Last Man Hanging

A BOOK OF PICTURES

WRITTEN, ILLUSTRATED AND DESIGNED BY ROBYN JOAN WILSON

EXEGESIS

MASTER OF ART & DESIGN

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in partial fulfillment for the degree of **Master of Art and Design.**

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Bachelor of Art & Design in Graphic Design (AUT)
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Dedication

Kenneth George Wilson

(1954 – 1997)

To my beloved father, who passed away in the *Silk Air MI 185* plane crash over Palembang, Sumatra, Indonesia on the 19th of December 1997.

You will always be my hero.

Your daughter Robyn

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Attestation of Authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment is made in the acknowledgments."

Robyn Joan Wilson.....

6th August 2007

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Abstract

This project involves the retelling of a historic New Zealand story using a system of multiple narrations. The research is presented in three parts:

1. The practical component, *Last Man Hanging: a book of pictures.*
2. A contextualising exegesis.
3. *31 months* (a documentation of my visual journey).

The major component of this research is the creative text, *Last Man Hanging*. This is a *book of pictures* and type that retells the story of the trial and death of Walter James Bolton; the last man hanged in New Zealand. Its narrative discourse involves the orchestration of relationships through a compendium of characters, architecture, artifacts, environments and typography. The book integrates narrative voices that may be grouped into two often-conflicting positions; the story as it appeared in newspapers at the time, and the writer's personal consideration of an alternative series of events and emphases. Though an argument of tellings the book suggests a different verdict to that established by the courts in 1956.

Finally, the exegesis contextualises both works. It considers specific theoretical issues pertaining to *Last Man Hanging's* narrative voice and imagery.

Ethics approval

This research was subject to AUT ethics approval granted by the *Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee* (AUTEC) on 1 May 2006, number 06/69.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This research project supports the development and execution of a *book of pictures*: *Last Man Hanging*. It develops an illustrated world in order to retell the story of a New Zealand murderer, Walter James Bolton.

Bolton, the last man hanged in New Zealand, was found guilty of poisoning his wife by tainting her tea with arsenic.

The story

Bolton was a sheep farm manager in Wanganui, who had been married to his wife Beatrice Mabel Bolton for forty-three years. Mrs Bolton fell ill and her illness worsened until her death seventeen months later on the 11th of July 1956.

Bolton was on trial for nine days. Crown prosecutor McCarthy (1956)[1] described Bolton as, "*...sixty-eight,* (and) *strong in sexual powers. He had an ailing wife and he persuaded his sister-in-law to become his mistress- with his wife out of the way what bar would there be to the fulfilment of this affection?*"

Bolton was charged with extracting arsenic from sheep dip[2], then introducing it into his wife's frequent cups of tea. He was found guilty of murder on December 6th, 1956 and sentenced to death by hanging. His execution occurred in *Mt Eden Prison* in Auckland on the 18th of February 1957 and was the final instance of capital punishment in New Zealand history.

1. See **Counsel address jury; Bolton trial nears its end.** (1956, December 6). *The Wanganui Herald*, p. 14.

2. Sheep dip is a toxic chemical solution used in liquid pits to kill ovine parasites.

CONTENT

This research project is an exploration into the world of a story. In developing this world and the timing of events, the researcher has designed a multi-layered system of narration embedded inside a *book of pictures*. The book's approach to narrative encompasses four voices that compare and contrast evidence. The first voice represents the position of the media. It does this by presenting extracts of newspaper articles appearing at the time of the trial. These texts indicate the *black-and-white* view that Bolton was guilty. A second voice appears at the end of the book in the form of an appendix titled, *Body of Evidence*. This provides pertinent facts and statements that contributed to a reconsideration of the original trial and newspaper reports of the time. The third and fourth voices in the *book of pictures* are subjective, and are those of the author. These voices, surfacing through poetic script and imagery, visit the evidence retrospectively from another era. They question whether Mrs Bolton's sister, Florence Ivy Doughty might have committed the murder.

This thesis is realised primarily through *Last Man Hanging: a book of pictures*. This work combines photography, illustration and digitally engineered images to produce a cohesive world of relationships through which the book's discourse is narrated. The practical work may be seen as constituting 80% of the thesis, with the exegesis making up the remaining 20%. The exegesis as a written, contextualising document is divided into three main chapters, the methodology, the critical framework and a conclusion. Three appendices accompany it. The first provides a *Time line of events*, constructed to document and arrange episodes in the early stages of storyboarding. The second is my interview with James Bolton (son of Walter James Bolton), presented as a transcript. The third is under separate binding titled *31 months: a journey towards a book of pictures*, a journal of creative processing.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter considers the methodology employed to research the creative work.

It commences with a consideration of the particular character of the book within the research context of creative production. It then examines the historic case study that operates to stimulate and direct the project. The section concludes with an illustrated discussion of the research journey titled *31 months* (under separate binding). In this section the working of the methodology is explicated.

Definition of the Project

Last Man Hanging is not an exemplary model. The book's purpose is not to position itself as a more effective artifact and it is not a solution to a defined problem. The work may be described as original, emerging from a historic context, and being produced in response to concerns of subjective representation. In this regard the work may be considered as creative practice[1].

Scrivener (2000) suggests that design projects may be broadly divided into either technology research projects or creative-production projects. This assignment may be considered as creative-production because the artifact is more important than any knowledge reified in it. In works such as this project, Scrivener suggests that the knowledge "*is the by-product of the process rather than its primary objective*" (p. 4).

Subjective Positioning

This project is based around my representation of an event and may therefore be seen as subjective. This subjectivity enables a more creative approach to the production of the book.

1. See Scrivener, S. (2000) In *Reflection in and on action and practice in creative-production doctoral projects in art & design*. Scrivener defines creative-production as research developed through art or design making, whereby the knowledge gained from the production of the artifact is not as important as the artifact itself. Originality, historical or cultural context and subjective representation of the work he argues are features of this type of research.

By utilising this subjectivity, one draws on tacit knowledge[2] and reflection on and in action[3].

Tacit knowledge enables me, as a creative researcher, to test ideas by intuition that is informed by my background as a designer and illustrator. Because of this, I am able to support decisions by experience on both a technical and creative level.

2. Polaner (in Schön, 1983) defines tacit knowing as a library of past experiences and expectations that we use to justify decisions and direct the course of research.

3. Schön (1983) defined reflecting-in-action as the designer's conversation with her work on a conscious and unconscious level. It involves critiquing and questioning it using tacit knowledge whilst the work is in a state of emergence.

HISTORIC CASE STUDY

Where creative production is not objective and draws on tacit knowledge in the refinement of its experiments, it may sometimes be researched heuristically[4]. In practice-based research the ability to query the potential of an idea using perception and sympathetic insight is crucial, because it is necessary that one is open to deal with uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and conflict.

While the transactional subjective and reflective method of processing this research may be seen as an over arching methodology, it is fed to a certain extent, by a more formalised approach to data gathering. The basis for this project relies heavily on a qualitative research method, used to review and examine the murder of Mrs Bolton and to provide the basis for the application of ideas in the retelling of the event.

Yin (1984) defines case study as an *"empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used"* (p. 23). The aim of the researcher in a case study is to investigate a specific case to describe and explain in detail the subject and its context.

A case study's strength is that it provides a method of dealing rationally and logically with a specific case. However, as with any method of research there are inherent flaws and weaknesses. This is most apparent when there are a limited number of voices supporting the case study. The findings and final outcome may be perceived as subjective. A case study gives the researcher an understanding of a complex issue or event[5] and can extend experience or add strength to what the researcher already knows through previous research.

4. Ings (2005) suggests, *"heuristics is a qualitative method of solving a problem for which no formula exists. It uses informal methods or experience, and employs forms of trial and error. Heuristics relates to the ability to find knowledge, patterns or a desired result by intelligent questioning and assumptions rather than by applying a pre-established formula"* (p. 1). Heuristics is therefore a form of discovery.

5. The purpose of the research was to ultimately create a book that retells the story of Bolton through multiple narrations. The purpose of the case study is to present multiple voices that will both support and conflict with the original media and legal narratives. Therefore the case study is trying to find common ground among the voices, it is not seeking an irrefutable answer. This is why a case study is the appropriate method of research in this case, as the same key question is asked of all the participants, *"How do you frame the death and judgment of Walter James Bolton?"* The researcher expects variations in the data collected and as a result is open to a new line of questioning for each of the participants.

Thus in an investigation into the complex nature of Bolton's trial and death, case study as a methodology, enables the researcher to exhume and question recorded knowledge through research into visual, oral and textual contexts. The researcher is then able to question and connect in new ways, information or hypotheses that to date may have remained isolated, disconnected or hidden.

DEFINING THE ISSUE

In an intrinsic case study the first questions (*how* and *why*) are asked. The aims of the study are obtained from these two key questions that are helpful in focusing the research issue.

Last Man Hanging looks at Bolton and questions the decision of the court to sentence him to death. The court decision of the time gave Bolton a legendary profile as the last man to be hanged in New Zealand. But his trial and the resulting sequence of events also created a level of enigma around his story.[6]

EVIDENCE USED IN THIS STUDY

Stake (1995) and Yin (1994) identify six sources of evidence in case study research; documents, interviews, archival records, direct observation, participant-observation and physical artifacts. The case study used in *Last Man Hanging* uses only three of these[7] but adds to them photographic recordings. In discussing sources of evidence in this project I will group data into the following arenas and sub-headings: secondary research (print media and documentaries) and primary research (interviews and photographs).

6. After his sentence was carried out, there were unanswered questions, rumours and a series of coincidental deaths that became of interest to the project.

7. It is not possible for the researcher to use physical artifacts, direct observation and participant-observation because she is removed from the event by fifty years. This section briefly discusses the use of documents, interviews and archival records in this case study.

SECONDARY RESEARCH

There is not a huge wealth of information regarding the circumstances surrounding Bolton. Despite this, there are a few sources that cover aspects of the story. However there has, to date, been no attempt by designers or illustrators to retell his narrative. Journalists have retold the story in books, newspaper articles and television documentaries. These generally focus on the outcome from the court decision and do not query the possibility of innocence. However, there are a few publications outside of mainstream media that entertain the idea of Bolton's innocence.

REVIEW OF PRINT MEDIA

Williams' (1998) book *The Bad, the Very Bad and the Ugly: Who's Who of NZ Crime*, was the first book I read on the case. It offered a consideration of Bolton, classifying him as a murderer. However, the book offered very little in the way of questioning Bolton's guilt.

To examine the case further, newspapers, firstly the national newspaper (*The New Zealand Herald*) and later the Wanganui local newspapers (*The Wanganui Herald* and *The Wanganui Chronicle*) were examined. These provided an indication of the mood and perceptions of commentators of the period. Closer examination of these articles showed inconsistencies and an editing out of significant detail.[8]

Investigate Magazine[9] and the *NZ Listener*[10] has to date presented the most controversial articles on Bolton. While they begin by stating the facts of the case, the majority of each article focuses on Bolton's innocence. The *Investigate Magazine* article is of most importance as it centres on an interview with Bolton's son. In this, he argues his father's innocence and points out many inconsistencies in recorded events and conclusions. Bolton's son also

8. This may have been due in part to the fact that reporters assumed that the reader already knew the background story and other details relating to the case and its participants.

9. (Jan/Feb, 2001. pp. 47-52).

10. (April, 1989. pp. 29-31).

maintains that Doughty was responsible for his mother's death. He draws attention to a connection between the Bolton case and that of Margaret Murray Doull[11]. These articles provided the first views of an alternate consideration of data presented at the time.

In *Guilty on the Gallows: Famous Capital Crimes of New Zealand*, Young (1998) provides a more in depth study than Williams (1998). This work includes pictures of the *Rusthall* farmhouse and key interviews with witnesses for the prosecution. It also provides anecdotal evidence from before and after Bolton's death. However, once again the book does not go into any great detail about contexts surrounding the story.

Gee's (1985) *Poison: the coward's weapon*, offers another consideration of the death of Mrs Bolton and the subsequent trial and execution of her husband. Like the other resources it briefly hints at innocence and notes that the Bolton case is unique as most poisoners are women. Doull's case is also featured in this book. Upon comparing them, many similarities between the cases become evident.

DOCUMENTARIES

Epitaph: Last Man Hanged

Epitaph was a New Zealand documentary series made for *TV One* (n.d.). The episode titled *Last Man Hanged* was of interest to this project.

The documentary is introduced by a man, claiming to be Bolton's son (previously named Peter Waller). It refers to archive footage of an event where James splashed red paint on the front of Parliament buildings to force the government to take his claim seriously. James said *"clean that up as easy as you cleaned my parents blood off your hands and remember me well, because I'm coming back again."* James' campaign for a posthumous pardon for Bolton prompted a *Justice Department* investigation but his application was declined.

The documentary visited Wanganui where Paul Gittin summed up the events within the case and visited *Rusthall* farm. Gittin described Mrs Bolton's illnesses and Bolton's behaviour as nothing but honourable, caring and attentive. He also notes that Mrs Bolton moves in with her sister (Doughty), as Bolton was unable to care for her and work on the farm. Shortly after moving in with her sister, Mrs Bolton died.

The documentary was well researched. However, it only hinted at the idea that Doughty may have murdered her sister and discussed in little detail the events surrounding Bolton's death. It makes no mention of an unsuccessful execution.

One News: Hanging Flashback

A short synopsis on *One News* titled *Hanging Flashback* was aired on the 18th of February 2007, as a fifty-year commemorative piece on the Bolton case. The synopsis looked at the execution at *Mt Eden Prison* and the events surrounding the case. *One News* reporter, John Stewart interviewed Bill Brien (a police constable who witnessed Bolton's hanging at the age of twenty). In the interview Brien denies there being any problems with the execution. The flashback then gave a synopsis of the event, showing video clips and photographs of inside *Mt Eden Prison* in the 1950s, *Rusthall* farmhouse, newspaper headlines from the local newspapers in Wanganui, a photograph of Bolton and Doughty and finally the police photograph taken of Bolton at the time of his arrest. It then revealed that there were serious doubts after Bolton's execution as to whether he was guilty or not. Brien stated in the interview that Bolton had never proclaimed his innocence to him. This synopsis was short

11. Doull was a prolific poisoner in the 1960s.

but provided the views of two more witnesses. However it never queried Bolton's guilt or any mention of his execution being mishandled.

