

***The Letter that Cannot be Sent:
Exploring fiction writing as a means of
sense-making and truth-telling.***

***An Exegesis:
Narrative Cure and the Writing of A Girl Called Frank
by
Anne Bradley***

2018

Student ID: 16949341

Primary supervisor: Siobhan Harvey

An exegesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Creative Writing

Centre for Creative Writing,
School of Language and Culture

Table of Contents

Attestation of Authorship	4
Acknowledgements	5
Intellectual Property Rights	6
Confidential Material	7
Abstract	8
Exegesis: <i>Narrative cure and the writing of A Girl Called Frank</i>	10
References	35
Bibliography	37

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 (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgments), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

Candidate's signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anne Bradley", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and includes a small circle at the end of the last name.

Anne Bradley

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks go to my supervisor, Siobhan Harvey, for her patience and encouragement, and for the focussed and constructive criticism which enabled me to learn and grow as a writer.

My grateful thanks also to my colleagues, Mark Wilson and Peter Richardson, who supported me in fulfilling my dream of completing this course of study.

Intellectual Property rights

- 1) All intellectual property, including copyright, is retained by the candidate in the content of the candidate's exegesis. For the removal of doubt, publication by the candidate of this or any derivative work does not change the intellectual property rights of the candidate in relation to the exegesis.
- 2) I confirm that my exegesis does not contain plagiarised material or material for which the copyright or other intellectual property belongs to a third party.

Confidential Material

- 1) The content of the candidate's thesis is confidential for commercial reasons, that is, the possible publication by the candidate of the thesis, or a derivative of it, as a work of creative fiction for sale.
- 2) This exegesis relates to and describes that thesis, and confidentiality is retained in it for that reason.
- 3) This confidentiality remains until after any commercial publication.
- 4) For the removal of doubt, publication does not change the intellectual property rights of the candidate of this or any derivative work.

Abstract

Writers of women's literary fiction often draw from life experience in their creative process. Self-referential narrative captures memories, events and relationships in order to create meaning rather than recount facts (Smith & Watson, 2010). Truth becomes a flexible concept, as the writer merges fact and fiction to recreate lived experiences (Gilmore, 1994).

On a quest to make sense of my past, I sought to explore experiences and events, key characters and relationships in a work of fiction. I wanted to engage in a transformational process of increased self-knowledge and emancipation from the obsolete values and traumatic events of my past, and make sense of the challenges in my present.

Many authors of contemporary women's fiction explore this concept in their writing. The problems of the past are examined, and resolution is discovered deep within the self. Winterson (2011) identifies with writing as a therapeutic process. Instead of a therapist, she proposes, the book becomes a 'container' for the feelings, the information. Van der Kolk, et al. (1995) acknowledge the benefit of telling the story, in enabling trauma survivors to relegate the events to the past and regain control of life.

Well known American-Indian feminist writer Paula Gunn Allen (1992) notes how her mother's stories helped establish her identity as a woman. "In all of those stories, (my mother) told me who I was, who I was supposed to be, whom I came from and who would follow me" (p. 12). This reciprocity in life writing is acknowledged by

many: We get to know ourselves through getting to know others (Bolick, 2015). I have personally gained immense value and growth from reading about other women's lives whether via memoir or fiction.

The process of writing my creative thesis, "*A Girl Called Frank*" and the accompanying exegesis, has been an exercise in hope. Turning my past into fictional narrative has to some extent enabled me to make sense of it. Piecing it together, viewing it as a story whose ending I can still change has brought me some healing. Relief. Clarity. A "Narrative Cure" (Robson, 2001).

1. Introduction:

This exegesis describes and evaluates the writing of my creative thesis, a novel entitled *A Girl Called Frank*, from my initial therapeutic intention to the development of the narrative as a work of women's literary fiction in its own right.

The first section of the exegesis discusses the concept of 'narrative cure' in women's trauma writing. This addresses, to some extent, my original research question, "To what extent does life narrative influence the transformational process for both story-teller and audience, and how does this inform the shared creation of identity and purpose?"

I will then outline how the work developed from a collection of disconnected vignettes into coherent chapters which make sense as a total story. This examination will include examples of how my writing has changed and improved during the process, and highlight how examples of existing literature have influenced my work.

Finally, I will reflect on the most recent complete draft of the novel as submitted for examination and identify intended future developments.

2. Aim

The letter that cannot be sent

Shortly before his eightieth birthday, obviously in a reflective mood, my father asked me,

“Was I a terrible father to you?”

Yes you were. You ruined my life. That’s what I wanted to reply. But instead, I reassured him.

“No! Of course not! You were brilliant! I have so much to thank you for! You taught me to think! To question! To look for evidence to back up opinions – even if they’re opinions touted by popular or powerful people. You taught me to disagree. To stand on my own intellectual feet. That’s the best gift you could have given me. And the travel. Travelling with you gave me a completely different perspective on the world. I had the most amazing upbringing.”

All of which is true. But it’s not the whole truth. I chose to protect him, just as I always have. Since I was old enough to realise, aged about five or six. I protected him from knowing the truth about what his father really was. The father he adored. As I got older, I continued to protect him from the knowledge of how my upbringing – the extreme religious worldview, the constant jokes about my appearance, the various abuses – damaged me. Set me up to fail. Set me up to recreate damaging relationships with men.

We choose to protect loved ones from our truth. Protect their image of themselves, of those they love. Proust touches on this when he discusses the importance

of insincerity, of deception, in maintaining relationships. He proposes that it's better to find a different outlet for those thoughts that are "too wounding to be shared with those who inspired them. A letter which never gets sent is such a place. A novel is another." (Proust, in: De Botton, 1997, p. 142)

One such novel is Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit* (1997). In some ways it is a letter to the world about the dangers of religious extremism. One I personally relate to. In another, it is a deeply private letter to her adoptive parents. It asks the question "Why? How could you have done these things to me? I was only a little girl." Her memoir, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* (2011) acts as an exegesis of the novel. She explains her need to write about what had happened to her, her need to break the silence. "I needed words because unhappy families are conspiracies of silence. The one who breaks the silence is never forgiven. He or she has to learn to forgive him/herself" (Winterson, 2011, p. 9).

