Fingerprints: Exploration of Identity, Community and Place

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University, 2010.
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Michelle Crawford
Abstract

This thesis consists of two stand-alone but complementary components. The first, a work of fiction, ‘Fingerprints: the fiction’, is a narrative based in a West Australian community exploring questions of memory, identity and experience along with notions of social connectedness. Set in a landscape of grief, physical and emotional isolation, the text is grounded in the everyday-ness and mundanity of life and, through delving into characters’ memories in particular, makes visible that which is often largely hidden. This body of work comprises part of the development of a full-length novel.

The accompanying exegesis, ‘Fingerprints: the exegesis’, also engages in part with issues of memory, identity and experience, and explores both the creative processes and the evolution of my own identity as a creative writer and postgraduate student working within another type of community—the university. In a sense, it too is grounded in isolation, and foregrounds the everyday-ness around the development of creative work. It also aims to offer greater insights into and focus on the value of the processes (rather than the products) of creative work. It thus also endeavours to make visible that which is normally hidden in the development of an academic and/or creative project. I address questions arising directly from my own research practices alongside broader discussion of ways in which creative research is intimately connected with the doing of creative writing within the academy.
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