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Crealivity: using creativity to portray reality

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Keywords: creative writing, ethnographic art, arts-based teaching, child abuse, sport

Abstract

WARNING: The social topics dealt with in this paper are disturbing, being uncomfortably close to the surface of our everyday society; child abduction, paedophile rings, the child sex trade and child prostitution. These topics are portrayed through two creative artworks; a short story and a pictorial image. In combination they illustrate with shocking clarity how easily abuse can start and where it can end. The endeavour is to impart a message about the vulnerability of children through accessible forms of data representations, given that social research should have the capacity to make these kinds of statement about the world we live in. Both creative works are underpinned by extensive research into the realities of the situations they describe and may consequently be regarded as ethnographic, through fiction and quite literally, through an *[ethno]graphic* artwork. The social topics of the artworks; child abuse in these extreme forms, are aspects of reality in society which the education system from 0-18years (ECM, 2003) and National Governing Bodies of sport in the UK are committed to combatting. Under Child Protection legislation (Children Act, revised in 2004) Sport England set up the Child Protection in Sport Unit (Sport England, 2001) which requires all NGBs to establish courses and reporting procedures to protect the young people they encourage in to their domains, such as the Safeguarding and Protecting Young Children course (Sports Coach UK, 2013). Thus, the ‘mediums and iconic / symbolic modes of communication’ (Gross, 1974:63) brought together in *Crealivity* become a means to educate about the social topics under the microscope. An outcome from this paper is to inform sports’ people about facets of our broader society, however unsavoury... a society we all take a part in, help to create, protect and enjoy.

Introduction [Clive Palmer]

This article is emotive and educational which may be indicative of its power and value in research. As a parent and an active sports coach the artistic representations of these dire, real-life occurrences are concise, unmistakable and shocking in their innocent language and graphic symbolism. Through the polished crafting of prose and depth of image, they make haunting suggestions and pose probing questions for the reader. This has caused me to reflect deeply about my



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responsibilities as a coach with a *higher duty of care* and as a teacher *in loco parentis* (BAALPE, 1995) as to my duties for the wellbeing of young people I often work with.

As artists and educators this may be where Anna Cresswell and Rachel Loveday's genuine skills have been revealed by offering a clear and stark message to coaches and parents about the vulnerability of children in school and in sport. Their tactic has been to invite readers to fill in the gaps that are opened by *Crealivity* with the imagined consequences about this situation. The story and picture prompt the recall of actual news reports, television documentaries, legal trials and atrocities of child abuse, from a local newspaper to celebrities exposed; Jimmy Saville and Operation Yewtree (2012) and on to the Houses of Parliament; Westminster (Goddard, 2015) may well come to mind. Working from this tactic it is likely that the reader will bring more meaning to this paper which may be another strength of this kind of education... less is more. That is, given the strength of the stimulus, new areas of 'meaning-making' seem inevitable through a natural empathy or as Claxton (2007:116) puts it, 'getting inside others' minds' to comprehend what is presented. Good research should be thought provoking.

The title of this paper *Crealivity* is a move towards an aesthetic interpretation of the artworks; a fusion of creativity that portrays reality, rather than the attention grabbing headlines that might be associated with a garish news report. For example, *Stealing children for sex* was one option considered as it described the social content of the artworks, but overwhelmed the cleverness of the artists to educate through the mediums of literature and image. *Crealivity* is a 'portmanteau' word (Untermeyer, 1961:208) formed when two different words are joined together, or two different ideas abstracted into one word, as if packed into a suitcase or portmanteau (see Palmer and Sellers, 2011:18). A famous example of this literary technique was *The Jabberwocky* poem by Lewis Carroll in *Alice through the looking glass* (1872 [1988:202]) 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves' etc etc. Thus, the creativity of a short story, so plausible in its telling, is now combined with the depicted reality of child prostitution rackets on the streets around football stadiums in Brazil at the FIFA 2014 World Cup. *Crealivity* has a unity in its social topic but a variety of artistic stimuli, establishing a synergy to impart their warning messages.

There is deliberately no written conclusion to this paper, the content; artistic and social (or anti-social) speaks for itself. Something like, 'a chilling tale meets a sickening reality, ethnographic art holding up a mirror to show us what is going on in dark corners of our society' may sum it up. More importantly, I wish for the students to have the last word in this paper. Whilst I did have a hand in mentoring and shaping the pedagogical process that brought the works into being, the topics,

concepts and execution are all theirs, and all credit to them. Also as their teacher I have to know when to shut up, again, less can be more when we are learning.