My family's continued silence about what happened to me, and other children in the family, at the hands of my grandfather is one such conspiracy. As an adult, I have valued moments of openness shared with my cousins whose lives were marked by worse abuses than mine. I even summoned up the courage to tell my parents and my partner at one point. But shortly thereafter they reverted to silence. Pretending that nothing had happened. I became complicit in this. I have a vivid memory of my parents taking me out to dinner for my 40th birthday and recounting 'funny stories' about my grandfather. It's as if they'd gone back and deleted the offending information. It made me feel sick. I said nothing. Smiled my way through dinner. I had no words. I didn't feel I had much to celebrate at the time.

My original intention in writing my creative thesis, *A Girl Called Frank* was to explore the potential of narrative as a catalyst for personal transformation. I had long felt that making sense of my past, piecing it together, viewing it as a story whose ending I can still change had the potential to bring me healing. Relief. Clarity.

Winterson (2011) describes the past as like a country which can be visited, and from which we can retrieve items we need. She also identifies that we often search for a miracle that is outside ourselves,

“We always think *the thing* we need to transform everything – the miracle – is elsewhere, but often it is right next to us. Sometimes it is us, ourselves” (Winterson, 2011, p. 31).

Many authors of contemporary women’s fiction explore this concept in their writing. Authors such as Elisabeth Gilbert with her best-seller *Eat, Pray, Love* (2007), Hanya Yanigahara in her Man Booker Prize shortlisted novel *A Little Life* (2015), and Michele Roberts in her Man Booker Prize shortlisted novel *Daughters of the House* (1993). All examine the problems of the past and the search for resolution hidden deep within the self. This concept is echoed by well-known contemporary philosopher Marianne Williamson (2015). In her reflections, she identifies that “A miracle can sometimes be as simple as a shift in perception” (p 72).

I longed for such a miracle. I had long been taught of my need for a saviour. I just didn’t realise that saviour could be me. I have tried to illustrate this process of realisation in the journey of personal development experienced by my main character.

A number of writers comment on the healing potential of reading others’ lives, of learning about others’ trauma. The sense of connection, the knowledge that someone

else has experienced similar issues, is important to the process of healing. Winterson (2011) states,

“The more I read, the more I felt connected across time to other lives and deeper sympathies. I felt less isolated” (p. 144).

I have certainly found this to be true in my own reading. It can be difficult to discuss trauma or pain, we find it hard to put it into words. However reading about others’ experiences can give a voice to our own feelings and ideas.

“We get our language back through the language of others. We can turn to the poem. We can open the book. Somebody has been there for us and deep-dived the words” (Winterson, 2011, p. 9).

It is impossible to predict whether another reader would find my writing helpful, or worthwhile, or enjoyable. I wrote my creative thesis, *A Girl Called Frank* because I needed to do it for myself. Elisabeth Gilbert (2016) describes the varied responses she received when she published *Eat, Pray, Love* in 2007. Some loved it. Some loathed it. Many layered their own story over the top of hers, and told her, “*You wrote my life*”. In her recent book *Big Magic* (2016), she explains that she wrote the book for herself. To make sense of her life. As have I. She describes her shock that so many others connected with it in the way they did.

Research suggests that women’s literary fiction provides a platform for mutual connection between author and reader, a reciprocal relationship which offers the potential for an important layer of meaning within the genre. The potential for mutual connection amongst the social audience is highlighted, for example, by Bakhtin (in: Holquist, 1999) and Bolick (2015).

The Narrative Cure

Writing a version of “my story” as a novel provides me with the opportunity to speak up without saying anything. To tell my story without accusing anyone. “This is what literature offers – a language powerful enough to say how it is” (Winterson, 2011, p. 40). It also gives me separation from the events. I can write about someone else experiencing trauma, but to write about myself is too close. Too personal. Too much. Fiction brings freedom. Freedom to say what I want to say in other ways.

Winterson (2011) describes the benefits of fictionalising autobiography in “keeping the narrative open” (p. 119). This has been a major part of my learning during this course: learning how to embroider fiction around facts, develop characters, details, devices, and symbols that make a scene more vivid, explain feelings, add meaning, enabling me to communicate my truth to the reader, without necessarily ‘telling’ them. Even though some of it isn’t strictly speaking ‘true’. Witnesses in court tell the truth, yet all will give a slightly different version of the same event. A version told from their own perspective. The flexible nature of ‘truth-telling’ is discussed by Grice and Woods (1998) in their exploration of Winterson’s work.

Writing my creative thesis as a work of fiction gave me freedom to *not* say some things – what Winterson calls the story’s “silent twin” (p. 8). What you don’t say can be as significant as the story itself. I didn’t want to wallow in unpleasant graphic detail. I feel that it was enough at times to trust that the reader would know what I was implying. Winterson also acknowledges the complexity of ‘truth’ in autobiographical fiction,

“When we tell a story, we exercise control, but in such a way as to leave a gap, an opening. It is a version, but never the final one. And perhaps we hope that the silences will be heard by someone else.” (p. 8).

Josselson (1996), also discusses the idea of power and control in the sense that the story-teller exercises these over the people being written about – whether the consequence are aggrandisement or criticism of the subject.

I am tired of silence. There is a voice inside me that is longing to be heard. My lost self. She’s been asking to be acknowledged for a long time. To be honoured. To be loved. But I didn’t know how, or where to begin; what to say, or what to leave out. Robson (2004) acknowledges the dilemma: What happened was unspeakable on one hand, but demanded to be told on the other. I needed to be free of it. To tell my story, to get it out on paper, externalise it. I wondered if this would help me make sense of my life. Heal me.

Winterson (2011) identifies with writing as a therapeutic process. Instead of a therapist, she proposes, the book becomes a ‘container’ for the feelings, the information. Van der Kolk, et al. (1995) acknowledge the benefit of telling the story, in enabling the survivor to relegate the events to the past and regain control of life. This is a common theme in women’s literary fiction, and in particular in women’s life writing (Smith & Watson, 2010).

