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***cinema expression: Morphology of the Contemporary Tale***

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Creative works and Exegesis submitted as fulfilment  
For the Doctorate of Creative Arts

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Technology  
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## Certificate of Authorship

I certify this thesis has not previously been submitted to any University and I hold the copyright in the creative works.

I also certify the exegesis has been written by me and any assistance I have received in my research work and the preparation of the exegesis has been acknowledged.

Production Note:  
Signature removed prior to publication.

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John Prescott

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## Abstract

The general understanding of the term 'morphology' is that it refers to the form and structure of something and implies changing characteristics, rather than a fixed entity. Within the primary ambit of this research, morphology refers specifically to the contemporary tale as found in narrative filmic texts and as demonstrated in the works *Moonfall*, *Inside Venus* and *Slam*. Supporting the creative research component of these cinematic texts, is the exegesis; and it similarly, is not a defined entity, but more an arbitrary articulation of some of the theoretical and practical concerns that have circulated and helped inform the research and development of the creative works.

The creative component consists of three screenplays and a short feature film *Moonfall*. The stories were inspired by actual events. The development of the scripts relied on practitioner-research enquiry, contextualized by the conventions of genre and determined by the exigency of low-budget film production. A DVD copy of *Moonfall* is included in Part A and the screenplays *Slam* and *Inside Venus*, at different stages of development, are appended for reference.

The exegetical writing contained in Part B is organized in sections across a range of material that relates to research, film theory, psychoanalysis and praxis. Insights that have emerged in my practice-based research, illuminated aspects of the discourse and through recursion, became relevant to the production of the creative works. This process of circular causality denies primacy to any specific text. This exegesis is not a definitive compendium nor is it intended to present an argument or explicitly frame the content of the works and how they should be received.

The cinema expression, implicit in the screenplays, is made apparent by the viewers response to the film and is entirely subjective and appropriate.

## Part A

# Moonfall

Screenplay  
by  
John Prescott  
re-revised final draft #2  
22/11/ 2004

copyright: BOOTLEG FILMS

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\* This screenplay was developed with assistance from  
the Australian Film Commission



FADE IN

1 VISUAL GRAPHICS:

A traditional JAPANESE WOOD-BLOCK PRINT; It illustrates *Taketori Monogatari*. The tale of the Bamboo Cutter. In bold black and white, the woodcut depicts an old man in his hut weaving strips of bamboo into baskets and hats.

ASOKO (V/O)

Long ago in the land of the Rising Sun, there lived an old man called Taketori...the Bamboo Cutter. His small hut stood at the edge of the forest near the Imperial City. Every morning he would go out to cut bamboo. On his bowed back he would carry it home and with skilful hands, he sliced the wood, then bladed and wickered the twigs. He would weave hats and baskets and many other things.

DISSOLVE TO

Another WOOD-BLOCK PRINT; shows a gold woven cloth covering a bamboo trunk amidst a stand of trees. The old man, with a number of cut stalks on his back, leans over it.

ASOKO (V/O con't)

One day as the dawning sky twinkled, Taketori discovered a gleaming trunk covered with silk as fine as a spider's web. Lifting it away he was dazzled by the sight of a beautiful baby girl dressed in scarlet and purple.

DISSOLVE TO

A WOOD-BLOCK PRINT of their hut, with the wife at her fire cooking and the baby girl in a large basket beside her. The old man weaves outside. They're both happy.

ASOKO (V/O con't)

Joy streamed into his heart for he and his wife had always wished for a child of their own. They thanked the heavenly gods for their gift...and

DISSOLVE TO

TITLE CREDIT: Moonfall

1b EXT JAPANESE GARDEN DAY

Lush growth conceals private paths. Bamboo and ornamental structures blend into the landscape.

Pools of water spill gently down a winding water-course.  
This is tranquillity.

ASOKO (V/O con't)  
...as time passed the little girl  
grew to a beautiful young woman,  
with almond eyes and velvet white  
skin. Hers was a strange beauty,  
not of this earth.

We see YOSHIKO TANAKA. She is twenty five years old. Her fine features and fragile appearance are accentuated by the traditional Japanese kimono she wears. She stoops down and plays her fingers through the water. Sparkles of light dance across her face. Yoshiko is lost in her own thoughts.

CUT TO

2 EXT LAKE'S EDGE DAY

A flock of WHITE COCKATOOS wheel and SCREECH through the gum-trees. We look down the shore line. It's a wine glass crescent that stretches around to an old jetty.

A solitary figure wanders along the water's edge. We follow the foot prints in the sand as the water ebbs and all but washes them away. Rusty rail tracks disappear into the lake.

CLOSER: We see Yoshiko. She is dressed in loose Japanese styled clothing. More contemporary than traditional.

3 INT TANAKA HOME (LOUNGE) DAY

It is a modern terrace unit that has been tastefully decorated to reflect a contemporary Japanese style. On the settee we meet ASOKO reading the Bamboo Cutters Tale. She is a woman in her late twenties, devoted, somewhat conservative but aunt to CHISA, a four year old girl who is hanging upside down off the furniture and listening to the story.

ASOKO (con't)  
As was the custom in old Japan,  
Taketori and his wife took their  
daughter to a Shinto shrine. She  
was given the name Nayotake no  
Kaguyahime; the Shining Princess  
of the Slender Bamboo.

The front door sounds as Yoshiko lets herself in. Asoko closes the book and taps it lightly on Chisa's forehead.

ASOKO  
It's time this princess was  
in her bed.

Chisa hugs Asoko goodnight. Yoshiko kneels down and gives her daughter a big cuddle.

Chisa, holding the story-book, pulls back a moment.

CHISA  
Will I grow up beautiful like  
the Shining princess?

YOSHIKO  
Just as beautiful and we won't  
let the moon steal you away.

A fairy kiss from Yoshiko and Chisa is off to bed.

3b EXT LAKE (LOOK-OUT) DAY

A vantage point overlooking the lake. A figure balances on a safety rail. In CLOSER we see him execute a series of controlled tai-chi movements.

KENJI TANAKA is a man in his mid-thirties. He is fit and handsome. There's a suppressed energy about him as he completes the exercise. Kenji steps off the rail, slides on a pair of "chefs-clogs" and exits.

4 EXT RESTAURANT NIGHT

Yamagens is the name of the restaurant. It's a contemporary timber building that defers to a linear Japanese aesthetic. The entrance is through a traditional garden courtyard. We see a GROUP of DINERS leaving. MANIKO, a Japanese woman in her early thirties, bids them goodnight. She is dressed in a kimono style uniform.

5 INT RESTAURANT (DINING) NIGHT

Maniko closes the doors after the last of the diners. She locks the register and turns down the lights. The dining area is divided into a number of screened intimate spaces. BREE DANIEL, a waitress in her early twenties, finishes setting the tables for tomorrows trading. She's a dance and drama student, with a physique that attests to many hours floor practice. Bree places origami swans beside the napkins on the tables. She admires her handiwork. Maniko is curious. She picks one up and examines the folded piece.

BREE  
They could float on the soup!

MANIKO  
Most people advertise on a  
notice board.

Maniko unfolds the origami piece out flat. We see it's a flier for a drama production called "The Apple Garden"

BREE  
This way, it's in your face!  
Direct to the consumer.

MANIKO

And they may gag on it too!

Maniko hands Bree the flier and goes to the kitchen.

6 INT RESTAURANT(KITCHEN) NIGHT

Kenji is the head chef of the kitchen. It's a responsible position and as with all highly trained sushi chefs, requires discipline. He's proud and looks good in uniform.

Displaying skill with the knife Kenji prepares a sushi dish. The fine slices of flesh are paired away quickly. With a small wooden ROLLING PIN dripped in oil Kenji massages the strips and places them in the marinade dish. Maniko stands at the door and watches.

MANIKO

Kenji, it's Tetsuro's job, you should go home.

KENJI

It's no task, I'll close up when I'm finished.

MANIKO

You leave nothing for him to do.

Bree crosses to a small utility room off the kitchen. It's a general purpose store room and occasional change room.

MANIKO (con't)

Bree, do you want a lift.

BREE (O/C)

Thanks Maniko, not tonight. It's party time.

MANIKO

I'll see you tomorrow then.

BREE (O/C)

Course you could always come with me! Kenji what about you?

Maniko shakes her head and turns to go. She catches sight of Bree half undressed in the change room. Her smile fades to a look of consternation.

KENJI

I would love to, but I think I'm too old and past it.

BREE (O/C)

You're never past it.

MANIKO

Goodnight you two.

Maniko leaves. We hear the sound of the front door closing. Kenji busies himself with the food. There's a moment of awkward silence. Bree shows her head around the door.

BREE

It's a mother thing. She'd tuck me into bed if she could.

KENJI

Maniko means well. We're like a family to her.

Bree sponges herself over the steel wash tub. In the mirror she follows her movements. They are slow and sensuous.

BREE

I think she fancies you Kenji.

Through the half open door Kenji watches and for a fleeting moment their eyes meet in the mirror as it steams up. Bree continues to enjoy the pleasure of the moment. Kenji remains completely captivated by her.

7 INT TANAKA HOME (LOUNGE) NIGHT

ASOKO removes the plates from the dining table. Yoshiko remains seated, her food still in front of her, untouched.

ASOKO

The wind will blow you away sister. Why do you not eat?

YOSHIKO

Asoko I know I'm your little sister, but we're older now!

ASOKO

You'll always be my little sister, remember that. Now Yoshiko, what is wrong?

Asoko suddenly believes she knows the problem. She shakes her head in disbelief.

ASOKO

Oh! No! You're pregnant? Are you?

YOSHIKO

No, far from it. Nothing like that.

ASOKO

I guess not.

YOSHIKO

I'm just tired.

ASOKO

Too tired to please Kenji,  
when he comes home. You don't  
think I notice?

YOSHIKO

He works long hours. And you  
should talk! Where's your man?

ASOKO places a hand-basin and rubbing oils on the table.

ASOKO

You have a duty, you're his  
wife. If he's distracted  
this might help.

YOSHIKO

Since when have you been the  
expert.

ASOKO

It's what our parents wished.  
And you have everything. So  
hold on to it. A few drops  
might help.

ASOKO makes her way off to her room. Yoshiko examines the  
bath oil for a moment then slides it across to the basin.

8 EXT/INT TANAKA HOME(ENTRANCE) NIGHT

Kenji opens the front door. He slips off his shoes, placing  
them alongside the ordered row of assorted footwear. Yoshiko  
greeted him then closes the door. She appears a bit anxious.

YOSHIKO

It's been a busy night?

She follows Kenji down the hall.

KENJI

There's always one group  
that stays on. I let Tetsuro  
go early.

YOSHIKO

Is he ill?

KENJI

No. He had things to do.

YOSHIKO

So you did his preparation.

Kenji stops. He's annoyed and defensive.

KENJI  
He'd do the same for me.  
What is this?

Yoshiko tries to make him see reason. In the heat of the moment she reverts to Japanese language. (Sub-title English)

YOSHIKO  
You need another assistant.  
Already they are long hours.

KENJI  
So you're now the time keeper.

Kenji turns away.

KENJI  
Remember we speak English in  
this house.

YOSHIKO  
I'm sorry, but Kenji, we have  
no time. Away early and home  
late, and Chisa, when was  
the last story you read her?

Kenji prickles at the truth behind the words. He bangs the wall in frustration.

KENJI  
You want me to resign? What  
then? Fairy stories won't  
feed us.

Yoshiko eyes fill with tears as she tries to placate him.

YOSHIKO  
I'm sorry, I spoke out of place.  
You must be tired.

Kenji affectionately thumbs away the tears.

YOSHIKO (con't)  
Go in and see Chisa. She was  
waiting up, like a big girl.

Kenji goes. Yoshiko sees Asoko. Her disapproval shows as she quietly closes her door.

9 INT            TANAKA HOME (CHISA'S ROOM)            NIGHT

Chisa is curled up in her bed fast asleep. She still holds the Bamboo Cutter fairy-tale book.

Kenji kneels down and gently brushes her hair, then carefully he prises the book from her grasp.

He flicks through a few pages of colourful block-prints and reads a little of the text.

KENJI (V/O)

She is more beautiful and elegant than any princess. Could she be a fairy? News spread like the wind and soon Taketori's cottage was lined with people. Among them, warriors and noblemen, all hoping to catch a glimpse of the Shining Princess. But Kaguyahime wished only for a simple life with her parents.

Kenji smiles and places the book down on the bedside table. He lightly kisses Chisa and leaves.

BACK to Chisa asleep. There's an eerie glow about her face. The light appears like moonlight reflected from the book. A breeze drifts in through the window.

The pages flutter and a strange voice makes her presence heard. It's a young Shining Princess with a very contemporary spin to the old tale.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O)

That's just so quaint. These fairytales always say that. The good girl, without a life! Well I was a celebrity, with all the paparazzi just hanging out to catch me.

#### 9a VISUAL GRAPHICS

We FOCUS on a WOOD-BLOCK PRINT depicting the young Shining Princess dressed in flowing robes.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O con't)

These block-prints don't do much for my curves. You could do a lot more with computers. Anyway, back to the story, there were five boys.

The page turns to a WOOD-BLOCK PRINT of five courtiers. They are dressed in elaborate traditional robes.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O con't)

And were hot for me. Not real bright, in fact pretty stupid, but they'd do anything for a date. So I thought, why not have a bit of fun.



10 INT TANAKA HOME (BEDROOM) NIGHT

Behind a small screen we see Yoshiko remove her garments. They drop to the floor beneath the panels.

Kenji reclines on the bed with a towel around his waist. He watches Yoshiko as she undresses. In the subdued light her lithe figure is a shadow behind the screen.

She slips on a night robe and carries a basin to the bed. Yoshiko kneels at Kenji's feet and starts to massage them. She cups the oiled water in her hands and spills it over his calves. In a sensuous and circular motion her fingers stroke his flesh. The night gown slips from her shoulders as she moves up his thighs and slides her hand under the towel.

Yoshiko's actions invite Kenji to engage, but he remains distant staring at the ceiling.

KENJI

Yoshiko, it's markets in the morning.

Kenji eases off the bed and goes to the bathroom. Yoshiko retrieves the night gown. The rejection hurts.

11 EXT FISH MARKETS DAY

Crates of fish swing from the boats to the dock. It's a busy time unloading the night's catch. Some fish are weighed and others packed in ice and wheeled off.

We see Kenji amongst the activity, inspecting the fish for sale. He is assisted by TETSURO, an apprentice chef in his mid twenties. Kenji indicates particular fish from the baskets and Tetsuro collects them in a trolley.

12 EXT PRE-SCHOOL DAY

Yoshiko and Chisa hurry up the path to the small cottage that doubles as a Pre-school. Chisa wears her satchel and carries the Taketori Monogatari fairy tale book. They climb the stairs to the building. The sound of clapping can be heard.

13 INT PRE-SCHOOL DAY

Chisa find a place on the floor among the other children. It's a small pre-school group and it's "show and tell". The other kids all have books.

Chisa opens the page at one of the pictures and holds it up to show the children. They shuffle close to get a better look.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O)

I was called the Shining Princess of the Slender Bamboo.

## 13a VISUAL GRAPHICS

In CLOSE we see the detail. It's a WOOD-BLOCK PRINT of the old man and the young princess.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O)  
 It's a cool name, but it makes me sound anorexic. Which I'm not. Check out the curves and Whoo! they can get you into trouble too. That's what the five boys were after. Dad thought they wanted to marry me, that's Dads for you! There's no way I was going to be easy though.

DISSOLVE TO

A WOOD-BLOCK PRINT of the first prince in his palace.

13b INT PRE-SCHOOL DAY

BACK TO Chisa with the story book. Excited, she quickly turns the page.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O)  
 I gave them all a really hard task to do. The first one had to find a special jade bowl in India. It would take him years.

We see the children in the class. Their faces light up with excitement as they listen to the story.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O)  
 I was hoping he'd get lost along the way, but then he turns up with this piece of junk.

14 INT RESTAURANT (KITCHEN) NIGHT

We see Tetsuro at the bench furiously chopping meat. He is skilful and fast. He is also angry. Kenji arranges a plate of food ignoring the obvious hostility.

TETSURO  
 Why do you send me home last night, when there is much to prepare?

KENJI  
 With all this talk, remember the knife is sharp.

Tetsuro slices even faster as he flicks the thin strips to the side of the board. Bree enters all excited. She holds up a miniature bottle of perfume.

BREE  
I love Americans, they sure  
know how to tip a girl.

Bree squirts a touch on her wrist and smells the  
fragrance.

BREE(con't)  
Definitely fifteen percent.

Bree proffers her wrist to Kenji. He touches her hand  
lightly and smells. Their eyes meet. A look filled with  
potential.

The moment is interrupted by Tetsuro banging a tray down.

TETSURO  
This is a kitchen not a bath-  
house.

Kenji turns to Tetsuro. His stare is glacial. Bree senses  
the tension and tries to diffuse the situation. She gently  
places the bottle of perfume on the bench and backs off.

15 INT RESTAURANT(DINING) NIGHT

A GROUP of DINERS are seated in a screened off area. This  
is traditional Japanese dining; low table and floor  
cushions.

MR SANTOS bows to the group. He is a well presented man in  
his sixties and owns the establishment. He stands aside as  
Bree delivers the entrees, then slides the screen for  
privacy.

16 INT RESTAURANT(SERVICE AREA) NIGHT

The service area is well appointed and functional. The  
essentials for the dining room are kept here. Maniko opens  
a bottle of wine and sets glasses on a tray. Mr Santos  
takes a key and unlocks a small security box.

MR SANTOS  
Have Kenji shuck the oysters.

Mr Santos takes out a velure pouch and gives it to Maniko.

MR SANTOS(con't)  
Two whites should make the  
night memorable.

17 INT RESTAURANT(KITCHEN) NIGHT

Kenji shucks and rinses a tray of oysters. He arranges  
them with wafer thin slices of lemon and rock salt. Maniko  
unfolds the pouch and we see a handful of cultured pearls.  
Bree watches on fascinated as Kenji selects one with chop-  
sticks and inserts it under the oyster.

IN CLOSE we see the pearl swallowed by the flesh.

BREE

Wow! That's so sexy!

MANIKO

It's Mr Santos' way of paying  
complement. A surprise gift.

BREE

As long as you don't choke on it.

Bree singles out a couple of larger black coloured pearls.

BREE (con't)

These are the ones I want.

Kenji selects a second white pearl and places it.

KENJI

Those are kept for very  
special occasions.

A little more rock salt tossed over the plate and the  
entree is ready. Kenji hands it to Maniko. Bree's excited.

BREE

Can I take it out?

MANIKO

That's Mr Santos' privilege.

Bree pulls a glum face. Kenji holds the pouch up for her.  
She opens her hand under it. He lets it drop.

BREE

Do you trust me?

Bree closes her fingers around the pouch. It's a covetous  
moment and again their eyes flirt with the possibility.

KENJI

Of course!

BREE

You know what they say! Give  
a girl a pearl...

Bree whisks them away.

18 INT RESTAURANT(SERVICE AREA) NIGHT

Mr Santos pours glasses of whisky for the staff. They  
salute each other and drink. Bree feels the alcohol.

MR SANTOS

A pleasant evening, but we  
spend the profit on the pearls!

He offers another round. Bree declines.

BREE  
I've a dance class in the morning.

MR SANTOS  
You dance in the morning?

BREE  
On tables very drunk! No, it's part of my drama course.

MR SANTOS  
What dance step do you do?

Bree smiles, a bit self-conscious with her flippant reply to Mr Santos' serious tone.

BREE  
Classical, mainly. There's some contemporary stuff.

Mr Santos engages the conversation further.

MR SANTOS  
For me, I love the tango!  
Do you tango?

Bree tries to maintain a serious face. Mr Santos feigns a few steps around her. She tries to follow his lead.

BREE  
Ballroom's not really my style.

MR SANTOS  
Now-days, there's no romance.

Mr Santos offers more whisky around. This time Bree accepts. She salutes her glass on the bottle.

BREE  
Why not, to romance, and I'll practice up on that tango!

Bree toss the drink back.

19 INT/EXT RAIL STATION(CAR) NIGHT

Kenji pulls the car into the drop-off zone. Bree collects her bag. There's an awkward moment between the two.

KENJI  
Bree, it's no trouble to drive you. Forget the train.

BREE  
I like trains.

Bree leans across and plants a kiss on Kenji's cheek. It's spontaneous. She lingers a moment, surprised at her actions. Kenji responds and suddenly it's full mouth, hungry and passionate.

Bree pulls back from the intensity. They breath heavy.

BREE  
I'll miss my train!

Bree's out of the car and walking into the station. Kenji watches after her. She turns for a brief moment and waves back.

20 INT TANAKA HOME (BREAKFAST BAR) DAY

Chisa wriggles about on her stool. She has a bowl of cereal in front of her and the fairy-tale book. She practices her reading. Yoshiko makes coffee. Kenji's at the dining table, his attention in a newspaper.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O)  
The fourth one called Chief Dragonhead was really determined. He said he'd get me these jewels from the fire dragon and then marry me. I knew he just wanted to jump my bones, so I thought I'd get some help.

20a VISUAL GRAPHIC

IN CLOSE on a WOOD-BLOCK PRINT of a dragon.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O con't)  
Dragons have always looked out for princesses. The Chief never came back, old fire mouth really blew him off. And the last boy, well he was a total basket case.

21 INT TANAKA HOME (ENTRANCE) DAY

Kenji is on his way out the door. Yoshiko hands him his coat and satchel. She picks up a couple of CDs from the hall stand and examines them briefly.

YOSHIKO  
Classical! It's unusual for the restaurant.

Kenji slips the CDs into his bag.

KENJI  
I thought why not a change.

Kenji kneels down to Chisa.

KENJI (con't)  
 And, what about a big hug from  
 my princess?

Kenji embraces Chisa and gives Yoshiko a perfunctory kiss  
 on the cheek. He's out the door.

KENJI  
 See you tonight. Not too late  
 I hope!

Yoshiko and Chisa watch after Kenji.

22 EXT RESTAURANT (REAR) DAY

Tetsuro shovels rubbish from one waste bin to another  
 beside it. They are identical bins and it appears to be a  
 silly thing to do. Maniko opens the back-door. She looks  
 puzzled at what Tetsuro is doing.

MANIKO  
 Tetsuro, can you explain this?

TETSURO  
 This is my punishment, for  
 speaking out.

MANIKO  
 Speaking out? About what?

TETSURO  
 The kitchen...and Bree. She  
 shows little respect for it.

MANIKO  
 It's not your place to criticise  
 the kitchen. It's Kenji's and  
 you'll accord him that respect.

TETSURO  
 But he lets her do--

MANIKO  
 -- Bree is my responsibility.

TETSURO  
 Yes Maniko.

Tetsuro returns to the task of shovelling rubbish. Maniko  
 watches a moment then goes inside.

22a EXT LAKE'S EDGE (STONES) DAY

Yoshiko and Chisa are crouched down at the water's edge.  
 They are busy collecting shiny stones from the clay pan.

Chisa is excited to find one. She digs it out and washes  
 the clay from it.

CHISA

Look at this one Mummy, It's  
so smooth.

Chisa touches the stone to Yoshiko's face. She places it  
in the small pile with the others.

23 INT RESTAURANT(SERVICE AREA) NIGHT

The diners have all left and the tables are set for the  
next day. Maniko finishes up in the service area. Kenji  
pours himself a drink.

MANIKO

You were harsh today. You  
know Tetsuro will do whatever  
you ask.

KENJI

I don't ask for his judgement  
on my kitchen.

MANIKO

You taught him discipline and  
set the bench-mark. In his eyes  
it's slipped.

KENJI

What slipped were manners. He  
had no call to judge Bree. To  
insult her character.

MANIKO

He's not blind Kenji and  
neither am I.

Bree wanders through from the utility room. She's dressed  
to go home and given the tension in the air, it's timely.

BREE

See you two, I'm out of here.

Bree leaves by the front door. Her footsteps sound loud in  
the ensuing silence.

Bree closes the door, very slowly and quietly behind her.

MANIKO

And Bree is quite capable of  
looking after herself.

Kenji settles into a chair with his drink.

KENJI

You're right. Tetsuro didn't  
deserve that.



MANIKO

As the master chef, he looks  
up to you.

KENJI

I'll find a way to make amends.

Maniko turns down the house lights and collects her bag  
and umbrella.

MANIKO

Goodnight Kenji, and remember  
the kitchen's closed. Go home.

24 EXT RESTAURANT NIGHT

We see Maniko leave by the front door. She pops her  
umbrella then makes her way through the garden court-yard  
and out to the street. In the semi-darkness of the  
restaurant we can just make out Kenji moving around. The  
sound of Beethoven's Ninth fades up and we are drawn back  
in through the gardens to the front door. Light rain  
continues to fall.

25 INT RESTAURANT NIGHT

Kenji relaxes to the music. Suddenly urgent knocking at  
the front door startles him. It's Bree, looking wet and in  
a hurry. She skips past Kenji as he opens the door.

BREE

I need the loo, I'm busting.  
Rain always does it.

Bree rushes through the dining room. Kenji closes the  
door and crosses to the service area.  
We TRACK with him as he calls on his mobile.  
He turns the volume down and we hear the sound of Bree in  
the toilet. It goes on and on.

KENJI(to phone)

Yoshiko, I'll be a little  
late home, it's extremely  
busy. Sorry if I woke you.  
Sleep well.

Kenji's distracted as he rings off.

BREE(O/C)

I love the music!

26 INT TANAKA HOME(LOUNGE) NIGHT

Yoshiko, half asleep reaches the bottom of the stairs. She  
can hear answer machine taking the call. She looks  
puzzled.

BREE(voice)

I love the music!

The machine clicks off. Yoshiko replays the message.

KENJI (voice)  
 Yoshiko, I'll be a little  
 late home, it's extremely  
 busy. Sorry if I woke you.  
 Sleep well.

IN CLOSER on Yoshiko.

BREE (voice)  
 I love the music!

The machine clicks off. Yoshiko picks up the phone and starts to dial. She thinks twice about it and hangs up.

27 INT RESTAURANT (SERVICE AREA) NIGHT

BACK to Kenji. He hands Bree a drink. She smiles aware of the implications.

BREE  
 Til the rain stops. So why  
 Beethoven?

KENJI  
 To extend my education of  
 music. You said you dance to  
 classical.

Bree circles around, curious as to where the conversation is leading. They jest with the words and the implied meaning.

BREE  
 You want me to dance?

KENJI  
 It would be a rare privilege.  
 In feudal Japan the courtesans  
 were paid with pieces of gold.

Bree throws her hands in the air. Her smile is innocent.

BREE  
 I could settle for pearls.

Kenji removes the pouch of pearls from the security box and holds them up in front of Bree.

KENJI  
 Ah! But there is a condition!

BREE  
 There always is.

He leans closer, his voice almost a whisper.

KENJI

They had to keep them while  
they danced... inside.

The challenge takes on a new dimension. The gloves are off. Bree holds out her hand.

BREE

Pearls...and Beethoven.

Kenji lets the pouch drop in her palm.

27a INT RESTAURANT(DINING ROOM) NIGHT

Bree flicks the lights on the private dining areas. She grabs one of the Japanese jousting sticks that adorns the wall and disappears behind the screens. The nervous energy is infectious. Kenji hovers over the CD player.

BACK to Bree. She folds her clothes over the top panel, her figure is a shadow through the paper screen.

Kenji turns up the music and we hear a bizarre rendition of the Ninth symphony's, Jesus Son of Joy. We see Bree's figure animate like a shadow puppet. The dance draws inspiration from 1930's German cabaret. The jousting stick, a spinning baton, becomes a provocative prop as Bree steps beyond the screen. She wears a slinky loose fitting teddy.

Kenji sinks into the cushions, totally captivated by the performance. Bree steps onto the dining table as the music reaches the finale. She pirouettes away and squats, jousting stick across shoulders, arms crooked over it. Bree holds the position as the music fades.

IN CLOSE on the polished table top. The black pearls fall from her. The clacking sound repeats ever faster in the silence of the room.

FADE TO BLACK

28 EXT RESTAURANT(COURT-YARD) DAY

We look down into the gardens. Maniko and Yoshiko make their way up the path to the restaurant.

29 EXT/INT RESTAURANT(DINING) DAY

Maniko lets herself in through the front door. She stops in her tracks with Yoshiko behind her. They see Kenji collapsed over a table amidst spilt sake. He's asleep, with a cherubic smile on his lips and Bree's teddy clutched to his cheek.

BACK on Yoshiko. She bites her lip, then turns away.

30 INT DANTON'S ROOMS DAY

DR DANTON is a psychiatrist, a woman in her mid forties.

The SIGN on the DOOR indicates these are her private rooms. She also conducts assessments in criminal cases for the police, using video interviews.

CLOSE on Dr Danton as she loads a mini-cassette into a dictaphone. She's at her desk and there's a video monitor on a trolley playing. It's an interview with Yoshiko.

YOSHIKO(video)

I suspected that night with the phone call. It still hurt in the morning to see him like that. And for Maniko too. I was ashamed.

Danton pauses the video. We see a frozen image of Yoshiko. She activates the dictaphone.

DR DANTON

Ident. Psychiatric assessment, Yoshiko Tanaka. Initial reaction emotional hurt, betrayal and some degree of self-blame.

Danton pauses the tape and starts the video.

YOSHIKO(video)

My sister said to be strong and put it behind me. I had the family to think of. Kenji assured me it was over with.

31 INT TANAKA HOME (BEDROOM) NIGHT

Kenji, dressed in a bath-robe comes in from the shower. He's in a buoyant mood as he combs his hair.

KENJI

It's good to be home. Enough of these long hours.

Yoshiko sits at the end of the bed, her eyes averted.

YOSHIKO

And enough of her?

Kenji is quick to comfort and assure Yoshiko.

KENJI

Yoshiko, I said it's over. I'm sorry. I was crazy and I lost my head.

YOSHIKO

I fear that I'm losing mine.

Kenji kneels beside Yoshiko seeking her forgiveness.

KENJI

It was a fantasy, but it's finished. If you don't let go, it will surely finish us.

Yoshiko responds pulling Kenji close in to her.

YOSHIKO

Then we'll be strong together.

It's a tender, loving embrace and passion grows out of it.

32 INT TANAKA HOME(CHISA'S ROOM) NIGHT

Chisa's asleep. Asoko pulls the blankets up and tucks her in. She turns out the bed-light and closes the door.

33 INT TANAKA HOME(STAIRS) NIGHT

Asoko pauses at the top of the stairs and listens a moment. We hear the sound of Kenji and Yoshiko having sex.

34 INT TANAKA HOME(BEDROOM) DAY

Yoshiko heaves the cotton mattress over and fluffs it up. She continues to make the bed. We catch a glimpse between the flying bed-linen of Asoko sitting across from her.

ASOKO

You're such a lucky woman to have all this and a devoted husband.

YOSHIKO

Devoted! I'm not the only woman to have my husband.

ASOKO

Be sure your tongue doesn't squander it. You'll bring shame on us all. Is that what you want?

YOSHIKO

It's not of my choosing, this shame.

Asoko catches the edge of the sheet and halts Yoshiko's actions. Her look is ice across the bed.

ASOKO

It will be if Kenji leaves. And Chisa? What life would that be for her.

Asoko folds the corner of the sheet and tucks it under the mattress. Controlled hands smooth out the wrinkles.

ASOKO  
Better you go than allow that.

Yoshiko stands across the room. Her face reflects complete alienation.

34a INT GALLERY DAY

IN CLOSE as the delicate fabric floats in the space. Through the hanging installation we see Chisa. She is bouncing around somewhat bored with the exhibition.

Yoshiko and Asoko admire the fine works on display.

They speak in Japanese. (English sub-titles)

YOSHIKO  
It's so fragile, makes me  
wish for home.

ASOKO  
But you are at home, here!

YOSHIKO  
That's easy for you to say  
when you fly off tomorrow.

ASOKO  
You could take my ticket! I'll  
stay and look after Chisa.

YOSHIKO  
And you'd look after Kenji?

ASOKO  
Maybe I could!

Chisa interrupts the moment. She grabs Asoko and pulls her in the direction of another piece.

Yoshiko looks after her as the last words hang in the air.

35 INT DANTON'S ROOMS DAY

Dr Danton watches the video interview with Yoshiko. It's a working lunch and she eats an apple.

YOSHIKO (video)  
I had more understanding from  
Maniko than from my own sister.  
Asoko thought a husband and  
children were the measure of  
your life. She hated me for  
it...for my life!

On the video we see Dr Danton place a number of photographs in front of Yoshiko. She moves them around as if seeing them for the first time.

ANGLE on Danton as she finishes a mouth full of apple and activates the dictaphone.

DR DANTON

The photographs we see in front of Yoshiko were found on her person. It's possible she was trying to erase all existence of family life.

BACK to the monitor. We see Dr Danton pull her chair beside Yoshiko at the interview table. She examines the photos.

DR DANTON(video)

Tell us about these photos.

YOSHIKO(video)

My family lived in Kyoto. They had very traditional values.

CLOSE ON PHOTOGRAPH. The setting is a traditional Japanese garden. Young Yoshiko, dressed in formal kimono bows before a young Kenji.

YOSHIKO(video V/O)

This was taken on the day I met Kenji. It was arranged by our parents. We fell in love. That's our wedding and the honey-moon in Australia.

CLOSE ON PHOTOGRAPHS. We drift across the WEDDING and a few HONEY-MOON shots and

HOLD on a photo of the RESTAURANT and STAFF in foreground. One side of the print is torn off.

DR DANTON(video V/O)

This is a recent photo and it's torn.

Yoshiko fingers the creased print.

BACK on Dr Danton and the dictaphone.

DR DANTON

There's a recent photo of the staff at the restaurant. The woman torn out of the picture, is Bree Daniel.

Danton fast-forwards the video a few seconds, then plays it. We see a mid-shot of Yoshiko talking.

YOSHIKO(video)

Maniko made her leave the restaurant, but she wouldn't leave Kenji alone.

36 INT RESTAURANT(KITCHEN) NIGHT

Bree and Kenji are engaged in sex. The kitchen, with an array of utensils at hand adds a primitive and dangerous element to their passion.

Bree, with her uniform falling away, straddles a low stainless steel bench. She grips the overhead meat rack for support. Kenji kneels before her and gently caresses her body with a smooth wooden roll pin. It leaves a trail of glistening oil across her chest. He slides the pin down under her clothes, losing it to her thighs. Bree responds to the sensation.

Yoshiko further back in the shadows eases a screened panel open. From her position she can see Bree and Kenji clearly. They appear to be spot lit by the work lights.

Everything in the kitchen is in place. The whole scene is ordered and still, except for this pantomime on the bench.

BACK ON Bree and Kenji as they couple on the stainless steel. It's passion gone awry and like an out-of-control circus act they climax.

CUT TO

Yoshiko POV witnesses their pleasure. In the FOREGROUND she sees a rack Kenji's of sushi knives. They stand in a perfect line from the large chopping blades to thinnest pairing implement.

YOSHIKO(video V/O)  
How ever hard I tried I  
couldn't shut it out of my  
mind. I thought of nothing  
but to end it.

Yoshiko slips back into the recess and quietly slides the panel closed.

Through the narrowing gap we see the rack of knives. From the line of blades we notice one's missing.

37 INT DANTON'S ROOMS DAY

Dr Danton leans forward to study the monitor. The image is a MEDIUM CLOSE shot of Yoshiko as she talks to Danton in the interview.

YOSHIKO(video)  
Then I was optimistic, I  
thought perhaps I could  
make her see reason to  
leave us alone. It was  
too late for that.

Danton backs up the tape. We see Yoshiko turn direct to the camera. Her tone changes to one of finality.



YOSHIKO (video)  
 ...leave us alone. It was  
 too late for that.

38 EXT THEATRE DAY

Yoshiko stands outside the entrance to the theatre, a little uncertain about the location. She unfolds one of the origami swan fliers advertising the production.

39 INT AUDITORIUM DAY

Yoshiko pushes the door open. A shaft of sun light cuts a path across the darkened theatre. She's hesitant at first, but then steps inside and follows it down to the stage.

40 INT DRESSING ROOM DAY

Bree is in costume. She sits in front of the make-up mirror. It's a typical back-stage theatre room, cluttered with props and mannequins clothed in colourful outfits. Bree applies the finishing touches of black eyeliner. She's made up as Pierrot, the sad funny clown of French pantomime. A bright red boa hangs off her shoulders and adds a femme-fatale touch.

Yoshiko just materialises out of the shadows. She looks wrung-out and edgy. Her pale complexion a mirror-image of Bree's face. The two epitomise the theatrical masks of comedy and tragedy.

Bree sees Yoshiko's reflection in the mirror. It's confused with mannequins. Then there's a moment as their eyes cross. She totally freaks.

BREE  
 God! Shit, where'd you come  
 from? Scare me to death!