Overview: context and development of each artwork

DEAR READER: if you wish to skip this analysis section and head straight for ‘full impact’ then scan on below to Anna’s story *Taken*. What follows is a discussion of the artworks, the students-as-artists and links to research to offer an artistic comment on this social reality.

The central message of this paper is a warning about the vulnerability of children concerning some people’s intent to sexually abuse them. This is communicated through two creative works, the first from Anna Cresswell, a short story called *Taken* (2015), followed by Rachel Loveday’s artwork, *Overexposed: negative images of sport* (2014). Interestingly, both Anna and Rachel have not met, they studied in different years, on different degree programmes, and followed different modules. Clive Palmer’s role as their teacher at university has been to bring the story and the image together to emphasise the ethical responsibilities for looking after children in our society, and highlight the potential, disturbing consequences of not doing so. Sport becomes implicated in this sad truth of child abuse, abduction, rape and prostitution by becoming the scene for these unsavoury acts, predominantly by men but not exclusively, as Anna’s story reminds us.

Anna Cresswell’s story *Taken* is similar in essence to the storyline of the recent blockbuster film *Taken* (Morel, 2008) starring Liam Neeson as a retired CIA agent, Bryan Mills, whose teenage daughter and her girlfriend are abducted in Paris for the international sex trade. The innocence of the girls in the film; going on holiday to France from the USA, on their own for the first time, is comparable to the innocence portrayed by Emily in Anna Cresswell’s story. Both the film and Anna’s story are a message to all parents about Stranger Danger (Daniels, 2015) but seems all the more effective within Anna’s story as it is so plausible. That is, being achieved without the stunts and explosions of a big-budget film set. In both the story and the film the word ‘taken’ is used as their concise titles, indicating that tragedy is the genre of story. Tragedy is when the ending is known from the start (Palmer, 2010) and the drama is in the telling of the story itself, for example, in William Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet* (circa 1595) it is known from the start that both characters will die, or in Greek Tragedies dating from the 5th century BC, such as Sophocles’ *Antigone* (c. 442 BC) there is a strong moral lesson to learn about honour, honesty and duty from the play. Even for the Ancient Greeks the study of their classic plays became an important part of the school curriculum (Cartwright, 2013). As Blodgett *et al.*, (2011) point out, many different cultures around the world have a long tradition of storytelling to warn its people of good and poor courses of action. In the case of the entertaining film, *Taken* is not a tragedy, it has a happy ending, the

baddies get killed and the main characters return home happy, as do the viewing audience at the cinema. In Anna's educational story, *Taken* is an authentic tragedy. There is a dark and uncertain end for Emily and a powerful moral dilemma for the reader (who may want to help but can't), articulated through the child's understated innocence who is persuaded to leave the Primary school playground with a stranger.

Two literary features in Anna Cresswell's story *Taken* are worthy of note, one is more obvious than the other, but both generating impact in the storytelling. First is her repetition of theme through colour. A red theme is repeated in different settings creating imagery as to what significance the object and colour might have. As Morton (2015) points out, red is the colour of extremes and can infer sexual attractiveness, virility, passion, love, lust, heat and daring. However, it can also infer danger, STOP! evil, aggression, anger, violence, blood and death. In the case of Emily these colour inferences do seem to affect her behaviour as she is drawn to the lure of what red seems to promise. However, red in this instance does not reflect polar opposites of 'positive or negative behaviour' (Elliot *et al.*, 2007) if we understand behaviour to infer some sort of choice. Emily has no control, certainly no choice, she has been abducted for the sex trade, all reds are negative for her. There is a red car that carries her away, to a big red door at a strange house, in which she is dressed up in a red dress and given red lipstick to wear... before she is taken to a 'special place'.

