
Rod Fee ID: 0826790

**Exegesis: 'Sandcastles' & 'The Postmodern Rules For Family
Living'**

An exegesis submitted to

Auckland University of Technology

in partial fulfilment of the degree of

Master of Creative Writing (MCW)

2008

School of Communication Studies

Primary Supervisor: John Cranna

CONTENTS:

ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS	6
CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL	7
ABSTRACT	8
PART 1: 'SANDCASTLES'	8
PART 2: 'THE POSTMODERN RULES FOR FAMILY LIVING'	8
EXEGESIS	9
INTRODUCTION	9
METHOD	10
<i>Research</i>	10
Reading classical and contemporary literature	10
Reading Literary theory and Critical Analysis of literary works	11
Reading craft books	12
Writing	12
Psychology and psychiatric research	12
<i>Methodology adjustment</i>	12
RESULTS	15
<i>Summary of 'Sandcastles' – the 'craft novel'</i>	15
<i>Summary of 'The Postmodern Rules For Family Living' – the 'literary' novel</i>	17
DISCUSSION	18
CRAFT	18
<i>Unreliable narrator in blog form</i>	18
<i>Short stories</i>	20
<i>Knowing as I write whether meaning and intention will be clear to a reader if I use language in open and in closed styles.</i>	20
THEMES	22
<i>Global issue</i>	22
<i>Origins and origin myths</i>	23
<i>The interior monologues of outsiders</i>	25
<i>Differing perceptions of people faced with apparently the same data</i>	26
<i>Humour</i>	27
<i>Story within story</i>	27
READER-RESPONSE THEORY AND 'COLLAPSING' MEANING	28
Postmodernism	37
<i>Fictive reality and fictive lies</i>	39
<i>Literary theory embedded in the text</i>	48
<i>What separates literary creative writing from what might be regarded as purely entertaining creative writing</i>	49
The fundamental differences between the two novels	50
General elements of difference	52

CONCLUSION	54
REFERENCES	58

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 acknowledgements), 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.

R H Fee

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Rosser Johnson of the university's School of Communication who gave assistance in the development of my exegesis plan.

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

This exegesis accompanies a thesis, being the portfolio of work submitted as the candidate's thesis consists of two parts, each being a completed first draft of a novel written during the Masters of Creative Writing course:

Part 1: 'Sandcastles'

Part 2: 'The Postmodern Rules For Family Living'

These two works are separately bound with a thesis cover sheet and numbered.

The exegesis covers the writer's motivation for writing these works reflections on the course of development and changes in thinking that occurred during research and the act of writing. It shows the changing perspectives of the writer's two thesis works in context and in contradistinction o each other.

It includes the writer's academic and creative goals as they developed and the result achieved in terms of those goals. It highlights the writer's developing interest in literary theory including suggesting an ephemeral adjunct to Reader-Response theory which is described as Collapse.

It shows the development of the writer's deep interest in reality in fiction versus the lie in fiction and in the differences between writing and reading a creative work produced primarily for entertainment versus work of a literary nature, identifying some of the differences in features the writer has perceived.

EXEGESIS

INTRODUCTION

My thesis consists of two parts, each being a completed first draft of a novel. N.B. This exegesis consequently has to discuss two novels and a comparison of them and so is necessarily longer than it would otherwise be at 10930 words.

I initially planned to:

- a) write a collection of short stories and prose poems
- b) concentrate on 'magical realism' as a dominant element in each
- c) the unifying theme of the collection was to focus on the figure of the outsider, a person on the fringe, who is confronted with social and physical demands from others and from the cultural and natural environment. The challenges to the outsider were to be dealt with a number of ways, some tragi-comical, with an overall feeling of struggle within a dreamscape. The reader would be brought to confront notions of identity, belonging, memory and place, in 'a set of fairy tales for adults' to borrow a phrase from André Breton's 1924 Manifestos of Surrealism (As transcribed by an unknown web author surrealist.revolution@skymail.fr, 1999)
- d) create a work as fictional as possible and not draw consciously on my own experience as far as is humanly possible to do so.

My motivation for the planned production of a cross-genre collection of short stories and poetry was so that I could explore as wide a variety of styles as possible.

I wished to imbue the collection with the mystery of true surrealism or absurdity, presenting the reader with extraordinary events seemingly occurring in an ordinary world which cannot and are not explained.

I thought that the work would differ from much of current New Zealand fiction in that it is neither focussed on its place of origin nor presented as reflecting real life.

After starting research I changed these goals by changing to novel writing and adjusting my content goals (see below).

METHOD

Research

The research I undertook was of five types:

Reading classical and contemporary literature

Until this year I have not been exposed to much literary fiction. As a child I developed an early interest in many non-fiction areas but read extensively in fairy tale and myth then early and modern science fiction and fantasy. I had an interest in short stories and anthologies because they gave me the fastest 'fix' of story and themes.

It dawned on me early that the conceptual differences between these fiction genres were blurry and have become more blurred since.

I have had an aversion in the past to what is described as literary fiction, in part due to reaction against my secondary education and in part a prejudice born of an uncomfortable feeling about fiction and reality (which I discuss below). The nature of a fictive description of reality and the fictive lie in fiction has remained interesting to me. I have also practiced for many years as a litigation lawyer. In some ways my interest in law as a career was first motivated by my first readings of case reports – these are very much short stories, where the borders between one side's description of reality, the others, and the judge's is very much in issue.

This year I broke that habit of a lifetime and thoroughly immersed myself in reading a great deal of contemporary and classical literature which I have thoroughly enjoyed.

Reading Literary theory and Critical Analysis of literary works

Throughout the early part of the year I read a great deal of critical analysis of many of the works I was reading as well as the authors' own comments where I could find them.

I also read texts and articles about literary theories.

Reading craft books

I read a large number of texts on craft.

Writing

The act of writing, experimentation, re-writing, editing and obtaining and especially giving feedback on various styles and forms of my own and the work of my classmates was an essential part of the research that forms the background for writing the thesis pieces.

Psychology and psychiatric research

For reasons that will become clear below as I developed my writing I engaged in research of mental states and illnesses and carried out interviews with medical specialists in the field.

Methodology adjustment

I came to the conclusion while undertaking all of this research that my initial interest in magical realism and surrealism had been predicated on two things:

- a) my interest in fictive reality versus fictive lies, and
- b) these were the first and only terms in literary theory I had consciously looked at having only a bricolage acquaintance with literary terms such as deconstruction and post-modernism.

