

**Deterrence Vivarium: A Collection of Stories and Exegesis**

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**Volume 1: Creative Component**



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## **Abstract**

The thesis *Deterrence Vivarium* is made up of a creative component and an exegesis. The creative component is a collection of eight pieces of fiction ranging in style and length, from microfictions to short stories and concluding with a novella. The opening story “Amsterdam” begins with the protagonist attempting to deal with the disintegration and loss of a relationship. The world around them reflects this sense of decay and the central character’s helplessness in taking control in a world whose threat encroaches upon his very perception of the physical space around him. The story “ONFF” follows on by inviting the reader into the narrator’s willful misperception of the world around them, using a room in his parent’s house to teach found electronic objects a new way of thinking and being. “jesussaves82” is an online date gone wrong. Both participants are more concerned with the idea of connecting with another person, rather than thinking about who that person may be. With one of them acting like Jesus, it is bound to fail. “The Suitcase” is a story of memory in which the disappearance of a father and the finding of an old man with Alzheimer’s on the street coincide for a mother and child. “Deterrence Vivarium”, the title piece, looks at the method a couple on the cusp of retirement take to eradicate a series of older selves that are scaling their back wall and making camp in their yard. “To My Son” is an epistolary short story in which a father leaves a beautifying face brace patent for what he sees and declares is his ugly son. He hopes it will redeem with wealth his failure as a father so far. “Imago” finds the central character turned into a copy of Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* in the bedroom of a woman who took him home in a failed one-night stand. The final piece, “By Numbers”, is a novella that follows Callum Ryder, a man who has left his job for no

particular reason beyond his dislike for his work. He redeems an offer for a free cosmetic procedure he found in his spam folder and finds himself entwined in the madness of Doctor Hensen and his elusive partner in their activities.

The exegetical component acts as a critical map of the influences and motivations that are embedded in the creative process of the collection's construction. It traces the relation of these pieces to a broader context, including the textual, the conceptual and social. It looks at the role and relationship of the exegesis and its purpose. And finally, draws out specific aspects of the writing as a collection, from its humor to its underlying concerns, and argues that in spite of the limits and breakdown of communication and language that are reflected in these stories, there is in turn a vital need to attempt to move towards empathy and understanding.

## **Thesis Declaration of Originality**

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name 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. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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Matthew Gabriel

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