Telling stories of trauma is full of paradoxes. Full of risk. Writing in the field of women’s literary fiction is accompanied by the temptation to water it down to a more ‘palatable’ state. Give it the “Hollywood” treatment. The cost is minimising, or de-valuing the trauma experienced. Invalidating the pain it causes. However, it’s also a survival mechanism. Robson (2004) identifies the challenges involved, the need to

balance, “an imperative to convey the horror of trauma and the equally urgent need to contain or minimise that horror. Between the requirement to remember, and the urge to forget” (p. 12).

In my creative thesis, the protagonist refuses to use the word ‘abuse’ to describe what’s happened to her. This reflects my own distaste for this word. It makes me shudder to use it to describe myself.

I was also worried about the potential *consequences* of telling my story. The vulnerability of ‘over-sharing’. The destructive potential within my family. Fuchs (2004) acknowledges the dual benefits of something she calls ‘creative distance’ and the level of protection provided by fictionalising the narrative. Bolick (2016) acknowledges the inherent risk in drawing fiction from real life events. Even if the story is written as a novel, there is the potential for the protagonists to recognise themselves. To experience “the brutal shock of seeing themselves transformed through another’s unforgiving eyes” (p. 179).

There is evidence that the genre of ‘trauma writing’ is valuable both to the author and to the reader, who may identify with similar experiences. Henke acknowledges this, describing the healing potential of such writing as “reconstructing the beleaguered subject and remembering the self shattered by traumatic experience” (1998, p. 144). Hartman (2004) outlines the benefits of a clear articulation of events providing clarity, alleviating confusion and releasing the weight of the memory.

The term ‘narrative cure’ is used to identify this process in some literature on the genre (Robson, 2001). Robson likens it to the relief a witness may experience giving their testimony on the stand (2001). Telling their version of the story. However, just as the victim of a violent crime is given the opportunity to avoid facing their

assailant directly via the use of video or closed testimony, narrative provides such distance and protection for the trauma writer (Fuchs, 2004).

Trauma can be defined as a ‘wound or injury’ and a ‘psychic injury, emotional shock, repressed memory, unhealed’. According to Robson (2004), trauma cannot be relegated to the past but tends to be continuously re-enacted in various ways in the survivor’s present life. Destructive relationship patterns or other repeated behavioural issues, bad dreams, hallucinations or flashbacks are just some of the ways “the past intrudes insistently on the present, demanding yet resisting articulation, wreaking devastating effects on the survivor’s memory and identity” (p. 11). Another is illness of various kinds. Denial, repression of, or dissociation from, traumatic events can surfaces as insomnia, depression, stomach pain, digestive disorders. I have experienced all of them. Brene Brown (2017) highlights the difference between ‘running from’ your story, which sentences you to endlessly re-live it with all its negative consequences, versus ‘owning’ your story, which enables you to take control. Best of all you can write a completely new ending.

Emancipation and Feminism

Robson (2004) identifies that denial and repression are not purely individual responses. These attitudes function on a social level, too. My father told me very firmly that “this sort of thing does not happen. Not in our family.” The church community, intentionally or otherwise, can also play a major role in hiding the truth of such events. Whether the issue is divorce, abuse of any kind, or another life challenge in which the church’s role is supposed to be compassion, love and familial support, the vulnerable –

most often women and children – may experience judgement, criticism and blame instead.

Fuchs (2004) acknowledges the larger emancipatory potential of trauma writing for those who feel powerless. Walker (1996) who speaks of women's life writing as a rebellion against authority, a means of "transforming the self from a player in someone else's narrative to the centre of their own" (p. 175). Part of my aim in writing this book is to expose the damaging effects of the religious controls that were exerted over me, mainly through fear of terrifying eternal consequences if I didn't comply. This is me, fighting back at last.

The intended purpose of the autobiographical work is an important consideration. Some are written to record historical detail, others to make a political point, others undoubtedly focus on self-glorification (Etherington, 2016). Gilmore (1994) notes the social value of autobiography as a cultural discourse on reality, identity, and 'truth-telling', and in particular locates women's autobiography as playing a distinct role in the modern feminist movement. Gilmore, however, highlights the limitations of seeking to interpret female autobiography primarily as 'shared female experience', and asserts that the strength of such works should celebrate the uniqueness and complexity of femininity (1994).

The representation of women in literature and media is an important area of study in the feminist movement. Autobiography, in various forms, is identified by Cosslett, et al, (2000) as "an increasingly visible means of confession, of accusation, of legitimization; it is a source of authority and shame" (p. 1). Etherington (2016) and Cosslett, et al., (2000) identify the potential for life narrative to create a platform for marginalised and dispossessed groups to have a voice, confronting assumptions and

encouraging the democratisation of knowledge. This provides an important platform for life writing in women's literary fiction.

3. Process

Permission

One of the most helpful suggestions my supervisor, Siobhan, made was to simply 'write'. She gave me permission to simply pour out words onto the page without worrying if what I was writing was any good. Her encouragement was very empowering. I was able to continue writing because of this non-judgmental stance. It took the pressure off me. I set myself the goal to write 2500 words per week for the first 15 weeks, and decided that I would write regardless of how I felt about the quality of the material I was producing.

In "The War of Art" (2002) Stephen Pressfield identifies *procrastination* as the enemy that every writer faces. Sitting down and writing without judgement is a key to taking action which overcomes procrastination. According to Elisabeth Gilbert (2016), one of the most counter-productive values in creative pursuits is *perfectionism* – which often creates an insurmountable barrier to starting any creative endeavour and is a major cause of procrastination. This sentiment is echoed by Natalie Goldberg (1990) who highlights the importance of self-acceptance and kindness – a gentle approach to the self.

Siobhan reassured me that once I had a first draft, it could then be re-written, re-developed, re-drafted into something better. This enabled me to approach my writing with a sense of freedom. Relaxation almost. It enabled me to enter into an

unpressured creative flow, allowing the words to come. Trusting the process. Trusting that the inspiration would arrive if I took action by sitting down and starting.