Bree regains composure. Yoshiko moves ever so slightly into the room. Her hands fidget beneath her clothes.

YOSHIKO  
 Why do you trample on my life?

BREE  
 Yoshiko, I'm sorry. It just  
 happened. We were working back  
 and things just...

YOSHIKO  
 But you keep coming back. Why  
 won't you leave him alone?

BREE  
 I guess there's more to it.  
 There certainly is now.

YOSHIKO  
Are you and Kenji in love?

BREE  
I don't know...but I'm pregnant.

Yoshiko is visibly shaken. She is grasping for anything.

YOSHIKO  
Is it Kenji's child you carry?

Bree nods affirmation.

BREE  
He doesn't know yet.

41 INT DANTON'S ROOMS DAY

On the video monitor, Yoshiko's image.

YOSHIKO (video)  
The world had crumbled around  
me. To save my family the shame,  
I knew then, what I must do.

Danton pauses the video and speaks to the dictaphone.

DR DANTON  
Faced with these circumstances,  
and given her emotional state  
of mind. It's clear she is not  
responsible for her actions.  
She saw no other option.

42 INT TANAKA HOME (LOUNGE) DAY

Yoshiko appears to be in a state of anxiety. She sorts through a draw of family photographs and personal letters. Some she places in a plastic sleeve, others are trashed in a bin beside her.

One photo she examines closely then carefully tears off a portion of the print. She trashes it with the other items and then sets fire to the bin.

Carefully Yoshiko collects the stones from the water feature and places them in pocket/sleeve of her kimono.

42a VISUAL GRAPHIC

CLOSE ON: one of the colourful WOOD-BLOCK PRINTS: It shows the princess pursued by guards of the Imperial Court.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O)  
You can imagine by now, I'm  
just so stressed out. Everyone  
saying how cute I am and wanting  
a piece of the action. And this  
virgin thing..just causes grief.

43 INT TANAKA HOME (CHISA'S ROOM) DAY

Chisa is curled up in bed asleep. Yoshiko enters and lifts the girl to her arms. Her kimono drags at the sleeves with the weight of the stones. She carries Chisa, still clutching her doll, out of the room.

44 INT TANAKA HOME (STAIRS) DAY

Yoshiko pauses at the top of the stairs. Tears streak her face. Gently she brushes back Chisa's hair.

CHISA

Why are you crying Mummy?

YOSHIKO

Because we have to go away.

Yoshiko takes Chisa's hand and they descend the stairs.

45 INT AUDITORIUM DAY

The stage is dark. The curtains drift gently in the wings.

We can just make out the red boa where it dropped centre stage. Then we see Bree, lying where she fell. A moment.

Then the sound of hands clapping can be heard from the seats.

The lights fade up on the rehearsal and we see the DIRECTOR and DESIGNER stand and applaud.

Bree gets to her feet and takes a bow.

46 EXT LAKE'S JETTY DUSK

The jetty stretches out into the waters of the lake. There's a full moon just showing light in the east. The tips of the waves glow a phosphorous white.

There are two fishermen in a tinnie floating just off the jetty. BLOCK, in his late thirties drinks beer. EDDIE, who could be his son, baits his hook.

Eddie's attention is attracted to the end of the jetty. Another ANGLE and further up the jetty we see Yoshiko and Chisa. They appear to be holding hands looking out across the water.

IN CLOSER; Yoshiko and Chisa step out of their sandals. Yoshiko lifts Chisa onto her hip and moves closer to the edge of the jetty.

47 EXT/INT RESTAURANT (REAR) NIGHT.

Kenji opens the door to Bree. She's still wears the red boa from rehearsals. The restaurant is busy with trade.

KENJI

Bree, what are you doing?

Bree gives a sultry look and halts his neck with her boa.

BREE

I thought just a quick entree?

She twists the feather neck-tie and drags Kenji outside.

BREE (con't)

Alfresco style!

They're lost to the shadows of the alley-way.

48 EXT LAKE'S JETTY DUSK

IN CLOSE on Eddie. The sound of a loud splash finds both fishermen peering into the gloom.

EDDIE (O/C)

Over there! What's that?

Ripples spread across the water. The moonlight catches the small doll as it floats between the pylons.

49 EXT ALLEY-WAY NIGHT

IN CLOSE on a hand as it grips the bricks. It's Bree's.

Boxes stacked along the wall obscure the alley-way. We can just make out Bree and Kenji, still tethered with the boa having sex. It's desperate and impetuous and they're totally oblivious to any by-passers on the main thorough-fare.

50 EXT LAKE'S JETTY DAWN

Mist drift off the lake. The jetty appears to disappear into it. Tranquillity of the morning prevails.

51 INT HOSPITAL (SECURITY WARD) DAY

Yoshiko is dressed in hospital pyjamas. NURSE WILSON escorts her down the hallway to the bathroom. Her face is gaunt, her eyes reflect a desolate blankness.

Wilson fumbles with a bunch of SECURITY KEYS. After a few tries she gets the door open.

52 INT HOSPITAL (CHILDREN'S WARD) DAY

Chisa appears to be asleep. She is surrounded by clinical apparatus. Kenji is in a chair beside her.

He tries to read from the fairy tale book but is unable to control his grief. He sinks into the bed and buries his face, shoulders heave with anguish.

53 INT RESTAURANT(KITCHEN) DAY

Kenji stands alone in the kitchen. He looks uncomfortable and out of place without his chefs attire. He unravels his leather knife pouch and spreads it flat on the bench. His actions appear almost ceremonial.

With meticulous care, Kenji selects each of his personal knives from the rack. He examines each blade edge and gives it a stroke on the steel, then slips it into the pouch.

There's just a moments hesitation at the missing knife. Kenji continues with the rest, then wraps and ties the swag and leaves.

54 INT RESTAURANT(SERVICE AREA) DAY

Maniko and Tetsuro standby as Kenji departs. This is not the time for words. He hands Maniko his service keys, accords them both a genuine farewell, and quietly walks out. His manner is humble, he hopes perhaps for some redemption.

Maniko hands Tetsuro a fold of soft leather. He unties it and finds the missing knife.

MANIKO

He said you earned it.

Tetsuro is touched by the honour. Beyond the door he sees Kenji make his way though the garden and out of his life.

55 INT DANTON'S ROOMS DAY

On the monitor we see the image of Yoshiko. Dr Danton pauses it and activates the dictaphone.

DR DANTON

On that jetty, Yoshiko was taking her life to avoid the shame. As the child Chisa, is an extension of the mother, we have what's called oyako shinju, parent and child suicide. An old practice some consider still honourable...

56 INT HOSPITAL(CHILDREN'S WARD) DAY

We see Chisa in bed propped up with pillows.

DR DANTON(V/O con't)

...Chisa's recovery has been remarkable. Yoshiko's response when she learns her daughter did not drown will be critical in reaching a decision on her assessment.

A NURSE has a corner of the bed beside Chisa. The two have the Bamboo Cutter story book open across their laps. Like a couple of children they listen to the tale read to them.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O)

After the boys, the emperor hits on me. Now if this was Cinderella's gig we'd live happy ever after. But it's mine and of course, it goes right off the rails. Actually, it goes to the moon.

56a VISUAL GRAPHIC

We see a WOOD-BLOCK PRINT of a chariot with lots of colour and fan-fare.

SHINING PRINCESS (V/O con't)

This chariot comes down and beams me away, back up there. That's where I came from. By now you're thinking I'm smashed off my face. But truly, it's what happened. Like the moon's a metaphor for a better place, Cool, rhymes

57 EXT/INT CLINIC DAY

Bree hesitates a moment at the door, then firmly presses the buzzer. She carries an night bag and a referral envelope.

As the door opens we see posters in the waiting room that indicate this is a pregnancy termination clinic. Bree steps inside.

57a EXT LAKE LOOK-OUT DAY

We see Kenji attempt to execute a Kendo move. His feet grip the safety rail, desperate to correct and hold balance. But he loses it. Kenji cries out, smashing the cane stick onto the beam.

He sinks to his knees and sobs bitterly.

57b INT HOSPITAL (SECURITY WARD) NIGHT

Yoshiko's frail figure sit on the edge of the bed. She turns over a water sodden photo of Chisa.

A tear falls onto the image. Yoshiko folds it over, holds it to her lips a moment then places it gently on the pillow.

58 INT HOSPITAL(SEcurity WARD/HALL) NIGHT

Moonlight spills down the hallway. There's a light on the night desk outside the ward. The place appears deserted.

IN CLOSE on the door, we see thin fingers then a hand pulls it open. Yoshiko eases out and checks the corridor. She's pale and drawn as though sleep is a thing of the past.

At the far end a glass door leads out to a balcony. Yoshiko is dressed in pyjamas and a traditional Japanese bathrobe. Keeping to the wall she makes a hasty bid for the door. On reaching it, she finds it unlocked, slips out and is lost to the shadows.

59 INT HOSPITAL(SEcurity WARD/LIFT) NIGHT

We follow the numbers as the lift ascends. Bing, it sounds loud in the quiet of the hospital wing. The doors ease open.

A very excited Chisa skips out. She's followed by Dr Danton. They head down the hallway.

60 EXT/INT HOSPITAL(SEcurity WARD/EXIT DOOR) NIGHT

Through the glass door, across the balcony the lights of the city twinkle in the distance. A utility light above the exit catches a waft of smoke.

Nurse Wilson appears on the other side of the glass. She takes a last puff on her ciggie, treads it out and steps back inside.

The bunch of keys in her hand again is a trial and error effort. She tries one but it won't lock. Then another. The sound of people down hallway can be heard. Wilson tries another key. In her haste she drops the bunch.

With no time to lose she scoops them up and hurries back to the security desk.

61 INT HOSPITAL(SEcurity WARD/HALL) NIGHT

Nurse Wilson slides into the chair and resumes reading the magazine in front of her.

Dr Danton and Chisa step up to the desk.

Chisa's attention is drawn to the glass door. She's transfixed.

CHISA  
Mummy?... (urgent) Mummy!

We can see Yoshiko's figure like a pale ghost on the balcony. Chisa reaches the door and bangs her hands up against the glass.

62 EXT HOSPITAL(BALCONY) NIGHT

Yoshiko appears to be in a trance-like state and drawn to the edge. She steps on the balcony seat then climbs onto the rail. Her robe luffs in the breeze as though she is floating on air. It's a shimmer of satin in the moonlight.

BACK on the door we see Chisa, a tiny distraught figure trapped behind the glass panel. She tries the door handle. It opens. She pushes it wide open.

CHISA

Mummy!

Yoshiko is distracted by the voice. She stumbles and almost overbalances. For a moment it's either way, then she regains her precarious hold on the rail.

63 INT HOSPITAL(SEcurity WARD/HALL) NIGHT

Dr Danton arms restrain Wilson. They remain frozen to the spot as they watch Chisa step out onto the balcony.

64 EXT HOSPITAL(BALCONY) NIGHT

Chisa runs towards the edge, her arms outstretched to Yoshiko.

CLOSE on Yoshiko's feet. Her toes twist and writhe to grip the steel railing. She steadies herself and turns back to Chisa. There's a fleeting smile of recognition.

Yoshiko attempts to step back off the rail to safety. In that split moment she overbalances. Chisa feels the satin brush against her face and grasps the robe.

Yoshiko's eyes cry out as she arches back. The robe slips easily off her small frame and she surrenders to the darkness below.

64a EXT MONTAGE DAY

A series of images of life passed.

The beautiful Japanese gardens and the wedding

The bridge and the cross-over to the other side.

64b EXT HOSPITAL(BALCONY) NIGHT

CLOSE ON Chisa, her eyes vacant as she rocks on her haunches and clings to her mother's silk robe.



65 EXT BUDDHIST RETREAT DAY

Some time has passed. An OLDER CHISA walks in the garden. She follows a path lined with flowers to the steps of a Buddhist temple. At the railing Chisa turns and speaks.

OLDER CHISA (V/O)

I thought it was the moon that  
stole Mummy away. But now I'm  
older, I know what happened.  
I still see her, her spirit,  
and I know she's free.  
That's my mother's story.  
Thank you for listening.

The IMAGE FREEZES and DISSOLVES

To a WOOD-BLOCK PRINT of the MOON OVER THE SEA.

END CREDITS

BASED ON A TRUE STORY...

ムーンフォール

ムーンフォール

# moonfall

BOOTLEG FILMS presents

YUTAKA IZUMIHARA    ARISA YURA    NADINE BARRY    MIHO YOSHIDA  
HARUNA KAWACHI    SHINGO USAM    AND    KOTOHA KASAI

"MOONFALL"

PRODUCTION DESIGN GABRIELLE O'CONNOR | ORIGINAL SCORE RUSSELL THORNTON | EDITOR JUSTIN CRUICKSHANK  
CINEMATOGRAPHY PETER BOROSH | SOUND DESIGN SHARON JAKOVSKY & FINN O'KEEFE  
WRITTEN, PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY JOHN PRESCOTT

## Part B

## An Introduction

A playwright makes and works with plays, not just writes them. The winemaker makes and works with wine and a filmmaker makes and works with film. These crafts utilise many different skills to realise their work and to briefly illustrate the range of skills involved I will use a viticultural metaphor.

The grapes grown are subject to many influences and rely on the viticulturist to recognise them. The location, aspect, climate, soil topography and seasonal change will all impact on the quality of the grape.

Equipment is needed to prepare the fields, the trellis and irrigation system to water the vines. There are sprays to control phylloxera and other diseases that will reduce the quality or yield. Then there is the machinery or the hands required for that time-critical picking of the crop. To produce the grape the viticulturist needs to be a skilled management practitioner.

There are agronomic skills gained through experience. Empirical knowledge in selection of root stock and phylogenic propagation, soil pH evaluation and even simple environmental orientation are all essential to maximise the quality of the product.

The grape press in a small boutique vineyard exacts the same principals as a high volume commercial operation and while it is not part of the wine, it is an integral part of the process. The cooper makes barrels from select timbers for the process of fermentation and the vigneron practices the science of chemistry to produce the wine.

The production of wine is enabled through the agency of the wine-maker in collaboration with, and selection of, these various elements. To focus on the end result, the wine itself, rather than the practice of wine-making sets boundaries, and denies the 'creative practice' its legitimacy.

Filmmaking employs a wide and diverse range of skills. These are not all immediately visible to the audience that views the finished film; however the interaction and correlation of all these elements will inform the cinematic experience.

The consumer selecting a bottle of wine looks to the label for information concerning variety, region, vintage and other details. This interpretative text supports the wine and as some have achieved almost canonical status, by definition, the writing could be considered exegetical.

There has been ongoing debate concerning the relationship between the exegesis and the creative work in Research Higher Degrees offered at a number of Universities. The journal of the Australian Association of Writing Programs devoted a special issue to the subject and compiled a list of previous papers that reflected practitioner opinions from a range of disciplines. (Fletcher and Mann 2004 *TEXT Special Issue 3 - Illuminating the Exegesis*) These included visual arts, performance theatre and dance, installation exhibition and media related creative works, as well as creative writing.

This exegesis will in part examine the creative skills and the mechanisms available to the playwright or scriptwriter. The scope of the exegesis will extend to the filmmaker as a natural progression from the screenplay. This is not exclusive to the process of the research and writing of the screenplays, but inclusive of all elements, including technology, in creative practice.

‘Tools exist only in relation to the interminglings they make possible or that make them possible.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: p.90) This would denote the importance of the ‘interminglings’ over and beyond any particular individual component of the work.

Heidegger argues that the artist or creator is not the only authorial entity to which the work owes allegiance, nor is the use of technology perceived as merely a means to an end. Creative practice responds to and challenges the notion of hegemony within the domain. Heidegger advocates a position of ‘co-responsibility and indebtedness’, a conjunction of the elements that contribute to getting the work, ‘on its way into arrival.’ (Heidegger 1977: p.9)

Brecht proposed the notion of ‘reflexivity’, in that art should reveal the principles of its own construction, and thus avoid the ‘swindle’ of suggesting that fictive events were not worked at, but simply happened. This is a deconstruction of what at the time was believed to be the ‘genius creator’ assisted by divine intervention. Brecht’s ideas were not embraced by many in the church.

My endeavour in presenting this document is to offer a contiguous reading of the creative works and the exegesis. I acknowledge it is difficult to avoid prioritisation of the texts, but in choosing a random almost chaotic approach to the exegesis, I offer the reader a chance to embrace the freedom of the creative researcher’s journey. Tess Brady (2000: vol 4 p.2) refers to this haphazardness as the ‘bowerbird technique’.

It’s the breadth and diversity of the creative works this exegesis accompanies that could be deemed problematic in the context of the Creative Research Higher Degree. The screenplays of

*Slam*, *Inside Venus* and *Moonfall* are three distinctly separate entities, each with their own ontological world. To add complexity they are at different stages of the creative research process and through practitioner based enquiry each script delivers unique, and quite specific, outcomes.

Estelle Barrett (2004: vol 3 p.2) suggests ‘The exegesis may be viewed both as a replication or re-versioning of the completed artistic work as well as a reflective discourse on significant moments in the process of unfolding and revealing.’ For the creative component of this DCA, it is precisely with the exegetical writing that a degree of exploration, experimentation and reflection on the creative processes can exist. The end product for the art-worker, script-writer, filmmaker and wine-maker reflects a number of restrictions imposed on their creative practice.

In the individual sections of this exegesis I will articulate a number of theoretical concerns that underpin and inform the outcomes of the creative research process. There is a risk this approach runs contrary to the nature of the research itself and establishes a competing dualism between the creative work and exegetical. Gaylene Perry (1998: vol 2 p.3) sees a danger in offering literary criticism to a creative work. ‘My greatest fear of following my novel with an exegesis is that the theory will guide, interpret, or frame the reading of my novel.’

Jeri Kroll (2004: vol 3 p.9) points out that the exegesis focuses on how the creative process has been carried out and has a stipulated length. She notes here that the length of the creative work depends on the art form category and that there is no uniformity. She acknowledges that creative arts theses can be presented in a variety of forms ‘Simply how a thesis is bound - as one or two volumes – can embody meaning.’ (Kroll 2004: vol 8 p.6)

Andrew Taylor (1999: vol 3 p.5) refers to the singularity of the university system as ‘The Machine’ and acknowledges the open ended process of creative practice, ‘via its very plurality and diversity challenges The Machine’s hegemony.’ Kroll (2004: vol 8 p.8) maintains ‘the hybrid nature of the beast - the creative arts thesis - means that one acceptable template does not exist...and in varying degrees the exegesis can be theoretical or confessional, descriptive or analytic.’

My DCA, originally titled '*cinema expression*': *Morphology of the Contemporary Tale*, focuses on three separate stories developed as screenplays with the intention to produce one of them. This document is presented in two parts with appendices. Part A contains the screenplay and DVD copy of the film *Moonfall*. Part B contains the exegesis that accompanies the creative work and the appendices include the screenplays *Slam* and *Inside Venus*.

I note here that the scope of the works is beyond the requirements for the creative component of a DCA. For that reason *Slam* and *Inside Venus* are located in the appendices. They are not simply a supplement but an integral component of the overall research into cinema expression. Many theoretical points that are elucidated in the exegesis are embedded and articulated within the screenplays. I have specifically mentioned particular scenes in the final section of the exegesis as a referent, but it is not imperative to read the scripts in their entirety.

I refer to sections in this exegesis rather than chapters; a small challenge to the straight jacket of literary conformity. The sections deal with different concerns and issues that have circulated during the research process. Some are theoretical concepts and specifically relevant to an individual work while others are generally accepted conventions of film analysis and film praxis. The analogous approach to the exegetical material could be the assortment of luggage piled on the platform; as the train comes in you take it on board.

The following sub-sections will; [a] introduce the three screenplays with a synopsis and provide an historical context for them; and [b] summarise each section of the exegesis.

### **Inside Venus**

Synopsis:

*'If you don't much care where you want to get to,  
Then it doesn't matter which way you go.'*  
*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll.*

For Venus, just turned nineteen, her life took a major detour. She fell in love with Johnny.

Johnny, a twenty five year old teacher graduate, who never quite made the classroom, was already in love...with heroin...The three got on famously, for a while.

Johnny's dream to open a diner, finds him an easy recruit for Oxtor, a small time scammer and drug dealer. A few kilos, a simple pick up, c.o.d. and it's all tax free. For Johnny the added recreational fringe benefits enhance the deal.

Roland, a sociopathic bodybuilder, is the muscle behind the operation. As they say, 'shit happens'. Johnny dies in Venus' arms, the result of a heroin overdose.

The investigating police see this as their opportunity to expose the organisation and catch those further up the line.

Nigel, Johnny's father, arrives in town to take care of the funeral arrangements. Venus keeps the remaining drugs, a small compensation for the grief they've caused.

She also finds a caring moment with Nigel.

Roland and Oxtor are not so caring. Their relentless pursuit of the missing narcotics leads to a pathetic and tragic ending.

*Inside Venus* is a tale of crime and confusion, a collision of lives that will take you on a ragged descent to the edge.

And back to innocence, where the spirit flies.

The inspiration for *Inside Venus* was originally founded on an event that occurred in 1999 and was reported in local and national news. This involved the abduction and murder of a young man on a house boat. The development of the screenplay identifies with the practitioner-based enquiry model of research and conforms to the notion that Donald Schon (1983: p.55) identifies as 'practitioners using reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action'.

The process of peer evaluation and review of the draft script resulted in strong negative feedback concerning the characters. The story premise was abandoned and the narrative re-directed. This is an example of what Schon termed 'talk-back' and further describes this as practitioner's 'reflective conversation with the situation.' (Schon 1983: p.79).

The transformation of the Venus character and the desire to relocate or reclaim the 'jouissance' of youth, despite the adverse circumstances, repositioned my response to the existing material. A number of individual stories with family and emotional connections resonated with me and began to inhabit and impinge on narrative logic. The fact that it was a genre film was never denied by myself, but tended to be side-lined in an effort to access development finance.

The practice of attributing a number to a particular draft of a screenplay is the industry standard, however, it is not indicative or commensurate with the work undertaken to get to that draft. In the case of *Inside Venus* the draft count restarted, as the story had changed so dramatically. Only the title remained.

In the domain of viticulture one could envisage grafting a new Semillon grape cutting to old Chardonnay root stock. Perhaps the analogy is too simplistic, but the resultant product, while it appears to be similar, is completely different.

I submitted the script for funding and the subsequent negative assessment, almost terminated the project. This will be explained later, but it illustrates what some practitioners perceive as filmmakers marginalised in a culture of hegemony and nepotism. On re-submission development funding was realised and this provided editorial input and consultancy.

*Inside Venus* is currently at draft stage #3.2 and, consistent with research practice, the interpretation, revision and reflection continues. The outcomes are assessed, sometimes annexed, and ongoing.



## Slam

Synopsis: *'When the light at the end of the tunnel is an oncoming train, there are few options left..'*

### SLAM

...is a story of our times;  
of chaos, love, despair and delusion.

...a story of four people  
caught in the maelstrom of a society that cares not for them,  
nor they for it.

CHICCI has 'lost time' to catch up -  
due to auto theft.

CAT has 'time' to catch up with Chicci -  
and a dead-line for an art exhibition.

SLAV depends totally on Bam.

BAM has a psychotic disorder.

When Bam and Slav decide on a holiday they enlist Chicci's  
skills to appropriate a caravan, and the three set off.

Malevolent forces soon take hold as their destination becomes  
apparent. The tranquillity of the vineyards is interrupted by a  
series of macabre vampire murders.

Finally, Cat hits the road in search of Chicci and the journey  
becomes a desperate struggle to save her from a bizarre initiation  
into 'the family'.

The final confrontation leads to an appointment with death.

### SLAM

*...is a modern day urban  
horror story that will meet you head on!*

It's a vexed question as to whether *Slam* will ever see the light in a cinematic sense. The tunnel has been a long journey. The script evolved from research into the horror genre and the identification of specific events that occurred and demonstrate the iconography of the genre.

The particular incident that inspired the story occurred in Queensland in 1986, when the body of a man was found on the river bank at West End in Brisbane. He was the victim of a ritual killing and those responsible became known in the newspapers as 'the lesbian vampire killers'.

At the commencement of candidature *Slam* was at fourth draft stage and during the process had been sanitised in an effort to accommodate mainstream cinema sensibilities. Engagement with industry producers, in my endeavour to promote the project, was an illuminating experience.

There were concerns expressed that being a male writer was problematic. One producer actively sought a second opinion in order to validate the lesbian content. The critical response was tempered with fiscal reason that implied there is no audience for this type of film. The producer cited the example of the film *Claire of the Moon* (1992) that ran in two cinemas for less than a week.

This type of response provides evidence in support of Colin Robson's (2002: p.4) 'flexible-design' category, of social science research methodology. He refers to using the 'researcher-as-instrument' in which the researcher is systematically evaluating and determining responses about their research. Flexible designs are, 'necessarily interactive, enabling the sensitive enquirer to capitalise on unexpected eventualities.' (Robson 2002: p.6).

*Slam* progressed through two further drafts after careful reassessment of character back-stories. The historical and religious elements emerged through both reflexive enquiry and anecdotal reportage from a catholic girl's boarding school. The devolvement of the screenplay continues.

### **Moonfall**

Synopsis: *Moonfall* tells the tragic story of a clash of cultures.

Yoshiko Tanaka loved her daughter Chisa and husband Kenji. They were her family, her way of life.

One day, she took Chisa by the hand, out on a jetty, and they plunged into the lake.

The Japanese call this "oyako shinju"....parent / child suicide. It's illegal but still considered an honourable way to die in that country.

Yoshiko's attempt to take the life of herself and her daughter failed. They were dragged from the waters by a couple of locals fishing.

*Moonfall* tells her story.

The screenplay has been a decade long process. It was originally written as a short feature and submitted to the Australian Film Commission for production funding. The assessment outcome was favourable and recommended further development to write it as a feature film. Funding was granted and following two further drafts a producer was engaged. The project was rejected by a state government agency. The assessor in this case demonstrated their knowledge concerning Japanese culture and resoundingly dismissed the axiom of the story maintaining it was an old fashioned view and would not occur today. This was unfortunate as my research identified the most recent account in Australia of 'oyako-shinju' occurred in Melbourne in 1992. This of course placed the project in jeopardy and it was shelved.

Responsibility lies with government instrumentalities to ensure those commissioned to undertake evaluation of manuscripts have the requisite skills to do so and that they carry out their evaluation with impartiality and transparency. Recourse through the Freedom of Information Act to identify the assessor was blocked. I believe this intransigence contributes to a culture of mistrust and uncertainty that is still quite pervasive within government funding agencies today.

The reincarnation of *Moonfall* was a response to industry initiatives. The one hour television drama was back on the agenda with SBS Independent. A key concept developed by Schon was what he termed 'talk-back'. The scriptwriter/filmmaker takes account of changes in the situation, in accordance with the initial appreciation of them, and as the situation 'talks back' they respond to the situations 'talk back'. (Schon 1983: p.79)

In my case the relationship of research theory with industry practice produced a creative outcome, a re-writing of *Moonfall*. Schon's (1983: p.103) dialogic metaphor is appropriate as he notes the practitioner's 'global experiment is also a reflective conversation with the situation'.

A major concern of the overall research is the alternative structuralist approach which emerged in Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968). *Moonfall*, more so than the other two works, engages with the Proppian model or arrangement of elements he proposed as the bedrock of narrative plot structures. The inclusion of the *Taketori Monogatari* [The Bamboo Cutter's Tale], and the story of the Shining Princess, served to extend the 'spheres of action' by situating it as an event outside the 'sequence of functions'. Propp's theory and model of functions will be examined in detail in section six.

The origin of the title *Moonfall* is not simply an extrapolation from the princess wondertale. The story is based on an event that occurred in California some forty years ago. The moon on the West Coast falls to the sea and the title acknowledges that, despite the Australian location.

The production of the film is a continuum of practise-based research and the synergism of theoretical and practical informed the outcome. A research grant from the University of Newcastle was the initial contribution to the budget and provided vindication of the worthiness of this creative, performance orientated, research. The project qualified under the 10BA taxation ruling as an Australian film and was able to attract private investment to supplement the grant, and the University of Technology, Sydney's contribution through the DCA. This discourse is not intended to frame the reading of the film; but as a part of the exegesis to accompany it, and hopefully as a document, it will be useful.

## **Summary of Sections**

### Section one: Tilting to exegesis:

This section will address the extensive body of research that has been devoted to the relationship between the exegesis and the creative work in Creative Arts Higher Degrees. It will examine the historical traditions of the exegetical text associated with the Scriptures and later applied to secular canonical works. The ‘forewords’ and ‘afterwords’ adopted by notable writers to comment on their own writing, and the dangers of the exegesis framing the response to the creative work, or privileging one text over another, will be discussed.

### Section two: On methodologies:

This section will deal with various research methodologies utilised in creative-based research. It will examine in particular what is termed practitioner-based enquiry (PBE), and how the self reflective process demystifies, and legitimises, creative practice. It will investigate some interesting personal choices of methodology in art practice and the influence of technology in our understanding of processes. I will attempt to illuminate the methodologies employed in the creative research and work components of my DCA.

### Section three: Scheduling creativity:

The two essential concepts of creativity will be identified and examined. The traditional, divinely inspired, historical works of the 13th and 14th century have been recognised and celebrated as the hand of the individual genius. This thinking was largely refocused during the religious dissent of the 17th century and the radical economic and scientific changes that followed. Creativity flourished and the ‘creative process’ came under scrutiny. The cognitive process, and the social context that informed the individual, provided a new insight to understanding creativity. This section will examine the creative models, the application of these systems, and the Australian film industry relation to them.

### Section four: Aspects of narrative:

This section will identify a number of examples of narrative writings that are inspired through the authorial experience. The application of narrative in literature and film is explored and articulated. Fundamental theoretical analysis is established in relation to filmic discourse. The role of myth in narrative construction and the hero’s journey is evaluated as a writer’s template. This segment will also examine Metz’ eight syntagmatic types that organise images into narrative and constitute his ‘Grande Syntagmatique’.

Section five: Towards the gaze:

Psychoanalysis has had an enormous impact on film theory and criticism. This section examines some of the critical thought associated with Jacques Lacan and his application of psychoanalysis and the study of cinema. The concept of 'the gaze' in relation to the spectator is addressed in the traditional 'mirror stage' of Lacan; as found in classical Hollywood cinema and the binary understanding of sexual difference. Recent theorists have reinterpreted the Lacanian gaze, and the role of the female spectator, and provide new readings to a number of contemporary films.

Section six: Occasioning praxis:

In this section, film theory and praxis are examined together. A critical look at the industry in relation to development funding and government initiatives is presented. In addition, a number of theoretical concerns addressed in the screenplays *Slam* and *Inside Venus*, and in the film *Moonfall*, are articulated.

Section seven: An ending:

The importance of the reflexive process in determining creative outcomes, from a personal perspective, is examined briefly through childhood memory.

## Section one: Tilting to exegesis

The Collins Concise Dictionary definition (Wilkes & Crebs 1990) of 'exegesis' is an 'explanation or critical interpretation of a text, especially the Bible.' The etymology of the word exegesis comes from the Greek, *exegeisthai* - to interpret, *ex+hegeisthai* - to guide.

The American essayist and philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1834) is somewhat dismissive of the rationale and suggests we do what we can, then make a theory to prove our performance the best. Jonathan Swift (1711) advises that an idle reason lessens the weight of the good ones you gave before. From this one might conclude the exegesis could place the intentions of the creative work in jeopardy and desist from continuing the discourse.

Jeri Kroll refers to Jonathan Swift and Henry Fielding, as two pre-eminent authors who helped shape English literature, as a discipline by incorporating their comments into their work in ways 'that shed light on how the practice of writers talking to readers in different modes has developed in modern and post modern literature.' (Kroll 2004: vol 3 p.4)

She points to Swift's 'hybrid work' as a precursor to metafiction. This postmodernist approach is not confined to the literary text but inculcated in many creative works, blurring the boundaries of the exegesis and the creative work itself. This is a challenge to what is essentially an academic construct. Henry Fielding considered the relationship between the reader, the text and the role of the critic, as intermediary between text, author and reader. Kroll suggests that some exegeses perform similar functions. (Kroll 2004: vol 3)

The wine taster could be considered the interlocutor between the wine, wine-maker and drinker. The wine taster's evaluation, a mini exegesis on the bottle, is a privileged discourse. The discerning imbiber will understand it and appreciate the language associated with identifying the sensory response of the pallet. Similarly the exegesis with the creative higher degree articulates to a specialist audience - that of the academic supervisor and examiner. Therefore, like the average consumer of wine, the reader could be deprived of gaining any new insight because the interaction has been truncated.

Tess Brady in *A question of genre: de-mystifying the exegesis* (2000: vol 4) states that in her exegesis she offered no critique of her work and refrained from literary criticism and analysis of her novel. She refused to explain the relationship between theory and practice incorporated in her work. 'I took this approach as I wanted to write a lively readable document, a document

which would exist in its own right, a document which might be useful or informative to the discipline.’ (Brady 2000: vol 4 p.10) Brady is not apologetic and defends her creative product. She explains her model ‘celebrates the creative, privileging its discourse [and]...like the creative product it is not safe, not comfortable, not predictable.’ (Brady 2000: vol 4 p.10) She acknowledges that her exegesis engages with aspects of her research findings, but in an ‘open-ended manner, picking and choosing and embracing incompleteness.’

Her concerns that the creative work may be autobiographical prompted the real and personal need to be able to step back from it. The emotional connection with the work influenced the exegesis and resulted in what Brady terms a ‘companion document...a hastily drawn *mappa-mundi*, one without decoration and without provenance.’ (Brady 2000: vol 4 p.11)

Gaylene Perry in *Writing in the Dark: Exorcising the Exegesis* (1998: vol 2) explains her attraction to the psychoanalytic theorist, Julia Kristeva, in considering the creation of literature to be a rupturing of the semiotic world into the symbolic, the individual into the social or institutional space. Perry sees this as analogous to the reception of creative writing in academic institutions and suggests ‘the writer of a literary work might reject the compulsory exegesis because ultimately she does not want to exist as a rupture, or hole, in literary studies.’ (Perry 1998: vol 2 p.2) She contends the antecedent of a creative work coupled with an exegesis can be found in antiquated texts and that the author would not have written the exegesis. She quotes the words of Jeanette Winterson to support this position:

It is a strange time; the writer is expected to be able to explain his or her work as though it were a perplexing machine supplied without an instruction manual. The question “What is your book about?” has always puzzled me. It is about itself and if I could condense it into other words I should not have taken such care to choose the words I did. (Winterson 1995: p.165)

To reject the idea of your exegetical endeavour being relegated to a ‘hole in literary studies’ is not unreasonable. One could anticipate the possibility of it, the exegesis, being buried altogether. Brady agrees with Perry and suggests the exegesis functions as a ‘kind of insurance policy’; a mini dissertation intended to illustrate literary criticism and analysis and to reassure the ‘gatekeepers’ of the discipline’s bona fides. One should not be surprised that such safe documents ‘fade into the dark recesses of the library.’ (Brady 2000: vol 4 p.8)

Nigel Krauth in *The preface as Exegesis* (2002: vol 6) draws a parallel with the exegesis and an author’s preface to introduce and comment on their work. He cites notable exponents of the

preface, Graham Greene, Vladimir Nabokov and Barth employing various stylistic methods to address aspects of their writing. In Greene's *The Quiet American* his preface took the form of a letter addressed to two friends reassuring them they are not characters in the novel. '...more generally this short preface is about rearrangements of place and history - the manipulating of raw materials - that are part of the fiction writer's process.' (Krauth 2002: vol 6 p.1)

Vladimir Nabokov used the term Forewords and Afterwords as 'other' writings attached to the novel. He believed this generated a connection for the reader between the work and the culture. His Foreword in the novel *Lolita* appears to be written by a Dr John Ray who was assigned to represent the publication of the novel in America. He articulates concerns with the protection of source material; censorship in literature; and a psychological critique of characters in the story. (Krauth 2002: vol 6)

Krauth suggests Nabokov, in his Afterword, denies the existence of Dr John Ray and cites his confession:

After doing my impersonation of the suave John Ray...who pens the Foreword, any comments coming straight from me may strike one - may strike me, in fact - as an impersonation of Vladimir Nabokov talking about his own book. A few points, however, have to be discussed; and the autobiographic device may induce mimic and model to blend. (Nabokov, 'Afterword' 1961: p.328)

Krauth points out that Nabokov also parodies the process of prefacing and examines its usefulness and dangers suggesting with *Lolita* that he makes a point of clearly saying aspects of the mechanism 'will be skimmed over or not noticed' (Nabokov [Afterword] 1961: p.334) by certain readers. 'This idea of pre-empting the faulty or superficial reading, and pointing to particular readings, is typical of prefaces and also of student exegeses.' (Krauth 2002: vol 6 p.6)

Krauth refers to the definition of the term exegesis in *The Oxford English Reference Dictionary* (1996) that states it is a 'critical explanation of a text, especially of Scripture.' Krauth believes this definition has remained fairly consistent and the main concern is that it's a 'canonical' text that the exegesis supports. In secular terms this is a text so significant to the culture that society requires it to be given meaning. 'As canonically-inclined institutions, universities are entirely happy with the idea of the exegesis. It speaks their language.' (Krauth 2002: vol 6 p.2)



He posits that the prefacing or exegetical voice is more than likely to be the authorial voice in disguise as a ‘critic pre-empting the critics, a reader pre-empting the reading’ or framing the reading, and in the context of a PhD exegesis, ‘it provides the opportunity for a pre-emptive strike by the writer against the examiners.’ (Krauth 2002: vol 6 p.5)

This leads to the danger that the exegesis is written primarily for a very small coterie of university academics and examiners. Jeri Kroll (1999: vol 3 p.1) refers to the relationship of the exegesis and the creative work as ‘uneasy bedfellows’ and points out, ‘For all the intellectual and spiritual wrestling, however, when they are finished, they rest under separate covers.’ Paul Dawson (1999: vol 3) adds that exegeses are often seen as an addenda to the creative work in order to fulfil traditional criteria for research.

