, almost as though by relinquishing ownership or grounding in a space one loses that sensation of home – in some way I'm actually not upset about that – after all this place was always a place to pass through – counting the years – coming on to five years. It's a long time and yet nothing at all. I dreamt of home – an unmarked territory – something along the lines of the potential prospects of places like Hutt River or unincorporated South Australia – an endless expanse upon itself expanding into the horizon – into the sea – never did we stand without conviction that our home belonged to everyone and no one. We concentrate on the process of making and creating rather than ownership

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<sup>102</sup> Pseudo Space was an underground experimental gallery which I founded in 2011. It was for new and emerging artists, musicians and performers held on the last Sunday of each month. The main objective of PS was to provide an alternative platform for creative people to show their works and engage with the local community. See appendix.

and work with what we have – all available resources, as the plants take root, the birds sing, the animals listen carefully – a living labyrinth takes shape with no beginning or end – a mutually supportive framework. It's a wonderful idea anyway. Today is a quiet day, not quite sunny not entirely overcast, it has the feel of a peacefully uneventful day. The show is nearly done, only an hour or so left and I can close my front door on the public and tell them to fuck off, leave me alone, let me drink and sleep in peace – at the moment it's all I can think of – sleep.

It was 5am before I passed out on the floor sofa, now in the kitchen – still running through all the details of what needs to be done for the show – keep telling myself it's only a soft opening, the real shindig is on Sunday, Stalker Book estimates the turn out to be around one hundred people, god knows how they'll all fit in the house – either way my mind turns to the amount of food and beer that will be needed – mainly beer – and I wonder what will be more important, nothing worse than rank food sitting in the sun all day and then eating it after consuming too much booze – at least that ill feeling could be put down to far too much boozing – who's really keeping track anyhow. So we go to the pub rather than staying home and finalising the show for tomorrow – the conversation goes from cannibalism to stabbing the little man in the boat in the head with your tongue.

I stayed up until past two in the morning – watching a Hungarian film on SBS about a woman past her prime wanting to get pregnant – it's Good Friday and it seems it has been so long since I last took the time to write – these ideas and beautiful lyrical moments would come into my head – I'd keep telling myself I'd remember at some other point, but it's never the case. I was in bed but I got up – tripped over the same pair of shoes leaving the room as I did coming back in – then I turned the light on. You see the trouble was that I died that night – I remember – I fell asleep and I didn't wake up. I was not worried, I did not think of the world or what it might be without me, I did not have any concern for a potential future which I may never see, I simply fell asleep – and that was all – the second hand continued to tick, the light outside faded became dark and then light again. I did not



mind that I may be here for an unspecified amount of time – a time frame which would extinguish any and all hope of last minute resuscitation. I did not die. I simply fell asleep.

I can't seem to find my pocket watch and filed down key – the key was a gift – not a particularly nice one – left in my studio hanging from a nail off the wall. I almost didn't notice it on a long piece of twine, a plain gold key now completely useless – I knew where it came from and I knew what it referred to – it was definitely not a friendly gift. “She stole the keys to my house – and then she locked herself out” – a line from a Placebo song which inspired the sentiment.<sup>103</sup> I'd have felt a little better about it had my - for lack of a better word – admirer, – actually listened to the entire song. I did. The prospect made me sick. However I kept that key, tied it onto my handbag with the twine, it stayed there for months the twine slowly fraying until the key was hanging on by a thread – I did nothing to stop it – this was after all the actions of its own destiny – I would rub the key between my fingers when I walked waiting for the day it was no longer there. It did break, but fell into my hand – I'd been helping the younger girl move – she was supposedly going to move in with me but in a fairly last minute bout of confusion and lack of context she'd decided to move to Newtown, conveniently just a few doors down from the boy she'd been shagging – also a chef – it was one of the strangest sets of behaviour I'd seen, or rather, allowed myself to participate in – had it been anyone else I'd have left. She would convince me to come out to Newtown after work, always denying that it was to see the boy, how entirely convenient and coincidental that he drinks with his friends in all the same pubs she frequents – but of course. She always complained about not having any money, yet I would go out with her, she'd often bribe me with a drink or two – spirits – before I knew it she'd be hammered and buying shots – for everyone – even complete strangers. It was not beyond me to partake in one of these free shots. She would then get herself worked up about this boy, chasing him about the pub, telling me he'd gone home to fuck the blonde bimbo he'd been talking to – I'm perplexed – mainly because I can see the boy – he's sitting outside with his mates, more than likely

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<sup>103</sup> *Lady of the Flowers*, Placebo. (1996) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gan1oKzVtiU> (accessed July 22, 2016).

trying to get away from the younger girl, whom subsequently orders me to run after the boy and do – something – all this nonsense gets very much in the way of my drinking. I guess my curiosity about the behavioural scene sparked my interest enough that I went out with her several more times, to the same end – eventually I'd get bored and walk home. Either way she lived there now, it would be her haunt. I wondered how long it would take before she got over it all – I hadn't really spoken to her much since she moved – guess she was out enjoying her new life and so on. She'd given me a bag of clothes and laid out a whole lot of jewellery she no longer wanted, amongst the bits and pieces was a pocket watch on a long gold chain – it didn't work – I assume the battery was dead. I took it. It was stuck at a little after one o'clock; it was the perfect place for the key – a void combination – which it seems now has slipped into a void of its own. The last time I saw it - two weeks ago – Friday night.

I was wearing it when I went to work, it was hidden under my dress – a black number from the 60's that looked exactly like what a gangster's widower might wear to the funeral in stilettos and blood red lipstick, painting a pristine picture of fashionable dutiful mourning – it seemed to be the perfect dress for tonight.<sup>104</sup> The Chef finishes before me, an unlikely scenario. I offer him a lift home so he waits downstairs – the rest of us finish five minutes later but I stay upstairs and have a drink first - my timing couldn't have been more on the money, I go to collect him just as he is about to make his own way home his finger still on the 'send' button on his phone as I appear in front of him – he recites the message to me instead, a few more drinks and we'll leave. I suggest we go for a drive, a pastime we'd engaged in often – the late night drive in tandem – exploring the parks and beaches of the city in the small hours. Tonight I drive us. He has legally misplaced his licence – again; funnily enough in an RBT on his way to come back for me – I got blisters on the bottoms of both my feet that night. I do not know the city so well so I take us out to the back of Rozelle to the water. There are trees along the footpath with fairy lights in them that reflect off the water and back again – and no one else around – we duck under the rope and onto the wooden wharf, you can see the trees

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<sup>104</sup> This is the same dress worn in the video work *Feminine Torture*.

across the water now – it really does look beautiful. I had considered the other aspects of tonight, such as offering the lift, taking him somewhere other than the house, this way he couldn't leave – I had the keys – I had not however considered just how splendid it was out here at this time of night. We made small talk then noticed a large rat scurrying about on the steps; it was after the piece of food on the next step up but was clearly cautious of our presence. A noise startled the rat and it took off – leaving me with the worst possible segue for the conversation I had brought us out here for – I couldn't think of anything better though, so I ran with it: speaking of stage fright – I'm pregnant..., It really didn't make much sense at all - after all, stage fright certainly wasn't what got us in this position – damn rat – though I guess I can't have really expected a rat to give me a better segue, short of perhaps giving birth on the wharf.

I feel nauseous; I guess it's to be expected.

He takes it well – in fact he apologises for putting me in this position – wraps me in his enormous arms and holds me. It's a little uncomfortable, he's got me in a strange lean and I'm still wearing my stilettos on the wooden wharf – I'm suddenly afraid for my life – what if he wants to have this baby? He does seem the type to become absurdly emotional about this sort of thing – my concern increases – I tell him I'm not particularly thrilled about the idea of being the third mother to his fourth child. –

It could potentially be the case he replies.

Right. OK. Yes fine – well how about this sir – I dare say I won't be able to carry to term anyways, after all I am in a fair amount of pain – it doesn't at all feel right – much like the prospect of having his child. But surely we've done nothing untoward, after all he no longer lives with his wife – it's a perfectly reasonable circumstance – and all kids want another half sibling in their lives. Then of course there is the other option to get out of dodge.<sup>105</sup> It'll be fantastic – just pack up and bugger off, maybe go back home to Coonabarabran find some local boy that I went to school with – one that's

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<sup>105</sup> "Get out of dodge", a slang term for avoiding trouble.

not too bright – we'll get hitched and I'll convince him that the timing's all right and he's exceptionally virile having knocked me up quite so quickly. Of course it may be slightly more difficult explaining the unquestionable Mediterranean characteristics – but then maybe it's just that my genes are so strong – yes of course – that would be the case – a completely plausible course of action, except that it would rely on the proviso of me actually having the child and the Chef not coming after me. It was an entertaining story though and one I'll no doubt relay with heavy sarcasm when the Bitch tells me that I'm getting fat – wide load she says – I'm just waiting for the offhand remark – sure you're not pregnant?

We lay on the wharf. A decision had to be made, one that we were both comfortable with. We have to try not to get emotional, but remain objective and rational – he was talking out loud - I pulled the chain out from under my dress and rubbed the key between my fingers – the watch still frozen in time. We left that wharf and those trees, I drove him home – then went home alone – I do not know what happened after that. It's the last time I saw my chain – time standing still with a key to nowhere.

Hot, dizzy and nauseous – I scull my cup of tea so I at least have something to throw up – the reflection of Jonathan McBurnie's work in the fragments of mirror embedded in the table give me a fleeting moment of nostalgia – remembering something I'm not sure happened and not quite able to put my finger on form or substance. Perhaps a flash of the dream I had last night. Jed runs to the front door barking – I run to the back and vomit - Hiske – here to pick up her work. They'd picked up their stage equipment last week, the day after the show – the show that did not end – by 8pm people were right into jamming - 8:30 and it's definitely time to leave and go to the pub, we've been going since 10am.

9pm – right – seriously – you guys have got to shut up and get the hell out of my house – the equipment gets turned off at least. About eight of us remain and the jam session continues in the kitchen, at some point I fall asleep on Jed's armchair – I wake up at about five in the morning – one

guy is passed out on the lounge – another kneeling on the kitchen floor with just his head on the floor sofa, well that’s interesting, but I’ve been covered with a blanket – I jump up - shit – the house is probably still wide open – it wouldn’t be the first time. Some stranger would wander in off the street; find three people passed out – the place strewn with glitter – like a kind of themed brothel. The front door is closed – in fact – so is the back door, looks like the Fables’ locked up when they left after rearranging the magnets on my fridge to read ‘thank you’- I opened the back door for Jed, looked at the guys passed out in the kitchen – I was still covered in glitter and wearing the dress I’d made – it’s not exactly a dress – see what I did was, I got a bra and glued feathers to it found a bit of silky blue material, tied it around the middle bit of the bra then wrapped that around myself and stuck a safety pin in it – and Huzzar! A dress, or more just a thing – fuck it I’m going to bed – filthy and sparkling.

I got up later in the morning, one guy was still here and the chickens were out, he and his friend who had read poetry with me last night – they’d just moved from Brisbane two days ago, somehow they’d found their way here, they were nice guys, the one that had crashed out on the floor sofa now informed me that he awoke to a chicken sitting on his back – how fantastic.

It’s a hot clear wonderful day with all the energy of a wet rag, the house is horrifying. I consider it might be the perfect day to abandon project and simply leave. I used to have incredible powers of denial when I was younger; the idea was if one closed the door and left upon returning the problem would be solved – or rather, not have existed in the first place. I remember doing that when I was a teenager, I played the violin for about two years, or rather, played dead cats strung to a board, I’d never really played an instrument before I knew nothing about them – I broke a string – it wasn’t my instrument, even though I was aware that this kind of thing was to be expected I wasn’t sure I hadn’t done something terribly wrong. I looked at the violin, slowly put it back in its case – closed the lid and put it in the cupboard – I looked at the door for a moment and then went to bed convincing myself that in the morning it would be unbroken. It wasn’t.

I worked three shifts this week. It's the most I've worked – paid - in the past month, no wonder I'm so far behind in rent, at least it was the Easter weekend so I get public holiday rates. I applied for a job last week as a postie, it seems like the perfect thing for me to do, but although my situation is potentially dire I have not at all been trying to rectify it. There is no doubt I could go across the road and get half a dozen jobs immediately, unfortunately for me though I'm just not at all convinced. I find the entire notion of scavenging about menial employment for the purpose of obtaining money to be ludicrous and vile – the biggest insult being that our immediate survival depends on it – and it's not a choice. I read somewhere that artists become pioneers for gentrification, making up a large section of the middle class working poor, and surely how does one pay a wage to people whom engage in flux, unobtainable moments and revolutionary ideas, but then perhaps I'm not particularly good at life – not this kind anyway. I struggle to understand why I should give a shit about engaging with the social industry, the one that keeps us anti-social and isolated – my apparent 'smart' phone is still at the shop – not getting fixed though – just sitting there whilst the warranty expires, it's been three months, and yes I recognise that I'm getting screwed – again – but I just do not have the time, energy or inclination to care – why should I? I'll be sold something under another two year contract – with the shelf life of a year if you're lucky – and do it all again, honestly I'd rather drive over the whole lot of them with a tractor then turn up to your house unannounced for a cup of tea and a yarn. Expect me.

Another day wasting away slowly looking out into the backyard waiting for the computer to restart so I can finish doing the audit for the student union and get the hell out of this job, yet another one that I don't get paid for, it's no wonder I feel like I'm getting ripped off. I actually don't mind doing any of this kind of stuff, what I find unusual is that with the importance and necessity placed on money how does it hence forth seem to be something privileged? As though I should expect not to be paid for my efforts unless I conform to a particular role specified for people like me, namely any kind of menial service industry labour – fascinating really – but alas, the audit awaits.

Staring down the barrel of a two dimensional ink shotgun apparently aimed straight at me – how happy are we to be so disenfranchised? Is it not something that begins with the assumption of being a whinger? Only those without the right to complain about being held back and left behind can stand accused of wasting time and energy and not appreciating what they indeed have – everyone else’s rules, agendas and politics – and how can one argue with that?<sup>106</sup> Unless you’ve a solution, I’ve always been suspicious of anyone whom says *this* is not the way – but *that* is – anyone whom can assume to have an answer for an entirety is either a dictator or delusional. I believe that there most certainly is always another way – to everything – and it’s not and never can be one thing – rather a continuation of ideas is what allows for movement, thought and problem solving – as if there were ever a problem able to be solved completely.

In the recesses of my handbag – a glint of glass and gold – the inbetween space where the lining has come away from the leather a gaping hole into which objects disappear from time to time and upon being retrieved from the cavernous space appear covered in a fine film of light coloured sand as though the bottom of the inside of my bag is a portal to some far away beach. On this beach my fingers sift through the sand to uncover the round glass face, the long chain follows jingling as the key dances its way down to the bottom, it’s like watching a magician pulling endless coloured scarves from his sleeve – the pocket watch reads ten twenty-two – I guess the beach it was on is in a different time zone. It is only fitting then that I wear that same black dress tonight. I’m to meet my parents for dinner. This dress will at least somewhat disguise the weight I’ve put on – so long as I’m not overwhelmed by the sudden urge to vomit I should be fine – although I suppose even that could be easily explained away. I’m not sure yet whether the watch is a hopeful step backwards in time or a pre-emptive move forwards – it just stares back at me frozen endlessly – disregard for anything remotely momentary. I wonder what happens in each fragment of time directly around each device that follows it – in this place – my home – each time reader sits at a different interval, none of them

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<sup>106</sup> ‘The prevailing forms of social control are technological in a new sense... as they appear to be the very embodiment of Reason for the benefit of all social groups and interests, to such an extent that all contradiction seems irrational and all counteraction impossible.’ Ibid., Marcuse, 11.

read the same time – each room is like its own portal – of course it does make it slightly confusing when it comes to being elsewhere at a certain time, like work, or in this circumstance – dinner.

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*And I met Kearnsy...*

*I met the most amazing two girls.*

*Embraced me like I shouldn't have (Fuck birds).*

As horribly horrifying as it is to lose your phone, it is equally as frustrating watching other people prepare to be looked at – she would love to actually approach him, bitching about not getting heard – we kick around at Kelly's the younger girl,

she makes time and ( telephones.. helps me out.. )

as it were –

the Karaoke here is much like it is at other places at this time, they try hard,

and DAMN THEY ARE AWESOME!

In some way I'm there – no time for serious behaviour tonight.

Yeah, so I met Kearnsy, he talked about himself in third person for most of the night –

they talked Rugby – the Western Australian type – I had no idea,



no chance or even vague interest to engage

- something about the storm or the force, it's all the same either way.

At the moment I sit here with the chef boy, he left the shop, the drama unfolds at every turn and is ultimately irrelevant

- Jay leaves - we sit - apparently awaiting his return - their shit is questionable - I do make some attempts to make polite conversation, he misses the boys club - that's what they say.

I don't remember leaving there that night - earlier today I went through my camera - I was taking pictures of the paintings I'm working on at the moment - or trying to anyway - it's full, of a friend's holiday photos, pictures of the wing of the plane - riveting stuff - delete all?

Yes.

