Hello, ruel World

BY PAUL MAGEE
BA hons (Melb); MA (Melb)

a thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Doctorate of Creative Arts, University of Technology, Sydney

2003
comprising

Cube Root of Book
The 14th Floor, an Hypothesis
Unaustrialia, A Study of Heads

prefaced
and
postfaced
by

Leninheads
I certify that the work in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate:
The work has always been dedicated to my sister Bridget Magee.
She acted, played flute and wove tapestries.
Each page as you read turns in this imaginary prayer wheel.
Rest well, sister.
Inspire me.

the artists who make you think the world anew, because through their frames. As well as
all the people in my bibliography I want to thank film-makers Pedro Almodovar, Luis
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beginning at age sixteen. You’re Gods.
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by being in it. He has been a wonderful supervisor, colleague and friend. He doesn’t just
produce ideas, he looks out for people on the edge, and finds a way for them to speak.
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when my poor legs were failing me. Much of the philosophy here has been derived from a
consideration of our collaboration, which has been a powerhouse. Thank you for your
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proper homage to what I have learnt from you in the essays enclosed, but it’s suffused
through all the poetry and all the craziness: the belief (but even more than that, the simple
acceptance) that our world is the real one. A revolutionary soul, and a revolutionary
friend. A composer of music, and community. Now a dad.
Jonathan Carter. Jonathan, your mind! You always kept me true to my desire to write for
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summer of 2002 was so restorative for me, having the privilege of seeing the strange
parallels between the casting of ceramics, and my own writing process, and just generally
sharing time together led to so many of the reflections on creativity and collegiality here;
you’re divine.
Anne Magee is now Dr Magee and we are proud. Mum, the older I get the more I realise
your influence on me, all the poetry you used to read and leave for me to read, which took
fifteen years to return to me, but did, and so strongly. I suddenly found myself realising
that you’d been speaking as if in lines from poems, and acting that way too, for years.
That’s where we came from! I’m so grateful for the way you brought us up to love, and to
be strong.
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When I saw Vera Mackie last week she told me of an installation artist who suspended himself, completely covered in mirror ball mirrors, naked from the ceiling of an art gallery. And then she proceeded to theorise gender through it. Thanks for the kookiness, and for always teaching, reminding me.
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The people at the Cultural Studies Association of Australia have been really sweet to me, let me hang out, turned up to my papers, given me wonderful new directions, but I theorise all this at greater length in book 3 essay g below.
To all the freaks I bumped into in Amsterdam, Finland, Russia, Chicago, Athens – the woman on the train from Meteora, a costume designer, who imagines how she would colour co-ordinate all the new people she encounters, the artist – San Francisco, Carmel and Hawaii. I want to thank Hawaii for being there, and inspiring me to move to Brisbane. I want to thank Bertie.
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Hello, ruel World

The analytic component of the thesis approaches major questions in Cultural Studies, Philosophy and Social Theory through an investigation of various forms of creative practice. I approach the question of agency, for instance, through a study of stage actors, who must recite set lines, and yet feel empowered precisely by the opportunity to act through them. Investigation of the author’s own work as a poet and novelist serves to cast light upon ideology, ie. how one might use a constrained language and yet feel empowered to speak new things through it. I apply these investigations to Althusser, whose famous essay on the total power of ideological interpellation is permeated with theatrical metaphor. I suggest that Althusser is repressing the creative component of everyday life, something social theory has ever found hard to theorise.

I proceed to suggest that the place where such processes are analysed is in the philosophy of science. The work of Charles Saunders Peirce on the experimental method is, my investigation uncovers, surprisingly geared toward the investigation of creativity. In science one has a method for, and an extensive literature on, discovering new phenomena. My thesis is that the experimental method of modern scientists, and the creative method of modern writers, both geared toward the production of things that are at once new and true, is largely the same. I use Peircean semiotics to argue that creative composition is about listening to the languages spoken all round you, and transcribing their objective contours. So as to have effect on others. Which is just like science. And in both instances we are endlessly spoken through at every moment by the myriad languages which interpellate us. Whence creativity (for those who are open to it).

My three portfolio pieces are:

**Cube Root of Book**: a series of one hundred and thirty two poems set at intervals along the descending spiral of a Fibonacci number sequence.

**The 14th Floor, an Hypothesis**, an experimental novel, written quite literally as an experiment; i.e. having written the novel, I then wrote up a prac-report detailing what I had learnt about the performance of writing, including the above.

**Unaaustralia, a Study of Heads**, an attempt to show the relevance of these findings to Cultural Studies and other related practices. It centres on my new reading of Althusser, and is flanked by mini-ethnographies of creative practice, including the above.

The poetry is presented as a major new creative work. The experimental novel/book of philosophy as a substantial contribution to knowledge.