Elisabeth Gilbert (2016) also highlights the importance of this attitude to the creative process. Unpressured. In my previous studies, I have always pushed for the 'result'. But in this course I have had to take a completely different approach. I also have to accept that my final submission is still a 'work in progress'. It's been very refreshing.

Discomfort

There is a certain discomfort in writing about difficult experiences and unhappy memories. Often, when I sat down to write, I would mentally place myself in a memory and invite the feelings to surface. Summon up the details. Sometimes it felt like inviting my demons to tea. Natalie Goldberg (1990) describes this as digesting your experiences and facing your fears. "A writer must be willing to sit at the bottom of the pit, commit herself to stay there, and let all the wild animals approach, even call them up... and not run away" (p. 29).

Sometimes tears fell as I wrote. I experienced such sadness at what was stolen from that little girl. From that young woman. Another time, when I was beginning to think and write about the plane crash, I experienced symptoms of PTSD – nausea, anxiety, insomnia – that had not troubled me for years. As I continued to work with the narrative, these feelings have dissipated. I feel much more empowered and in control of my story, both in a literal and metaphysical sense.

One of my inspirations for writing this book, was A.B. Facey's autobiography, "*A Fortunate Life*" (1985). His life was full of abuse and intense difficulty – certainly not 'fortunate' - but it is above all else a hopeful book. Facey simply tells his story, from the beginning to the end. There is little embellishment and little emotion. He simply tells it like it was. The richness of the detail in his descriptions of the characters and the landscape draw you into the story. You identify the feelings he must have felt without him ever telling you. I kept this in mind as I began to write: Just tell the story. Part of the way through Semester 1, I worried that, once I had written the first series of vignettes, I would run out of things to write – what if there was nothing else there? This idea of simply telling the story kept me going.

With each iteration I feel I am getting closer to writing something I can be proud of. I can see clearly how my writing has developed and grown. Catherine Courage (2012) emphasises the importance of iteration, and continuing reiteration, to creativity. This describes my experience as a developing writer exactly: Even small adjustments – a full stop, a different sentence structure, a new paragraph, can make a big impact on the final piece, altering the pace and adding interest. One such challenge Siobhan presented me with, was to justify every single time I had used the word "and". In the second draft of my creative thesis, I had removed almost 450 of them! This also precipitated a complete reconstruction of sentences and paragraphs to make better sense without using "and".

Vignettes

My writing process began as a series of vignettes. Memories and ideas arrived as 'scenes' from my life, which I began to write down. Initially, I applied a technique

recommended by Natalie Goldberg in her book *Wild Mind* (1990). She suggests beginning with an incomplete sentence, such as “I am thinking about....”, or “I am remembering....”, or “I am looking at....” and completing the sentence by writing for ten minutes non-stop. This exercise can lead the mind elsewhere, somewhere unexpected. The concept of ‘wild mind’ has its origins in Buddhism: the ‘monkey mind’ describes our conscious ‘busy’ thoughts. Behind monkey mind is ‘wild mind’, our true self, our true voice, what is really going on underneath the surface.

One of my initial ten-minute exercises resulted in a piece called ‘red sofa’ which I stitched into my narrative in chapter 1. I wrote about lying on the sofa, listening to the clock ticking, the smell of the lemon cake baking. Suddenly the feelings about meeting ‘Zac’ at the supermarket dropped into my brain. Smith and Watson (2010) describe the process of self-referential writing as a complex process of observation, exploration, memoir and self-reflection. I found writing exercises such as those suggested in *Wild Mind* were a helpful means of stimulating this process, particularly if I wasn’t sure where to start or what to write, writing like this created a flow of thought that lead me in unexpected directions.

My first major change was to re-write the vignettes in the present tense. My supervisor directed me to a number of books, such as *All The Light We Cannot See* (Doerr, 2014) in which the past is written as if it is happening ‘now’. The result is that the narrative is much more immediate and engaging than if it is ‘reported’ as a past event. The reader implicitly understands via other devices that they are reading about something that happened ‘before’, even though the present tense is used.

Doerr also includes small vignettes but these have a specific purpose and direction, leading the reader towards the complete picture. My vignettes were initially

disjointed and disconnected. Needing to add detail and expand them into chapters with episodes that make sense as a ‘whole’ is something I am continuing to work on.

It became apparent early on, particularly as the story was arriving in disconnected vignettes, that structure would be a challenge for me. Should the story be told chronologically? Would it be confusing or frustrating for the reader if I jump around in time? I personally find the ‘flashback’ structure frustrating, as it can interrupt the flow of the story. So it is ironic that this is the structure I have chosen for my creative thesis. Or rather, it chose me. Winterson (2011) acknowledges that our inner world is non-linear; that events experienced at different times “lie side by side imaginatively and emotionally” (p. 153).

My focus was the unfolding emotional process, and exploring the reasons for the ‘present’ my main character is experiencing. It made sense to write in a non-linear manner as the ideas and feelings unfolded into scenes which illuminate and develop the character and her context. Structuring this in a way that would make sense as a complete narrative is a challenge I continue to grapple with.

Jelinek (1980) emphasises the unique experiences of women – who’s lives, in contrast to their male counterparts – are fragmented, discontinuous, full of interruptions and place relationships at the axis of life, rather than ‘self’. She argues that a thematic, rather than chronological approach is often more appropriate structure for writing about female experience.

Using detail to ‘show’ rather than ‘tell’

The change from a reporting style was connected with my next big development, which was to use detail to ‘show’ the reader what is really going on, rather than simply ‘telling’ them. Natalie Goldberg recommends using detailed, rather than general descriptions, “Not car, but Cadillac. Not fruit, but apple. Not bird, but wren.” (1990, p. 3). This was one of my challenges as my writing began to unfold: my supervisor identified that I was ‘reporting’, skipping over facts and summarising, when *detail* would bring my writing to life.