The second, more subtle literary technique is the naming of the location that 'John' aka 'Daddy' takes Emily to, i.e. 'The Tracks'. Emily assumes The Tracks is something to do with horse racing; 'how she did love horses'. That such a strong sporting inference could be made so concisely is an adept use of language inviting the reader to imagine what kind of track this might be but still maintain an air of dark mystery. Is this a horse racing track? or a dog racing track? a stock-car racing track? or a motorbike speedway track? Is it a cycling velodrome or BMX track, or even an athletics track? It seems not to matter what kind of track Emily is taken to, that kind of elaboration could be irrelevant and distracting to the story, but it does seem important that a location for the lewd and indecent acts is identified... 'The Tracks'. Significantly, Emily's experiences do not take place *on* a track as a sport would do, she has not been taken there *for* the sport, rather it is on the periphery of such a location, in grubby car parks and out-buildings where the abuse takes place, conjuring up a picture of secrecy, raw light-bulbs, filth and grime. This is similar to the reality for the children depicted in Rachel Loveday's picture *Overexposed: negative images of sport*, where a child-figure is stood outside a brand new football stadium, but on a kerbside in the vicinity of derelict buildings and slum areas in the main Brazilian cities where the high profile football matches were staged.

Rachel Loveday's picture came about after an in-class discussion following the Panorama documentary *Brazil: In the shadow of the stadiums* (Rogers, 2014). The programme was screened on 4th June 2014, a week before the football World Cup commenced on 12th June -13th July 2014. The investigative journalist Chris Rogers revealed a sleazy side of football-associated activity that had evolved into a holiday trade of men visiting child prostitutes; boys and girls as young as 8 or 9 years old. These supposed football supporters, predominantly from Europe, were bussed around on the auspices of watching matches, but went to pick up girls from pavements or stopping along deserted jungle roads in the middle of the night to meet young boys, for sex. The trend for this kind of *holidaying* to prey on vulnerable children was also reported by Glaze (2013) who exposed 'devious Brits' going to poverty stricken Cambodia for their gratification. Röhn, Neller and Wild (2014) likewise, reported a 'World Cup of exploited children' in the German press, indicating that it was a widespread and ingrained problem for the sport. With Brazil being the second largest nation after Thailand for a booming child sex trade, there are an estimated 400,000 child prostitutes working the streets and Favelas, often run by Mafia gangs or even parents just selling their children for a few Euros (Röhn, Neller and Wild, 2014). They reported that the popularity of football seems to be providing a plausible excuse, or cover, for thousands of men to travel to have sex with children 'whilst the police and FIFA look the other way'. Due of this kind of investigative research there can be no mistake about the reality being portrayed and symbolised in Rachel's artwork.

The memorable in-class conversation with Rachel Loveday to explore her initial ideas for the image she wanted to create, leading to a pedagogical *eureka* moment of realisation, went along the lines of,

'Now, students, can you tell me what your idea is for this project in art and sport?' Rachel put her hand up and replied...

'Well, I want to make a negative image of sport'.

'Oh, I see that's very interesting Rachel, can you tell me more about the concept behind your *negative* image of sport' [my added emphasis to reinterpret her word].

'Well I don't know about that yet, but I studied photography at A Level before coming to university and enjoyed developing negative images from film'.

With this response my antenna for *potentially great ideas* was already alerted. I asked Rachel in a typical teacher way, 'can you think of something negative you might want to say about sport through your artwork... that is, through the use of this *negative* photographic medium... what might you want to say or show to the world that is actually negative in a social sense?'

‘Well I wasn’t thinking about *negative* in that way but now you mention it, ok, yes, that seems like a good idea, but at the moment I don’t know what I want to say’.

At this point I knew Rachel was edging towards a powerful idea with a clear and accessible means of communicating her message through this kind of imagery. I had that feeling which I am sure many teachers get when they encourage students to follow their fledgling ideas, knowing that it has huge potential for learning. The trick was to gently guide the student to their realisation, facilitate them, not push them. It was her work after all. Then she said,

‘Yes, I really like the experiments you can do with overexposed film’.

‘*Overexposed* eh? Rachel, do you realise the brilliance of what you have just said in your last few sentences, in terms of our sporting-come-artistic mission for this assignment?

‘Well, errr, yes, maybe, but can you tell me as well?’ Rachel asked, looking around somewhat surprised at her friends.

‘You want to make a *negative* image of sport that uses *overexposure* in photographic film. This is quite brilliant, just to let you know the genius you have stumbled upon here. The very use of your photographic medium as an overexposed and negative image becomes your means to send a strong message about sport, i.e. that some aspect of sport is socially very negative because something, or someone is being destructively overexposed. Did you see the Panorama report about child prostitution going on around the stadia for the Brazil World cup?’

‘Yes I did hear about it but no, I have not watched it’.

‘Then that is your homework tonight, get it on iPlayer or YouTube’.