Time Line

Although these documents were useful for making connections between events, I was careful when analysing them, as some were clearly hypotheses. To order and cross reference information, I configured data into a *Time line of events* (see appendix one). Keeping clippings of the newspaper articles in a time line structure made for easy retrieval of information and put events into perspective. Documents could then be analysed for frequencies or contingencies. The time line and the other documents served as substitutes for records of activity that I could not observe directly. Adding this quality control to the case study, improved the ability to align sequences of events with interpretations (and misinterpretations) surfacing in other researchers' work.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

The secondary research was only the starting point, from there I needed to gain more information and from as many different sources as possible. This improved my understanding of the Bolton case and prevented bias representation, as it offered a multitude of opinions. This made it necessary for me to interview two people relevant to the story, visit *Wanganui Regional Museum* for archived images, and collect my own photographic images in order to design the narrative.

INTERVIEWS

Literature relating to this case study was supported (and contested) by the reflections of two individuals, Gary Gleeson (the sexton at *Aramoho Cemetery*) and James Bolton (the son of the executed man).

Two principal uses of an interview are to obtain descriptions and interpretations from primary participants. I only recorded the first of three interviews that I had with James Bolton (see appendix two for the transcript). It was used to document the exact words of the participant and as a reference for specific areas of the research dealing with contestable interpretation. The other interview with Gary Gleeson was focused on answering a set of specific questions so I could obtain verification relating to information about the burial of Bolton, his wife and Doughty. The answers to Gleeson's questions were then used to confirm and refute data collected from secondary research sources.

Gary Gleeson

The interview with Gleeson (fig. 1:1) in March of 2005 provided the author with anecdotal evidence as well as contradictions and points of interest that had not surfaced in previous

GARY GLEESON, THE SEXTON OF *ARAMOHO CEMETERY*, WANGANUI.

Fig. 1:1 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Gary Gleeson*. The sexton of *Aramoho Cemetery* in Wanganui. 2005, March 8.
Gleeson provided background on the events surrounding the death and funeral arrangements for the main characters in the narrative, Mrs Bolton, Bolton and Doughty. He has worked at the *Aramoho Cemetery* since October 1989 and recalled in detail many opinions and emphases not profiled by the newspaper reports of the period.

research. In his position as sexton of *Aramoho Cemetery*, Gleeson was privy to tales from the previous sextons of the cemetery. He was also able to provide information surrounding the handling, burial and circumstances surrounding Bolton, his wife and Doughty. Gleeson was able to confirm that *Battersby Funeral Directors* of Auckland carried out Bolton's cremation. His son, James Thomas Phillip Bolton, returned his ashes to Wanganui. The ashes were then interred in a shared plot with his wife at *Aramoho Cemetery* (BLK E, Row 12, 717 and 718). Gleeson also noted that it was very unusual for a perpetrator of a capital crime who had been put to death, to be buried in a public cemetery, let alone next to his victim. *Dempsey and Sons* carried out Mrs Bolton's funeral and she was cremated and buried at *Aramoho Cemetery* on the 13th of July 1956. Having learnt from *Investigate Magazine (2001, Jan/Feb)* that the judge and the sub-inspector died shortly after Bolton's execution, I inquired if their names featured in his records. Gleeson could not find any entries for these names but because they were from Wellington he suggested they might have been buried in a cemetery there. There was also mystery surrounding Doughty's death, as it had been suggested that she committed suicide. The sexton could only confirm that she died on the 19th of November 1959, aged sixty-two, in her own home (*7 Kepa Street*). *Dempsey and Sons* directed her funeral, and her body was cremated at *Aramoho Cemetery* on the 21st of November 1959. She was buried in the *Old Town Cemetery* on Heads Road on the 9th of December 1959 in her husband's family plot (L(eft), N(orth), Row 31, 123 feet from the inside path). This information created more questions, as her funeral was of a religious nature and although it can be proved she is interred at the *Old Town Cemetery*, there is no marking of her grave. Gleeson did not have a decided opinion on Bolton's guilt or the surrounding events. However, he was able to provide dates, locations and retell stories he had heard.

James Bolton

I made contact with James Bolton (fig. 1:2) after reading about him in *Investigate Magazine (2001, Jan/Feb)*. James had an extensive knowledge of his father's case, having followed it for more than twenty years during which time he had amassed a significant volume of information from public archives and personal communications. He opposed the original verdict and as a result, also opposed much reflection on the case as it was presented to the courts and the public in the 1950s. In interviews he proposed an alternative series of events and circumstances surrounding his mother's death. He also hypothesised the guilt of his aunt, Florence Doughty. James further claims that Bolton was ill for two months at the same time as Mrs Bolton and that Doughty was poisoning them both.

He drew another correlation between Doughty and Margaret Murray Doull, one of New Zealand's most prolific poisoners of the 1960s. The house at *7 Kepa Street* is mentioned in both the Bolton trial and the Doull trial in 1964. He compared the cases and found that poison was purchased in 1955 under the name Doull and that the poisons used and the method by which they were administered were similar. Upon learning that Doughty had attempted suicide, James contacted ambulance driver John Humphrey who had a conversation with Constable H. Flynn (now deceased). Humphrey said that Doughty had left a confession note stating that she had killed Mrs Bolton, and Bolton was innocent.

James also disputed the events surrounding the execution. After viewing Bolton's death certificate he noticed there was no doctors signature, which is a mandatory requirement. James also claims that Bolton did not die on the 18th of February 1957, instead he was hidden in the prison under a different name. James supports these claims by the fact that *Battersby Funeral Directors* never handled Bolton's body on that day.

JAMES BOLTON, SON OF WALTER JAMES BOLTON.

Fig. 1:2 **Anon.** James Bolton. In Untitled, *Investigate Magazine*, p. 47. A photograph of James Bolton, son of Walter James Bolton. 2001, Jan/Feb.
James had an extensive knowledge of his father's case, having amassed a significant volume of information from public archives and personal communications. James strongly opposes the verdict of the courts and insists that his father's name be cleared of this crime.

James believes that the *National Government* was trying to cover up a botched execution, hanging as a method of corporal punishment in the 1950s was losing popularity, and they had sent an innocent man to hang.

PHOTOGRAPHS

As the trial and subsequent execution took place fifty years ago I was not able to take first hand reference photographs of the events. In order to circumvent this hurdle the research turned to archival material and photographs of locations, albeit in a modern setting. This was possible as Wanganui has a strong heritage of which the town is immensely proud. The town has worked hard to restore the old buildings to their former profiles.

The Wanganui Regional Museum Archives

The ***Wanganui Regional Museum*** was an initial point of contact for reference photographs of the district. The museum was able to provide the researcher with thirty-seven photographs. These photographs were obtained from public and private collections and were taken between 1950 and 1957. These photographs may appear to just illustrate the main streets (with the odd rural landscape) of Wanganui. However, on closer examination they provide a lot more information than may first appear. They illustrate architecture, thus denoting the materials used, building styles, details and decoration of the period. They also contain details on the way of life, everything from streetlights, power lines, cars, advertising and fashion.

As useful as the archival photographs were, they didn't depict the landmarks necessary for the story. These included the police station, The ***Wanganui Supreme Court*** and the ***Wanganui General Hospital***. Unfortunately the buildings have been demolished and rebuilt since the 1950s, so I was unable to take my own reference photographs of these buildings.

Reference photographs

Reference photographs are images I took myself to aide in the development of the narrative. The reference photography that was required can be broken down into three groups: primary location, pseudo-location and studio photography.

The primary locations consist of Wanganui landmarks and *Mt Eden Prison* in Auckland.

The pseudo-locations are images taken to represent institutions (the hospital and the prison courtyard), houses and other sites such as graveyards.

Studio photography includes all the prop and character photography.

Obtaining the profile of Wanganui required me to photograph key areas, landmarks and the main streets. As the story takes place in Wanganui I felt that an accurate representation of the city was required and upon reading the newspaper articles found some locations mentioned repetitively. There are six main locations featuring in the story these are:

1. *Rusthall* farm, No. 2 Line (the Bolton residence)
2. *7 Kepa Street* (Doughty's residence)
3. *Wanganui General Hospital*
4. *Aramoho Cemetery*
5. *Old Town Cemetery*
6. *Mt Eden Prison* in Auckland.

Of these six locations only three still exist in their ***original*** form (the farmhouse on the No.

2 Line referred to as *Rusthall*, and the two cemeteries). As *Rusthall* farmhouse (fig. 1:3) is on private property the only image I was able to obtain was a long distance photograph that was not at all useful. At *Aramoho Cemetery* I photographed the Bolton plot (fig. 1:4) and the sexton, Gary Gleeson. I also photographed the *Old Town Cemetery*, as this was where Doughty's ashes were purportedly interred (fig. 1:5). These images were used as references in the creative construction of the photographic montages.

I researched building types in both Auckland and Wanganui and found many similarities and patterns. While using Wanganui photographs as references, I integrated details evidenced in buildings and landscapes from other locations. I was intrigued by repetitions seen on the back of the old flats on Queen Street in Auckland and used these to develop the repetition of small windows that can also be witnessed on the walls of prison courtyards. Photographs of the buildings were cut and pasted in *Photoshop* in order to amplify their repetitious nature and create unease and discord within these buildings. In doing this, I created fictional façades from real objects, buildings and environments. I term these environments, pseudo-locations. I also visited a series of graveyards, *Waikumete Cemetery*, *O'Neill's Point Cemetery, North Shore Memorial Park Cemetery & Crematorium* and *Birkenhead-Glenfield Cemetery*, in order to photograph funerary devices such as statues, ornamentation, typefaces and headstone designs. As a substitute for the *Wanganui Supreme Court* I took photographs of *St Paul's Church* (in Auckland), putting the images through the same digital distortion process.

Depicting the prison however, posed a significant obstacle as no one is allowed to photograph the inside of any New Zealand jail, and the area that they used for hanging in *Mt Eden Prison* no longer exists. Intrigued by the back of an old commercial building in Auckland, I decided to construct my own prison walls, remembering to keep the repetitious nature and the small

RUSTHALL FARMHOUSE.

ARAMOHO CEMETERY.

OLD TOWN CEMETERY.

The following images are images of the only landmarks important to the telling of *Last Man Hanging* that still exist in their original profile (albeit in a modern setting), *Rusthall* farmhouse, *Aramoho Cemetery* and *Old Town Cemetery*.

Fig. 1:3 *Rusthall farmhouse*. In J. Stewart. *One News: Hanging Flashback*. [Television broadcast]. Auckland: TVNZ Television Archives, TV One. Film still. 2007, February 18.

Fig. 1:4 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Aramoho Cemetery*. Photograph. 2005.

Fig. 1:5 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Old Town Cemetery*. Photograph. 2007.

windows I had established as signifiers in the book's diegesis.

The *Wanganui General Hospital* has been remodelled, and again no one was allowed to take pictures inside these buildings (due to the patients' rights). I therefore looked around for old derelict buildings or hospitals and found a deserted maternity hospital in Huntly. This hospital had the right look, but didn't have the grand scale required to give the sense of power and authority. I learnt that *Unitec* in Auckland was once *Carrington Mental Hospital* and the outside was said to be unchanged from its time of construction. The building was grand and overwhelming, with piping running along the back of the building in interesting patterns. I took a series of photographs of the front (fig. 1:6) and back (fig. 1:7) of the building and then ran them through the same process of digital collage and manipulation (fig. 1:8).

In total there were eight character and prop photography shoots within a studio environment. I took on the role of art director and producer of these shoots. After ethics approval was obtained, suitable actresses and actors were located and scheduled. There were three criteria by which the actors and actresses were chosen: acting ability, age and resemblance to the character to be portrayed. The three main characters were Kevin Murray (Bolton), Lorna Tucker (Mrs Bolton) and Margaret Pedersen (Doughty). Following fittings and the purchasing of props, I directed photographers, hair and make-up artists to achieve the desired final outcomes. The prop photographs were divided into two categories those that were accompanied by an actor or actress and those that were inanimate. I carried out the majority of the inanimate photography. These shots included buildings, dolls in various poses, flowers, butterflies, chairs, a tea service, tins and bottles. The studio photography provided me with many workable images that were later manipulated in *Photoshop*.

CARRINGTON MENTAL HOSPITAL (FRONT).

CARRINGTON MENTAL HOSPITAL (BACK).

COMPLETED PSEUDO-HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION (DETAIL).

The following images are photographs of the *UNITEC* building in Auckland. The building used to be used as a mental hospital, the exterior has just been maintained but the interior has since been renovated. The last image illustrates my completed construction of the hospital.

Fig. 1:6 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Carrington Mental Hospital (UNITEC), Front*. Reference photograph. 2007.

Fig. 1:7 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Carrington Mental Hospital (UNITEC), Back*. Reference photograph. 2007.

Fig. 1:8 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Wanganui Hospital pseudo-location (detail)*. Digital construction. 2007.

SUMMARY

Thus the methodology employed in this project may be broadly described as a historic case study. This approach was used as a method of exhuming factual data, opinion and visual references. The methodology allowed for the surfacing of contradictory data and from this I was able to negotiate the narrative that forms the basis of *Last Man Hanging*. The creative processing of data surfaced through the case study is discussed in the appended document *31 months*.

CRITICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical framework

Introduction

A function of the *book of pictures*[1] is to express ideas and stories by means of words and pictures. This section of the exegesis therefore considers how image and text when coexisting, might enable a form of multiple narration. It defines and explains the application of specific narratological devices employed in creating the book's system of discourse. The critical framework is divided into three main sections:

Narration

An introduction to narrative.

A consideration of homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narration.

Type

An analysis of the treatment of type as both a narrative voice and graphic element.

The treatment of typefaces.

Images

A discussion on how images convey narrative.

A consideration of imagery, focusing on the significance of ornamentation and metaphors present in Last Man Hanging.

1. *Last Man Hanging* may be defined as a *book of pictures*. In this regard it is demarcated from a *graphic novel* because it does not draw heavily on episode development sequenced within the confines of a single page. I also demarcate it from the convention of the *picture book* in that the text is a highly integrated, enigmatic discourse between image and text targeted at an adult reader.

NARRATION

Narration as an act of communication may be understood as fiction or non-fiction, truthful or even deceitful. Narrative may be divided into two parts, the *what* and the *how*. The *what* is the story (named *histoire* by the French structuralists and *fabula* by the Russian formalists). It consists of events, actions, time and location; all of which are incorporated in the development and execution of the book. The *how* may be understood as the narrative's discourse (named *discours* by the French structuralists and *sjuZet* by the Russian formalists). Put simply *discourse* is the way in which the story is told. It includes the arrangement, the tone, emphasis and de-emphasis, as well as the magnification of any elements within the context. The design of the discourse is engineered in order to direct the viewer into a desired reading of the *text*.

