

Creator: Paul Williams

Title: Promise Me This

Publisher: Chicago Quarterly Review (2012)

Title: Promise Me This

Publisher: New Contrast South African Literacy Journal (2012)

Title: There is No Hereafter

Publisher: Meanjin (2012)

Research Background

JM Coetzee suggests that significant fiction needs to 'dissect the myths of our society' rather than 'reinforce those myths' (Coetzee 1988: 3). This story dissects the myth of a 'respectable' funeral enforced by a traditional Catholic family. A dying father questions his religious upbringing, and his son promises to not give him a Catholic funeral, yet the family overrides his wishes and (in the son's eyes) betrays his new convictions.

Research Contribution

The story contributes to the scholarship of creative writing by positioning itself as a palimpsest of previous works through its intertextual allusions. The story explores a man's struggle to free himself from a religious worldview by juxtaposing references to Dylan Thomas's 'Do not go Gentle into the Dark Night' and the father's naive reading of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* which destabilises his traditional worldview.

Research Significance

The story was published in three international journals in the same year, first in the prestigious *Chicago Quarterly Review* (as 'Promise Me This'), then in *Meanjin*, the leading Australian literary journal (under the title 'There is no Hereafter'), and in *New Contrast*, the leading South African literary journal. The story is part of the author's growing work that employs the notion of palimpsest and intertextuality as a narrative technique, and will be included in a short story anthology, *The Art of Losing* (Bridge House Publishing, London) in 2018.

Reference

Coetzee, J.M. 1988 'The Novel Today', *Upstream* 6, 1 (Summer): 2-5