

A Thousand Points of Light

a novel, with accompanying exegesis:

‘Lacanian Psycho: Analysing Transgressive Fiction’

Mark Rossiter

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Certificate of Original Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been 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 Student:

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Abstract

A Thousand Points of Light is a novel that tells the story of a wildlife photographer who begins his career making pornography in London. After a trip to Berlin, he moves to Ukraine, where he photographs young models for a website. Now living in Australia, Max is forced to return to Kiev and confront his past when a journalist, Nadya, arrives to interview him about the international award he is short-listed to receive.

The novel incorporates aspects of the 2008 Bill Henson affair and draws on the largely undocumented Ukrainian child model websites phenomenon. By locating the reader within the narrative as intimate witness, it exposes and exploits what the theoretical aspect of the thesis calls the Lacanian desire/drive of the transgressive. Additionally it explores the gulf between conventional morality and the artistic instinct which seeks to show beauty wherever it lies, asking to what degree the photographer is responsible for the scenes he or she captures.

‘Lacanian Psycho: analysing transgressive fiction’ is the exegetical component of this thesis. It applies the work of Jacques Lacan to the problem of transgressive literature by imagining the text of the novel as a Lacanian symbolic order, a pre-existing domain into which the subject/reader arrives and must resolve primary conflicts.

The exegesis locates the transgressive moment in the text as the last signifier in the metonymic chain proximate to *das Ding*, the unattainable/forbidden object of desire. The field of desire motivates both reader and writer, yet because *das Ding* is also in the unknowable and terrifying order of the real, subjects are threatened. One response is repressive censorship; the alternative is the acquisition of new knowledge.

This model is applied to both the writing of the companion creative component, *A Thousand Points of Light*, and to the analysis of the following other novels: Bret Easton Ellis’s *American Psycho*, *The Kindly Ones* (Jonathan Littell) and *Platform* (Michel Houellebecq).