Gaylene Perry (2001: vol 5 p.1) in reviewing Stephen King’s, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, found parts of the book ‘overly fragmentary’ but suggested ‘this fracturedness is interesting in itself: in its reflection of the circumstances and persona and usual writing genre of the author.’ She concludes the author does not believe in what he is writing at various points and suggests the book encapsulates the difficulties associated with the exegetical writing. Perry cites King’s Second Foreword:

This is a short book because most books about writing are filled with bullshit. Fiction writers, present company included, don’t understand very much about what they do - not why it works when it’s good, not why it doesn’t when it’s bad. I figured the shorter the book, the less bullshit. (Stephen King 2000: xiii)

Richard Vella, writing in *Real-time* (2005), about PhD supervision identifies problems with the creative project plus exegesis model. He believes the importance attributed to the ‘reporting’ of the work within the exegesis, and the separation of text from the creative work, tends to ‘emasculate’ the work of its own embedded knowledge. Vella argues that the exegetical perspective is an interpretation of the creative work and therefore like the creative work it may not necessarily be articulated by a written text. He contends the exegesis can be a separately written piece, or a complex intertwining of components, and raises the question; can a work of art comment on another work of art and could this be considered exegetical.

Robyn Stewart’s *Re-inventing Artists’ Research: Constructing living forms of theory* (2003: vol 7) refers to artist based research that recognises practice as a valid form of enquiry. It’s a rigorous form that requires relevant sets of criteria, professional standards, epistemologies and methodologies. For Stewart practitioner research involves the identification and evaluation of

those theories that underpin and embody the practice. ‘It involves searching systematically and serendipitously for new perspectives and insights into practice.’ Stewart claims that ‘visual, performance and textual outcomes’ identify practitioner researchers, and their knowledge of the field is reflected by their own practice. ‘Whether these are ultimately presented as “exegesis”, “thesis”, or “dissertation” is a moot point. More critical is how the ingredients and protocols described illuminate the praxis and illustrate a living form of theory.’ (Stewart 2003: vol 7 p.1)

The use of ‘serendipity’ as a research tool ascribes a certain personal faculty in the process of enquiry. This is not a gift or endowment as bestowed on those fortunate princes in the Persian fairytale *The Three Princes of Serendip*, but rather an outcome related to diligence, perseverance and probability. There are many examples in all disciplines of research where discovery appears to be the result of a random accident.

In my attempt to define, or euphemistically tag the evasive and allusive ‘exegesis’, serendipity played a hand. A nostalgic re-run of the *Muppet Show* (1976) provided the answer with Statler and Waldorf perched in their balcony seats discussing the show. The *Muppet Show* could be considered a creative work of canonical dimension. It is accompanied by this interpretative explanation that is both reflective and reflexive and, culturally significant. Together they are a dislocated voice(s), legitimate expositors of the work and their comments form a framing device that is entirely embedded in it - a ‘part’ of the main work, but ‘apart’ from it. This exegetical function is positioned between the world created in the work and the world the reader inhabits.

Tess Brady (2000: vol 2) suggests that for her, an exegesis is a document that can exist in its own right. The recent appearance of an online program of shorts, titled *Statler and Waldorf: from the Balcony* (2005), confirms the independent exegetical quality of the show. Each episode involves a movie review, a guest appearance from the *Muppet Show*, and a ‘Balconism’. (1) Is this criticism by two Muppets an exegetical site from which new insights emerge? Have I in my quest to unravel the mystery of the exegesis fallen victim, as Krauth suggests (2002: vol 6), into ‘some quagmire of a dingo trap’?

Michel Foucault’s chapter, ‘Representing’ in *The Order of Things* (1970) focuses on Cervantes’ character Don Quixote.

He travels endlessly over that plain, without ever crossing the clearly defined frontiers of difference, or reaching the heart of identity... He is made up of interwoven words; he is writing itself, wandering through the world among the resemblances of things. (Foucault 1970: p.46)

Is my pursuit of the exegesis, like Quixote's journey, a 'quest for similitude'? And does the exegetical presentation, like Cervantes' text, loop back on itself, 'into its own density, and becomes the object of its own narrative.' (Foucault 1970: p.48)

Like a mobius path, or an ever spiralling ellipsis ... the journey-ing continues against blades of windmills turning.

(1)A Balconism is an extrapolation of words or an aphorism that conveys a special meaning and is comically and contextually linked. Statler and Waldorf, the two elderly curmudgeons sitting in the balcony, criticise, comment and exchange balconisms. eg, KILL-dren: those kids in horror movies that are not cute. HACK-tors: cut-rate actors who replace big stars in cheap sequels to their hit movies. YULE LOG-jam: the glut of block-busters released around the Christmas holiday period.

## Section two: On methodologies

*'In the story of my life,  
I came to myself in the dark woods  
where the straight way was lost"*

*Dante's Inferno*

There are a number of research methodologies that have been sampled, mixed and emerged during the process of this practice-based research. In an attempt to navigate this terrain, or map out the process, it is essential to identify the origins and explore the number of academic traditions that address research issues, similar to arts-based enquiry that can be found in other disciplines. In order to further our knowledge and understanding of the field it is necessary to engage in a dialogue about emerging methods of practice within the field.

Dodds and Hart (2001: p.173) exhort the artist-practitioner's responsibility to the field and to be rigorous in observation and articulation of theoretical changes and perspectives on practice-based research. Donald Schon's influential book, *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action* (1983), contributed the term 'reflection' as a key element to the understanding of what professionals do. His notions of 'reflection in action' and 'reflection on action' are central to his alternate epistemology of practice, where practitioners alter their actions while in the act of 'doing' itself. Schon claims:

The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation. (Schon 1983: p.68)

This reflection enables the practitioner to link the question of why they acted as they did, 'reflection-on-action'; and develop ideas about the activity. The outcome of this approach provides the practitioner with a 'repertoire'- a collection of actions, images, examples and ideas they can draw upon. Schon suggests a cyclical view of the research-practice relationship in which 'reflection-on-theory' generates experimentation and then 'reflection-on-results', in turn generates an evolving theory. He proposes that within this framework the practitioner conducts a dialogue, a 'global experiment is also a reflective conversation with the situation.' (Schon 1983: p.103) This study of practice leads to personal theories that devolve from that practice.

Colin Robson's *Real World Research* (2002) refers to two broad categories of social research methodologies based on fixed or flexible design. Essentially fixed-design researchers are more

aligned to a ‘natural science’ methodology by conducting laboratory-style quantitative experiments. Flexible-design methodologies, by contrast, occur in the less controlled, real world situation. (Robson 2002: p.4) In this type of research the methodologies utilise the ‘researcher-as-instrument’ approach, whereby there is continual interpretation and critical evaluation about their research, not unlike that of a literary researcher. (Robson 2002: p.167)

Robson claims flexible designs are, ‘necessarily interactive, enabling the sensitive enquirer to capitalise on unexpected eventualities.’ (Robson 2002: p.6) He also points out that adopting this practitioner approach to research attracts criticism because the researcher, perceived as an insider to the field, may have pre-conceived ideas about issues and/or solutions.

McNiff and Whitehead’s *Action Research: Principles and Practice* (2002) asserts:

The process of research becomes the practice, and because we are involved in a research process of thinking, evaluating and acting, the practice is a form of research. The boundaries are dissolved; knowledge, interests and practice are integrated within a life. (McNiff and Whitehead 2002: p.36)

I first came across Mikhail Bakhtin as one in a lineage of influential Russian figures depicted in paintings in David Perry’s film, *The Refracting Glasses* (1991). In this context Bakhtin was described as a supreme eccentric, and prominent in the Russian Formalist movement. Michael Holquist’s *Dialogism* (2002: p.15) suggests that ‘Bakhtin’s philosophy is a pragmatically oriented theory of knowledge.’ Holquist asserts that it is an epistemology that seeks to understand human behaviour through the dialogic concept of language as being fundamental. The term for this interconnected set of concerns is ‘dialogism’. Holquist refers to the terms ‘self’ and ‘other’ as crucial to Bakhtin’s thinking and stresses that they ‘always enact a drama containing more than one actor.’ (Holquist 2002: p.18)

The dialogic concept gives rise to the term ‘responsive understanding’. Gavin Stewart cites Voloshinov (1973: p.102), a contemporary of Bakhtin, who notes, ‘meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is, meaning is realised only in the process of active, responsive understanding.’ (Stewart 2004: p.12) Stewart suggests that all language through dialogic thought is realised in the form of an utterance, and Bakhtin in refining this notion developed the concept of addressivity, as the quality of turning to someone. This is a highly-charged recursive relationship in that the author-participant is never free from their audience and anticipation forms a pivotal function by which the social situation establishes the basic structure of their utterance. (Stewart 2004). Adopting elements of Bakhtin’s dialogic concept, in locating

utterance outside the boundaries of language, becomes relevant as a methodology for the practitioner-based artist researcher.

Robyn Stewart (2003: vol 7) embraces the notion of ‘a living form of theory’ where theoretical outcomes are located in the practice. They derive from the process of ‘doing’ and inform the practice through what Schon terms ‘as artful doing’. Thus Stewart claims, ‘theory and practice become synonymous, presenting the same experience from different perspective’s, like the warp and weft of a tapestry.’ (Stewart 2003: vol 7 p.3)

Stewart refers to Anne Marsh’s article *Just (an) Other Picture: Where art and research meet* (2002: p.15) where these new forms and paradigms of research and practice have the potential to become ‘the established excellences of tomorrow’, and the outcomes generated from exhibition and performance produce ‘a sort of magnificence as research comes alive.’ Marsh sees the studio as ‘an experimental arena for creative interactions, a space for critical analysis and renewal’. (Stewart 2003: vol 7 p.4)

These models in their examination of creativity and the process of practitioner-based research are observed to be iterative and recursive, as opposed to linear and sequential; and offer a complex range of methodological choices. What is fundamental to the task is that theoretical concepts are achievable and believable in the context of art-based practice. Kantor (1991: p.109) urges the need to become more familiar with research and associated literature relevant to the field, while maintaining the faculty of critical enquiry in an open-ended application. These inductive research outcomes create a new assemblage of meaning that generates a cognisance of our own praxis through an enhanced process of discovery. (Stewart 2003: vol 7)

In an effort to situate the creative work in a cultural, historical and theoretical context it is necessary to identify the specific individual components that comprise the work. My screenplays *Slam* and *Inside Venus* are draft scripts and still subject to the plethora of methodologies that are continually evolving and under discussion in this section. *Moonfall* as a digital moving image has extended the scope of the creative practice and as such reflects an expanded complexity of practitioner-based research. The prerequisite review of literature and cinematic texts, due to the diversity of the work, was comprehensive; and tended to develop a multimodal discourse that resonated between the components of the work and the relation to exegetical concerns. Rather than apply theory to practice I believe the reflective practitioner questions the assumption of ideas that underpin their practice. Stewart suggests, and I agree, that the approach to art practice is a personal and professional expression of knowing and

knowledge, 'framed by a complication of personal, cultural, historical, political, societal and local community contexts and circumstances'. (Stewart 2003: vol 7 p.4)

To clarify the 'personal' in relation to how knowledge is generated in the field the employment of 'reflexive enquiry' needs to be addressed. This reflexivity provides one of the key aspects of heuristic methodology as Moustakas defined it in his publication, *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology and Application* (1990). This method allows for the holistic collection of data. It engages and employs the researcher's personal attributes of understanding, insight, and interpretation. It relies on the tacit knowledge of the individual researcher, and they become fully immersed in the study. The field of research is interpreted from an axis of tacit knowledge 'within' the researcher. This denies any position of the objective, unbiased observer.

The epistemology for heuristic methodology has its foundation in Michael Polanyi's belief that, 'all knowledge is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge, (making) a wholly explicit knowledge ... unthinkable'. (Polanyi 1969: p.144)

Moustakas refers to a period of 'initial engagement', an inward formulation of questions that try to reveal the phenomenon of human experience. This is followed by an intense focus called 'immersion', which draws from all experience to gain insight. The emerging information from all possible sources expands where ever and how ever the topic is reflected. The next step is a period of 'incubation' which enables tacit knowledge and intuition to connect with data and the research question(s). The breakthrough moment is 'illumination', where new understandings emerge.

In describing the phenomenon, the 'explication' stage, the researcher embraces the question as holistically as possible. Finally, there is the expression of the findings, a 'creative synthesis' that brings a natural closure. These different stages overlap, loop and vary in scope and intensity. The heuristic design is a personal quest for individual understanding, and it provides additional ways of knowing that complement other methodologies.

At this point it needs to be emphasised that to provide a succinct summary of methodologies employed in my research is impossible. In this area of study there is no uniform methodology, just as there is no uniform scientific methodology. There are clearly defined guidelines and rules of traditional methodologies and various aspects of these methodologies that offered relevancy to this creative-based research have been sampled and mixed.

Dodds and Hart (2001: p.168) claim, that to break with tradition one must know the tradition; however, it is not imperative that one wholly embrace it. Stewart notes the argument that the constraints of 'set' methodologies can inhibit creativity. The alternate approach for Stewart is to accept them as a blueprint from which new methodologies devolve that will incorporate innovation. 'Our aim here is to create conditions that facilitate methodological inventiveness'. (Stewart 2003: vol 7 p.5)

This framework is contingent on ideas that resonate a personal empowerment, the centrality of practice, the significance of personal history and the different processes of heuristic learning. The ability for the artist-practitioner to comprehend and communicate knowledge is dependent on the influences and elements that underpin their methodology. This is inclusive of empirical inquiries into practice, relationships and context. Collaboration, discourse analysis and experiential exploration help to generate insight into the creative processes deployed. Cole and Knowles (2000: p.78) claim 'this is a process that uses a bricolage of methods to develop detailed accounts that help to cross between the image and thinking.'

Dezin and Lincoln's *Handbook of qualitative research*, (2000) refers to the notion of this process as interpretive bricolage:

The product of the interpretive bricoleur's labour is a complex quilt like bricolage, a reflective collage or montage - a set of fluid, interconnected images and representation. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole. (Dezin and Lincoln 2000: p.6)

Lincoln and Guba (2000) acknowledge these dynamic, open ended and complex forms of writing can be problematic. However they do describe a place in research for the creation of 'messy texts'. Jan Allen and Jean Rumbold in *Postcard conversations: A dialogue about methodology* (2004: vol 4) describe the process they adopted as a simple exchange of postcards or created images that resonated with them, 'spoke to us', concerning some aspect of the arts-based collaborative forms of enquiry they were utilising.

Jan Allen, in referring to her photo montage titled *Stepping into Reverie*, maintains the idea that 'reverie' is not simply an escape from the serious and important, but that it is an essential part of cognition. This process includes perception, intuition and reasoning. Allen asserts, 'Reverie is not simply an activity of the mind, but an embodied experience that transports us into extended space so that nature resides on the inside.' (Allen and Rumbold 2004: vol 4 p.123)



She ascribes to Armstrong's claim in *Move closer: An intimate philosophy of art* (2000), that 'reverie' is a way to become intimate with a work of art through a mental process of 'bracketing out the seriousness' in the consideration of art works and 'allowing ourselves time to wander through our own experience and to turn around and see the exquisiteness of the present.' (Allen and Rumbold 2004: vol 4 p.123).

To delineate a sharp distinction from some of the methodologies employed and discussed so far, and to reassure any arbitrary thoughts of solipsism, it would be appropriate to mention a key tenet to Heidegger's thinking. He contends the artistic process is one of 'responsibility and indebtedness', and that the artist is not alone in causing art to come about. It is through 'concernful dealings' that original relations with things are established. Heidegger supports his contention with the metaphor of a hammer:

The less we just stare at the thing called hammer, the more actively we use it, the more original our relation to it becomes and the more undisguisedly it is encountered as what it is, as a useful thing. The act of hammering itself discovers the specific 'handiness' of the hammer... No matter how keenly we just look at the 'outward appearance' of things constituted in one way or another, we cannot discover handiness. When we just look at things 'theoretically' we lack an understanding of handiness. But association which makes use of things is not blind, it has its own way of seeing which guides our operations and gives them their specific thingly quality. (Heidegger 1996: p.65)

Clark's *Martin Heidegger* (2002) suggests Heidegger refuted the idea that art is representational and cites Heidegger's response to Van Gogh's painting, *A Pair of Shoes*, 'On the leather lies the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field path as evening falls....' (Clark 2002: p.46) This engagement with the image indicates for Heidegger, a particular significance, regardless of the reality contributed to the constructed image. Clark asserts that for Heidegger, what's important is the way the image engages the viewer into dialogue. Morrison (1983) argues that the power of the image lies in the fact that it conceals at the same time as it reveals. Images offer a silence and in these silent spaces the viewer's imagination fills the hermeneutic gap. Similarly the illustrations found in comic books are presented in segments. The silent or blank gaps between each frame serve as a hermeneutic function. It's through this 'gutter narrative' device that the reader interprets a sense of the narrative. There is co-responsibility between the reader and the work of art. In order to interpret a sense of meaning in a film, the spectator constructs the narrative between the individual shots

in a sequence. A simple analogy of this co-responsibility is the picture book where you join the dots, and it's through this participatory act that the image emerges and sense is made of it.

Barbara Bolt's *Heidegger, Handlability and Praxical Knowledge* (2004) suggests Heidegger derives his understanding of 'bringing-forth or occasioning' from a reversal of Aristotle's doctrine of causality and that 'indebtedness', rather than causality, allows us to rethink our relation to technology. Heidegger's example of the silver chalice provides an appropriate metaphor:

Silver is that out of which the silver chalice is made. As matter (*hyle*), it is co-responsible for the chalice. The chalice is indebted to, that is, owes thanks to, the silver out of which it consists. But the sacrificial vessel is indebted not only to the silver. As a chalice, that which is indebted to the silver appears in the aspect of a chalice and not in that of a brooch or a ring. Thus the sacrificial vessel is at the same time indebted to the aspect (*eidos*), or idea of chaliceness. Both the silver into which the aspect is admitted as chalice and the aspect in which the silver appears are in their respective ways co-responsible for the sacrificial vessel... But there remains yet a third that is above all responsible for the sacrificial vessel. It is that which in advance confines the chalice within the realm of consecration and bestowal... Finally there is a fourth participant in the responsibility for the finished sacrificial vessel's lying before us ready for use, i.e., the silversmith. (Heidegger 1977: p.8)

Thus, as Bolt concludes, Heidegger 'opens the possibility for theorising a very different relation between humans, materials and tools in artistic practice.' (Bolt 2004: p.6) What is interesting for me is the application of these relations to my film work. The silver material taking the form of a chalice can be contrasted to a strip of film or video tape becoming an image. The purpose of the chalice determines the form, just as the reason for the image and the circumstances of how it will be viewed, determines the style, the content, the duration and multiple economic factors concerning the making of the image/film. The silversmith brings about this effect as the filmmaker (incorporating the multiple functions of the production process) brings forth the finished film.

The diversity of choice of methodologies, and the inventive interaction between them, owes allegiance in some part to the idea of a hyper-textual approach to methodology. It's a flexible process that incorporates recursive planning, revisiting, rewriting, rethinking and redoing. Landow (1992: p.2) a hypertext theorist, describes how he abandoned conceptual systems founded upon ideas of centre, margin, hierarchy and linearity and replaced them with ones of

multi-linearity, nodes, links and networks. I have, in part, adopted this hyper-text approach in linking different methodologies with my research. Deleuze and Guattari's *Thousand Plateaus* (1998: p.516) introduces a concept of rhizomatic writing structure and compares it with the textual metaphor of the tap-root structure. They suggest a structure of language that relies on words having 'multiple roots'. I suggest the methodologies for my practitioner-based research are a rhizomatous application of inter-dependent processes and outcomes.

The viticultural metaphor is a multi-nodal vine formation, the result of empirical observation and judicious pruning, which will produce vibrant new buds, and eventually provide an original contribution to the cellar.

### Section three: **Scheduling creativity**

The lunatic is on the grass  
 The lunatic is on the grass  
 Remembering games and daisy chains and laughs  
 Got to keep the loonies on the path

Pink Floyd, the track 'Brain Damage'  
 from the album, *Dark side of the Moon*.

In 1973 Pink Floyd released their seminal album *Dark Side of the Moon*. Over the last thirty years it has consistently been claimed the most influential work to emerge in western contemporary music and an ebullition of creativity; paramount to 'genius'.

It is precisely the question of 'genius', in relation to creativity, that I will address and illustrate with the examples of Pink Floyd's music, Alain Resnais' film *Last Year in Marienbad* (1961), and Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty. The emergence of these creative 'works' appears to be unique and is attributed to individual creativity regardless of external, influencing factors. To understand and appreciate the creative process I will elaborate on theoretical and practical applications that engage current thinking and contribute to the exponential growth of the 'creative industries'.

Roger Waters wrote the lyrics and music for the majority of tracks on *Dark side of the Moon*, including 'Brain Damage'. He is a little more circumspect with the elevated status of 'genius'. He has stated the insanity-themed lyrics of 'Brain Damage' are a response to the former Floyd front-man Syd Barrett's mental instability. The lunatic on the grass is Syd; 'And if the band you're in starts playing different tunes...' is referential to his behaviour caused by his mental problems. There were more than a few occasions when Barrett would be playing a different song to the rest of the band during a performance. 'I'll see you on the dark side of the moon' is Waters' empathetic response to mental idiosyncrasies.

The band's occasional lack of synchronicity is compensated by the claims that numerous images from the film *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) appear to synchronise with the music and lyrics from the album. David Gilmour and the other band members refute this phenomenon, coined 'Dark side of the Rainbow' by fans, as coincidence; and dismiss it as some guy with too much time on his hands. However, the image of Scarecrow flailing around at the end of the movie to the song 'Brain Damage' could conceivably be interpreted as the lunatic on the grass.

Alain Resnais' film *Last Year in Marienbad* has been hailed as a masterpiece by many critics over the last forty years. Others have found it incomprehensible, insisting the deliberate

ambiguity is confusing and simply a bewildering exercise in vanity. Despite these polemics I found the single and perhaps most enigmatic image is the geometric formal garden scene where two characters exit the chateau and are faced with a tableau of arranged static figures. They cast long dramatic shadows whilst the ornaments in the garden do not. This is a simple shot created by painting the shadows on the ground, and for the spectator, produces a confusing and unnatural spatial relationship. The author Alain Robbe-Grillet collaborated with Resnais on the screenplay for *Last Year in Marienbad* and as a Structuralist thinker believed the network of order in a society is the key to understanding that society. The film depicts repetitive motifs with impeccable precision. It is a mimetic play with characters and events that suggest the infinite. The film represented many concerns of the Surrealists and narrative cinema.

The French playwright Antonin Artaud worked closely with the Surrealist movement, consolidating his theories of reality and the theatre. He believed that the physical expression in space would subvert the text and its inherent meaning. Artaud's theatre comprised of a unique language suspended between thought and gesture and advocated what he termed 'Theatre of Cruelty'. Artaud (1968: p.66) claimed 'The Theatre of Cruelty has been created in order to restore to the theatre a passionate and convulsive conception of life...' He perceived suffering as essential to existence and used pain and the grotesque in order to confront an audience. Artaud was a frequent resident of asylums over the years for mental illness. He had cancer and died from a lethal dose of chloral. He was found seated at the foot of his bed holding his shoe. The last lines in Artaud's *Manifesto for the Theatre of Cruelty* seem disquietingly prophetic. 'Do not ask him to be content, ask him only to be calm...but only the madman is really calm.'

Artaud's theories have resonated and influenced beyond the theatre. Jim Morrison of the rock band The Doors embraced a visceral physical assault on his audience during performances. In Morrison's life the tormented parallels with Artaud are perhaps too obvious. Charles Bukowski claimed him as a major influence on his work and the filmic term 'cinema of attraction', (discussed later) embraces shock techniques to engage an emotional response from the audience.

In the late sixties, prior to the Australian 'renaissance' of its film industry, the underground film group UBU resisted the omnipotence of American Hollywood. The founding members, David Perry, Aggie Reed and Albie Thoms, took inspiration from the theatrical practitioners of Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty. Their Surrealist narrative essays, such as *A Spurt of Blood* (1962) embrace a cinematic visceral horror embedded with the notion of absurdist existentialism.

Roger Waters / Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*, Alain Resnais / Robbe-Grillet's *Last Year in Marienbad* and Antonin Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty* are creative works that involve the

generation of new ideas or concepts and are valued in their respective field of cultural production. The process to produce these works, the creative process, is extremely complex and difficult to define and categorise.

At this point I want to suggest two major streams of thought concerning the creative process. The first, and historically the oldest, is a cognitive belief that the individual is a creative 'genius'. The second takes into account the position of the talented individual, in the context of the society - a society that supports and nurtures the individual's creativity to fruition.

The end of the sixties was a turbulent time. A major power struggle was emerging in the Middle East that shifted focus from the defeat of the Western alliance in Vietnam. The space race saw foot-prints on the moon and the medical scientific world enabled life to be extended through recycled body parts. The music scene reflected these changes, from the laid back 'peace and love' mantras of Height-Ashbury to the bouncy Canterbury Road funk, the veneer was peeled away. Supergroups, groomed throughout the decade, reached their zenith. Virtuosos like Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker from the Cream, produced what some consider their defining album, *Disraeli Gears*. Jimmy Hendrix defied the world at Woodstock with his interpretation of the American anthem *Star Spangled Banner*. It was from this flourish of musical innovation that the introspection of Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* was able to emerge and astonish the world with its brilliance.

Colin MacCabe (1980: p.108) cites Godard's bold statement from the film *La Chinoise* (1967) 'Art is not the reflection of reality; it is the reality of that reflection'. I've quoted this statement in my screenplay *Slam* (p22 sc.49) in relation to an art installation. The French cinema was experiencing a renaissance in the late 1950's. This 'New Wave' movement by luminaries such as Francois Truffaut and Jean Luc Godard is often perceived to be a rejection of the dominant Hollywood cinema at the time. However, there were a number of other influential French film-makers working outside this tradition as well, and they helped to create this environment of cinematic enquiry. Melville examined 'noir' themes with his masterpiece *Le Samurai* (1967). Jean Cocteau politicised and contemporised Homer's tale *Orpheus in the Underworld* in the film *Orphee* (1950).

Resnais and Robbe-Grillet fused Surrealist philosophy with a Structuralist sensibility to narrative and produced the film *Last Year in Marienbad*. This enigmatic masterpiece was the result of collaboration between the authors and a vibrant film culture that nurtured them and embraced innovation.

Antonin Artaud and his *Theatre of Cruelty* was an attempt to break with the early Formalists and their rigorous aesthetics. For them art was a means for experiencing what Victor Shklovsky's *The Poetics of Cinema* (1982) called the 'artfulness of the object'; for feeling the 'stoniness of stone'. Shklovsky introduced the term 'defamiliarization', making strange, to describe the reaction to art, in that it sharpens perception and denies the familiar response. Bertolt Brecht later referred to this in a political context as an alienation effect and called it 'distanciation'. In this way a work of art, conscious of the political ramifications, reveals the process of its own production and conversely that of the society. Artaud thrived in this dynamic milieu, and his determination to subvert the text with violent physical demonstrations was adopted by thespians disenfranchised with the theatre and its perpetuation of the delusion of reality. The *Theatre of Cruelty* rose like a fetid phoenix from the disenchantment of the time, and it was this environment that allowed the movement to come into being.

These three selective examples of creative works are representative of the creative process in a context and serve to illustrate the difficulty and complexity in ascribing any particular dominant factor that contributed to the creator's output. In these cases it is precisely the interaction between various processes that one needs to examine in order to understand the ontology of creativity. The preceding preamble focuses on practical examples of creative works, situated in a social and historical context. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the creative process it's important to provide a theoretical framework.

The term 'creative' is illusive; the Collins Concise Dictionary (Wilks & Krebs 1982) refers to it 'as having the ability to create; characterised by originality of thought; having or showing imagination'. Richard N Foster's paper *Who Designed Brunelleschi's Dome* (2005) notes the views of Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), that 'Imagination, not invention, is the supreme master of art as of life', and Einstein's statement, 'Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.' (Foster 2005: p.5)

The Italian neo-realist film-maker Pasolini, in his interpretation of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1972), exhorts the viewer to use their own imagination. At the close of the film, the character, master painter Michelangelo, interrupts the diegesis with the comment. 'Why do you come to see my pictures when you have your own dreams?'

I suggest two central concepts of creativity; the first is centred on the individual and the classic romantic view of the creative 'genius' and the second, more recently developed notion, is concerned with and defined by the context in which the individual exists. Both these paths co-exist and intersect with each other as this brief historic summation that follows indicates.

The ancient Greeks and Romans had no words that directly corresponded to the word 'creativity'. The muse was a source of inspiration and although there was no explanation to qualify this phenomenon it was recognised and valued. Horace in his writings elevated the poet and painter and suggested they alone were entitled to the privilege of daring to do what ever they wished.

Randall Dipert in *Artifacts, Artworks and Agency* (1993: p.23) categorises the utilitarian use of objects. 'Some natural objects are used simply as is. Others are modified, however slightly, to better serve an intended end.' He describes how Plato, in attempting to explain the creative process, used an object, in this case a magnet, as an allegorical representation of divine inspiration. A series of iron rings transport this divine inspiration from the poet, then to the actor and finally the listener, who themselves contained no magnetism/inspiration. (Dipert 1993) Heidegger, in questioning the essence of causality, believed the Greeks notion of causality was 'the letting of what is not yet present arrive into presencing.' (Heidegger 1977: p.10)

The etymological root of 'create' is derived from the Latin term 'creare'; 'to produce, to make'. (Collins Concise Dictionary, Wilks & Krebs 1982) This ability remained the province of secular concerns and was both recognised and coveted. It was a quality bestowed upon certain people and responsible on occasions for manifestly idiosyncratic behaviour. The implication of divine intervention provided an explanation to what was often considered a fragile gift. Creativity flourished for centuries under this protective mantle and any examination of the creative process was largely ignored. During the latter half of the 16th century a number of artists had been elevated in status and the mystique associated with their creativity grew. Vasari published the biographies of the 'most eminent artist' in Italy; Michelangelo, Leonardo and Raphael. He remonstrated that nature had bestowed on the artists of the day elements of savagery and madness, which made them strange and eccentric. (Vasari 1959)

The religious dissent of the late 17th century gave rise to sophisticated methods of establishing scientific truth through observation and experimentation. 'The move to empiricism led to a split between the hard sciences (known as the impersonal sciences) and the humanities, which had, until then, been seen as having common origins but now were increasingly being seen as competing epistemologies.' (Foster 2005: p.8)

The 19th century, through the radical economic changes of the Industrial Revolution, witnessed rapid urbanisation and unprecedented demographic reform. Scientific enquiry competed on an unparalleled scale as the industrialised nations of the world gathered momentum.



Darwin raised new questions concerning the age and origin of life. Freud challenged the world with psychoanalysis while Dostoevsky and Tolstoy questioned the morality of political issues. Karl Marx railed against democratic institutions and produced the *Communist Manifesto* and Nietzsche embraced the nihilist approach to science in his manuscript *Beyond Good and Evil*. Foster (2005: p.10) claims Romanticism reached its zenith across Europe with the works of Byron and Wordsworth and influenced the literary output of Keating, Shelley and Blake. Impressionists presented new ways of observation, exploring light and colour, and their legacy gave the world the treasures of Van Gogh, Manet, Renoir, Degas, Gauguin and Cezanne. In the theatres of Europe, audiences could appreciate an overture from Beethoven, Chopin or perhaps an operetta by Verdi. Classical music was transformed and new instrumentation gave rise to more complex musical structures and orchestral arrangements. (Foster 2005: p.10)

The arts and humanities, the sciences and the economics of the 19th century were subject to explosive and transformational changes. It was a century where ‘creativity’ flourished and where the phenomenon known as ‘the creative process’ that produces it came under scrutiny.

Graham Wallas, in his work, *The Art of Thought* (1926) presented one of the first models identifying the stages of the creative process. Through empirical observation Wallas originally concluded a four stage model as summarised in the table below:

Preparation:	The problem is investigated. Drawing on one’s field of expertise the individual focuses on the problem, both expanding and exploring the dimensions of the problem.
Incubation:	The unconscious processing of the problem and information that has been gathered and collated. This internalisation gives the appearance that ‘nothing’ is happening.
Illumination:	The instantaneous recognition of a new insight. The ‘great’ idea bursts forth into conscious awareness – it’s the ‘eureka’ moment.
Verification:	Assessing the worth of the idea. Its validity is tested and elaborated on, then applied and finally distilled to a precise form.

Wallas referred to these stages as ‘interpenetrated’. They are not a linear fixed progression, with each stage a defined duration that is relative to and reflects the overall timescale. A moment of Illumination does not guarantee progression to a Verification stage. It may simply remain a good idea in need of further development. This may require additional Preparation, followed by a period of Incubation, before progressing through further stages. Wallas’ model does not identify singular moments of creative production but rather denotes a recursive cyclic pattern that provides a structure to the creative process.

*'Life is a tragedy when seen in close-up,  
but a comedy in long-shot'.*

Sir Charles Chaplin

The dictates of these words echo all too familiar. First, the close shot of the Pierrot, with his sad painted face and a tear in the corner of his eye. Juxtapose this with a long angle as he stands, a comic figure on the rail-tracks, as a train approaches. The result is a moment of insight into the truth of the situation.

Arthur Koestler's *The Act of Creation* (1964) lists three types of creative individuals; the 'Artist', the 'Sage' and the 'Jester'. Much of his anecdotal evidence identified all three elements of this trinity in creative companies. Koestler suggests that creative ideas originate from the juxtaposition of insights from two different fields. He termed it 'bisociation' and claims that in-depth knowledge from one field alone is not sufficient for true insight.

Foster (2005: p.17) believes 'bisociation' has become a central focus of efforts to improve creativity. He describes a special form of 'bisociation' that chess masters deploy, called 'Zoom in-Zoom-out', thinking. (ZIZO for short) The chess master possesses an enormous repertoire of games and moves in their mind as they play. They integrate details of present moves (ZI) with the potential game implications (ZO). The greater the speed he is able to 'bisociate', the greater the possibility the insights will be useful. This ZIZO ability in multiple fields is essential for productive interdisciplinary science.

Foster (2005: p.18) states that Getzel and Csikszentmihalyi's *The Creative Vision* (1976) challenges the idea that all problems are essentially the same. He points out there are fundamentally two different kinds of problems; 'Presented problems', where the statement is clear in advance of attempts to solve it; and 'Discovered problems', those where it is not clear there is a problem to solve and questions are raised when the answer is at hand. Foster suggests conventional problem solving techniques are effective with 'presented problems' and most managerial process focus implicitly on them. The unknown characteristics of 'discovered problems', require a complexity of 'exotic' tools in order to realise the problem and then find the appropriate solution. Contemporary research into creative activity has established that it is neither a linear chronology of stages, terminating with Verification, nor is it locked into a set of rigid conventions that are determined by the domain of the activity.

To achieve innovation knowledge of the domain is essential, and through constant reflection and re-interpretation of that knowledge, the domain remains a vibrant and fluid entity. Schon claims that the practitioner can learn to adapt and conform their actions whilst in the process of 'doing'

the action itself. He suggests this is ‘a kind of reflection on their patterns of action, on the situations in which they are performing. And on the know-how implicit in their performance. They are reflecting *on* action and in some cases, reflecting *in* action.’ (Schon 1983: p.55). The outcomes of this reflection cause changes to the conventions of the practice and provide a re-interpretation and new perception of the product. These principles can be extrapolated to encompass multiple inputs from a diversity of domains.