An example of this was my description of the Community Hall in chapter 3. In my first draft, I described it as ‘ramshackle’. Siobhan challenged me over this word. How could I show the reader the hall is ‘ramshackle’ by adding detail? This resulted in a complete rewrite of that section into a paragraph with details that conjure up a much more vivid image of what the hall is actually like. “The dance class is in the ramshackle community hall down a pot-holed side street” became,

The dance class is in the community hall down a pot-holed side street near the yoga centre and the youth hostel. It’s a bold testament to Kiwi ingenuity. The original building is a post-World-War-II prefab. Resources were limited. They built with what they had. It’s been added to every decade since. Concrete toilets in the 60’s. A 70’s extension with a kitchen. Very retro. Still complete with orange formica worktops and brown tile-patterned lino. Someone in the 80’s thought that brown aluminium windows were the height of style. ‘They should be shot,’ thinks Frankie. Various repairs give it a patchwork appearance. In the 90’s a big fundraising drive saw the entire exterior re-painted a pale coffee colour in an attempt to smarten it up. With dubious results.

I am using this approach more and more as my writing continues.

In her book *A Little Life* (2015) Hanya Yanagihara employs tiny details to create vivid images of how her characters are feeling – for example one of the protagonists tipping tiny mountains of salt on to the table and forming patterns with his fingers while he’s listening. She also drops ‘clues’ into the narrative which gradually create a picture of the person’s past that might explain their present state – one of her main characters has difficulty walking, can’t go up-stairs, has to rest, has scars, doesn’t talk about his past – these are woven gradually into the narrative and the reader builds a picture of the person’s past. I applied this idea when I began to re-develop my vignettes.

For example, in my original version of some scenes I wrote that my main character was ‘nervous’. Keeping Hanya Yanagihara’s work in mind, I tried to add details that would show the reader she is nervous without telling them that: for example, in chapter 2, “she feels uncomfortable” became,

Frankie folds and refolds the napkin on her lap. Straightens the cutlery again.
Absent-mindedly traces the edge of the small scar on her cheek with a finger.
Stops suddenly when she notices Dean frowning. She’s already finished her water.
Trying to drink her wine slowly. Small sips.

In chapter 12, “She feels nervous” became,

She needs fresh air. She can feel her heart beating fast. Her mouth is dry. For the fifth time in the last fifteen minutes, she checks her lipstick in the rear-view mirror.

I also added clues about her past, such as the scar on her face, her avoidance of kissing her husband.

Now, when I sit down to write a scene, I ask myself the question “How can I show the reader what is happening? What are the feelings? How can I show the emotion

without telling it?” It was this question which began to show me the necessity of dialogue for bringing the action to life.

Dialogue

In my initial drafts, my ‘reporting’ style enabled me to avoid writing dialogue. I didn’t feel confident that I could do it, or that it would be believable. Mike Johnson’s masterclass on dialogue made me realise how important dialogue can be in bringing the characters to life and making them real to the reader. I challenged myself to add dialogue to my scenes. For example, in the restaurant scene in chapter 2, I originally wrote that Dean and Frankie ‘didn’t have much to talk about’. I wanted to show the reader what their relationship was like, so along with the details about Frankie’s nervous discomfort, I added dialogue to the car journey and the restaurant scene. I believe this is a big improvement to my initial attempt, and paints a much more vivid picture of the state of their relationship. With each draft, I am adding more dialogue, which is improving the pace and immediacy of my writing.

I have also added internal dialogue, to give the reader a window into the main character’s thoughts. This is something I am continuing to develop. Hanya Yanigahara (2015) uses internal dialogue to great effect. She also includes different ‘voices’, such as the thoughts of one character about the other, or their perspective on a particular event in the story. I found this somewhat confusing initially: it took me a while to figure out which character was speaking in the internal dialogue, as she swaps between characters without preface or introduction. This idea led me to write the prologue, which is in the voice of one of Frankie’s friends, to shed light on what she is like to be around, what it’s like to be in her house at one of her impromptu dinners. However, I wanted to avoid the confusion of mixing voices in the main narrative, so the only internal dialogue I have included is Frankie herself.

I also took note of Milena Busquets approach to dialogue in her novel *This Too Shall Pass* (2016). She weaves dialogue into the text without speech marks, and swaps

internal dialogue, in which the protagonist addresses her dead mother, with ‘real’ dialogue between the characters. This is done seamlessly within the writing and creates a flow within the text, rather than separating out speech from thought. I am still considering how best to achieve this in my own work.

The portrayal of text conversations was another challenge. Siobhan suggested I show this in text-boxes, which I feel brings reality to this digital form of dialogue.

Symbols

In my reading and the master-classes early in the course, the concept of using symbols and devices to convey meaning, depth and emotion was discussed. I initially added a ‘silver cross’ to the writing, to denote the Christian identity of the protagonist. The silver cross is present in the early scenes of her life, but she eventually discards it, a symbol of her increasing freedom from the fundamentalist views of her upbringing. I also introduced the scar on her face as an indicator of something that happened in the past, which is later explained and shows the reader more about the relationship between the main characters.

I was thinking about how to show the depth of her feeling, her horror and her fight against being overwhelmed by the negative emotions and depression she has contended with from a young age, when it suddenly struck me that the feelings were like a pack of wolves following her, shadowing her and waiting to pounce. I hoped that this metaphor would enable the reader to understand her anxiety and the fear of being consumed by the past.

Beginning and Ending

When I began my creative thesis, I changed the beginning a number of times. Initially, the piece I wrote about the little girl remembering going into the Oast House with her grandfather (now in chapter 4) was the opening of the story. I wanted to reader to know that the story's protagonist was damaged. I was dissatisfied with this as a place to start, it seemed so depressing. I felt that if I was a potential reader and picked up the book and read that as the opening, I would put the book down and read no further.

I replaced this with a different scene, the one when the main character is 'stood up' on an on-line date (now in chapter 11). My idea was that my target market for the book – a middle-aged female audience – would relate to the idea of on-line dating, the battle with an ageing appearance and a lack of confidence. This places the book firmly in the present day, and makes the main character relatable. However, I didn't feel the scene was an appropriate prologue: it might make the book seem like yet another one about on-line dating. I found as I developed my chapter on dating, that it fitted much better within that chapter, not as a piece on its own.