Narrative may therefore be understood as the *telling* of a story, the representation of an event or a series of events. Something is required to *happen* for there to be a narrative. Todorov (1977) describes a minimal narrative structure as a move from *equilibrium* to *disequilibrium* and back to *equilibrium*. Rimmon-Kenan (1983) however argues that there needs to be at least two or more events taking place for a narrative to exist.

Abbott (2002) suggests, "*the difference between events and their representation is the difference between story (the event or sequence of events) and narrative discourse (how the story is conveyed)*" (p. 13).

A narrative must consist of a story and a narrative discourse. The narrative discourse is the telling or presenting of a story. However, a narrative does not have to follow the linear laws of time. Discourse may allow a story to switch from past to present or the future (in any order) and be told through one or many points of view in order to direct or manipulate the spectator's perspective to the author's desired reading. This non-chronological approach is evidenced in *Last Man Hanging* where linear chronology and retrospective reflection combine to create the story. In this regard the laws of time do not adhere to a strict chronology in the work, despite there being a base line of sequential episodes.

Another consideration of narrative discourse is the narrator. The narrator is the one who tells the story. In this project the retelling of the story is mediated through the author's *voice over*, a series of illustrated events, locations and a poetic voice. The *author*[2] in *Last Man Hanging* is not the only narrator. Excerpts from print media and newspaper reporting are used to sometimes texture the surface of the illustrated world and at other times, to add detail to information unfolding within and outside of the narrative. This copy is used to orchestrate emphasis within the confines of the book. However, the story and its discourse is also something that the reader *constructs*[3]. We do this through the employment of our personal and cultural experiences. These in discourse with the text, enable interpretations of meaning.

HOMODIEGETIC AND HETERODIEGETIC NARRATION

Last Man Hanging uses multiple narration. Three voices are narrated from a homodiegetic position and another voice is narrated from a heterodiegetic position.[4] Narration may be interpreted as a *voice* or *voices.* It is whom we *hear* or *see* narrating the story. Homodiegetic narration is when the narrator is situated within the fictional world that the story tells us about. In reference to *Last Man Hanging*, the newspaper's voice (the articles), my written narration of events (the poetic voice) and my visual voice (story telling through images) are present within the story and exist for an isolated and fixed instant. Therefore they may be understood as narrating homodiegetically. Both my written and visual voice are positioned

2. The **author** is the *real person* who has created the text, in this case that person is Robyn Joan Wilson. The **narrator** is the imparter of the story. Sometimes this may be a character in the book, a body of archive newspaper reporting, or a heterodiegetic commentator.

3. See Barthes, R. (1977). *Image-Music-Text.* (S. Heath, Trans.). New York: Hill & Wang.

4. The terms homodiegetic and heterodiegetic are taken from Gérard Genette's (1988) terminology.

as omniscienct[5]. Because I know and control the beginning, middle and end of the story. I narrate by *dropping visual clues* bringing attention to certain objects, characters and places that help to construct meaning within the story. In short, I introduce and narrate the story retrospectively from a different time and place. The retelling of the story (both the visual and poetic narration) and its events presented are being told, but I remain situated outside of the story's world. This position allows me to be associated with the diegesis and its discourse, while simultaneously remaining distanced from all imagery and events that may occur inside the telling of the story.

Heterodiegetic narration[6] on the other hand is conducted outside of the diegesis. In this project there is one heterodiegetic voice, that of the omnipresent commentator who speaks broadly about the implications of the text. This voice appears as a form of appendix, located at the end of the book titled *Body of Evidence*. This section archives statements that both confirm and challenge the legitimacy of the events proceeding and following Bolton's execution. The *Body of Evidence* is narrated as a form of case file that presents data from documentaries and print media, some of which is sourced outside of the time frame enveloped by the story's events.

As the author of *Last Man Hanging*, I act as the primary narrator, it is my voice that opens and closes the book. My narration reaches beyond the knowledge and capabilities of the newspapers. Nuepert (1995) discusses the role of the primary narrator as "*the controlling voice constructed by the spectator out of organizational cues from the narrative* (discourse) *and finally brackets the text*" (p. 26). This means that the primary homodiegetic narrator strongly influences the viewer's comprehension of the book from start to finish through the manipulation of structural and aesthetic devices. However, it accepts that the system of narration is not absolute and a text may be open to a variety of decodings.

The subjective homodiegetic narrator in this project is the viewers' focalizer[7]; they show the viewer the action they want them to see. This contributes significantly to the way the reader decodes the narrative. The newspaper's voice however is in a transactional relationship with the diegesis. It causes and experiences a series of connected events and does not engage in any commentary outside of the narrative.

5. Ings (2006) defines omniscience as *"a point of view used by the author in which he or she knows all and sees all. The author can look into characters' minds and tell readers some or all of the characters' thoughts as well as the unseen qualities of places and objects"* (p. 1). So omniscient narration is narration by a narrator assumed to know everything that is connected with the story. Although there are some narrators who seem to know everything, narration is often riddled with gaps, which we must fill from our limited knowledge. Because of this a narrator may sometimes conversely be seen as less than omniscient (*all-knowing*).

6. This form of narration is also termed extradiegetic (Prince, 2003). The extradiegetic level (the level of the narrative's telling) is external to the diegesis.

7. Abbott (2002) defines focalization as "*the lens through which we see characters and events in the narrative*" (p. 66) often through the eyes of the narrator.

TYPE

Typography treated graphically and in the service of the story, functions as an extension of the imagery. The addition of style and subtle application of weight, emphasis and definition to the type properties, combine to evoke message and emotion.

THE TREATMENT OF TYPE AS A GRAPHIC ELEMENT

Type that operates simultaneously as a narrator and pictorial element has established precedents in comics and graphic novels. McCloud when explaining writing in comic books states that, "*it is an exclusively visual representation. Within these panels, we can only convey information visually*" (1993. p. 89). Of course words themselves, more than visual symbols, have the power to describe the invisible. Words can however lack the immediate emotional charge of pictures. They rely instead on a gradual cumulative effect.

Type used as a form of *voice-over* in the book, because of its unique design, carries certain paralinguistic[8] and poetic qualities. In *Last Man Hanging* the consideration of the narrative potential of typography is paramount. I use the concept of multiple narration, where the various written voices work in conjunction with each other, whether in accord or in disagreement.

TYPEFACES

A fundamental design challenge in *Last Man Hanging* was the effective translation of two textual voices. The voices being that of the newspaper's story and my poetic presence, these also had to assimilate with the ethos created by the diegesis.

8. Paralinguistics may be understood as the propensity for language to contain emphases beyond the standard presentation of words. In this regard intonation, rhythm, pause and volume may all contribute additional meaning. In his essay, *Value-added text: where graphic design meets paralinguistics,* Mealing (2003) suggests that typographic design may be capable of mapping these emphases in the way it creatively integrates scale, texture, size and space into the design and display of written words.

Newspapers

Newspaper type represents a specific exploration of the zeitgeist in which the story was set. The 1950s was a decade when certain newspapers were assumed to report fact, and were rarely questioned. Newspaper text has a certain sense of authority and authenticity, by breaking up the construction of the newspaper, one must be careful not to damage the legitimacy of the voice.

After reflecting on the design and typographical profile of newspaper articles in Wanganui between 1956 and 1957, the author decided to expose the reporter's voice as bias. A series of experiments were undertaken to see how the rigid and structured layout of a newspaper article might be deconstructed to evoke meaning, emotion and to emphasise relevant information held within it. This created an illustrative approach to type that fitted within the world of the story. Aspects of the newspapers were distorted and enlarged to uncover the inconsistencies and indicate bias evident before the final verdict of the trial was passed.

The illustrative quality of type made the articles more distinctive. With the introduction of changes in volume and scale, the text was able to communicate in a manner closer to the paralinguistic quality of speech.[9]

At this point in the development of the work I began to reconsider both systems of narration and the typographical voices that might accompany them. As a result of several trial approaches I decided upon two almost antithetical narrators: a poetic, ornate voice and the rigid voice of the newspaper report. The newspaper's voice however, had to remain secondary to that of my poetic voice. I then embarked on another experiment, this time I decided to once again take a more understated approach to the design. After revisiting the

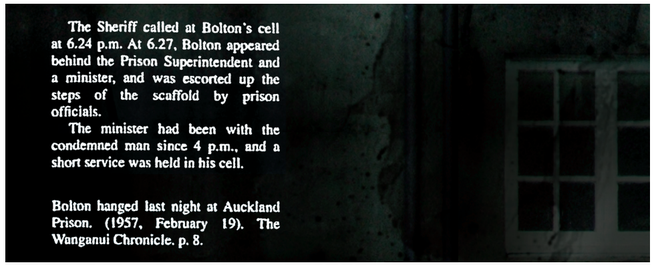
9. The *speech* may be understood as silent. The poetic copy written and designed for *Last Man Hanging* is created to be *heard* internally as a dark, ornate murmur. It's weighted display face (*Bolton*) set against a lighter serif face (*MrsEaves*) creates a contradiction that struggles for harmony. This may be likened to the ethos of the narrative where contradictory voices are pitched against each other in an effort to create concord.

past newspaper articles and with the addition of my poetic voice guiding the reader through the book, I didn't have to rely so heavily on the newspaper's information. The newspaper's voice became the secondary textual voice and therefore could be treated as is, bringing with it the authenticity of its first reading. The relevant information needed, was still chosen from the article by cropping and only including significant data. The properties of the original article would all be there making it appear as absolute truth. This meant that all the newspapers would have to look as if they were speaking with one voice. In other words, each selected section of each article would have to be typed within the same format, so that although they might be distressed, they would not disturb the legibility or create emphasis that was not evident in the original reporting.

The challenge I was facing was how to recreate the aesthetic of the newspaper articles. The original archived articles, although legible, showed subtle signs of bleeding and thinning of specific letterforms. By emphasising this degrading of type I was able to give the impression of age and wear. In order to recreate this I had to re-type all of the articles needed within a standardised text frame using *InDesign*. The article was then printed and distressed by enlarging and shrinking it on a photocopier. The approach, although time consuming, produced a well-structured consistency that allowed for more control over the newspaper's seemingly authoritative voice (see figures 2:1-2).

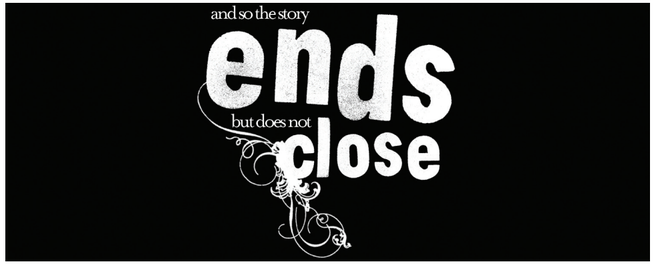
In *Last Man Hanging*, the articles are intended to weave through the pictorial and poetic narrative, questioning, supporting and conflicting with the authenticity of the viewer's first reading. This technique subtly references the repeated loss and recovery of equilibrium. An underlying desire for inquiry or investigation enables the reader to penetrate the multiple representations and eventually form the text into meaning through a process of closure[10].

10. McCloud (1993) defines closure as the tool that allows us to connect disjointed, unrelated moments and mentally construct a continuous, cohesive reality.



NEWSPAPER TYPE USED AS DIRECT NARRATION.

NEWSPAPER TYPE USED AS ILLUSTRATION.



MY POETIC VOICE SHOWING PARALINGUISTIC TENDENCIES AND HISTORICAL AESTHETICS.

Fig. 2:1 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Bolton's last moments in his cell (detail)*. Newspaper type as direct narration. Digital construction. 2007.

Fig. 2:2 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Writing on the wall of an empty cell (detail)*. Newspaper type used as illustration. Digital construction. 2007.

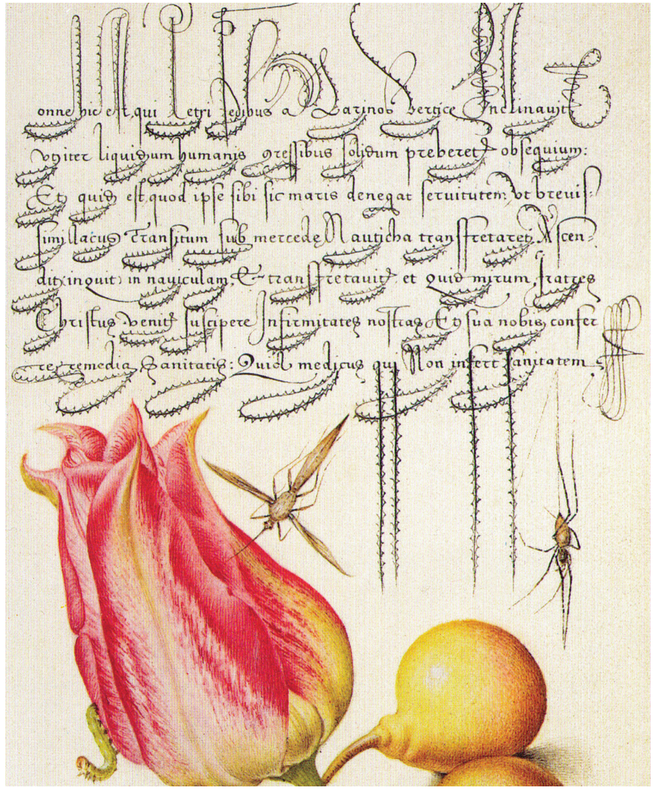
Fig. 2:3 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Paralinguistic poetic voice (detail)*. My poetic voice showing paralinguistic tendencies. Typographical digital construction. 2007.

The poetic voice

The combination of the newspaper's voice and my poetic voice was designed in order to create a conflicting narrative that laced throughout the book. In *Last Man Hanging*, the poetic voice and the imagery are the main narrators, therefore the poetic voice rather than the newspaper's voice is more prevalent. The poetic voice served to seduce the reader into my desired interpretation of events and emphases. The embellished type is reminiscent of days gone by (fig. 2:3). The poetic voice supports and supplements the narrative as communicated by the images. Because of this, common qualities of rhythm and personality are evident in both. They are designed to work in concord with each other, often held together by my ornamentation, embellishment and carefully positioned in relation to each other so they combine into a harmonious composition.