I summed up for Rachel and for the benefit of other students in the class who were looking for their own topics and means to communicate a message about sport through art, this being the focus for the arts-based learning we were doing.

‘If we are talking about the issues of child prostitution that are associated with the highest levels of international football, and FIFA for that matter, as broadcast on the BBC 1 Panorama show aired a few months ago, then Rachel has a social topic; the exploitation of children, which just needs to be represented in some way in the image. Because she has chosen this form of photography, a medium, the technical terms of negative and overexposure in film development can be twisted, equivocated, into a useful artistic context for the artwork. In fact it could even be her title for the work? In doing so, Rachel does not need to elaborate on the extent to

which these children are negatively overexposed, the use of the artistic medium in this way says it for her. All she need do now is concentrate on the composition and spatial design’.

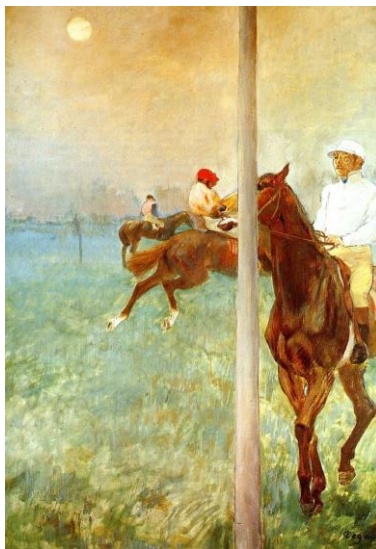
The seed of a good idea was planted, watered liberally with encouragement at the start and then tended from a distance. The image that Rachel produced as a result was all her own work, supported by her own research to explain the image (which was her written assignment).

The picture *Overexposed: negative images of sport* comprises of four digitally overlaid images, (managed through Microsoft Photoshop software version CS6 circa 2014) including (1) the child’s legs in the foreground, (2) the roadside and kerb in the mid-ground creating a sense of perspective and depth, leading to (3) faint images of the football design used for the 2014 FIFA competition and (4) a new football stadium in Brazil in the background. The image is faded and bleached out in the form of a monochrome negative, allowing the overlays to become see-through. Blotches of black indicate the overexposed response of photosensitive film to excessive light creating a chiaroscuro effect between shades of black and white.

The spatial arrangement of objects in the picture is also interesting. The child’s legs in the foreground are obvious, the kerbside running from the foreground to the background leading the eye to shadowy forms of footballs and the outside structure of a stadium. These objects tell the story behind the picture, pointing to its social content, but through the negative and overexposed photographic medium to make a statement about this social state of affairs. The artistic composition itself follows a classic design of a centuries old system of proportion called the Golden Section or Golden Mean (Barry, Bronowski, Fisher and Huxley, 1964). Devised by the Ancient Greeks who were fanatical about symmetry in their artwork and building design, it later became a proportional Rule of Thirds in art. Also referred to as the Golden Ratio, it is the approximate 1/3-2/3s division of content in an image. John Smith (1797) was one of the first to write about the Rule of Thirds, relating it to sense of balance in etchings and paintings, with Caplin (2008) in his *Art and Design for Photoshop* applying the same ideas to digital image composition, stating ‘the horizontal and vertical lines of the 1/3-2/3s grid give us positions where the image elements have the most power and impact’ (2008:35).

Rachel Loveday has applied the Rule of Thirds in *Overexposed: negative images of sport* following an example from the famous French painter, Edgar Degas (1834-1917) who was an early pioneer of Impressionism. Impressionism is an art movement that was concerned to capture a sense of reality in painting that was vibrant, sincere and ‘as-witnessed’ (Hodge, 2011:79). Degas’ *Jockeys before the race* appears almost as a snapshot of reality, however the image is held together by

the vertical line of the winning post in the foreground which divides the canvas by the 1/3-2/3s ratio. The horses in the fore, mid and background create a sense of depth, the natural horizon also creating a distant perspective, dividing the canvas horizontally at approximately the same proportions.



Jockeys before the race
by Edgar Degas

Rachel Loveday seemed to have had similar artistic motives as an Impressionist artist to capture a sense of reality in her photographic composition, but in the material of digital pixels, not oil paint and canvas. In *Overexposed - negative images of sport* the child's legs have the same compositional function as the winning post in *Jockeys before the race*. The legs are obvious and the viewer has to look deeper into the picture to make out the faint shapes that symbolise the association with football. Upon scanning back out to the disembodied child in high heels, connections may be made that this artwork is a statement about child prostitution and its connections to the much publicised football World Cup in Brazil.

