

**ROCK'N'ROLL OUTLAW:**  
**THE EXPRESSION OF FREEDOM IN CULTURE.**

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In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Creative Arts**

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

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## CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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IN MEMORY OF MOUSTACHE & BALLOON.

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## INTRODUCTION

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Rock'n'Roll Outlaw is the title of the feature length documentary I completed as the major component of my Doctorate of Creative Arts. This text is the exegetic companion-piece to the film, and is a chance to focus on the specific personal and public circumstances of the production of the film and to articulate my artistic, intellectual and technical ideas and processes during its composition, analysing a distinctive mode of expression that the film represents.

The major theoretical concern of my exegesis is to link the subject of my documentary –Australian rock band *Rose Tattoo* - to broad conceptual formations of Western cultural history and to highlight the way in which the band influenced the construction of specific norms within contemporary popular culture. Transcribed here, the band's individual, subjective recollections further elucidate the artistic and theoretical objectives of the documentary, situating *Rose Tattoo* within its contemporary cultural niche. This paper will illuminate conceptual links between that niche and Western cultural notions of freedom of expression, including Rabelaisian humour, the Bakhtinian concept of the carnivalesque and the comparative contemporary cultural limitations on those varied and specific modes of expression.

The documentary Rock'n'roll Outlaw, presents *Rose Tattoo* in terms of the encounter in their performance with a carnivalesque manifestation of late twentieth century Australian sub/urban culture. I recognized in *Rose Tattoo*'s oeuvre the ambivalent humour and irreverent attitudes of a carnivalesque intelligence missing from mainstream representations of Australian cultural praxis and saw in that lack a regenerative opportunity for my own artistic response. In this exegesis, I argue that *Rose Tattoo*'s aesthetic repertoire is a contemporary manifestation of folk music, possessed of the rebellious, transforming intent of Indo-European ancestral patterns and the carnivalesque energies of an unofficial cultural ethos.

Including the ideas of Jacques Attali, Stella Bruzzi and Scott Mcquire, this paper makes brief consideration of the nature of documentary as an autonomous form of communication and the role of contemporary popular music as cultural production, with some speculative remarks on the contingencies and absences created in the interface between experiential ways of knowing, the virtual storage of digital data and the nature of memory. Via modes of silence and absence, these phenomena perhaps represent a crisis in clearly defining differences between the cultural formations of truth and institutions of power in contemporary experience. These are the conceptual considerations made during the production and completion of the documentary Rock'n'roll Outlaw.