Originally I considered using an established font for this voice, choosing perhaps a handwritten face that spoke in a frail yet ornamental manner such as Eduardo Recife's (2001) *Porcelain* or the handwritten font *Miss Claude* created by Philippe Blondel (1998). These however lacked the handcrafted aesthetic that I wanted for the poetic voice. This was mainly because each letter had only one upper case and one lower case option. This made the font feel impersonal and mass produced. I also considered historical treatments of the ornamented voice, specifically Georg Bocskay's calligraphy (fig. 2:4) and certain pen and ink embellishments found in Lee Hendrix and Thea Vignau-Wilberg's (2003), *The art of the pen: calligraphy from the Court of the Emperor Rudolf II*.

However, the final decisions in *Last Man Hanging* were made in relation to duality and composition. The display face I designed (*Bolton*) was ornamented and set in uneasy *harmony* with the established font, *MrsEaves*. This typographical voice was tied into the voice

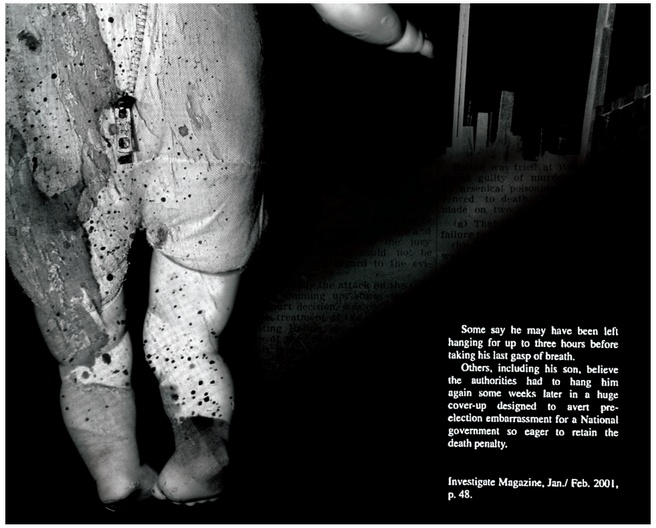


GEORG BOCSKAY'S CALLIGRAPHY.

Fig. 2:4 Georg Bocskay. Folio 25 (detail). (n.d.). In *The art of the pen: calligraphy from the Court of the Emperor Rudolf II*, London: Thames & Hudson, p. 19.
Georg Bocskay's calligraphy: italic letters with exaggerated ascenders and descenders. A pre-eminent scribe, Bocskay assembled a vast selection of contemporary and historic scripts ranging from the latest Italic and humanist writing to antique Roman and German Gothic. Many were intended not for practical use but for virtuosic display- lines filled with vines, mirror writing and tiny micrography. This approach to type as an ornamental yet communicative *display* was significant in the development of the poetic voice in *Last Man Hanging*.

of the image through ornamental elements that spanned both illustration and text. In terms of composition, copy was placed on the page so it operated as part of the illustration (fig. 2:5). This same approach was evidenced in an even more integrated fashion in compositional approaches to the voice of the newspaper reports of the period (fig. 2:6).

TYING THE VOICES OF THE BOOK TOGETHER THROUGH ORNAMENTATION (DETAIL).



INTEGRATING NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE COPY INTO AN ILLUSTRATION (DETAIL).

Fig. 2:5 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Tying the book together with the use of ornamented type and vector illustration (detail)*. Digital illustration. 2007.

Fig. 2:6 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Newspaper copy integrated into an image composition (detail)*. Digital illustration. 2007.

IMAGES

McCloud (1993) suggests that, "*by stripping down an image to its essential meaning, an artist can amplify that meaning in a way that realistic art can't*" (p. 30). What he suggests is that through simplification an illustrator may be able to produce imagery that increases meaning. McCloud (ibid.) suggests that the lines that make up images are essentially a visual metaphor, a linguistic symbol (a basis of language), that may be applied in a variety of places and the reader will know its meaning.

While McCloud's (ibid.) observations are of interest to this project and have influenced the simplification of environments (like the landscape), my concern was not only with the amplification of meaning. In creating the book, I was interested also in the amplification of *subjective position*. I endeavoured to create a world where one responded emotionally to imagery and my bias was explicit.

In the early stages of the book's design, character development focused on the exaggeration and intensification of the emotions and the physical qualities of each protagonist. While initial approaches relied heavily on simplistic imagery, the results lacked the theatrical quality I was seeking in creating a dark, enigmatic and troubling diegesis for the narrative (fig. 2:7).

Instead of adopting McCloud's (1993) stripping down of the image to essential forms, I attempted to increase the sense of troubled reality by importing and distorting photographic references into the illustrated world. On one level this helped to reinforce the zeitgeist of the period, however, it also helped to increase the tension in the book. The disruption of a photograph is a disturbance to an encodement of information we often read as secure. Photographs are often the ways we preserve memories as images. By deliberately interfering

EARLY CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.

Fig. 2:7 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Character sketches*. Early character development using sketching and distorted photographs. 2005.

with the stability of such things, as an illustrator, I was able to heighten the sense of disturbance in the book.

In the development of *Last Man Hanging*, I explored ways to represent a real world through fragments of *real objects*. This helped to reinforce the fragmented recollection of memory and to also reinforce a sense of distorted perspective or emphasis.

HOW IMAGES CONVEY NARRATIVE

Picture reading is a highly creative form of synthesising information. In this process we can translate pictures into ideas and stories. These in turn, inform us. Pictures are prone to interpretation that is determined by our vocabulary of images. Baxandall (in Manguel, 2002) suggests, "*we do not explain pictures, we explain remarks about pictures*" (p. 14). The world's iconography (symbols, signs and stories) and a vast range of circumstances, private, social and cultural, make up our library of pictures and determine our systems of representation. Manguel suggests that, "*we can only see that for which we already have identifiable images, just as we can read only in a language of which we already know the syntax, the grammar and the words*" (2002, pp. 12-13).

The image prompts the viewer to extend his or her vision, to search for signs and to follow or predict their transformation. Picture reading often allows us to invent stories by giving them the sequential quality of narrative. The subject of the picture presents a dialogue that may not allow for one, absolute interpretation, but alludes to a world of representations, many unexpected. The viewer interprets the picture on his or her own terms (determined by their own capabilities and imagination). We, as the viewer attach a name, a history, and a relationship to the picture from our own time and place. We see pictures as defined by their context, but what we really see is the picture translated into our own experience, merely a space that we fill with our own desire, questioning and understanding.

In this project the idea that the viewer has input into how they read the *book of pictures* was a challenging prospect. This is because the narrative of the story needed, to a certain extent, to be apparent. This was so it would provide a degree of direction. A completely aberrant decoding may result in the reader becoming perplexed or important aspects of the narrative being misrepresented. However, input was needed in the comprehension of the images. *Last Man Hanging* is essentially an enigma. The facts surrounding it are often unstable, refuted or missing. It's retelling in interviews, recollections and print media are often contradictory. Because of this it was my decision as a designer and illustrator, to construct a *book of pictures* that did not seek to provide *emphatic truth* but instead construct an almost poetic contemplation on a series of facts and recollections. Within this stylistic approach, an acceptance of the role of the *reader* as a decoder of meaning is a *given*. My role, as the author, is to suggest meaning. Because of this, images are often unfocused or enigmatic; the language is poetic; and the design, ornamental and metaphoric. Thus images in the *book of pictures* may be understood as suggesting meaning but not absolutely closed to interpretation.

IMAGES AND ORNAMENTATION

Last Man Hanging is distinctive in its use of ornamentation. Embellishment is used to bring contrasting letterforms into concord and to create relationships between image and text.

An ornament may be described as something used to adorn, beautify, or embellish. It is historically gendered as feminine. Today graphic designers may still refer to ornamentation as *candy* seeing it as a form of garnishing that resonated from cultural tradition. The need for ornamentation may be considered as a craving, indulgence and guilty obsession. However, ornamentation allows for a highly imaginative world were text and image sprouting with decorative detail, lace and fleurons, where dense patterns multiply and tendrils of lush flora creep. It is a question of beauty and taste, a balance between organics and order. James Trilling (2003) says, "*when we think of ornament, to praise and condemn, we usually think of patterns, integrated, composed of distinct motifs, orderly and predictable even at their most intricate*" (p. 9). According to Trilling, "*ornament is almost never original, the skill lies in turning a recognised form into something different- familiar but also unique*" (ibid. p. XIV). After many years of a modernist restraint, having been hostile to the generation, application or even mention of decoration, the ornament is resurfacing in contemporary approaches to graphic design. Ornament has become an almost ubiquitous part of the representation of images in both print (see figures 2:8-9) and digital media (fig. 2:10).

Within the language of ornament is a vocabulary consisting of a repertoire of both meaningful and provocative gestures and figures. The grammar of this visual language stems from the interactive arrangement between distinct figures as well as the special ways in which patterns, or passages, are arranged on the surface of objects or pages.

SOPHIA TOULOUSE.

SI SCOTT.

STILLS FROM THE *CHOOSE ONE, TV ONE* TELEVISION COMMERCIAL BY SAATCHI & SAATCHI.

The above images illustrate the modern use of ornamentation within pictures, type and moving image, in the area of graphic design.

Fig. 2:8 Sophia Toulouse. *Remastered* (2005) & *Untitled, Nation of Angela* (n.d.). Retrieved June 19, 2007, from http://www.sophietoulouse.com.

Fig. 2:9 Si Scott. *The Mask of Sorrow display face.* (n.d.). Retrieved June 20, 2007, from http://www.siscottstudio.com/

Fig. 2:10 Anon. (n.d.). Choose One, TV One. Auckland: Saatchi & Saatchi.

In 1856, the architect, Owen Jones published *Grammar of Ornament* laying out thirty-seven propositions instructing the appropriate uses of decoration and pattern, showcasing thousands of global examples of ornament. Jones suggested that ornament should be based on geometrical construction, giving detailed instructions concerning the use and placement of colours. He frowned upon the use of natural objects and flowers unless they were conventional representations in harmony of the object they are employed to decorate. John Ruskin's writings (in the 1960s and 1970s) about ornament also posited similar concerns. Furthermore, in the early twentieth century amongst avant-garde circles it was thought that items that disguised their construction with ornament were dishonest and essentially flawed.[11] Ornament however has always been a concern to designers of calligraphy and type.[12]

The reason for the current resurgence of ornament in graphic design may be due to a range of factors. First, a fluctuation of style and fashionabity within the visual language of computer software has given rise to a need for a visual currency as contrary and exotic in comparison to those that preceded it. Ornamentation also offers a visit to nostalgia, to a time and place that was never part of the designers' personal or cultural history. The resurgence may also be seen as an embracing of uselessness (rebelling against the conventional design teachings in which *problems* are *solved* by following a formula). Some ornamentation however stands out from the rest because it brings complexity, meaningfulness and a seriousness of intent. The ornamentation is not merely sampled from a palette of choices but derives from content and is integrated at a deeper level with concept. This level of ornamentation requires the illustrator to be mentally involved and critically discerning. Within a discussion about *Decorationism* on the design blog *Speak Up*, Armin Vit (2004) suggests, "*heavy ornamentation requires a type of character not found among many people. It is a balance of obsessive compulsiveness, an acute sense of style and, most importantly, an understanding of knowing when to stop*" (p. 2). The Canadian illustrator and designer Marian Bantjes shares a similar view on her own process of working. In the same discussion on *Decorationism* she says, "*I have a very uneasy and, yes, guilty relationship with decoration. I do it because I have to; it's an obsession... I do feel that there is something there in my work (and in other people's) that goes beyond gratuitous prettiness*" (2004, p. 8).

Malcolm McCullough (1996) has recently written on the notion of the computer as a craft tool. To this notion he attaches the term *digital craft*, and refers to it as a combination of skill and intellect accompanied by a balance of work and play, usefulness and beauty, tacit and codified knowledge. The computer is also recognised as a valuable craft tool by designer Denise Gonzales Crisp (2004), who in a lecture hosted by the *Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University's School of Applied Communication* argues that the computer lets you attend to the complexity, detail and amplification which are key to decoration. McCullough also refers to a renewed interest in the handmade aesthetic and a tacit knowledge of making. He argues that the computer aids in the creation of complex detail that is required for ornamentation. Thus one is able to create forms of detail that are beyond what is possible by using a purely handcrafted approach. Critic Louise Schouwenberg supports this position when she says that, "*freed from its negative connotations, craftsmanship can be valued for the psychological effect it exerts on its user: it not only refers to a slower pace, but also implants this deceleration, and the implied attention to detail, into the product*" (in Twemlow, 2005, p. 27).

Ornament is increasingly becoming discussed in terms of its rational, functional and emotional value. Crisp terms this *deco rational*. In this construct ornamentation and the rational are brought into a design discourse where *"functionality is completed by ornament."*

11. Austrian architect Adolf Loos (1998) published a criticism against decoration in 1908 titled *Ornament and Crime*; he argued that ornament was a waste of manpower, materials and capital.

12. American type designer Fedric W. Goudy (1911) designed the typeface *Kennerly* in response to the need for typefaces in decorative printing.

She suggests that "*the rational aspect of the decorational is its capacity to tell, not only in a story-like way, but also in a metonymic*[13] *way in the same way that icons do*." She says, "*graphic design's time gets spent on refining, organising and making things clear. Graphic designers use ornamentation to establish empathy or provide escape*" (ibid.).

Ornamentation I would argue challenges mainstream views of design's role as a simplifier and solver of problems. In *Last Man Hanging* ornamentation is used to create a harmony between the darkness of the narrative and its poetic written voice.

In the book, ornamentation is not used to garnish without purpose. The challenge I have faced has been to create ornamentation that functions not only as embellishment but also exposes deeper meaning in the text.

The technique most prominently employed in the book is a vector application that pays homage to the disquieting line work of Harry Clarke and Aubrey Beardsley (see figures 2:11-12). Their integration of simple line work, solid black and meticulously ornamented detail I found useful in turning the ordinary, unpleasant or plain into something extraordinary, delicate and beautiful.

In typographical treatments, ornament is used as an overlay to represent how characters intertwine and tangle themselves throughout the poetic narrative. In concord with this notion of entwinement, certain artifacts that serve *darker* purposes (scissors, syringes, etc.) attract ornamentation in the book. Like Beardsley's flowers, they are beautiful and disquieting- they have an undercurrent of meaning brought about by the meeting of purpose and decoration. The notion of entwinement is also evident in the treatment of type. Here the stark display

13. A figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated.

A HARRY CLARKE ILLUSTRATION FROM HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S *FAIRY TALES* (N.D.).

AUDBREY BEARDSLEY'S *THE BATTLE OF THE BEAUX AND THE BELLES* (1896).