I found that I was now interested in these things instead:

1. In craft:
 - a. The craft of story writing novels
 - b. Rich imagery
 - c. The extent to which I can know as I write whether meaning and intention will be clear to a reader if I use language in open and in closed styles.
2. In themes:
 - a. Origins and origin myths
 - b. The interior monologues of outsiders
 - c. Differing perceptions of people faced with apparently the same data
 - d. Humour
 - e. Story within story
3. In literary theory:
 - a. What separates literary creative writing from what might be regarded as purely entertaining creative writing
 - b. Literary theory in general (which was new to me)
 - c. Realism in the sense of a fictive description of a reality on the one hand and fantasy or fictive lies

on the other (two apparently contradictory ideas both inherent in contemporary fiction)

- d. Art versus the artist and artistic intention versus the artistic effect

I therefore changed my methodology in these ways:

1. **In craft:**

a) I would continue to write short stories but put them to one side and concentrate on novel writing as my primary focus. I wished to challenge myself in order to develop as quickly as possible as an author over the course. .

b) I would split craft development from my other interests. This would enable me to maximise the development of both by writing two novels rather than one:

- i. an initial craft development novel written primarily as entertainment

- ii. a literary novel allowing me to explore deeper meanings and techniques and the elements above.

c) First person unreliable narrator speaking in a blog

2. **In themes:**

- a) I would use a contemporary global issue, the world economy, as a backdrop to the story in the craft novel
- b) I would pare down other thematic elements in the craft novel
- c) In the literary novel I would address in different layers the different themes I identified as my interests
- d) Both novels I would maintain story as the primary focus

3. In literary theory:

- a) Writing both an entertainment and a literary novel allowing me to begin to better understand and explore the differences between these types of work
- b) As one of the layers in the literary novel I would make implicit references to major literary theories in the literary novel as a way of exploring these for my own benefit and interest rather than as a necessary part of the reader's response.

RESULTS

Summary of 'Sandcastles' – the 'craft novel'

'Sandcastles' explores the basics of the creative process of story and the traditional rules of craft. It is in a spare, naturalistic

style obeying the unities of time, place, action, and voice as well as climactic scene construction.

When I started writing this the global credit crisis was beginning to emerge. It seemed clear that if it broke it would be an important event in modern history and therefore chose to use it as the backdrop to a modern tale.

I was able to draw upon my experiences as a lawyer in other recessions. It is set in the current financial problems in world markets and sub-prime lending. It touches upon themes of displacement from home and family, the meaning of material legacy over generations, and the ethical blindness that can occur in otherwise conservative individuals when financial security is threatened.

The protagonist, Georgina, arrives in New Zealand from London to stay for an extended period with Ysabel, her ex-flatmate who has already returned to her own South Otago home. She discovers that her friend has however been murdered.

She is asked to help James, Ysabel's brother, to sort out his financial problems with Verity Inc, a finance company. She returns home to London only to find a second flatmate, Marguerite, missing. She meets Gerald, a manager of Verity, in an apparently accidental way, is offered a lucrative job and develops a love interest in Gerald.

She eventually finds that the finance company is involved in major fraud to cover losses which can no longer be hidden given the current credit crisis.

The underlying theme is that apparent wealth and position built upon a false foundation cannot last. As the situation deteriorates, the false values and money churn that is propping up the financial position is washed out and the castles of apparent status and wealth crumble like 'Sandcastles' in the water. The protagonist comes to appreciate the difference between what constitutes real and false wealth both material and spiritual.

Summary of 'The Postmodern Rules For Family Living' – the 'literary' novel

The second novel 'The Postmodern Rules For Family Living' ("PMRFL") is more experimental. It departs from the unities by containing nested stories within stories and making the unreliable narrator deal with both immediate events in her present and events in her past and those of her claimed ancestors as well as the voices coming from what is either her delusional psychosis, magic, or her deliberate lies.

I am interested in the fantasies, misapprehensions, embellishments and lies that people often weave about their personal histories. In New Zealand Europeans this is especially interesting because of the common lack of knowledge of their pre-New Zealand heritage, particularly in comparison to Maori, and to what is often portrayed in fiction about current European citizens

who have apparently long and rich histories. In the novel I take that to an extreme by enhancing it with a psychosis or lie in Vivienne as an unreliable narrator or by asking the reader to believe her.

Through the use of a fantastical familial history, it includes what may be lies represented as truths, what may be truths represented as dreams, rich imagery, what may be magical realism, loneliness and isolation, abuse and mental illness, and the idea of intelligence, rationality and irrationality can all be wrapped up in one sympathetic though essentially 'bad' character.

Without giving the twists of plot away, the reader is never sure quite where the truth lies or what Vivienne believes to be truth.

DISCUSSION

I turn now to discuss my work with reference to each of my goals.

Craft

I did write the first drafts of two complete novels in the manner intended. I believe it has challenged me and given me greater insight into the craft aspects of creative writing that either a short story collection or a single novel would have given me.

Unreliable narrator in blog form

'PMRFL' is written in the form of Vivienne's internet blog, including copies of letters to and from her.

I chose this in part because it is new and modern and as far as I know unexplored so far in contemporary literature in novel form, but mainly because it allowed me to have a novel which was partly epistolary, and partly journalistic but with an additional layer: unlike a journal, a blog is supposed to be read by others. This enhances the sense of the unreliable narration (assuming what Vivienne claims is untrue) because there are more reasons to be unreliable when talking to others and less when journaling for oneself, where unreliability is almost always going to be through misunderstanding rather than deliberately misleading.

It was also necessary to allow for the possibility (but only the possibility not the certainty or probability given the nature of Vivienne's action) of Callum reading it more or less contemporaneously when recorded. It struck me that a blog is a wonderfully post-modern tool for this which is fluid and can be constantly rewritten. Securing it with a password, knowledge of which depends on breaking a code in a letter, means that it is hidden from anyone who is not worthy in Vivienne's eyes of access.

To further make the novel more immediate to a reader I created a real blog on the internet which can be visited. But, as with everything that Vivienne says and does, it is not straight forward to access as it requires Vivienne's password to access the blog's text in the real adjunct web site at <http://viviennesblog.org> .

It is interesting to consider at the extent to which a possibly unreliable narrator forces a reader response that is necessary to create the work the author intends. It is an element that relies upon the construction of this in the mind of the reader.

Vivienne claims to have no descendant. Readers should come to doubt that but it appears from her narrative that she fails to recognise it. At a crucial point she destroys those things that anchor her Faerie realm to the human world, dismantling the connection as she believes the line is at an end. Readers will I suspect find they know differently – and in knowing that, just that moment perhaps, tacitly accept the reality of her rules no matter what their opinion as to her state of mind and true beliefs.

Short stories

I also continued to write short stories and prose poems which further enhanced my development but they are not included in my submitted thesis.

Knowing as I write whether meaning and intention will be clear to a reader if I use language in open and in closed styles.

My initial view of writing was that it was a reflection of and an extension of reading. I wanted to write what I wanted to read but which didn't yet exist. That is still what motivates me.

When writing short works I find this easy to accomplish because the whole text appears in my mind before I write.

