

End of the Night Girl

Amy T Matthews

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Writing

Discipline of English

School of Humanities

University of Adelaide

April 2007

Contents

1. Abstract	3
2. Statement of Originality	5
3. Acknowledgements	6
4. Dedication	8
<i>End of the Night Girl:</i>	
5. the taste of pink	10
6. strangers when we meet	61
7. secondhand kisses	113
8. the taste of amber	150
9. ghosts	186
10. end of the night, girl	230
11. Author's Note	275
12. Bibliography for	
<i>End of the Night Girl</i> and	
'Navigating the Kingdom of Night'	276

Abstract

End of the Night Girl and ‘Navigating the Kingdom of Night’:

End of the Night Girl

Nothing seems to go right for Molly – she’s stuck in a dead-end waitressing job, she’s sleeping with a man she doesn’t even like, and she’s just been saddled with a swarm of goldfish and a pregnant stepsister. The chance discovery of an old photograph leads her into an act of creation, and brings her into contact with the ghost of a woman who has been dead for more than sixty years.

Sixty years earlier, in Poland, Gienia’s family arranges her marriage to a distant cousin. Not long after her marriage to this stranger, the Nazis invade and she has to face life in the ghetto and the horrors of Auschwitz.

End of the Night Girl is a complex fictional narrative in which the lives of these two women, ‘real’ and imagined, imagined and re-imagined, are inextricably combined.

‘Navigating the Kingdom of Night’

Critics, historians and Holocaust survivors have argued for decades over whether the Holocaust should be accessible to fiction and, if so, who has the right to write those fictions. ‘Navigating the Kingdom of Night’ addresses such concerns and analyses various literary strategies adopted by authors of Holocaust fiction, including the non-realist narrative techniques used by authors such as Yaffa Eliach, Jonathan Safran Foer and John Boyne and the self-reflexivity of Art Spiegelman.

Through the course of the essay I contextualise *End of the Night Girl* by turning my attention to works that raise critical issues of authorial intent and the reader/writer contract; for example Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* and Helen Darville's *The Hand That Signed the Paper*. How did I resolve my own concerns? Which texts helped me and why? Together *End of the Night Girl* and 'Navigating the Kingdom of Night', one creatively and one critically, explore these complex and controversial questions in a contemporary Australian context.

Statement of Originality

This work contains no material which 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 or belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. In the case of *End of the Night Girl* there will be a one year embargo.

Amy T Matthews

April 2007

Acknowledgements

Thanks to everyone who read the many drafts and offered advice and support: Henry Ashley-Brown, Chelsea Avard, Kathryn Doube, Rachel Hennessy, Stephanie Hester, Ben Marton, Barry, Susan and Gerald Matthews, Helen Mitchell and Stephanie Thomson.

Thank you to all of my supervisors, initially Thomas Shapcott, a kind and generous man; the ever supportive Susan Hosking, gracious and inspiring, who once told me that it is possible to research, write and teach even when raising small children; and especially Nicholas Jose. I don't have enough words to thank Nick, who has taught me so much about redrafting and editing and who was always honest, supportive and able to drag the best out of me, even when I didn't think it was there.

Thanks also to Judith Lukin-Admunsen, my mentor, who offered criticism so accurate it hurt and advice so inspiring I was able to redraft the novel yet again.

Thank you to Chef Tony Carroll (who never once called me the C-word!) for letting me steal from his menus.

And, finally, thank you to the people who make it all worthwhile – the ones who offer me every possible kind of support: encouraging me to write, babysitting so I *can* write and being more than happy to help – my husband, Ben Marton, the smartest guy I know, and my parents Barry and Susan Matthews, the best people I know. And to

Kirby, for helping me keep some perspective – redrafting is nothing compared to sleeplessness, vomit and nappies and the pleasure of PhDs and publication are nothing compared with the pleasure of being with you.

*For my parents,
who have always believed in me*