

Spreading the word:
Persuasive performance techniques used by
Christian fundamentalist evangelists

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An exegesis and creative project submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Creative Arts
University of Technology Sydney

Part A: Play script *I Want To Be Slim*

Part B: Exegesis

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Statement of authenticity

I certify that the work presented in this dissertation has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged in 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 student: _____

Date:

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VIDEO DOCUMENTATION OF MOVED READING OF PLAY SCRIPT FOR EXAMINATION ON 20TH NOVEMBER 2013 AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING BY PRIVATE YOUTUBE LINK:

<https://youtu.be/f2dlwciffre>

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Abstract

Framed by theories of persuasion, this Doctorate of Creative Arts explores the role of the persuasive performance styles of Christian fundamentalist evangelists in increasing the number of church followers. I ask: What makes people convert and then continue to believe, follow, and stay? Is there a relationship between evangelical performativity, the social, economic and political context, and people's decisions to commit to and remain in evangelical churches?

The doctoral creative project, *I Want to Be Slim*, seeks to personify these tools and techniques of persuasion in the behaviour of a theatrical evangelical character, the Reverend Slim Limits. Research into evangelism and evangelical performativity informed the creative development of the performance script. This creative work is written as a satirical cross-platform project involving theatrical performance and digital media, including social networking.

This exegesis draws out the connections between the creative performance script and the broader critical cultural and sociological discussion of the research. The purpose is to give immediacy to the research and demonstrate how it has had direct outcomes in the creative work. ■