However, when writing the novels I have been faced with understanding that because of its length and its complexity, the act of writing is so different from reading that it excludes reading entirely. With a novel there is the sense of exploration and discovery of the sum and the parts but also one of over familiarity with the text as I is written, rewritten and edited. I have discovered that Satre is right when he says that one cannot read what one writes:

“Now the operation of writing involves an implicit quasi-reading which makes real reading impossible. When the words form under his pen, the author doubtless sees them, but he does not see them as the reader does, since he knows them better before writing them down.” (Satre, 2002 at p.30)

This has been difficult to come to terms with but very interesting.

I am now more confident that I understand individual elements of craft and of theory. But because of the ways in which different readers responded to my written work during the course, and because of Satre's point above, I am however no more confident than I was at the beginning of the process that readers will understand all of my intentions nor that I as artist will see everything that I see in the art, engage with my work, or enjoy it.

Themes

Global issue

Setting 'Sandcastles' in a backdrop of the global credit crisis this allowed me to draw from various pools of memory that I have from my legal work to add the element of realism. The scheme that is at the heart of the plot is what is known as a 'Ponzi' scheme and is one that often arises during times of financial difficulty. The mechanisms of such schemes are such that the fraudulent perpetrator is able to hide an ever growing misfeasance by the application of an ever present supply of new investment monies. In a financial collapse one sees an increase in advertising as these sources dry up. The fraudster can no longer rely on new funds to continue to backfill the hole left by the fraud. Inevitably there is a collapse.

We have recently seen a repeat of this issue in certain American companies and experience tells me we will see more there and in our own economy amongst others. There are resonances already in our society with the collapse of finance companies for other reasons and the effects are much the same despite any lack of fraud. I was involved in the aftermath of a number of these in the financial difficulties in New Zealand in the late eighties and early nineties and so have first hand knowledge of the workings of these schemes, the motivations of those involved peripherally as well as directly in them and the rippling long term effects they have on people's lives.

These motivations and their consequences in terms of covering up then of the collapses are explored in 'Sandcastles'.

Origins and origin myths

'Sandcastles' touches upon the origins that people have in terms of direct forbears and the desire to move themselves in some cases up a social scale. In doing so people paint a new image of themselves by putting on the trappings that wealth gives them but ultimately we find in 'Sandcastles' this is often illusory. 'Sandcastles' also deals with how insubstantial family heritage can be in that in real life things go wrong and very quickly no matter what your origin. It is not however highly concerned with this theme.

'PMRFL' is deeply concerned with it. The protagonist Vivienne invents or appears to invent an entire range of different histories to explain her existence and to bolster her meaning in life. Her discoveries along the way as to her own delusions, lies or magical truths (depending on which is correct) the way in which she may have become as she is, all are crucial to the story. So too are her perspective on the origins of the culture of others.

One layer deals with the human problem of our origins and our identity. Vivienne does not know hers and on one view of her story, like many modern people, starts to misinterpret, misremember, blur or even entirely invent stories or parts of them that explain our pasts and therefore ourselves or what she knows in order to fill gaps. In her case, this is taken to an extreme so

that it becomes a part of her psychosis. One a second view of her story she is consciously lying about I so does not believe it and on a third is simply telling the strange magical truth. Indeed, in the every last page of the text the story deals with this overtly in a way that casts doubt over the true authorship of the blog and the true nature of Vivienne's actual condition. Whichever is right, Vivienne's story still serves to highlight the reality of self-grown origin myths for most of us, and perhaps points to a new post-postmodern theory of individual constructions in fiction (a subject outside the scope of the exegesis).

Vivienne's story is also about the creation of alternative myths that appeal to her, that she is constructing way. She invents new myths entirely or takes existing mythologies and bends them to accord with what she would prefer (such as when she describes Lantanesis in the precise terms that Plato described Atlantis or the legend of the phoenix which she uses to justify her own preferred history of the naming of the Manitoto Plain).

Although in no way have I attempted to emulate Cervantes' Don Quixote, I read very recently an essay by Coetzee that illustrates his view of a similar set of uncertainties as to delusion or lie in that story:

"The reader of *Don Quixote* can never be sure whether Cervantes' hero is a madman under the spell of an illusion, whether on the contrary he is consciously playing out a role – living his life as fiction – or whether his mind

flickers unpredictably between states of delusion and self-awareness." (Coetzee, 2005 at p.266)

although in 'PMRFL' there is the additional possibility of magical truth.

The interior monologues of outsiders

'Sandcastles' is written in a limited third person with the spotlight mostly on Georgina, the protagonist. We are privy to her thoughts and the thoughts on occasion of other characters. In her thoughts we see a woman battling for a place in the world.

Georgina is an outsider in three senses. First, she is socially alone with no family. Second she is in a state of cultural and geographical limbo, stuck between emigrating or not, and she spent part of her formative years displaced in a third country. She is an outsider in the classes of wealth and status that she wants to join. But when she does, she ultimately returns outside of it because of her integrity.

Vivienne in 'PMRFL' is very much the outsider. We see her thoughts as a first person in that she reports them to the reader through her blog (allowing for the possibility of an unreliable narrator.) She is obviously more intelligent than many around her which is isolating. She admits to depression, she undergoes psychiatric treatment, is hospitalised in a mental institution for a period, she commits criminal acts. She appears to have been a child victim as an orphan. She is possibly delusional or possibly magically non-human or possibly choosing to paint herself

differently to society through deliberate falsehood, depending on whether readers believe her monologue or not. All of these states are those of an outsider. She appears to choose to emphasise this by not interacting with society in the same way as most.

As an example, one of the unexplained aspects in the work is the semiotics that are available to her the signs and signals that she reads and describes in her report of her interior monologue. Who, we can ask, put them in the landscape and in the unknowing words, actions or simply form of people, animals vegetables or minerals? If asked she would say that they are signs of the true world, one that she and her ancestors belong to and understand as they come into their full powers.

At the heart of her search is a search for belonging to some line of heritage as she lacks this in what we understand to be her real life (of one sort or another).

Differing perceptions of people faced with apparently the same data

In 'Sandcastles', Georgina is faced with apparent success in the form of new acquaintances. One is an honest man who has inherited a large estate. The others have built their own success. Both turn out to have shaky foundations. She also examines Verity Inc's financial scheme and, faced with exactly the same data as everyone else there, feels confusion as to how it was possible where most of the others see no problems. She rationalises it away. A co-employee, Robin, on the other hand

sees that data, has the same misgivings as she, but does not rationalise the problems but sees through it to the underlying fraud. It is only as the two characters interact that the truth is accepted by Georgina.

This theme is more complex in 'PMRFL'. Vivienne reports she sees differently to everyone else, the landscape as animated, animals and birds anthropomorphically. She claims to see signs in both the landscape and in language itself which are meant for her. She also sees such things as other peoples' genetics in a purely mathematical instead of assumed ethnic way.

Humour

'Sandcastles' is not humorous in any sense. Georgina is faced with death, betrayal and deceit. The storyline follows murder, fraud, and her loneliness and search for identity.