Whilst fictional storytelling as a means to educating people has been around for millennia across numerous cultures; African, Indian, Greek, Aboriginal and European to name but a few (Wood, 2005), it has more recently become a method of qualitative research to explore sport; sporting experiences and sports' impact in society. Sparkes' (1992) book *Telling tales in sport and physical activity* applied this cultural trend of storytelling to portray what may have been emerging from data in social research in and around sport. Similarly, the power of 'imagined narratives' (Denison and Rinehart, 2000) and the significance of 'small stories' were being

adopted to explore anything from gender equality in various settings (Hardin and Whiteside, 2009) to explorations of self-identity achieved through what Duncan (1998:95) described as the ‘stories we tell ourselves about ourselves’. This approach has moved some research writing towards a form of introspective storytelling called autoethnography. An example of this is David Gilbourne’s (2013) tale *Heroes, toxic ferrets and a large man from Leeds*, the title being a clue to its genre and methodology, it is a personal, storied analysis of society as he has experienced it.

Lewis (2011:505) promoted the notion of ‘storytelling as research and research as storytelling’ indicating that they may be one and the same kind of thing which is similar to what Marshall McLuhan, a theorist from the art world, has claimed for many years within his area of expertise. ‘The medium is the message’ was his mantra (McLuhan, 1964) suggesting that the form of an artistic medium says something about the topic of the artwork, i.e. it influences how the message is perceived and how effective that mode of communication may be. Consequently, the gap between fiction and reality in *Crealivity* may be bridged by the artistic mediums and modes of communication that Anna Cresswell and Rachel Loveday have adopted to depict these disturbing realities. Towards this end, Vickers (2010:556) proposed the ‘creation of fiction in social research to share truths and different viewpoints but through a creative journey and an interpretive process’. This is a stance towards research that Leavy (2009) is very much in support of in her approaches to arts-based research and practice in sociology. Meanwhile Sparkes (1997) and later, Smith, McGannon and Williams (2015) applied this ideology directly into sports research advocating the use of ethnographic fiction or creative-nonfiction which are stories written with a flare of creativity but based upon field research about a reality, just as Anna Cresswell and Rachel Loveday have done.

Whether a creative approach to social research is applied to sport or other areas of society it seemingly relies upon a creative pedagogy to promote it in the first place. Bocchi, Cianci, Montuori, Trigona and Nicolaus (2014:336) issue a warning to educators that:

Our current educational systems reflect forms of thinking and organizing that are not appropriate for the twenty-first century. New transdisciplinary educational approaches should integrate complexity, creativity, and an awareness of the most recent developments in the sciences [research] *my emphasis*.

Bocchi *et al.*’s (2014) running dialogue discusses the importance of creativity in education and significantly, the consequences of it being extinguished in modern-day schooling. This is a refreshing reminder of the pedagogical value of publishing students’ arts-based research as part of their learning. Within the Sporting Image Series (2009 to date) over 250 students have published their work across sports poetry (Palmer, 2009), creative short stories (Palmer, 2010), abstracted art in sport

(Palmer, 2011), morals in Olympic sport through pictures, poems and stories (Palmer, 2013) and in the Sports Monograph (Palmer, 2014) there are over 60 chapters of creative, reflective and ‘scientific’ interpretations of sport from learners spanning ages between 6 months to 60 years old – a real community of learning evidenced through literacy. All of these publications are part of a growing body of creatively inspired products that feed back into teaching as resources to support student-centred learning (Lea, Stephenson and Troy, 2003) and Research Informed Teaching in sport (Jenkins, Healey and Zetter, 2007; Healey and Jenkins, 2009)... in addition to over 100 articles in the *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies* (2007- to date).