Dean Keith Simonton’s *Origins of genius* (1999) focuses on the cognitive processes of the individual and, while he supports Wallas’ model, he was primarily interested in the Incubation and Illumination stages. He developed what he called the ‘Chance Configuration’ model of creative thought. The essence of this model asserts that, ‘the subconscious repeatedly attempts to combine mental elements (memes) until one permutation becomes stable and coherent enough to emerge into consciousness.’ (Foster 2005: p.19). Simonton developed testable implications of what was understood to be Priced Law of Productive Elitism. It states that half the productive output comes from the square root of the number of contributors. From this Simonton claims that creative abilities are not equally distributed in the population. He also asserts that it is easy to dismiss an anomalous fact precisely because it does not conform to the known domain of knowledge. His advice in this case is to ‘suspend your disbelief’ and slow down in order to allow proper permutations to be found. (Foster 2005: p.25)

Wagner, et al (2004: p.352) claims German researchers recently confirmed the inferences underpinning Simonton’s Chance Configuration model by direct clinical observation. They concluded that insight denotes a mental restructuring that leads to a sudden gain of explicit knowledge allowing qualitatively changed behaviour. Foster concludes, ‘While one cannot yet observe the direct workings of the mind (although Wagner’s team is coming closer!) it does seem there is some phenotypic evidence that Simonton has correctly inferred the nature of the genotype’. (Foster 2005: p.29)

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi suggests creativity is a primary measure of our humanity. His approach to the creative process focuses on the social context of the creative individual. As with Simonton he elaborated on the Wallas model and provided fresh insight to the stages of Illumination and Verification. The Csikszentmihalyi model changes one of the basic questions in the study of creativity from; ‘What is creativity?’ to ‘Where is creativity?’ Csikszentmihalyi (1999) proposes that in his Systems Model, creativity can be observed in the inter-relations of a system that comprises three essential elements: The domain, the field and the individual.

A domain encapsulates a ‘set of rules, conventions and procedures for activity to take place.’ Domains are recognised and established in particular cultures and the number of domains may vary according to the culture. In order to achieve creativity an individual must be familiar with the conventions of that domain and operate within them. (Csikszentmihalyi 1999: p.319)

The field includes all the individuals ‘entitled to make decisions as to what should or should not be included in the domain’. This social organisation, incorporated in the domain and with an understanding of the conventions of it, assess and select ideas/product, which they believe fulfil the criteria of novelty for inclusion in that domain. They could be considered the ‘gatekeepers’ to the domain. (Csikszentmihalyi 1999: p.319)

As an example, in the domain of art the field would consist of; art critics, art historians, the art distributors, dealers and collectors, corporate patrons, institution that teach artistic skills, festivals that promote art, galleries, art competitions and the artists themselves. Collectively this group selects art products that then become recognised as legitimate art; and included in the domain. Similarly in the domain of filmmaking the field would include; the wide range of production people, film distributors, critics, investors, exhibitors and festival organisers, institutions that teach skills and film theory/culture and screenwriters. It would also involve those people in government agencies that promote film and filmmaking in various ways.

The final element is the individual; and this is by definition, dependent upon the nature of the domain and the field in which the individual operates. As the artist Henri Matisse maintained, ‘We are not the masters of what we produce. It is imposed upon us.’ (Seuphor 1961: p.16) Through education, examination of the domain, and by active pursuit and association with the field, the individual can gain cultural credibility. ‘In many domains it is indispensable for a young person to be trained by experts as soon as possible.’ (Csikszentmihalyi 1999: p.328) These experts can be found in academic institutions, the apprenticeship system, the master and mentor relationship, and now, technological tuition in on-line seminars and workshops.

Contiguous to these influences on the individual, Schon’s notion of ‘reflection in action’ and the heuristic approach of ‘reflexive enquiry’ as defined by Moustakas (1990), contribute to an intuitive understanding - a changing and adaptive ‘artistic personality’. However at this point it is important to note that the Systems Model of Creativity does not place the individual as the centre of the system (nor the domain or field), but rather denotes a circular causality. It denies emphasis to the individual and promotes the idea that the domain or field could equally instigate the creative process.

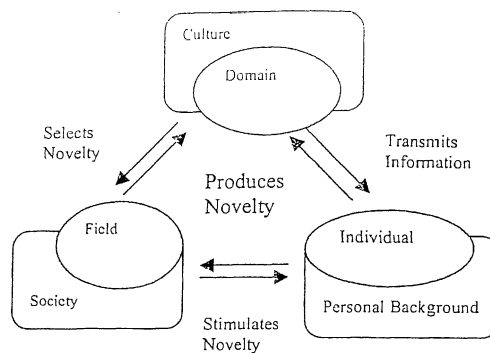


Figure #1 - The Systems Model of Creativity. (Csikszentmihalyi 1999: p.315)

The arrows in this model indicate an open-ended exchange. This allows the investigation of the creative process to begin at any point, denying primacy to any one element. It also declines the notion of linear progression. In an interview with Csikszentmihalyi, *The Well of Creativity* (2004), he makes an important distinction when asked if there is a definition of creativity. He suggests that most people agree creativity is a new idea or product that is accepted and valued by society, and thus brought to fruition. 'That's creativity with a big "C", creativity that changes the culture. Creativity with a small "c", the personal creativity, is what makes life enjoyable, but does not necessarily result in renown or success.' (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: p.2)

After interviewing a select group of a hundred exceptional individuals Csikszentmihalyi concluded that 'luck' played a major part in their achievements. He sees this as a welcome inclusion in the creativity debate and helps to refute those notions of elitism that persist and generate dogmatic attitudes in some domains. Csikszentmihalyi (2004) quotes Linus Pauling, recipient of two Nobel Prizes, who said good genes are luck and having a background that allows you to focus on a particular domain of knowledge is partially luck. Being in the right place and at the right time is luck. In Pauling's case he was one of the first generation of chemists exposed to quantum mechanics. He had a window of opportunity and applied this to chemistry. Pauling claims that if he had not acted then someone else would have.

Csikszentmihalyi is a little more circumspect, arguing it was Pauling's implicit knowledge that allowed him to recognise that the possibility was there. He goes on to qualify the famous Thomas Edison aphorism that 'creativity is one percent inspiration and ninety nine percent perspiration' with the supposition that 'You have to be able to transform those wild ideas into something that will stand up - and that's hard work'. (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: p.2)

An interesting aspect that emerged, and is implicit in the Wallas' stage of incubation, was the notion of 'idle time'. To think consciously about solving a problem, writing a book or perhaps an original screenplay, is to force ideas in a lockstep linear progression and the outcome will not necessarily be very new or original.

Csikszentmihalyi (2004) confirms Simonton's Chance Configuration Model and his advice to 'slow down', with the assertion that:

For original ideas to come about, you have to let them percolate under the level of consciousness in a place where we have no way to make them obey our own desires or our own direction. So they find their way, their random combinations that are driven by forces we don't know about. It's through this recombination that something new may come up, not when we try to push them directly.

(Csikszentmihalyi, *Well of Creativity* 2004: p.2)

Linda Aronson in her lucid and eminently practical book *Scriptwriting Updated, New and Conventional Ways of Writing for the Screen* (2000), describes Edward de Bono's theories of 'vertical' and 'lateral thinking' in *Lateral Thinking* (1970), as a division between imagination and technique. 'Good writing happens when craft (provided by vertical thinking) and the writer's unique view of the world (provided by lateral thinking) are inextricably mixed to produce a work of striking originality...(and claims) ...weak writing seems to happen when there is an imbalance between vertical and lateral thinking.' (Aronson 2000: 2)

Aronson suggests vertical thinking is based on experience, logic and practiced skills. A writer, quite uncritically, might apply the first solution to a problem, possibly an idea that they've encountered before on the screen and invariably it leads to a cliché. Characters become stereotypical; the renegade cop in a loveless relationship and the good guy with a stable marriage. Their dialogue is bland and feels recycled. It lacks 'emotional authenticity'. The writer is not in the head of the character but writing from 'memory' of other films and television shows. 'Over dependence on vertical thinking often happens through exhaustion (particularly for storyliners and consultants on television series) and is a perennial problem for established writers, making them write "on automatic pilot" without being aware of it.' (Aronson 2000: p.4)

Conversely, a dominance of lateral thinking can 'make the script pull towards the incredible, silly, repetitive, unfocused and overly emotional...in plot and characterisation, this means it's unable to discriminate between what is real and what is over the top.' (Aronson 2000: p.4) This will produce situations when the audience just give up believing in the actions of the characters and the world they inhabit. The diegesis of the film is completely lost. Aronson refers to Carl Sautter's *Selling Your Screenplay* (1988), in which he believes all successful forms of screenwriting are always credible; however, highly original screenwriting is real, but unusual. 'In practical terms, we can trigger the vertical imagination by thinking *real* and the lateral imagination by thinking *unusual*.' (Aronson 2000: p.6)

Sue North's *Creativity: The fire in the fennel stalk* (2006: vol 10 p.1) claims 'creativity' is a 'buzzword' and those practitioners actively involved in its promotion gain cultural and economic capital. The ascription of 'creativity' here is not defined by artistic or cultural boundaries but applied to strategies employed in management, innovative discoveries and visions that contribute to a progressive society. 'Creativity has come to be valued - and systems have evolved to encourage and harness it.' (North 2006: vol 10 p.2) Contemporary attitudes to the notion of creativity have become entrenched and form what constitutes the 'doxa'. North describes the 'doxa' as; 'the agglomeration of arbitrary meanings that have succeeded in becoming so naturalised that they seem common-sensical, and, therefore beyond discussion.' (North 2006: vol 10 p.2) Using doxa, we accept many things without knowing them; a doxic perspective establishes legitimacy, and for the creative process, sets a dangerous precedent, blurring the boundaries between the subjective and objective position. Creativity has always been perceived as a virtue and therefore valued. Society now links creativity with technological advances appropriating and shifting the aesthetic or expressive to economic and political agendas. North refers to the 'colonising of creativity' on a billboard, where the term, 'to imitate or innovate' implies that innovation is economic and therefore progressive, and imitation, associated with the notion of creativity, leaves you redundant. She maintains, doxic logic conveys limitations for the creative practitioners' artistic expression and:

...it (creativity) has the capacity to impact on social understandings and the everyday, and should not be ghettoised as commodity, entertainment or simply part of the everyday....Creativity, is part of society's expression, interaction, change and development that is always something more than economic value alone can allow for. (North 2006: vol 10 p.10)

*Cogito ergo sum*, 'I think, therefore I am'. The idea expressed here is widely attributed to Rene Descartes. The negative extrapolation; 'I dream, therefore I am not' appeared as graffiti on a billboard image of Rodins' sculpture, *The Thinker*. Dreaming has long been associated with creativity, and as thinking results in the affirmation that 'I am', that I exist; conversely the creative dreamer inspires a negative image, 'I am not', and I do not exist. This reductive argument, whilst not demanding Promethean (1) retribution, nevertheless, belies a disingenuous perception of creative practitioners associated with arts and culture. Filmmakers are particularly susceptible to this discrimination, often finding themselves garrisoned in 'art-house' cinemas and marginalised, because of their creative endeavour. The multiplex cinemas with their economic imperatives demand box-office draw cards and unfortunately this does not necessarily equate with innovation and creativity.

The term 'individual' has been incorporated in a number of the creative models examined and to a degree it is misleading. The source of creativity in many domains is achieved through multiple combinations of people; a collaboration in creativity. Bennis and Biederman (1997: p.199) offered the definitive statement concerning the notion of collaboration with, 'The Lone Ranger, the incarnation of the individual problem solver, is dead.'

Stephan Sonnenburg's *Creativity in Communication* (2004: vol 13) maintains that current research mostly ignores the fact human beings generate ideas in collaboration. He asserts that communication is essential for dyads, groups or teams with a common interest in collaboration. 'As the process of communication is specific concerning creativity, a new term is introduced. I call this term a "creaplex", which is derived from Latin *creare in complexu* (to create in collaboration). The creaplex is defined as a specific kind of communication system from which collaborative creativity emerges.' (Sonnenburg 2004: vol 13 p.255).

The creaplex model focuses attention on the creativity in a specific collaborative situation. It is not perceived as a constant factor 'but as a dynamic and moment-to-moment phenomenon in a unique project. [and] Only thoughts uttered are crucial for the structural maintenance and the content of the collaboration.' (Sonnenburg 2004: vol 13 p.256) Sonnenburg claims three types of communication are relevant for a small encounter situation in a creaplex:

Face-to-face interaction: This is determined by the participants being present in the communication process and facilitates mutual perception by all senses.

Tool-mediated interaction: There is a constraint on the presence as the participants are not in the same place and specific senses are focused on a medium - the telephone or video conferencing.

Tool-mediated communication: The participants are absent, and it is asynchronous communication which usually employs a writing medium, for example, e-mail, fax or letter. The process of communication can vary in time from minutes to weeks.

The efficiency of the creaplex, and possibly its effectiveness, can largely be determined by the time feature. The synchronous, face-to-face environment enables immediate interaction and collaboration to the highest degree. There are dangers of course that the enthusiasm of the moment results in action without the chance for reflection. This denies the 'slowing down' and the 'percolating under the level of consciousness'; an advantage of asynchronous communication. Sonnenburg acknowledges that each single process in a creaplex is unique and determined by the situation. He emphasises the course of performance is not a linear assembly line process as the model may appear to suggest, but 'distinguished by co-occurrence, interrelations and feedback loops. (Sonnenburg 2004: vol 13 p.258)



Leonard and Swap (1999) suggest a culinary description of the physical model of the process would look similar to a plate of spaghetti. The working style of a creaplex is largely determined by the connections between the social entities or collaborators. This operating mode supports mutual trust, risk-taking and experimentation, increasing the quantity and quality of the contributions.

There are a number programs set up to encourage this kind of collaboration in the development of screenplays and film projects. Successful overseas models such as Sundance in the United States and eQuinox in France have spawned initiatives elsewhere, including Australia. The Australian Film Commission and The Australian Film, Television and Radio School instigated a program called SPARKS and the NSW, Film and Television Office have a separate development workshop for creative teams in their Aurora program. Both these programs facilitate the creative process with a mentor system and apply a number of the principles outlined here.

The relation of discovered problems and radical solutions, often found in creaplexes where the collaborators are friends or partners, are projects distinguished by a high degree of autonomy. There is an investment of time in the project, necessary to gain the relevant knowledge and mutual trust, to achieve this level of creativity. This enables the participants to reach a radical solution that often challenges the boundaries defining the particular domain.

In relation to the domain of filmmaking in many situations it is the field that makes up the domain that restrict the degree of autonomy. The external management conditions that organise the hierarchy and impose cultural and aesthetic conditions effectively undernourish the creative dyads or creaplexes and thus innovation suffers in favour of expediency.

Adele Horin's *Young creative types the new mega-rich* (2006) claims research shows that one in three Australian multimillionaires, under the age of forty, made their fortune in the 'creativity industries'. Dr Jason Potts, an economist at the Queensland University of Technology's Centre for Creativity Industries, argues that in the last few decades those pursuing a career in the creative professions have a very good prospect of making it into the elite. He suggests the Beatles, in terms of the fortune they made, were 'a once-in-a-generation phenomenon [and] now we turn these people out once every six months.' (Horin 2006: p.11) Sarah-Jane Clarke a co-founder of the fashion label 'sass and bide' and recently included in the top Young Rich List claims money wasn't a priority for them, they just wanted to create beautiful things. In what could be considered serendipitous, the viticultural industry could now claim tangible links with 'creativity' and the domain of fashion. Researchers at the University of Western Australia are

using bacteria to grow slimy dresses from wine. The inspiration occurred when a vat of wine became oxygenated and produced a 'slimy rubbery layer' on top. The layer of cellulose was spread over an inflatable doll to achieve the dress shape. (Anna Salleh 2007)

If one considers the notion of 'an organisation' as a micro-metaphor for a society, then periods of great creativity have emerged precisely because that social infrastructure has permitted it to occur. Csikszentmihalyi's answer when asked 'Who designed Brunelleschi's dome?' suggests:

Brunelleschi and his friends found themselves in a stream of thought and action that started before they were born, and then they stepped into the middle of it. At first it appears they have initiated the great works that made the epoch famous, but in reality they were only catalysts for a much more complex process with many participants and many inputs. One could say that the stimulation was provided by the city's bankers. (Foster 2005: p.1)

The enigmatic character Harry Lime in Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949), offers a more sanguine interpretation of innovation:

In Italy, for thirty years under the Borgias they had warfare, terror, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love, they had five hundred years of democracy and peace - and what did they produce? The cuckoo clock. (Harry Lime / Orson Welles)

Csikszentmihalyi maintains that it is essential there is a nurturing social environment for opportunities to emerge within the domain. It is also imperative that the field's selection process acknowledges the changing nature of the 'artistic personality':

At any given point in time, there will be a constellation of personality traits that are optimally suited to create the kind of art the field will recognize as significant (and that) the artistic personality is not a stable, timeless personality type. As the field's taste for art changes, so too will the types of personalities creating the art that will be accepted as significant. (Abuhandeh & Csikszentmihalyi, 2004)

Csikszentmihalyi's *Longitudinal Study of Artistic Development and Artistic Success* (1984) involved 281 students at the prestigious Art Institute of Chicago over a twenty year period.

The focus was to identify and understand the factors that were most predictive of artistic success. The results that emerged were unexpected and the few artists that achieved some artistic success showed traits that were more characteristic of Wall Street marketing executives than the common perceptions associated with artists. Those students whose traits complied with the archetypal artistic personality were considered original and creative. However, if they lacked the extroversion, aggressiveness and self-promotion abilities, they tended to disappear from the art scene. Simpson's *SoHo: The artist in the city, Chicago* (1981) suggests the artistic mystique is perpetuated by those unsuccessful in their artistic endeavour, as a defence against failure.

Marcelle Freiman's *Dangerous Dreaming: Myths of creativity* (2003: vol 7) examines the discipline of creative writing and highlights the different perceptions of it, between the academy and the community. She suggests the preference in some institutions, for limited intake into creative writing courses, creates an 'elite cohort [with] the tacit assumption that creative writing cannot be taught; that chosen students will simply develop their already-identified creative talent.' (Freiman 2003: vol 7 p.1) She acknowledges that this is an outdated approach and tends to marginalise and isolate creative writing rather than reflecting its potential. It's important to note that the 'elite cohort' syndrome is not peculiar to writing courses. There are a number of institutions that offer courses in media production, communication and the performing arts that undergo rigorous and competitive intake processes. A systematic and comprehensive research study of their alumni, based on creativity performance outcomes and the economic imperatives associated with it, has not been conducted to date. Freiman argues that the public perception of the writer as an individual, an 'outcast' from society, continues to enjoy currency. 'The outsider status of writers feeds the public fascination with the connection between creativity and madness, depression, suicide, social dysfunction. And yet, not without contradiction, successful writing and its writers attract commercial attention.' (Freiman 2003: vol 7 p.5)

A corollary, or perhaps simple word association, is the graffiti stencilled on a pillow I found in a Brisbane warehouse (1987) that read: 'When they outlaw pillows, outlaws will have pillows.'

Romantic thoughts concerning 'creativity' and writers remains firmly entrenched within contemporary discourse and nowhere are they more obvious than the domain of screenwriting. Everyone imagines their book inside them, only now it's trying to get out as a script – the mystique and solitude of the writer is usurped by the fast track red carpet to celebrity fame and fortune. Freiman refers to the poets' short burst of insight and spontaneous overflow, as the tormented emotions are purged, and links this writing to psychoanalytic discourse. The 'dangerous dreaming, an expression of repressed desires... writing as therapy is a contemporary manifestation of this cathartic model.' (Freiman 2003: vol 7 p.8)

Vivian Glusman's Creativity Workshops conducted throughout Europe and North America encourages the holistic benefits of exploring ones creativity. She maintains people are by nature creative, and this creativity is unique and needs nurturing in a non-competitive environment. The workshops are conducted in exotic locations such as Prague or Florence and the tuition fees reflect the substantial economic possibilities that the 'creative industries' can generate.

Emily Dickinson describes the intensity of creativity in relation to her poetry; as if physically the top of her head were taken off. (2) I agree there is a sense of elation and achievement when creative endeavour is rewarded with success, but I propose this creativity is inclusive of the individual and the context in which the creative process is founded. 'Creativity does not happen inside people's heads, but in the interaction between a person's thoughts and a socio-cultural context. It is a systematic rather than an individual phenomenon.' (Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p.23) I suggest the provenance of creativity does not lie with the artist, but resides in the amalgam of the individual, the society and what might be humanly possible: and if as my intention is, to illuminate the creative process, just perhaps; 'I'll see you on the *Dark Side of the Moon*.'

(1) Relating to Prometheus, the Titan who stole fire from the Gods on Olympus to give to mankind. His actions were considered creative, original and life-enhancing. He was punished by being chained to a rock and having an eagle tear out his liver.

(2) Abrams 137, As quoted in W F Thrall and Addison Hibbard, *A Handbook to Literature*, (New York, 1936: p.325)

## Section four: **Aspects of narrative**

Many writers reflect on personal experience in order to construct their narratives; and as an introduction I will identify a number of classic texts and the circumstances that influenced the authors. In terms of praxis, the empirical aspect of research is also applied to narrative cinema texts. I will summarise a number of theoretical concerns that have circulated and emerged from literary analysis and examine how they inform filmic discourse. This will include Metz and his linguistic approach to narrative form, Genette's model for narration and Propp's morphology of fairytales. The influence on screenwriting of Campbell's mono-mythic hero will be appraised.

George Orwell's *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936) emerges from the alliterative connection with 'aspects'. The story follows the travails of Gordon Comstock, a poet *manqué*, who leaves his respectable job in order to write. The autobiographical elements are apparent, as the narrative traces Orwell's disaffection with society through Comstock's descent into poverty. Orwell's challenge to his privileged background and Etonian education are documented in the novella, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933). His account of the tramps well trod path from the spikes, (1) located across the country, were his first steps on the road that initiated writing *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), and documenting the Spanish Civil War in the novel *Homage to Catalonia* (1936). The polemics of Orwell's narratives so vividly etched into our conscience are a result of his empirical observation.

Herman Melville's canonical novel *Moby-Dick* (1851) was also the culmination of his travails. Historians believe his voyage on the whaling ship, *Acushnet*, and the experiences chronicled in the novels *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847) were the empirical observations that formed the basis for much of *Moby-Dick*. Melville was greatly influenced by the Romantic writers Lord Byron, Mary Shelley and Sir Walter Scott, but he was determined to capture the essence of the whaling industry in an interesting and truthful fashion. 'Call me Ishmael' is one of the most famous lines in American literature, and the first in *Moby-Dick*. The narrator Ishmael is a conflation of character and author and it's his description of the events, and reflection on characters within the enclosed universe of the story, that is delivered with an omniscient view-point. Ishmael, a former teacher, enlists in the crew of the *Pequod* and as the ship sets sail we're introduced to the other main characters Starbuck, Flask and Stubb. We learn how Captain Ahab lost his leg to the great white whale Moby Dick, and that the *Pequod*'s quest is to hunt the whale down and kill it. The journey reaches it's dramatic and tragic end when Moby Dick shatters the harpoon boats and finally sinks the *Pequod*. The crew drown, leaving Ishmael the sole survivor.

Ishmael as the narrator is the authorial agent inscribed within the text and thus able to relate and recount the events of the fictional world. However, this was a real world of whalers and seamen for Melville, a life experience and one that informed his writing of *Moby-Dick*.

Rudyard Kipling, a controversial figure in English literature, had vivid recollections of his Indian childhood and, following a period of formal education in England, returned to India. Kipling gained a unique insight into Indian culture during those formative years and this had a profound influence on his literary output. While a number of critics insist that Kipling's 'mature' work is the most interesting and important; generations of readers have grown up with his popular volumes of the *Jungle Books* (1897) and *Just So Stories for Little Children* (1902). Kipling's travels to those distant lands, and the beautiful gardens of splendid palaces, are the exotic settings for the *Just So Stories* and his desire to return is expressed in the words of the poem *Mandalay* (1890). 'For the wind is in the palm-trees and the temple-bells they say; Come you back, you British soldier; come you back to Mandalay!'

In the late 1790's Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote the epic lyrical ballads, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Kahn*, which were derived in part from the tales of the early explorers. However in a prefatory note to the poems Coleridge gave the following background:

In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair...he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than two to three hundred lines...all the images rose up before him as things...  
(The Norton Anthology of Poetry, #3rd Edition: p.564)

Coleridge's evocative descriptions of the Mariner's journey through storms and whirlpools, into vast ice caverns with hot seas and swarming monsters, is quite probably the product of a hallucinatory mind. The narrative opens with a third person, omniscient point-of-view and shifts to the first person thus permitting the reader an insight from first hand experience.

For Orwell there was a need to experience extreme poverty and to witness the destruction and futility of war in order to write about it. Melville's capacity to understand the complexity and humanity of his characters, and to provide the details of life at sea, are related to his experiences as a sailor. Kipling found inspiration in the far eastern frontiers and imperial horizons; and Coleridge, through opiates to relieve pain, removed the boundaries of his imagination and penned an allegorical window into the soul.

This narratorial musing on the human psyche is a strong theme embedded in many classic texts. In the close of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), with Kurtz dying on the trip back from the Belgium Congo, Marlow acknowledges the 'horror' and the 'heart of an immense darkness' that has the capacity to dwell in us all.

In Francis Ford Coppola's film adaptation (2), *Apocalypse Now* (1979), the character Captain Willard [Martin Sheen] narrates from an epistolary dossier from US Army Intelligence. The information about Colonel Kurtz, who we don't meet until the third act, provides the reader with a picture of the character and details of the circumstances that led to his defection. There are moments in this narration where the boundaries and the point-of-view cross between the historical information about Kurtz and the actual trip Willard is undertaking.

Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980), describes the first zone of the personified character-narrator, who tells a story from within the frame of the fictional world, as an Intradiegetic Narrator. If this character-narrator appears as an actor in their own story they are Homodiegetic and if they are absent from the story they narrate they are Hetrodiegetic. The second zone Genette identifies in film is the function of the narrator to control the visual and sonic registers. This external, impersonal narrator is referred to as an Extradiegetic Narrator and relies on a number of cinematic codes rather than verbal discourse.

In Willard's case he appears as an actor in his own story and would be defined as a Homodiegetic Narrator. However, in Willard's particular narration of the intelligence notes on Kurtz, there is ambiguity in the categorisation of the voice over. First there is the omniscient intelligence concerning a character who exists within the story [intradiegetic] and not identified as yet, related to us by a narrator [homodiegetic] who's discourse on occasions includes his own embedded narration.

Pasolini's films, *The Arabian Nights* (1974) and *The Canterbury Tales* (1972), consist almost entirely of embedded narrations. In a formulaic progression, a character will commence the narration of their story; and before long one of the characters within the parameters of the first story will begin telling their own story. This repetition leads to a sense of infinite regression and Genette refers to it as Metadiegetic.

An important note is the distinction between a literary text and a filmic text. In literature a character-narrator's discourse may comprise the whole of the story from a homodiegetic position. Robert Stam et-al in *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics* (1992: p.98) suggests for the same application in a film, 'the character-narrator always has his or her story embedded within

the larger narration produced by the ensemble of cinematic codes, the overarching discourse of the external, impersonal narrator who renders the text in a non-verbal form.’ They describe a number of theoretical terms to label this external cinematic narrator as the; ‘Camera Narrator’, ‘Image-Maker’, ‘Intrinsic Narrator’, ‘Fundamental Narrator’ or ‘Primary Narrator’.

To return to Willard’s narration in *Apocalypse Now*, it is embedded within the discourse of the external cinematic narrator. This overarching inscription provides another level of commentary that incorporates multiple cinematic codes such as; cross-cutting, rhyming or mimetic images, superimpositions and manipulation of point-of-view. The interpolation of a fade-to-black or dissolve can be interpreted as an expressive form of punctuation. For example the series of black frames following the murder of the boat people gives the viewer a moment to reflect on the event. These cinematic codes make up the overarching extradiegetic narration.

‘In film, the discourse of the character-narrator is always enveloped within a larger Primary Narrative, or a first-level narrative, controlled by an extradiegetic narrator.’ (Stam 1992: p.98) David Black’s *Genette and Film: Narrative Level in the Fiction Cinema*, (1986) focuses on the character-narrator’s ability to ‘invoke’ a sequence of visual images in order to accompany or illustrate the verbal narration. These images may or may not correspond directly to the verbal account or perhaps they overload or exceed the level of knowledge and understanding of the character-narrator.

The polemics of this juxtaposition can challenge the verbal account or simply be at odds with it contextually. One of the features of character-narrators is that they can lie, mistake the recollection of events, or distort the truth of the fictional world. ‘Unreliability’ is usually associated with intradiegetic character-narrators and in many cases it is understood as the ‘invoking narrator’ who just happens to be duplicitous. The voice-over of Holly [Sissy Spacek] in Terence Malick’s film *Badlands* (1973) is in stark contrast to the tone and content of her character because her narration is delivered when she is older. A self-reflective voice to the diegetic world she and Kit [Martin Sheen] find themselves in.

The character-narrators of Kurosawa’s film *Rashomon* (1950) give contradictory versions of the central event; the rape in the forest, and in doing so place all the narrator’s accounts in doubt, even the spirit who speaks from the grave. Robert Altman’s *Fool For Love* (1985) suggests unreliability on the part of the character-narrator, the father, who relates the details about her childhood and the night the car ended up in a paddock amongst the cows. He relates his efforts to calm the distraught girl; however the images reveal him making out with her mother in the front seat. The extradiegetic image maker corrects and verifies the truth of the event.



In Resnais' *Last Year in Marienbad* (1961), the images frequently contradict the narrator's verbal account and the viewer is left to decide the veracity of the character's involved. In this case the unreliability is quite unusual as the narrator is extradiegetic.

Sarah Kozloff's study of voice-over narration, *Invisible Storytellers* (1988), simplifies Genette's terminology. She describes homodiegetic voice-over narration as First-person narration and hetrodiegetic voice-over narration as Third-person narration. The essential difference for Kozloff is that the third-person narrator deals with the omniscient quality that the voice conveys. 'When a narrator is not a character, not a participant in the story he or she relates, that narrator is not bound by the rules of plausibility that govern the characters; the narrator is superior to them, the shaper of their destinies.' (Kozloff 1988: p.97) This hetrodiegetic narrator, whilst confined to a verbal register, 'mimics' the authority and power of the extradiegetic cinematic narrator.

When dealing with extradiegetic narration in film, Black (1986) describes it as the primary narratorial or discursive activity flowing from the medium of cinema itself; and it is that which narrates the entire film. This encompasses all the codes of the cinema and as the principle agency it has attracted various names including Kozloff's 'image-maker', Metz' 'grande imagier', Black's 'intrinsic narrator' and Gaudreault's 'fundamental narrator'. Extradiegetic narration, as the primary agency responsible for relating events, is always exterior and logically precedes the fictional world that it encapsulates.

The debate concerning extradiegetic narration in film circulates around the question of whether film possesses the equivalent of the narrator in literature. For Genette literary narratives manifest a certain presence through a register he calls narrative voice, but the narration remains an abstraction inferred by the reader whose physical experience of the text is confined to the *recit*. In Genette's triptych model the *recit* is the verbal or cinematic discourse that conveys the story-world to the spectator. The *histoire* is the story and the *narration* is the act of narrating.

Genette's model is designed for literary analysis, although corresponding categories have been adopted in order to clarify and systematise the approach to film narrative form. It's important to mention the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) who founded the science of *Semiology*. Stam suggests he provided the most influential definition of the *Sign* as a 'union of the form which signifies - the *signifier* - and an idea signified - the *signified*.... The perceptible aspect of the sign is the signifier; the absent mental representation evoked by it is the signified, and the relationship between the two is signification.' (Stam 1992: p.8) He cautions that to understand 'the signified of a "cat", for example, is not to be equated with the referent - the animal itself - but rather with the mental representation of a feline creature.' (Stam 1992: p.8)

The use of certain pronouns and verb tenses in literature infer the presence of a narrator however, the category of narration in film, Genette acknowledges, is more complex. The voice-over or character-narration is coupled with equivocal cinematic narration, which embraces a multiplicity of cinematic codes. In order to understand cinematic narration there are a number of different rubrics that have influenced and shaped film theory. These posited rules or procedures have their foundation in the classical period and revolve around the concept of realism. In a rudimentary description, classical philosophy distinguishes between; 'Platonic realism' - the belief in the existence of universals, such as 'humanity' and 'truth', and that they exist independent of human perception in the realm of some perfect form and; 'Aristotelian realism' - the view that universals only exist *within* objects in the external world. (Stam 1992: p.2)

This simplistic binary grouping appears to be at odds with the notion that gained credence in the nineteenth-century. The term realism was underpinned by the mimetic idea that art imitates reality and that the figurative and narrative arts rely on observation and accurate representation. This was a neologism borrowed by French writers and artists to describe the oppositional attitude towards romantic and neo-classical models in fiction and the arts.

One of the foundations of narrative analysis was the distinction introduced by the Russian Formalists between the *fabula* and the *syuzhet*. Herbert Eagle's *Russian Formalists Film Theory* (1981: p.17) describes Victor Shklovsky's original formulation of the *fabula* as the 'pattern of relationships between characters and the pattern of actions as they unfold in chronological order.' The *syuzhet* can be understood as the artistic organisation, or 'deformation' of the causal-chronological order of events. Michael Holquist's highlighting of selected works of Bakhtin in *Dialogism* suggests the difference between *fabula* and *syuzhet* is, 'the distinction between the way in which an event unfolds as a brute chronology [*fabula*], and as the "same" event, ordered in a mediated telling of it, a construction in which the chronology might be varied or even reversed, so as to achieve a particular effect.' (Holquist 1990: p.113) He further suggests Bakhtin uses the term *chronotope*, and specifically invokes it as 'a formally constitutive category of literature (and that) chronotope is the indissoluble combination of these two elements.' (Holquist 1990: p.113)

David Bordwell's *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985: p.51) provides a detailed description and radical analysis of how the *syuzhet* relates to the *fabula*. He describes it as an 'elaboration - and complication - of narrative logic, narrative time and narrative space.' Narrative logic can be presented in a causal, linear fashion or it can digress with interpolative extraneous material. Similarly, narrative time can be articulated in successive moments or presented in a complex disruption of temporal synchronicity.

Bordwell focuses on style and how it is revealed in syuzhet elaboration:

...in classical narrative film technique, though highly organised, is used principally to reinforce the causal, temporal and spatial arrangements of events in the syuzhet, (and claims in some cases), the film's stylistic system creates patterns distinct from the syuzhet system. Film style may be organised and emphasised to a degree that makes it at least equal in importance to the syuzhet patterns. (Bordwell 1985: p.275)

Eagle (1981) concurs with the argument, that style and the stylistic relationships between the pieces that link together, becomes prominent and is the principal mover of the plot. This arrangement can be identified in many current films where the stylistic approach over-rides formal narrative considerations. For example the disjointed narrative structure of Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) relies entirely on the stylistic relationship between sequences to make sense of the events of the story. In my film *Moonfall* the chronology of the events unfold with the interpolation of the psychiatrist and the images of the protagonist Yoshiko out of temporal and spatial synchronisation. *Inside Venus* employs a stylistic device with the character Johnny, commenting from the grave on events unfolding within the narrative. The viewer perceives these comments through temporal and spatially disjointed images on a video tape.

In an endeavour to examine narrative form Christian Metz adopted a linguistic approach. He argued that the organisation of images into a narrative closely resembled that of a language and proposed the *Grande Syntagmatique*. This was an explicit effort to relate features of discourse, particular styles and textural patterning to the story or fabula. Metz designated eight syntagmas, or sequences of shots, that formed narrative segments of film language. The grouping and arrangement of individual shots was defined and identified. Other codic systems, combined with the syntagmatic types, permit events to develop within the filmic chain. Metz recognised that these eight syntagmas were delineated through the process of editing and they expressed the logical, temporal and spatial elements that became the matrix of the fabula. Adopting a structuralist method he searched for binary oppositions. His eight syntagmas, to briefly paraphrase Stam's (1992: p.40) summary, include:

The autonomous shot: consists of the 'single shot sequence' and four kinds of 'insert shots'.

The single shot sequence is the only syntagma defined in terms of its signifier, the single shot. It is not strictly a syntagma as it consists of only one shot; however it is a type that occurs in the global syntagmatic structure of narrative film. It claims spatial and temporal integrity in the works of directors such as Flaherty, Wells and Wyler and is integral to the aesthetics of *direct cinema*.

Robert Altman's film *The Player* (1992), with its eight minute tracking shot is an appropriate example of the single shot sequence. It's interesting to note the characters' referential comments as they cross the studio lot, concerning Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil* (1958) and Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), both employing to various degrees the autonomous single shot.

Nondiegetic insert: presents objects exterior to the fictional world.