'PMRFL' is on the other hand a black comedy. Vivienne's sense of humour is sophisticated. In her story telling she plays with language constantly. In the stories she tells the young child, Samuel, there is often humour and she pokes fun at the characters she describes. There is sardonic humour in the interaction she reports between herself and the other characters, in particular Samuel.

Story within story

This is not a thematic element in 'Sandcastles' but certainly is in 'PMRFL'.

Vivienne's narrative is a series of stories within stories within stories and may in fact in itself be a story within a story (a point I will not elaborate on as it is part of an important final plot turn.) Each contains both an allegory of life and a commentary on a literary theory, hidden in the text. Samuel is eighteen months old but becomes mentally adult in Vivienne's mind as a device and as a further indicator of Vivienne's other worldliness. He serves as foil to her and might to some readers appear to be a rational part of Vivienne projected by her to question what she is thinking and doing.

As a first person blogger she is of course telling a story to the reader. The story she tells is of stories of her own past, of the past of her supposed ancestors, of an unlikely series of conversations with a young child wherein she tells him stories. She includes dreams and refers to stories she has written that may be the only truths in the story.

Reader-response theory and 'collapsing' meaning

A thorough analysis of literary theory is impossible in this exegesis. I can however say I have come to the view that, like theories in philosophy, literary theory advances not by resolving any particular argument or stance but by moving to a new one, often to criticise the last.

I will however touch on these very briefly: reader-response, feminist, and standpoint theories and on postmodernism.

Much of literary theory is political and claims that:

- all literature has a message
- the author should not only have a message but should have the particular message that is favoured by the theorist.

I find this narrow and difficult to accept without looking at a much wider context.

In Tom Wolfe's essay 'Stalking The Billion-Footed Beast' (see introduction to Wolfe, 2008), American authors, he says in effect, have a duty to describe the reality of current culture and then to explain it with the fictive lie. That is a political idea which is valid but I do not think should in any sense be mandatory nor necessarily more desirable than that which another author or another theorist would urge.

I do not believe that it is incumbent on any author to impart any message at all – the message read by a reader may be unconsciously imparted by the author. Kafka's work 'The Metamorphosis' for example (Kafka & Glatzer, 1971) is often cited as a bearing a message of the futility of humanity and existential despair but others see it as comedic and with a different message (Foster Wallace, 1998). Both can be right in the sense that it is reporting what different readers read as the message. Whilst either, both or neither might have been Kafka's intention, one can see that all interpretations can exist no matter Kafka's actual intention, even if they are all mutually exclusive (though I do not

say that they are). This is more difficult to sustain if Kafka had told us what his intention was.

I believe that the only necessary purpose of literature to be worthy of the description, and whether for entertainment or more literary is to engage the author's mind and/or to engage the readers mind in some way, with a fictive lie that help the engagement.

It is unarguable that creative writing only exists for the creator alone until it is accessed by someone else – and at that point the author's intentions and understanding of what he or she has written are inaccessible and irrelevant to that reader and remains so until there is some form of exchange of intention or reaction dialogue between them (such as Wolfe's essay or this exegesis for example). Likewise either of them with subsequent readers.

Nietzsche once wrote:

“[I]t's certainly best to separate an artist far enough from his work, so that one does not take him with the same seriousness as one does his work. In the final analysis, he is only the precondition for his work, its maternal womb, the soil or, in some cases, the dung and manure, on and out of which it grows — and thus, in most cases, something that we must forget about, if we want to enjoy the work itself. Insight into the origin of a work is a matter for physiologists

Exegesis: 'Sandcastles' & 'The Postmodern Rules For Family Living' by Rod Fee p. xxxi/lviii
and vivisectionists of the spirit, never the aesthetic men, the
artists — never!" (Nietzsche, 1887)

This is aligned with the fundamental starting point of Reader-Response theory. To an extent, the views expressed in post-structuralist theory and by Barthes (Barthe, 1968) that the author can no longer be regarded as the omniscient and all-pervading presence and influence on the work and that the reader holds all the power – that s/he supplants the author (Barthes going so far as to title his essay 'The Death Of The Author' - Foucault took this to an even greater extreme by suggesting the anonymity of authors eventually (Foucault, 1977)) is partly correct – but not completely.

Thus far in my reading I tend to side with Eco in particular because of his focus on the difference between 'open' texts where the reader is required to closely and actively collaborate in forming meaning and 'closed' where the language used tends to dictate the response of the reader, all of which seems sensible (Eco, 1979). This necessarily indicates that the more open the texts, the more the reader's collaboration and response is reader's critical and the more likely it is that the author's view is irrelevant.

I agree with the view that the authorial intention and the resulting interpretation by the reader are not mutually dependent. How the reader will respond in that context and the extent to which it might be different in another context is unknowable, it seems to me. To a large extent the author finishes the work but

then it is over to the reader as to the effect, as in all art and architecture. Artists of any sort may intend to say one thing and yet it is not understood in that way. This might be because the artist has technically failed to realise his/er own vision. It may be because the person appraising has in some cases more limited knowledge or more knowledge of the subject matter than the author, or perceives things differently for any number of reasons.

In my opinion this approach is understandable and has a good deal of truth in it but partly incorrect for three reasons:

1. the artist is also an appraiser of the work. It has meaning for her/im as an individual just as it does for a reader – and probably more. The author's view is as valid as any other appraiser's view. This it could be argued changes a little when the author has interpretation on A and all other appraisers have interpretation B (to give an extreme possibility) but even that is not an absolute answer.
2. the author can collapse the possible interpretations down so that the readers despite the degree of realism they recognise will nevertheless understand the message. This can be done by text so that the reader is in no doubt as to which is to be seen as real and which is to

be seen as the lie, or extra-textual outside of the story.

3. Others in positions of influence – marketers, librarians, critics – can also collapse the possibilities that exist and limit them for a reader

No work exists in a vacuum – art can never be silent or outside of a context as Sontag (Sontag, 1968) points out.

To someone who has no knowledge of New York or the financial workings and excesses of the Eighties Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities* will be just as gripping a story. S/he will not know whether Wall Street is a place or a concept or both (as it is in fact). Because Wolfe doesn't tell the reader this in the text itself then readers unfamiliar with that might assume for instance that all action pertaining to 'Wall Street' in fact refers to only a geographical location. They similarly will not know that there actually is a Wall Street and that financial affairs are said to revolve around it.

Wolfe goes further though. He told readers in his article originally appearing in the November 1989 issue of *Harpers Magazine* (which I have not read in the original form but is now included in the introduction to his *'The Bonfire of the Vanities'* (Wolfe, 2008)) and therefore outside of (and two years later than) the text itself in *'Stalking The Billion-Footed Beast'* that he is aiming at realism and that he has a purpose in doing so, a political purpose, and he urges modern American writers to follow his

example of describing the real state of society (the sub-heading of the introduction is 'A literary manifesto for the new social novel'.)