I may not be forgiven for that, after all one person's interpretation of the importance of the visual memories can never be aptly placed - it's probably why that same sensation of nostalgia can occur by the vaguest non-events - a smell - the way the light hits a street post - how the same song sounds different every time.<sup>107</sup> I got caught up on the way home it seems, these photos are of dark alleyways and graffitied roller doors, no wonder I don't remember leaving the pub - I entered a different world on the walk home, it may as well have been a different night all together - and I imagine I was more engaged with the nothingness of these dark back streets than the guys at the pub. The chickens are pecking at the painting doors of their fuck'n sick chicken house - it's falling apart at every turn which is to be expected from a temporary structure built of found materials in

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<sup>107</sup> A remembered event is infinite because it is key to everything that happened after it and before it. Ibid., Wolin, 69.

such a way that it can be deconstructed with relative ease. Although at this rate it appears the weather will sort that out for me as well. I've finally figured out how the little fuckers keep getting out – straight out the door – guess they watched Jed open it enough times to figure it out for themselves. It's been a relatively mundane day but not unproductive – the sky feels heavy – it seems like I should be waiting by the water somewhere and watch whatever unfolds – there is an overwhelming sensation of observation today suddenly accentuated by Jed's dramatic charge towards the chicken house. He lets out a desperate cry and runs back to me – fine – I'll let them out. Turns out the puppy just wants to chase them. The second they are out they go for his food – as per usual – the pup is ready for them; his menacing growl is very convincing – if you don't know him – no one's really worried.

I've been trying to think pink, a proposal from Sacramento – the show is in a little less than a month.<sup>108</sup> I was painting – stick landscape paintings – drinking wine – when it occurred to me, by chance I'd bought rosé. Yes – I am doing something pink! I shall consume the pink thing – photograph the pink thing let the pink thing take me to a pink place – which it did – by pure chance and wonderful coincidence – whilst taking photos on the way home from Newtown; the darkest most obscure photo – I adjusted it with the automatic setting to see what it was.

Pink.

It was pink, a wood paling fence and a tree casting shadows from the street lamp – I stood on the other side of the road and watched the shadows – I wanted to be them – every way they moved effortlessly in the darkness so clearly, but obscured by any form of representation – they could not be captured – they existed for the time I watched them. I do not know how long I stood, and when I did try to take them home – they turned pink.

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<sup>108</sup> *Translations: A Sydney/ Sacramento Exchange*, Verge Gallery, the University of Sydney (2013). A collaboration between Verge Center for the Arts, Sacramento and Verge Gallery, Sydney. See appendix.

It is curious how much the world changes when your perspective is focused on something particular – the ribbon I tied my painting pants up with, pink; – now laying over a bag of five dollar notes, I wear my tie dyed pink happy pants as I write, my coffee cup reflects through my wine glass the smiling rotund pink pig staring back at me against the pale pink walls that in this light in the kitchen the stains from the steam dripping down the walls is abruptly obvious – the paint is cracked in places, in others it has ruptured into large peeling fragments of paint and plaster – cobwebs cling to the unreachable grease towards the ceiling each attempt to brush them away simply causes black scum to cling to the wall above the painting of pink roses. Just as my rosé runs dry is it any coincidence that a glance towards the sink reveals a pink cup and a tea towel that used to be white – I must remember to wash my red cape separately. The chickens wander right by me into the lounge room, the music has stopped and I am more than tempted to listen to Pink by Aerosmith, I would too if I'd not already done so half a dozen times already. Perhaps it's time for Skippy instead, bloody; I've not really eaten anything today.

I put on ten kilos – it really snuck up on me too – I realised I was eating unbelievable amounts of food, the constant sickness – not sure why it's called morning sickness – it just hung around day after day. I tried to ease it with steak – lots of it – until I felt sick again, but different sick, beyond full sick – and there is nothing that can ease that feeling. Although frozen yoghurt eaten with a tea spoon from the tub kinda helps. We went to the clinic on a Tuesday morning. I'd been thinking about it all week – what was the point? Why go through all of this if a choice was already made – best be done with it – and quickly – it's getting on twelve weeks and my body was reacting to the pregnancy obviously and ambitiously. We sat in the waiting room – 30 Rock was on loop on the TV, he'd clearly never stayed up watching late night television to appreciate the fine mixture of humour and absurdity. I was regretting not having brought a book to read – for me – although probably for you too, I said – after all he was going to have to wait around for three hours. I guess we didn't really think about that. We didn't seem like we were supposed to be there, we looked content, happy, one may have

even confused us for being in love – after all one can't help but fall in love with a supportive potential father of your soon to be terminated child.

He held me like we were at home – looked into my eyes as though he would for an eternity and kissed me as though we'd been together for one.

A doctor appeared at the door and struggled with a name – that must be me – I jumped up but she was gone. I looked around – the Chef behind me looking quite lost – the door down the hall the receptionist pointed; I strode quickly without a glance behind. She was a straight forward woman, not cold, but very matter of fact as she went through her list of questions – do you have a boyfriend?

No.

Does the father know?

Oh – right, well – yes – he's here with me.

And how long have you been seeing each other?

I was trying to keep my answers as simple as possible but it occurred to me that I didn't know the answers to any of those questions she asked me.

So you don't see yourself getting married to him?

I think a simple no will suffice – well thing is he's already married – wonderful – congratulations to you all.

Through those double doors the clinic is the same place every time, those same walls and hallways, that same linoleum floor and backless gowns – the anaesthesiologist is cheerful enough as she explains the procedure to me – I am listening, but all I can see is the eyes of the girl that just walked out – she looked fine enough walking to the door our eyes met – she was a pretty girl probably no

older than me – beautiful green eyes – she gave me a peculiar half smile as she went past, polite but knowing and empathetic – there was a heaviness in her eyes, they just stared.

There was no time to lose, we were in the theatre – I felt like I'd missed something – did I walk in here with the doctor?

Had she been wily and distracted me with conversation?

I stopped – looked around – there was something strange about it, a feeling, not in my stomach – in my head – monsters with tiny claws on the edge of my brain – I remember thinking how I had to take in every single detail of the room and what was happening so I could write it down. I sat in the enormous grey armchair, this was it – no second chances – she asked me to put my legs in the stirrups - aside from those it was like a regular armchair. I felt the stretch – I really am not at all flexible but surely that shouldn't have been quite so difficult, I considered how that sounded in my head for a minute; yes, I really must practice spreading my legs.- Perhaps I should also practice rephrasing my thoughts before I say them. The chair went back, it was positioned directly underneath a skylight set up in the roof cavity recessed and tinted – it didn't seem to let in any light whatsoever – I focused on the walls – the machines beeping – the tourniquet – make a fist – the peg on my finger, the lights on the monitor – focus – concentrate – take everything in.

I woke up covered with a hospital blanket in a room behind a curtain, it was open slightly, a nurse came in – it's time to start waking up she says – tea or coffee? Answer the lady don't just stare blankly – coffee – I hold my hands together with the blanket up on my chest allowing only my fingers to venture out and take the coffee and three biscuits – I guess I should be getting my head together and leave.

I've got to get my stuff.

I glance over – it's on the floor – boots – bag – did I have a coat?

It would no doubt be difficult to put on in my state – I seem to have misplaced my face – no wait I found it, it's with the biscuit I'm scraping at with my teeth into fine powdered crumbs – time to go – relax a minute – at least finish the coffee, we can take the biscuits with. Zip up the white fluffy boots, get bag, wander out clutching the last biscuit gnawing mindlessly at the edges, the nurse looks at me – are you ok? I nod in a daze through those double doors, he's moved so he's looking directly at those double doors in one seamless motion he's beside me – that's where my coat was – more coffee? Sure – I don't feel like using words just yet I'm still fairly involved with my biscuit. It was supposed to be takeaway but instead we sit there in the cafe, he looks concerned at times – I'm too hazy to care – I just want to go home and sleep – it's done now, no more ifs or buts, no considering changing one's mind – no need to remain rational – no reason not to get emotional – even I'm surprised at how well I'm handling this, after all I really want kids – lots of them – just not like this, in this circumstance, with this man – just ignore that brief moment of consideration in which you potentially would have had his son.

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I feel like a cigarette so badly. It's been 228 days, surely that's enough time for it to be ok if I celebrate with a cigarette? It's unbelievable how much the craving hangs on, it occurred to me a while ago that it didn't necessarily have anything to do with smoking at all – as it turns out perhaps I'm simply a habitual self destructive addict – it really doesn't matter what vice it is, for now wine will have to do – it's closer – and after all it's time to celebrate. I have a job. Which means I'll be able to buy better cleaning products; I just drank a bit of scum that was in the wine glass, which looking at now is really beyond filthy. Maybe I could also invest in some better wine. I'm thrilled by just how

excited I am about starting this job tomorrow – it was just far too perfectly coincidental for me to ignore. I'd not done any painting for a while – it was time to focus and throw myself into my work – like I said – the show is in less than a month. The phone rings – a telemarketer with a sense of humour, apparently I'm the most optimistic person he's talked to all day – having said that – I'm the first person he's talked to, so it's not really a lie he says. He's entertaining so we talk. It's a charity drive for the RSPCA – Jed's from the pound I tell him, but I can't really help out the cause – I'm in struggle town I tell him – in desperate need for work – well then, how perfectly convenient is it that there just so happens to be jobs available at the call centre.

Come on in he says. Tell them I referred you, it might help – and come say hi when you get the job, and I will find him after training – or during. I always wanted to work for the RSPCA, but could never figure out how to go about it in a way that I'd also get paid – after all there is only so much volunteer and unpaid work you can do in this society without becoming one of the people that depend on charitable support, it's one of the circumstances I have the most difficulty understanding – and now I'm looking forward to the prospect of spending eight hours a day on the phone asking people for charity with the full expectation of being hung up on all day – I think I answered that concern quite well in my interview though – I'm an artist, I'm more than used to rejection – comes with the territory. Although what I look forward to most is that after I've got my spiel down pat and don't need to concentrate on what I'm saying I'll have eight hours a day to sketch – the joys of multi-tasking – it really does seem perfect.<sup>109</sup>

I kind of wish I knew what the time is. I have more clocks now than before but it doesn't help. It's unbelievable that I've still not sent in the audit for the student union, the AGM was last week; change over to the new execs is done. The doggedly enthusiastic boy hounds me for a meeting at

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<sup>109</sup> In 2013, I used this experience to create the performance work *Two Months as a Telemarketer*, at Agar Dish in Woolloomooloo. See appendix.

9am the very next day – he never turned up – in my very hung under<sup>110</sup> state I was unenthusiastically disinterested as to why. I'd left Kearney on the sofa with Jed – just a regular night – though I woke up wearing a St. Christopher - patron saint of travellers - bracelet; it was something that I would normally adamantly reject.

I couldn't remember who'd given it to me, either the younger girl or the beautiful red head. Sifting through what had happened that night proved difficult then I remembered Kearney buying me a drink and asking me if I wanted to get smashed – oh yes – I do – they said nothing at the clinic yesterday about drinking, and it wasn't making me feel sick – however fragmented it made my memory was a side effect to be expected. I toyed with the large blue beads, the medallion was worn in places where it had clearly been rubbed, I couldn't help the sensation of protection and importance I felt from this object, also because it was handed to me as a gift; though I didn't know how – it's timeliness seemed excruciatingly relevant.

More wine and a friend would help – she'd be here around one-ish. I'd left my car in Newtown somewhere and I'd best get it before I start drinking again – though ol' mate is pretty keen to kick around on the sofa for an unspecified amount of time. He says he'd like to graffiti cows – curious – but he does live in Robertson so I guess that makes some sense – no – round here in Sydney, he says.

Oh ...- there's not really that many cows in Sydney.

He looks at me for a minute then pisses himself laughing and I realise he means spray paint pictures of cows – s'pose that does make more sense – more ethical too.

After all, buildings don't have feelings – cows do.

Charred bloated cows - caught in fences – upside down in burnt out paddocks.

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<sup>110</sup> Though most people refer to feeling 'hung over' the term has never meshed with the actual feeling as I have never felt 'over' anything in this state but rather very much 'under'. Under the weather; under a chair; under a grey fog waiting for the sweet relief of crawling out from under the haze.



They look more like pigs the way they are laying in the dust all their hair burnt off and about to explode – it's what happens in those kinds of extreme temperatures I'm told. The bush fires raged through the Warrumbungle's around Coonabarabran, I called my friend, my best friend, we grew up together – there is no apt term – not even that we are like sisters – she's more like my other half, a team player to the end regardless of the months or year that pass in between. Sometimes I hate that she's stayed home and that I had to leave – that I'm the one that calls home, she very rarely leaves the farm. Our parents did try to separate us a few times when we were young, I guess they were concerned that we'd get to dependant on each other and in a small town people do talk. Though kudos must be given to her folks and mine – though they really had little choice but to support our friendship, it was most certainly a challenge – especially after moving to Bowral in my early teens; the phone calls for hours on end –postage stamps for letters over twenty pages long – and every holidays the transfer –her with us for a week – me with her family for a week. It was like a continuation of how our time was divided as kids, alternate weekends between the motel and the farm. It was not a good year for anyone it seemed, the bushfires - though they'd come almost every year it seemed when I was younger - never ceased to be utterly devastating. What could I ever do?

I'd not had TV for about nine months – I have one – it just wasn't plugged into an aerial, there's only one in the house and with PSEUDO furniture gets moved around the house a lot. At least the front room was now being used – as a cinema room – with floor sofas and pillows. Subsequently, I'd had no knowledge of any recent events – aside from the immediacy of being alive. The phone started to ring – it had been a while - dad called; bush fires around Coona – it used to happen every year more or less, we'd even get an extra week of summer holidays – heat week. Great thing about a small town is that everyone's a volunteer and helps each other out in the tough times. I called her. She said all was more or less as you'd expect – fire running rampant – Firies out in force giving it all they've got – well – the locals anyhow. All in all they were fine out at the property and the town wasn't in immediate danger, although Coonamble, Baradine and some other neighbouring towns were evacuated to the bowling club in Coona. Surely I'd get a call if anything where awry with my

godson's family – they'd been living in Baradine, but planned on moving back to town and she was expecting again.

The chickens decided that they were going to be inside today – it had suddenly started to rain and one of them stood by me looking as though she planning to jump up either into my lap or onto the table – they both decided to hop onto Jed's armchair instead though he didn't seem to particularly mind, protective as he was over me and his food when it came to chickens.

I called my mate – they were all fine and fairly unconcerned – well – it is to be expected and the town's pretty fine really – so no need to worry. Natural disasters do tend to have that kind of effect I find – dramatically calm – perhaps it's because everybody's waiting for what can't be controlled. The phone keeps ringing here – the boys call wanting to know if everything is alright. I can't say that I know more than them – they saw it on the news. I know the mountains are alright - the observatory is in danger - farms and livestock have been decimated.

I call again on Friday before work – she can't talk – the fire is now three kilometres from the property the coppers say and they've come to evacuate her – she's part of the RFS though so she's just gotta go out and move the cattle then head up to the main house – her folks place – which is being used as base camp for the crew fighting on this side of town.

The phone beeps and I've got to go to work – the roads are closed out to Coona now – there is nothing I can do, but get ready for work and hope. I get the bus in. We cross ANZAC parade and the sky breaks – it starts raining – I can only sit defeated. I know what they are doing and I think that although they know there is a multitude of people here – elsewhere – in cities – they expect nothing necessarily from them at all – they'll sort their shit out – they'll come together as a community and fight. Yes – they will – against a fire.

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So on the third day at the new job – it's forty minutes past twelve – at the pub on the corner of Surry Hills – the last group of voices sing out sounds of 'whatever' as we down our last drinks. I've a full beer and my companion is seemingly questionable. I'm not sure what happened after that, it seems I came to on ANZAC parade walking entirely the wrong direction - presuming my intention was going home - although it had been such a long time since I'd started this, and it was well past ANZAC Day and far too long until it came around again; when would it end; when could it? I was mid conversation before it occurred to me that I wasn't actually talking to myself - rather there was a young boy walking with me – he couldn't have been more than twenty-one, but then I didn't realise he was even there so undoubtedly perceptions could have been mildly off – perhaps we'd agreed to go somewhere with someone. Vague memories of ol' mate talking to a group of girls singing at the next table flash by, something about a party or karaoke maybe, perhaps I was trying to help out the old fellas – they were clearly trying to chat up these young girls, not that it would have worked. One of them had already drunk two bottles of chardy to himself – they were doing well. I'd only stopped in on the way home for one beer – it was my third day on the job, and after eight hours on the phones my mouth was a little dry. It was a wonderful pub – completely empty – just the way I like it. I'd said goodbye to an old fella outside the office as I left – he was saying bye to someone else – I knew that, but I was walking past anyhow so I figured I'd exchange the pleasantries regardless.

I sat – beer in hand – contemplating my next move whilst simultaneously trying to convince myself not to think at all and simply sit. The old fella walked in with his mate – I'd seen him earlier in the day at the office – as they sat with their drinks it was a barrage of big noting, amicable of course, and they did not stop – for hours we sat there – my one quiet drink turned into an endless glass as I was informed that neither of them could possibly allow for a lady to buy the drinks – I've got no problem with that, although I never said I was a lady – just so we're clear. –

After all it's better to get all your facts straight right off the bat, that way no one gets misled or confused later on.