Furthermore, Jacobson and Larsen (2014:179) help to reinforce the role of creativity in social research stating that, ‘ethnographic fiction aims to evoke cultural experience and a sense of place using literary techniques to craft a compelling story’. *Creativity* may be an example of research that moves towards this aim. Stepping back in to the messy world of reality, if ever there was any doubt as to the value of the educational message behind these fictional and creative works, it has been the cases of abuse that may be recollected by reading *Taken* and viewing the image *Overexposed – negative images of sport* that creates real impact. This is where reality may be worse than the fiction. Atrocities against defenceless children have included: abduction, grooming, slave/sex trade, rape and murder, often followed by the gruesome disposal of bodies. A few high profile examples include:

The Moors Murderers, Myra Hindley and Ian Brady who in the 1960s raped and murdered five children with Brady mentioning that more bodies were buried on Saddleworth Moor in Yorkshire (Williams, 1992). Then there is the abduction of 4 year old **Madeleine McCann** who disappeared on the evening of 3rd May 2007 from a secure holiday apartment in Portugal. Rayner (2015) reported that ‘to date, not one shred of proof of what happened to Madeleine has been unearthed’. Another abduction but where proof was unearthed is the sad case of 5 year old **April Jones** who was taken as she played on her bike close to her home in mid-Wales (Morris, 2013). After her rape and murder, Brown (2013) reported that Mark Bridger dismembered her body and disposed of her remains in the surrounding hills and by incinerating them in a fire grate at his home, just a few miles from where April lived. On a more ambitious scale was the **Rochdale Grooming Ring** revealed when nine Asian men were convicted in May 2012 for the chronic sexual abuse of teenage girls as young as 13, including, variously: ‘rapes, aiding and abetting rape, sexual assault and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation’ (BBC News, 2012a). A few days later, more men were arrested when five girls gave evidence, leading police to believe there may have been up to 47 victims (BBC News, 2012b).

The artworks by Anna Cresswell and Rachel Loveday and the important warning messages behind them seem highly relevant to sport in society currently. In addition to the devastation for the victims, child abuse can damage the reputation of a particular sport affecting coaches and organisations working from entry level to elite, for example all the following sports have serious abuse taints; FIFA (Rogers, 2014), Gymnastics (Daily Mail Reporter, 2012; Ice Skating (BBC News, 2015) and Swimming (Hannigan, 2015) - there are many others. Whilst the majority of athletes and coaches wish to protect people in their clubs, they can sometimes be the abusers too, as was the case for USA Olympic gymnastics coach Marvin Sharp who was arrested in August 2015 (Spargo, 2015) but committed suicide in his prison cell a few weeks later (Stelloh, 2015), he was also running and certificating child protection courses for coaches at his gymnasium in Indianapolis. Likewise organisations who employ sports people such as Primary and Secondary schools for after school clubs, youth clubs, scouts or any other form of twilight recreation, i.e. places where policing and vigilance may be lower, sport can act as the honeypot to attract those with dishonourable and illegal intentions.

Taken

By Anna Cresswell (2015)

The school bell rang and children came bursting out in streams, running towards their parents at the gate. One little girl however, remained. Standing in the middle of the playground, she looked around hopefully but there was no sign of her Mummy, so she waited patiently in her usual place.

The minutes passed but there was still no sign. Impatiently she started to tap her foot and swung her book bag around. She then noticed a strange figure walking towards her. She didn't recognise this man as his giant frame loomed over her and as he grew closer the man said, 'Hi Emily'.

'Hello' Emily nodded back politely, slightly confused that he knew her name. She continued to look around in hope that her Mummy would be here soon.

'Who are you looking for Emily?' she looked up back at the tall man and took a step back so she could see his face properly. He smiled back. As he did so she could see his crooked teeth.

'I'm looking for my Mummy, she told me to wait here for her'.

‘Aahh’ replied the man, ‘well’ he chuckled in friendly way, ‘I’m a good friend of your Mummy’s Emily and sadly she’s running late and asked if I would do the honours of picking up her little princess from school and spoiling her until she got home’.

Emily looked around anxiously. ‘But Mummy told me to wait here’ she crept back as the man took another step forward.

‘Come on Emily, let’s go’ the man held his hand out. Emily hesitated, ‘come on Emily’ he said again, and the man’s smile was starting to go stern, just like her teachers when she had done something wrong. She didn’t want to get into trouble so she took the man’s hand and he led her over to a red car parked in the corner.

‘So who are you?’ said Emily once the car had started moving. The man scoffed. ‘Me, well Emily, you can call me Daddy’.

‘Daddy?’ Emily eyes lit up, could this mean that she’d finally got her wish for a Daddy? ‘Mummy never mentioned she was getting married’ said Emily eagerly. The man scoffed again.

As they drove they passed their normal turning. ‘Where are we going daddy?’ the sound of saying Daddy rolled nicely off her tongue. The man was silent ‘where are we going’ Emily asked a little louder this time just in case he hadn’t heard her. Still nothing... ‘where?’