This extra-text for any reader unfamiliar with the subject matter collapses the possibilities about the interpretation of meaning and message if any in the text down. It is no longer possible for that reader to believe that the text is an entire fictive lie and that the city of New York and traders and Wall Street are as imaginary as Brigadoon. He tells them which parts are real in effect and destroys their possible views as to which parts are purely lies. This authorial commentary on the work makes a deep impression on the reader – and influences the way they perceive the text – but only (it is trite to say) if they read that introduction.

While I agree with Barthes and Foucault view which is in effect in part that that one should not confuse the artist with the art and cannot be said to define the art, the artist is still linked to the work. That link may be invisible but it can be made a strong one because the artist describes meaning.

The author can wish the reader to accept the lie or to suspend disbelief in order to illustrate a purpose of the authors, a message. To do that across as wide a readership as possible the author must make the setting and cultural aspects as close a description of reality as possible. The reader who is to understand as closely as possible that message should be able to recognise the realism and so sift out the lie and synthesise the purpose from a comparison. A reader who is not familiar with the setting or

culture is more likely to gain a different perspective and not be able to determine which is fictive lie and which is accurate portrayal in the sense of fictive reality and therefore is less likely to be able to make the necessary distinction for the message to come through as clearly.

If the author does take extra-text part in the reader's response, there is a hierarchical aspect of the authority of that pronouncement. This means that the author's extra-textual statement of what the purpose of the literature is in general likely to have more weight than that of the critic or reader. The librarian who catalogues the book and the bookseller and publishers marketers are also collapsing the possibilities of the author's intentions, at least until the point that the reader accesses the book. Similarly if there is literary criticism of the book accessed by the reader. The critic stands in a more powerful relationship to most readers than the librarian or publisher in giving an interpretation of the work. The expectation is set up at that point.

To a person who knows the place and culture that the story-lie is set in, the degree of correspondence with that reader's view of that reality is highly important. A writer has considerable latitude in lying about all of the details of the location if that location is unknown to the reader but much less if the location is known to the reader. A writer setting a story in Yaoundé in Cameroon may carefully describe up the average summer temperature as 34 degrees, describe the landscape of orange sand and black rocks all covered with lush rainforest, a place with

no mineral resources whatsoever, no railway system and where the only way to shake hands is to offer the wrist to shake first, where all men wear a kris at the belt and where the universal rite of passage for males at thirteen years of age is to fight and kill an animal of equal weight, where the second language is Portuguese. This is a wonderful setting for all sorts of stories. To the uninformed reader, these fictive lies are able to be believed no matter what the story. To a reader who is unfamiliar with that place and culture there is little difference if the degree of verisimilitude is satisfying to the first reader or entirely missing. To someone familiar with Yaoundé however, the writer must somehow present a reason why disbelief should be suspended. Reality comes with far more baggage.

If I were female and wrote these novels, 'PMRFL' in particular, I would no doubt be able to credibly claim that these works represented a feminist viewpoint in that the portrayal of Vivienne in particular is questioning the traditional depiction of women in society. I am not criticising what that theory holds. I just wish to point out that in terms of Reader-Response, the indicated gender on the by-line can make a huge difference to the response of the reader, which interests me from the point of view of what the message in a work really is and how it is collapsed.

Similarly standpoint theory. In particular, am I qualified in 'PMRFL' to:

- write adopting as narrator the persona of a woman?

- write from the standpoint of a narrator who possibly has mental illness?

To which the glib political answer is: I am because I have written it and that is the only authority I need. The question of its validity in terms of those theories is only relevant if I am trying to portray psychosis and/or a female condition as a message. I am not. I am telling a tale and part of that tale is the uncertainty whether this woman is lying or is delusional or is magical as she claims. I am not attempting to portray a social realism for the sake of imparting a social message. But if I do not adequately communicate that this is my intent to the readers (either through the text or externally as in this exegesis or an interview or introduction outside of the text for example) then they cannot be criticised if they criticise me for taking on an authorial position that I am not entitled to, just as they can be criticised if my intention is made known to them but they refuse to accept it.

This gloss upon Reader-Response theories I am calling for the moment 'Collapse' because in my research to date I have not found any discussion of it (though it has not been possible to be exhaustive in the course of this degree.)

Postmodernism

Postmodernism I define for the purposes of my work as a reaction to modernism, a despair at the realisation that the world is chaotic and irreducible. Modernism, it says, gets it wrong in that it paints a false idealised view of the world of its fiction with its

clear scenography and linear time frame. It says 'you have it wrong' and then says 'it can't be shown in reality' and then in a contradiction proposes to do just that.

It appears to me that postmodernism tries to reflect reality by over-reduction of a different type to modernism. Instead of a nice clean picture it tries to paint an abstract that captures more than the sum of its parts.

It tries to form shortcut connections between people in history and events in order to paint a sort of readers digest world view. In doing so it must rely on false coincidence and synchronicity and a complicit readership who must 'get' the references and ironies implicitly referred to.

These are all also facets of a psychosis where significance is seen by the psychotic in all sorts of apparent coincidence and hidden meaning and synchronicities that are invisible or unreal to the average person. This in turns implies some unseen hand and eye that has placed these connections there for the psychotic to see. C.f. the writer – unseen hand and eye - and reader – understanding acolyte - in postmodern literature) who is creating this reduced connected over-rich world.

Therefore one can see postmodern literature as a rather desolate psychotic painting of the world, one that the postmodern writer declares an impossible task. And an appeal to or preach at the reader to enter and to accept that this is the actual world, more real than the modernist view and nevertheless a complete

fabrication full of more weirdness than the modernist would paint it – i.e. psychotic world view.

One view of 'PMRFL' is that Vivienne is delusional. Taking that perspective on can see the novel as applying postmodernism *in extremis*: as a depiction of the world in a psychotic reduction and interconnectedness and hidden coded messages. Of an unseen and in fact even unreferenced (by the psychotic narrator) hand and eye at work who must put all these in place and must therefore be aware of them even if the psychotic is not. Or else those connections would not exist.

The novel refers to this irony of postmodernism in fact being even further from the truth than modernism, by pushing the extreme to psychosis in the narrator and then references the postmodern approach by the psychotic referring to the various strands and rules of postmodernism as part of her manual for life. Then ultimately asks the reader either to reject these as unreal, to see it all instead as a deliberate conscious falsehood on the narrators part or as actual magical truth, without arming the reader with sufficient tools one might say to decide which is correct.

Fictive reality and fictive lies

The fictive lie in a work and its relationship to the fictive reality described is very interesting. Pablo Picasso famously said "Art is the lie that tells the truth." This snippet suggests that there is always a truth to be found in art, which in turn suggests that it is incumbent on the reader to ferret it out. It would appeal no doubt

to those followers of Wolfe's views (Wolfe, 2008) as to the purpose of the social novel. But the quote in context is this and to me this, in particular the second sentence, is more interesting:

"We all know that art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least the truth that is given us to understand. The artist must know the manner whereby to convince others of the truthfulness of his lies.." (1923, in an article translated by Marius de Zayas and approved by Picasso, published in *The Arts*, New York, cited in Barr, 1980)

Jakobson tells of the phrase used by storytellers in western Spain, in particular Majorca. Instead of the familiar "Once upon a time" they would say "It was and it was not so." (Jakobson, 1967, p. 316).

