ILLEGIBLE NARRATIVES:

Towards a Queer Violation of Life Story

Gretta Jade Mitchell

Discipline of English & Creative Writing
School of Humanities
May, 2015
# CONTENTS

Abstract .................................................................................... 4  
Declaration of Originality ......................................................... 6  
Acknowledgements .................................................................... 7  

**CRITICAL INTRODUCTION** 8  
Prologue ..................................................................................... 30  

**THE WOMEN WHO HIT ME** 31  
Sticky Kniky ................................................................................. 32  
aka ................................................................................................. 35  
Justine ......................................................................................... 42  
Alice’s Wish .................................................................................. 58  
The Target is Leo ........................................................................... 65  
Who? .............................................................................................. 85  
Alive like Albertine ........................................................................ 88  
Any Other Name ............................................................................. 91  
The Two-Year Sentence Notebook ............................................. 92  
Mikhel ............................................................................................. 99  
  Day 1, Dawn .............................................................................. 108  
  Day 2, Dusk ............................................................................... 115  
  Day 3, Danse ............................................................................... 118  
Three-Secret Jim ........................................................................... 122  
Lovesick Rage .............................................................................. 148  
Chapter Thirteen .......................................................................... 154  
Epilogue ....................................................................................... 155  

**ADDENDA** 157  
Gothic Frame ............................................................................... 158  
Learning to Read .......................................................................... 159  

**EXEGETICAL NOTES** 169
Abstract

‘The Women Who Hit Me’ is an exercise in *queer writing*. Via strategic (mis)uses of the aesthetics of creative writing, it attempts a Genet-esque seduction of its readers in order to crescendo the force of its (im)potential disturbances. A novella of sorts — imagined from within the structures, the strictures, of heteronormative language — ‘The Women Who Hit Me’ engages in a self-conscious fictional game that it nonetheless plays dead serious. The focus is Jimi: a protagonist at a queer disjunction with the language that inscribes her. ‘The Women Who Hit Me’ is the coming-of-age story of Jimi’s illegibility as the textual non-binary demarcations of erotica/pornographica, supplication/confession, fiction/thesis battle like MCs until ultimately there is no victor. — Corrosive even to that which it loves, part suicide note part love letter.

As well as addressing the concepts and strategies mentioned above, the exegesis is an idiosyncratic response to the metacritical problem of in/appropriate theoretical speculation. Informed by the night vision pedagogy of Williams S. Burroughs’s *My Education: A Book of Dreams* and the implications of reading the unconscious as a nonsymbolic and nonfigurative social force in schizoanalysis, it aims for a critico-philosophical phantasmagoria, a post-surrealist “look-behind-the-scenes” at the thinkers and poets who claim ante-
cedence to ‘The Women Who Hit Me.’ Like the creative work, the exegesis is a queer text, working against the fulfilment of meaning and toward the disturbance of the poetics it nevertheless desires.
Declaration of Originality

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, no part of this work will be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without prior approval of the University of Adelaide.

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

The author acknowledges that copyright of published works contained within this thesis resides with the copyright holder(s) of those works.

I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University’s digital research depository, 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.

Gretta Jade Mitchell
May 2015
Acknowledgements

To all exposed to the black juvenilia of my first drafts, thank you for not holding it against me. Due to your feedback only a few dark stains of the early brutality remain.

To my primary supervisor, Dr. Rosslyn Winifred Prosser, I extend heartfelt gratitude. A more patient, careful, and sensitive superior, I could not hope to find. I will not forget you. Likewise, Dr. Mandy Treagus, I am indebted to your scrupulous eye and your open arms. You are both above and beyond, and without your support, my work — not to mention my life — would be a lesser beast at which to marvel.

Alison Coppe & Carolyn Lake, Shannon Burns & Kelli Rowe deserve special mention. The latter duo for the gifts of their generous readings and their sincere and insightful remarks; the former for their unfailing friendship. Despite the causticity of my persona, you have each maintained contact when many have not. I thank you all.

And finally, to Michelle Wilson for your love and enduring devotion... read ’em and weep, my love, read ’em and weep.