Fictocritical Sentences

Simon Robb

English Department, University of Adelaide.

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ABSTRACT

'Fictocriticism' refers to writing that performs yet also problematizes the key manoeuvres of both fiction and criticism. Fictocriticism is a term that has been taken up in Australian academic contexts to describe writing that is concerned with an interplay of writing 'positions' and with the specific or local contexts that enable the production of these 'positions'.

**Fictocritical Sentences** primarily enacts a fictocritical mapping of local cultural events. The 'events' are essentially concerned with crime and trauma in Adelaide. They include the disappearance of the three Beaumont children in 1966, the 'Family' murders of the 1980s, the 'Truro' murders of the 1970s and the 'reforming' of 'criminal' and 'neglected' boys on the Fitzjames, a hulk moored off the metropolitan coast of Adelaide, during the 1880s. The fictocritical treatment of these events simulates their unresolved or traumatised condition. Differences between 'invention' and 'explication' matter most at times of personal and public trauma. A problematic yet important use for the unstable combination of both the literary and the critical can be found in the mapping of trauma events.

A secondary concern is the relationship between electronic writing (hypertext) and fictocriticism. The mapping of significant (and virtually uncharted) Adelaide trauma events and the relationship between fictocriticism and hypertext is presented in print and hypertext works.

Fictocritical strategies can be used to simulate rather than synthesise the textual field of a given event. Fictocritical strategies are effective in dealing with competing truth effects and their desire for mastery. Fictocriticism can be a way of documenting the textual or discursive field of the local environment in a way that encourages the reader/user/listener to negotiate his own path through that landscape.

In reviewing my fictocritical work I have come to realise that fictocriticism is concerned both with producing and destabilising the effect of 'presence'. Of equal importance is the mapping of a particular textual field in such a way that the play of difference produces a multiplicity of reading positions.