Displaced diegetic insert: presents images, temporally or spatially out of context.

Subjective insert: shows memory or mind manifestations such as fear.

Explanatory insert: to clarify events for the spectator.

The parallel syntagma: presents two alternating motifs without a clear spatial or temporal relationship such as city and country, images of war actions and peaceful activities.

The bracket syntagma: a brief sequence presenting a certain order of reality without concern for the temporal authenticity. It's organised around concepts, for example a love-making scene which is truncated to the extent that it is 'de-eroticized', also a 'Brechtian' strategy.

The Descriptive syntagma: a display of objects to suggest spatial co-existence. It is not restricted to inanimate objects. Shots of zoo animals grouped together with people feeding them.

The Alternating syntagma: a narrative cross-cutting of shots, a chase sequence with pursuer and pursued alternating but with temporal synchronicity.

The Scene: presents spatial and temporal continuity as if without breaks. A conversation depicted in a classic Hollywood film, would imply a coincidence of screen time and diegetic time. The signifier is fragmented with different shots and reverse angles but the signified, the conversation, is felt to be continuous and uninterrupted.

The Episodic sequence: a symbolic summary of stages in an implied chronology. It is usual to compress the time frame. The celebrated 'breakfast scenes' in *Citizen Kane* (1941) denoting a developing sense of estrangement as their relationship disintegrates to boredom.

The Ordinary sequence: action treated elliptically with 'unimportant details' and 'dead time' removed to progress the event. Almost any cinematic dinner sequence in classical fiction, with a few characteristic gestures and a shortened exchange of dialogue, would qualify. While the signifier in the ordinary sequence is discontinuous the signified of the diegesis is implied to be uninterrupted.

The Grande Syntagmatique was widely disseminated and received a diverse response of oppositional analyses. Much of the criticism was based, initially, on the misperception that it was intended to be the definitive master code of the cinema. Stam points out that Metz' attempt to address the important questions concerning temporal and spatial articulation within the fiction film, shifted attention from the narrative signified onto the cinematic signifier. 'The Grand Syntagmatique, whatever its flaws, still offers the most precise model to date for dealing with the specific image-ordering procedures of the narrative film.' (Stam 1992: p.48)

The Russian Formalist Vladimir Propp, as with Shklovsky and Bakhtin mentioned earlier, examined the structural syntax of narrative work. Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) was finally translated in the late sixties and was immediately recognised as an important contribution to the structuralist debate. Propp's focus was confined to analysing one hundred of the *Wonder-tales*, collated in the Aarne-Thompson Index, (3) and his conclusion found there were a number of constants that occurred in uniform sequences in each of the tales.

The elements defined as 'actions' or 'events' were compiled into a table of thirty one *functions*. The immutable events such as: [i] An interdiction is addressed to the Hero, [xi] The Hero leaves home, [xviii] The Villain is defeated; would occur in the exact sequential order for each fairy-story, but not all functions need to be included in every tale. 'As for groupings, it is necessary to say first of all that by no means do all tales give evidence of all functions. But this in no way changes the law of sequence. The absence of certain functions does not change the order of the rest.' (Propp 1968: p.22) Propp also claimed a uniformity of characters across tales, asserting that 'Function' is understood as an act of character, and defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action. He formulated that 'Functions of characters serve as stable constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental component of a tale. [and] The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited.' (Propp 1968: p.21)

Propp condensed the number of characters across the sample study to seven key figures. These were called the *dramatis personae*, or tale-roles: the villain, the donor, the helper, the princess and her father, the dispatcher, the hero and the false hero. Various tale-roles control various functions and it's the nexus of these two that constitute the *Sphere of Action*. For example, the sphere of action of the donor would involve the preparation of a magical agent, finding a ring or some talisman, and providing the hero with it, while the sphere of action of a princess might constitute the assignment of difficult tasks to a suitor. (Propp 1968: p.79) Propp defined the tale roles as distinct from the actual characters in a story suggesting that a single character may perform a number of different tale roles and consequently appear in various spheres of action.

The application of many elements found in the model to a number of diverse films found a strong degree of correspondence to their plots and Propp's morphology. Propp's method provided the context for further research on plot analysis and film grammar. Stam (1992: p.82) claims some writers working in feminist theory have used Propopian categories as a way of defining gender codes in films and that this line of analysis can inform major areas of contemporary theory.

Central to recent theoretical concepts is the belief that the extradiegetic narrator is essential in providing a framework to understand the classification of narrative types, in order to verify the fictional world. Rimmon-Kenan argues in *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (1983), that Genette's definition of 'focalisation' is limited and should be expanded to be useful in film analysis. Genette introduced the term from the study of literary narratology, in order to delineate the act of the narrator recounting the events of the fictional world, from that of the character who perceives the events in the fictional world. This is the distinction in literary theory between the agent 'who speaks' and the agent 'who sees'.

Rimmon-Kenan expressed concern that the optical sense of focalisation while being limited was already catered for in filmic discourse. '[Focalisation's] purely visual sense has to be broadened to include cognitive, emotive and ideological orientation.' (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: p.71) She went on to suggest a type of 'variable' focalisation which can occur when the focalisation shifts within a scene or film from one character to another; or 'multiple' where a single event is viewed from different perspectives. An example is Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, in which the event, the murder and rape in the woods, is recounted in flash-back by the woodsman, the samurai husband [from the grave via the medium], the wife and the bandit. All accounts are different in their perspective, leaving the spectator/investigator confused as to the truth of the event. (4) The basic fictional contract the narrative establishes with the spectator, whilst dependent on the category of the narrator, is also contingent on a 'higher narratorial authority responsible for quoting the dialogue or transcribing the written record.' (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: p.88)

Taking a contrary position to this narratorial hierarchy Tom Gunning (1991) maintains it is the inherent mimetic characteristics that disguise film as a narrative form. He argues it is the organisation of the mimetic dimension of the film text that defines the role of cinematic narration. Gunning refers to a process of *narrativisation*, which establishes a narrative coherence through combining mimetic details. His focus is primarily on the narrative discourse and the idea of expression, as opposed to the sphere of content. In Genette's [literary] term this would consist of the *recit*. Gunning identified three levels and labelled them the *Pro-filmic*: Level one concerned the physical materials placed in front of the camera to be filmed. These include actors, lighting and set design, selection of locations etc; and inform narrative meaning. Level two is the 'enframed image', which involves camera movements, establishing point-of-view on the action and the perspective, composition and spatial arrangements and any superimpositions or optical effects.

Level three of narrative inscription comprises editing - the arrangement of the shots into syntagmatic units to manipulate spatial and temporal articulations.

Gunning asserts the interaction of these three levels is the method in which films 'tell' stories and this constitutes the cinematic narration. (Gunning 1991: p.18)

Film-makers utilise different narrator-systems which can be distinguished by the complex nature of choices encompassed across Gunning's three levels of filmic discourse. One can extrapolate that the range of cinematic narrators will produce the spectrum of stylistic approaches; from the 'invisible' classic Hollywood cinema to the extremely idiosyncratic narrative discourse of Jean-Luc Goddard or the minimalist and reductive work of Snow's *Wavelength* (1967). Gunning's narrator-system, incorporating the combination of the pro-filmic three levels, conveys messages about the story world or the fabula and the association of the narrator to the discourse itself. Gunning, as with Genette, describes the category of tense as an element of narrative structure and refers to the temporal relations between story and the recit or the story and the discourse. It provides artistic license, through technique, to present the story-world in various ways in order to engage the spectator. Story elements are understood to generally occur in a chronological linear order. The progression of the narrative can be diverted using flash-back, parallel discourse, or other devices that interrupt the chronological sequence and perception of time.

Henderson's *Tense, Mood and Voice in Film* (1983) asserts the majority of films are told in straight chronological order and believes, as does Genette, that such order is the exception with novels. Henderson claims that cinema has no intrinsic tense system within its construct, therefore a shift from straight chronology, must be clearly signalled. The viewer must be warned at every level of cinematic expression, to avoid becoming disorientated. I suggest this is an outdated view, that audiences are far more sophisticated and temporal disengagement can enhance the narrative by promoting certain aspects of the story and/or characters. To illustrate this, a recent film such as *Irreversible* (2002), as the title suggests, is told chronologically in reverse and highlights the viewer's perception of violence, precisely by not signalling the preceding events. *Crash* (2004), is an ensemble of characters and their individual stories, leading up to and beyond a singular event - a car wreck, which challenges the audience by indifference to the chronological ordering of moments. The emotional premise of the film, encapsulated in the opening lines, 'we crash into each other, just so we can feel something' resonates with the audience because the exposition is not a rigid chronology of events.

Genette refers to the categories of the 'descriptive pause' and the 'ellipsis' in relation to the temporal ordering of sequences. The descriptive pause, or in a literary sense, passage, occurs when sequential time in the story ceases to progress in order to describe something or someone. In film, this could be an establishing shot of a location that interrupts the narrative progression. The ellipsis reverses the relationship of story-time and discourse-time to that of the descriptive

pause. It's a temporal abbreviation that provides the opportunity to edit out unimportant events and to cover passages of story-time economically. It is typically used for narrative compression. Henderson suggests Goddard's use of ellipsis, as an authorial signature, allows the elision of key events to distort and disrupt the temporal and spatial continuity. Goddard extended his deconstruction of the 'invisible' style of classical Hollywood cinema to the micro-ellipsis of individual shots where sections of the shot were elided - producing the celebrated 'jump-cut'. The macro-version of an ellipsis, Genette refers to as 'summary', in which long stretches of story-time are condensed to brief passages of discourse-time. A series of shots to cover a train journey might include rail-tracks, wheels, carriages and countryside to summarise the trip. *Moonfall* employs an ellipsis that spans the chronological narrative time as well as the filmic discourse with the opening and closing garden / after-life sequences. *Slam* and *Inside Venus* both utilise versions of the macro-ellipsis associated with car travel.

A further category of the temporal order of sequences is the exact matching of discourse-time and story-time - described as 'isochrony'. A number of avant-guard film-makers have adopted isochrony to challenge conventional pacing and highlight the spectator position in relation to the narrative or their expectation of a narrative. Paul Winkler's films invoke a reflexive response from prolonged viewing of isolated frames encapsulating moments of everyday surroundings. Andy Warhol's *Sleep* (1963) is isochronistic in that the scenes unfold as actual events.

Finally, a category unique to film, and not included in Genette's system, is the 'slow-down'. Slow-motion scenes are a primary example of the slow-down, where discourse-time is expanded to describe an event that is much shorter in story-time. The event can also be reiterated from a variety of different camera angles or the movement can be fragmented to heighten the dramatic effect by isolating the moments of the action. The 'jitter-bug' dance sequence, of David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* (2001) utilises this technique. The 'veranda breakfast' scene in my film *Bootleg* (1986) employs a fragmented slow-down to elevate the tension between characters. Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) utilises the slow-motion effect to inscribe a subjective response from the character Travis Bickle when he first sees Betsy on the street.

So far I've discussed the category of 'tense' in relation to narrative and the levels of Gunning's 'profilmic'; however, it's important to note that the voice-over narration in film will often relate a different durational time frame to the image. For example in *Badlands* (1963), Holly refers to a number of events that occur over a period of years, while the diegetic image of Kit letting the balloon go with a few memento attached, is in the present. Stam maintains the significance of tense is as, 'one of the principal means by which a film's discourse can vary, retard, elaborate or highlight the chronological relations of the story.' (Stam 1992: p.122)



The 'myth' offers serious insights to the origin and structure of narrative form. It is an intrigue or promise, a story or tradition, which claims to enshrine a fundamental morality about the universe and humanity. Myths are considered to be an authoritative account; a profound truth that is not literal, historically accurate, or scientifically verifiable - a legendary narrative, usually of gods and heroes, or a theme that expresses the ideology of a culture. Richard Cavendish's *Mythology; an illustrated encyclopaedia* (1992) suggests there are innumerable ways myths can be interpreted. The functional view is that myths justify social and traditional beliefs and the symbolic approach regards mythology as a way of thinking, a poetic method of communication. The dream-like quality of many myths, Cavendish believes, provides the 'ammunition' for the theories of Freud and Jung. Freud's account for the distorted imagery is suppression of the individual's desires whereas Jung regarded them as a product of the 'collective unconscious'. The anthropologist Levi-Strauss interpreted myths from a Structuralist position asserting that the patterns found in myths is the interplay of opposites - a universal binarism as an organising principle of human culture; life and death, male and female, order and disorder. Mythical perception shifts from awareness of contradictions towards their resolution. (Cavendish 1992)

Myths are of interest for what they reveal about human psychology and culture, but they're also significant, like great works of literature, in that they inscribe a poetic truth about the human condition. In Sophocles' tragedy *King Oedipus* (428 BC), it is through the gradual discovery of events that Oedipus finally realises the true horror of his actions - the unwitting slaying of his own father and the marriage to his mother. The play closes with Oedipus blind and in self-exile; and thus the Apollonian and Dionysian balance determines the actions and existence of mortals. Euripides' *The Bacchae* (406 BC) introduces ethics and reason with his story of Dionysus. It is an engaging narrative that deals with fundamental family problems such as duplicity, jealousy, and hubris. Dionysus, the illegitimate son of god Zeus, and mortal Semele, escapes a retributive death to wander the lands teaching the skills of viticulture. He gathers a cult following, known as Maenads or Bacchantes, before returning home to exact revenge for his mother's death. The elements in this story encompass many of the themes found embedded in modern narrative texts and long pre-dates the phenomenon of celebrity pop culture we have today.

Joseph Campbell's influential work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), is the result of a comparative study of important cultural myths. Campbell analysed a number of myths and found they all share a fundamental structure, a universal pattern that he called the *monomyth*. He refers to the archetypal hero's journey that is described through a number of stages. His introduction describes it as 'A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of natural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.'

Campbell identifies some seventeen stages or incremental steps along the journey. He acknowledges that very few myths contain all of the elements, but differs from Propp's rigid chronological order of functions in the folk-tale. For Campbell, the stages of the myth may be organised in a more flexible manner but generally fall into three broad categories: The *Departure*, sees the hero venture forth on the quest; the *Initiation*, where the hero encompasses various adventures along the way and the *Return*. Having found enlightenment, the hero comes home to the ordinary world or the world in which he (or she) has changed for the better.

In a radio interview, American novelist Kurt Vonnegut referring to Campbell's views on the monomyth, said it was excessively complicated and offered a satirical interpretation he called, 'In the hole' theory; loosely defined as 'The hero gets into trouble. The hero gets out of trouble.'

Campbell's model of the 'monomyth', despite detractors, has been consciously applied by a number of writers and artists. Some claim the simplistic reduction is a recipe for derivative clichés, while others embrace the clarity of his insight. George Lucas has acknowledged a debt to Campbell regarding the stories of the *Star Wars* (1977) films and George Miller has spoken of his recent film *Happy Feet* (2006) as the 'penguin' hero's journey.

Christopher Vogler, working in the Hollywood studio system, created the now legendary 'seven-page company memo', *A Practical Guide to the Hero With A Thousand Faces*. This was essentially a précis of Campbell's work and designed to be used as a template to evaluate the potential of screenplays submitted to the studios. Vogler later developed his memo into the book, *The Writer's Journey: mythic structure for screenwriters and storytellers* (1992) which is now recommended reading in many university screenwriting courses. Aronson suggests it 'demonstrates how its scenario, its protagonist and its range of compelling archetypes can be identified in modern screenplays of all kinds' (Aronson 2000: p.28) and claims Vogler argues mythical heroes like Ulysses and Oedipus are versions of the hero of a thousand faces. Aronson believes that specific scenarios of individual myths and fables can be used as 'triggers' to stimulate the 'lateral imagination'.

Narratives that have engaged audiences and survived re-telling over generations are clearly stories that work and therefore provide a suitable model or structure for the application of contemporary story elements. The specific contextual details of the story components will be determined by the research methodology. In the film *Apocalypse Now*, discussed earlier, the writers chose a contemporary event, the war in Vietnam, and applied the structure of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which is an appropriation of Campbell's 'hero's journey' in the monomyth.

Captain Willard receives his call to action. His journey will take him up river, across the threshold into the unknown. Along the way he will encounter a number of obstacles; the napalm strike, the chaos of a GI out-post, the murder of civilians, spears, imprisonment, and the final confrontation with Kurtz, a metaphoric Minotaur. These he must overcome before attaining enlightenment and returning home.

I will return to the notion of life experience informing the writing, as illustrated at the beginning of this section. One of Willard's encounters, Lt. Colonel Bill Kilgore, is an interesting example of empirical observation informing the character. Kilgore's famed exultation to Willard; 'I love the smell of napalm in the morning...' follows an attack on a village in order to capture a renowned surfing-beach. The character of Kilgore was inspired by the highly decorated military practitioner, Colonel David Hackworth. His obituary edited by Suzy Baldwin (2005) claims he was most famous 'as commander of a Blackhawk air cavalry brigade in Vietnam... (and) he was the model for Lieutenant Colonel Kilgore, the abrasive, cigar-chomping officer played by Robert Duvall in the 1979 film *Apocalypse Now*.'

Hackworth lived in self-imposed exile in Australia for a number of years and became a leading spokesman for the anti-nuclear movement. In my film *Bootleg* (1986) he delivers an address to an anti-nuclear rally and the interpolation of his (real) character with the fictional diegesis produces a referential veracity to the sequence. His words still resonate:

The world is about to melt. We blame it on the United States, or, we blame it on the Soviet Union, or, we blame it on the Generals and the soldiers, or the politicians. You know who's at fault, you, you are at fault. Because you've not been responsible citizens. You've let this fragile thing that we have, which is called democracy, slip. All of you know the danger...well we've got to do something...the big difference between eight May 1945, and the day after the bomb is, there won't be any of us left to shout we have to do something.

Edited transcript: David Hackworth, *Bootleg* (1986)

Kurt Vonnegut's experience as a prisoner of war in Germany, 1945, and his survival in a meat-packing cellar during the fire-bombing of Dresden, formed the core of his most famous work, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). Vonnegut experimented with a number of literary techniques including exegetical commentary and a 'metafiction' device where characters re-occur and interact in different stories. Kilgore Trout, a major character in a number of Vonnegut's novels, interacts with the 'authorial voice' and the main character Billy Pilgrim.

The themes of fate, free will and the inconsequential, illogical nature of humans are explored through the prism of the alien inhabitants of the planet Tralfamadore. The events in Billy Pilgrim's life occur in a seemingly random order, 'unstuck in time'. A 'hypertext' (5) of life experiences, in which passages of mortality are punctuated with the ironic refrain 'So it goes'.

In this section my endeavour is to articulate a number of practical and theoretical issues that implicitly relate to narrative and my creative work. The notion of empirical investigation is an important tool just as understanding some of the theoretical concerns helps to contextualise the work. There is no definitive way to tell a story; but to know the options helps to inform the choice as to how the tale unfolds. 'Once upon a time, in a far off- land... [and] So it goes.'

(1) British slang for doss-house

(2) The film was directed by Francis Ford Coppola from a screenplay by Coppola, John Milius and Michael Herr and drew inspiration from Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*, (based on Conrad's life experiences as a steam-paddleboat captain in Africa). Marlow is the pilot of a river boat sent to collect ivory from an outpost in the Belgian Congo and run by Kurtz. The adaptation has Captain Willard (Marlow) dispatched by the US intelligence into the neutral territory of Cambodia to assassinate Colonel Kurtz, a renegade officer conducting his own war. Coppola acknowledges a strong influence from the German director, Werner Herzog's film, *Aguirre the Wrath of God*. (Wikipedia, *Apocalypse Now*)

(3) Antti Aarne's *Index of Types of Folktales*, was published in 1910, and translated and enlarged by Sith Thompson in 1928. Essentially it was intended for classification purposes.

(4) The recent animated film *Hoodwinked* (2006) recounts the story elements of *Little Red Riding-hood*, from a multiple character focalisation.

(5) Genette refers to hypertext as an elaboration, modification, or extension of an existing text (hypertext).

## Section five: Towards the gaze

Jean Baudrillard, the French cultural theorist and philosopher associated with post-modernism, utilised an image of a receding highway in his essay *America* (1988). Titled 'Vanishing Point', it depicts the reflected image with the warning; 'Objects in this mirror may be closer than they appear!' This is a common signature on many auto-rear-vision mirrors, but in the context the photograph is presented, it becomes a powerful metaphor for contemporary American society.

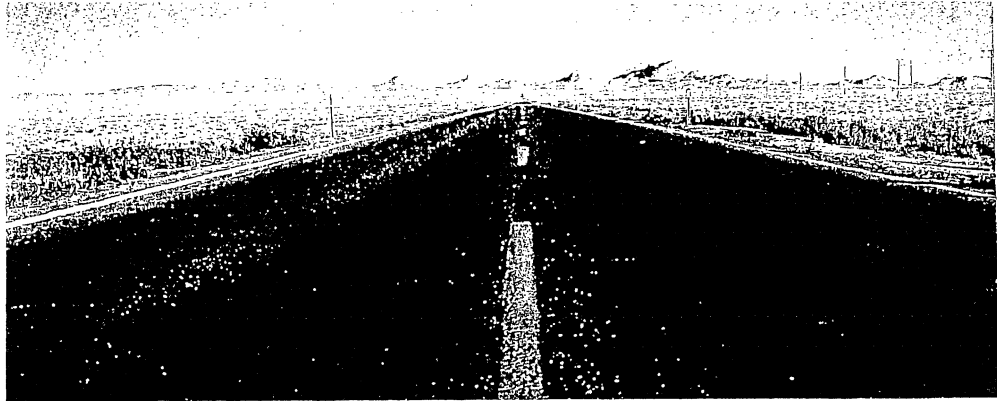


Figure #1. 'Vanishing Point', photograph by Chris Richardson in *America*, Jean Baudrillard (1988: p.1)

I perceive this image as a personal metaphor; a journey to an unknown destination from an indefinable place. It resonates with many of the concerns raised in this section of the exegesis that will attempt to understand and unravel the meanings implied by the term.... 'The Gaze' as a concept employed in psychoanalytic analysis and film theory.

From a biological position Dr Annie Sprinkle's *Post-Porn Modernist* (1989-95) attempts to focus the gaze on the original site of the individual's 'coming into existence'. In an infamous sequence titled 'Public Cervix Announcement', Sprinkle invites the audience onstage to view her cervix with the aid of a speculum and flashlight. 'A cervix is such a beautiful creation, yet most people go through life having missed the chance to see one. I've given thousands of people that rare opportunity.' Sprinkle contends that with the aid of technology you no longer have to stand in line in the theatre, you can 'simply visit my cervix online.' ([anniesprinkle.org/](http://anniesprinkle.org/) web site)

From a psychoanalytical position the motivating behaviour of the spectator to gaze at a cervix can be identified in the complex mechanisms of the unconscious. The network of social relations that constitute culture, and specifically the theatrical venue and the public performance, will contribute to the activity in a collective sense. However, it is primarily the individual's (unconscious), fundamental structures of desire, that will determine the human behaviour.

The founding of the discipline of Psychoanalysis is generally attributed to Freud. It is a study of the (human) unconscious in its various manifestations. The methodology is an investigation that relies on revealing repressed mental elements by bringing them into the conscious and interpreting human behaviour in terms of the information.

Jacques Lacan, a French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist, reformulated Freudian theory and, through a series of seminars delivered during the 1960's and 70's, profoundly changed the institutional face of psychoanalytic thought and practice. Lacan was associated with what became known as post-structuralism, but his work retained a strong inter-disciplinary focus; drawing on linguistics, philosophy and mathematics. One of the early major concepts that Lacan introduced was the 'Mirror Stage' which marked a decisive turning point in the development of the child. This involved the formation of the 'ego' through a process of identification of one's own specular image. Ironically, and noted by many film critics of Resnais, Lacan delivered this paper to the International Psychoanalytical Congress in Marienbad in 1936.

Lacan later rejected the notion that the 'mirror stage' is simply a moment confined to the life of the infant, but argued that it was a structural phenomenon related to libido and the body-image. He referred to this as the 'Imaginary', in that it relies on a visual process of identification. This process forms the basis for later identifications which are imaginary in principal. For Lacan this early sense of 'self' is essentially a fiction. Lacan's *Ecrits: A Selection* (1977: p.2) claimed 'the total form of the body by which the subject anticipates in a mirage the maturation of his power is given him only as *Gestalt*,<sup>(1)</sup> in an exteriority in which this form is certainly more constituent than constituted.'

Todd McGowan's *Looking for the Gaze: Lacanian Film Theory and Its Vicissitudes* (2003: p.2) suggests that Lacan is making the point that in the mirror stage 'the gaze allows the child to anticipate and assume an illusory control while lacking this control over her/his real body; the gaze in the mirror stage is a mastering gaze.' McGowan reminds us that Lacan thought of the mastering gaze in precisely the opposite way later on. 'The gaze becomes something that the subject encounters in the object; it becomes an objective rather than subjective gaze... the gaze is not the look of the subject at the object, but the point at which the object looks back.' (McGowan 2003: p.2) This disrupts the spectator's ability to remain all-seeing and yet not seen in the cinema. In order to contextualise Lacan and psychoanalytic film theory it is important to note that in the contemporary landscape there is no single universal theoretical discourse that takes precedence. Bordwell and Carroll's introduction to *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (1996) suggests historically 'film studies' has reached a point which might be described as the waning of 'theory'. They assert that Lacan and psychoanalysis during the 1970's and 80's

had achieved hegemony over the field of film studies to the extent that Lacanian film theory was labelled 'the Theory', and 'has been effectively insulated from sustained logical and empirical analysis by a cloak of political correctness.' (Carroll 1996: p.45) McGowan disagrees and states that a number of detractors believe the problem lies with the application of Lacanian concepts to the cinema without regard for the specifics of the cinematic experience itself. (McGowan 2003)

Prince's critique of traditional Lacanian film theory argues that 'film theorists...have constructed spectators who exist in theory; they have taken almost no look at real viewers. We are now in the unenviable position of having constructed theories of spectatorship from which spectators are missing.' (Bordwell and Carroll 1996: p.83) The polemics concerning psychoanalysis in relation to film studies continues but McGowan firmly maintains that traditional Lacanian film analysis is vulnerable to critique, 'not because of the grandeur of its claims but because of its modesty...[and the correct response should be]...to expand Lacanian analysis of the cinema - making it even more Lacanian.' (McGowan 2003: p.1) He suggests Bordwell and Carroll and the contributors to *Post-Theory* are twenty years too late in their attack on psychoanalysis in film theory. 'Post Theory is flogging a dead horse....One attacks an authority not for its strength but for its weakness, for its failure to be fully authoritative.' (McGowan 2003: p.1)

Laura Mulvey in her seminal article *Visual Pleasure and Narrative cinema* (1975), uses the fundamental psychoanalytic concepts of Freud and the translative psychoanalysis of Lacan's 'mirror stage', to understand the fascination of classical Hollywood cinema. Mulvey analysed the gaze, through the notion of 'scopophilia' - the desire to see. Freud believed this to be a fundamental sexual drive. In classical cinema Mulvey contends this desire to look is underpinned by the structures of voyeurism and narcissism. Voyeuristic visual pleasure is derived by looking at a figure/character as an object, whereas the identification with that image/object produces a narcissistic visual pleasure. These structures function as a binary opposition; that of the active and conversely the passive. Classical narrative cinema, as with traditional Western art and aesthetics, divides the axis along gender lines. The male character is established as active and powerful; an agent to initiate dramatic action and control the look. The female character is passive, the object of desire for the male gaze. Through the process of identification the cinema has constructed an active male spectator that controls the passive female screen-object. 'Cinematic codes create a gaze, a world, and an object, thereby producing an illusion cut to the measure of desire.' (Mulvey 1975: p.17)

Metz denies gender division and implies the spectator has mastery over the filmic experience. 'The spectator is absent from the screen as perceived, but also present there and even "all-present" as perceiver ... every moment I am in the film by my look's caress.' (Metz 1982: p.54)

Metz and Mulvey both invoke the traditional Lacanian ‘mirror stage’ in the cinematic appeal to the spectator’s unconscious. However, Mulvey makes the distinction ‘in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female...Woman [is posited] as image, man as bearer of the look.’ (Mulvey 1975: p.11) She suggests this division of active and passive creates a privileged position for the male protagonist to order the narrative while the female fills the space and becomes the spectacle synonymous with the screen.

Anneke Smelik’s *Feminist Film Theory* (1999: p.1) contends that Mulvey, in psychoanalytic terms, finds the image of ‘woman’ fundamentally ambiguous in that ‘it combines attraction and seduction with an evocation of castration anxiety. Because her appearance also reminds the male subject of the “lack” of a penis, the female character is a source of much deeper fears.’ (2)

Classical cinema offers two textual options in defence against this castration threat; through narrative subjugation the woman is investigated, and either punitive action instigated to assuage ‘guilt’, or a form of salvation reached. The alternative is fetishism, where the woman, or a part of her anatomy, is glamorised and presented in a spectacular fashion, ‘an image in direct erotic rapport with the spectator’ (Mulvey 1975: p.14) Mulvey claims this highly coded woman’s image connotes ‘to-be-looked-at-ness [and] cinema builds the way she is to be looked at into the spectacle itself.’ (Mulvey 1975: p.17)

Smelik maintains that for many feminist film critics Marlene Dietrich in Josef von Sternberg’s film *Morocco* (1930) has been the privileged example of the fetish image of woman in classical cinema. Claire Johnston’s *Woman’s Cinema as Counter-Cinema* (1973) refers to Dietrich’s famous cross-dressing sequence as a masquerade that signals the absence of man and the fetishised image merely indicates the exclusion and repression of woman. Mulvey agrees that the erotic image establishes a direct rapport with the spectator, devoid of any mediation from the male screen hero. In fact he is unaware of her following him into the desert at the close of the film. (Mulvey 1975)

However, not all agree, as Gaylyn Studlar’s *In the Realm of Pleasure* (1988) suggests the film expresses a masochistic mode of desire. She reads the femme-fatale cabaret singer Amy Jolly [Dietrich] as promoting a sustained attack on the symbolic father and phallic sexuality. The confusion of gender identities and the feminisation of the femme-fatale’s object of desire is further emphasised by the active female gaze. Studlar asserts that this active look undermines the notion that the male gaze is always in control.



Andrea Weiss' *Vampire and Violets: Lesbians in the Cinema* (1992), challenges predominantly heterosexual readings of *Morocco*. Von Sternberg's masculinisation of Dietrich added to her androgynous appeal and, as Weiss argues, this sexual ambiguity was embraced as a liberating image by lesbian spectators. This re-focused the attention to the spectator, and in particular the marginalised female spectator.

With the release of *Morocco* even the studio's publicity machine was quick to recognise and exploit this new spectator with the slogan: "Dietrich - the woman all women want to see".

The multiple semiotic and psychoanalytic interpretations of the film *Morocco* illustrate precisely the difficulty and danger in the articulation of aesthetics. To rely on the antecedent as an exemplary window, through which the translation of the literary can be perceived, risks elision of the original. It also denies the directorial influences and technical implications in the transformative process from screenplay to film. The ramifications of the theoretical concerns discussed in this section, as with other sections in my exegesis, are conditionally implicit in the attendant screenplays *Inside Venus* and *Slam*, and determinatively explicit in the film *Moonfall*.

Smelik points out that psychoanalysis for more than a decade has been the dominant paradigm in feminist film theory but that 'recently there has been a move away from a binary understanding of sexual difference to multiple perspectives, identities and possible spectatorships. This opening up has resulted in an increasing concern with questions of ethnicity, masculinity and hybrid sexualities.' (Smelik 1999: p.1)

The cinema spectator in psychoanalytical terms is constructed and activated by the cinematic apparatus. Metz claims the core of this apparatus is the intersection of the psychic and social:

The cinematic institution is not just the cinema industry. It is also the mental machinery – which spectators, accustomed to the cinema, have internalised historically, and which has adapted them to the consumption of films...

The cinema is attended out of desire, not reluctance... The institution as a whole, has filmic pleasure alone as its aim. (Metz 1982: p.18)

Stam suggests that the 'combination of technical, ideological and psychological operations' is clearly identified in the Dziga Vertov's film *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929), and 'reinforces the spectator's central role in the cinematic apparatus... it continually reaffirms the fact that the spectator's psychic participation is what makes the film exist.' (Stam 1992: p.146) For psychoanalytic film theory, the cinematic apparatus constructs conditions for the viewer that

simulates a dream-like-state. Stam contends that film's signifiers are activated in the viewing and that the film's images and sounds are meaningless without the unconscious work of the spectator, and it is in this sense that every film is a construction of its viewer. (Stam 1992)

Stam refers to Metz's *The Imaginary Signifier* (1982) as the primary text of psychoanalytic film theory. For Metz 'imaginary' can be interpreted in three ways. There is the literal sense of the word; imaginary film stories, fictions. The second meaning refers to the cinematic signifiers; the perception of actuality of events unfolding in real time, however, filmed images don't share the same time and space with the spectator, as for instance they do in theatre. The third meaning is embodied in the psychoanalytic, and Metz refers specifically to the Lacanian 'Imaginary' which contains all the relations of fantasy and desire that forms the initial centre of the unconscious.

For Lacan the 'Imaginary' is one of the three psychic registers regulating human experiences; together with Symbolic and the Real. The Imaginary consists of formative experiences that are repressed and become part of our unconscious psychic make-up. The first moment of loss is associated with the breast, or the absence of it. Freud and Lacan both account for this moment as one of initiating desire. Stam offers a provisional and simplified explanation of the Lacanian concept of desire and refers to the 'moment' in terms of the triad; 'need / demand / desire' in order to show how fantasy, desire, and language, mark the infant even in the 'originary loss that engenders subjectivity, the primal separation from the breast.' (Stam 1992: p.127) He logically argues there is the physical need for food, expressed by crying. Once satisfied, the crying is associated with satisfaction and thus the signal becomes a demand conveyed to an 'other' (3) outside and distinct from the self. The cry becomes a sign, existing in a chain of meaning: the cry 'signifies'. But in this chain there will always be something beyond the satisfaction of need; the 'memory of experienced pleasure will forever be associated with a loss, with something not under the subject's control, and this impossibility becomes desire.' (Stam 1992: p.127) The discrepancy between the satisfaction of need and the unsatisfied demand for love is what Lacan calls; 'Object Small A' (*objet petit a*), the object of desire caught up in the unfulfillable search for an eternally 'lost pleasure...desire will always exist in the register of fantasy, memory and of impossibility... circulating endlessly from representation to representation.' (Stam 1992: p.127)

McGowan argues that traditional Lacanian film theorists have conceived desire as an active process of mastery and overlooked the importance of a 'much more radical kind of desire - the desire to submit to the Other.' (McGowan 2003: p.2) He contends, the motivating desire is positioned by the subject in the Other - *objet petit a*, and that the relationship between them remains, and is sustained, as a mystery.

McGowan cites Lacan's *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (1979: p.183) that 'desire is merely a vain detour with the aim of catching the "jouissance" (4) of the other', and claims that for Lacan, the jouissance embodied in this object remains out of reach for the subject because the object exists only in so far as it is out of reach. Lacan describes the process at work in the visual drive. 'What is the subject trying to see? What he is trying to see, make no mistake is the object as absence...What he is looking for is not, as one says the phallus (5) - but precisely its absence.' (Lacan 1979: p.182)

Renata Saleci's *Per-versions of Love and Hate* (1998: p.64) asserts 'That which arouses the subject's desire... is the very specific mode of the other's jouissance.' McGowan concurs that despite the acquisition of power, one still feels that something is missing, and that the something is the *objet petit a*. The allure of the obscured jouissance of the other is the point where the power is absent. Lacan describes this in terms of the master/slave relationship. The master envies the slave, believing the slave has access to a jouissance that power cannot provide. It is the perception of the Other's jouissance, not its mastery, that acts as the engine for desire. McGowan maintains the more traumatic alternative is 'The gaze of the object gazes back at the subject, but this gaze is not present in the field of the visible.' (McGowan 2003: p.5)

The return of the 'gaze' has circulated in art criticism in relation to the work of Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, where the object stares back. Lacan refers to the painting in *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, as a signifier of the Real. In this specific case two ambassadors pose in front of a number of objects associated with Renaissance art and science. What appears to be a brown stain on the carpet at their feet, when viewed from an obtuse angle, is in fact a very detailed skull gazing back. Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* broke with conventions when, instead of averting her gaze, she gazes directly back at her viewer.