I take as my definition of the fictive lie as equivalent to 'irreality' or 'unreality' as described The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as:

"Absence or lack of reality; an instance of this"

(Trumble & Stevenson, 2002).

This is an incomplete definition without that of fictive reality which I equate to 'reality':

"1. What exists or is real; that which underlies and is the truth of appearance or phenomena.

2. The quality of being real or having an actual existence [...]

[...] 5. A real thing, fact, or state of affairs; the real nature of something; that which constitutes the actual thing, as opp. To what is merely apparent or external.

6. Resemblance to what is real or to an original.”

(Trumble & Stevenson, 2002)

I then define 'fictive lie' in fiction as:

1. something that did not happen
2. having no necessary element of conscious deception on the part of the author – the author can believe the lie; motivation is unimportant. What is important is what untruth has been communicated to the reader.
3. having no necessity for the reader to be aware there is a particular lie but understands there are lies
4. there is no necessity for the reader to believe the lie
5. there is a necessity for the reader if aware there is a lie to suspend disbelief of the purposes of engaging with the work

My interest in examining this issue is long-standing. It is perhaps best summed up by a conversation I had with someone when at primary school. The concern was expressed that I was not socialising, engaged in enough physical activities, and reading too much, in particular science fiction. This was described as

'pure escapism' (as though that was harmful). I was told I would be would be 'better off' reading 'better fiction' because there was a danger that I would grow up not able to tell reality from fantasy. I could not see the difference between the clearly fantastic elements of science fiction and the non-true elements of any other fiction except possibly in this way: the more like our perceived reality the setting, themes and character, the more likely the fantasy element (which I will call from now on the "lie") the closer to believable it is, the more difficult to separate from the reality described and therefore possibly the more escapist, inherently confusing and possibly dishonest it is.

I started the year by looking at Magical Realism. It is defined in the Shorter Oxford Dictionary as:

"A literary or artistic genre in which realism and narrative are combined with surreal, fantastic, dreamlike or mythological elements" (Trumble & Stevenson, 2002)

This aligned with my goal of the style in which I wished to write and so I researched this by reading the literature and literary criticism of this genre.

I had expected to find more elements of magical realism in the works of those who are most associated in the literature with that form of writing – in particular the Latin writers Isabel Allende, the Columbian Gabriel García Márquez e.g. (García Márquez, 1967) but found more in the short stories of Kafka (Kafka &

Glatzer, 1971) (though it was not called that in his time) and Jorge's Borges' 'Ficciones' (Borges, 1962).

My initial understanding from the definition and from a review of critical analysis of the work suggested that the magical part is understood to be unreal by author and reader but not by the characters.

However, when we look at the way in which some of the well known magical realists view their own work it is somewhat different. They portray the magical elements as in fact understood realities in their own culture. Hence the reader's response is different if from a different culture to the writer. This was said by Marquez in the interviews with Mendoza in relation to the ghosts, yellow butterflies and the ascension which featured in *One Hundred Years Of Solitude* for example (García Márquez, 2000) recorded in *The Fragrance of Guava* (Mendoza, 1988) and by Allende in relation to magical elements in her own work e.g. 'Daughter Of Fortune' (Allende, 1999) in 'My Invented Country' (Allende & Peden, 2003) and in an interview in 2003 (Zapata Whelan, 2003). Coetzee wonders though whether Marquez, at least, was speaking tongue in cheek (Coetzee, 2005).

For the writer, the magical elements are said to be real and that it will also be to readers from that culture.

To the readers of another culture the magical elements are unreal. There are other magical realists whose magical element is not based however in a culturally accepted

supernatural reality e.g. Angela Carter's work 'Nights at the Circus' (Carter, 1993b) or the 'Bloody Chamber And Other Stories' (Carter, 1993a) or Gunter Grass's 'The Tin Drum' (Grass, 2004) but written as a symbol of the characters' unreality and the reader is expected to pick up on that.

'Magical realism' incorrectly describes what I wished to write in the second novel and indeed, is a misnomer even for the works for which it is often used in the literary canon, I would abandon that label.

Thus what Marquez and Allende include as what we regard as magic is better called something else – perhaps 'cultural supernatural realism'. Or 'culturally realist magic'. Whereas Grass and Carter should more properly be distinguished from its lack of any culturally accepted reality and simply called 'irrealism and realism.' To generalise into a category that includes all types of this literature, one might borrow inspiration from the Spanish phrase for magic realism, 'lo real maravilloso', and call it instead 'marvellous realism,' which includes sub-categories 'fantastical realism' (e.g. Carter and Grass), 'cultural supernatural realism' (Marquez and Allende), and a third category in which perhaps 'PMRFL' belongs: 'delusory realism' (assuming that this is the way the reader interprets it).

In 'PMRFL' elements that might be regarded as fantastical – either lies, delusion or magical include such things as floating in

the air above oat fields, Samuel the child talking as though adult, anthropomorphisation of landscape and inanimate objects

All these types of literature deal with real and elements of magic. The differences lie in the intention the author has in asking for the reader's response. With 'delusory realism' the author expects the reader to understand that the narrator is deluded in thinking there is magic. In 'fantastical realism' the author expects the reader to understand that the characters are not deluded but actually experiencing magic. In 'cultural supernatural realism' the author expects the reader to accept that not only the narrator but also the author believe in the magic.

To what extent then does this category of 'marvellous realism' differ from 'fantasy'? 'Fantasy' differs from 'cultural supernatural realism' in that in the latter, the author expects the reader to understand that in so far as the magical aspects are concerned, the narrator and characters but not the author believe in the magical world.

It shares this assumption with 'delusory realism'. But with 'delusory realism' the author also expects the reader not to believe in that world while reading but with an obvious fictive lie the author invites the reader to suspend disbelief in that in order to experience what is an unreal world.

'Fantasy' is closest to 'fantastical realism' in these two aspects: the author wants the reader to willingly pretend but

understand that the author does not think the pretend world is real.

The next question then is, in what way is 'fantastical realism' different from 'fantasy' (such as Tolkien's 'The Lord of the Rings' or the 'Narnia' series of CS Lewis or a space opera science fiction work such as Asimov's Foundation series)? If one looks for differences one is forced to look at the scale of the magic elements. In 'fantasy' or science fiction the creation is an entire world in which magic or technomagic form an a essential part. The reader expects to be introduced to this world and see its unreal landscape as well as follow the plot and character development in that world. In 'fantastical realism' the world is our own but there are a few – and only a few – magical elements that are symbolic of a slightly skew gloss on our real world rather than as part of a sweeping unreal landscape. Ultimately of course that is a matter of degree.