‘QUIET’ the man barked back. Emily looked shocked, the man shot her a look and Emily decided it was best to stay in her new Daddy’s good books and spent the rest of the journey day dreaming.

After being in the car for what seemed like a lifetime to Emily, the car came to a halt. ‘Get out’ Daddy said sternly. Emily did what she was told, unfastening her seat belt and jumping out of the car. She didn’t recognise her surroundings, it certainly wasn’t her house, and a strong pungent smell hit her as she walked. She screwed her nose up. Daddy grabbed her hand and pulled her towards an opening on the left.

‘Get her ready’. Daddy shoved Emily towards a lady. The lady looked down at Emily and back up confused with her new Daddy. The lady went to open her mouth to say something, but had obviously changed her mind, ‘come on princess’ taking Emily by the hand and pulled her towards the stairs.

‘What are we doing?’

The pretty lady smiled ‘well my young girl, we are going to play dress up and make you look like a princess fit for a ball’. The lady sat her down on a wooden stall

and started working her magic. Emily had often watched her mother get ready for a night out, dancing around the bedroom to her favourite songs, putting on her pretty dresses and bright red lipstick, giving Emily a big kiss on the lips so that the remainder of the lip stick smudged onto Emily's lips. Emily longed to look as pretty as her mum one day. The brush tickled her nose and made her sneeze, the lady smiled at her. She smeared red lipstick onto Emily's lips. 'Just like Mummy's', Emily giggled at the thought of her mum. The old woman smiled at Emily, not like before, this time it seemed distant, almost sad.

BANG BANG BANG the door opened. 'Is she ready?'

'Daddy, Daddy, don't I look pretty?' Emily walked clumsily in her high heels and tried to twirl in her pretty new red dress.

'Where are you taking her?' said the women.

'What's it got to do with you?' the man barked back.

'She's just a little girl John'

'John' Emily said to herself, that must be her new Daddy's name.

'The Tracks'

Daddy grabbed Emily's hand once again and led her out the room, Emily stumbling as she tried to keep up wearing her new heels.

Back in the car Emily smiled happily to herself, how pretty she looked and felt now, wishing that her Mummy would be able to see her all dolled up. She stared out of the window, learning from the first time, she stayed quiet and wondered what The Tracks were. Maybe it was the tracks were the horses raced she thought. How she did love horses.

They arrived at their destination, however there were no horses. Instead there were lots of cars that kept driving by and lots of girls walking around all dressed up, laughing and giggling as men got out of their cars and approached them. One girl sniggered as she walked passed, smiling politely back she stayed close to her Daddy and tried to keep up with his long strides.

'Here we are' said Daddy. Emily looked confused. In front an old looking building with a red front door. Daddy banged on the door hard, the door shook on its hinges and Emily jumped. The door opened and a man stood in the doorway.

‘John’ the man nodded, looking Emily up and down. Another John, that’s funny Emily thought as she chuckled to herself looking up to the man with her best smile swinging side to side to show off her new dress.

‘A bit young don’t you think old man?’

‘Take her or leave her, your choice pal’, the man looked at Emily once again, smiled at her and opened the door behind him.

‘Come inside doll’, Emily looked up at her Daddy, he pushed her inside and the door shut behind her...

The moral: The moral of this story is don’t listen to strangers. The message to children and parents is to highlight the consequences of Stranger Danger and possible lapses in communication for children to be picked up from school. Emily had no way of knowing if she was doing the right or wrong thing as she had no alarm to sound when her mother didn’t show.

Overexposed: negative images of sport

by Rachel Loveday (2014)



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Reviewer comments:

The task of commenting on this paper has taken some time. Several readings and the peeling back of several layers has proven fascinating in many ways. At the heart of 'Crealivity' is a strong pedagogical message. Creating things is risky, creating things can be unnerving but creating things from the potent realities as raised in this paper are provoking, haunting but also deeply pleasurable to learn through. As a father of two young children myself, yes the context throws up visceral repulsion but I am also overwhelmed with positivity. It is positive and uplifting to see two students and their teacher doing some 'creativity' and learning together. I would love my children to learn like this and it is on this note that the paper truly succeeds. Does this paper make me want to turn the pages? Yes. Does the paper mean anything to me? Yes. Can this paper be used by others? Most definitely.