It was then that I read Hanya Yanigahara (2015). Her use of one character's voice talking about the other, and describing a scene or event from their own perspective, gave me the inspiration to create the current prologue: what would one of Frankie's friends say about her? What is it like being in her life, as one of her friends? I hoped that this would give the reader a glimpse of her from a different perspective.

The two master classes on 'beginnings' and 'endings' were very challenging to me. I was impressed by 2015 Man Booker Prize Winner Marlon James' opening line in *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (2014), "*Listen. Dead people never stop talking*" (p. 1). I recognised that my book didn't have a 'hook' at the beginning, and at that

point, I had no idea how the story was going to end: it was completely open in my mind. I went home and began to research how other well-known authors beginning and ending lines.

I set myself a challenge to write a ‘gripping’ first line, not just for the first chapter, but for every chapter. This resulted in the use of Frankie’s voice at the start of every chapter, which I hoped would draw the reader in and create anticipation of what the chapter is about. Siobhan’s feedback on this was that it started to become tedious: I had overdone the idea. So I removed some of these openings in my final draft.

I also researched endings. We discussed the importance of ‘circularity’ in the ending. What is the problem the novel is addressing and to what extent has the problem(s) been resolved at the end, and is it necessary to answer all the questions, or leave the reader some choice or interpretation? These are all questions I considered.

I introduced some circularity by including some words and ideas from chapter one in the description of the beach scene in the epilogue: a similar scene, but with very different feelings. “Cold air. Grey sky. Pale Sun.” I wanted to show the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of the main character’s life. In chapter 1, she notices the sound of the gulls, but it’s eerie. In the epilogue, the noise of the gulls is joyful.

In one sense she has resolved one of her biggest problems – her geographic location. She has also made peace with herself, but as for her other problem, a relationship with a man, I decided to leave that open. I felt that otherwise it would be too Hollywood, the fairy-tale “and they all lived happily ever after”, whereas real life is much less certain, and much messier than that. I decided to leave it up to the reader to decide whether she is in a relationship or not at the end. I felt that this was more ‘real’.

In her novel *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* (2017), Gail Honeyman includes a plot twist at the end. The narrative is also a story of recovery from an abusive past. She also uses small details, and layers clues into the narrative that gradually build a picture of the protagonist's back story, appearance and character. However, the conversations she has on the telephone with her mother – the source of her childhood abuse – turn out to be imaginary at the end of the book. We learn at the very end that her mother died in a fire years earlier. It is a clever twist and adds an element of surprise which is satisfying to the reader. As yet, I have not identified a suitable twist, but this is something I would like to add in my future development of the narrative.

Future Developments

It is my plan to continue working on my creative thesis next year. In the fourth draft, that I now submit for assessment, there are improvements and developments I would like to make.

I have come a long way since the beginning of the year, however there are subtleties to add, and polishing to be done, such as more layering of the backstory rather than presenting it in large chunks. I will be considering the idea of a plot twist.

I will also continue working on the overall structure of the narrative. I would like to investigate the potential of a 'symbol' to denote a change of time, eg. A flashback. In "Hummingbird" (2007), James George uses an aeroplane icon to help the reader with the structure. I am considering the idea of a small pencil drawing of a wolf that will appear at points throughout, at times sitting watching, at times in

a walking/jogging pose, and at the end, walking away from the page to show it is leaving the story.

There are still sections I would like to ‘open out’ more by writing detailed scenes that capture the emotion and meaning of the event – for example the visit to England after the plane crash in chapter 7 still ‘skips’ over detail, compressing a very important two weeks into a few paragraphs. Siobhan has suggested to me that I could also expand on the idea of Frankie’s journal, and include extracts from it throughout the chapters and this is something I am also considering.

In addition, I would like to review and redevelop my transitions, both within the chapters and between chapters, to ensure the writing flows and that the reader has a ‘safe’ place to launch from one section to another, be it a change of timeframe, or a change of topic.

4. Conclusion

This has been a deeply challenging and enjoyable year. I started writing my story half a dozen times over the past decade. I never made it past chapter 1. I had no idea how to translate the voice in my head, the longing to be heard, into words on paper. But the words and the wish to write them down didn’t leave me. It’s as if the book was nagging me to write it, asking to be heard. Needing a voice. Maeve Brennan’s voice inspired me to be more pro-active about getting it done,

“You are all your work has. It has nobody else and never had anybody else. If you deny it hands and a voice, it will continue as it is, alive, but speechless and without hands” (Maeve Brennan, in: Bolick, 2016).

This year has been a twofold process for me. On one hand, I have learned an enormous amount about writing women's fiction – although I am living the truth that the more I learn the less I realise I know. But I have certainly taken big steps forwards in my development as a writer. On the other hand, I have also accomplished my initial desire to explore the therapeutic potential of 'life writing'.

My initial intentions were quite weighty. Apart from learning about writing, I sought to document my life journey as a work of fiction, and to engage in a transformational process of increased self-knowledge and emancipation from the obsolete values and traumatic events of my past, and the challenges of my present. I wanted to identify and express my feelings of marginalisation and dispossession: I am an immigrant, a single parent, an unattached woman. I live in exile. I am the quintessential "Rushing Woman" (Weaver, 2017). I wanted to record my experience. I wanted to make sense of my present by revisiting my past. I also wanted to find hope that I can change my future.

Although my creative thesis *A Girl Called Frank* only touches the surface of some of these issues, I feel that I have accomplished my aim to some degree. I have made friends with some of my demons. I have even recognised that they are my teachers. I have in some sense laid the past to rest. Made peace. I do feel more positive. More empowered. I feel in charge of my future in a different way. I feel more relaxed and accepting of my present.

I feel hopeful for Frankie.