It was just my luck then that these old fellas have been with the company for years and happen to hold fairly senior roles. It did not occur to me at the time that there might be any repercussions from this boozy night out - although there had been a moment of concern, it had long gone by this point - after all - the more pressing question right now was exactly who this young guy was - where we were actually going - and to a lesser extent - where he had come from. We'd managed to walk to Fox Studios, it was then I realised exactly how off track we were - or at least me. The last time I was out this way I was lost and wandering.

I'd attempted to climb the huge fig trees in the park, they seemed like a good place for a nap, but they were far too tall and I neither tall nor agile enough to climb into the cosy looking branches. I'd been to see The Living End - my mate and I got so smashed it became one of those hazy events that must have been awesome because one can remember nothing to the contrary. My mate was thrilled simply by me dragging us through the crowd and right to the side of the stage - I'm still baffled at how skilfully we seemed to be able to buy our drinks and continuously sift through people standing shoulder to shoulder without spilling, dropping or getting lost - I did momentarily lose my phone - I'd prepared myself for such an outcome as I left the house that afternoon.

I didn't need much I figured: house key to get in, somewhere safe - in my boot. -

\$70 cash in my bra, to cover drinks - well - for a bit - but then how to get home?

Card. Just in case more cash is required - also in the boot - RMW's are great for storage - and for not getting one's feet trampled on in the midst of a horde of drunks.

But the phone, it's funny how they went from getting smaller to becoming these rather large cumbersome things - I mean sure if you want to see it as a computer then yes, really quite tiny, however under the banner of being a mobile phone - a device with the primary use of making and

receiving phone calls and text messages – it does seem on the large side and most certainly not subtle when trying to carry it in your bra. I don't know how those fashion conscious girls out there do it – I'd imagine it would be entirely unacceptable to have a rectangle jutting out the side of an outfit carefully considered to maximize an appealing and ample bust. Luckily for me I didn't quite give a shit much. My main concern was that my bra was questionably supporting me and therefore not an incredibly secure area for the phone either – I stood in front of the mirror – phone in hand – shorts – corset – boots – not many options. My hand briefly went to my shorts – no pockets – maybe inside the shorts? No – no that's a terrible idea. The corset and dodgy bra is your best bet, all the while the old man in the back of my brain is saying do you really need it anyway? And on this occasion he was in between being right and a complete smart arse of irony, fate and serves you right.

I left those trees with a mixture of regret and relief; the suburbs took shape around me – though which ones I could only guess – directionally I was heading the right way at least. I'd never been concerned at wandering the streets at absurd hours, not that I was oblivious nor naive to the potential dangers of generic life – realistically a very specific chain of circumstances would have to occur for such danger to become more than just potential but actual – unfortunately this so happened to be such a night.<sup>111</sup>

The white van drove past. It was just a regular van nothing distinguishing about it. I watched it pull over a little way up the road – it seemed odd and as I came closer suspicion rose – I walked past as tall, straight and determined as possible distinctly aware of the two men watching me. They waited until I'd walked about a block or so then started the van, slowly they drove behind me – passed – and then pulled over again up the street.

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<sup>111</sup> 'One must seriously inquire as to whether structuralism, by persistently devaluing the categories of human consciousness and will, remains capable of recouping a serviceable concept of the ethical subject. If structures really function as the subterranean determinates of historical practice, does there remain any room for the notion of moral accountability? ...In a century in which crimes against humanity have become virtual norms, to relinquish the normative commitments of traditional humanism risks meeting the forces of tyranny halfway.' Ibid., Wolin, 195.

I immediately wished I wasn't quite so drunk. –

I could walk straight but as I wracked my brains trying to formulate a plan it was painfully obvious that wit and calculation would not be coming out to help me tonight and I was coming up on the van again – all I could think was to keep walking – focused – let them see you are unconcerned and confident and please let me pass by again, give me a bit more time to think of something.

I had nothing on me.

I kept an excessive collection of keys on my key chain, I only really knew what two of the keys were for, but it was heavy and also had two pocket knives – but they were at home – in my bag – all I had was one key in my boot – somehow I couldn't conceive of a way that would come in handy.

The frustration grew as I stared at the number plate and cursed the many writers and intellectuals that spoke of the pen being the mightiest of weapons – I could barely remember the first three letters, the best I could hope for was that I at least looked like I could – but then that did rely on them being not very bright. –

I had my fingers crossed and passed by them a third time. –

I held my phone in my hand – a sly attempt to deter the spooks, though a completely useless gesture – the phone was out of battery.

*There was nothing left to do, as I walked I convinced myself that – realistically – there would have to be a very specific set of circumstances which must come to a head for anything of particular drama to affect me and my circumstance at this moment in time.*

*Ludicrous as it may sound – and does – there is no luck, fortune or otherwise that has kept me here as a person, and as far as I can figure there is neither answer nor recommendation that might assist with that –*

I'm not sure what I'm meant to do -

I feel like I'm spending an awful lot of time excusing myself for not being able to understand the point -

as far as I can figure it didn't seem to be poignant -

I can see the north beach in Wollongong in my head, the waves crashing the sensation of being a part of everything in the entirety of everness - and nothing at the same time -

yes - I will meet you,

between never and impossible - I will be there.

Some things never end - an endless commitment to everyone and anyone whom may need such attention -

they are -

we are -

the best and the worst of people to know, spend time with - live with-

an extreme between selflessness and selfishness -- kicking about, beyond comfortably between the two as though a spectrum didn't exist - or at least not a viable one - our chances were out swiftly simply by being in this life, perhaps it was just a matter of not being convinced about what this life was for.

In my personal opinion I was under the impression that to live one's life was to strive towards happiness - one's own, personal - unadulterated, enthusiastic, eccentric,

experimental, inexcusable sense of self – slipping between being conscious of killing myself to being aware of being unaware that that was indeed more or less the case –

I may have stopped paying attention to myself.

You are no one's –

just yourself to contend with – so best pay attention to her,

ridiculous as she may be seems she's your best bet –

good work mate – seriously –

good work mate.

Still – this time I think we'll get a cab. I'm not sure if I kidnapped that poor boy or if he was a willing stray dog – but either way he woke me at 7am. I was asleep on the sofa – crap I've got to go to the new job – and why exactly are you in my house? I do remember meeting you but when did ol' mate bugger off and you come along – don't get me wrong – liking the trade off for a younger model, but I was out to drink - not pick up. It's not Tuesday so you get nothing.<sup>112</sup> Well to be fair if I had known he was actually there - he could've had a chance – either way – I was late for work, oh wait – no I wasn't – it was 7am. Why the hell did this kid wake me – he's gotta go – righto – he seems to be an absolute sweetheart I don't actually mind that he woke me, he was being very polite, subsequently giving me a few hours to get over my hangover before going to work – thanks – no really – at least I made it on time and showered. Always a plus, turns out at this new job they're thrilled if you just turn up – every shift would be preferable – but you know – we'll see. Still not really sure I know what that

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<sup>112</sup> The Bondi Bitch had joked about the consistency of my transgressions and that I should perhaps have at least one day a week that I didn't either sleep with a complete stranger or bring one home, we figured Tuesday was to be that day.



means, but hell, if they feel so strongly about it that they'll pay you extra: just for turning up each shift: they'll pay you extra – well shit, I was going to do that anyway so sure, pay me extra, which might well be less in the end but it's all pretty silly anyhow. The acquisition of money – transformed into the only thing left that makes it viable to 'live', just lucky my rent's so damn cheap. Still I made myself a *Lands-Cape*,<sup>113</sup> just in case – you know – if you're going to end up in a shack in the middle of nowhere may as well get damn used to having no money what so ever. Little tricky in the city – here saying you've no money means you can't go out drinking every night – and zero dollars – really does mean zero dollars, usually after all those life costs come out – not always – but somehow they'd

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<sup>113</sup> The *Lands-Cape* provides the method of travel for just such a journey. It is a prototype for the individual pilgrimage, the journey of the hero potentially. It was constructed as part of *The Coorabie Proposal*. A robe which transforms from a traveling coat to a reversible raincoat that can then unfold into a tent, without excess equipment to be carried, entirely self encompassing, the ideal wearable travelling aid for nomadic movement to remote Australia. With plenty of pocket space for recording such a journey! These are transient, liminal spaces: the places conducive to nomadic movement, a pilgrimage to a 'promised land' perhaps in search of a new territory. Deleuze speaks of the territory of death in relation to animals, the space in which one can arrive at their ultimate end; it is a space of specificity, intimacy and definitiveness. Deleuze states there are particular things used in nature to form territory such as colour, lines and song. Territory also stipulates a place which is home even in nomadic movement, such rituals as colour, song and lines are used in nature to demarcate the new space. Some animals will not recognize their mate outside of their territory such as birds. Does this somehow translate to the fear that we have about those places outside of these urban areas in which the majority reside. Although it is recognized that people do reside in rural and remote areas and are part of our population, part of this nation, there still is an apparent dislocation from them and from that territory. From the land. Our estrangement from the land causes a great deal of anxiety and fear of it. Similarly, the notion of not recognizing ourselves in it or as part of it maintains our distance from it- we become, in a sense, confined by our own urban structure of all available resources that eliminate what we suppose to be any necessity to relate with, associate with or work with the land outside of our immediate built environment. We are made to feel safe that all is on hand, removing the consumer from the product to the degree of complete ignorance of nature. The *Lands-Cape* uses colour, the colours of the horizon, the earth and the sky the setting sun, the atmosphere of outside. Lines are not just that of nomadic movement, but the lines that are traveled, and the lines of the body. See appendix.

managed that too.<sup>114</sup> It was a thing called budgeting, it made sense – had some great ideas and strategies, perhaps, but in practice it seemed unconvincing. There was a strange sensation of a nation – perhaps a world – with an uprising of petulant children whom could not live without their toys – a bully who decides to make them pay for their toys – and an idiot that subsequently decides it's mandatory to have toys. Some people really need to step out of the past. I'm right in the middle of it and I've no idea what is going on, almost as though I were in a situation of telling a story about a huge adventure to a room full of people, only standing on one leg with a gin or two too many under her belt. I imagine though, when it comes down to it, it's simply about taking in the quietness of standing outside – in the middle of nowhere – and combining it with an endless crowd of people coming over to sleep the night – a constant medium in a world of transience, and a transient in a world that does not live. We are not at all civilised, why are we pretending we are, we've become our own habitual abusers and addicts without so much as a bat of an eyelash, in some ways asking oneself when did screwing people stop becoming personal?<sup>115</sup>

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Time stands still so often – unnoticed – and flies by with the same perception, time passing whilst we were away and the time it takes to catch up never actually comes – but still I look for it – in a

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<sup>114</sup> Most of the young unemployed people of Sydney have absorbed the morality that lies behind the condemnation of the unemployed in the wider Australian political culture. Moreover, they see the unemployed as habitually violating this moral code by dole cheating and bludging, further undermining the legitimacy of unemployment as a basis for asserting citizenship rights. They tend to grossly exaggerate the incidence of dole cheating and bludging that more closely resemble the inflated levels often suggested by the media. Ibid., Hogan and Dempsey, 157.

<sup>115</sup> 'There is no progress... what we call progress is immured on each planet and vanishes with it. Everywhere and always, the same drama...on the same narrow stage, a clamorous humanity, infatuated with its greatness believing itself to be the entire universe and living in its immense prison... The universe repeats itself endlessly...Eternity plays imperturbably in the infinity of its representations.' Ibid., Wolin, 82.

panic trying to catch up with myself. We got lost that night on the walk home, like so many times before but it didn't matter so much anymore because the more I thought about it - I could never find myself lost - *find myself lost* - be lost – after all – either way you'll end up getting somewhere.

You can always find your way back from somewhere.

A destination is nothing if not the fulfilment of a journey, lost or otherwise – I feel lost at the moment – as though I've left half of myself on display elsewhere. I so desperately want to get it back but I've committed myself – I put it on show – an exhibition, a performance – my soul on a page laid bare – unedited even – how absurd, astonishing, irrelevant, the passersby will take no heed, in reality the risk is beyond minimal. I think nothing of leaving my personal belongings in the gallery for a week or two, even my toiletry bag – although when I think about it – it was much of a muchness really, turns out I live in transience as well – never really unpacked – settled – always on the edge of here and elsewhere.<sup>116</sup> There is more beyond this place, it is merely a pod of information to hook up to, but I believe that the idea – or at least the premise; should be that one moves on – spreads out – leaves.<sup>117</sup> A nanny state becomes so when everyone is playing at it and with it; are there no balls left to take on what we've got? An endless expanse, and an unfettered opportunity for idealistic potential.<sup>118</sup>

And then what? They ask; -

always the same questions, as though no imagination were left in the world at all. I never said nor presumed to allude that I had the answers – I'm just saying – there is always another way, and

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<sup>116</sup> According to Michael Strummer, historians are tasked with creating a positive image of the past, because after the decline of religion, the search for a higher source of meaning came from what the nation and patriotism was able to provide, therefore 'in a land without history, whoever fills memory, coins the concepts, and interprets the past, wins the future.' Ibid., Wolin, 88.

<sup>117</sup> Hannah Arendt's "The Human Condition" speaks of the revelatory character of action and speech, in which one 'discloses oneself without ever either knowing himself or being able to calculate beforehand whom he reveals. One of the primary virtues of action, therefore, is its unforeseeableness, its sheer unpredictability.' Ibid., 167.

<sup>118</sup> According to Arendt, revolutions constitute moments of 'pure action' which transcend an otherwise politicised normality associated with the predictability and regimentation of the party system. The revolution represents an authentic space of freedom. Ibid., 169.

arguably always will be. When did we become comfortable about having our fate and presumed goals dictated to us? I mean sure – everyone loves fascism when it comes down to it – we want to not have to worry and be taken care of – by attractive people – whom seem confident – have wares, wealth and substance, at least enough to seem plausible anyhow. After all it's not as though one person can make any kind of difference really, at least not without a mob mentality behind it potentially.

So it's about twenty to five on a Tuesday night, went out and had dinner with the girls – it's been a while, we took off one at a time – times have changed, we are not the trash bags we once were it seems. At least not as a team. Either way I walked to Town Hall, it seemed to be the end of my night – get on the bus and go home; but for these girls – sitting on the bench. She was passed out, fair enough really. They were from Campbelltown - trying to get home. Apparently it was the passed out girl's twenty-first, they'd clearly had a good night, all I could do was help her get her friend to Central – then I stopped paying attention – turns out I ended up on the wrong bus myself.

I got off somewhere past the end of King Street and the Hume Highway – the fog had set in – it was past 2am and I had no idea where I was exactly, suffice to say that I was roughly close to where I wanted to be – but entirely unsure as to how to get there – and all together in the circumstance of having no time to appreciate just how lost I actually was.

*The door was open – smoke wafting out – the sense of alarm was curiously on hold as I watched from across the street.*

I'd been at the eccentric wealthy man's house, asking him if he might help out with the animals – give a donation – I'd waited in the lobby of his dark mansion – the kitchen boy, also a sort of butler or messenger – he showed me into the dining room where the older man sat calmly. He was a lonely sort of man it seemed, all he really wanted was to have a chat – something about his mother I think but I couldn't be sure – I was still a little perplexed as to why I was there in the first place. I guess I

was taking my job very seriously, after all – all those abandoned and neglected animals – they don't take care of themselves do they? They clearly need money – this old man had plenty of it.

As we spoke he became more inclined to want to help – he wanted to give me food – for the animals, as though I knew where they were all kept and could go to them.

A few kilos of good quality smoked salmon, for the animals – would that help?

He wanted to help, he wanted to be part of the solution – it was all he could think what to do, he said after all, that he wasn't keen on giving cash donations for one reason or another – it was fair enough – although I really wasn't sure what to do with all this salmon. His carer, she took the salmon from the room and offered me a drink in the kitchen, the elderly man had had a sudden change of heart - \$550 I will give you – will that be ok – will that help? He'll just go and find his cheque book. I take the drink. Seemingly it is never early enough to drink – or eat salmon – it is after all somewhat ridiculous to be giving kilos of smoked salmon to stray dogs – so she helps herself to portion after portion of luxurious pink flesh, not really sure that's the point but anyhow. Die fast or live young, so it seemed.

I'd stopped to have a drink with the Irish guy from work across the road, we sat on the veranda, I told him about the gallery – he should come sometime – in fact there was a show coming up at some point, it just had to be organised.

*The door was open, the smoke drifted out. –*

I wanted to just walk on by – after all – surely it wasn't my house – and if it was probably best not to go in, rather perhaps best to leave and start looking for Jed – he'd most likely taken off. We came closer – Jed stood in the doorway looking sombre waiting for my return – we walked slowly down the hallway. A burst of blackness as we entered the lounge room, a smell beyond indescribable – unsure as to go further; – it was lucky the side gate had been left open after the painters had left.