BOTH TYPEFACES WORKING IN HARMONY IN *LAST MAN HANGING*.

Fig. 2:11 Harry Clarke. (n.d.). Untitled (detail). In H. C. Andersen. *Fairy Tales.* Retrieved January 18, 2007, from http://www.grandmasgraphics.com/graphics/andersen/andersen192a.jpg

Fig. 2:12 Audbrey Beardsley (1896). *The Battle of the Beaux and the Belles (detail)*. In S. Wilson. *Beardsley.* Oxford: Phaidon Press Limited, p. 63.

Fig. 2:13 Robyn Joan Wilson. *MrsEaves Roman and the Bolton display face integrated.* The two typefaces in *Last Man Hanging* working together. 2007.

face (*Bolton*) is embellished to bring it into concord with the lighter and more evenly kerned *MrsEaves*. Thus two antithetical faces, through ornament, begin to speak in harmony with each other (fig. 2:13).

Application

At the opening of *Last Man Hanging* ornamentation is applied only to the display face *Bolton* (fig. 2:14). It weaves and intertwines as a method of bringing together disparate tones of voice. When Mrs Bolton goes to hospital, vector ornamentation begins to seep into the images and back through the text. Emphasis is brought to its presence over the pages that follow, as it infiltrates images that talk about Doughty, from her house to her status as a widow. The most obvious connection and application of ornamentation to the character of Doughty is seen in the image of the affair (fig. 2:15). Here ornamentation flows and curls like hair, long and highly decorative. It has the appearance of a tiara or crown. It may be noted that the flowers and foliage from this point in the book come to represent the adulterous affair that affects the three central characters in the plot. Ornamentation flourishes as this affair progresses and Mrs Bolton grows sicker. The decorative devices and the images of Mrs Bolton become an integrated phenomena. In the image of Mrs Bolton's autopsy the presence of the leaves that cover her face suggest that the affair again may have had something to do with her death.[14] However, as Doughty's plan falls into place ornamentation disappears from the pages of the book, until shortly after Bolton's execution. His funeral however, is heavily embellished with ornamentation, both in the type and within the photograph of the bouquet (fig. 2:16). This embellishment was a way I sought to communicate both the love and guilt Doughty might have felt after his execution. After Doughty's death the ornamentation disappears, in relation to increase in inexplicable deaths occurring on the periphery of the central story.

14. The use of Ivy is subtle here as the plant is also Florence Doughty's middle name.

ORNAMENTATION IS INCORPORATED WITH TYPOGRAPHY FROM THE OPENING OF THE BOOK (DETAIL).

DOUGHTY'S ORNATE HAIR (DETAIL).

ORNAMENTATION AT BOLTON'S FUNERAL (DETAIL).

Fig. 2:14 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Ornamenting the Bolton display face (detail)*. The introduction of ornament to the poetic voice. 2007.

Fig. 2:15 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Doughty's ornamented hair (detail)*. The presence of ornament, flora and fauna to the character, Doughty. 2007.

Fig. 2:16 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Bolton's funeral (detail)*. The abundance of ornament represents the characters of Bolton and Doughty. 2007.

Conclusion

Thus ornamentation is used in *Last Man Hanging* to trace the relationship between the three central characters. It carries references to entanglement, obsession, love and guilt. It is both delicate and dark; it shares metaphors of butterflies and flora with the photographic imagery, but serves as a form of commentary on the relationships between Bolton, his wife and his mistress.

METAPHOR

Having considered ornamentation as a device in *Last Man Hanging*, it is useful at this point to comment on the prominent use of metaphor in the book. The term metaphor[15] is derived from the Greek word *metaphora*, *meta* meaning *over*, and *pherein*, *to carry*. A metaphor generally refers to a particular set of linguistic processes whereby features of one object are *transferred* to another object, offering some similarity or correlation between the two objects that are generally dissimilar. In this process the second object speaks as if it was the first.

Where *literal* language seeks to use words in their original form as a method of direct translation of meaning, *figurative language* doesn't necessarily mean what it says. It instead, lends itself to related, multiple meanings. These meanings are formed by language, society and attitudes of the time. Metaphor therefore deliberately *interferes* with the system of literal usage, whereby the vocabulary of terms connected with one object can be transferred to another object. The aim of metaphor is to achieve a new, wider and more precise meaning.

Although metaphor is most frequently talked about in terms of language (the written word), metaphor may also be expressed through pictures (the visual metaphor). Representations of the world (as perceived through the filter of our, or others' preconceptions, values and tacit knowledge), whether verbal or pictorial in nature, are distortions of reality. Within design the use of visual metaphor may be frequently seen within the realms of advertising and movies. *Last Man Hanging* uses three primary visual metaphors: flora, dolls and butterflies. These objects are vehicles to represent deeper meaning and appear as visual threads that permeate the text.

15. The dictionary definition (Collins, Third Edition, p. 982) defines it as "*a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action that it does not literally denote in order to imply a resemblance.*"

Flowers and foliage

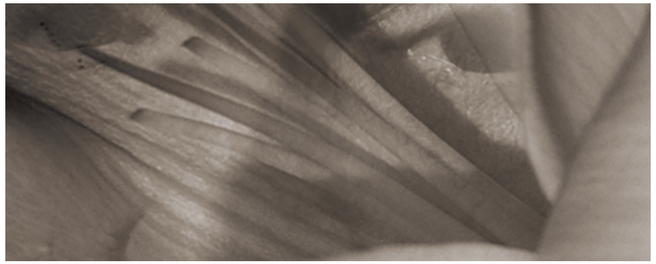
Flowers and foliage in general are used as a method of talking about the character of Florence Ivy Doughty.

Her name *Florence* comes from the root word Flora (the classical goddess of flowers) and in the book I use the contrasting meanings of the (red and white) rose and the lily to illustrate her relationships and those of her sister and brother-in-law. The presence of flowers in *Last Man Hanging* both softens and disturbs the world of the story. Flowers as associated with the presence or influence of Doughty are used in contrast to the emptiness of the world of *Rusthall* farm and the isolation of the Boltons.

The red rose is used to represent love, passion, perfection, desire, romance and infidelity. The white rose is employed to signify innocence, purity, secrecy and silence. The white lily is generally used to represent pride, innocence, purity, modesty and death. Each flower provides a subtle comment on the nature of the central characters. Doughty is represented by both the red and white rose (in both photographic and ornamental vector work). This shows her continued presence suggesting that she is always subtly involved and present. The red rose is used to represent Doughty's adulterous, promiscuous and manipulative nature.[16] The white lily represents both Bolton and his wife. Their lives and deaths are followed by the flower's journey. The lilies also follow an arch (fig. 2:17) representing a single cycle of rebirth. The lily represents the four stages in this cycle from birth (bud), life (full bloom), death (decay) and then rebirth again (bud). The flowers however are not used as explicit signifiers. While I employ them strategically, their purpose is to permeate and suggest. They accompany shifts in the narrative and gravitate towards meaning by association. In this regard, they are not employed as absolute signifiers of irrefutable meaning.

16. Thus we also see red (scarlet) bled onto her lips, fingernails and clothing.

LILIES IN BUD (DETAIL) PP. 12–13.

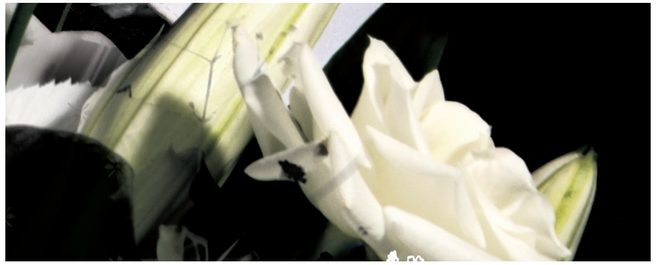


LILIES IN FULL BLOOM (DETAIL) PP. 32–33.

LILIES DECAYED (DETAIL) PP. 34–35.

Fig. 2:17 (above and overleaf) Robyn Joan Wilson. *The lily's process through a cycle of rebirth (details)*. The lily follows a cycle from birth (bud), life (full bloom), death (decay), life (full bloom) and back to rebirth (bud). 2007.

LILIES IN FULL BLOOM (DETAIL) PP. 42-43.



LILIES IN BUD (DETAIL) PP. 72-73.

Dolls

Unlike flowers, dolls used in the text have a fixed meaning that does not develop. In *Last Man Hanging* they symbolize lives lost. The use of dolls in illustration enjoys an extensive tradition of unease, death and displacement. This is explored by artists like Hans Bellmer and Fredrik Ödman (see figures 2:18-19), both of whom deal with amputation and sexuality. The reason for using dolls as a metaphor for loss of life was because of the tension between their genderless inanimate nature and its conflict with the suggestion of life. They are objects that *live* only in the hands of those who use them. When put aside, they *die*. In this regard I see them as signifiers of vulnerability. Dolls are primarily used to show innocence and untimely demise. However the dolls also portray a cold countenance of frozen beauty, a lifeless presence as if they were embalmed or awaiting death. The scenes in which they appear are eerily lit. The dolls are often dismembered, bound or stitched (fig. 2:20). Thus they become metaphors for manipulation, mortuaries and inexplicable, anonymous death.

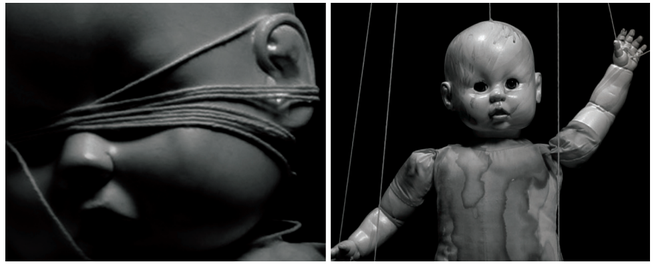
The butterfly as a bracketing metaphor

The butterfly in *Last Man Hanging* represents the soul of Bolton. Like the insect, his life is short-lived, frail and vulnerable. At the same time the image offers hope. It moves in a flicker of brilliant colour across the darkened landscape of the story. The butterfly is frail but intense and brackets certain elements in the text.

Neupert (1995), in his study of narration and closure in the cinema, suggests that bracketing is used in order to enclose a narrative and make it whole. He argues that it is done by employing identical or very similar images or events at the opening and closing sequences of a narrative. The employment of an essentially cinematic device like bracketing allowed me to subtly demarcate sections of the narrative from each other. Bracketing as a device has wide

HANS BELLMER'S *LA POUPÉE* (DETAIL).

FREDRIK ÖDMAN'S *PINOCCHIO DANCE* (DETAIL).



BOUND AND MANIPULATED DOLLS IN *LAST MAN HANGING* (DETAILS).

Fig. 2:18 Hans Bellmer's (1934). *La Poupée (detail)*. Vintage gelatin silver print. Retrieved October 11, 2006, from http://www.artnet.com/artwork/424661764/141144/hans-bellmer-la-poupee.html.

Fig. 2:19 Fredrik Ödman's (n.d.). *Pinocchio Dance (detail)*. Digital Photograph. Retrieved October 11, 2006, from http://www.fredrikodman.com/

Fig. 2:20 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Bound and manipulated dolls (details)*. Digital Photographs of the dolls featured in *Last Man Hanging*. 2007.

use in televisual narrative and can be evidenced in series like The Thomas Cobb Group's *Grey's Anatomy* (n.d.) and in graphic novels like Dave McKean's *Arkham Asylum* (1990).[17]

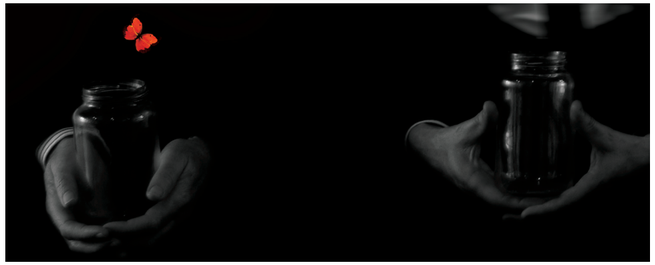
If we trace the progression of the butterfly in *Last Man Hanging* we see it at the opening and closing of the text. When we first encounter it, the insect is a small flicker of colour in a darkened cell. It is seeking freedom in a world defined by newspaper reporting and condemnation (fig. 2:21). As the narrative begins to develop the butterfly disappears, and is lost into the body of the book. During this time Bolton experiences the journey of manipulation, accusation and condemnation. However, after his trial the insect appears again. It is trapped in the jars of eight of the jury members who condemned Bolton to death (see figures 2:22-23). Here the butterfly struggles and dies of suffocation. It represents both the inexplicable demise of these jurors and also reiterates Bolton's execution.[18]

While the butterfly as a metaphor brackets the narrative, it is supported by other, more subtle instances of the containment. An example of this is the use of biblical quotes from Isaiah and Matthew (see figures 2:24-25). These quotes also bracket the text and operate as subtle whispers rather than direct contributors to the narrative. They comment on broader ethical considerations that underpin the story.

17. Burton (2000) suggests that mediums like television are in fact a "*continuous flow*" of narrative (p. 95). Each programme, episode, advertisement and announcement sits within this seamless continuum of information. Because of this, certain devices are used by programmes to draw emphasis to their borders.

18. At the hands of these people, Bolton's life force was suffocated and his freedom was terminated. In the book, the jurors who lived have empty jars where the butterfly is free. Those who die have the insect trapped and suffocating to death.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE BUTTERFLY IN THE OPENING PAGES OF THE BOOK.



THE RE-APPEARANCE OF BUTTERFLIES TOWARDS THE CLOSING OF THE BOOK.

THE DYING BUTTERFLIES AT THE CLOSING OF *LAST MAN HANGING*.

Fig. 2:21 Robyn Joan Wilson. *The introduction of the butterfly metaphor that also serves to bracket the text (detail)*. This illustration is from the opening sequences of *Last Man Hanging* and introduces the reader to the butterfly. 2007.

Fig. 2:22-23 Robyn Joan Wilson. *The re-appearance of the butterfly metaphor (details)*. These two illustrations are from the closing sequences of *Last Man Hanging*. 2007.

THE FIRST BIBLICAL QUOTE FROM ISAIAH IS FEATURED ON THIS PAGE (BELOW THE *RUSTHALL* BARN) IN THE BOOK.

THE LAST BIBLICAL QUOTE FROM MATTHEW IS FEATURED ON THIS PAGE (SUBTLY EMBEDDED ACROSS THE ANGEL'S WINGS) IN THE BOOK.