Jessica Hope Jordan's *Woman Refusing the Gaze* (2006) applies what she describes as the full Lacanian gaze dynamic to the Thryth digression in the text *Beowulf*, (6) as a referent to woman in post-modern cinema. Jordan argues that by refusing to be a passive object of the spectator, and 'killing off the male gaze', Thryth and violent women are metaphorically killing their spectators by turning them into passive objects that are 'controlled by an active woman's image, wherein the spectator becomes subsumed into the realm of the imaginary, and mesmerized by a traumatic encounter with the Real.' (Jordan 2006: p.16) Thryth breaks the male gaze and dismantles the 'fourth wall of the cinema' as she kills off her own spectators; and as Slavoj Žižek in *Looking Awry* (1992: p.39)) suggests 'Thryth's fighting back represents an eruption into the narrative of the trauma of the Real.' (7)

Thryth's actions, in having the men killed for their 'transgressive' gaze, may seem on the face of it, somewhat extreme but Carol Clover (1993) contextualises Thryth's agency in suggesting that, in Scandinavian culture, the sex-gender system was different from our own and that of the Christian Middle Ages. In early Germanic culture the oppositional attributes of 'hard/soft' what she calls *havtr/blauor* work more as a 'gender continuum than a sexual binary' and that being in possession of *havtr* was highly valued regardless of biological sex. While 'the ideal man is *havtr* and the typical woman is *blauor*, neither is necessarily so; and each can, and does, slip into the territory of the other.' (Clover 1993: p.377).

Elaine Showalter examines constructs of the feminine in her article *Sex Goddess* (2001) and notes that in post-modern cinema there is a mixture of strong and weak and that the feminist motifs of women's athleticism and strength recur in number of films. There are many examples of these 'action chick' films: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), *Charlie's Angels* (2000), *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (2001), *Sin City* (2005) and their small screen sisters *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1999), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997), *La Femme Nikita* (1997), to mention but a few. Showalter comments, 'There is something exhilarating to the female viewer in the mere spectacle of women acting resourceful and fearless.' (2001: p.2) Stephanie Mencimer in her article *Violent Femmes* (2001) questions what it means for the male spectator. Those men who lived vicariously through the escapades of Rambo, Arnie and Bruce now love watching Lara kick some bad-boy ass, and she speculates, it's a sharp diversion from misogyny to masochism.

Clover's *Men Woman and Chainsaws* (1993) describes the male spectator's ability to identify with the 'final girl' syndrome in the horror genre. The protagonist (female) after being relentlessly pursued and terrorised finally takes control of the narrative and ultimately exacts revenge. I would argue the character Chicci in the closing scenes of *Slam* subverts her own 'final girl' destiny, with assistance from Cat, as the pair physically battle against their opposites. There is the added intrigue of the internal struggle with Bam's multiple personality and the final control of the narrative belongs with her. The 'gaze' in this final scene, (Bam searches for the ideal image of herself in the mirror), exemplifies what Lacan describes as the absence of the *object petit a*. For the subject (Bam) the consequences are horrific; and I anticipate for the spectator the experience will come close to a traumatic rupture with the Real.

Jordan asserts that Thryth refuses the male gaze and claims control and revenge through the sword. She argues that The Bride [Uma Thurman] in Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill, Volume I* (2003) 'provides a great example for looking at "havtr" women', and that the film itself is a deconstruction of Classical Hollywood cinema's representation of passive woman. Jordan also suggests that Tarantino critiques Mulvey's theory derived from the traditional Lacanian 'mirror

stage' of 'the woman as the passive object of the male gaze by making his female characters all women who refuse the gaze.' (Jordan 2006: p.10) Jordan cites an example of this refusal of the gaze when O-Ren-Iishi [Lucy Liu], stares directly at the viewer with her sword blade at eye level and she 'all at once returns the gaze, refuses the gaze and gives the spectator a traumatic encounter with the Real.' (Jordan 2006: p.10)

McGowan contends that Steven Spielberg with his film *Duel* (1970) 'uses the filmic image itself to reveal the workings of desire - how desire emerges in response to the indecipherable gaze.' (McGowan 2003: p.5) There is the resistance of the gaze to Mann's [Dennis Weaver] vision and, similarly to the spectator. 'The truck driver's gaze remains a blank spot in the field of vision, a spot that resists all signification.' (McGowan 2003: p.5) This unknown is continued for the duration of the narrative. The spectator doesn't know what the truck driver wants or what Mann did to trigger the duel. Mann doesn't know and never finds out. When the truck is lured over the cliff and the duel ends, neither Mann, nor the spectator, can encounter the object-gaze. *Duel* makes this elusiveness of the gaze the point of the movie and it's the *objet petit a* that motivates the subject's desire. (McGowan 2003) Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) continually revolves around an impossible *objet petit a*, (suggested by the signifier 'Rosebud'). We get different accounts of Kane's life and the film gives us multiple perspectives but 'none can render the object visible; Kane's desire, his gaze remains absent.' (McGowan 2003: p.10) Both *Duel* and *Citizen Kane* reveal that the gaze, as *objet petit a*, eludes us. It is non-specular - as absent in the picture, and as a spectator makes us 'aware of the Real, [and will] expose the Real of the gaze through its absence.' (McGowan 2003: p.6)

Catherine Breillat's film *Romance* (1999) addresses a number of issues central to the 'female gaze'. It's arguably one of the most influential, recent French films in international distribution, and has been variously categorised and polemicised as 'hard core' porn and exploitation, or an intellectual dissertation on female sexuality and art-house. *Romance* tells the story of a woman Marie, whose boyfriend Paul, refuses to have sex with her. Her frustration leads to a series of sexual encounters and to an eventual understanding of her own sense of desire. The film is sexually explicit with scenes of unstimulated sex in which the point of view is unambiguously feminine. Breillat's films refuse to reinforce conventional patterns of identification and offer no access to the mind of women as found in dominant mainstream films where the female unconsciousness is mostly externalised. Breillat is quoted as saying 'There is no masculine psychology in my cinema. There (is) only the resentments and desires of women. A man should not attempt to recognise himself in my male characters. On the other hand, he can find, (in the films), a better understanding of women.' (Price 2002: p.3).

John Phillips' *Hard Core and the Female Gaze* (2001) explores the conflict in relation to *Romance* and the pleasure of the female spectator. He refers to Laura Mulvey's (1975) claim; that only the male spectator experiences pleasure through visual enjoyment of the female star, as he shares the voyeuristic gaze of the camera and adds Mary Anne Doane's (1992: p.760) declaration that 'Cinema is about woman, not for her.' (Phillips 2001: p.134) Emma Wilson (2001: p.151) however, according to Phillips, has no doubt that the film offers the female spectator a gaze with which to identify: *Romance*, she maintains, 'shows a woman, Marie, actively looking: the subject of her own desire.' (Phillips 2001: p.134) Phillips argues that *Romance* functions as a 'metatextual' commentary on the very problem of the gaze and Marie's 'enchanted nakedness' represents complicity with male spectatorial pleasure. During Marie's sexual encounters, with Paul and lover Paulo, Phillips suggests she assumes a voyeuristic position, and her 'gaze is singularly unerotic [and] remains downcast and pensive throughout.' (Phillips 2001: p.134) The scenes of ritual bondage represent a retreat for Marie into masochism and again she directly avoids her own gaze in the mirror. I believe the answer to this continual elision of the gaze is the *objet petit a* and not as Phillips suggests a 'crudely staged and essentially phallogocentric female gaze'. (Phillips 2001: p.140) The *objet petit a* eludes us, (the spectator), and applying McGowan's interpretation of Lacanian theory allows the desire of the 'Other' to remain completely unapproachable.

Phillips notes a dominant feature of *Romance* is the gender role reversal and the fluidity of gender positions; and the idea that masochism, and even sadistic fantasy, could be liberating for a woman. He concurs with Linda Williams' (1990: p.228) claim that 'it may represent for women a new consciousness about the unavoidable role of power in sex, gender and sexual representations and of the importance of not viewing this power as fixed.' (Phillips 2001: p.140) Williams has described Breillat's approach to work as elitist, avant-garde, intellectual and philosophical pornography of imagination, pitted against the mundane, crass, materialism of a dominant mass culture. (Price 2002) It is impossible to integrate it into a commodity driven system of distribution. 'It does not offer visual pleasure, at least not one that comes without intellectual engagement, and, more importantly, rigorous self-examination - hence Breillat's assertion that sex is the subject not object, of her work.' (Price 2002: p.2)

Krisjansen and Maddock's *Educating Eros* (2001: p.142) refers to the 'dichotomy of the face and body' and suggests the 'anti-realism of *Romance*... [and that] the characters in the film have been strictly reduced to symbols.' In an interview with Breillat, she claims 'the sex organs of the woman are in the realm of the symbolic, in the cosmology of symbols - [they are] the black holes of the universe' (Breillat 2000) The scene where Marie is subjected to an internal examination by a number of trainee doctors, provides the viewer with a voyeuristic invitation

into that universe. The pornographic potential of the scene in this case is elided by the medical procedure. Thus, for the subject, there is no safe distance or assumed mastery. The gaze, as *objet petit a*, represents the 'originary rupture' and becomes (for the spectator) a traumatic encounter with the Real.

In reference to Richardson's image 'vanishing point', Baudrillard (1988: p.6) comments; 'The silence of the desert is a visual thing ... a product of the gaze that stares out and finds nothing to reflect it.' He suggests speed cancels out the territorial reference points, 'its only rule is to leave no trace behind.' I realise my attempt to understand the meaning of the gaze in cinematic terms, via Lacan's psychoanalytic terrain, is a journey travelled partway - the illusive 'vanishing point' still lies ahead.

(1) Gestalt a German word translated a shape, form, guise or likeness. Gestalt psychology theorises that our perceptions are governed by certain principals, notably seeing objects as whole forms, not an assembly of individual components.

(2) In Lacanian terms 'Lack' denotes a series of losses defining the constitution of the self. The most significant loss is symbolized by 'Castration', a moment crucial to the primary organising principle of the Oedipal Complex. (The name derived from the Greek tragedy by Sophocles)

(3) 'Other', defined by Terry Eagleton in *Literary Theory: an Introduction*, (1983) 'is that which like language is always anterior to us and will always escape us, that which brought us into being as subjects in the first place but which always outruns our grasp...we are caught up in linguistic, sexual and social relations - the whole field of the "Other" - which generate it.' (Eagleton 1983: p.174). Some theoretical readings claim 'Other' as meaning 'M-other' in perpetuity. While the infantile moment is gendered and specific it is not necessarily a continuum for the subject.

(4) 'Jouissance' is the French word meaning enjoyment but with sexual connotations associated with the phallic. Lacan's Seminar: *The Ethics of Psychoanalysts*, (1960) develops the 'pleasure principal' concept where the subject transgresses the prohibition placed on enjoyment, resulting in not more pleasure, but pain. This suffering is jouissance. Feminist theorists reclaimed jouissance as sexual ecstasy or pleasure characterised by explosiveness, dissipation, the shattering of limits, from its phallic definition. (Stam 1992: p.137)

(5) 'Phallus' in psychoanalytic terms is symbolic, defined in terms of presence and absence, having and not having, and creates the division between masculine and feminine that possession of the phallus signifies. This is not a biological or anatomical distinction. Stam suggests it is first a fantasy of unity and completion in the pre-Oedipal phase and second, as a result of recognition of castration in the Oedipal stage, signifies entry to the Symbolic (the realm of discourse and culture). Thus Phallus is a presence representing an absence, a signifier of loss and represents later, the originary lost object, (the breast).

(6) *Beowulf*, a traditional heroic epic poem of Scandinavian and Germanic origin. Thryth was a queen who had men executed for gazing at her.

(7) 'Real' one of the three psychic registers (with Imaginary and Symbolic). Lacan defined the Real as a more 'realer' reality that exists outside the Symbolic and the realm of the Imaginary; the 'objet petit a' that represents an 'originary rupture'.

## Section six: Occasioning praxis

This reflective digression on theoretical concerns is intended as an effectual segue to the pragmatism of the film-making process. It is not a refutation of psychoanalytic film theory, but an acknowledgment of the shifting landscape in theoretical debate. Al Razutis (1984) claims filmmaking is a form of labour, a means to communicate and an expression of artistic ideas. Film theory he maintains, is a 'speculative venture', a 'hybrid of specialised formulations' that assumes a status that could be considered to be 'self-serving elitism'. He contends the contradictions reside in theory itself and notions such as phallogentrism, feminism, and psychoanalytic essentialism, have little to say about the reality of film practice, technology and the economics of cinema. (Razutis 1984: p.1) However, contemporary film theory 'exerts an increasing influence over film studies and curating and this tends to effect practice in a manner that can be both rewarding and oppressive'. (Razutis 1984: p.1) Film theory has combined existing knowledges with speculative interpretation in order to conduct analysis. This gives rise to a specialist language which tends to privilege meaning. Contemporary film theory obligates the reader to identify these very specific meanings in order to avoid exclusion. Terms such as 'the lack', defined in notes earlier, and 'suture' are examples that Razutis claims use 'plausible inference to proceed from one axiom to the next.' (Razutis 1984: p.2) He refers to the narrow range of writers, (non-filmmakers), repeatedly sourced for argument and suggests parallels with an elitist medieval cabal. Certainly film theory has the propensity for obfuscation and the evidence is more pronounced when dealing with a widely accessible domain such as film. As a practitioner, I believe there are many concerns with production that influence the end product-the film. These concerns are often overlooked by those involved in the film's analysis.

Razutis criticises Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975), suggesting the essay is rhetoric posing as theory, and with her speculation concerning 'scopophilia', Mulvey transfers pleasure to 'sadism and fetishism' then 'illustrates her theory with appropriate examples from the psycho-pathological cinema of Hitchcock.' (Razutis 1984: p.2) It is noted that Mulvey, following criticism concerning the question of female spectatorship, re-addressed the issue with a later essay *Afterthoughts* (1981), inspired by King Vidor's film *Duel in the Sun* (1946).

Alice Jardine's *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (1985) is also critical of the position of woman as perceived intrinsic to new modes of thinking, writing and speaking. She refers to this as a process and posits, 'I have suggested what I hope will be a believable neologism: *gynesis* [and] the object produced by this process is neither a person nor a thing, but a horizon, towards which the process is tending: a *gynema*.' (Jardine 1985: p.25)



In the context of theory and praxis, and with deference to Razutis' criticism concerning the dispensation of language, the term 'gynesis' could be interpreted as an example of the capacity to use language to privilege and empower. However, Jardine's *Gynesis* is a lucid analysis that examines the apparent contradictions of French and American thinking as characterised by the conflict between 'woman as process' and 'woman as sexual identity.' (Jardine 1985: p.41) Her chapter on Lacan attempts to explain his explicit and pervasive feminine spaces metaphorically through the logic of the Borromean knot. (1) This, Jardine sardonically comments, is Lacan's major contribution to knowledge about the "dark continent of female sexuality".

To end this theoretical digression and return to the concerns of praxis, I'll offer a few relevant comments from practitioners about low budget films, of which *Moonfall* is one. Christine Vachon in her tell-all book *Shooting to Kill* (1998), claims a low budget movie is a crisis waiting to happen, and with resources stretched to a limit, you constantly push that limit. 'You have to be creative on your feet, because if something goes wrong, and it always does, you can't just throw money at it.' (Vachon 1998: p.3) She maintains it's hard to determine at what point your budget becomes your aesthetic. 'When the physical limitations of what you can do shapes the style...and the story you choose to tell.' (Vachon 1998: p.20) Vachon contends the smart writer-directors are thinking about the budget when writing the script.

Robert Rodriguez' *Rebel With Out A Crew* (1996) is essentially a diarised account of events during the development and production of his ultra-low-budget film *El Mariachi* (1992). It details the volunteer clinical drug trials he undertook in order to raise the production budget of \$7,000 US. Rodriguez claims the additional live-in benefits provided a place and the time needed to write the script. The film was shot on location in Mexican border towns with a minimal cast and skeleton crew. It was initially intended for the home video market but was picked up by Colombia Pictures. They provided post-production finance and marketing and the film received an American release. It was a commercial and artistic success and inspired a new generation of low-budget filmmakers to produce films such as *Clerks* (1994) and *The Blair Which Project* (1999). Rodriguez' *Ten-Minute-Film-School*, (part two of the book) offers a simplistic but encouraging addendum with this excerpt: 'So you want to be a filmmaker. First step to being a filmmaker is to stop saying you want to be a filmmaker...you are a filmmaker. Go make yourself a business card.'

Rodriguez' benchmark in determination invites comparison with independent filmmakers in Australia and the methods they adopt to develop and produce their vision. The vexed question; 'what is low budget?'- generally elicits the aphoristic answer 'how long is a piece of string?' Making films is not about string, but if we insist on this rhetorical metaphor, perhaps we should

ask; 'what is the quality of the yarn?' And thus, we arrive at the story and the screenplay! First, what story do we want to tell and who wants to hear it? Negotiations concerning free trade arrangements with the US have been perceived, by some, as a threat to our future ability to tell our own stories. More recently there was the fear of a television avalanche from New Zealand.

So what stories do we want to tell? Pauline Webber's article in *Storyline* (2006: vol.16 p.5) suggests our writers are no longer interested in 'a collective narrative about our history' but rather in 'the small, generally sordid tales of the underneath.' She backs the claim with a list of AWGIE award nominees that involve crime, criminals, drug addiction and/or murder. Television drama based on real crimes such as *The Society Murders* (2006), *Blackjack* (2006) and the half hour psycho-thrillers in the *Two Twisted* (2005) series as well as tele-features *Little Oberon* (2005), *Small Claims* (2004) and *The Silence* (2006) complement a raft of feature films produced over the last few years. I will identify a few examples; *The Magician* (2005), *Little Fish* (2005), *Three Dollars* (2005), *The Proposition* (2005), *Wolf Creek* (2005), *Gettin' Square* (2003), *Dirty Deeds* (2002), *The Hard Word* (2002) and *Lantana* (2001). More recently; *2:37* (2006) *Jindabyne* (2006), *Book of Revelation* (2006), *Suburban Mayhem* (2006), *Irresistible* (2006) and *Last Train to Freo* (2006) were produced. Peter Doyle, author of a number of crime novels, contends the balance is skewed and there should be more crime in narrative. 'Crime is a way of raising human emotions to the nth power. So it's always a compelling narrative.' (Webber 2006: vol.16 p.6) Film writer and commentator Dan Edwards claims there is conservatism in our society that is reflected in our filmmaking culture. (Webber 2006: vol.16)

The down-turn of Australian films at the box office in the last few years has caused concern within the industry. It has generally been attributed to the paucity of quality screenplays and a number of schemes have been instigated in an attempt to rectify the problem. Script workshops such as SPARKS supported by the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) and the Australian Film Commission (AFC); and Aurora, funded and managed by the NSW, Film and Television Office (FTO) are two high profile programs designed to develop scripts and promote teams of 'key creatives' in a project. The intentions are commendable, and while a number of projects have been successfully realised, it's too premature to gauge whether they will make a difference.

Peter Sainsbury, a producer with extensive 'hands-on' experience working for and advising various government agencies, is sceptical. In his article *The fear and loathing of risk* (2004) he refers to the above programs as high-end development initiatives that are an annual competition and part of the cycle that is 'a public service management scheme'. He suggests this protects administrators from adverse criticism and distributes resources across 'bureaucratic time' rather

than ‘rigorously measured creative talent...’ (Sainsbury 2004: p.15) Sainsbury maintains this risk-management by the agencies engenders a ‘cult of the first draft script’. Due to the pressure of limited resources, agencies require the fullest possible knowledge of each project, to enable a qualitative judgement to be made. So the prerequisite, in order to secure financial support from funding programs, is a full-draft script. For ‘emerging’ writers, Sainsbury asserts this is a ‘bizarre attempt to mitigate the risk of their inexperience’ and results in accumulated misjudgements in writing a full draft. (Sainsbury 2004: p.13)

Journalist Greg Singer’s report on a Screenwriting Expo in Los Angeles (2006), maintains the ‘creatives’ at Pixar view writing as messy, and something to play with. First draft is a kick off and often always bad. Writer/director Andrew Stanton emphasises the importance of getting ideas onto the page even if they’re wrong, as the rewards will come later. (Singer 2006) Michael Arndt, writer of *Little Miss Sunshine* (2006) and Pixar team player, believes life and cinema are meaningful through the dynamics of emotional connections. (Singer 2006)

While Sainsbury is critical of the government agencies and funding procedures he also maintains part of the problem lies with writers not being prepared to take risks. Sainsbury refers to the financial guarantees required by the Film Finance Corporation, on the basis of the script, as contributing to a self imposed conservatism. Projects anticipate audience expectations by avoiding the unfamiliar, and therefore the innovative, ‘investing in the false comfort-zone of everyday realism, middle of the road stories and ordinary characters.’ (Sainsbury 2004: p.7) These stringent requirements were relaxed with the introduction of the ‘Creative Evaluation’ scheme in 1995, and a number of ‘more risky’ and original projects received investment. (2)

Sainsbury, in defence of his claims, includes *The Goddess of 1967* (2000) an art-house film he co-produced and suggests the film failed with audiences because of the script. I am not aware of the genesis of his specific project, but I believe part of the problem with the industry is the inability for some producers to define the stories/films they wish to tell. In many cases writers originate and develop projects and then try to elicit interest from a producer. To illustrate my point with a metaphor; it would be absurd for an architect to labour over drawings for a dwelling then attempt to find a client with suitable land, and that just happens to engage with the design.

Stanton refers to ‘story physics’ as being the key to telling a story well and this includes the juxtaposition of elements that elicit certain feelings, perceptions and reactions. He contends the audience has an unconscious desire to participate in the storytelling and you don’t have to add it up for them – ‘as everyone knows  $2+2 = 22$ .’ Stanton claims writer’s need a key visual image or a log line that represents the emotional core on which everything hangs and identifies the scene

in *Finding Nemo* (2003), where Marlin looks at the last remaining fish egg in the nest, as a poignant moment that resonates through the entire film. (Singer 2006) A visual motif such as this, in the writing stage, cannot always be articulated in words. Writers employ different methods and mediums to capture this conceptual and emotional information and expand the horizon of the script. This will not necessarily appear on the page and conform to conventional script layout as the following examples illustrate.

Some writers inhabit their characters through a detailed back-story and provide a chronology of events and relationships surrounding them. Mike Leigh claims, in Schwager's (1994) interview, that his approach to film is quite fluid and he constructs a script and creates the characters through conversation, improvisation and research. Leigh referring to his production of *Naked* (1993) 'we go out and invent the film on location and structure it and shoot it as we go... it's about using film as a medium in its own right'. (Schwager 1994: p.2) Leigh rejects the idea of decisions made by committees and sees no logic in embracing a Hollywood style of filmmaking.

Vicki Goldberg (2003) maintains that Wim Wenders still photography, as with his movies, is a quest to understand the spirit of a place and the stories it tells. 'Place is the driving force of my filmmaking...to let places tell the story instead of impose a story on a place.' (Goldberg 2003: p.1) Wenders' film *Wings of Desire* (1987), about melancholy angels in Berlin, was inspired by an urge to portray that city and the story and its characters grew out of that. (Goldberg 2003)

Kathryn Millard's *Writing for the Screen: Beyond the Gospel of Story* (2006: p.4) suggests that during the development of her short feature *Parklands* (1996), the conventions of genre restricted exploration of ideas and images. 'I began again by writing a treatment that collaged key images and excerpts from a policeman's diaries and place and character.' She refers to Wenders' term 'broken stories' and describes the fragments of text, and the initial collage of images, as a document that helped maintain the design of the film in production. (Millard 2006)

*Moonfall* was originally developed as a feature length screenplay. A substantial component involved a police investigation into the 'oyako-shinju' incident and the court proceedings that followed. This material was dropped after a rigorous dismantling of the script. In re-writing I found myself returning to the binaries that constitute the bond between mother and daughter, in their life and death. The smooth stones from the lake, a reflexive image, came to represent this and inscribed the framework for the characters to interact.

The 'Shining Princess' fairy-story is a universal tale and provided a secondary anchoring narrative during the re-drafting of the screenplay. The interpolated passages, both the traditional

reading and the contemporary authorial ‘princess’ voice, offer extradiegetic comment to the primary text. There are many incarnations of this fairy-tale, from heroic deeds involving dragons, to Babette Cole’s *Princess SmartyPants* (1989). The cyclic nature of these narratives, whilst culturally specific, inscribe a continual journey of unfulfilled events and desire.

The famous drawing of ants crawling endlessly along a twisted lattice is MC Escher’s unique depiction of the Mobius strip. The topology of the Mobius strip has found many applications, from the practical twist in a mechanical drive belt to minimise wear, to the more esoteric conceptual framework of Lacanian psychoanalytic thinking. David Lynch’s films are noted for their weirdness and radical existential conception of fantasy. Film such as *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Lost Highway* (1997) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001) have been described as Mobius strip narratives. In everyday experience, as with most films, the worlds of desire and fantasy overlap and intermingle. In Lynch’s films however, he attempts to hold these worlds as separate. The progression through the story returns us to the beginning, but, as with the Mobius strip, we’re on the opposite side.

Todd McGowan’s introduction to *The Impossible David Lynch* (2007) suggests the model for his films is *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) which creates a division between the social reality of Kansas, depicted in black and white, and the technicolor fantasy world of Oz. Lynch claims that *The Wizard of Oz*, ‘must have got inside me, when I first saw it, like it did a million other people, (and taking this) as his point of departure, Lynch depicts worlds of desire by emphasising the absence of the object.’ (McGowan 2007: p.6) McGowan contends that the unfolding world of fantasy in a Lynch film alternates with and separates the realm of desire and thus provides, ‘an unsettling insight into normality that everyday life militates against.’ (McGowan 2007: p.6) Lynch describes *Mulholland Drive* as a love story in a city of dreams. It was however a circuitous path to realising the film. Initially it was intended as a television pilot for a series, but after viewing the footage ABC executives passed on it claiming they were cutting back on violence with their programming. A year later the French company Studio Canal Plus purchased the rights, and as legend goes, Lynch hashed out a thirty minute conclusion and *Mulholland Drive* was resurrected as a feature film.

Perhaps the maxim with the process of writing is that there is no ‘right’ way, to conceptualise and develop story ideas; just the need to hold onto them when adverse circumstances arises. It could be a producer or director not sharing your vision of the project, or multiple mentors in script workshops offering well intentioned guidance and direction for further development. In these situations it’s easy to lose sight of your original concept. The assessors responsible for reading submissions to government agencies may not be competent to evaluate certain projects,

and this can impede the progress of development. It also has the capacity to 'taint' a script and in a small industry, such as we have in Australia, this can sound the death knell for the project. *Inside Venus* received a particularly hostile assessment when submitted to the FTO. I can only speculate from their report (3) that the exposition in a scene describing heroin use influenced the reader's perception. These are the opening lines to that draft script: 'FADE UP: Velvet blue - shifts to deep burgundy, rich and comforting. The glint of a needle punctures the frame....' This elicited a response that suggested Lynch's film *Blue Velvet* was an antecedent to the screenplay. The inadvertent approbation continued with a comparison to the scatological themes depicted in Pasolini's *Salo* (1975). Elation should prevail to have the script included with such a visionary canon, was it not for the fact the submission was unsuccessful. I was fortunate to have a conciliatory project officer who encouraged re-submission of the draft. The second reader, whilst not as effusive with their appraisal, recommended the project for development funding. The development of the screenplay *Slam* over a number of drafts has not been contingent on government agency support. In the past they have demonstrated a resistance to supporting genre films in general, and more specifically, the horror genre. In relation to *Slam* this was my choice to avoid both the discrimination and the disappointment of rejection.

So the writer has a story that they believe is worth telling, and the screenplay is undergoing development. At what point do the writer and/or the creative team believe the script is ready for the market place? According to Sainsbury the policy of government agencies is to spread their funds 'in favour of maximising the number of appeased customers and letting over-all quality take care of itself.' (Sainsbury 2004: p.16) He claims this approach is disingenuous and should be analysed, and defining neurosis as a compulsive repetition that causes anxiety, Sainsbury suggests, our system of script development must be pathologically neurotic. (Sainsbury 2004)

An invitation to listen to the screenwriter Robert Towne speak, quoted an excerpt from his article *Your write to win* (2003) 'when creative people are insecure they can get esoteric ... I always ask myself, what the scene is really about, not the events, but the sub-text, and try to do it as simply as possible.' (Towne 2003) He maintained that generally scripts are too talkie and the problem is usually because the script lacks clarity. Paul Coughlin's *Language Aesthetics in three films by Joel and Ethan Coen* (2006) claims that 'mannered dialogue directly confronts the illusion inherent in cinematic representation.' (Coughlin 2006: p.2) He refers to the dialogue in the films *Raising Arizona* (1987) and *Miller's Crossing* (1990) as unusually slick, affected, and artificial, and *The Big Lebowski* (1998), as inarticulate, in deference to his character. He contends, as does Walter Weintraub (1989: p.31), that the artist will avoid depiction of realistic dialogue and 'create the illusion of real-life conversations without reproducing the mumbling and stumbling that constitute the dialogue of most living individuals.' (Coughlin 2006: p.2)

I suggest the closing scene in *Barton Fink* (1991) paradoxically sums up the writer and their conviction. Barton, [John Turturro] who has been struggling with writers block, sits by the sea. There is a hat-box beside him that, unbeknown to him, could contain the head of friend and lover Audrey [Judy Davis]. A young woman in a bikini asks; what's in the box, and if it's his. Barton replies that he doesn't know. A pelican drops into the sea and the screen fades to black. Perhaps the appropriate final word on writing is the elegant statement by the writer William Goldman, referring to whether a script will 'go' or succeed, that; 'Nobody knows anything.'

Eventually the screenplay is at 'final draft', the production finance in place and the project is, as they say, given the 'green light'. In the case of *Moonfall* it was a pale yellow, flickering light. With a modest research grant from the University of Newcastle, production resources from UTS, dedication from the cast and crew, and support from the local community I was able to realise the film. I refer to this style of production as ultra-low-budget, guerrilla filmmaking. It is tolerated, as it can't be ignored, but generally not sanctioned by government and industry authorities. In seeking post-production assistance from the AFC, *Moonfall* was seen as being problematic. It was referred to as 'a square peg in a round hole' and this made the project difficult for the AFC to consider. I coined the term 'feral peg' and in order to complete the film it was necessary for me to forage in private pastures - synonymous with 10BA investment. (4)

The ramifications of a production budget are considerable and generally overlooked when critically evaluating the film. Rodriguez' *El Mariachi* was shot with an absolute minuscule budget but had studio finance to finish the film and promote it. Australian examples such as Emma-Kate Croghan's *Love and Other Catastrophes* (1996) and Brad Hayward's *Occasional Course Language* (1998) both enjoyed a limited successful release. These films had extremely low production budgets, but comparatively substantial 'back-end' post production investment and marketing finance to launch their release. Advanced digital technology has made it possible to produce high-resolution programs with relatively low budgets. With less financial risk it has enabled filmmakers to circumvent the conventional requirements of distribution guarantees and pre-sales in order to raise the budget needed for production. Free from financial shackles, filmmakers can produce more innovative and edgy material that is not necessarily compliant with mainstream audience imperatives and bureaucratic conservatism.

The Dogme 95 films, founded by Lars Von Triers and Thomas Vinterberg with rigorous regard to the 'Vows of Chastity', have spawned many stylistic (and heretical) adaptations using digital technology. The Dogme web-site lists 201 registered titles, including a number from Australia. In France there are group of contemporary directors who make thematically and formally aggressive cinema. There is Catherine Breillat, mentioned earlier, Michael Haneke with films

such as *Funny Games* (1997) and *The Piano Teacher* (2001) and Gaspar Noe with his recent film *Irreversible* (2002). These directors are notable for their controversial catalogue of films and their determination to provoke critical thought, and to disturb and challenge their audience.

Matt Bailey in *Senses of Cinema* (2003) refers to the term 'cinema of attractions', which originated with the writings of Eisenstein but is redefined in the films of Gaspar Noe. Tom Gunning's *The Cinema of Attractions* (1990) describes it as a category of film that 'directly solicits spectator attention, inciting visual curiosity, and supplying pleasure through an exciting spectacle.' (Gunning 1990: p.58) Bailey suggests a more accurate definition and one closer to the original intention of Eisenstein's *Montage of Attractions* (1923) is 'filmmaking that is intended to illicit a primal response from the spectator in some way apart from the narrative.' (Bailey 2003: p.4) Bailey contends in *Irreversible* Gaspar Noe's use of 'attractions' underscores and works against the narrative and 'features a number of scenes that employ aural or visual amplifications or modifications in order to provoke an effect.' (Bailey 2003: p.4) Bailey maintains, as does Gunning, that the concept of attractions in theatre was designed to emphasise the political message and avoid the distraction of narrative and audience identification with character and situation. Noe's application to the principles is intensely illustrated in the opening scene where a man's head is brutally bashed in with a fire extinguisher. The camera movement is erratic, and the score that accompanies the image for much of the film is designed to cause nausea in the audience, and this effectively subverts the narrative. The practical implication of an international and in-demand cast required *Irreversible* to be shot quickly. Most of the dialogue was improvised from the basic outline of a script. Noe was largely responsible for the cinematography using S/16mm film and a compact camera. The film was transferred to high definition digital video and in the extensive post-production most of the effects were added.

Frey's article on Michael Haneke, *Senses of Cinema* (2003), suggests his attempts to depict violence, without inciting fascination or titillation, has been criticised as being didactic and essentially no different to the action films he challenges. 'Haneke concentrates on the suffering of victims, rather than allowing the spectator to identify with any pseudo-psychological motivation of the perpetrator.' (Frey 2003: p.6) Haneke's *Funny Games* is a terrifyingly simple plot where two well groomed young men, without motivation, terrorise and kill a family in their vacation summer house. Haneke instigates a number of self-referential devices that disrupt and disturb the spectator from their observational comfort zone. This is exemplified when a character actually rewinds the film. The mother grabs a shot-gun and attempts to shoot the killers only to have one of them reach for the remote control and rewind the scene, and the film continues to its relentless end. 'The film thus plays with the spectator just as the young men play their 'funny games' with the family. (Frey 2003: p.6)



While these films could be considered low budget, avant garde, and challenging to audiences and censorship authorities, they've received an R (restricted to adults) rated release in Australia, as with most other countries. On the other hand *Baise-Moi* (2000), a film by Virginie Despentes and Coralie Trinh Thi, was initially given an R rating by the Classification Board, with consumer advice concerning sexual violence, actual sex and adult themes. Six months later it was subsequently withdrawn from exhibition - flagging parallels to Pasolini's film *Salo*. (5) The literal translation to the title of the film *Baise-Moi* is 'Fuck Me'. Adrian Gargett in *The Film Journal* (2005) describes it as an 'exuberant embodiment of excess: physical and sexual excess, interpretative and stylistic excess.' (Gargett 2005: p.1)

*Baise-Moi* could be categorised as a road 'carnage' movie. It follows prostitute Nadine [Karen Bach] and porn-actress Manu [Raffaella Anderson] who meet by chance after both have had violent arguments with their partners. They go on a sex killing spree after Manu is raped. Unlike other 'rape revenge' genre films there is no rationale as to the choice of victims. Women die, as do men, in random acts of exhilaration, as Manu effusively declares, 'We'll follow our stars...and let rip the motherfucker side of our soul', recalling moments in *Natural Born Killers* (1994) and *Pulp Fiction* (1994). Townsend in her (unpublished) thesis, *Representations of Sexual Violence in Cinema Film* (2006), refers to the documentary *Bad Girl* (2001) and a discussion with Catherine Breillat and Virginie Despentes as to why they make films concerning the interior female sex life, 'because women have been deprived of expression, language, pleasure. Now they want to turn the tables - sometimes violently'. (Townsend 2006: p.71) The rape scene in the film is undoubtedly the most controversial, although Despentes dismisses it with the reply that she didn't invent rape and that it's all part of every day France.

Gargett contends *Baise-Moi* elucidates the explicit absence of the feminine that is necessary in mainstream action/violent narratives. Instead he suggests 'femininity now provides the more or less explicit metaphor for the destabilisation or deconstruction of those binaries in the work of contemporary theory.' (Gargett 2005: p.2) The deliberate artifice, Gargett maintains, creates the distinction between cinematic form and poses the dilemma of; is it real or fake? After that the film becomes much more like a cartoon, a comic strip fantasy.

*Baise-Moi* articulates a post-feminist agenda that resonates with mainstream films such as *Thelma and Louise* (1991). When Nadine is propositioned on the street by some guy he is shot without hesitation by Manu, in a scene reminiscent of the car park attempted rape of Thelma, or the sleazy tanker-driver's gestures, that result with his truck destroyed in an exploding inferno. The iconic shot, from a low angle, of Nadine's black stiletto in a pool of blood has to be one of exploitation cinemas most enduring images and consistent with the trash aesthetic of the film.

The grainy texture, a quality usually associated with low budget films, and the graphic Manga-style violent sex scenes, provoke and shock the spectator. The sardonic sense of humour is evident when Nadine comments on her own bloody actions ‘You’d think anything was allowed.’ Gargett suggests the final remarks by Manu express concern with the trash aesthetic of the screenplay, when she laments the lack of suitable dialogue amidst the action. ‘Fuck we’re useless... Where are the witty lines? I mean people are dying, the dialogue has to be up to it.’

