

2008

Tainted fruit

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University of Wollongong

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TAINTED FRUIT

A creative work and exegesis submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award
of the degree of

DOCTOR OF CREATIVE ARTS

From

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

Name: Pearlie McNeill MA (University of Wollongong)

Faculty of Creative Arts 2008

CERTIFICATION

I, Pearlie McNeill, declare this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Creative Arts, in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work, unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualification at any other academic institution.

Pearlie McNeill

21st February, 2008

ABSTRACT

I have written two earlier books about my family. *Tainted Fruit* is the third and continues the thread of dialogue I have been weaving into my consciousness about the impact of family violence on my life.

One of the Family is a first person, autobiographical account of my growing up years, related along a chronological time-line. *Counting the Rivers*, is also chronological, but the story is written as a novel, using a fragmentary style rather than chapters. This structure includes pages of my patient file, and italicised paragraphs written from the point of view of the main character. This novel documents my experience as a psychiatric patient in Sydney, in the era of the 1960s and 70s.

Tainted Fruit, a reflective book, is then, the third book of this trilogy and is not circumscribed by the defines or conventions of any one genre but instead, borrows from many genres: fiction, memoir, journals (etc) in order to create its own experimental, imaginative form. I have sought to explore a broader range of options for my own narrating voice.

I have sought to examine the implications of violence within my own family, the far-reaching implications of growing up with domestic violence as a backdrop to daily life and reverberations of awareness and shame. I am concerned too, about how that experience of childhood can continue a cycle of violence that for some is hard to resist.

My research for both the book and the exegesis has involved a wide range of sources: books, newspapers, journals, magazines, maps, oral history recordings and transcripts, rent-book records, genealogical documents, interviews with members of my family, visits to relevant settings and website material: detailing information from writers' panels as well as interviews with individual writers.

The exegesis chapters are organised around the narrating voice. My particular interest has been point of view. What power is invested in the narrator and where do they stand in relation to the events, the people, they are writing about?

My aim has been to closely examine the complex negotiation between narrative and perspective, illuminating the emphasis narrators give to certain aspects of a story, and broadening that aim to explore the question *how do we writers write about violence?*

PUBLICATIONS

One of the Family was Highly Recommended in the Human Rights Awards (Australia 1990)

Counting the Rivers won the Wirra Wirra/Wakefield Press Award for Unpublished Non-fiction 1998.

This prize of \$10,000 also included publication of the book by Wakefield Press.

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