I knew what I would see before I saw it – through the window – the old man’s carer – kneeling before the oven, her face turned away toward the window as though she was staring right at me - her mouth open – she looked like she was made of hard plastic.

I gasped –an audible gasp and looked away – I’d never dialled 000 – not even when I was dying – we waited in the backyard for the sirens to come. The two fire trucks blocked the street as the firies calmly, but swiftly, came in through the side passage. It seems the girl had been fiddling with the oven – presumably trying to fix it, for what reason I do not know – it seems she was feeling bad about something or other, either way she was certainly not feeling much of anything now – the oven had exploded. I’d called the emergency services and told them I needed the police, ambulance and firies. There’s a dead body in my house.<sup>119</sup>

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I can see my mistakes and future decisions coming apart before my eyes – before their actualisation, before the breath is even taken. I guess the real question is – what happens when nobody’s watching? Or paying attention – do we assume that the world stops around us – that things do not continue on without us.

Of course for some of us grandeur is everything. That all important self assuredness – because, well, let’s be fair – when you’re as great as all that there’s no need to be modest. Ol’ mate was telling a story – he looked me dead in the eye or at least as close to that as possible after two bottles of chardonnay; guess how much money I make?

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<sup>119</sup>‘Since the self can never be anything other than a patchwork of artificial, linguistic constructs that serve to cover up and distort the unconsciousness, the scientifically honest approach to subjectivity would be to embrace its primordial fragmentation.’ Ibid., Wolin ,187.

He wouldn't have been able to distinguish between feigned and real interest – but I sat and drank with him anyhow.

I guess whatever he'd said was intended to be impressive, unfortunately I could neither tell nor care – there was no real need for me to respond with flattery or awe – he was doing far too good of a job with that himself – it would have been a mere insincere echo. Though there is only so long one can sit listening to someone harp on about how they're king shit at making money before you get beyond bored – even if they are buying endless amounts of beer. That's awesome I said – I'm happy for you – but I've gotta say, I really don't care – at all.

Everyone likes money he said – well, fair enough – sure – but if that's you're only goal – it's kinda pointless isn't it? That relentless pursuit of money – grandeur – for what – an assumed status perhaps – no one really cares do they?<sup>120</sup> But yes – apparently they do – in fact he tells me forcefully – anyone who say's they don't like or care about money is a liar – I'm sorry I said – but in my opinion for that to be the case the conversation has started in the wrong place. His mate took mild stock in that statement, although by this point any form of reasonable conversation or debate had long gone out the window - to such an extent that it seemed ol' mate subsequently picked a fight with his mate who then left – leaving the two of us there.

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Ah sobriety - my old friend – appeared before me like a ghost, a mere shadow of a former self – we met in momentary madness almost unrecognisable, like nostalgic villains that arrive with comfort

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<sup>120</sup> If the young unemployed look for potential political allies, they often tend to encounter actors who appear to treat them unfairly or view them negatively. As a result, they view their relations with important socio-political factions, such as parties, unions, businesses and the bureaucracy as antagonistic. Ibid., Hogan and Dempsey, 155.

and pain – we gazed blankly at one another – a conversation on the tip of our collective tongues and an overwhelming sensation of pending potential mixed with sheer boredom – lacklustre depression – it was past midday – no need to make a phone call – perfectly reasonable time for wine.

I'd received another text from his wife. She was less than happy – I would have been offended but was far too distracted by the poor grammar - I had half a mind to edit the text and send it back to her – here – this will be more effective. I'm not sure she'd have appreciated it though. He always seemed to call on those days – it bordered on suspect – a casual message on my answering machine; I'll see you tonight, we need to talk. Well yes, we probably do – that's fair. We didn't. The car was like a sauna in the car park off King Street – it was simply a kiss – my foot pressed hard on the brake – his fingers deep inside me – we struggled with the dimensions of the car – my hand gripping the door. The steam dripped down the fogged windows we were damp with sweat – bodies stretched and cramped and that hand brake was digging into my back – but still my foot with all force on the brake. It was only after that I was able to actually put the car in park and put on the hand brake, my leg and arm trembling from the exertion of suspending us in time and keeping us from crashing into the wall – definitely time for that drink we came out here for – though now I was regretting that I was wearing black. He got out, the cool air hit the inside of the car with welcome refreshment – he'd cranked on the air con to defog the windows – not that it helped much – sure the windows were no longer fogged however they were now covered by a film of scum – hot, sweaty sex stuck to the windows. I sat there, several things happened at once, my body still tingling, my hand print in the steam vanishing before my eyes and in an instant I was in a familiar place; my former lover's blue car. It looked like a spaceship from an 80's film, he called it the cockroach – and it never did recover – the filth was glued to the windows like a red flag of infidelity, streaks and long lines of last night's steam patterned before your eyes. I wondered for a brief moment if my car would recover from this encounter or if there would be a permanent film before my eyes. I began to get shivers as the cold air hit my damp top – ah – how good am I – so prepared for such an event, well at least so incidentally anyhow, I still had a shirt hanging off the back of the passenger seat. It'd been there for



weeks I'd been meaning to take it out –perhaps it had stayed for just such an occasion. Wiping the sweat and cum from my chest with my top I stepped out of the car – the crisp button through flannelette shirt slide over my arms – cool and homely – I sat on the open boot of the car taking in the breeze and the vehicle – it was defiantly time for that drink by now, a sneaky G+T or five – and a parking fine in the morning for \$98.<sup>121</sup>

On a mundane Monday I went out to run those errands – like rent – I was on the verge of catching up, so long as I ignored the bills – which I did – the parking permits had expired and there was nothing more frustrating than getting a parking fine out the front of one's house. I didn't bother getting changed – the leopard print coat would go nicely with my pink pyjamas. I ran into one of the local ol' mates he'd just finished work – a can of olive oil under one arm – a paper bag wrapped around a long neck in the other hand – it was three in the afternoon.

He lived above the pub – so I'll see you soon I said – I was in the mood for a beer, the wine was getting a bit tired.

I paid the rent; walked down Norton Street to the Council not at all concerned about the state I was in – even after seeing a brief reflection – swanned into the council to be informed of a wasted trip – apparently they were instating a new parking permit program. It needn't be renewed til next year – I should have received a notification – clearly didn't though – so here you are. She slid the piece of paper across the desk, complained about the cold and how she'd like to be in my coat. As I left I heard the other lady saying - goodbye and have a good trip – I dare say she wasn't talking to me but curiously I'd been the only person in the vicinity – perhaps the pink tie dyed pants gave her a different impression, it got me thinking. I did have a hankering for some green, perhaps ol' mate would have some – there was nothing for it but to ask.

I walked home – it was that time of day – school was finished – parents were on the move to fetch their young – reasonable – sensible – the school yard clears out. The sun finally managed to crawl

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<sup>121</sup> G+ T . Gin and Tonic, always a favourite.

out from behind heavy winter clouds for just long enough to shine a targeted ray of warmth, I turned the corner, walked past the school yard – empty but for one girl – in her frilly salmon coloured princess skirt, she clambered up the play equipment without hindrance. As I walked by her I was struck by the indescribable nature of that conflict between what one sees and what one feels – I struggled to articulate a viable plan in my mind – to put into action an alternative situation which would account for the geographical circumstance and population discrepancies in only a small way – but nevertheless at least put a voice and action to a potential plausible possibility. I wondered as I wandered to the pub if I had been stalling thus far – after all I'd spent the last year theorising on the idea – the Coorabie Proposal – it was to be the starting point for a much larger investigation of rural and remote Australia – how the iconography of a nation is not only built but circulated in the cities – the one percent of our total land mass on which eighty percent of the population resides. How on earth could I begin to understand the dynamics of such a discrepancy walking down Parramatta Road? I strolled into the Stag, the beer was already waiting for me, the ol' mate at the next table – he's from Coonabarabran – they tell me. As though we were Mr and Mrs Hometown, he tells me a story I cannot quite recall – nevertheless it matters little, I've met this chap before and have almost certainly had just this same conversation.

It's an odd crowd of people – sure it's three-thirty in the afternoon on a Monday and the football is on – so are a variety of other sports, but no one is even really bothering to feign interest in any of the games on the numerous TVs aside from something to stare blankly at, they seem to be disheartened but not miserable – more resigned to their own particular circumstance, it is an odd sensation watching them almost mimic what would be considered stereotypical behaviour as we sit there in the full awareness of the depression we drink towards and from. They all seem to have their own simple piece of life they desperately cling to – ol' mate shows me the most extraordinary photos on his phone that I cannot help but fall somewhat in love with his sight. The haunting photos of leaf littered dirt tracks fading away into a dense fog gave an overwhelming sensation of being

drawn into a vanishing point – dancing in oblivion – it must have been more or less exactly what I did, after that nothing much seemed worth recall.

Although it would be nice to know at least some of the finer details of what occurred, such as where that blue plastic thing in the middle of the hallway came from – and what the blue plastic thing is exactly – an exceptionally vague memory of a collection of blue plastic things comes to mind, but swimming aimlessly without context.

I did not feel at all bad about kicking ol' mate out of the house half naked at whatever time it was – suddenly bolt upright on the sofa in the kitchen wrapped in a blanket avidly proclaiming that I had to go to work – that was four days ago. I've still not been to work. The chickens scratch around behind me in the apple tree – I'd planned to bury the cat there – I'd taken apart the crypt,<sup>122</sup> painters came to fix the side wall.

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<sup>122</sup> *Cat*, performance, 2011. On Wednesday August 10, 2011 at aprox. 9am a woman knocked on my door asking if I owned a cat as there was a dead one the pavement outside. I told my partner at the time, that we had to collect the cat as dead cats don't live on the pavement. Not quite sure of what to do we placed a small very cute black and white cat into a bag, my partner suggested we put her in the bin to which I responded 'dead cats don't live in bins either' at which point he put forward the notion that dead cats don't live anywhere...it's dead. As I thought about this I made the decision that this cat, regardless of its state of being, deserved a home and someone who cares for her. How can one feel more abandoned, even in death, than to be summarily discarded and left to rot in a rubbish dump or even in a stranger's back yard? This cat looked so much like a cat I had when I was a child living in a motel by the highway, premature death was common for our pets, but they were always collected and given a burial. Between those experiences and the farm I frequented, the mortality of animals was something that was ever present. On the farm however, I also noticed the practical side of dealing with the death of animals. Ritual, respect and method was always adhered to whether in slaughtering a beast or getting dead rabbits to 'play' with.

Subsequently, I realised that I had to proceed with haste if I was going to give this cat a home in which to live out her death being. I knocked on the doors of my neighbours, because I still believe common courtesy and ethics dictate I must find her original owners, but with no luck. As with the work I did with Erich Trojna\*, similar themes are drawn together of displacement, abandonment and a search for a place to belong, to be home. And as with Erich Trojna the chance discovery of his suitcase I could not help, but have the overwhelming sensation that it was not so much luck that brought us together, but a feeling of being incomplete, and the most pure form of empathy through a process of rediscovering a life of a stranger that became a friend through death.

With complete respect to this cat and her death process I decided that the only way I could achieve a bond and adequately preserve her with honest dignity was to embalm her in a way that was as natural as possible. I

It had been one of those nights, desperation was running rampant but no one was willing to take responsibility for it - the solution was undeniably not here – upstairs at Kelly’s – but none the less we were here and the Bondi Bitch was presumably on her way said the younger girl.

I’d no real intention of being there at all that night, I wanted something that I could not quite place – to be alone in a crowd – but not here – the choices faded fast. It seemed the tipping point was becoming harder to place and I was striving to find it with rigorous gusto each and every time. I knew the day the Bitch had – it wasn’t a good one. Funerals never are – and she’d handled it like a champion, supporting her mate by doing a shit load of coke with her – my selfishness prevailed as I kept my mouth shut and waited for her imminent arrival.

She should have stayed home.

It was a wonder she’d managed to not only get here but get let in, but then it was Newtown and the younger girl seemed to hold some sway with the bouncers – a skill that was both a help and a terrible hindrance to generic life, health and wellbeing – but none of us would complain – if anything we would have been appalled had we been refused. My shock at her appearance was poorly masked, if at all, not that it mattered – she could barely focus – simply a vessel at this point – she’d arrived at her destination and was now leaving everything up to chance and in the hands of the people she’d come to see and expected to be there.

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researched many methods, a full description of the processes undertaken have been documented in a journal, along with photographic evidence of the procedures.

\*In 2009 I purchased a second hand suitcase belonging to Herr Erich Trojna who had passed away two weeks prior, unbeknown to me at the time. I traced this man’s life for six months, which concluded with a ceremony remembering his passing that I was invited to. It was held by his only family; the Russian nurse who cared for him until his death, and the author Alan Gill who wrote the book *An Interrupted Journey*, in which Trojna’s youth as one of the Vienna Mozart Choir Boys is documented. See appendix.

There was certain peace sitting here in the backyard. The planes passed overhead as they did, more or less every five minutes, the conversation stopped for those moments – waiting for the roaring to pass, though it never does – it still carries on in its own way. There was most certainly a sense of peace but most defiantly not a feeling of stillness, quiet or justice – for nothing in particular and yet everything that belonged with being here at this time in this circumstance<sup>123</sup> – I was no more or less involved than anyone else. But still sitting in the yard the mandarin trees swayed in the breeze, the chickens sat about the glow in the dark planes – a work left from a PSEUDO show, a prior grad show work – only one plane stood tall on its Perspex rod, the other had fallen – same as the front yard. I imagined people walking past the collection of bottle caps, manikin legs and aeroplanes would be unimpressed by the state of the grass and weeds overgrowing – the giant orange question mark on the side of the gate offered me some solace and potential risk – I never did bother to relock that side gate after the painters left. Whilst I thought about it - I thought I did not much care. Surely I had nothing of much value to such an individual that would be inclined to break into this place, aside from perhaps a Goldilocks looking for a comfortable bed....

I arrived home perplexed about the bedroom light being on – I'd not remembered leaving it like that, as I entered the room I thought; I'd not remembered leaving a boy in my bed either.

I woke him; I was curiously unconcerned about his presence – even though he'd made himself more than comfortable.

Oh my god I'm so sorry – he exclaimed – this is really weird isn't it?

Well – yes – it is.

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<sup>123</sup> 'Nothing exists in itself but only in relation to something else: either to that with which it is linked chronologically, as in the process of conditioned arising, or with its opposite. Thus, everything can be viewed only as either a middle way between two stages or as one side of a coin, which can only exist if the other side exists, and vice versa.' Ray Billington, *Understanding Eastern Philosophy*. (London: Routledge, 1997),59.

He said he'd come to return my coat. I'd lent it to him after the PS show – he was supposed to bring it back earlier that day. The bed just looked so comfortable - and I was so tired.

So you figured it would be ok to break into my house?

Oh no – he explains – the side gate wasn't locked.

I guess I should have maybe investigated that banging noise a little closer than simply sticking my head out the window before going to work.

I'll leave, I'm so sorry, this is really weird, he rambles – still lying there – and I watch him curiously; No, don't move. You Stay Right There – I need to make a phone call, and then I'll come back and deal with – this. I'd not figured out what to do with him so I thought it much better to leave him where I knew he'd be.

A brief part of me almost said; fine – move over; you're on my side of the bed. As I considered the thought I wondered if that meant I'd have to sleep in my clothes, after all - I wouldn't want to give the random stranger in my bed the wrong idea – and then that half moment of contemplation – I didn't even have to go out and find some stranger; one had already found their way in – curious. But no – bad idea. I mean if we're to consider that then we may as well just keep the boy – there was heaps of room – he could live in the third room; locked from the outside of course. He vaguely seemed like the type whom potentially wouldn't mind quite so much.

It was then that it occurred to me that I was less concerned about the situation I was in than I was about relaying the story to others. People often reacted with strong disbelief or anger at my seeming lack of concern; I don't know what to tell you. If I felt the circumstance was at all precarious or beyond my control, then yes – perhaps I'd be more suitably alarmed.

I'd made the phone call – I'd told S. Man that I'd call when I finished work and we'd catch up for a drink – it was about 2am, but he'd been working late also. I still had that filed down key to his

apartment – but clearly he’d have to let us in. I said if Jed and I had to leave the house then by default- Goldilocks would have to leave too – it seemed like the perfect, most diplomatic solution. Somehow I couldn’t quite be completely comfortable with kicking him out for being mindlessly over familiar – even though I’d met him for the first time two days prior.

He came back about a month later on a casual Sunday afternoon; I was enthralled with the Novelist – laying on the floor sofa in the front room entirely wrapped around him, a movie playing in the background. He would later tell me he could not hear a word of that film, he was partially deaf and had been that way since birth. The knock on the door disrupted my whimsy – begrudgingly I got up. Goldilocks; standing there with meekly apologetic stupor seeping from his very being – I could not help but laugh – as I told him that it actually really was fine – believe it or not. Certainly not an invitation to do it again; you definitely should not do that kind of thing. But for right now – here, don’t worry about it – you bizarre random person. He shifted on the spot – looking at me – asked what I was doing today – clearly he’d figured we could maybe hang out, or he could at least come in for a while – after all, he’d come all the way here – all the way from where though, I’d no idea. Not that it mattered by this point; I had someone to get back to and random boys appearing on my doorstep was seriously cramping my style.