All of these approaches still beg the question: 'What is the extent to which any fiction is unreal or real?' In all fiction the author expects us to suspend disbelief in order to accept the world that is narrated. None of it is real. That is not to say that there are not real elements contained within it.

This is what Allende had to say in an interview in 2003 about imagination and fantasy:

"There is a fundamental difference between imagination and fan[t]asy. Fantasy is made up of fairytales,

which do not have a basis in real life. Imagination is the exaltation of reality. I believe that in my books there are elements of imagination; there is hyperbole; there is gross exaggeration; there is recurrent use of premonition, of coincidence -- of things that happen in fiction that wouldn't seem to happen in real life; but, actually, if you pay attention, they happen often enough. In that sense, there are elements of magical realism in some of my novels -- but not in all of them -- and they always have a logical explanation if you look for it." (Zapata Whelan, 2003)

With respect I disagree. To me there is only a matter of a degree. It is possible to take the Allende view if one looks at extreme examples of both types of writing. But the distinction blurs as one moves across the spectrum of literature from one to the other.

Fundamentally it seems to me that what makes creative writing fiction is that the author lies and the reader understands that. The issue then becomes the degree to which the author lies and the degree to which the reader knows about any particular part of the lie and accepts it or does not know about it and accepts it as truth.

'PMRFL' did not take that psychiatric illness as a starting point, though it has ended up framed in that way on one of the three viewpoints of it.

I took certain themes of reality and unreality and then pushed them to an extreme (without letting the work become an anti-novel) and found that this is where those themes have ended up.

I started with a phrase that spontaneously entered my mind "I am Faerie though with no wings" and the thought that it would be interesting if a character thought this to be true even though there was no evidence of it and no consequence other than that which came socially from the assertion in itself.

I decided this should be a woman as I wanted a birth that was misremembered to be involved and a betrayal of a relationship.

I then wondered what it would be like if someone had no knowledge of his or her origins and felt compelled to invent this – perhaps to simply lie about it to people in order to gain social credibility. Then, what would happen if that person began actually believe it to be true or if it was indeed true?

This all pushed the fictive lie to the point where I felt I could represent three equally possible ways of viewing the nature of the fictive lie and reality presented.

Literary theory embedded in the text

I wished to see if I could, both as a pure challenge to myself and as a way of better getting to grips with their concepts,

make implicit references to major literary theories in 'PMRFL' as a way of exploring these for my own benefit.

On one analysis Vivienne's story is a commentary on the major literary theories.

I have no room to discuss this in this exegesis nor is it important to an understanding of the work. If they see that and to what extent. The extent which any reader sees these references depends entirely on that reader's understanding of literary theory. It is not necessary to see that layer in order to appreciate the work as a story. I will leave it to each reader to discover it if they wish.

What separates literary creative writing from what might be regarded as purely entertaining creative writing

I now deal with this probably unanswerable final question.

It is ultimately in my opinion a matter of taste as well as degree, the extremes of which we can point to and say 'that is literature' and almost (but not all) would agree and that is not (to which probably most but a few less, would agree given that there are genres in popular culture where opinion is very much divided). In the middle, who can say? The edges, the fringes, are however fuzzy. And that fuzziness has, as Hirsch in effect points out when discussing the equally interesting corollary, what isn't literature, has come into focus on a larger number of new media and so I is something we should eschew, the definition of literature, lest we arbitrarily limit it and therefore ourselves (Hirsch Jr., 2004). The definition now includes all sorts of things that fifty years ago it

Exegesis: 'Sandcastles' & 'The Postmodern Rules For Family Living' by Rod Fee p. 1/viii
would not: e.g. comics, web sites, television, shott movies. There
is no science to it. It is art.

I can say, bearing these two things in mind (taste and degree), that I have my own unique way of determining the members of much of the class, and that the two classes certainly intersect in a Venn diagram.

I set out below what my journey this year has suggested to me so far:

The fundamental differences between the two novels

'Sandcastles' is written in a closed unambiguous language style that seeks to take the reader through a clear storyline without becoming diverted. Whilst all readers will see and miss different things and different things to those I was thinking they might see when I wrote the text, writing in a plain language way is as close to ensuring that all interpret the plot character and themes in as narrow and similar band as possible.

'PMRFL' is quite deliberately different. 'PMRFL' is written in an open ambiguous language style seeking to allow the reader as broad a set of different interpretations as possible. This I hope will lead to many more and varied and mixed interpretations by all readers and my aim is that some readers will be able to access multiple layers of meaning as I intended to place there, and perhaps also to come up with their own unique and quite different

responses. At this point new art, it seems to me, is created.

PMRFL is rich in imagery and plays with language. Its overall aim is not so much to entertain as to explore character and situation and the meaning of both humanity and literature to push me towards the boundaries of my craft without losing the essence of a story.

'PMRFL' is also an attempt at an entirely imaginative work with as little conscious (though it is accepted it can never remove unconscious) reliance on the author's background experiences and with minimal research into reality. It is an attempt to be as new as possible. That is not to say that 'Sandcastles' is not entirely original - just that it uses a familiar set of devices and presents them as a perfectly possible and not unlikely alternative reality. Nor is it to say that 'PMRFL' is not based on my pre-existing understanding of various aspects of people and the way our society works. I have researched minor things to ensure that wherever a technical matter is referred to (such as the psychiatric arrest procedures and hospital and how delusions sometimes present clinically) have the procedures correct because it is necessary to ensure credibility with some readers.

'PMRFL' starts from the premise of fantasy and pulls it into an irreality, that is, the warped mind of a person who

we can accept might exist in an alternate and not unlikely reality. The difference is subtle but important.

In the traditional plot arc of an entertainment novel the resolution is either tidy or there is an explanation of why it is not. 'Sandcastles' has such a form.

The plot arc and character development in 'PMRFL' are non-traditional. Vivienne's character and the truth or otherwise of her narration is never completely certain, the ending is highly ambiguous.

General elements of difference

I have come to believe that there is a matter of degree between a purely entertaining work and a work which may be regarded as literature.

The main matters which I identified and which are relevant to the differences between my own two novels and between the literary and entertainment texts of others I have read this year are, in a generalised, non-exhaustive sense, those I tabulate below. There are obviously exceptions to either side and in any novel the two clearly overlap. Some well-known authors write both types deliberately as I have done. E.g. Graham Greene who used the term 'entertainments' even in titles to distinguish some works from what he (though perhaps not we!) regarded as his serious work e.g. 'Our Man In Havana: An Entertainment' (Greene, 1971).