References

- Bolick, K. (2016). *Spinster: Making a Life of One's Own*. London: Corsair
- Brown, B. (2017). *Braving the Wilderness*. NYC: Random House.
- Busquets, M. (2016). *This Too Shall Pass*. London: Penguin Random House.
- Courage, C. (2012). *Igniting Creativity to Transform Corporate Culture*. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01Y7qlPFpqw&pbjreload=10>
- De Botton, A. (1997). *How Proust Can Change Your Life*. London: Picador.
- Doerr, A. (2014). *All The Light We Cannot See*. NYC: Scribner.
- Etherington, K. (2016). *Narrative Approaches to Case Studies*. Retrieved from: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/facnatsci/schpsych/documents/counselling/conference/5thannual/NarrativeApproachestoCaseStudies.pdf>
- Facey, A. B. (1985). *A Fortunate Life*. Sydney: Penguin
- Fuchs, M. (2004). *The Text is Myself: Women's Life Writing and Catastrophe*. University of Wisconsin Press.
- George, J. (2007). *Hummingbird*. NZ: Huia Press.
- Gilbert, E. (2016). *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Gilbert, E. (2007). *Eat, Pray, Love*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Gilmore, L. (1994). *Autobiographics: A feminist theory of women's self-representation*. NYC: Cornell University Publishing
- Goldberg, N. (1990). *Wild Mind*. NYC: Bantam Books.
- Grice, H. & Woods, T. (1998). *I'm Telling You Stories: Jeanette Winterson and the Politics of Reading*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Gunn-Allen, P. (1992). *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. NYC: Open Road Media.
- Hartman, G. (2003). Trauma Within the Limits of Literature. *European Journal of English Studies*. 7 (3). pp 257-274.
- Holquist, M. (1990). *Bakhtin and his world*. London: Routledge.
- Honeyman, G. (2017). *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*. London: Harper Collins.
- James, M. (2014). *A Brief History of Seven Killings*. London: Oneworld Publications.

- Jelinek, E. C. (1980). *Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism*. Indiana University Press
- Josselson, R. (1996). *Ethics and Process in the Narrative Study of Lives*. London: Sage.
- Pressfield, S. (2002). *The War of Art*. NYC: Black Irish Entertainment.
- Roberts, M. (1993). *Daughters of the House*. London: Little, Brown Books.
- Robson, K. (2004). *Writing Wounds: The Inscription of Trauma in Post-1968 French Women's Life-Writing*. NYC: Rodopi
- Robson, K. (2001). Curative Fictions: The Narrative Cure. *The Journal of Cultural Values*. 5 (1). Pp 115-130.
- Smith, S. & Watson, J. (2010, 2nd ed.). *Reading Autobiography: A guide for interpreting life narratives*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Van der Kolk, B.A. & Van der Hart, O. (1995). The Intrusive Past: The flexibility of memory and the engraving of trauma. In: *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. London: JH Press.
- Walker N. A. (1996). *The Disobedient Writer: Women and Narrative Tradition*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Weaver, L. (2017). *Rushing Woman's Syndrome*. London: Hay House Press.
- Williamson, M. (2015) A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles". NYC: Harper Thorsons.
- Winterson, J. (2011). *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* Canada: Knopf.
- Wright, N. T. (1996). *Jesus and the Victory of God*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- Yanagihara, H. (2015). *A Little Life*. London: Picador

Bibliography

- Allcott, L. M. (1995). *Little Women*. NYC: Random House.
- Allcott, L. M. (1995). *Good Wives*. NYC: Random House.
- Allcott, L. M. (1995). *Jo's Boys*. NYC: Random House.
- Alliott, C. (2006). *A Crowded Marriage*. London: Headline Publishing
- Alliott, C. (1998). *Rosie Meadows Regrets*. London: Headline Publishing.
- Alliott, C. (1994). *Going Too Far*. London: Headline Publishing.
- Angelou, M. (2009). *I know why the caged bird sings*. NYC: Random House.
- Atwood, M. (2011). *The Handmaid's Tale*. London: Vintage Publishing.
- Austen, J. (2003). *Sense and Sensibility*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Austen, J. (2003). *Emma*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Austen, J. (1997). *Pride and Prejudice*. London: Wordsworth Editions Ltd.
- Austen, J. (2003). *Persuasion*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Bailey, K. (1999). *Jesus: Poet & Peasant*. Grand Rapids, USA: William B. Erdmans Publishing
- Bailey, K. (2008). *Jesus: Through Middle Eastern Eyes*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- Barrett-Browning, E. (1992). *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. NYC: Dover Publications Ltd.
- Beattie, M. (1992). *Codependent No More*. USA: Hazelden Foundation.
- Beecher-Stowe, H. (1999). *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Herts, UK: Wordsworth Editions Ltd.
- Bell, R. (2006). *Velvet Elvis*. Grand Rapids, USA: Zondervan.
- Bell, R. (2012). *Love Wins: at the heart of life's big questions*. London: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Binchy, M. (1998). *Evening Class*. NYC: Random House.
- Bincby, M. (2000). *Tara Road*. NYC: Random House.
- Bronte, A. (2012). *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Bronte, C. (2006). *Jane Eyre*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Bronte, E. (2004). *Wuthering Heights*. Penguin Books Ltd.
- Brown, B. (2015). *Daring Greatly*. NYC: Random House.
- Brown, B. (2007). *I Thought It Was Just Me*. NYC: Random House.
- Chang, J. (1992). *Wild Swans: 3 Daughters of China*. USA: Bolinda Audio.

