

This thesis comprises a novel titled *I'm You*, accompanied by a critical exegesis titled *Remembering is a Form of Forgetting: Episodic Memory as Postmodern Simulacrum*. As a whole, the thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge by arguing that episodic memory is best conceived of as a system of simulacrum, not unlike Jean Baudrillard's description of postmodern hyperreality.

The exegesis begins by outlining theories of the simulacrum from Plato to Baudrillard. It next moves to construct a working definition of episodic memory by engaging with contemporary psychological research supporting the notion of reconstructive memory, which concludes that there are empirical reasons to think of memory as a system constantly in flux. The exegesis then goes on to examine the consequences of such a conception, arguing that the subject suffers a radical sense of fragmentation and alienation as a result of the unverifiable nature of memory narratives. This is related in the exegesis to a kind of internalised, postmodern uncanny effect, drawing on Freud's 1955 essay 'The Uncanny' to describe a situation in which the simulacrum of memory gives rise to innumerable uncanny selves. In order to explore how these ideas have been embodied in postmodern fiction, the exegesis provides case studies of the work of Paul Auster, Haruki Murakami and Jan Kjaerstad. Finally, the exegesis describes how my thesis novel, *I'm You*, represents these theoretical ideas in a manner that extends the work of other postmodern writers.

*I'm You* tells the story of Paul, an anthropologist, who returns from a long research trip in rural Argentina to find that his best friend Mark has been dead for some time. In the resulting grief and confusion, Paul inadvertently ostracises himself from his group of friends, finding himself alone and without purpose. He stumbles across an abandoned suburban home bearing an eerie resemblance to the house he grew up in, and there meets Lana, a highschool dropout living nearby. They form an unusual yet contented friendship, and things start to take on a semblance of normality for Paul. That is, until a strange woman starts calling Paul's phone, searching for her lost lover, and a series of misaddressed letters begin turning up at the abandoned house; the writer of those letters confesses to a terrible crime. The novel explores the cycles of repetition, fragmentation and alienation discussed in the exegesis, attempting to represent them structurally through the use of framed and fragmented narratives; cycles and repetition; and the inclusion of irrational elements such as doppelgangers, non-linear temporality, and profound ambiguity.

The novel itself also constitutes an original contribution to knowledge in several senses. Firstly, it works as a creative expression of my conceptual thesis of memory as a simulacral system. Secondly, it engages with postmodern notions of radical fragmentation, ambiguity and irresolution, but places memory itself as the cause of these conditions. While these subjects have been explored in other literature, their causes are largely linguistic and metaphysical, in the case of both Beckett and Borges, or otherwise stem from the hyperreality of the postmodern world, as in Auster, Murakami, Kjaerstad and others. *I'm You* moves away from previous works by locating the cause of radical fragmentation within memory itself.