*Baise-Moi* is an important inclusion in this catalogue of low budget films and specifically invites comparison with a number of implicit concerns in the screenplays of *Slam* and *Inside Venus* and from a psychoanalytic reading it inscribes a subtle congruence with *Moonfall*. The characters of Bam and Slav in *Slam* inhabit a marginalised world defined in part by queer culture but predominantly by the social class system; a world on opposite tracks to that of Nadine and Manu’s. Chicci’s character however, with her careless and impulsive exuberance, occasions analogous moments with the *Baise-Moi* protagonists. *Slam* similarly embraces a trash aesthetic. It’s interesting to note the director’s (intended) vision (6) ‘Like some “Manga” manifestation, our four characters, sirens of the apocalypse, trample through this viticultural travelogue.’

There are many scenes that resonate the exploitative nature of the pornographic. Cat’s reference to Chicci’s incarceration in the detention centre echoes the fetishised “caged heat” lesbian fantasy. (*Slam* p.12 sc 35) The shower block scene that follows (*Slam* p.27 sc 58) is a straight lift from Jonathan Demme’s Corman school of exploitation, *Caged Heat* (1974), with a ‘Borstal girls’ nod to Mai Zetterling’s *Scrubbers* (1983) and an endearing homage to Grundy’s long-running television series *Prisoner* (1979).

The rape sequence bookends with the deconstructive text of ‘psychotherapist’ cut up to ‘psycho the rapist’ and taped to the forehead of the victim which demonstrates the perversity of Bam’s (multiple personality) character. It also implies a disrespectful psychoanalytic interpretation; an aberrant post-Lacanian rupture of the Symbolic with the Real. (*Slam* p.49 sc 79 & p.67 sc 115) Gargett suggests the materialism apparent in much of *Baise-Moi* is at odds with Jardine’s concept of subversive woman-authored gynesis. ‘The economic commodification of the female body from prostitution, to porn film, to mainstream cinema is presented and unfavourably critiqued throughout.’ (Gargett 2005: p.4) Cat’s photography of Chicci articulates similar concerns. The art work “bulldozer girl” questions the relationship of the image, the diegetic viewer and the spectator and is exemplified in the provocative, pornographic calendar poses on the dozer. (*Slam* p.10 sc 31). Chicci’s ‘art’ image is transposed to a commodity that in turn is analysed (Godard and Lacan), fetishised, coveted and finally transacted, as Chicci sadly laments to Cat’s explanation; ‘What? That you sold her.’ (*Slam* p.27 sc 59 & p.37-41 sc 72/73)

*Inside Venus* relates to pornography directly, in that the characters Johnny and Venus video sexual images of themselves for their friend Elaine's therapy. (*Inside Venus* p.14 sc 27) Later we join Elaine watching a scene with Johnny and Venus having sex on the bonnet of a car at the beach. The video camera, diegetically placed to capture the action, slips off the car and leaves their feet framed in the sand. The sound of their love-making can be heard but again the pornographic imagery elides the spectator. (*Inside Venus* p.49-51 sc 63/64). The grainy textural image of the video-porn with the erratic hand held camera movements is not dissimilar to the look of *Baise-Moi* or some of the intense scenes in *Irreversible*. However it is different in that it is structurally and diegetically embedded into the narrative and occasionally, through specific temporal interpolation, it functions as an extra-diegetic commentary. Essentially it is Johnny's voice from the grave, chronologically signified through the video, that informs and to a degree determines the narrative and the spectator's relationship to it.

As mentioned the 'cinema of attractions', or sometimes referred to as 'primitive cinema', relies on extremism to elicit a response from the audience. Johnny's voice over comments concerning the most efficient and painless method to kill a crab, when juxtaposed with the image of his finger being severed by secateurs, provides a shock and offers a glimpse of bleak humour. It induces a visceral response rather than intellectual. (*Inside Venus* p.41 sc 51) The director's notes (7) for further development of the screenplay suggests *Inside Venus* resonates with examples such as *Fargo* (1996), *Betty Blue* (1986), *Truly Madly Deeply* (1991) and *Sex Lies and Videotape* (1989) due to the 'weaving of drama' around a pivotal event and the 'psychology of genuine human interaction verses voyeurism.'

Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous-Feminine* (1993) suggests; that which crosses or threatens to cross the border is abject, and while the border may shift with different films the function remains the same, 'to bring about an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability.' (Creed 1993: p.11) In her recent *Phallic Panic* (2005) Creed maintains the monstrous-feminine signifies the primal uncanny through her body, by bringing to light that which ought to have remained secret and hidden. She contends this 'offers a great deal of pleasure to spectators encouraged to identify with her wildly excessive anarchic, deadly behaviour.' (Creed 2005: p.16)

*Moonfall* presents two distinctly different representations of the 'feminine' and they both instigate an encounter with the symbolic order and threaten stability. Bree Daniel is synonymous with the 'gaze' on a number of levels. There is the gaze from other characters within the diegesis of the narrative. There is the camera's look at the pro-filmic event and there is the position of the spectator's look in relation to the events on screen.

The initial suggestion of Bree's predatorial intentions is signalled while undressing in a store room. For the spectator it is a knowing gaze that recognises the voyeuristic. The object of desire is elided and the spectator's complicity, (caught out watching), is compensated through the editorial cut to Kenji. This acknowledgment of the spectator again pre-empts the dance sequence as Bree slides the doors open to enter the inner sanctum, a room reserved for special guests.

The camera's look at the event firmly establishes that 'iconic low angle-through the legs-exploitation shot' as Bree steps onto the table. I would mention here that Bree's masquerade and the fetishism associated with dancing on tables are undermined by the ultimate trash aesthetic of her attire. There are no fish-net stockings and garters but 'daggy' boxer shorts that ride up her bottom. The expulsion of the pearls, as a Kristeva/Creed reading, is a definitive act of abjection. It signifies the 'hidden mouth of myth and superstition whose representation warns man about the dangers of female sexuality that is not brought under strict control and regulation.' (Creed 2005: p.87) Kristeva terms 'abjection', as that which does not 'respect borders, positions, rules [and] disturbs identity, system, order' (Kristeva 1982: p.4) and claims the ultimate in abjection is the corpse.

The encounter with Yoshiko and Bree in the theatre dressing room reveals that Bree is pregnant to Kenji. This propels two actions of abjection. Firstly, the scene with Bree in the medical waiting room suggests a termination of the pregnancy and for Bree a final act of abjection. The second action is Yoshiko's attempt to take her life, and that of Chisa. This has to be understood in the cultural context of 'oyako-shinju' and Buddhist belief. One might recall the metaphor of the 'mobius strip' for the journey Yoshiko embarks on and in that respect her abjection is an empowering force.

Gargett maintains that *Baise-Moi* illuminates the fact that femininity provides an 'explicit metaphor for destabilisation and deconstruction' and employs the 'feminine to evoke things like difference, jouissance and undecidability.' (Gargett 2005: p.2) Bree's actions are a process of Jardine's 'gynesis - the putting into discourse of "woman" as...intrinsic to the condition of modernity...' (Jardine 1985: p.25)

Freud used the term 'phallus' to refer to the symbolic function of the penis, however Lacan, as mentioned earlier, refers to the phallus as a 'signifier of desire' and McGowan asserts the phallus as the object of desire, is that which is absent. Thus, according to a Lacanian psychoanalytic reading of *Moonfall*, Bree is that embodiment of desire that is eternally lost. Bree is the Phallus, and by extension in the secondary text, the fairy story, the Shining Princess is a metaphor for that which is unattainable - Bree Daniel.

To bring closure to theoretical minglings with *Moonfall*, Jacques Derrida, as Jardine recalls, presented a paper in which he referred to a text as being ‘invaginated’. When questioned about the use of the word, by someone not familiar with contemporary theories of reading in France, and (excluded by the use of language), his response was to provide the etymological origin of the word, which is essentially botanical and refers to folding back on itself. (Jardine 1985: p.34)

To suggest that *Moonfall* as a text is ‘invaginated’ would simply fuel the pearls of provocation, although there is a structural element of the narrative that folds back on itself. The contentious scene of Bree dancing on the table remains irreducible to any fantasmatic identification. Bree embodies the gaze and while she remains that which is unapproachable, the *objet petit a*, she also represents the trash aesthetic of the exploitation spectacle. It is the intersection of this duality, that for the spectator, becomes the traumatic point of the Real.

As a film practitioner [and the filmmaker of *Moonfall*] I believe the analysis in this section is illustrative of the nexus between theory and praxis and denies determination. The avant-garde artist, Hollis Frampton, when drawn to comment, referred to film theory as a ‘house of words’. Risking censure, I suggest a benign extension to that construction of words. It concerns the transgressive scene of Bree dancing on the table with the shinai sword and pearls. The actions can be read simply, as a literal and physical interpretation of Diderot’s ‘indiscreet jewels.’ (8)

(1) Borromean knots or Borromean rings consist of three rings interlinked. Removal of any one ring results in two unlinked rings. The design has been used to indicate unity and strength and in some instances to symbolise Trinity. Jacques Lacan found inspiration in the rings as a model for the psychic registers of the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic.

(2) The results of the Federal Government's Review of Australian Government Film Funding Support announced in the May, 2007 budget will implement a new producer rebate scheme to stimulate higher levels of investment in the industry. The Government also announced the merger of the Australian Film Commission, The Film Finance Corporation and Film Australia into the newly created Australian Screen Authority in July 2008

(3) A condition of receiving assessor’s reports is that it cannot be reproduced (including extracts) or used without prior written consent of the FTO

(4) *Moonfall* qualified as an Australian film and was issued with a certificate under Division 10BA of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* and was eligible to raise private investment funds.

(5) *Salo* in 1976 was banned by the Australian Film Censorship Board. In 1993 the Film and Literature Board of Review overturned the seventeen year old ban. In 1998 an appeal to the Review Board of The Office of Film and Literature Classification re-imposed the ban. It still stands in 2007.

(6) The director at the time signed for *Slam* was Russell Mulchay.

(7) The submission to Aurora 2005, the director Claire McCarthy, the producer Tor Larsen

(8) In Denis Diderot’s famous fable *Les bijoux indiscrets* / The indiscreet jewels (1748) the genie Cucufa provides the sultan Mangogul with a magic ring that will make women’s genitals (jewels) talk frankly about their sexual adventures.

## Section seven: **An ending**

I have tried to avoid imposing a singular position or argument in relation to the creative works and my exegesis. The individual sections articulate multiple concerns that have circulated throughout the research process, and my overall approach to the material is inclusive and does not privilege a specific component or text. I encourage the viewer/reader to assimilate with the characters, the ideas and the individual stories of the creative works. If the exegetical writing helps to facilitate and illuminate their engagement, then it is of value to the work.

As research tools, reflexivity and personal experience, as discussed in sections four and six; influences the creative practitioner and informs the outcome of their research. Memory is integral to this process and I acknowledge it is also subjective, manipulative, and in many cases, historically inaccurate. *River-stones and Redneck* (2005) is an essay describing a number of events recalled from my childhood. A few selective paragraphs, précised for concision, illustrate an implicit connection with the creative works, and perhaps, provide an insightful closure.

I am reminded again of the familiar ‘vanishing point’ of the road, with the parallel lines that appear to converge at some point; but may not. Baudrillard identifies this as a simulacrum of American culture, but I believe this image that expresses the vacant and hyper-real can be found everywhere. The road is often perceived as a ‘mythological space’ wherein problems can be solved and, that which is hidden, ultimately revealed. The road indicates nothing beyond itself but can be understood to figuratively represent something. The mobius strip takes you back to where you started, and in the process the protective valance, through reflexivity, is peeled back to expose the real.

‘Show me the boy at age seven and I will show you the man.’ This maxim, proclaimed by a Jesuit priest, provided the structural time-frame for Michael Apter’s *Seven Up* (1964) series. In the far Northern Rivers of NSW the year 1958 heralded two major events; the advent of regional television and the ‘second coming’- I also turned seven and the implications of that year, have emerged through this reflexive process, and to a degree, inform aspects of my research and creative work.

My family lived on the outskirts of the country township of Murwillumbah. We were surrounded by farms, so space was never a problem. It was a place of bucolic bliss for any child to grow up in. The Perkins, a dysfunctional family of hill-billies, lived on the farm next door. They embraced the benefits of the new technology while our family remained loyal to the

wireless. My exclusion from television was somehow allayed by Saturday matinees at the local cinema. The Regent, an imposing building, was truly a magnificent palace, and a place to dream in the darkness and cheer on the heroes of the screen. These things have remained with me all these years later.

The impact of television on Ronnie, the oldest Perkins' boy, was immediate and dramatic. It became apparent in a real life re-play of *Roy Rogers* (1951), the television series programmed between the test patterns of those early days. Ronnie, armed with an old shot-gun, held up the local store on horse-back. He had the mandatory handkerchief to disguise his face, but the distinctive speech impediment when he yelled 'this is a stick-up', gave him away. My father was called to mediate and Ronnie surrendered the loot peacefully. He was given a few months to sweep the drive-way for his recalcitrant behaviour.

Most of the Perkins family had a cleft palate and it was thought to be genetically passed on. However, Mary the oldest girl was fortunate in that she didn't have the affliction; but that year she did have an immaculate conception. The birth was generally concealed from the community but at Christmas time in our church, I found it difficult to accept the original nativity scene when just over the hill we had a new baby Jesus, born of Mary Perkins in a rat-mangle of a dairy farm.

These memories fade with time, but like physical scars they still remind me of things that are hidden. On holidays at the beach I would collect rocks from the crevasses of the headland. It was dangerous because the timing had to be precise between the incoming waves, but these smooth gems were worth the risk.

There were oysters in the costal estuary and I turned my hand to cultivating pearls. A few grains of sand slipped under the flesh of the mollusc, and in a couple of years time, the jewels would be mine. One high tide I dived across them. I thought I could skim on the surface but the shells cut deep into my chest. Perhaps this was retribution for interfering with nature. In the years that followed I lost track of the oysters, but as an abstraction the pearls still remained, and every now and then they return.

My mother had pearls, a plastic string of them that could be adjusted depending on the dress she was wearing. This costume jewellery was in vogue in the 1950's and she always looked good in them. F Scott Fitzgerald wrote about society in the age of jazz, in his book *The Great Gatsby* (1925). I always saw my mother and father in those pages; the cotton prints, the loose fitting suits, the cigarettes and the struggle.

Maybe the closing lines in his book would be an appropriate ending for my exegesis. ‘So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.’ Then again, the opening lines referring to a character in a screenplay I’m developing, would be my own words, and exemplify the nature of reflexivity and my continuing creative journey. ‘Like spindrift he blew in from the Southern Ocean – the torment in his eyes, spoke to me of a man who had traded his soul. Later I would learn, it was for a handful of pearls.’



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## Films

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*Aguirre the Wrath of God* Werner Herzog, 1972 Germany  
*Apocalypse Now* Francis Ford Coppola, 1979 USA  
*Badlands* Terrence Malick, 1973 USA  
*Barton Fink* Joel Coen, 1991 USA/UK  
*Baise-Moi* Virginie Despentes & Coralie Trinh Thi, 2000 France  
*Betty Blue* Jean-Jacques Beineix, 1986 France  
*Blue Velvet* David Lynch, 1986 USA  
*Book of Revelation* Ana Kokkinos, 2006 Australia  
*Bootleg* John Prescott, 1986 Australia  
*Caged Heat* Jonathan Demme, 1974 USA  
*Canterbury Tales* Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1972 Italy/France  
*Claire of the Moon* Nichole Conn, 1992 USA  
*Clerks* Kevin Smith, 1994 USA  
*Charlie's Angels* McG, 2000 USA/Germany  
*Citizen Kane* Orson Welles, 1941 USA  
*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* Ang Lee, 2000 Taiwan/China/USA  
*Dirty Deeds* David Caesar, 2002 Australia/Canada  
*Duel* Steven Spielberg, 1970 USA  
*Duel in the Sun* King Vidor, 1946 USA  
*El Mariachi* Robert Rodriguez, 1992 Mexico/USA  
*Fargo* Joel Coen, 1996 USA  
*Finding Nemo* Andrew Stanton & Lee Unkrich, 2003 USA  
*Fool For Love* Robert Altman, 1985 USA  
*Funny Games* Michael Haneke, 1997 Austria  
*Getting Square* Jonathan Teplitzsky, 2003 Australia  
*Happy Feet* George Miller & Warren Coleman, 2006 Australia/USA  
*Hoodwinked* Cory & Todd Edwards, 2005 USA  
*Irresistible* Ann Turner, 2006 Australia

*Irreversible* Gaspar Noe, 2002 France  
*Jindabyne* Ray Lawrence, 2006 Australia  
*Kill Bill: Volume 1* Quentin Tarantino, 2003 USA  
*La Chinoise* Jean Luc Goddard, 1967 France  
*Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* Simon West, 2001 USA  
*Last Train to Freo* Jeremy Sims, 2006 Australia  
*Last Year in Marienbad* Alain Resnais, 1961 France  
*Lantana* Ray Lawrence, 2001 Australia/Germany  
*Le Samurai* Jean-Pierre Melville, 1967 France  
*Little Fish* Rowan Woods, 2005 Australia  
*Little Miss Sunshine* Jonathan Dayton & Valerie Faris, 2006 USA  
*Lost Highway* David Lynch, 1997 France/USA  
*Love and Other Catastrophes* Emma-Kate Croghan, 1996 Australia  
*Man With a Movie Camera* Dziga Vertov, 1929 Soviet Union  
*Miller's Crossing* Joel Coen, 1990 USA  
*Moonfall* John Prescott, 2006 Australia  
*Morocco* Josef von Sternberg, 1930 USA  
*Mulholland Drive* David Lynch, 2001 France/USA  
*Naked Mike* Leigh, 1993 UK  
*Natural Born Killers* Oliver Stone, 1994 USA  
*Occasional Course Language* Brad Hayward, 1998 Australia  
*Orphee* Jean Cocteau, 1950 France  
*Parklands* Kathryn Millard, 1996 Australia  
*Pulp Fiction* Quentin Tarantino, 1994 USA  
*Raising Arizona* Joel Coen, 1987 USA  
*Rashomon* Akira Kurosawa, 1950 Japan  
*Romance* Catherine Breillat, 1999 France  
*Rope* Alfred Hitchcock, 1948 USA  
*Salo* Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1975 Italy/France  
*Scrubbers* Mai Zetterling, 1983 UK  
*Sex Lies and Videotape* Steven Soderbergh, 1989 USA  
*Sin City* Frank Miller & Robert Rodriguez, 1005 USA  
*Sleep* Andy Warhol, 1963 USA  
*Star Wars* George Lucas, 1977 USA  
*Suburban Mayhem* Paul Goldman, 2006 Australia  
*Taxi Driver* Martin Scorsese, 1976 USA  
*The Arabian Nights* Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1974 Italy/France

*The Big Lebowski* Joel Coen, 1998 USA/UK  
*The Blair Witch Project* Daniel Myrick & Eduardo Sanchez, 1999 USA  
*The Goddess of 1967* Clara Law, 2000 Australia  
*The Hard Word* Scott Roberts, 2002 Australia/UK  
*The Magician* Scott Ryan, 2005 Australia  
*The Piano Teacher* Michael Haneke, 2001 Austria/France  
*The Player* Robert Altman, 1992 USA  
*The Proposition* John Hillcoat, 2005 Australia/UK  
*The Refracting Glasses* David Perry, 1991 Australia  
*The Third Man* Carol Reed, 1949 UK  
*The Wizard of Oz* Victor Fleming, 1939 USA  
*Thelma and Louise* Ridley Scott, 1991 USA  
*Touch of Evil* Orson Welles, 1958 USA  
*Three Dollars* Robert Connolly, 2005 Australia  
*Truly Madly Deeply* Anthony Minghella, 1991 UK  
*Wavelength* Michael Snow, 1967 Canada/USA  
*Wings of Desire* Wim Wenders, 1987 Germany/France  
*Wolf Creek* Greg Mclean, 2005 Australia  
*2:37* Murali K. Thalluri, 2006 Australia

### **Television**

*Blackjack* Peter Andrikidis, 2006 Australia  
*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Matt Kiene & Joe Reinkemeyer, 1997 USA  
*La Femme Nikita* Rene Bonniere, Chris Gross & Luc Besson, 1997 Canada  
*Little Oberon* Kevin Carlin, 2005 Australia  
*Prisoners* Reg Watson, 1979 Australia  
*Roy Rogers* George Blaire & John English, 1951 USA  
*Seven Up* Michael Apted, 1964 UK  
*Small Claims* Cherie Nowlan, 2004 Australia  
*Statler and Waldorf: from the Balcony* Ian Hirsch, 2005 USA  
*The Muppet Show* Jim Henson, 1976 USA/UK  
*The Silence* Cate Shortland, 2006 Australia  
*The Society Murders* Brendan Maher, 2006 Australia  
*Two Twisted* Jennifer Kent, 2005 Australia  
*Xena: Warrior Princess* Robert G Tapert, 1999 USA/New Zealand

## Appendix one

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# Inside Venus

a screenplay by  
John Prescott  
(Draft 3.2; 5 October 2006)

copyright BOOTLEG FILMS 2006

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DEVELOPED WITH THE ASSISTANCE FROM THE  
NEW SOUTH WALES FILM AND TELEVISION OFFICE

FADE IN

TEXT ON BLACK: *If you don't much care where you want to get to,  
Then it doesn't matter which way you go.*  
*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*  
*Lewis Carroll*

1.EXT HARBOUR NIGHT

The thump of diesel engines sound a warning through the mist. Light patterns snake across the velvet black water.

An aluminium dingy drifts in the wash. Amidst a tangle of crab pots and fishing gear we find JOHNNY KINSELLA.

He pulls furiously on the starter cord of the outboard motor. Again he tries, it chokes and dies. He curses the lifeless engine as he stumbles to stay upright.

Johnny is twenty five. Wet clothes cling to his lean frame, his worn cowboy boots at odds with the slippery hull. He fumbles the oars into place.

The hulk of a container ship materialises from the fog. Its' bow slices across the city lights. Johnny waits and watches as the steel wall of ship bears down on him.

He digs the oars in hard, trying to clear the rolling bow wave. The dingy is almost swamped in the turbulence.

High on the starboard stern a figure looks over, then a light arcs to the water. Johnny rows for the bobbing light.

They're two squat dolphin torches tied together. One sinking, the other a dull glow and going under. Johnny swipes at them with a fish net, almost capsizing the boat. He hooks one and eases them in. A wave hits and it's lost.

Johnny lunges over the side and catches the loose end of the tie rope as they slip away. Slowly he drags them up.

From the bottom of the boat, Johnny hugs the prize to his chest. He salutes the stars. The sound of a horn moans.

2.EXT KING EDWARD PARK DAWN

In the distance the harbour and industrial landscape, provide a sharp contrast to the park.

Johnny cycles over the crest into view. It's an old pushie with a milk-crate carrier holding the bait bucket and gear. We see the torches slung around his neck. Water sloshes from the bucket as he pedals up the path.

3.EXT WAREHOUSE (STREET) DAWN

Johnny rides past the red bricks and saw-tooth roofs of the warehouses. He pulls up and wheels into a building.





9.EXT FANTASY PARK DAY

Lou Reed sings "Perfect Day". Clouds float against a clear blue sky. A frisbee arcs and glides into view.

In SLOW-MOTION, Venus leap gracefully into the air to take the catch. She's dressed like a cheer leader, and with a smooth sweep she returns the throw. Johnny bounds across the park to intercept the flight.

A YOUNG COUPLE jog by pushing a pram. They wave and smile. Johnny and Venus walk hand in hand. They run, they tumble, they roll and hug.

There are dogs in the park and ducks on the pond. It is a celebration of life itself.

10.INT WAREHOUSE (BEDROOM) DAY

Venus stirs from sleep. She rolls over and stretches.

11.INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING) DAY

A drop of milky liquid squeezes from the tip of a needle, then runs the length of the shaft. Johnny examines the barrel closely, easing the plunger to expel the air.

12.INT WAREHOUSE (BATHROOM) DAY

Venus sits on the toilet half asleep, cleaning her teeth.

CUT TO

A band circles Johnny's arm. The vein is slightly raised and the needle slides in easily. He tweaks the plunger back and a mushroom of vivid pink explodes into the barrel. Johnny smiles and presses the plunger home.

CUT TO

Venus pulls the shower curtain and steps into the tub. Crab claws scythe the air in defence. She steps back out.

VENUS

Johnny...why are there crabs  
in our bath? Johnny!

Venus turns off the taps and grabs her robe.

13.INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING) DAY

Johnny is slumped forward on the couch, his head on the table. He stares at the floor. The needle hangs from his outstretched arm.

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE CREDIT: *"Inside Venus"*

14.INT CHAPEL DAY

Candles burn in the subdued light. A coffin stands before a small altar.

The body of Johnny Kinsella is laid out. He is dressed for the occasion and the make-up adds a theatrical dimension.

JOHNNY (V/O)

That spear took care of everything. It had special powers. Mind you, it was a dangerous thing to do.

We move around and look down on the body.

15.INT WAREHOUSE (STUDIO ROOM) DAY

Corrugated iron sheets define the studio. The layout is spartan and functional. Windows on the second floor offer a view over the harbour.

VENUS (V/O)

Well why do it?

We move in, searching along the galvanised dividers. The voices can be heard the other side of the tin.

JOHNNY (V/O)

Impulsive! This babe Athenia lived for the moment, her idea of a party trick. She throws it into the ground, from up there! And, it turns into an olive tree. Fixed the economy overnight. So they called the town Athens, after her.

A number of black-board menus are stacked against the wall. On a drawing bench, Trattoria Gambino's menu, is a work in progress. It details the meals of the day with elaborate calligraphy. We focus on the text.

Farfalle with Saffron

Fettuccine with Goats cheese, Olives and Basil

Orecchiette with Yoghurt, Parmesan and Mint

Conchiglie with Prawns, Garlic and Rosemary

JOHNNY (V/O)

Mint with Parmesan! I think not. You heard that story? About Persephone and Minthe, the nymphette?

VENUS (V/O)

Another chick fantasy Johnny?

We move off the board and creep across the corrugations.

16.INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING) DAY

To a television. We see Johnny working on the black-board menu in the studio. He talks to the camera.

JOHNNY

No, they were straight. Both had this thing for Pluto. Now he gets down to it with Minthe and of course, she walks bang in on them. Ugly scene.

We see Venus perched on the couch. She paints her toe nails and watches the video.

JOHNNY

You see Persephone was solid. With such a soft sounding name, you wouldn't have thought it. But she was definitely heavy. Steroids for breakfast type, would account for the rage.

VENUS (O/S)

So what happened?

Venus caps the polish bottle and blow dries her toes.

JOHNNY

She went ballistic and totally trashed Minthe. Trampled the life out her. All that was left was mint.

VENUS (O/S)

And what about Pluto?

Venus tosses the drier and peels herself off the couch. She crawls over to the television.

JOHNNY

I think he moved on to Rosemary. Now there's a herb! Stands for true love beyond death.

VENUS (O/S)

You're full of shit Johnny.

JOHNNY

Okay, I made that bit up.

Tears glisten in the flickering light. Venus reaches out and touches the glass. She hunches over, her shoulders heave with pain. The tape stops and ejects.

17.EXT           CENTRAL STATION           DAY

The city lives on the harbour. Alongside the station, rolling cranes swing cargo into ships. Coal loaders pile endless tons of rock on top of black mountains.

Over a confusion of tracks the Northern Express pulls in. NIGEL KINSELLA steps onto the platform. Despite the slept in clothes, he wears his forth decade gracefully.

Nigel, shouldering an overnight bag, negotiates the crowds to the taxi rank.

18.INT           WAREHOUSE(LIVING)           DAY

Venus sits on the edge of the couch and talks to us. On the table before her is a brown paper parcel tied with tape. She unwraps it, pausing occasionally to check her emotions.

VENUS

I told the cops about Johnny and his crepes. And about the crabs in the bath. Then I let them go.

The parcel contains Johnny's clothes and boots.

VENUS

They asked lots of questions that I couldn't answer. I've never seen this shirt ironed...

Venus smoothes out the folded shirt. Her fingers tremble as she adjusts the collar.

VENUS

They said on the form that it was death by misadventure...but it didn't look like fun to me. I just wished I'd had more time before they took him away. Like, there was nothing they could do for him and that was it...left with a pile of folded clothes. They even shined his boots.

Venus places the boots neatly together on the table. She smiles sadly.

19.EXT/INT.   TRATTORIA GAMBINO           DAY

NICHOLAS, the owner of the family restaurant, opens the doors to Venus. She carries a black-board menu inside and props it against the bench.

VENUS

Johnny didn't finish it Nic! He was working on it though.

NICHOLAS

Hey! Forget the board. Are you okay?

Venus folds into Nic's embrace. She just holds it together.

NICHOLAS

Take some time off work,  
we'll manage.

Venus checks her tears with a table napkin.

VENUS

No, Nic, I need to work...  
Is all the spelling right?

Their attention focuses on the menu board.

NICHOLAS

What they can't pronounce, they  
can't spell. It's the art work  
they see. Should be framed and  
hung on the wall.

Venus pulls a cook book from her bag. She flicks the pages.

VENUS

He loved the book, all he talked  
about were gods and food...You  
know we were going to start up  
this diner. A spaghetti bar, and  
show gangster movies.

NICHOLAS

He told me, over there. Said  
they'd be queued up down the  
street, right past my window.

VENUS

That was the trouble with  
Johnny. They were all just  
dreams.

Venus closes the book on the bench.

NICHOLAS

The trick is to hold onto them...

Venus bites her lip to hold back the tears.

VENUS

I know...I've got a dream  
catcher. I'll see you Nic.  
I've got to go.

Nic breaks a sprig of rosemary from a bunch and gives it to Venus.

NICHOLAS

You come by when you're ready,  
and have a meal. I'll wait on  
your table. Okay? Promise me?

A smile, a sniffle, a kiss on the cheek and she exits.

20.EXT        CREMATORIUM(STREET)        DAY

A late model Commodore is parked down the road. Detectives  
CLEMENTS and EDWARDS have the place under surveillance.

Detective Sergeant Clements is in her mid thirties and  
looks gently determined. Detective Edwards, ten years  
older, looks disinterested as though nothing much matters.

He unwraps his lunch and inspects the sandwich filling.

CLEMENTS

It's funny Edwards. Lunch is  
always a surprise for you. Does  
Margo make it? ... Reminds me  
of the school yard, vegemite and  
lettuce.

Edwards offers Clements a sandwich.

EDWARDS

This is chicken and mayo Serg.  
It's low fat!

CLEMENTS

Well, you must have been a good  
boy. Thanks, I'll stay with the  
caffeine.

Clements refills from a thermos. A taxi pulls up and Nigel  
Kinsella gets out. He shoulders his bag and enters the  
building.

CLEMENTS

I wonder who this is?

EDWARDS

Could be the kid's father, or  
a relative. You think the girl  
knows more than she's saying?

CLEMENTS

Well, she said nothing.

Edwards digs in for another sandwich.

EDWARDS

What makes you think there's  
more?

CLEMENTS

Your street deal would've been cut. Heroin this pure, usually comes in larger quantities.

EDWARDS

And someone will come looking for the rest?

CLEMENTS

You can count on it they will. How's that chicken sandwich?

Edwards assures with a mouth full and offers the last half to Clements. She takes a bite.

CLEMENTS

Mme! Not bad, you tell Margo now.

They both munch on.

21.INT        CREMATORIUM(ATRIUM)        DAY.

The atrium adjoins a vestibule with a number of seats facing a small curtained archway. Adjacent is the chapel.

KAREN, a woman in her mid forties and ANDREW, of similar age leave the vestibule. The distraught sound of Venus can be heard from the chapel.

VENUS(O/S)

Nic sent some rosemary Johnny. Remember? Love beyond death. What happens now?

Nigel greets Karen and Andrew. There's an awkward embrace.

KAREN

Nigel, thank god you're here. He was doing so well the last time...He said he had a job teaching. I don't understand!

NIGEL

He started using again. The coroner's report said it was an overdose...

KAREN

He had methadone, from the program.

NIGEL

Perhaps he was off the program, or it wasn't enough, whatever?

Sounds of anguish from the chapel.

KAREN

That poor girl in there. I  
can't even remember her name.

Andrew offers Karen comfort.

NIGEL

John's girlfriend, was Venetia.

KAREN

That's right he called her Venus.

ANDREW

They talked to Karen about the  
funeral and said they'll organise  
everything if you want.

NIGEL

That's fine, whatever.

KAREN

He just seemed to shut the  
door on us.

NIGEL

I suspect he did that a long  
time ago.

Another burst of howling from Venus interrupts.

VENUS (O/S)

The moon rockets Johnny. Their  
last touch down.

KAREN

Should we call someone?

NIGEL

Maybe we just let her grieve  
her way.

Nigel turns to the chapel. Karen buries her face in  
Andrew's shoulder and the two exit.

22.INT. CHAPEL DAY

Nigel steps into the chapel. From the shadows he watches  
Venus. She is wearing "rose-tinted" sunglasses and sits  
astride the casket.

VENUS

Just remember me Johnny. One  
last moment together.

Venus, with reckless disregard, unbuttons her shirt and  
pulls it open.

CUT TO



Venus' POV: Johnny is alive and trembling with rose tinted light. She leans into him. He pulls her down and they kiss full mouth, passionate and hungry.

Johnny moves down, the intensity builds.

VENUS

Moon rockets...one last time.

In closer, nipples touch lips. The curve of breast and face are silhouetted. As they move, flares of light spiral and explode into patterns.

CUT TO

Nigel moves from the shadows, interrupting the moment. Venus looks up surprised.

VENUS

I guess this looks a little weird! You're... Nigel? I'm Venetia, I called you.

NIGEL

Look, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt. I'll come back...

VENUS

No! Please, I was just saying goodbye.

Venus realises her shirt is undone, and that she is sitting on the coffin. She slides off and buttons up the shirt.

VENUS

We weren't too big on church. Did you just arrive?

NIGEL

Yeah, this morning. Why don't you stay and perhaps later...

VENUS

We've had our time.

Nigel looks down at Johnny. His bag slips to the floor. His breathing is heavy. Venus touches his hand lightly.

VENUS

I'll wait for you outside. I can give you a lift back, if you want.

She leaves Nigel standing before the casket.

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER TEXT: *Though the sky be dark, and the voyage be long,  
Yet we never can think we were rash or wrong,  
While round in our Sieve we spin!*

*The Jumblies  
Edward Lear*

23.EXT CREMATORIUM(DRIVE) DAY

Venus leans against a funeral limo in the the drive-way.  
She plays jacks with a handful of pebbles and talks to us.

VENUS

My name is Venetia Kennedy, I'm  
nineteen years old and people  
call me Venus. When I started  
seeing Johnny my life was pretty  
much a non-event. It sounds corny,  
but we kind of fell in love. I  
never would've thought that four  
months later he'd be dead. That's  
his family in there. His mother  
Karen, who doesn't understand what  
happened and I think she never will.  
And his father Nigel, who I just  
met and god knows what he thinks.

Venus ambles across the drive into the garden. There's a  
commemorative wall with a number of inscribed plaques.

VENUS

Please! Johnny don't end up in  
one of these.

She bounces a few pebbles off the brass head plates, then  
points to the Commodore parked along the road.

VENUS

See that car parked down the  
street? They're detectives.  
They think they're doing  
undercover work.

24.EXT KENNEDY HOME DAY

PAULINE, Venus' mother, rounds the family up for a photo.  
Husband BARRY stands beside the barbecue with his arm  
around REBECCA, the youngest daughter. Venus just squeezes  
in on the other side of the barbecue.

VENUS (V/O)

This is my family. There's my  
dad Barry and his favourite  
daughter Becky. And there's me.  
Mum always says that a good  
photo just catches the moment.  
See where the barbecue is,  
that's no accident.

Pauline activates the time-delay and scurries into frame.

25.INT UNIVERSITY CAFETERIA DAY

Venus and ELAINE serve themselves in the lunch bar. They sample the boiled eggs while getting a sandwich. Elaine is twenty years old and a little shy.

VENUS (V/O)  
This is my best friend, Elaine.  
We used to hang out together  
at Uni. We were going to move  
into a share house, but I got  
into big trouble.

26.INT OFFICE(LECTURER) DAY

DR ANNE WOODS places two assignments on the desk in front of Venus.

VENUS (V/O)  
You'd think, with all those  
academics, they'd have a clue.

She pauses and removes her glasses.

DR WOODS  
I don't have a problem with the  
paper, in fact I would give it  
a high credit, but I can only  
give one the mark. They're  
identical.

VENUS  
It's my fault. It was on Elaine's  
disc and I copied it.

DR WOODS  
You didn't think to add any...  
original thought to it?