ISAIAH 43:26
REVIEW THE PAST FOR ME,
LET US ARGUE THE MATTER TOGETHER;
STATE THE CASE FOR YOUR INNOCENCE.

MATTHEW 7:1-2
JUDGE NOT,
THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED.
FOR WITH WHAT JUDGMENT YE JUDGE,
YE SHALL BE JUDGED:
AND WITH WHAT MEASURE YE METE,
IT SHALL BE MEASURED TO YOU AGAIN.

THE TWO BIBLICAL QUOTES FEATURED IN *LAST MAN HANGING*.

Fig. 2:24-25 Robyn Joan Wilson. *Bracketing (details)*. Two illustrations from the opening and closing sequences of *Last Man Hanging*, as well as an enlargement of both quotes. 2007.
These illustrations are designed to subtly frame the narrative and its discourse. The *typographical treatments* of the biblical quotes (present within these two illustrations and shown below them) offer the only similarities. However, I wanted to create two stylistically different illustrations in terms of design, placement and imagery. Keeping these aesthetic and structural issues unrelated may disguise the quotes from the viewers first decoding of the book. However, upon repeated readings, the viewer may discover the quotes and draw connections between the opening and closing of *Last Man Hanging*. Most importantly, the bracketing separates the text from the story's diegesis and homodiegetic voices.

SUMMARY

While a text as complex as *Last Man Hanging* uses many image-based devices to explicate its narration, this section of the exegesis has dealt with two, ornamentation and metaphor. Both profile dominantly in the treatment of the book and both are part of carefully considered paradigms that underpin it.

Ornamentation is treated not as surface decoration but as a method of bringing into concord often antithetical ideas. It is applied to typographic treatments and to illustration as something that updates historical precedents like those established by Beardsley and Clarke. In this regard it uses the decorative to both ornament and to simultaneously create unease. The concerns of ornamentation parallel the concerns of the narrative because ornamentation seeks to find resolution in an environment of contradiction, enigma and contrast.

Metaphor however, operates as a form of weaving that is employed to create connection between elements within the narrative. Its use is suggestive rather than didactic. The use of dolls, flowers and butterflies is driven by a desire to create a visually rich, but enigmatic resonance in the work. This resonance holds sequences of the story together and adds (through reappearance) a visual rhythm to the text. The metaphors speak as a form of visual undercurrent, suggesting meaning and association.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

In writing this exegesis I have considered both methodological approach and key illustrative and narrative issues impacting on the development of *Last Man Hanging*.

In this project, a historical case study was employed so that in acting as both a researcher and creative practitioner I was able to engage with the project from as many perspectives as possible. The aim was to accumulate a rich (if often contradictory) database.

In terms of writing, designing and illustrating the book I was aware of both the need to communicate meaning and the propensity of an illustrated text to be open to multiple decodings.

How we interpret pictures is determined by our personal experience, and the message that we receive is our own. Text is essentially a visual representation of language that has the ability to convey further meaning and emotion through the text's physical properties. An author/illustrator/designer can only suggest meaning. However, it was my purpose to suggest *preferred* meaning. Thus the book presents a chronological narrative that is permeated by the sequential, dark and enigmatic.

Last Man Hanging presents its case in two phases. The first is the troubled and often poetic narrative. The second is the more didactic appendix *Body of Evidence*. In this second section we are taken out of the homodiegetic narrative and presented with data that shaped (and sometimes questioned) the work. The *Body of Evidence* reminds us again that this is not a fictional story. It is a part of our history that resulted in judgement, condemnation, execution... and the loss and destruction of many lives.

It reminds us that this final application of an uncivilized law was as deeply troubled as the idea of capital punishment itself. The taking of the life of a Wanganui farmer, by the state, when evidence was unclear and fraught with supposition and conjecture, resulted in not one death, but many.

It left a son, decades later, still trying to prove his father's innocence. It left legend and supposition so deeply embedded in fact that the two remain inseparable. But most importantly, it left a scar on our national consciousness. This is a troubling thing.

The death of the last man hanged in New Zealand, should not be forgotten.

My book acts as a reminder.

Robyn Joan Wilson
August 2007

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

TIME LINE OF EVENTS

Appendix one: time line of events

introduction

This time line was constructed as a method of arranging and clarifying sequences related to the book's narrative. The extensive profile of events presented were sourced from;

Newspapers

The Wanganui Chronicle and The Wanganui Herald (both of which were dominant newspapers in Wanganui at the time).

The New Zealand Herald.

Published books

Williams' (1998) book titled The Bad, the Very Bad, and the Ugly.

Young's (1998) book titled Guilty on the Gallows: Famous Capital Crimes of New Zealand.

Gee's (1985) book titled Poison: the coward's weapon.

Magazine articles

Investigate Magazine (2001, Jan/Feb).

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Documentaries

A TV One News synopsis on the event called, Hanging Flashback (2007, February 18).

A documentary series titled Epitaph: Last Man Hanged (n.d.).

Interviews

An interview with Gary Gleeson (2005, March 8).

An interview with James Bolton (2007, January 10).

What is listed here are verifiable facts (opinions have been omitted).

1913

Walter James Bolton married Beatrice Mabel Jones in Wanganui.

1933 (AUGUST)

Mrs Bolton saw Dr Alexander Wilson. Her weight from his case notes was 7st 8lb.

1942

Allan William Bolton (Bolton's second eldest son) lived at *Rusthall* until 1942 when he began military training.

1943

Mrs Bolton began experienced insomnia.

1946

Florence Ivy Doughty's mother Constance Jones died of a cerebral haemorrhage (a type of blood clot which is rare), Doughty was a beneficiary of her will.

1947

James Thomas Phillip Bolton (Bolton's eldest son) leased a property neighbouring *Rusthall* farm.

1948

Doughty was a beneficiary of the will, when her father William Henry Jones died of a cerebral haemorrhage, suffering the same fate as his wife under Doughty's care.

1948–9

A pipe was installed from the wool shed to the house in order to supply water from the spring and water tanks. This is significant, as water contamination was considered by the defence as a possible cause for accidental arsenic poisoning.

1949

Doughty's sister, Evelynn Catherine Pull died of cancer under her care.

1950 (DECEMBER)

Dr Ian Kennedy Wilson's case notes showed that Mrs Bolton had a loss of weight. She now weighed 7st 4lb.

Doughty claimed her sister had been dieting for thirty-two years due to her diabetes.

1951

Doughty's uncle, Thomas Collard, died under her care. He died from a cerebral haemorrhage. Collard's nephew, Eric Collard, has long maintained that Doughty killed him, possibly through long term arsenic poisoning.

1951 (FEBRUARY)

Bolton claimed he painted the water tank. There were claims that flaking paint from this tank may have poisoned Mrs Bolton, Bolton himself showed signs of poisoning, his finger nails and hair both contained arsenic deposits. James Thomas Phillip Bolton moved to Cambridge.

1953 (JULY)

On the 12th of July, Mrs Bolton saw Dr A. R. Stone.

1954 (AUGUST)

Mrs Bolton presented the first symptoms relating to arsenic poisoning.

1954 (DECEMBER)

The last recorded purchase of sheep dip from Thomas Hunter Smith (manager of the Farmers Distributing Co., Wanganui) to *Rusthall* occurred in December. Walter Edward Fernie owner of *Rusthall* gave Bolton a £1000 bonus in appreciation of his services.

1955

Dr Wilson's case notes showed again that Mrs Bolton continued to lose weight. She now weighed 7st $4^1/_2$lb.

1955 (JANUARY)

From the 6th to the 11th, the *Wanganui General Hospital* cared for Mrs Bolton. On the 12th, Dr Stone saw Mrs Bolton on the request of Dr Wilson. Doughty admitted to intimate relations with Bolton over a period of three months during this year. In early 1955 he was said to have bought her gifts to the value of £230.

1955 (MARCH)

Mrs Bolton's illness became almost fatal. On the 4th or 5th, Mr and Mrs Bolton went to the beach in the morning, and had ice-cream in the evening (even though she was a diabetic). On the 5th or 6th, at 4am Bolton urgently called Dr Heinrich Schmidt and stressed the seriousness of Mrs Bolton's condition. Dr Schmidt saw Mrs Bolton. She was vomiting and complained of stomach pains. He admitted her to the *Wanganui General Hospital*. He thought she may have been suffering from diabetes complications. It took four or five days for Mrs Bolton to be restored to normal health. Dr C. P. Powles, (senior visiting physician, *Wanganui General Hospital*) saw Mrs Bolton twice after she was admitted.

Cecil Constance Hartley said that her mother (Mrs Bolton) could not bear bright light on her eyes and had complained about her eyes generally.

1955 (JUNE)

Dr Powles, saw Mrs Bolton again at the request of Dr Wilson.

1955 (SEPTEMBER)

Dr Powles, saw Mrs Bolton again. On the 13th of September, Dr Y. L. Jackson diagnosed Mrs Bolton with influenza at *7 Kepa Street*. He gave her a sedative injection and referred her to Dr Wilson. The recurrence of symptoms were of similar character to those experienced in March.

On the 15th, Dr Wilson was called by Bolton to see Mrs Bolton at *7 Kepa Street*; she had an attack of vomiting. She was in bed, flushed and retching with signs of dehydration. *A feature of arsenic poisoning is that on an empty stomach a person continues retching*. Thirst and dehydration could not be relieved by drink because it promoted further vomiting and dehydration. Bolton was present during Dr Wilson's visit and diagnosis.

Russell Bain Jack (substation operator) had received a call from Mrs Bolton who asked him to tell her husband at the wool shed to come home, as she was ill. He passed the message to Bolton who ran home immediately.

1955 (NOVEMBER)

Leo Charles McCarthy (surgeon of Wanganui) operated on Mrs Bolton removing her gall bladder. He also conducted an extensive examination of her internal organs with the naked eye and saw nothing abnormal that would account for the symptoms she had. Mrs Bolton was being cared for by Hartley, her daughter. Bolton said he was going to buy groceries, but then admitted to Mrs Bolton when she questioned him, that he had been to *7 Kepa Street*.

1955 (DECEMBER)

Doughty claimed her affair with Bolton had ceased long before now, and was never renewed.

1956 (JANUARY)

In January there was an epidemic of vomiting and diarrhea in Wanganui. However, Dr Wilson said that Mrs Bolton's symptoms were different from others. The sheep dip was emptied some time between January and February. On the 2nd, Mrs Bolton again had a recurrence of the severe symptoms that had occurred in the March 1955 incident. Mrs Bolton had a worsening of peripheral neuritis, it degenerated to a poly neuritis (affecting many nerves) until she was almost completely paralysed. On the 3rd or 4th, Bolton called Dr Wilson, and said his wife's attack of vomiting had returned. On the 5th, Dr Wilson sent Mrs Bolton a prescription by telephone. On the 6th, Dr Wilson visited Mrs Bolton, she was still ill. She was flushed and retching but not bringing up vomit. He ordered morphine-like tablets to quiet her bowel and ordered that she take plenty of fluids. Bolton was present during the diagnosis.

On the 11th, Dr Wilson visited Mrs Bolton again. She was seriously ill. He admitted her to *Braemar Hospital*. There she received intravenous fluids, her vomiting stopped but she got worse. Phyllis Marjorie Ardell (psychiatric nurse), Olga Marie Coughlin (nursing aide), Esme Valerie Newport (registered nurse) and Christabel Tye (physiotherapist) were the nurses that cared for Mrs Bolton while she was at *Braemar Hospital*. They said her condition was that of a dying woman. Dr Wilson then transferred her to *Palmerston North Hospital*. Mrs Bolton had taken out two life insurance policies on the lives of two of her sons; these policies were signed over to Bolton while she was in *Palmerston North Hospital*.

1956 (FEBRUARY)

Mrs Bolton saw Dr J. D. Willis (senior physician and neurologist, *Palmerston North Hospital*) who attempted to discover the cause of her peripheral neuritis, but he was unsuccessful.

1956 (MARCH)

According to Dr Willis; Mrs Bolton's condition had not deteriorated at all during the time she was in *Palmerston North Hospital*. The theory was that, Mrs Bolton's deterioration in *Palmerston North Hospital* was due to extensive examinations and not being fed as excessively as she had been in *Braemar Hospital*. On the 8th, Mrs Bolton returned to *Braemar Hospital*. She weighed about 5st according to Mrs Ardell (a psychiatric nurse). Her condition was poor, she couldn't do anything by herself and could hardly talk, instead she whispered that she had a tightness round the chest, however her brain was still working. Bolton was warned that Mrs Bolton's end was not far off. She was fed every possible occasion on a nutritious, easily digested diet and given drugs. She was out of danger ten days later. Mrs Bolton's symptoms levelled out until the 10th or 11th when a steady improvement began. Dr Powles thought Mrs Bolton was suffering from a violent form of gastro-enteritis,

caused by contaminated food. He treated her, but it didn't work. Her recovery was largely due to her co-operative attitude towards all forms of treatment.

On the 24th, sheep dipping occurred at *Rusthall* farm.

1956 (APRIL)

Mrs Bolton had improved sufficiently to be removed from her bed. She made every attempt to get better. On the 13th, Mrs Bolton visited Dr Wilson at his surgery, she complained of symptoms of neuritis of the extremities. She was put in the care of the four nurses at *Braemar Hospital* from April to June. Bolton visited her frequently.

1956 (MAY)

Whilst at *Braemar Hospital*, Mrs Bolton got physiotherapy from Dr Tye, to get her hands, feet and muscles working properly. This treatment helped her recovery and whilst there she had not vomited.

Bolton admitted that he was intimate with Doughty in the months before June.

1956 (JUNE)

Again, Mrs Bolton experienced a recurrence of all the severe symptoms that had occurred in the March 1955 incident. On the 2nd, Mrs Bolton was discharged from *Braemar Hospital*, she was quite well, cheerful and looking forward to going home. However, she had to walk with the aide of a walking stick. She accepted that she had to go to her sister's house (*7 Kepa Street*) because she was told she wouldn't manage being at *Rusthall* by herself. At 5:30pm Dr Wilson received a call from Bolton asking if he would come see Mrs Bolton at *7 Kepa Street*.

Mrs Bolton was flushed and vomiting. Dr Wilson thought it was excitement and emotional strain caused by leaving the hospital and gave her an injection to quieten her. From the 3rd to the 31st, Dr Wilson visited Mrs Bolton regularly. Mrs Bolton had two short episodes of vomiting. Because of the attack of vomiting on the 2nd of June and the recurrence of the previous worrying symptoms on the 7th June, emotional upset was dismissed as cause of illness.