- Dahl, S. (2003). *The Man with the Dancing Eyes*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing
- De Bernieres, L. (1998). *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. London: Vintage
- De Botton, A. (2016). *The Course of Love*. Milton Keynes: Penguin.
- De Botton, A. (2014, Ed.). *The School of Life*. London: Pan Macmillan.
- De Botton, A. (2000). *The Consolations of Philosophy*. Milton Keynes: Penguin.
- Dick, P. K. (1992). *Confessions of a Crap Artist*. NYC: Vintage Books.
- Du Maurier, D. (2003). *My Cousin Rachel*. London: Little, Brown Books.
- Du Maurier, D. (2003). *Jamaica Inn*. London: Little, Brown Books.
- Du Maurier, D. (2003). *Rebecca*. London: Little, Brown Books.
- Du Maurier, D. (2015). *Frenchman's Creek*. London: Little, Brown Books.
- Durrell, G. (2011). *My Family and Other Animals*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Duval, M. (2000). *The Persistence of Yellow*. WA: Compendium.
- Eliot, G. (1992). *The Mill on the Floss*. London: Everyman.
- Frank, A. (2002). *The Diary of a Young Girl*. NYC: Bantam Books.
- Gallico, P. (1958). *Flowers for Mrs Harris*. London: Michael Joseph Ltd.
- Gallico, P. (2006). *The Snow Goose*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Gardner, S.P. (2007). *Lillian's Story*. London: Createspace Publishing.
- Gaskell, E. (2012). *North & South*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- George, J. (2003). *Hummingbird*. Auckland: Huia Publishing.
- Gilbert, E. (2014). *The Signature of All Things*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing
- Gilbert, E. (2011). *Committed*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Goldberg, N. (2013). *The True Secret of Writing*. NYC: Atria
- Goldberg, N. (1986). *Writing Down The Bones*. Boulder: Shambala Publishing
- Goldberg, N. (1997). *Banana Rose*. NYC: Bantam Books.
- Goudge, E. (1946). *The Little White Horse*. London: University of London Press.
- Goudge, E. (1977). *Gentian Hill*. London: Hodder & Staughton.
- Goudge, E. (1979). *Island Magic*. USA: Amereon Ltd.
- Goudge, E. (1974). *The Scent of Water*. London: Hodder & Staughton.

- Greene, G. (2004) *Brighton Rock*. London: Penguin Putnam Inc.
- Harvey, S. (2014). *Cloudboy*. Dunedin: Otago University Press.
- Hemfeld, R., Minirth, F. & Meier, P. (1999). *Love is a Choice: The definitive book on letting go of unhealthy relationships*. Nashville, USA: Thomas Nelson.
- Hendrix, H. (2005). *Getting the love you want*. London: Pocket Books.
- Hodgson-Burnett (1994). *A Little Princess*. London: Wordsworth Classics.
- Huxley, A (2004). *Brave New World*. London: Vintage Publishing.
- Ingalls-Wilder, L. (1971). *Little House on the Prairie (series)*. NYC: Harper & Row.
- Instone-Brewer, D. (2003). *Divorce and Remarriage in the Church*. USA: Intervarsity Press.
- Kaye, M. M. (1979). *The Far Pavilions*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Keyes, M. (1999). *Lucy Sullivan is Getting Married*. London: Arrow Books.
- Keyes, M. (1997). *Rachel's Holiday*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Lee, H. (2015). *To Kill a Mockingbird*. London: Arrow Books Ltd.
- Lehman, R. (2003). *Invitation to the Waltz*. London: Little, Brown Books.
- Lerner, H. (2002). *The Dance of Anger*. NYC: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Lerner, H. (2004). *The Dance of Fear*. NYC: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Lesser, E. (2004). *Broken Open*. USA: Random House.
- Lewis, C. S. (2012). *Mere Christianity*. London: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Lewis, C. S. (1983). *The Chronicles of Narnia (box set)*. USA: MacMillan Publishing.
- Lowry, M. (2000). *Under the Volcano*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Martell, Y. (2003). *Life of Pi*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books.
- Maushart, S. (2012). *The Winter of our Disconnect*. London: Profile Books.
- McCall-Smith, A. (2002). *The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency (Series)*. NYC: Random House.
- McCall-Smith, A. (2004). *The Sunday Philosophy Club*. London: Little, Brown Books.
- McLaren, B. D. (2008). *A New Kind of Christian*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.
- Mitchell, M. (1991). *Gone with the Wind*. London: Pan MacMillan.

- Mitford, N. (2015). *The Pursuit of Love*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Ondaatje, M. (2004). *The English Patient*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Orczy, B. (1997). *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. Australia: Penguin Books Australia.
- Orwell, G. (2008). *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Pankhurst, E. (2015). *My Own Story*. London: Vintage Publishing.
- Polley, J. (2012). *The Havocs*. London: Picador.
- Rhys, J. (1996). *Wide Sargasso Sea*. NYC: WW Norton & Co.
- Roberts, N. (2011). *Dance upon the Air*. NYC: Penguin Putnam.
- Roberts, N. (2011). *Heaven and Earth*. NYC: Penguin Putnam.
- Roberts, N. (2011). *Face the Fire*. NYC: Penguin Putnam.
- Roy, A. (1998). *The God of Small Things*. London: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Scott-Fitzgerald, F. (2013). *The Great Gatsby*. London: HarperCollins Publishers
- Scott-Fitzgerald, F. (2012). *Tender is the Night*. London: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Shakespeare, W. (2007). *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. London: Wordsworth Editions Ltd.
- Shonagen, S. (2007). *The Pillow Book*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Smith, B. (2008). *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. NYC: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Smith, D. (2003). *I Capture the Castle*. NYC: Thomas Dunne Books.
- Smith, W. (1982). *Hungry as the Sea*. London: Book Club Associates.
- Smith, W. (1982). *The Sound of Thunder*. London: Book Club Associates.
- Smith, W. (1982). *The Eye of the Tiger*. London: Book Club Associates.
- Smith, W. (2008). *River God*. NYC: St Martins Press.
- Smith, W. (2008). *The Seventh Scroll*. NYC: St Martins Press.
- Spark, M. (2009). *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. NYC: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Von Arnim, E. (2011). *The Enchanted April*. London: Little, Brown Books.
- Walton, L. (2014). *The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender*. London: Walker Books.
- Watson, W. (2000). *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day*. London: Persephone Books.
- Wharton, E. (1994). *The Custom of the Country*. NYC: Random House.

Winterson, J. (1997). *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*. London: Grove Press.

Winton, T. (2015). *Cloudstreet*. London: Picador.

Woolf, V. (2003). *A Room of One's Own*. London: Penguin Books Ltd

Woolf, V. (1999). *Mrs Dalloway*. Herts, UK: Wordsworth Editions.

Wright, M. (2007). *C'est La Folie*. London: Transworld Publishers.

Yousafszai, M. (2014). *I am Malala*. London: Orion Publishing.