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An Australian film came on SBS, I felt the same way I imagine most people might;<sup>124</sup> somewhat obligated but unenthusiastic about having to sit through another bland rendition of Australian

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<sup>124</sup>According to an unnamed Australian critic, thirty or so years ago, literary criticism has suffered from its own “over efficiency”: its professionalism, it’s far too clever intellectual skill, and its lack of surprise. As such, to an

culture and/ or lack thereof – after all – was it just going to be a bogan, boozing, bushland revival of outback wannabe’s not coping with big city ideas – spraying – crop dusting – farmers playing pranks with cattle and low flying aeroplanes – let’s be honest – the culture industry here was doomed unless it had global backing; Independent Australian Film, Arts and Culture? Most certainly it existed – in the same way that home movies existed – they were never quite stylised enough for a larger audience.

Yes.

What a great Australian movie it was.<sup>125</sup>

The younger girl and I had been spending time together.

I would walk home from Surry Hills via Newtown and we would meet up at the pub. It was a strange thing – this working 9 to 5 caper – she’d graduated with a psychology degree, neuroscience; something or other – impressive stuff – and she was passionate about it, said she wanted to take a year off before going on to do her honours year – go out – get a job – make some money for a year. It’s a novel idea.

She did get a job.

A great one – I think – she works for an insurance company, to be fair I found it quite confusing, I didn’t understand how the transference of skills worked in that scenario – but apparently it did and that’s all that mattered.

She seemed to be enjoying the job so far – but then I’d been saying that same thing about my new found coincidental occupation – really all I needed to do was maintain that I had no real issue with

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outsider criticism seems an archaic and exclusive, and subsequently unattainable for the viewer not linked to scholarly debate. Martin Harrison, *Who wants to Create Australia?* (Sydney: Halstead Press, 2007),5.

<sup>125</sup> There are indeed many great Australian films!



the job – after all- a job is a job; it's all the same so long as I'm getting paid, at least the income was steady and much better than at the brothel.<sup>126</sup>

I wasn't particularly concerned about the prospect of working in a brothel. The job was as a receptionist. I'd always been curious about the industry so why not check it out – I mean when it comes down to it we're all whores for someone at some point. I thought to myself how Hospitality was more or less the same thing, it's still the service industry – just the menu is different – slightly – but then I was paid to look pretty. As hostess the job description was more or less to wear pretty dresses and the heels; –

Yes Sir –

Right this way Sir –

Please – Allow me – Oh Sir – You are so witty; no - I've never heard that before...

Excuse me before I hit you.

It does seem odd -I know – to work in such an industry when it would seem there is a clear disdain for people – and it's true – sometimes I have trouble hiding my contempt for people – but to be fair, it's probably because they're morons – see – it's quite simply all about audience; wank begets wank; scum begets scum; and some people are just plain stupid: – the Chef put the risotto on a plate!

Yes, that is where the Chef put it...

Well, it's unacceptable, it should be in a bowl – this is an absolute disgrace.

I wonder, as I stare blankly, how people have to time to be concerned about these things in their down time – I mean, being irate takes so much effort – surely you'd want it to be worthwhile.

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<sup>126</sup> 'The task of government will be to make sure that all our citizens have access, not only to adequate income, but to a range of choices and opportunities that enable them to participate fully in the life of our community.' Ibid., Hogan and Dempsey, 5.

And No; You cannot have your money back.

I guess the great thing about Hospitality was that there was always an abundance of stories to tell – and unlike being on the phones for eight hours a day – one could actually engage with people. So much becomes lost when the physicality of the other person is removed.

I was out in Coonabarabran gathering reports of what had happened in the bushfires so that people in Sydney might feel more connected with the locals, the situation and the extent of exactly what had happened – in the hopes that at the fundraiser we would be able to raise a whole lot of money for the bushfire appeal.<sup>127</sup> I'd written an article for the paper, a piece for the radio, things to get people involved, motivated, activated; I had to get the city to care, to give just the slightest shit about what happened beyond their conception; that people they didn't know they knew had lost their houses, their land, their livelihood.

I'd been getting text messages from the boy back out on another stint in Outback Queensland. We'd been messaging back and forth, hooked into one of those horrible text message conversations where although you realise it would be a lot easier to simply call, there is something in the back and forth of non-verbal communication – mild anticipation of each message – if it is enticing and relevant enough to warrant a response – not to mention the confusion and ambiguity of interpretation – although that was not necessarily a problem confined to non- verbal communication. My friend – with his key – was a master of ambiguity. After three years of Art School together it was no surprise that we'd become quite close – despite the fights that we'd had – which I'd always found somewhat odd and confusing. We would have long in depth conversations of our respective work – theories of Art and interpretation – yet somehow our collective interpretation of our situation was never quite aligned. He would tell me suddenly that we could no longer spend time together and that he could

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<sup>127</sup> *Art Alight - Fundraiser for the Coonabarabran Bushfire Appeal*. In Verge Gallery at The University of Sydney, 2013. See appendix.

not be around me – I'd no idea why – but it made little difference really. I'd point out that we went to school together and he sat across from me – so either way – he was going to see me.

I've never really been a big fan of actively avoiding people – it takes too much effort really – he'd get over it; set up new rules for how we could interact – I was not allowed to call him after 10pm.

Ok, that's fine – but in that case then you're not to call me before 10am – yes – any communications we are to have shall only occur strictly between the office hours of 10 to 10.

That rule actually staying in place for about a year. Having said that, we'd spent countless nights after shows at pubs with people until the wee hours – but I guess that didn't count – we would fight several more times over the years before he lost his shit completely – it was a strange thing. I'd noticed that the conversations we'd have always began with our work collectively and individually – new theories and ideas we'd discovered and wanted to discuss – but then somewhere, somehow I realised we were no longer talking about the same thing at all – I'd no clue what he was saying though somehow I was implicitly relevant to the conversation – there was an odd disjuncture to the entire affair – I felt as though he was trying to put me in a box and keep me on his mantelpiece, but I could only know as much as he told me, which was often encrypted in Art theory and therefore resulted in us having two entirely separate conversations with one another in the same space.

Things got better – I suppose things do become skewed when lots of weed is involved. We maintained that maybe getting hammered together was not altogether the best idea – and he became my best friend – finally – after the last hiccup; we'd had a fight – I yelled at him - and he went to Mongolia.

We were back to normal – sharing ideas even and considering collaborative works - he was the closest person to me, we spent a shitload of time together – the thing was – that when I thought of him I knew He was one of the people that I wanted in my life – Always. One of the people that no matter where you go – who you meet – what you do – you know that there is someone you can

always count on – someone who is just a phone call away – in the best times or the worst times. I felt like we had finally got there. That he was finally comfortable enough with me – that we could actually be friends – it seemed feasible – but it was probably my mistake, I was feeling far too appreciative of our friendship. Love You Mate.

What followed was a most unexpected self destruction – hands thrown in the air with a weighty – I Give Up – a bizarre combination of desperation and abusive text messages. I'm not sure how this happened – I said – see I told you I love and appreciate you.

He took that and ran with it and stopped listening.

I'll fight for my friends – and this is me fighting; is the note I slide under his door begrudgingly and enraged.

I was craving intimacy as a desperate solution to a catastrophe I could not only not put my finger on, but somehow refused to accept a solution for - he came, like I knew he would, we could smoke and talk and drink for hours -

but tonight it would not be enough -

I remember having absolutely no reaction, I remember not saying a single word, I remember an idea, an ideology, a simple thought that we were all nothing but human beings living together in our own ways, that we each just want our own sense of peace and well being, that deep down it just could not be realistically possible to hurt other people-

to look at someone and with forethought and malice inflict harm on that person -

to know that you were doing so.

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I thought of hardwood floors – the old fashioned floorboard – long heavy planks of thick wood. But the commercials had none of that – only these snap in easy click wood panels. I looked at the floorboards; half – half. Maybe old hardwood floors had become like ivory – they seemed to hold such esteem – like a reminder of grandparents – whose importance and relevance was placed on a wealth which was now placed on their former lack of resources and knowledge – odd - odd kind of value system – wealth in obtaining. All people really need is that comfort that they're allowed to relax – that one does not always need to be striving physically – that one strives towards and in many different ways – and that those who fight the good fight don't always win.<sup>128</sup>

*When I considered the idea of wanting to be saved I realised that in that moment – I was ok with dying – I can ignore You for so long and still be in the moment with You-<sup>129</sup>*

*but I will not stop learning from every person that I meet – from the back alleys to the brightly lit call centre –*

*sure – trouble most certainly could lay right around the turn with the next stranger in the pub at closing time –*

*but I reckon you'd have figured that out by now.<sup>130</sup>*

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<sup>128</sup>Free choice among a variety of goods and services does not signify freedom if these goods and services sustain social controls over a life of toil and fear, that is, if they sustain alienation. And the spontaneous reproduction of superimposed needs by the individual does not establish autonomy: it only testifies to the efficacy of the controls.' Ibid., Marcuse,10.

<sup>129</sup> The power of creation is inseparable from a line of death, from a constant threat of death. To create is to take the risk of a violent and possibly very destructive confrontation with the purely intense forces of life itself. Andre Pierre Colombat, "Deleuze and the three powers of Literature and Philosophy: To demystify, to experiment, to create."In *A Deleuzian Century?* ed. Ian Buchanan (London: Duke University Press, 1999), 203.

<sup>130</sup> Thoughts are dangerous because they 'advocate change, recommend rupture and are generated by individuals...which is anathema to institutions that want none of that.' Meeka Walsh, "Stutter: the body and the Institution," *BorderCrossings*, Issue 113 (2010). ' <http://bordercrossingsmag.com/article/stutter-the-body-and-the-institution> (accessed July 2, 2014).

I thought about MasterChef -

the wild, wild west series - you know - get regular Aussies - take 'em Outback and see if they can cook a steak outdoors -

it was funny how far they had to take 'em out before it could be classified as being 'Outback' -

but I guess you've got to start backwards before you can begin forwards - it was just such a shame that we were so late to the game - at least Culturally -

well, kind of - things seemed Ok -

stuff was definitely happening - I mean geographically - you know - where exactly is the Outback for MasterChef and the Farmer Wants a Wife?

Hmm. How about Politically - after all - it would seem that the government for the entirety of the nation is decided by the ever rivalled State of Origin states - but it's ok - because America is not the last standing Empire.

It's never an Actual you at all is it - when you talk to yourself - I guess it does become confusing at times -

you know -

when you wake up at 5:19 in the morning trying to figure out how the two of you are going to make it to the city - because as far as you both going to the same place, for some reason - one of you has to catch the bus - and the other one is going to drive -

we're having a hard time trying to co-ordinate our meeting - either way it was a damn shame how the Gatsby mistook Australian appreciation -  
ahh - if only one could contextualise complacency.

What a night -

what a shindig -

what a something more important than what it seems like.

I'm pretty unfazed by the people on the train that work in the government system - we'd meant to go hunting, probably for about a year or so - well - it's a pretty tricky conversation - in my opinion - friends help friends kill poultry.

And I became it - I was practising - giving it a crack - after all a performer uses everything - every single thing - every time - I didn't actually do anything - I just watched - I wanted to be that no one and everyone with them.

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Sometimes it seems that I am the voice in my head's head.

I could never give myself a break -

at all -

ever. -

If I was going to do something it would have to be now - or at least very soon.

I thought about hospital rooms – those limestone green linoleum floors and pastel yellow walls – crisp white coded bed sheets – thin grey army blankets that are always so strangely warm despite appearances – fluorescent light and low voices – in a register that makes it seem as though the lights themselves emitted a continuous low hum which filled the room – but of course – I'm following an impulse – just a continuous, numbing pulse – beating with the rhythm of miscalculated watches in perfect harmony – I feel delusional – and I'm not sure how I feel about that. Does a photograph hold a particular time – a narrative – I saw a stream of events – a mash up of photos from many a random adventure to the sun and back – but had no idea how to get to work on time – but I thought about those snapshots and their order – on a linear idea of time – and decided – what if each photo – snapped in each frame or narrative of forward time – were taken one out of sequence; you see – trying to live in society – is one of the hardest things to do.

I relax my mind by watching films I can absorb – like a sponge – late at night – until ridiculous o'clock – I guess more or less I kept myself in a constant state of daydream or flux – the thing was – I didn't know what I might do –

- what impulse I was going to follow –

Not that it made much difference.

*I never actually wanted to hurt anyone else – especially myself – I actually really kind of like myself; it is after all a lot of fun being me – but one could never really have absolute comfort in that –*

*well –*

*potentially – yes –*

*it may be questionable considering my history –*



but seriously -

I am actually pretty cool -

I'm simply avoiding instant fame via calculated criminal activity by channelling my opinions in a more constructive - though potentially unsubstantiated sector of (society)

- that can at least hope to dream nostalgic dreams of could have been's and what was.

- either way -

you can't really stop people talking to you

- or wanting to for that matter - really I just wanted to make sure I stayed alive long enough to finish this book - I mean c'mon - I've nothing better to do so may as well give it a crack.

I could understand just how exciting society was - well - no - no I could not - at least not convincingly, but then perhaps it was all about making every moment momentarily infinite<sup>131</sup> - there was no such thing as instant gratification. Ah - Empire of the Sun - You do - very much so - Make Me Feel So Alive.<sup>132</sup> And still I stood there looking at the keys in the ignition - making dreams in my head - not knowing I was driving the whole truck - cows on the back bleating as fragmented lives became one - sometimes I find - that the only way to slow down, is to speed up - I felt -

and it felt -

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<sup>131</sup> Do things exist, or do they not? At one level of 'conventional truth' they do, as phenomena that are objects of the senses. But on the deeper level of 'ultimate truth', absolute truth compared with relative truth, they do not exist. So from the point of view of conventional truth, the world and everything in it has validity; from the point of view of definitive truth, it has no validity, since it is only appearance, the object of human perception that is itself subject to the inescapable law of impermanence. Ibid, Billington, 59.

<sup>132</sup> *Alive, Empire of the Sun* (2013) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPKAwJKGSDc> (accessed July 22, 2016).

the pen in my mouth -

the tension in the conversation -

slobbering on the pen in my mouth -

I can hear You.

It was like something that had never been mentioned before. They were the same as they always were - I would have potentially been able to enjoy the boys enthusiasm - but it did not work.

I tried to be nice.

I could not find any way to deal with the situation - did not of me - was I partially responsible for tartiness - but - more over - how does one gauge abuse - it is indeed a good point.

My friend - she told me a story - about her brother - her friend - she was by all means incredibly attractive - regardless of how much she wanted him.

I cannot (fi...) the karaoke that fullest(?) not cool - keep up with seeming conversation.

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I figured life was full of last chances and new possibilities - the smell of rotting flowers filled my nostrils - I grieve - not necessarily for rotting flowers - but for the death I can do nothing for. It is something that no one can be or ever will be a stranger to - the most curious of sensations - how

one feels so left behind when one they love commits suicide – can you only feel left behind if the intent was there in the first place? Or does the action itself open up that stagnant repressed mind that thinks all is fine with a smile and confectionary – I dare say not to his two daughters – I can hear him – purposefully mowing the lawn out the front of the room in which his brother and I lay sleeping in the early morning. He had a right laugh about that – about the bed sheets – about the time he and his eldest brother got into exceptionally dramatic altercations with baseball bats and chainsaws. But of course it would be nothing without the larrikin humour of picking up a mighty boy Ute and placing it nose to end between two trees. I could say that perhaps some souls re-emerge in the wrong place – but all I can really say is that I loved him.

It's strange how people that are far too sensitive to the finer points of life suffer them all too completely, but simultaneously know that there are only two options – to move on – or to move on. Yet either way no one ever does. He did not drink – we would sit around and listen to country music – pretend we lived our lives through the music, lyrics and sentiment atop a flight of wooden slat stairs in a fibro shack with a Biker living in the garage; at least there was land – and to be fair the shack wasn't all that bad. It was typical really, that pasty yellow box on stilts - it's the type of thing you see in areas prone to flooding – I'm not sure Badgery's Creek was such a place, aside from being prominently argued over when it came to airports. It seemed a nice place – close enough to the city to get caught up in the drama yet far enough that one could potentially ignore it.

The smell of rotting flowers lingers - they sit on the table – petals falling off and rotting on the bills being held down by the vase in an apparent measure to remind me to pay them – it may have worked – but not before a substantial lump of floral matter had caved under its own rotting weight and slopped onto the overdue Telstra bill with a funk that can only be described as wet lumps of cloth left in a pile in the corner of the laundry floor that never dries – perpetual rotting damp.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Delusion slowly begins to take over and become more prominent as the effects of immersive research into transience reaches the third aspect of the trialectic; liminality of the mind. At this point the translation of the original text becomes somewhat akin to Spivak's notion of 'Comparative literature' in which one can

I moved coasters around on the pub table to distract myself from the tension in the air – or perhaps it was not so much tension but boredom – strange how one can be so unenthused in an environment that is constantly active – I felt as though I had to partake in at least something – surely one could simply be at home and be – not when there was so much not happening – just stuff – to be social – it was a curious thing. I'd not felt that kind of pressure when I was on the property – or in Badgerys Creek – maybe it is because of the people involved – or the environment – I figured that when it came down to it – really all one needed was a collaborative effort to strive towards something that makes you comfortable and happy – I did not see that here – I looked around; a lot – these people certainly seemed to be reasonably happy – certainly enthusiastic – but then it was the local – and most of these cats were fairly drunk. I'd been thinking about getting a cat for a while. I like cats – they generally hate you – I find that endlessly entertaining

Maybe I was not the only one who sat in pubs alone with a pint and specifically arranged coasters – they clearly must be in some sequence or pattern – whether it's geometrically a flow of pattern – colour – it doesn't much matter – but something must be done – immediately.