1956 (JULY)

Mrs Bolton had an acute attack on the 8th, then the recurrence of all the previous symptoms on the 10th. Dr Wilson visited Mrs Bolton again, she was in bed, looking flushed, distressed and in a condition similar to January 1956. Dr Wilson gave her a sedative and vitamin B1. Mrs Bolton on no occasion blamed food or drink for her illness. On the 9th or 10th, at 8am Bolton called Dr Wilson to say Mrs Bolton was recovering.

Mrs Bolton drank tea that she said tasted *queer* or the milk had slightly turned. Later that day Doughty called and asked that Dr Wilson come see Mrs Bolton. Mrs Bolton was severely ill. Wilson gave Mrs Bolton an injection of morphine and had her re-admitted to *Wanganui General Hospital*. On the 10th, Garth Grierson Holdaway (registrar at *Wanganui General Hospital*) said that Mrs Bolton's condition was that of a dying woman. He also said a staff member could have administered her arsenic through injection but that would have been done without authority, and very unlikely as he was with her most of the time.

Dr Phillip Patrick Lynch hypothesised that on the 10th of July; in the morning Mrs Bolton may have been given a deadly dose of arsenic prior to her death.

On the 11th of July at 1am, Mrs Bolton was 65 years old when she died in *Wanganui General Hospital*.

Bolton had paid £500 in medical expenses for the caring of his wife. Bolton's bank balance was £2556 at the time of her death. On the 12th, Cegric Howard Hoskins (house surgeon at *Wanganui General Hospital*) received consent to a post-mortem examination from Bolton. Bolton at all times expressed himself willing that the post-mortem should be carried out. Other family members had objected.

At 7pm Bolton was at *7 Kepa Street* with Doughty when he was told there was suspected poisoning. Detective Sergeant B. B. Bevege took possession of several articles and two bottles of medicine. On the 13th, Bolton made a statement about his wife's previous health. Detective Sergeant Bevege searched *Rusthall* farm, and took a sample of sheep dip powder he found in the shed. On the 23rd, Mr Haggitt said that Dr Lynch and Dr Leslie Harold Davis (analytical chemist, toxicological branch, Dominion Laboratory) had already made up their mind that Mrs Bolton's death was due to murder.

On the 24th, Sub-inspector James J. Murray arrived in Wanganui and started the investigation with detectives on the assumption of murder.

Dr Powles was present at the post-mortem. Dr Leo Sefton did the post-mortem and said death was due to severe dehydration. A lack of reason for this dehydration led to a suspicion of poisoning. No death certificate was issued. There was however no inflammation on the stomach, bowel and alimentary tract at the time of the post-mortem. Certain organs (her brain, lungs, kidneys, liver, stomach and intestines), contents of the stomach, urine, hair and nail samples were sent to the *Dominion Laboratory* for analysis. On the 25th, another search of *Rusthall* farm was undertaken. Bolton was asked about his wife's diary. He said he didn't think she had one. Investigators removed all forty-four bottles from the kitchen cupboard except for some olive oil and a lotion. Seven bottles of turpentine were found in the shed. No medicine bottles were found in the kitchen cupboard, at *Rusthall*.

On the 26th, the diary of Mrs Bolton was apparently burned. Bolton was questioned again about his wife's diary and he recalled her getting a diary for Christmas. He claimed he had never seen inside it, or had been aware of its use in recent months. Bolton called Doughty to ask for Mrs Bolton's diary and Doughty said she had burnt it on impulse, *despite the fact that Bolton had not told her to do so*.

1956 (AUGUST)

On the 13th, Detective Sergeant Bevege pointed out to Bolton that whenever Mrs Bolton got ill, he or Doughty was always around her. Bolton said it was his duty as her husband to be with her at all times during her illness. Detective Sergeant Bevege asked Bolton about the purchase of poison. It became obvious that he did not associate the sheep dip found in the shed at *Rusthall*, with poison.

Sometime after Mrs Bolton's death, Dr Davis found the presence of $1^1/_2$ grains of arsenic in Mrs Bolton's submitted organs (five grains is considered fatal). On the 22nd, Dr Davis also examined a sample of yellow sheep dip submitted to him by the police (Sub-inspector Murray). He found it contained 15% or 16% soluble arsenic. In the trial, Detective Sergeant Bevege gave him a packet of sheep dip from *Rusthall*, Dr Davis showed how it could be added to tea or any other drink and how it made little difference to the taste or smell of the

drink. Dr Lynch said the presence of arsenic in Mrs Bolton's hair and fingernails confirmed that the arsenic was introduced over a long period of time.

1956 (SEPTEMBER)

On the 6th, Sub-inspector Murray and Detective Thompson were shown money hidden in the garden at *Rusthall*. On the 11th, Detective Sergeant Bevege and Sub-inspector Murray searched the coal shed for bottles.

Bolton denied any relationship with Doughty, or buying her any gifts. Later Bolton admitted to intimacy with Doughty when his wife had been in hospital, but not since her discharge in June 1956. Fifty-five medicine bottles were found in the kitchen cupboard at *Rusthall*. Doughty and Bolton were interviewed for the last time before Bolton's arrest. During this interview Doughty said to Bolton, *"I told you I only wanted friendship. You should not have dragged me down like this."* To this Bolton replied, *"Well, I suppose I could have gone up the street and got what I wanted."* Superintendent F. N. Aplin told Bolton it would be better for all concerned if he left Doughty alone.

1956 (OCTOBER)

Ernest Lawrence Fletcher Buxton (a bacteriologist) took samples of water from the sheep dip and the cold water tap in the bathroom at *Rusthall*. They were analysed and arsenic was found. He also catalogued all the bottles in the cupboards. Soil tests from earth forty-four feet below the sheep dip pit, found lethal doses of arsenic in every pound of earth.

1956 (NOVEMBER)

On the 14th, Leonard Storkey Spackman (forensic scientist of Auckland) took a soil sample from *Rusthall* farm. During the trial the Crown had to prove four things:

1. That death was due to arsenical poisoning.
2. The administration or the taking of arsenic was not due to an accident or suicide.
3. When the Crown had eliminated those two possibilities it followed that the administration of arsenic must have been murder.
4. The accused was the guilty person who had brought about the death of his wife.

26th Monday (first day of the trial)

Bolton entered a plea of not guilty. Twenty-three jurors sought exemption, of these fifteen were excused and eight were refused. The Bolton trial started and there were thirty spectators in the court that morning. Mr McCarthy said Bolton alone had access to arsenic (in sheep dip) whilst his wife was ill, and poisoned her on seven occasions. The Crown offered as motive, adultery between Bolton and Doughty and perhaps a money motive as well. Dr Wilson said that throughout Mrs Bolton's illness, Bolton was always expressing an attitude of concern and consideration. Court adjourned at 5pm until 10am on the 27th of November.

27th Tuesday (second day of the trial)

The trial resumed at 9:30am. Fifty people were present in the public gallery by noon. Nine medical witnesses testified confirming Mrs Bolton died from arsenic poisoning. Fifteen of the twenty-three Crown witnesses were heard. Dr Schmidt was first, then Dr Wilson, Dr Jackson, Dr Stone and Dr Willis. Dr Powles, Dr Holdaway and Dr Hoskins gave postmortem evidence for the Crown. The analyst had shown that arsenic was contained in Mrs Bolton's hair, her fingernails and toenails. This proved that arsenic was taken over a two to six year

period. In court, Dr Davis showed how arsenic could be added to tea or any other drink and how it made little difference to the taste or smell of the drink. He was cross-examined extensively on technical details, and admitted there could be a 5% error margin in the six organs examined, and if the sheep dip was unprocessed it would be obvious in the taste and smell of the drink. Dr Lynch found no diseases of the heart, kidneys or brain that might have caused her death. Mrs Ardell (psychiatric nurse) found that Bolton was a friendly person. Dr Lynch stated that when arsenic entered the body it entered the blood stream and was widely distributed to all the tissues of the body. He stated that higher concentrations would be seen in the liver. He also stated that the amount of arsenic found in Mrs Bolton's body would be several times the $1^1/_2$ grains found in the organs analysed. During her illness excretion took place from the body, this vomiting removed a large proportion from her stomach; any in her bowel would have been excreted in diarrhoea and through her urine. He stated that the arsenic would be excreted from up to fourteen days after taking the poison. He concluded that prior to death, Mrs Bolton could have received fifty to sixty grains of arsenic. The case continued at 9:30am on the 28th of November.

28th Wednesday (third day of the trial)
A jury member, Mr T. Sutherland was stricken with a gastric complaint and was unable to continue after lunch. A decision was to be made on the 29th as to whether they would continue with eleven jurors, start a fresh trial, or see if he was fit to return. After the juror didn't recover Bolton and the Crown agreed that the trial could go on with eleven jurors.

Suicide was discounted as a reason for Mrs Bolton's death as Dr Lynch had never heard of a suicide resulting from repeated doses of arsenic. He said, it would be painful and distressing, the symptoms following the recovery were so terrible as to exclude the possibility.

29th Thursday (forth day of the trial)
Juror, Mr T. Sutherland, came back to the jury box recovered (and more comfortable chairs were given to the jury). Forty-six spectators attended the trial, and by the afternoon there were more than one hundred people seated and several people standing. Dr Lynch was cross-examined and was asked if arsenic could be stored in the body. He said that if it was only a small dose it could, because if it were a large dose the body would react and expel it through vomiting. Small doses of continued use of arsenic according to Dr Lynch would not show the same drastic symptoms as Mrs Bolton experienced. Hartley, Bolton's daughter from Bulls, said it was custom at her house to have a cup of tea in the morning and occasionally at night; Bolton usually made it for Mrs Bolton. Hartley also said it was twenty years since her mother had made up the hair wash containing arsenic and two years since she made a flax concoction. Noel Arthur Hartley (Cecil's son) used to work at *Rusthall* for five years and said that sheep dip was left over night to settle, sediment formed on the bottom of the sheep dip pit but the liquid above was quite clear, and that some sheep had died after being dipped. Joy Emma Bolton, a daughter-in-law of Mrs Bolton, said she saw a pictorial diary on a visit to *Rusthall*. She opened it and realised it was Mrs Bolton's personal diary and replaced it. She claims that she saw the diary in the same place while Mrs Bolton was in hospital.

Ian George Bolton (Bolton's son, and Emma's husband) told the court about an incident at *Rusthall* a few days after Mrs Bolton's death, when he and Jim asked their father to explain Mrs Bolton's death, Bolton replied there were some suspicions. Ian then asked if she had left a will. Bolton produced a letter written by Mrs Bolton only to be opened at her death. There was also some discussion over money in the garden and Jim had been annoyed with his father. Bolton had said the money belonged to him and Mrs Bolton, he offered

to show them where the money was but they declined. There had already been publicity about Mrs Bolton's death in newspapers and it had been widely talked about, this caused embarrassment to the members of the family.

Patricia Winifred Bolton (Bolton's daughter-in-law) had come to see Doughty before Bolton's arrest. Bolton said that Ian and Joy had been talking too much about Mrs Bolton's death and advised her to say nothing that she could not hold up in court.

Grace Evelyn Cook (Bolton's daughter) showed signs of stress when she entered the witness box and was permitted to sit down while giving her evidence. When Bolton suggested suicide as a possibility she did not believe this nor did she feel her father did it but she claimed that her aunt Doughty had committed the murder. Bolton did not think so.

On a later occasion Cook refused to go to *7 Kepa Street* as she thought Doughty had something to do with her mothers death, Bolton replied *"I suppose your aunt and I did it between us?"* Bolton later denied saying anything to that effect. On leaving *Rusthall*, her father supposedly gave Cook an envelope containing £50. She felt like she was being bought.

Robert Aaron Cook (son of Grace Cook) told of an occasion at *Rusthall* where his grandfather (Bolton) had given him sheep dip powder to preserve opossum skins. Leonie Alicia Lilith Pointon (a niece of Mrs Bolton's) who lived at *7 Kepa Street* was giving evidence when the court adjourned at 5:00pm. The trial continued at 9:30am the next day.

30th Friday (fifth day of the trial)
One hundred and twenty spectators were present. Under cross-examination Doughty said that Mrs Bolton had commented that her tea tasted *queer* or *funny* and had complained of a bitter taste in her mouth. *This is a symptom of prolonged arsenic poisoning*. Doughty continued by stating that she knew her sister had been in the habit of mixing up medicinal preparations and hair lotions, some of which contained liquid sheep dip. Doughty was fifty-nine and a widow. She had helped to care for her sister both at *Rusthall* and at her own home at *7 Kepa Street*. She outlined the tea drinking habits in her own home and at *Rusthall*. She claimed that Bolton had called her to ask for Mrs Bolton's diary and that she had thrown it onto an open fire. She told the court that she burnt it on impulse and that Bolton did not tell her to burn it.

Doughty had admitted to intimate relations with Bolton over a period of three months in 1955. Doughty said her sister had been dieting for thirty-two years due to her diabetes. Money matters were later discussed, and it was found that Mrs Bolton had taken out two life insurance policies on the lives of two of her sons. These policies were signed over to Bolton while she was in *Palmerston North Hospital*. The amount of £657 was made out to Bolton and deposited in his *ANZ* bank account.

Thomas Nevil Lynch (a bank accountant) took the stand, and showed Bolton's banking activities in the last three years (from 1953 to 1956). The last recorded purchase of sheep dip from Mr Smith (manager of the Farmers Distributing Co., Wanganui) to *Rusthall* was in December 1954. He also said of Bolton in the seventeen or eighteen years of knowing him, that he had come to respect his judgement and ability as a farmer and held him in very high regard as a man.

Detective Sergeant Bevege took the bench and said he had statements made by Bolton giving details of Mrs Bolton's health during her lifetime. He claimed that he had spent his life

savings trying to get his wife well. He also claimed to have no knowledge of a diary. On a second visit to *Rusthall*, Bolton had produced two large jars containing £1200, two smaller jars containing £160 and an envelope containing £50, together totalling a sum of £1410. He also admitted knowledge of his wife's diary due to Doughty's statement. The jury heard that at a later date just before the police were about to interview Doughty, Bolton told her not to say anything without a solicitor. Court was adjourned at 5pm and scheduled to continue at 9:30 on Monday the 3rd of December.

1956 (DECEMBER)

3rd Monday (sixth day of the trial)

Mr Haggitt sought an adjournment when it was learnt that the Crown might be calling fresh evidence, but the judge would not allow the representatives of the Crown to bring this forward.

