

The Production of a
Creative Work: an illustrated
Contemporary Gothic novel entitled
The Silting, accompanied by a
Research-Based Critical Reflection
(Exegesis) of the work

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Abstract

This PhD project involved the writing of an illustrated contemporary Gothic novel entitled The Silting. Concurrent with the writing of the novel, a substantial, theoretically informed exegetical critique of the novel was also produced.

The Novel: The Silting

The Silting is a contemporary Gothic novel set in a fictitious English seaside village called Cove. The Silting's narrative is predominantly driven by the psychotic interior monologue of the narrator Johnathan Wolms. Despite Johnathan's cynical and nihilistic demeanour, he becomes obsessed with the apparent divine presence of an ancient stone cube – *the Cube* - that 'speaks' to him from its housing in an old windmill. The Cube's influence seems intrinsically connected to a number of other characters, such as the mill owner's daughter Abby.

The Exegesis of The Silting

The Exegesis, produced concurrently with the writing of The Silting, explores the process of creating The Silting particularly with regard to its location within the contemporary Gothic genre, as well as its role in terms of metafictionality. Significantly, the latter concept became more pronounced as both the novel and exegesis drafts proceeded, in that the self-reflexive, metafictional interplay of the novel seemed to 'spill' across both fictional and exegetic frames. In this way, the writing of the novel influenced the nature of the exegesis; and vice versa, exegetic research came to influence the content and narrative direction of the novel.

Please Note: The novel The Silting is an unpublished novel, which for MLA referencing purposes normally requires the use of quotation marks (i.e. "The Silting") rather than be underlined. However, as the title is used frequently in the Exegesis, I have chosen to underline The Silting (as with other titles) in order to maintain the "flow" of reading. This action also serves to avoid the awkward situation of the use of the title in a possessive form ("The Silting's") in which the possessive apostrophe tends to clash with quotation marks.

PhD Project Title:

**The Production of a Creative Work: An Illustrated
Contemporary Gothic Novel Entitled The Silting, Accompanied
by a Substantial Research-Based Critical Reflection on/Exegesis
on the work.**

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List of Illustrations (for Novel)

(All illustrations © 2007 Dennis Mealor)

1. The town of Cove (panoramic view) . . . follows* p. 1
2. The old windmill . . . follows p. 14
3. Cemetery and Black Rocks Cottage . . . follows p. 16
4. Jo'anne Laver . . . follows p. 39
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6. The 'double corner' of the Frontage and Hills Road; and The Frontage and Millers Way . . . follows p. 54
7. Ron Miller . . . follows page 76
8. Cove steps & cottages . . . follows page 134
9. The *Cock and Conch* . . . follows page 222
10. All Bushel's Church and Cove Square . . . follows page 279

* please note: for artistic reasons, pagination on illustrations has been omitted.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements pages are usually the part of a book that I tend to avoid reading. To me, they are in the same category as Prefaces and Forewords, both of which are like signposts to let me know where to find the start. But in writing this acknowledgements page, I can really appreciate their worth. This Project has taken a big piece out of my life over the last three years, not only time-wise but also mentally and physically. But I could not have done it by myself, and so there are a number of people to thank.

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Dennis Mealor

Author's Declaration

This PhD Project, The Production of a Creative Work: An Illustrated Contemporary Gothic Novel entitled The Silting, Accompanied by a Substantial Research-Based Critical Reflection (Exegesis), represents all my own work (including illustrations). It has not been submitted elsewhere, for the purpose of assessment or any other reason whatsoever.

This Project is herewith submitted as fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy program at Central Queensland University, Rockhampton, Australia.

Signed

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The Silting

an illustrated Novel

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