I look up and notice once again that I am indeed surrounded by people though fittingly it is whilst the song *Dancing with Myself* plays – one of the ceiling lights is hanging by its wires from the roof – it's far more interesting that the guy subtly sitting beside me - I imagine he'll just sit until he gets bored – or until the boy from Outback Queensland gets here – who knows – it is a curious state of affairs –

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manipulate the new language without reference to the original language, or 'forget translation'. Ibid., Spivak, 14.

Dear lord you should not wail that gun quite so flippantly

– I know it's fake and you're playing a video game in a pub in which it seems the main selling point is a chick in short shorts and denim top with a moose. Who plays video games in pubs anymore – still - it's a thing. There is something in the way the fluorescent lights sit in the windows in a grid floating elusively – I did have some envy for video and light Artists; there is such a wealth of illusion that enhances each delusion into a myriad of poetic horror, grief and glory. This stranger beside me was quite adamant – he wanted to know – he wanted no doubt to pick me up – but still – I considered it research.

*Feeling Good*

*Meet a Gorgeous girl*

*Haven't seen in a while*

*This will be fun.*

He is beyond comfortable and leaves me be – chats to the random dude whom is fantastically entertaining as it would seem.

They wandered in off the street – a tiny corridor of a bar – the live music drew in the fashionable people walking past – but appearances perhaps evaded them or at least kept them at an arm's length. I had not seen these people for a while and I was curious as to what to expect; the following was after all a most obscure cross section of weirdos, freaks and downright fantastically genuine people – but still it was interesting to see how the crowd picked up exponentially because of her undeniable talent; and then thinned – potentially because of the Fans; either too friendly – not trendy enough or somewhere between the two that was too vague or abstract to follow. She was beautiful – one of those people whom people want to see – pure talent unabashed performance –

what people call character – I couldn't help but notice the 'pretty' girls leaving as she played – perhaps they knew, and regardless of her appearance – that they had nothing on her in this space – she was stunning..... And the absurdity began – oh daddy – yes – a fourteen year old boy with the name Wilfried introduced himself, played backup for an incredibly talented singer due to move to the States – back home for her – in fact accepted to CALARTS – a privilege – an honour – a move –

dear lord somehow this girl must be – an is – there is no doubt. Sometimes you meet people who simply have exactly have exactly everything that life affords – as in Life – yes –

regular generic life. I sat here in this wanky bar in Newtown – last to leave – the cats had gone home – the roller doors where down, I hoped that boy with the long red hair and black cowboy hat didn't think I was sticking edncancing around for him – somehow – I think he understood \_ it was about time to leave, they were cleaning up around me – always an odd experience – well – not o much odd – as fantastically presumptuous (sometimes I think I'm cool by writing quickly with a flourish that is not at all conducive to reading {mateid , masterd, mat said} ) ... what I may mean is – I left that bar.

My breath catches in my throat – stomach tightens – I can feel the tension build as I consider how to make that phone call and actually say what needs to be said – it seems simple enough but I can think of no words that would aptly describe just how nervous I am at the sheer prospect of a voice on the other end – even that is too much – for now I'll let my nerves build up enough that I can at least check my emails without too much concern – surely on a Saturday there will be nothing pressing to worry about in there – it is just delay – delay to get in the shower – delay to stand up – to get dressed – to leave the house – the air is far too thick and I can only take shallow breaths – I needed

epic music now to alleviate this tension; something that would beat to the pounding of my racing pulse and draw it out of me; I played house – dishes – make a chicken pie, the recipe book still sitting on the counter – it was one of those distractions that would become more trouble than helpful as the chicken filling sat on the stove in the pan cooling – I knew it would most likely just stay there like that for days – never quite becoming it's destined pie state – or if so – probably not eaten. I couldn't think of anything worse – eating just seemed like far too much effort and hassle – I needed to get ready for work – at least now I only had the one job to worry about – I may have inadvertently either have quit or been fired from my telemarketing job – turns out I could not multi-task as well as I thought – instead I poured myself into every conversation I had - so I was – once again, back where I'd started – struggle town – though I wasn't fazed about it this time around.

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He died at the table beside me – I'd asked him if he had ever remembered a time when he did not exist – I told him there had been times when I myself had not existed – but then how could I have possibly have expected something that is not; to be aware of its nothingness – it defeated the concept of consciousness – although after a bottle of wine the consciousness may as well have been non-existent.<sup>134</sup>

*It's never a good thing when your team loses - especially at State of Origin - even odd years at the losing end is bound to mess with the best of confidences*

*- I love those boys -*

*there is nothing better than men in short shorts wrestling each other around a field -*

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<sup>134</sup> 'Death is not to be considered the passive negation of life, but rather to be endorsed as the active negation of actual forms of life.' Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 236.

those bodies crashing and smashing - at times hugging - it seems - though the follow through is anything but friendly - who doesn't like an aggressive cuddle - in shorts - compensation (compassion) lacks in these circumstances energy wasted OR spent - who can determine.

Hot, big and at times agile bodies collided on moistened grass with full determination and aggression deserving of total commitment

- if only we all believed it - if only they did - there was a wonderful moment -

I watched him - he held on as though he may never have that same chance - he charged with the energy of an army in last defence -

I watched him - so intently - he was pushing - making moves - strategising - and I looked on ({I can't just write - I'm not that good}) falling over themselves to get to the bar - to get more booze - it was uncanny - but viable -

the girls had left earlier

- after being defeated - seven years counting in the state of origin it was a fair call - although potentially misguided - t'was fitting as the night progressed - energy(?) it seemed -

I sat commiserating and contemplating my next move - line of coke? - he asked - I'm sorry - I didn't catch your name - mainly because we've not been introduced - fair enough - though -



really - probably best to be at least mildly cautious about your randomness - or not:  
Mate - .... the place was empty - all of them - but they kicked around it was no doubt  
their time -

if anyone could hear - it would be here - at ridiculous o'clock - waiting for a break - not  
really waiting - but playing for one. -

If I could ever say that I gave what I felt they did - I'd potentially be satisfied - there  
cannot be a night without a kitty though - and a bitchy blonde makes a point of it -  
pleasingly - a friendly little cat - with all the additional joys and connotations - but  
then where is the question when temptation becomes too strong. All I can think is: if his  
daughters were in this position. My guilt will follow me - always - but I can do nothing  
for anyone else - at all - ever.

The paranoia that is afflicted upon those whom believe so intently in what they do is enough to  
make anyone mad or at least appear so - it's always best to appear eccentric I find - no one listens  
to mad people. A lie is most convincingly hidden between two truths - a sound theory put forth by  
the shady characters in the X-Files - and brought to life by the actuality of every encounter I'd had. -  
Somehow nothing was ever completely true. A haze of mixed realities and conversations - of people  
in places trying to be somewhere and someone else - latching on to any piece of new; different;  
exciting. I was nearly in tears as I sat by myself trying to write. Some guy decided to hone in on my  
space and left barely an inch of room between us as he uttered repeatedly slurring and leering -  
You're so beautiful - there was nothing I could do - I could not move - he wandered off for a minute  
- long enough for the bouncers to come over - Are you Ok - an overwhelming sense of relief and  
mild guilt - he came back over - intent on continuing his apparent courtship he'd locked into before  
he was swiftly escorted out the door - a minute later there was some guy from Bourke beside me -  
meek, stammering and lost - he followed me home.

I was looking at these men - the way they seemed to be the only ones around running the show and somehow it was bigger than just me here and now, but a parallel to a larger ideology – it appeared that I had two choices – be beat on or sold out – neither seemed like a good option, if anything it felt more like a crude, self serving ignorance dressed in boozy deniability. It didn't much matter what was said or done so long as no responsibility was laid, but rather replaced by complacent slurs of just kidding – take it easy – an odd sense of misplaced resigned rage that there seemed to be little to subsequently argue over as voices on the radio said things like 'women are destroying the joint' without so much as a hint of jovial sarcasm – it seemed that what should have been outrage became overwhelming confusion and head scratching with a mixture of perhaps just let that one go because surely it's an obvious unspoken slip – we all agree on how we feel about that sort of commentary.<sup>135</sup> To be honest – I was still confused – it felt a little too much like abos ripping off the welfare system – though I can't be sure of that either - but the delightful woman who was living in the park near Central with a couple of other homeless fellas was not at all fazed as she gave me a plastic cup of goon – we danced in the park with only a fleeting word from the coppas when things got a little loud as we play fought – commentary for a friend.<sup>136</sup> I was asked what I thought of the Issues – it was such a misplaced and stupid question – all it had become was a buzzword topic with the intention of dividing people into supporters and protesters – there was no substance; much less middle ground – I wondered about non-bias research and figured it actually didn't make that much difference in this larger ignorant forum where people just needed a winner and a loser – a team to back – it felt a bit like climate change or boat people. Boat people – every time I hear it I cannot help but conjure up an image of the Kevin Costner movie – you know – the one that was almost exclusively trashed for being absolutely shithouse – but this image of strange people in their crafts – floating around – I think the funniest thing is that the term does not imply or have the feel of despair, vulnerability or of

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<sup>135</sup> A comment made by Allan Jones, which subsequently sparked numerous 'Destroy the Joint' feminist movements, and the book "Destroying the joint: why women have to change the world."ed. Jane Caro, (2013).

<sup>136</sup> 'Being unemployed does not dispel the dominant cultural myths that large proportions of the unemployed cheat the system or are work shy. Individual unemployed young people do not see themselves as the objects of these myths. The unemployed they describe are always other people involved in deviant behaviour, observed from a distance.' Ibid., Hogan and Dempsey, 158.

people in desperate need of rescue – rather it has this odd sensation of strange subtle pirate invaders sneaking in through heavy fog crouched low in long silent vessels. It seems that finite language is the only accessible one – leaving no room for abstraction of ideas and thought pattern - yet with this preference for finite language it is so bizarre how much misinterpretation is left kicking about, ever expanding until no one is talking about the initial subject at all – yes – perhaps that’s because language doesn’t actually work in black and white interpretation at all – but is explicitly abstract.<sup>137</sup>

Restlessly resigned to one’s fate, the days merged into nights that lasted too long without the possibility of sleep – even the wine took too long – simply perpetuating the elongation of the inevitable – round the traps they just called me ol’ mate.

Pendant lights like enormous shark teeth hung from the ceiling as rigid chandeliers – the lights above my head, wire half cages that splayed bars across the walls – fashionable women silhouetted in champagne glasses – strange assortments of succulents and green plants growing on the courtyard roof and walls whilst inside chanting and cheering arises, possibly for the men in short shorts on the TV. This pub didn’t have an animal head above the bar – but rather oddly shaped mirrors – painted bookshelves laden with books – geometrical triangles and small squares of translucent cloth arranged like sails on the ceiling. At least the beers were cheap. This place had served us quite well as we smashed down a few beers before heading to work – that little hit she’d say; the beer buzz that starts off the night so you can power through the shift. – Unfortunately it only worked if there was a steady pace at work - if it started too slow the buzz wore off too quickly and you were left cranky and bored – if we got slammed straight off the bat you were left shell shocked and feeling a little too drunk to be serving. I never bothered to call her – she would usually turn up here

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<sup>137</sup> Spivak speaks of abstraction and translation with regards to culture and power relations. The world is perceived through language, not binary classifications, rather things are relative and dependant on interested parties and the nature of these interests. For example, the impact of post-colonist theory; when they write their own histories using the colonizers language for their own purposes. Ibid., Spivak, 16.

regardless. I hated to feel rushed so I would usually have an hour or so to kill before work – it was another place to sit, think and observe – whether fortunate or otherwise – it did not take long for the two of us to become recognisable posts – the ol’ mates made themselves known by informing me of her movements – She’s usually here around five – I never recognised them – even when they came in for dinner speaking with casual recognition. This was merely a place to pass through - not a place for conversation – this was the place to drown three beers in half an hour before going on to start shift – there was no time to mess around with the locals – we were here for a reason – and now – it was time to go.

I watched Rage and wondered if perhaps AC/DC were the ‘soft rock’ of Marilyn Manson – they seemed to be a very specific type of power play that used gendering heavily to get the point across – ‘we’re not gonna take it’ –

for some reason the male taking on a feminine role play – costumes – wigs – make up – there seemed to be something about the gendered female role to alleviate a form of rationalisation for creativity and emotion – so how is a male acting female more relevant and targeted and generally accepted in pop culture – than the authentic female <sup>138</sup>– being... –

a Manic Street Preachers marathon was well underway – chronicling their fascinating and fabulous history and discography – and my earliest memory of my father came to mind – we would sit and watch rage together on a Saturday morning – Darryl Braithwaite’s song *Horses* was our favourite song and sing we would – at the top of our lungs – I dare say much to the dismay of the guests – but then I guess that’s to be

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<sup>138</sup> ‘A minority never exists readymade; it is only formed on lines of flight, which are also its way of advancing and attacking. Adorno states that the ‘Femineity which appeals to instinct, is always exactly what every woman has to force herself by violence – male violence- to become: a she-man... Femininity itself is already the effect of the whip. The liberation of nature would be to abolish its self fabrication. Glorification of the feminine character implies the humiliation of all who bare it.’ Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 305.

expected in small family run businesses – humanity – suicide is painless – or should I say 'Theme for MASH' as the Preachers tell us what now becomes a sad sorry empty shell as a pro-war campaign – simply brilliant.<sup>139</sup>

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I remembered the night I walked until both of my feet swelled with blisters – to go back for him after the coppas got him in an RBT – I'd kept him waiting – he'd come back for me – he was angry though he tried to hide it; it seeped from him in the form of righteousness and the adulthood that can only come from being a father – but the most poignant moment of the night came when we arrived at his car – I imagine that he wanted to turn and face me; but he didn't – rather seemingly resigned to get me home and get out of dodge – the frustration and irritation still mingling with the cool night air – and I could feel it – it weighed on everything as I thought I could just tough it out – ignore him – and get the hell out of dodge myself – but the idea of that tense, cold drive made me pander somewhat – my lips parted slowly as his name wafted out – he squared up to me – I had nothing to say, at all – and I knew it – I looked him dead in the eye – blankly – I wondered how long I could hold my gaze without purpose – without speaking – seems I didn't need to, his eyes locked with mine – stern; but not with reproach – I stood still as I looked at him – his shoulders dropped as the air escaped his lungs - and his eyes softened – I wondered how cruel it was when the colour drained from the world – we stood there in black and white – apparently for convenience so we might feed our own fantasies in a momentary lapse of time. Arms darkened the world around me – I could see only his purpose – his intense intent – I guess my blank expression somehow satiated his desire for conquest.

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<sup>139</sup>*Theme from M\*A\*S\*H (Suicide is Painless)*, Manic Street Preachers (1992)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y11f8Oc25AI> (accessed January 28, 2014).

There seemed to be such a controversy between being a whore and being a mother – at some point it felt like a violation – for whom though could not be thoroughly presumed – but if ever anything was to be assumed it figured that perhaps it would still have very little to do with me at all – but rather a pre-emptive strike on the inevitability of transience and nomadic movement<sup>140</sup> – somehow I wonder if perhaps we are all living within our own elaborately planned suicides – I figured that if I was to write about anything to make sure it was both contextual and inconsequential. I wondered if maybe everything really came down to people being able to justify themselves and their actions – and they seemed to rely on all kinds of group activities to do so – religion – politics – guns – cults.<sup>141</sup> In reality – divine will – simply becomes an excuse for not taking personal responsibility – a law has already been divined – there is no need for choice – no room for thought – but rather a comforting place to nestle into to alleviate the idea that perhaps we are indeed capable agents of our own destinies. The hardest thing about choice seems to me to be so fully aware that you are potentially and inevitably accountable to nobody but yourself – first – that in reality – only you can fool, convince, manipulate and lie with full conviction and denial to yourself and believe it – I wanted a cigarette – beyond badly – no one needed to know that on day 347 I would go and buy myself a pack and hook through those smokes like the Rapture was upon us – I suppose my grip on reality was somewhat tenuous.

The last time I was here I was waiting for the boy coming back to Sydney again after another stint in Outback Queensland - I sat alone at a table upstairs whilst groups of people played pool and some arcade game called 'Big Buck' – trying to think of a word that would not come to mind and no doubt continues to allude me – this time I sat more or less in the same spot – but waiting for Younger girl. The place was far more crowded this time but then it was a Saturday night – I brushed past two

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<sup>140</sup> 'Nomads have neither past nor future, only becomings – have no history, only geography.' Ibid., Deleuze and Guattari, 141.