Detective Sergeant Bevege had visited Bolton ten times before he was arrested. Bolton was asked what he thought may have caused his wife's death, and the only thing he could think of was that he painted the roof of the water tank five years ago and perhaps the paint was flaking off. It was proven that Bolton had lied about the missing diary and knew it had been destroyed. The court adjourned at 1:45pm, and resumed on the 4th of December at 9:30 am.

4th Tuesday (seventh day of the trial)

The defence made their opening statement; they said the Crown had failed to prove without doubt that Mrs Bolton's death was caused by murder. The Crown had also not investigated the possibility of accidental poisoning. The defence claimed that Sub-inspector Murray arrived in Wanganui and started the investigation with detectives on the assumption of murder. The pathologist thought in his opinion, that the arsenic was administrated over a period of time. Arsenic contamination of water supply was not uncommon. He stated that there had been two other cases in Wanganui.

James Thomas Phillip Bolton (Bolton's oldest son) said water from four water tanks came from the shed roof and the spring down a steep hill by the farm sheep dip pit, near the wool shed; drinking water went to the cold water tap in the kitchen and was piped directly from the wool shed.

Doughty drank brandy and milk to get to sleep, and had destroyed one bottle so that police didn't think she was drinking. No arsenic was found on or inside the bottle.

A sample of Bolton's hair, finger nails and toe nails were taken by Dr Hutchison, both the finger nails and hair showed evidence of arsenic poisoning. However his toenails didn't contain any of the chemical. It was unknown if arsenic could be externally absorbed by a man dipping sheep, although this would explain why Bolton's fingernails contained arsenic.

Allan William Bolton (Bolton's second eldest son) lived at *Rusthall* until 1942 when he left to begin military training. As long as he could remember his mother was always ill. She wrote to him during the war and complained of rheumatism of the hands and feet.

Harold Sanderson, general farm hand at *Rusthall*, noticed numerous medicine bottles with handwritten labels. He also said the spring was over grown, unfenced and just below the sheep dip pit and he would not drink from it. Leonard Storkey Spackman said that it would be very difficult for the general public to recreate Dr Davis' method for making clear arsenic. In

a wet season, arsenic would just flow in and out of the sump. But in dry months, the arsenic would wash into the sump and not escape due to low water levels. Therefore during dry months arsenic would probably be at its highest level of contamination in the sump.

5th Wednesday (eighth day of the trial)
Dr G. H. Robertson suggested that chronic arsenic poisoning; not acute arsenic poisoning had killed Mrs Bolton. Dr Robertson (when previously working in Wanganui) said he recalled three cases in Wanganui where accidental arsenic poisoning took place. However, they were never fatal. The first was an occasion where garden spray leaked into preserved eggs. In the second occasion, birds poisoned with contaminated wheat had died in a water tank, contaminating it with arsenic. In this instance the mother of the family got the sickest because she drank the most water. On the third occasion, paint on the roof of a water tank had crumbled away and got into the water. Another instance of accidental poisoning he told of was evidenced in the report of the *Royal Commission* on the outbreak of accidental poisoning from contaminated beer in Lancashire, where the women got more ill than the men.

Dr Sefton had described Mrs Bolton's stomach as thin and withered during the post-mortem. This and other signs he described were not the signs of acute arsenic poisoning but of chronic arsenic poisoning. Dr Robertson ruled out the possibility of acute arsenic poisoning, as the intestines, bowl and stomach were not inflamed at the time of the postmortem and also because of Mrs Bolton's history of indigestion. Dr Brown said arsenic could be absorbed externally. It can be absorbed through the skin if soaked for seven hours. Hair takes twenty hours and nails take sixty to seventy hours soaking in an arsenic bath to absorb traceable quantities of the poison. Walter Edward Fernie owner of *Rusthall*, had leased the property to Bolton for twenty-eight years. He said he had always found Bolton to be a kind person. Bolton's salary as a farm manager at *Rusthall* was £8-£9 per week.

6th Thursday (ninth day, the final day of the trial)
The jury paid a visit to *Rusthall* in the morning. There were forty to sixty people in court. Thirty-six witnesses had been called by the Crown and eight by the defence. All evidence was finished and the counsel commenced their final addresses at 10:30am. The jury were told the question before them was one of murder (choosing acute arsenic poisoning, meant that short lethal doses were given to Mrs Bolton by Bolton) or *no murder* (choosing chronic arsenic poisoning, which meant that arsenic was administered over a long period by the water tank at *Rusthall* or by other accidental means). The jury left at 3:20pm and returned at 5:30pm. It took them two hours and ten minutes to reach a verdict of guilty.

Bolton gripped the dock when he heard the verdict and when asked why he thought the sentence of death should not be passed upon him, Bolton answered in a firm clear voice: *"I plead not guilty, sir"* The Court Crier called for silence when the sentence was passed. The judge said: *"since you have been convicted of murder I am required by law to pass sentence of death upon you. I sentence you accordingly to death as prescribed by this statute."* The Bolton trial ended and the jury were freed from jury service for seven years.

1957 (FEBRUARY)
An appeal was made on two grounds. The first was that there was misdirection or failure to direct by the trial judge. The second was that the verdict of the jury was unreasonable or could not be supported having regard to the evidence. The *Appeal Court* replied *"upon a careful review of all the evidence we see no reason for holding that the verdict is an unreasonable*

one or one that cannot be supported having regard to the evidence. In the result the appeal must be dismissed." So on the 1st of February the appeal was dismissed. The decision of the *Appeal Court* was unanimous.

On the 18th, a minister had been with Bolton since 4pm. A short service was held in Bolton's cell. The sheriff called at Bolton's cell at 6:24pm. At 6:27pm Bolton appeared behind the prison superintendent and a minister and was escorted up the steps of the scaffold by prison officials. The Sheriff of Auckland asked Bolton if he had anything to say why the sentence of the court should not be carried out, Bolton said nothing. Bolton was hanged at *Mt Eden Prison* at 6:30pm. An hour later, the case was opened by Auckland coroner, Mr A. Addison who found Bolton died from a complete fracture of the vertebrae column as a result of being hanged. Bolton was the first murderer to be hanged in Auckland since December 1955, and the eighth since the death penalty was reintroduced.
Later he was also known as the last.

POST BOLTON'S EXECUTION

Bolton was cremated in Auckland at *Waikumete Cemetery* on February 19th, 1957. His ashes were brought down from Auckland to Wanganui by James Thomas Phillip Bolton (Bolton's eldest son), and were buried on March 11th, 1957 in *Aramoho Cemetery* in a shared plot (Block E, Row 12, 717 and 718) with his wife.

Contradictory evidence posited by *Investigate Magazine (2001, Jan/Feb)* and the author's interview with James Bolton suggests that Bolton's death was not immediate and that Doughty had tried to commit suicide. Following her first attempt, there were also a series of unexplained deaths.

Doughty appears to have attempted suicide, possibly leaving a full confession on a table, saying that Mrs Bolton had died because of her and that Bolton had nothing to do with it. In light of this new evidence the police considered re-opening the case but the family objected, stating that no good could come from it, as all concerned were dead.

The next day, Sub-inspector Murray, the man in charge of the Bolton case, committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. The death certificate for Sub-inspector Murray read: *"self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head while the balance of his mind was disturbed."*

Sometime following the execution and presumably after Doughty attempted suicide, the judge, Justice Gresson and eight of the twelve jurors died.

Doughty died at sixty-two years of age at her home (*7 Kepa Street*) from a cerebral haemorrhage on November 19th, 1959. She was cremated on November 21st, at *Aramoho Cemetery* and her ashes were buried in the *Old Town Cemetery* on December 12th, in her husbands family plot (L(eft), N(orth), Row 31, 123 feet from the inside path.

APPENDIX TWO

INTERVIEW WITH JAMES BOLTON

Appendix two: interview with James Bolton

Wilson, R., J. (2007, January 10). *James Bolton standing outside Mt Eden Prison*. Auckland: private collection of Robyn Joan Wilson.

A TRANSCRIPT OF ANSWERS TO THE FIRST INTERVIEW WITH JAMES BOLTON (SON OF WALTER JAMES BOLTON) TO THE AUTHOR. DEVONPORT, AUCKLAND: JANUARY 10TH 2007.

"She (Doughty) was always there, and she lied. There were a couple of occasions when she would cover her tracks by saying that my father had made the tea, but it was her that made the tea. If they had gone back and investigated, they would have found that five people have actually died, my mother was the fifth, in the same house in her care."

"What it was, was over a will. My mother's mother had made my father, administrator executive of her trust for the will. Remember Doughty says, he paid for the roof, he paid for the plumbing, he paid for a new carpet. Because he was executive of the trust, that covered the house."

"Evelynn died, that's the other sister. She inherits the house, she gets the house after the will was heard, (and) three months later she becomes ill and dies of cancer. So I rang Sprott up, Jim Sprott was a forensic scientist and (Leonard Storkey) Spackman's partner. So I rang him up and I asked him. I said would it have been possible back in the forties, if a person was being poisoned by arsenic and an x-ray was taken of their kidneys or liver. Do you think a (arsenical) gravel build up, could be mistaken for cancer? You know what, he says, you've got one sharp mind, he says, it would have been very easy."

"They never found any arsenic on my father, and tried to maintain that he had made it from sheep dip, (but) they were both being poisoned. They were trying to kill both of them (Mr and Mrs Bolton). He's sick at the same time (as Mrs Bolton) for about two months. It was nothing to do with the sheep dip. The same address (*7 Kepa Street*) turns up in the Bolton trial, its on my birth certificate in Palmerston North also again turns up in a case in 1964 on the Margaret Murray Doull trial (Doull is one of New Zealand's most prolific poisoners from the sixties). Notice that in the (Bolton) trial Doughty is also known to the family as aunty Doull. Look at 1964 and look at 1956 and you'll find the same poison, the same technique and the same method, everything, used. You'll also find, that in 1955 poison was purchased under the name Doull, it's in the Doull trial. The one in Whangarei (Doull) was getting the poison for the one down there (Doughty). In the (Doull) trial, it says that she's travelling down the line, she goes to Napier; the same time as my mother and Doughty come up from Wanganui to Napier. Doull was down there and they were just around the corner from each other at the same time. So basically what I believe happened was that Doughty was the one that killed my mother."

"Later on, I met an ambulance driver (John Humphrey), now he told me that he knew a senior constable who was on the case at the time (Constable H. Flynn, now deceased), who had told him that he attended Doughty's first attempted suicide. He (Humphrey) wasn't the ambulance driver on the day but he knew about the letter, the confession that she had left on the table. That day the police were brought in to check out homicide suicide. Because it was six months after my father finally was executed, she tries to commit suicide, leaving a full confession on the table, saying it was her, that my mother had died because of her and that my father had nothing to do with it. Coincidentally it so happens the next day, Sub-inspector Murray, the man who is in charge, pulls a gun from his draw and shoots himself in the head. What I believe happened, is that they rung him and said, we got it wrong the old girl's just tried to commit suicide and left a confession at the scene. The death certificate for Sub inspector Murray reads: self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head while the balance of mind was unstable. So that tells you six months out from a major murder trial and investigation

that blew the country to pieces, what unbalanced his mind? What he didn't have, or the fact that he discovered that he had got it wrong? Which ever way, it shows that his handling of the case was not proper."

"Have a look at his (Bolton's) death certificate, do you notice there's no doctors signature on it? A death certificate has to be signed by the doctor present. I've spoken to people that were in the prison. What I found out happened is that they [indecipherable], pulled the lever, he dropped, but because he was so sedated his body was limp, they looked down the hole and saw no struggling from asphyxiation, so cut the rope. Then the doctor went down to certify the death, but finds a pulse. Once that rope has been cut, he (Bolton) falls back under inmate category and he's got to be given medical assistance immediately, and to put him back up on the gallows you need another warrant signed by parliament, by the prime minister. So they couldn't just string him back up and do it again, they had to wait for the warrant from parliament."

"In that period of time they hid him in the pound, now everyone believed that he was dead, but you have a look at the crematorium notice, it says that the body came in there, you know, and they handled him on that day. I went to *Battersby Funeral Directors*, and I have it in black-and-white writing, they never handled the body of Walter James Bolton, signed, by them. They have a record of all the others (sentenced to death) by not my father. And he said, no he was a special, and had a twenty-four hour guard on his body, but because the date the body arrived was later, they couldn't sign for (receiving) it."

"In the paper it writes up the next morning, Walter James Bolton hanged, but that was pre-written, because it was always a certainty. Because the execution happened at six o'clock at night, because there's going to be no one in the office (at the prison and also at the crematorium), the paper work had to be done the day before. But the doctor didn't sign the (death) certificate, and *Battersby Funeral Directors* didn't handle the body. It never happened on that date. He had been hidden, in the prison, under a different name, and I think he was under the name Rodney McNeil, you'll find that there is non-release. There are three McNeils in there at the time; one there is no release papers for. So what I assume they did, is they had to have an accountability for him being there, so they fabricated the name, Rodney McNeil. They then preformed it (another hanging) in the morning, not at night. They brought him out in the morning, instead of the normal time at night, so people wouldn't click. And went to hang him again. That's the reason why there was a conflict in the paper of what happened, one said it was a smooth execution, the other said it was horrific."

"This is what they covered (up), Doull had killed other people, both of them had (Doughty and Doull). That other people had paid their crimes for. Not just my father. There were others, look at the case of Arthur [indecipherable], in each case a mysterious woman stands up and testifies. It shows you that there's something wrong, and I believe that in 1964 they knew how wrong they had got it, when *National* was in power. They didn't want the public to know what it had done. That they had hanged another man at least, plus other people had been put in prison and psychological treatment, others locked in prison, because of these two women. A number of poisoners were done by them, that other people had paid the price. So, they get rid of all the evidence and cover up all their tracks. The Wanganui papers were bombarded with hoards of people saying this is an atrocity, this is an outrage, there's no way that he (Bolton) did this. Anyone who knew him knew he didn't do it."

"(Another thing,) a condemned man cannot be buried in a public cemetery, he's not allowed to be. (But my father is buried) next to the woman that he's supposed to have murdered. Obviously they knew perfectly well that he did not commit it (murder)."

What if he said before he had died, that he wants to be buried with his wife?

"They wouldn't do it mate. If he had poisoned his wife, murdered his wife, they wouldn't put him in the same grave to hers. That's sacrilege. (It would be) morally wrong and sacrilege towards the church. But because it was so well known that he didn't commit that murder, half of them knew he hadn't done it. It had to be so well known, unquestionable."

Interview conducted by Robyn Joan Wilson
2007, January 10.