

DIGNITY OF BOUNDARY

“JACK LONDON SLEPT HERE”

(A NOVEL)

**“FOREGROUNDING DIALOGUE: AN ETHICAL APPROACH
THROUGH COURAGEOUS RISK”**

(AN EXEGESIS)

Robert Sedlack

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Discipline of English and Creative Writing

School of Humanities

University of Adelaide

May 2017

“JACK LONDON SLEPT HERE”

(A NOVEL)

Volume 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	i
TITLE PAGE (NOVEL)	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	vi
DECLARATION	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
VOLUME 1: NOVEL	
<i>JACK LONDON SLEPT HERE</i>	1
JACK LONDON HOUSE (PHOTOGRAPH)	2
NOTE ATTACHED TO TRANSCRIPTS	3
CHAPTER 1	
<i>Playboy</i>	
Entrevue Interruptus	4
CHAPTER 2	
<i>Rolling Stone</i> (Part One)	
Swinging for the Moon: An Unexpected Rendezvous	
With Brilliance	16
CHAPTER 3	
<i>Rolling Stone</i> (Part Two)	34
CHAPTER 4	
<i>Ladies Home Journal</i>	
Dinner with the Queen of the Court: An Interview	
With Hartley Sickerdick	62

CHAPTER 5	
	<i>Architectural Digest</i>
	A Spin Around the Jack London House 99
CHAPTER 6	
	<i>Nintendo Power</i>
	Capturing Ghosts: The Hartley Sickerdick Way 127
CHAPTER 7	
	<i>Rave</i>
	Up and Atom: Get Hip to the Cool Hot Clues 165
CHAPTER 8	
	<i>Girls and Corpses</i>
	The Songwriter and the Exotic-Dancing Porn Star 221
CHAPTER 9	
	<i>Esquire</i>
	Birds on the Line 237
CHAPTER 10	
	<i>Parenting</i>
	Pounce of the Now 257
DEAD END (PHOTOGRAPH)	294
VOLUME 2: EXEGESIS	
	“FOREGROUNDING DIALOGUE: AN ETHICAL APPROACH THROUGH COURAGEOUS RISK” 295
INTRODUCTION	296
	Chapter Outlines 308

CHAPTER ONE	
THEORY	311
Bakhtin and Pure Dialogue	311
Friedrich Spielhagen and Objective Narrative Theory.....	321
CHAPTER TWO	
OMISSION	335
Pretty Words	336
A Chary Approach to the Chamber of Consciousness	344
CHAPTER THREE	
TEXT ANALYSIS	350
<i>Eternal Curse</i> on the Pirates of Privacy	350
<i>Doting on Carpenter's Gothic</i>	361
CHAPTER FOUR	
A NOVEL UNDER THE EXEGETICAL INFLUENCE	372
Foregrounding Plot in a Dialogue Novel	372
CONCLUSION	380
ABBREVIATIONS	386
WORKS CITED	387
BIBLIOGRAPHY	395

ABSTRACT

The thesis couples my creative work, *Jack London Slept Here*, with an exegesis that argues for an “ethical” approach to the foregrounding of fictional dialogue. My argument will take into consideration the role of the reader and characterisation through dialogue rather than author-intention and self-interest. It invites participation and collaboration as a gesture of abdication of control. My original contribution to knowledge will be found in my argument that this ethical invitation is not the product of ideological positioning or experimentation with novelistic technique, but rather, the result of courage – manifesting through risk; humility – manifesting through erasure; and ultimately, a respect for the boundaries of reader and character.

The novel is composed entirely through a series of interviews with my protagonist in his house on a dead-end alley in Hollywood. These interviews take place shortly before and after a shooting massacre at a nearby golf and country club. The interview structure has afforded me the opportunity and challenge to not just reduce narrative description but to eliminate it altogether. It has allowed me to forego all reliance upon speech tags to convey the emotions of the characters. There are no interior monologues and any attempt to interpret character consciousness must be made by the reader based upon their relationship to the dialogue presented to them.

The exegesis will investigate the foregrounding of fictional dialogue as a narrative choice for the unobtrusive author and how this function requires a collaborating

reader. Bronwen Thomas, who has made significant contributions in the scholarly study of fictional dialogue with her book, *Fictional Dialogue: Speech and Conversation in the Modern and Postmodern Novel*, was initially inspired by novelist and critic David Lodge's assertion that novelists who foreground dialogue "have been somewhat undervalued by academic criticism because their foregrounding of dialogue makes them resistant to a method of analysis biased in favour of lyric expressiveness." [*After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism*. London: Routledge, 1990. 83.]

My research takes the form of a critical reflection of the dialogue novels of William Gaddis, Henry Green and Manuel Puig by employing the theoretical lens of the nineteenth-century German author and theorist, Friedrich Schlegel.

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text of the thesis.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for photocopying and loan subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The experience of writing this thesis felt similar to running the Los Angeles Marathon. If the marathon is monologic then thesis composition is dialogic. I would like to thank the University of Adelaide for providing such an extraordinary opportunity to explore craft and theory. My principal supervisor, Brian Castro, has what can only be described as a “beautiful mind.” His attention to EVERYTHING helped to make this thesis possible. I will always be indebted to Brian. Thanks also to my co-supervisors Joy McEntee and Phillip Edmonds. Phil Butters brought humanity and humour to the paperwork path of postgraduate work. As did Jennifer Osborn and Cally Guerin. I would also like to acknowledge the many candidates and faculty who attended the English and Creative Writing seminars. Your voices were an inspiration. I was fortunate to find additional voices outside the university. I would like to thank Brian Poole for his superb scholarly work and his dialogue with me. Other scholars who were kind enough to offer guidance include Ken Hirschkop at the University of Waterloo and Andrew Gibson at Royal Holloway, University of London. I would also like to acknowledge the shimmering assistance of Rowan Scott. And thank you, Nicole Winstanley at Penguin Canada, for your generosity and insight. Thank you, dad (Ron Sedlack), for the support. And to my beautiful wife, Belinda Reich, thank you for your guidance, encouragement, and superb editing. I love you. Also, to Jack and Millie who helped keep everything in perspective, I promise I will no longer be grumpy when you sashay into my workroom at 5:00 a.m.