<sup>141</sup> Groups provide context for their actions.

coppas on the way in as they hauled out some clown, yelling out something about getting knocked out by some other clown, as he tried to struggle against them – seemed everyone was out tonight – the clergy were playing pool – though it looked like they were overplaying their hand – they had both God and Jesus on their team – it seemed fitting then when the music changed – a song already considerably old by these standards but still popular blared – ‘*he didn’t look a thing like Jesus*’<sup>142</sup> – I figured I wouldn’t know – I’d never met the bloke – but it seemed a reasonably accurate statement. Somehow these people all lingered togetherly nowhere – they seemed to exist only in their portrayal which seemed to traverse both time and space – or flawlessly move between the two as a remembering of a remembering of both the past and the present. The boys at the table beside me decided to engage – it was funny how even when striving for solitude – or rather – perhaps being that loner without friends – never actually worked out in these circumstances – even in sheer avoidance – one cannot help but become somewhat distracted by party boys and girls.

*As I drove home – the sensation of solitude and disappointment echoed through the empty streets that went by faster and faster – sheer determination gripped the wheel as the car hugged tight corners – but it was the median strip causing the most trouble – that raised section of concrete – separating safety from impending disaster. In my mind I saw the wheels hit the edge of the concrete – hard – the sound of something important under the car buckling and crunching rang through the night as it lurched forward – slamming into oncoming traffic that was not there – the back wheels spun out screeching. Black smoke and the toxic smell of burnt rubber pounded through my head as the speedo kept steadily increasing so I would not need to see where I was going – coloured light bulbs blurred and faded until the world became a sort of luminescent blackness. The steering wheel banked*

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<sup>142</sup> *When we were Young*, The Killers (2006). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ff0oWESdmH0> (accessed July 22, 2016).

sharply to the right. The car came abruptly to a halt. The haze lifted as I sat up - looked out the window - I was here again, there was nowhere else left to go.

I stood at the bar with a stupid grin on my face that I could not shake no matter how hard I tried. I was indeed a Cheshire cat - and felt so very content. I wiped my nose - wide eyed - static energy pumping. There were only seven of us - it may have well been a packed out night club with no elbow room and bleeding chairs from excessively loud music - the affection we had towards each other was most certainly magnified but the love remained intact and beyond valuable. These were the people that got me through one of the hardest moments of my life - Daniel's suicide - what followed was two and a half years of intense drinking, drugs and living in one another's pockets - we were never apart for longer than a phone call - home became a complicit place - floor sofas, blankets and a mirrored table for glamour. We could always pretend that we were indeed outgoing party animals - and maybe we were - at least they certainly may have been more so - I was just trying to get by - by any means possible. The music raged - though the play list was debated constantly - switching between dance - trance - 80's - and randomness - limbs flailed about in individualistic out of tune rhythm - and that odd smell which came from the smoke machine that always reminded me of food left in a deep fryer too long - filtered through the coloured lights that one could not help but try to catch with each flailing limb - an attempt to absorb the mood through sound and colour - regardless of how it might look, I could only image - a wide eyed - wired - Lemmings - clinging wildly to life - desperately trying to deny the overwhelming urge to follow it's breed off the cliff.

This pub was empty.

Things had - as expected - changed.

Thankfully for the better - for the most part anyhow it was clearly not the only change - my staple pub had been sold out - to PJ Gallagher's - I couldn't be sure they kept those



same late night / early morning hours - something I very much appreciated - at least they'd been reasonable - kept the place open whilst they renovated around the few of us whom still needed to have that after - after - place - the buffer - to unwind from unwinding.

Those are the places and times, it seems to be well understood - no one wants to be talked to - we sit here - holding up the bar - without pretence -

the bar staff do not care to disguise their boredom or active social calendars - the tapping of imaginary buttons feels like a type writer in my brain - heavy fingers - jamming together - catching keys - plied apart and rewound.

It's darker in here than before - the walls are a deep rich brown - a mock stone wall separates - well - something - the lounge room now divided, the purpose will most certainly be revealed. I wondered how this would change things here - would an Irish pub chain make a significant difference here. - It was more a blast of neurons in the brain, rather than an actual thought - there was no follow through - and no need for me to stay.

The fallout was to be expected as the come down slowly seeped in and took hold - keeping me firmly planted on the lounge afraid that any movement may result in uncontrollable dry retching - beads of sweat collecting on my forehead as the colour drains from my face - icy cold fingers grip the toilet bowl - knees shaking - the pounding of my head is equal to the paranoia of destroying large portions of my brain, as though with each convulsion grey matter is liquefying; the heat in my body turning it to steam, slowly cooking the remainder of my brain before evaporating for good. I

guess it was lucky I didn't have anything else planned for that day but to engage with something that would feel like a slow, painful death, beckoning and mocking but never arriving.

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I organised my world on the back table of a wanky pub on the wharf – the tropical coasters marked out my territory as I sat perched on a peculiarly high chair surveying the Sunday crowd – spread out – lounging in booths – individual wooden cabins of sorts with decorative totems guarding the entrance. –

It seemed as though the time was different out here.

I walked through the streets, buildings towering into the sky on either side of me cutting squares with shadows and intermittent neon lights into grey clouds – I was in the middle of the city – cars and people passed by – but for some reason it was silent – I wandered in a general direction rather than a set path – the buildings became strange – sparse – vacant – closed – the cars fewer – the road ahead littered with traffic cones – I only assumed I was right, but now it seemed questionable. A change of tactic – I turned left – presumably towards the water and the scenery changed drastically – no longer outlandish barren urban buildings - now funky, sharp and edgy looking buildings and people emerged, yet somehow caught in this strange time warp. Though it was not the people so much who were caught – they were more like tourists – it was the place itself – the old marina – the wharf – the old buildings – that even though they were renovated – expensive – decked out – could not rid themselves of that feeling of having sat in the harbour for a century. Waves lapping on thick wooden posts with long heavy ropes holding vessels put – they bobbed in the water – seemingly hollow, their stillness echoed in the vibrations of the harbour.

One of those vessels catches my eye – a stark white barge – the oval windows beckon company and a wafting smell of fried fish catches the breeze as I stare at the beams and struts – the arched walk ways along those sullen windows.

Slowly, softly, but with overwhelming presence another vessel silently cruises into the harbour – fairy lights along the tops of the masts – something I'd seen on boats before – I'd no idea why they did that – perhaps they were exclusive passenger vessels – or overly prepared for Christmas party functions.

There was a particularly foreseeable problem with drinking alone in a place such as this – with each drink – my table sat empty

– unattended –

unguarded.

Each time I stood up for the bar vultures circled – my tropical coasters, – regardless of arrangement – could do little to deter this potential overthrow –

I considered using my empty beer glasses as tokens along my border however – who the fuck is ALICE – was far too efficient and promptly cleared them away.

I check the bar versus the availability of vacant tables – and make a run for it – no chance.

Tall backed cane chairs beckoned the passersby and the scene was set.

Beer in hand I scoured the perimeter – the outer corners still vacant –

once again I setup the perimeter –

again.

Who cares, she was not at all helping.

Bound leather legs and fire engine red hair saunters down the stairs – she sits – her back unaware.

There was no way anything would make sense ...

There it was – my body seemingly, once again, activated in a way I knew not what to do with. The tingle in my bottom – the flutter of my vagina – my mind soaking up the information as I read pages of non-descript substance, tantalizing and thoroughly impractical for any purpose other than another way to think deeper about the finer subtleties and details of emotional being and brain function. It was funny to be so completely aroused by my own brain and thought process. All I wanted to do was talk to someone that was not there – someone whom did not exist quite yet – my wine provided some solace as I became so intoxicated by words I could barely recognise – my pen scratching into pages of used paper scattered across the table amongst assorted bills and election campaign mail that began with the words: DEAR FELLOW AUSTRALIAN. I could not help but turn into an artwork of fifteen pages all beginning with that line of address, and ending with: YOURS SINCERLY – interspersed in between, one or two lines from the campaign such as – THE RESULT IS OUR PLAN – yes – so very informative – thanks buddy.

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It was already starting to get dark – there was a silence and starkness in the air that felt like snow as the headlights lit the grey road ahead. The road was seemingly deserted, save for the few sparsely

spaced cars which now came together and stopped – the cause of our delay, a large white van set up almost like a toll booth.

The confusion over the events that followed remained bewildering in its simple coercion and execution.

It seemed that simple impatience first lured us from our vehicles – a demand to know what the holdup was, though hesitant to acknowledge the strange set up, clearly the reason for our delay. With barely a word but with gruff authority these men ushered us inside where a series of non-descript people asked an array of non-descript questions, took swabs – looked inside mouths – patted us down - and up again – yet for what felt like violation was too wrapped in the absurd that we were shuffled through only to find that by the time brain cells and senses snapped into focus it seemed to be far too late. –

Hang on random stranger on the side of the road –

Why does it feel like I've been kidnapped in a very official way?

I'm almost certain that I have rights and formal complaints – it appeared they did not have the time nor interest to even look at me blankly. We awoke in long rooms with countless cots and a bizarre array of personal, menial possessions - our cars must have been emptied - and although it seemed momentarily to count as somewhat useful to potentially help find a way out of this predicament, I was left looking at a dozen old wooden Big Ben pie boxes that I'd been meaning to turn into a set of drawers – suddenly struck by the innate nature of objects and the crap we drag from place to place.

There were no answers here – no apparent reason for the vast amount of people that had been brought to this place – but also there was no sign of those in charge – it appeared as though we'd simply been brought here and left – it seemed to be an old abandoned village. There were some people I knew from years ago, though I did not see them, I only heard their names being spoken from time to time. There was a lingering sense of doom, however nothing happened.

We waited – wandered about – let time pass without really acknowledging it – something had happened to my phone – in a fit of temperamentality it somehow lost almost all of the stored numbers.

I heard the voices of my friends and the people I'd met calling out.

I could do nothing.

It felt like the snow began to fall around us – stone buildings sat dark and empty but the street lights were still on. There was movement in the long rooms - they were emptier than before, it seemed that I'd been away for a while, but the vibrations in the air still buzzed with the energy and pace of people hurriedly and without question gathering up their things. Out the window the sky was getting darker the clouds thick, heavy, grey – I wondered if it might actually snow – there were very few people left in this room – but I was at the far end – I saw others mingling up ahead – I hadn't a chance to formulate a thought before I was handed a bright orange thermal parker and told I'd been 'cleared'. There was no explanation – no anything – I felt that sense of urgency in the air as I went to gather my things – lingering dread became thicker – I tried to bundle everything together, but the absurdity with which I travelled proved complicated and cumbersome as I tied things into parcels, wrapped in items of clothing, and stockings for ties. The door opened and closed behind me – I stepped out into the same stone walled street – somehow it was different – I'd been sent out without the need nor presumable option of return – I was curious as to how this amounted to my freedom – would we not have all walked out that door from the get go rather than be censured and held captive by unconvincing factors enforced by questionably authoritative people? It was darker than before – there was no one in sight – the cold made me reluctantly grateful for the orange parker as there was nothing for it but to wander aimlessly aiming for a way out. –

I do not know how long I trudged – by now I had come across that snow again though this time it was thicker and more prominent providing the only source of lightness in an otherwise darkened sky

– I saw an orange parker up ahead – a fellow wanderer on a mission to get out – at least I was no longer alone out here. I focused on the orange back – trudging in mindless automation – the earth seemed to tilt somehow – or perhaps it was that orange back – somehow it seemed to be scurrying but no longer moving forward as though it had hit a wall – it was then that I noticed the other orange backs

– Tens of them –

Hundreds of them –

They all threw themselves with utter determination at the large stone wall that loomed before them – like rats trying to escape a flooding drain pipe they scampered and clawed over one another in a sordid attempt to scale what seemed to be the only way of escape. Bodies piled on one another getting them inches closer to the middle of the wall – the snow was thick now, but a dull luminescence permeated the ground – I lowered my head – I was standing amidst a growing mound of orange parkers – some had already been completely covered in snow. All I could see was cruelty and desperation unfathomable. I may have in my own life been trying personally to destroy myself – but that was my own choice – this was not; nor was it theirs. The cockroach ran from Jed's biscuit towards my foot as I sat on the toilet – I made it my mission to deter its path – stamping my feet assuming the vibrations through the floor would affect its sense of direction – Jed's nose on the biscuit – it ran at my feet across the tiled floor – I stomped and it cut around the impending danger – I stomped again – moving my feet to block its path – it turned – scurried too hurriedly and tripped over itself onto its back on the cold floor – its feet desperately trying to grasp the air in a more tactile way rather than flailing aimlessly – it did so for some moments before setting its legs to rest like a dead spider – I could only imagine its frustration and the importance of conserving energy to prolong survival.

*Back again –*

we fell asleep and awake simultaneously - hungrily undecided, but wine distracted us well enough - this was no place for reasonable thought - but certainly for educated food preference -

cheap wine served from carafes by international students and backpackers -

there was not a whole lot to observe - one dude kicked around on the dance floor as the rest of us stayed the perimeter and sang along -

in pieces -

they decided that in their own moments maybe the words were missing -

that all that needed to be said was as simple as I feel so close to you right now -

sentiment flowed - I sat with my shoes in my handbag momentarily amused and entirely adamant about avoiding conversation - I was caught between impulses of having a full beer and desperately needing another - trying hard not to get sloppy or complacent as the walls bounced and jackets piled up near me -

it was entertaining - enjoyable even -

hearing them belt out the old classics - but the tension in his flawless rendition executed their lack of presence on the top floor pub stage - midnight on a Sunday -

twenty odd people shuffled about - equally as awkward with live music as with pop culture -

apparently things could never be quite safe enough walking home as every place turns to parks from industrial wastelands - suddenly so frustrated with myself as I sit at the bus



stop, superficially offended by the advertisements of iPads and the such - all in red with pretty hand bags and shoes - captions that read; SUPER FRESH and OH LA LA GREAT COLOUR;

in passive aggressiveness I fume - I think - have we nothing better to talk about?

I scavenge through my bag - look for a pen or some form of something so I may make my mark on the bus shelter advertisement

- nothing -

all I could find was lipstick - I paid reasonable money for - but huzzar - some bright pink gloss that had been kicking about in the far reaches of the inside of the lining of my bag was extracted - figured I may as well try it before defacing public property

- and in the tiny mirror - damn it looked good.

**I always felt as though the things I didn't know I should have known already - I guess I was paranoid - but only in the way one was after six cups of coffee -**

my mind wanted me to say fifteen but it seemed somehow unreasonable -

I didn't have much of a problem with paranoia - for the most part it seemed a healthy, normal and entertaining mental state -

kept the heart rate going -

the mind ticking over -

the ideas flowing -

that self criticism that keeps you on your toes -

keeps you in check -

keeps the blood pumping - blood - pumping - pumping - spilling?

Haemorrhaging - clotting - building pressure - so much pressure that legs become tense  
toes numb - perhaps from being kept on them too long - dear lord - isn't that how deep  
vein thrombosis happens?

Or is it maybe the same as how Real Life happens -

in a series of panic of things that are or are not but potentially always potential -  
paranoia is fine I think so long as disbelief is suspended -

sometimes I would drive for hours - late at night - stumbling upon dark deserted  
sublimity only to sit in the car and watch the waves crash - images flashed across my  
mind violent, vivid pictures of old caravans and cars locked in garages never to move  
again but only return too constantly in lucid dreams - I was having nightmares again -  
I must have been running a fever - perhaps I'd spent too many days alone inside with my  
panic.

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Sunday afternoon sun makes the tables appear not only clean but luminescent - men in short shorts  
chase each other about in brightly coloured jerseys - the clock by the door reads a quarter to five. As  
the traffic passes outside on Parramatta Road I find myself having to adjust my vision and the ticking

of my head as I peer through amber globes set on tables sparsely occupied – they stand almost on testimony appearing as temples of solitude in the afternoon sun – in here things are very different – the sense of quiet was somehow not disrupted by the cheering – the silence was somehow echoed in those amber globes reflected on tables cluttered together with no semblance of order, form or comfort. Plastic boxes laden with Keno forms like tokens of formalities for debutants. The old men spoke of houses, taxes and making sure you keep an eye on the government – never drop a five cent piece – he says – another ninety-five cents and you’ve got a dollar – I wondered if he was the kind of person that voted for the Liberals every time – regardless of content, policy or mere scare factor – but football and financial gain where far more important than politics, thought or considering consideration. Didn’t much matter though – the game was heating up – bodies collided – points scored – controversies raised. These were the issues. These were the things that got the ol’ mates worked up – this – is what mattered.

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With every word they spoke I cringed – I wondered how many times I had sounded quite so stupid – declaring platitudes of – well if you knew my story – through heavy breaths of alcohol.