Perhaps the best of all literature combines all of
these elements strongly:

Element	Entertainment	Literary
Plot	Strong – its usual raison d'être	Weaker
Character	Weaker investigation or if developed, in terms of one element only	Strong – lo of investigation of motivation, of reasons for action and thought, and usually a big development of several facet
Description of reality	If set in 'our real world' it is usually accurate or where inaccurate unimportant to any other element except moving the plot forward	If set in 'our real world' it is accurate or if inaccurate, deliberately so on order to highlight some aspect of that real world or character rather than plot
Fantastical elements (If set in a fantastical world, accuracy of the description is self-verifying and an irrelevant issue)	If set in a fantastical world, the accuracy of the description is irrelevant as it is self-verifying. It exists as it does in order to allow plot to move forward	If set in a fantastical world, it is as a device for character development or in order to reflect and thereby comment on reality or aspects of character in some way
Open or closed text	Closed	Open
Themes other than plot	Weak	Strong
Purpose of the author as understood by the reader	To entertain the reader by describing a story where a human is usually presented with a particular circumstance and barrier to overcome. The circumstance is not usually cultural but as an individual faced with a problem	To elucidate an aspect of being human in a particular circumstance, either culturally or as an individual faced with one of a limited number of universal human conditions (e.g. death, sickness, love, life, survival)
Imagery in its different forms	Weak	Stronger

CONCLUSION

I started the year with preconceptions of what constituted literature and its value. I had little idea of literary theory or the craft of writing. I have developed my understanding of all of these throughout the course. I have done this with intensive research, with discussion and most of all with writing and reflection.

I have come to certain ephemeral conclusions about literary theories which I would like to explore in more depth more. I have

been able to explore an interest in the depiction of reality as opposed to the fictive lie.

I have also begun to explore some of the differences between serious literature and entertaining literature. I have done this not just through reading but by actually attempting to create both.

In the end I conclude what may be obvious, that creative writing is an art not a science and as such what constitutes literature or entertainment is a matter of taste and degree. That purposes and intentions of the author have no meaning to the reader other than what is in the text and picked up by that reader, but may be influenced in collapsing down or broadening) through the text itself (if closed as it often will be in an entertainment work) or extra-textually. Extra-textual statements have differing degrees of authority and influence on the reader and range from the opinions of other readers, cataloguing by booksellers and librarians and marketers, marketplace and academic critics, and by the treatment of the material when translated from one language to another or to a different media such as film.

One of my novels I have attempted to write in closed and therefore guiding text and the other in open text allowing for as wide a readership response as possible. I have however approached both with story as fundamental.

In terms of my journey, I have enjoyed it, writing most of all. 'Sandcastles' I enjoyed as an exercise, a challenge. But 'PMRFL' I enjoyed much more because it interested me in its complexity.

What a reader will make of either, I do not know nor do I have any right to expect to correctly predict, and because the writing to me is more important than what a particular reader may think, frankly do not really care much, except in one matter to which I refer to below.

I find myself in agreement with Satre (Satre, 2002 at p.30) that a writer cannot read his or her own work as does a reader coming to it as a crafted, polished, unknown piece of writing they spend some hours with. A writer is behind all of that and sees only sawdust and flaws, marred varnish, months of repetition, images that turn to banality somewhere for her/im. and trying to see how this mythical reader will see it with brand new vision, an impossible task.

With one exception I have accomplished what I set out to do, or rather the changed direction I took early on in the process. I have examined many aspects of craft, themes and theory and produced stories which I hope will engage with readers in ways that they like. It is the latter issue which is the exception to knowing I have achieving my goals:

And now I come to that which I do care about: given my views about the inability of the writer to read the work as a reader does and the view I currently hold that readers will and should see

Exegesis: 'Sandcastles' & 'The Postmodern Rules For Family Living' by Rod Fee p. lvii/lviii
different things in the art than the artist, from an academic point of view I find myself fascinated by how readers will in fact react to my work. It would be wonderful to design research that compared my intentions and thoughts as I wrote with:

- a. how those translate in the minds of readers; and
- b. what else they may see that I do not.

REFERENCES

- Allende, I. (1999). *Daughter of fortune : a novel* (1st ed.). New York: HarperCollins.
- Allende, I., & Peden, M. S. (2003). *My invented country : a nostalgic journey through Chile* (1st ed.). New York: HarperCollins.
- Barr, A. J., Jr. (1980). *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art* (Vol. 2008). New York: Arno Press for The Museum of Modern Art.
- Barthe, R. (1968). *The Death of the Author*. *Aspen*(5).
- Borges, J. L. (1962). *Ficciones*. New York: Grove Press.
- Carter, A. (1993a). *The bloody chamber and other stories*. New York ; London: Penguin Books.
- Carter, A. (1993b). *Nights At The Circus*. London: Penguin.
- Coetzee, J. M. (2005). Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Memories Of My Melancholy Whores. In *Inner Workings: Literary Essays 2000-2005* (pp. 304). Sydney: Vintage.
- Eco, U. (1979). *The Role Of The Reader: Explorations In The Semiotics Of Texts*. London: Penguin.
- Foster Wallace, D. (1998). Laughing with Kafka. *Harper's Magazine*.
- Foucault, M. (1977). What Is An Author (D. Bouchard & S. Sherry, Trans.). In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews By Michel Foucault* (pp. pp. 113-117). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- García Márquez, G. (1967). *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (G. Rabassa, Trans.). New York: Avon Books.
- García Márquez, G. (2000). *One hundred years of solitude*. London: Penguin.
- Grass, G. (2004). *The Tin Drum*. London: Vintage Classics.
- Greene, G. (1971). *Our Man in Havana: An Entertainment* London: Penguin.
- Hirsch Jr., E. D. (2004). What Isn't Literature? In E. John & D. Lopes (Eds.), *Philosophy of Literature: Contemporary and Classic Readings : an Anthology*. Oxford.
- Jakobson, R. (1967). Linguistics and Poetics. In S. Chatman & S. R. Levin (Eds.), *Essays On The Language Of Literature*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Kafka, F., & Glatzer, N. N. (1971). *Franz Kafka: The complete stories*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Mendoza, P. A. (1988). *The Fragrance Of Guava : Conversations With Gabriel Garcia Márquez*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Nietzsche, F. (1887). Third Essay: What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean? *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemical Tract* Retrieved 1 December 2008, from <http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/nietzsche/genealogy3.htm>
- Satre, J.-P. (2002). *What Is Literature?* (B. Frechtman, Trans.). London: Routledge.
- Sontag, S. (1968). *The Aesthetics of Silence*. *Aspen*(6).
- surrealist.revolution@skymail.fr. (1999, 1999). André Breton's Manifesto Of Surrealism, 1924. Retrieved 12 February 2008, from <http://www.screensite.org/courses/Jbutler/T340/SurManifesto/ManifestoOfSurrealism.htm>
- Trumble, W. R., & Stevenson, A. (Eds.). (2002). *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, p.3460* (Fifth ed. Vol. 2). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wolfe, T. (2008). *The Bonfire Of The Vanities*. New York: Picador.
- Zapata Whelan, C. (2003, 27 March 2003). The Difference Between Fantasy and Imagination: A Conversation with Isabel Allende. *Margin: Exploring Magical Realism*. Retrieved 21 March 2008, 2008, from <http://www.angelfire.com/wa2/margin/nonficCZWEnglish.html>