*I panic about their imminent return –*

*I feel he is tired*

*but I know that he is stuck in his assumed role –*

*perhaps it’s why I feel so guilty – I have changed these peoples’ lives irrevocably –*

*yes they made a choice –*

perhaps they thought it would be different -

not so hard - that I would be different -

that maybe I would be ok - I was feeling fine - a little drunk - but no more so  
than those people beside me -

somehow I felt safe in my judgement - at least I was trying to get things done - they  
were just saying words - menial - mediocre - melodramatic utterances of the joys - the  
pains - the etc - certainly life was hard -

uneaten food sat between us - fingers politely assuring a momentary lapse in hunger -  
they'd left me by myself at the table - potentially not a wise move -

I'd get distracted by the stairs -

the waiter asking to clear plates whilst they smoked outside.

I walked to the toilets - without shoes - the scum was all the same I figured.

As special as they'd figured I may have been - the discontent remained unrivalled or even  
distinguished, modesty had little to do with anything in these worlds - it seemed to be a  
value based system - who could accomplish what and to what end -

would we serve as example or facilitator -

mentor or mediator -

or do we even consider service at all - as something outside ourselves and our own  
motivations for 'self improvement' or acquisition.

Regardless – there will always be better dressed (questionably) skankier girls sauntering – as i could be accused of. (I seemed to recognise it more completely after the immersion, the in-between states are beyond problematic for generic life and yet inextricably relevant for this circumstance)

They'd moved the tables and chairs out from underneath us – apparently this was no place to stand and chat – the dance floor emerged – with exactly the same fashion – bodies pulled to walls – to make room for the invisible excessive movement.

They wore tight leather – and tried to move with squat knees and tight expressions – it reminded me of a story about water birds that used heat cream to alleviate the cold – the ridiculous motherfuckers.

-Several Months Later-

A man in a suit with a bow tie –

he walks as though the gathering drunken crowd should notice his attire – potentially he is someone.

*The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain!*

*Look at that... over there... you missed it... you always do. I'd just like to say that roses really smell like poo-oo-oh! Generally I have neat writing! Generally I am a proper lady. What is a lady? I feel like riding a camel isn't ladylike. My life is riding a camel! That is all! Xxx*

The 'whoop' girls were out in force. Perhaps the beginning of the football season had set them off but somehow it seemed unlikely. My old familiar pub had been transformed – it was no longer the sticky carpeted, ol' mate last resort, shindig it had once been – though I was here at the right time for it – it even seemed that the sleazy local flamenco playing ol'mate had been replaced by some strangely fashionably fascinating version of the same dirty old man – or perhaps it was still him – just better dressed and with a younger crowd and a very noticeable hat. I had to admit – the place looked good – not that I could really remember it before – but at least they were still willing to cater to the late night/ early morning crowd – and with the new licensing laws – that was most definitely a win.

I could not help but be drawn in by their cheap wood-like facing and plastic rock walls – they may well be real but it seemed better for the flow of the place if one assumed they weren't. Doorways led to corridors that were not there – to doors that went nowhere – to signs that promised a thing but did nothing. The shelves above the bar reverberated with idealism and disappointment of nostalgic longing with no hint of relief – the sagging back strap on the bouncers' waist coat as he pours himself a sprite and goes back to his post out the front – whilst the flamenco singer gathers more fans with an undisputed vocal talent – however unauthorised his performance. Seems you can rock up with a guitar and good intentions – a barman's imposition was of no consequence to these people – and presumably shouldn't be – our time had been encroached on and who could argue with a better, drunker, more willing audience to an impromptu mariachi band – because as it were – that was exactly what they were – the local mariachi band. –

*I'd been here – a time ago – the first time I met them – it feels like they have more instruments this time – or perhaps more people –*

*they twirl and hoot as they go past – each step seems as though it should be tenuous – but they pull it off.*

Perhaps it's the moon tattoo on her wrist that makes him ignore the last two drinks she orders as being "whatever disgusting shit the other chick was drinking" -unfortunately - as keen as she seemed when she relayed stories of exorbitant shots of wet pussies - she did not grace the bar flies with any -

the detrimental effects are still to be known -

He arrived at the door in a paint splattered shirt - as I called out what I presumed to be his name - the beer had affected his name recollection - for both of us - but the shoulder shake did not.

The deterrent of bouncers seemed to have very little impact on this particular venture as the bar phone rang twenty minutes later -

I wonder how he described me to the bar man that answered the phone -

apparently I was the only female in the vicinity -

it wasn't entirely accurate but the call was - without a doubt - for me.

It seemed an opportune time to exchange mobile numbers - but clearly that was still taboo - as I stood there - in the bar - on the phone to him - it was the high school recollection that did not exist which came to mind - at 29 -

I cannot begin to decipher my feelings about being called on the local pubs phone at 1:30 am on a Friday night - although the request was not only tempting but valid - a reading of Henry Miller's Tropic of Capricorn - as a bedtime story.

It was what was needed right now – the rats had long left but their droppings remained – small solid excrement with no other distinction other than Shit.

He had the appearance and cordial nature of a friend – but the undeniable discipline of an untrained operative.

She could not sing –

she pretended she could – and they did too –

eventually I presumed she had some talent but it seemed it was all a ploy to encourage the artists amongst the crowd – it was a term – that aptly became solidified by the statement

–

Let's Throw Petrol On It!

Because that's completely reasonable –

COMPLETELY REASONABLE

Somehow – Completely reasonable became completely reassureable.

On just another mundane Monday I thought I'd perhaps had an idea that was more relevant than my equivocated life – luckily it was not Monday. My main objective – by mere default and infantile petulance – was to get quite PISSHED. I had to renew my RSA – and pay a quite hefty fee for the privilege – I disagreed with the concept, but enjoyed the irony I could bring to the proceedings – theoretically I enjoyed it – it was getting harder and harder to tell. The vice gripped firmly, cold steel clamping my breath to my lungs so tightly it could barely escape – it felt like fingers, stretching to their limit, grasping for my face – and yet there was seemingly some level of comfort in this slow, subtle suffocation – constricting and holding me close – the words in my head fell unsequentially



from my mouth – I stumbled as I tried to pick them up – reached for my glass and swallowed them whole. I was implicit in my own delusion – I knew what I was looking at – what I was becoming a part of – I watched myself feed it as it grew beyond not only control, but sense and recognition of any initial point – but death – the death of me – the death of consequence – of irrationality – but mostly the death of self – selflessly – for the other – not an actual death, but a perceived one; which only exists in the other – an allocution of destruction.

*I do not see in my head necessarily – thought the functions and connections of automation from years of repetitive behaviour flow without thought, substabccance*

*(dude.. we were a little wasted on bourbon & wine & weed after he'd left.... we had been talking art – stretch , dance, gotta write and cant spell oor write efficiently – whilst writing ideas about the mundane nature of blue collar labor .. stuttering, stumbling, ideakistic fundunmentalist:?)*

*Or identity – but simply as button pushing mechanisms –*

*an automated response to a computer screen –*

*an expectation of a gesture to the right when it was meant to be a left –*

*operating systems –*

*functionality –*

*fundamental function –*

*service –*

a caricature of a play I thought I once wrote in a moment of despair, in a moment of loose mind, not burdened with keys to a shop that said stop and go – there would be a time when these things would come together – of that I could be certain –

my lacking could be acknowledged eventually – or immediately – as could my guilt – simply for being involved – and having something to say – even if it was only a front of an opinion – they needn't know.

I'd spent time with the girl – for one reason or another it was particular that she was exactly that – a she – in the most obvious way – and simultaneously unexceptionally. The carpeted floor was still the same – the grunge – the funk – the movement that could only be felt by being in that space – the beat that moved the walls – the strumming that made you weak without realising – the sound that filled the space without compromise. Still at the back of my mind was Olympia – the 'smack shop' –<sup>143</sup> as I would readily come to call it – I could not prevent my unabashed physical reaction to that space – I leaked – like a tap – a faucet – from the face. No hope of abandon – No chance of escape – Retribution. Explanation, was – really – potentially what was most needed – what was this idea – I sat there and watched as they got drunk – off their chops – PISSED – my grandmother- it may as well have been me. If only my ambition was to prove a menial point.

I wondered how some people could regiment their lives, compartmentalise every aspect of it, write lists, cross them off – a to-do list of activities – duties – which must be performed in order to function in daily life. Perhaps I should write such lists – my functionality seemed ambiguous – yet laden with responsibilities I hadn't the time to panic about – maybe I should slot in some time for that. Flaking – peeling – cracking – there was nothing for it but to scratch and pick. They'd looked

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<sup>143</sup> *Olympia Milk Bar*, 190 Parramatta Rd, Stanmore N.S.W. Is a seemingly destitute shop front, although one night I ventured in out of sheer curiosity, it was as though I had walked onto a film set. There were display boxes of chocolates and candy with nothing in them, and just one florescent light flickering in the far corner were an old man emerged and served me buttered toast and a pot of coffee at 9pm. There are numerous blogs and pages on *Olympia*. <https://z3291822.wordpress.com/2011/06/10/the-olympia-milk-bar-dracula%E2%80%99s-den-or-parramatta-road%E2%80%99s-treasure/> (accessed February 3, 2015).

pristine for a moment, but the nail polish was at least ten years old – and you could tell – I wouldn't have been so adamant to use it, but I similarly could not stand it being there and being wasted through non-use. To be fair I should have been thankful. Not a thought came to mind. I sat – pretending to pretend to be in deep thought – but all I could see was chipped nail polish and the feeling of being hopelessly dismayed by the stemmed flow of wine – it was not intentional and that made it all the worse. I sat and I could not concentrate – an open window proved to be little distraction regardless of the building tension in the wind – perhaps exemplified by my mounting desire for a cigarette as I stared at the stove and the packet of matches beside it – the stove wasn't particularly old but it didn't exactly work and I hadn't the patience, time nor inclination to deal with landlords – much less to make the place presentable for such a visit – I was far too busy staring blankly attempting to deny and displace the shiver of each gripping urge for escapism. Focusing on fragments of red - reflecting in dull light bulbs scattered on an empty table.

Until you understand desperation – there can be no accomplishment – no fear – if I needed help with generic life perhaps it was that I never felt truly accomplished unless I was sharing things with other people – whether I knew them or not – whether they were people or not – I had been desperate – despairingly so.

I sat – elated – savouring my beer in the knowledge that I had nowhere to be – nowhere to go – in the joy that I could sit here without a thought or care about the ink leaking onto my fingers – and all at once realised – all I wanted to do was get home – to wash away the filth and scum of unnecessary – of repetitive behaviour and menial tasks – of people who micro-manage and take themselves far too seriously. I noticed how much attitude came into play with these people who were so easily flustered – who could not see beyond the scope of their worker day lives and subsequently turned their lives into their worker days – it seemed there was absolutely nothing beyond that for those guys – I could have cared – but I very much didn't.

Did nothing particular happen tonight? It seems it should have – the drama was implicit – the recoil incipit (or arguably not even a word) – how could any (b\_\_\_?) of simplicity be relevant or even cohesive at this point – earlier engagements would have been much more valid – though without commitment – turns out I wasn't too much adverse to the idea of being that refuge for the ol' mates.

I had not spoken nor thought in German for a long time. Once again, late on a Tuesday night, I was watching SBS – *The Lives of Others*<sup>144</sup> – I could do nothing but weep and even that was not enough – I thought of the Berlin Wall - I thought of my father growing up in a world in which that segregation existed – *EXISTED* – in actuality – so very recently after I was born – a united Germany. It wrapped its tentacles around my mind and around my heart – I could not escape the utter despair of such indescribable control and confinement – and fight and revolution – and the overwhelming sensation that everyone has a place and a part to play in this magnificent catastrophe which we live in – sedation does not come easily to those who think.

I wanted nothing more – I think – to be more subtle and simultaneously understood. So much like those songs that moved me – that made me feel as though I understood the depths of a person's soul, the way their brains flared- electronic pulses always firing – not always hitting the spot.

No need for sedation now.

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<sup>144</sup> Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, *Das Leben der Anderen* trans. *The Lives of Others*. (Germany: Buena Vista International, 2006).

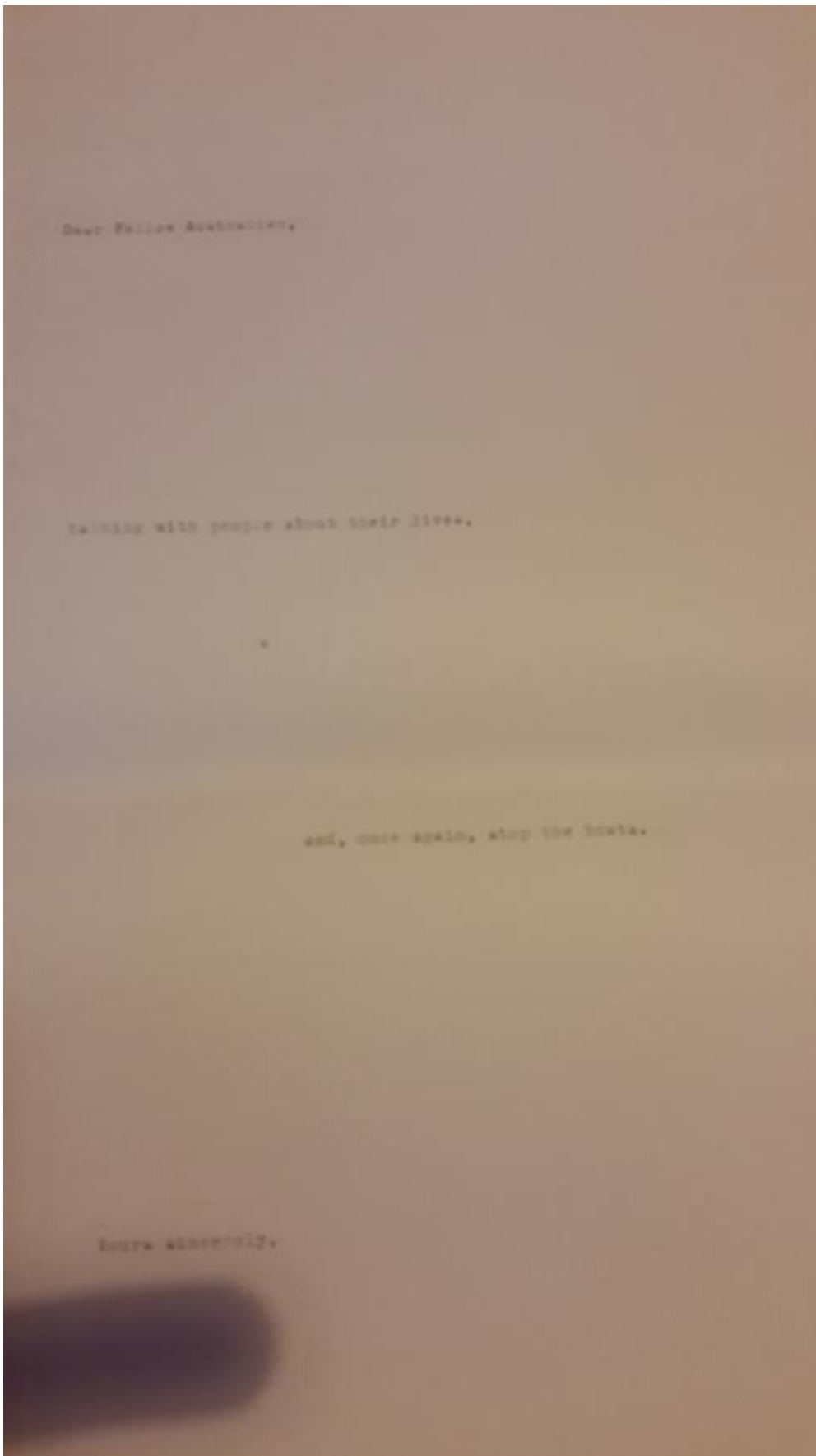
### Appendix 3: Images

PSEUDO SPACE ran from 2011 until early 2014 and featured in the Leichhardt Open Studio Trail (LOST) in March of 2012 and 2013.





Verena Heirich, *Dear Fellow Australian*, PSEUDO SPACE, 2013.



Verena Heirich, "Pink Week", in *Translations: A Sydney/ Sacramento Exchange*, Verge Gallery, the University of Sydney, 2013. A collaboration between Verge Center for the Arts, Sacramento and Verge Gallery, Sydney.







Two Months as a telemarketer. With Agar Dish Performance Collective at Woolloomooloo Cancer Council (part of the revive Sydney pop-up shops), 2013.



Verena Heirich, *Lands-Cape and Nomads Fireplace*, 2012.



Verena Heirich, *Cat*, performance/installation, 2011



Verena Heirich, *Dear Her Trojna*. 2009.



*Art Alight - Fundraiser for the Coonabarabran Bushfire Appeal. In Verge Gallery at University of Sydney, 2013. Silent Auction raised \$3000 for the victims of the Warrumbungle's Bushfire.*



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### **Images**

Figure 2 taken by Greg Shapley, Director of Verge Gallery, 2012.

Figure 3 PSEUDO SPACE images taken by Lydia Brown and Geoffrey Goodes.

Figure 4, 5 and 6 taken by Lydia Brown and Greg Shapley, 2012.

Figure 7 sourced from <http://www.rs.realestate.com.au/property-mixed+farming-sa-coorabie-7210663> (accessed November 3, 2010).

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