VENUS  
What's the point? I thought it  
was pretty good as it was.

DR WOODS  
Venetia, your grades have been  
consistently high. Is there's  
some problem?

VENUS  
Not with me.

DR WOODS  
Maybe you could talk to a  
counsellor?

VENUS  
What would they know!

Dr Woods shuffles the two assignments. She is anxious.

DR WOODS

Well, it's up to you. But with this attitude, you'll fail.

Venus is on the verge of tears.

VENUS

Maybe, I'll just...I can defer

DR WOODS

That's another option. Look, I can give you a week's extension, to resubmit.

VENUS

Thanks, I appreciate it, and I will try.

Venus reaches to collect her assignment. Dr Woods staples the two papers together.

DR WOODS

I'll give Elaine this mark. You see what you can do. Okay?

Venus smiles, gathers her bag and leaves.

VENUS (V/O)

Elaine and I always said if we had to choose, we'd take the cliff. So, with uni on hold, there was time for other things.

27.INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING) DAY

We see Venus and Johnny romping together on the bed. It has a home video look as they play their seduction to the camera. We hear the sound of a guitar lightly strummed.

Venus reaches out, takes the camera and frames Johnny.

VENUS

And just for the record, Johnny Kinsella, do you love me?

JOHNNY

I do, I love you to bits, Venetia Francis Kennedy. I love this bit, and this bit and...

Johnny finger walks up Venus' leg. He pauses on her knee.

JOHNNY

Round and round the garden like a teddy...hound. One step, two steps, and...down on the mound!

Johnny goes down on Venus. He is almost lost between her legs. Venus grabs a handful of his hair and gently eases him back up into the frame.

VENUS

Whoa! You come back up here.  
And what is a teddy-hound?

JOHNNY

Half bear, half dog. Cuddly  
and dangerous, and often found  
lurking under bed sheets!

Johnny pulls the sheet over his head and burrows into Venus. We see a glimpse of the room as she responds, turning the camera back to an erratic frame of herself.

VENUS

Definitely dangerous...

She expresses her pleasure and arches back into the pillow. We see the dream catcher suspended above the bed.

JOHNNY (O/S)

Hey! Good shot to end on!

We hear the sound of Venus reaching climax.

VENUS (O/S)

I didn't exactly plan it.

CUT TO

Venus stops the VCR and ejects the tape. Johnny's on the couch playing guitar and watching their performance. He quits the guitar and pulls a column of smoke from a bucket bong. He plunges, inhales and deflates into the couch.

JOHNNY

Elaine could download better  
stuff from the net.

VENUS

That's not the point. She knows  
it's us and can relate.

Venus is dressed in a waitress uniform. She dumps the tape in her bag and grabs her coat. Johnny pulls another column.

JOHNNY

You want half a cylinder before  
you go, babe? Make the tables  
fly by. Shit I'm ripped!

Venus plunges. She grips the table to steady the rush.

VENUS

Don't get too ripped. I asked Elaine if she wanted to come tonight. I finish at eight.

Johnny drifts a moment. Venus collects the keys to go.

VENUS

Hello! Johnny, you do remember tonight? Dinner, at my parents?

JOHNNY

Yeah!..I forgot to tell you, Oxter's coming around, but he'll be gone by then.

Venus looks very unimpressed.

VENUS

So much for the detox program. Shit Johnny. You don't have to lie to me.

JOHNNY

It's just a little taste! He offered, I'm not going to be rude. God knows I still owe him...

Venus rounds savagely on Johnny.

VENUS

Tell me about it. Last time he wanted a head job, to clear the slate. Remember?

JOHNNY

That was a fucking joke.

VENUS

Well I didn't find it funny. He's a fucking creep!

JOHNNY

Let's just lighten up. It was no big deal. He can't express himself. I think he likes you.

VENUS

Yeah! He'd like me to suck his dick? Is that what you want? How much smack is a blow job worth?

JOHNNY

Venus, I think we're losing it here. Did I...did I say that? No! So, what's this about?

Venus answers with silence. She exits. Johnny follows.

28.INT WAREHOUSE(LIFT) DAY

Venus pulls the gate shut. Johnny punches the button to hold the lift. The steel cage separates them.

VENUS  
Finish Nic's menu then!

JOHNNY  
I will, promise. Look, Oxter's no friend, but what can I do?

VENUS  
It's what he can do. I'll see you tonight.

Venus descends in the lift.

29.EXT/INT TRATTORIA GAMBINO NIGHT.

Elaine peers in the window of the restaurant. She waves to Venus who is waiting tables. Venus removes her apron and grabs her coat. She signals for Elaine to come in.

VENUS  
Come in, the door opens, see!

Venus laughs and holds the door open for Elaine.

ELAINE  
We'll be late and you know what your mother's like.

Nic greets Elaine with a warm hug.

NICHOLAS  
Elaine! You worry too much. Now there's a table right here. The menu and the wine list.

Nic offers Elaine a chair and drags the black-board menu to the table. Elaine blushes with all the attention.

ELAINE  
Next time Nic, soon, I promise.

NICHOLAS  
Cross your heart!

Nic looks at the menu, then to Venus.

NICHOLAS  
We might just have a new board by then, or should I ask?

VENUS  
He's working on it Nic.

NICHOLAS

It's not the Sistine chapel,  
just a menu.

VENUS

I'm sorry, he's just slack.

Nic escorts the two girls to the door.

NICHOLAS

You two have a good night, and  
next time Elaine, we'll do the  
tango... on the tables.

Nic swivels his hips and waves them off.

30.INT BOTTLE SHOP NIGHT

Venus has a mobile phone to her ear. She checks the label  
on a bottle of red.

VENUS

Yes Dad! It's a Shiraz. What  
about the Tooheys?...Okay!

Venus rolls her eyes and rings off. Elaine takes the phone.

VENUS

Talk about full of shit! They  
had this house tasting, like  
a Tupperware party, with wine.  
Now he's a connoisseur.

Elaine checks the bottle.

ELAINE

Look at the price!

VENUS

Whew! Just a bit! Could get  
smashed off your face on cooler  
for that. Get some beer?

They collect the beer and check it at the cash register.

VENUS

Dad's trying to reinvent himself.  
He's at Uni now, doing Arts!

ELAINE

He still blames me, doesn't he?

Venus pays and gives Elaine a hug as they exit.

VENUS

I don't. Elaine we just deferred.  
Anyway how uncool, at Uni with Dad.  
And he wears these squinty glasses.



She pulls the tape from her bag and hands it to Elaine.

VENUS  
Just don't let him see this.

31.INT WAREHOUSE(LIFT) NIGHT

The lift ascends with OXTER. He carries a small outboard motor on his shoulder. His figure, in silhouette, like an oversized hunchback.

32.INT WAREHOUSE(LIVING)) NIGHT

Johnny opens the door to Oxter, a man in his thirties. He has brittle features and a winning smile. With a touch of theatrics, he presents the motor to Johnny.

JOHNNY  
Hey Oxter! What's with the motor?

OXTER  
John boy, this is an opportunity in search of an entrepreneur. But first, a little sample.

Oxter casually looks around.

OXTER  
And where is the lovely Venus?

JOHNNY  
She had this family thing. Set the example for the sister.

Oxter pulls a Snac-pac of savoury twists from his pocket and starts munching on them.

OXTER  
One cannot be too cavalier with the female of the species. They maintain our survival at the top of the food chain.

Oxter shoves the Snac-Pac over to Johnny and settles onto the couch.

OXTER  
Fuck, if it was left up to us we'd still be in the swamp.

JOHNNY  
So we go catch some fish? Is that what the motors for?

Oxter leans forward, his fingers tap the table to emphasise his words. Johnny concentrates and chews on the crisps.

OXTER

Think incubator, it nurtures  
life. Now that requires power,  
which equals money John. Without  
it you're a shag on a rock.

Oxter breaks up some mull into a bowl and rolls a joint.

OXTER

And we're not talking the shag  
on the backseat. There's plenty  
of them. We're talking the Venus'  
of the world. High maintenance,  
and you need capital.

Oxter admires his handy work with the joint. Satisfied, he  
passes it to Johnny and flips the zippo. Johnny draws hard.

JOHNNY

Got all that Oxter. But why the  
motor?

Oxter draws hard.

OXTER

There is logic. You need the  
outboard for your boat.

JOHNNY

I've already got oars.

OXTER

I know, and people rode bikes  
before the car.

Johnny takes the joint.

JOHNNY

I've got a bike too. Why do I  
need this engine?

They slide back into the couch and the comfort zone.

OXTER

Punctuality John. We need to  
rely on you, and so does Venus.  
She's got a sister?

33.INT      KENNEDY HOME (DINING)      NIGHT

Venus and Elaine drink beer at the dinner table. Becky  
joins them. She is sixteen and a constant challenge.

BECKY

Mum said I could have your  
room now you've moved out.

VENUS

Just don't touch my stuff.  
That includes the posters.

PAULINE sets the table. She's in her early forties with a little middle age thickening.

PAULINE

Bec, not tonight. Venus might  
come home if things don't work out.

BECKY

Why does Venetia always get  
to do what she wants?

VENUS

Because I'm the oldest, Becky!

PAULINE

Well let's all act our age.  
Give your father a hand love.

Becky shoves her chair out and flounces off

BECKY

I suppose I've got to wait on  
her too?

Pauline hushes a response from Venus.

PAULINE

Ignore her Vee. She actually  
misses you when you're not here.

VENUS

You wouldn't guess.

Barry, wearing a colourful apron, carries in a platter. He looks over his reading glasses.

BARRY

Spiced rack of lamb, Cajun style.

VENUS

Hey Dad! You should be on TV.  
Cooking with Barry!

There's appreciation from all at the table. Pauline passes the plates up and the meal is served.

PAULINE

Doesn't that look scrumptious,  
girls?

VENUS

Beats chops on the barbie.  
You could get job at Nic's.

ELAINE

Or Johnny's diner? Bet your  
Dad could do a spaghetti.

Venus gives Elaine a look of resignation.

VENUS

Elaine! The diner won't happen.

BARRY

How is John, still doing his art?

VENUS

He was finishing a board tonight.  
That's why he didn't come.

PAULINE

It seems a shame John doesn't use  
his teaching...

VENUS

Mum, can we drop it? What's  
this Cajun style Dad?

Venus pokes at the plate in front of her.

BARRY

It's char-grilled with chili  
pepper. True Cajun food comes  
from the swamps around Louisiana.

VENUS

Pretty impressive! Did you learn  
this at Uni?

Barry laughs.

BARRY

It's in the cook-book.

VENUS

That sounds like someone else.

ELAINE

Tastes great Mr Kennedy, not  
too hot.

Barry tastes the wine and offers it around. Venus does the  
big taste ritual, then swirls the glass for Elaine.

VENUS

A Shiraz 98. What do you think  
Elaine?

ELAINE

I think we're being kicked  
under the table.

Pauline exchanges looks with the girls. Venus returns the glass to Barry.

VENUS  
Reckon Uni will help you get  
another job?

Barry contemplates the wine in his glass.

BARRY  
Who knows? University was the  
golden handshake.

VENUS  
Least it's better than a watch.

PAULINE  
You'll find something. It's a  
mid-life change.

VENUS  
Or crisis! All those babes out  
there with pierced belly buttons!  
Look out for him Mum.

PAULINE  
I'm thinking of having a little  
tattoo done myself.

We pull back and look down on the the dining table.

BECKY  
You won't let me!

PAULINE  
When you're my age Rebecca, you  
can have as many as you like,  
where ever you like.

VENUS  
That's so cool. My mother turns  
into a Goth!

34.INT      WAREHOUSE (LIVING)      NIGHT

Oxter has a map of the harbour in front of him. He points out the shipping lanes to Johnny.

OXTER  
She'll come into the harbour, port  
side of the beacons. You intercept  
the drop here.

JOHNNY  
You heard the saying, a drop in  
the ocean? This is one big mother  
of a ship Oxter.

OXTER

You're the mariner. Just sit  
off beacon two. You'll see it.

Oxter offers Johnny a cigar from a silver case.

JOHNNY

I'm the mule, in a boat.

Oxter contemplates Johnny for a moment. He smiles and leans  
across to light the cigar.

OXTER

Johnny, I don't do deals with  
donkeys. You either take the  
initiative and play, or walk  
away.

Oxter folds up the map and takes a look at some of Johnny's  
drawings. He focuses on an erotic sketch of Venus.

OXTER

But then, you've always got  
Venus to hock her arse. She  
could pull five hundred a night.

JOHNNY

Whoa man! Don't confuse the  
issue. I didn't say no. I just  
need to think it through.

OXTER

I know you've got integrity,  
but she's high maintenance and  
like I said, that takes capital.

Oxter slides a square of foil over to Johnny's hand.

OXTER

I'll leave this with you, for  
the drawing. Look good framed.

JOHNNY

Firstly, Venus is not in the  
equation.

OXTER

Maybe not yet.

JOHNNY

Not ever! I'll do it, but you  
stay clear of here, till then.

OXTER

That's fine by me. Why don't you  
read up on the manual?

Oxter tosses the engine manual on the table and leaves.

35.INT           KENNEDY HOME (BEDROOM)           NIGHT

This is Venus' old bedroom. A single bed, complete with soft toys. A desk with photos, school trophies and posters on the walls. In one corner a sewing machine and ironing board intrude.

Venus packs things into a box. Elaine sits on the bed.

ELAINE

Don't you sometimes wish you could just take your room!

VENUS

Yeah I miss it. Not everything. Like this, it's embarrassing.

Venus holds up a floral print halter top. Elaine cracks up.

ELAINE

I used to think you looked so good in that. It's outrageous! Try it on.

VENUS

My boobs will fall out.

ELAINE

That's the idea, isn't it!

Becky tentatively pushes the door open.

BECKY

Can I come in?

VENUS

I suppose. Here Bec, why don't you wear this. You can have it if you want.

Venus chucks the top to Becky. She takes a look, then tosses it back.

BECKY

I wouldn't be seen dead in that! What about your black jeans?

VENUS

No way! Hands off!

Becky bounces onto the bed with Elaine. One of the girls.

BECKY

I thought they didn't fit anymore.

VENUS

And what's that supposed to mean?

BECKY

Nothing! Are you moving in Elaine?  
With Johnny and Venus?

ELAINE

I don't know. I'm thinking about it.

BECKY

I would, you can do what you  
like, and Johnny's pretty cool.

VENUS

Yeah Bec, but not all his friends  
are. That's the trouble.

Venus rolls up a few posters. We see one as it comes down.  
It shows the front man of a new hot band.

BECKY

Awe no! Leave that one, go on.

Elaine holds up a tatty bear and wiggles it at Venus

ELAINE

What about Boofie, is he coming?

VENUS

He gets homesick.

Becky shakes her head to Elaine.

BECKY

Boofie's been dumped. There's  
not enough room in the bed.

VENUS

Shut up Becky. Here carry this,  
please!

Venus dumps the box on Becky, grabs the posters and exits.

36.INT        KENNEDY HOME (KITCHEN)        NIGHT

Pauline juggles cans of food from a packed pantry. She  
stacks them into a carton. Barry loads the dish washer.  
Venus enters, then Elaine and Becky carrying the box.

VENUS

And I thought it was safe to  
come home...killed with food!

Venus rolls her eyes.

PAULINE

Just a few things. They were  
on special.



VENUS  
It's called compulsive.

Venus opens the doors to the pantry.

VENUS  
Mum, you could close this door  
and come out next year, and  
you wouldn't lose a kilo!

Pauline places the remaining cans on the bench. The rebuff wounds a little.

VENUS  
I'm sorry.

Venus gives Pauline a hug. She spies a rejected tin.

VENUS  
Oh! Rice cream! Just one more  
itsy little can, please, Mum?

Venus inches the can along the bench. Pauline smiles and loads the rest in the box.

37.EXT KENNEDY HOME NIGHT

Venus and Elaine are in the car and ready to go.

PAULINE  
It's wonderful to see you.  
And remember Elaine, you're  
both welcome, anytime.

VENUS  
Don't study too hard Dad!

Almost as an after thought Venus thrusts a poster to Becky.

VENUS  
Here Bec, I wouldn't be seen  
dead with it.

Becky unfurls a quick glimpse. It's the poster she wanted. She's over the top. The car exits down the drive.

We look down on the Kennedy home and pull away till it's just another house in a suburban street.

38.INT THE VENUE NIGHT

The place is packed, standing room only. The floor sways to the music. We see the BAND, laid back and confident.

Further back we find Venus and Elaine. The bracket ends and there's an urgent push towards the bar.

VENUS (V/O)

We hung out for a while, did the Newie thing. That way I could avoid Oxter, but for Elaine it brought out the ghosts.

Elaine and Venus jostle their way to the exit.

39.EXT THE VENUE NIGHT

The queue to get in spills onto the street. The mandatory dress check is carried out by "door security".

Down the line we see an altercation with a BOUNCER and a young guy TERRY. He is wearing casual clothes and a natty bowler hat. His girlfriend ANGIE hangs off his arm.

ROLAND PRENTICE, intervenes. He's thirty and a gym-jock.

BOUNCER

Roly, we don't allow hats inside do we?

ROLAND

No. It's casual dress, not formal.

Terry obliges by removing his hat. He despairs at the absurdity to Angie.

TERRY

All right! Fuck, I'll take it off.

BOUNCER

Did you call me fuck? Roly, you heard it.

ROLAND

Well that's not your name, is it?

Roland moves the line of people towards the door.

TERRY

Awe! Fuck, forget it, we're out of here.

Bouncer shoves Terry against the wall. Angie tries to pull him away. Roland takes the hat and examines it.

ROLAND

He doesn't listen, does he!

Bouncer drives a sharp punch into Terry's stomach. He folds over gasping for air. Angie turns on Roland.

ANGIE

Fucking leave him alone you cock suckers.

Bouncer lifts his knee into Terry's face. Roland grips Angie's jaw, forcing her mouth open.

ROLAND

Are you calling me a cock sucker?

Angie shakes her head. There are tears in her eyes.

ROLAND

You like sucking cocks? That right? You want to suck mine?

Roland forces a nod of agreement from Angie. Relaxing his grip, he adjusts the bowler hat on her head.

ROLAND

Sorry, not tonight. But you can go in. Girls can wear hats.

Roland and Bouncer saunter back to the door. Venus and Elaine give them a wide berth as they exit the club.

VENUS (V/O)

Another night in Newcastle. It's funny they call it our town, but it's not. It's theirs.

Terry wraps an arm around Angie. His nose bleeds. Angie stands frozen against the wall, the bowler hat askew on her head and tears streaming down her face.

40.EXT BEACH (PARKING BAY) NIGHT

The car pulls in and parks, leaving the lights on. They cut a path across the sand to the waters edge. Venus tries to coax Elaine down to the beach. She stays at the car.

ELAINE

You know I hate this place, Vee. Can we please go home? Now!

Further up the beach torch lights weave across the dunes.

VENUS

They're just fishermen Elaine! Coming in from Nobbies. It's a beach, like, where people go to swim.

ELAINE

I know that. But I still want to go home. Or do I have to walk?

Venus recoils a moment, then gets in the car.

VENUS

Okay! We're going home.

ELAINE

Vee, I'm sorry... That didn't  
come out right. I just don't want  
to be here. Let's not spoil it.

Elaine gets in the car and they drive off.

41.INT WAREHOUSE(LIFT) NIGHT

The cage drops to ground floor. Venus slides the boxes of  
food and posters into the lift. We see her ascend through  
the meccano of struts and steel.

VENUS (V/O)

I never thought then, that  
Oxter's visit would change  
everything. And the  
began here with Johnny and me  
would end in such a tragic mess.

42.INT CHAPEL DAY

The coffin stands before the altar. We move over Johnny's  
body to the row of candles burning.

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER TEXT: *Far and few, far and few,  
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;  
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,  
And they went to sea in a Sieve.*

*The Jumblies  
Edward Lear*

43.EXT NOVA-HOTEL(DRIVE) DAY

Venus drops Nigel at the hotel.

VENUS

You could stay at the warehouse,  
and I can show you round, if  
you like.

NIGEL

I've paid for the room, so I'll  
check in. But later, that would  
be really good.

VENUS

Cool, I'll pick you up.

Venus drives off. Nigel enters the foyer.

44.INT WAREHOUSE(STREET) DAY

Venus gets out of her car and sees Clements and Edwards  
coming from the building. She stands, hand on her hips and  
awaits their approach. Edwards carries a plastic bag.

CLEMENTS

Ah, Miss Kennedy, we've been looking for you.

VENUS

Well I'm here, you found me.

CLEMENTS

I know it's a difficult time, but we need your help.

VENUS

I told you everything before. Why don't you believe me?

CLEMENTS

We do Miss Kennedy. There may be something else, that you forgot.

VENUS

No. The only stuff was in that tin foil you took. There was nothing else.

Edwards pulls the two dolphin torches tied together from the the bag. One of them looks broken.

VENUS

What's that?

EDWARDS

Torches. We found them in the bins out the back.

VENUS

They probably don't work.

CLEMENTS

You've never seen these before?

VENUS

No. Why would I? I don't go rummaging through bins.

Venus becomes increasingly agitated.

CLEMENTS

Alright Miss Kennedy.

VENUS

Look, you don't believe me, so come and search the place.

CLEMENTS

That won't be necessary.

Edwards dumps the bag with the torches in the boot of the Commodore. Clements watches after Venus as she goes inside.

45.EXT      BOAT SHED      DAY

It's an old waterline building on eroded piers. Rusty rail tracks run to the water. Upturned boats are chained to anything secure. Nigel and Venus check Johnny's tinnie.

VENUS

He left about four that morning.  
Came back with three crabs.

Venus plonks herself down on the sand. She digs her feet in and pats a mound over them. Nigel sits alongside.

VENUS

We first met here, that day I left Uni. I'm sitting wondering what to tell my parents and he rows in from out there, with this bucket of oysters. He said he was searching for pearls.

NIGEL

I'd say he might have found one.

Venus laughs off the complement.

VENUS

Well if he did he ate it. He must've eaten more than thirty. Slimy little things. Then he tries to kiss me. There was no way! I moved into the warehouse a week later.

NIGEL

What did your parents say?

VENUS

They were just upset about me leaving Uni. What are you going to do after the funeral?

Venus stacks some round stones into a pile on the sand.

NIGEL

Collect John's ashes. Karen's arranged a plaque in that wall.

VENUS

You should scatter them here.

NIGEL

Does it matter? It's what we remember that counts.

VENUS

It matters to me.

Nigel acknowledges her words. He adds a stone to the pile.

NIGEL  
Maybe you're right.

VENUS  
There's some video tapes, if you want to see them. Just us doing stupid stuff. A bit embarrassing but...You know it's weird, like I've come a full circle, and it amounts to a pile of rocks.

NIGEL  
People have always gathered stones. To mark an occasion or just to say they were there.

Venus carefully places one last rock on top of the growing collection.

VENUS  
This can be our marker.

46.INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING) DAY

We see a video image of Johnny chalking an elaborate drawing of a Tortellini shell. It's a visual cue to the dish; Tortellini in Brodo alla Bolognese

VENUS (O/S)  
What is that?

We come in close on the drawing. Johnny taps the chalk on the board.

JOHNNY  
For those who can't read.  
Order by pictures.

VENUS (O/S)  
Numbers would be easier...  
What is it?

JOHNNY  
Tortellini! And you should know where it came from!

VENUS (O/S)  
I don't. But I think I'm about to.

Johnny slaps the cook book closed.

JOHNNY  
Nope! What you don't know, you won't miss.

VENUS (O/S)  
 (sarcastic)  
 Oh! Johnny...tell me please!  
 I love Tortellini. Tell me.

Johnny dusts the chalk off his hands.

JOHNNY  
 On two conditions. Give me the  
 camera. And then...

We see an erratic image of walls and roof and then we  
 steady on Venus.

JOHNNY  
 You undo all the buttons on  
 your shirt.

VENUS  
 Tortellini had better be worth it!

Venus pops the buttons and the garment falls away.

JOHNNY (O/S)  
 We're in this cut-rate motel. It  
 was an inn back then, and Venus  
 the goddess of love, is having  
 an affair. Could've been your  
 great grandma.

VENUS  
 Who with?

JOHNNY (O/S)  
 Don't know, probably some local.  
 So Venus is lying there naked and  
 the innkeeper gets this key-hole  
 view of her. We're talking serious  
 exposure here. And what does he do?

The video image moves down and focuses on Venus' navel

VENUS  
 Masturbates on the doorstep?

JOHNNY (O/S)  
 No, this dude's into the kitchen  
 and he shapes this pasta like  
 Venus' navel. That's Tortellini.

VENUS  
 That's pretty dumb!

Venus reach for the camera and turns it on Johnny crutch.

VENUS (O/S)  
 Let me tell you about spaghetti.



The image breaks to static.

VENUS (O/S)  
Your saved by the battery!

CUT TO

Nigel is watching the video replay. Venus changes tapes and we see an image of Johnny asleep.

VENUS  
Turn on the camera and he'd  
perform. Even in his sleep. Here  
we're studying dream patterns.

Venus searches through the tape collection. She finds the double cassettes of *Gone with the Wind* out of their case.

NIGEL  
I remember one morning on this  
farm, I found him reciting poetry  
to a herd of cattle.

Venus opens the box cover and is shocked to see the the pack of heroin wedged inside. She stares in disbelief.

NIGEL  
He was about six, just standing  
there warming his feet in fresh  
cow pats. You know he told me  
they were mooing for an encore.

Nigel watches the television. He can't hide the hurt or the tears. Venus closes the case on the drugs and returns it to the shelf.

She wraps a comforting arm around Nigel.

NIGEL  
Was there pain, do you know?

VENUS  
It was like he was asleep,  
only he never woke up.

Nigel crumples into Venus, burying his face. She holds on tight. Tears crash down her cheeks.

Venus' POV sees the television and Johnny asleep, then the tape of *Gone with the Wind*. She turns to the couch.

47.INT      WAREHOUSE (LIVING)      DAY

Johnny's head is slumped on the table. Froth spews from his mouth. The needle still hangs from his arm. The moment hits with impact.

Venus rushes into the room. She jerks his head back out of the vomit. She rips the needle from his arm. She slaps his face. She wipes his face. She opens his mouth and breathes hard in his face.

Johnny's eyes roll back, his head bounces on a rubber neck.

VENUS

Johnny, you hold on. Don't you  
let go. Johnny, Johnny stay with  
it. We'll take a shower. Okay?

Venus grapples him to his feet. His legs buckle as she dances and drags him across the room.

CUT TO

Johnny folds over the side of the bath like a sack. Venus screws the shower on full. Water cascades over everything. The crabs scrape to and fro.

CUT TO

At the fridge, Venus ransacks the freezer. The ice tray's empty. A box of "icy-poles" spill and skid across the floor. She grabs the box and tears the mobile from the charger on the bench.

CUT TO

Venus reefs down Johnny's pants. She fumbles through the box of icy-poles.

VENUS

It's supposed to work Johnny!  
And you like green ones!

Venus jams the ice-block in Johnny's butt. There is no reaction.

VENUS

You stay with me. I'll call help!

Kneeling beside the bath she punches at the phone.

VENUS

Work, fuck you. Come on.

Venus bashes at it, listens and tries again. Then trashes it into the water at the crabs.

In vain, she tries to shake life into him, shuffling the limp body around the room.

Venus collapses exhausted, still gripping Johnny. There's cry of anguish as she pummels her fists into his dead body.

48.INT GYMNASIUM DAY

A stack of weights crash down. Slowly the block creeps back up the pulley. They crash again.

ROLAND  
 You told me he was reliable.  
 You'd expect more intelligence  
 from a teacher.

Roland climbs off the bench and towels himself down.

OXTER  
 Roly, I didn't anticipate this.  
 What a way to go though.

ROLAND  
 It's quality hammer. Which is  
 immaterial, because we don't  
 have it. We've got a circus  
 of cops watching the place.

Roland pulls his gym gear off and wraps a towel around his waist. He studies himself in the mirror.

OXTER  
 Well, we know they don't have  
 it. It's the girl, Venus.

Roland addresses Oxters reflection in the mirror.

ROLAND  
 Let's be quite clear Oxter.  
 This is between you and me  
 and the dead teacher. Not  
 some mythical maiden. Now I  
 want closure on this. Who the  
 fuck is Venus?

OXTER  
 Hey Roly. It's his girlfriend,  
 and I'll get the gear from her  
 and we'll close it

Roland takes a needle kit from one of the lockers. He gives himself a shot of insulin. Oxter lights his thin cigar.

ROLAND  
 Whose girlfriend? The teacher's?

OXTER  
 Yeah! Christ Roly, insulin's for  
 diabetics. Why don't you use  
 steroids like everyone else?

Roland dumps the kit in the locker and bangs the door shut.

ROLAND

There's the downside with steroids, but not insulin. You feel these walnuts.

OXTER

Roly! I've no doubt you're hung like a bull. But you need food with it.

Roland hands Oxter some money.

ROLAND

Why don't you go and get me breakfast. Then we'll talk about this girlfriend, and how you're going to get my smack back.

The towel drops as Roland steps into the shower cubicle. Oxter turns and leaves.

49.INT POLICE STATION(OFFICE) DAY

Inspector PETER NORRIS has a clear view across the city.

NORRIS

We're in dangerous territory. I think we should bring her in.

He turns from the window to the room. Clements and Edwards sit across the desk.

CLEMENTS

But sir! With due respect, what purpose would it serve?

NORRIS

It might just save her life Clements. Isn't that what we're all about?

CLEMENTS

Yes sir, it is.

Norris eases his frame into the chair. Edwards agrees.

NORRIS

So, you searched the place and found nothing?

CLEMENTS

Just routine for an overdose. We did find marine torches in the garbage bins at the back. And we know the deceased had been fishing.

EDWARDS

There were live crabs in the bath sir.

NORRIS

So he could've done the pick up?

CLEMENTS

Yes sir. We've been watching the place and there's a good chance the drugs are still there.

NORRIS

And the Coroner's report?

CLEMENTS

Found traces of very pure, high grade heroin. The boy didn't know what he was shooting.

Norris jolts forward over the desk.

NORRIS

And this girl does?

CLEMENTS

She's not a user.

NORRIS

You're sure of that? What if she wants to experiment!

CLEMENTS

Sir, given the circumstances I don't believe she would.

NORRIS

There's something perverse here Clements. You've not heard the word compassion?

CLEMENTS

Yes sir, I have.

They stare each other down across the table.

NORRIS

And you'd use this girl to catch the bigger fish.

CLEMENTS

Well, that's up to you sir. She's our only lead, and they will come looking for her. Whether she has the drugs or not.

Norris acknowledges the argument.

NORRIS

I know it's up to me. I don't like it, but that's my problem... Continue with it and keep me informed. That's all.

Clements and Edwards take their leave.

50.INT GYMNASIUM(RECEPTION) DAY

Roland unlocks the front office and enters. He moves through to the mini bar and adjusts the blinds. In the half light we see TULKUS sitting at one of the tables.

ROLAND

I've been expecting you Tulkus. You're not here must be a social call.

Tulkus is a big man, an ex-wrestler gone to seed. On the table before him sits a plain black shoe box.

TULKUS

A regular tea party Roland. Just me and you, like the song. He's disappointed with you.

ROLAND

You tell him it's under control.

Tulkus enters a number on a mobile phone. He listens a moment, then hands it to Roland.

TULKUS

Why don't you tell him.

ROLAND

I'm listening...Yes I know... extremely patient, and I assure you that...what box?

Tulkus slides the box across to Roland. He opens it. There is a bouquet of flowers with a card. Roland reads it.

ROLAND

You want me to read it out loud?...For there to be order in the garden. One must occasion discipline.

Roland picks up the bouquet. Underneath it we see a pair of secateurs.

51.INT CHAPEL DAY

It's a small family ceremony. Among the mourners, we see Venus and family, Nigel, Karen and Andrew, Elaine, Nicholas and a few others. Piped organ music concludes the service.

The chapel door opens abruptly and Roland steps inside. He strides down to the casket and places the bouquet of flowers down. The mourners are confused by the intrusion.

From his coat, Roland produces the secateurs and crunches off Johnny's little finger. He adjusts the flowers over the hands, pockets everything and walks up the aisle.

Halfway he stops, turns and genuflects. Elaine sits in the adjacent pew. Roland smiles as their eyes meet, then exits.

The casket retreats behind an arch of curtains. We see the fire burning through the window of the furnace.

JOHNNY (V/O)

Some say it's painless, that the heat draws out all the oxygen. The freezer method's supposed to be humane too. I reckon a screwdriver straight between the eyes is the quickest and best.

52.INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING) DAY

We see Johnny doing a black-board menu to the camera. The text reads: Pappardelle con Granchi e Asparagi  
A crab and seaweed sketch decorates the frieze.

JOHNNY

That takes care of the granchi. You crack the claws and remove the meat.

VENUS (O/S)

What's the Pappardelle?

JOHNNY

It's pasta with crinkly edges. Means "to gobble up".

The image moves in close on Johnny.

VENUS (O/S)

Maybe JK, I'll pappardelleo you!

We move from the television across the room and see that it's been trashed.

On the table in the centre, we find Oxtor watching the video and munching on Snac-pacs.

JOHNNY (O/S)

You know that little hunch  
back puppet with the cone hat?  
This was his favourite food.  
You see him on the packets.  
He looks a lot like Oxter.

Oxter stops the tape. His eyes search the room.

53.EXT        CREMATORIUM(DRIVE)    DAY

Venus, Elaine and the Kennedy family are leaving.

PAULINE

That fellow that came in late  
was abrupt. Was he a friend  
of John's?

VENUS

I don't know, I've never seen  
him.

ELAINE

The look he gave me I thought  
he was going to bite.

PAULINE

Why don't you stay with us,  
just for a few days, till  
you make up your mind.

VENUS

Mum, I'm staying there. And  
I'm going to help Elaine.  
She's moving in.

Venus hangs back a little. She sees Nigel comforting Karen.

PAULINE

I think a little flat would  
be more comfortable, after what  
happened.

Barry gives Venus a reassuring hug.

BARRY

It's a beaut spot. Just say  
if you need the trailer to  
move stuff.

Venus gives Nigel a wave. There's a moment's hesitation.

Andrew and Karen leave. Venus and family leave. Nigel  
watches after her.



54.INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING) DAY

Venus and Elaine look at the state of the place.

ELAINE  
Someone's broken in. Should  
we call the police?

Venus steps across the mess to the tape shelf. The videos lie in a heap on the floor with everything else.

VENUS  
No. They were looking for  
something.

Venus rummages through the pile of video tapes.

ELAINE  
Oh shit! You mean the tapes?

She finds the case of *Gone with the Wind*, feels the weight, then places it down with the rest. She laughs.

VENUS  
Not the tapes. It's probably  
Johnny's friends looking for  
his stash.

ELAINE  
Nice friends. Maybe it's that  
guy at the funeral?

Venus picks up the bowl of Snac-pacs.

VENUS  
No, I'd know this slime trail  
anywhere. Come on, we'll teach  
him to mess up (

Venus dumps the bowl and they exit.

55.EXT BOAT SHED DAY

Venus and Elaine load the outboard motor into the boot of the car and drive off.

56.EXT POLICE/LOCAL BRANCH DAY

Elaine watches at the door. She signals urgently. Venus rushes a shopping trolley around the corner. In it is the outboard motor. She parks it beside the entrance. We see Oxters name and address in large texta on the side of it.

VENUS  
Least it won't get stolen!

The two girls skip away, laughing.

57.INT NOVA HOTEL (CLUB BAR) NIGHT

Nigel nurses a drink at the bar. There are a few others, all sporting name tags for some conference. The local news plays on the television.

NEWS READER

The current debate over heroin injection trials continues. Dr Helen Carden with the Emergency Service Unit says that the recent number of drug related deaths could have been prevented if the trials had been implemented.

A woman in her late thirties introduces herself to Nigel. Dressed for the conference, her tag reads MS DIANNE KNIGHT.

DIANNE

Hello! I'm Dianne, and you're a mystery man.

Dianne unpins her tag and places it on the bar.

DIANNE

Don't you just hate these? The guys always ask what I call the other one.

Dianne laughs at the joke. Nigel checks out the name tag.

NIGEL

I'm not with the conference. My name is Nigel.

DIANNE

I'm sorry, but now that makes you more a mystery man!

Nigel listens to the news report.

NEWS READER (O/S)

It's believed that a lethal batch of heroin was responsible for the deaths.

Dianne picks up on the report.

DIANNE

That's rubbish! They've only got themselves to blame.

NEWS READER (O/S)

Dr Carden said that under the strict guidelines of the trials the heroin is monitored.

NIGEL

What are we drinking? You line them up. And I'll be back!

Nigel presses a note into Dianne's hand and leaves.

DIANNE

Don't you worry, I'm not going anywhere.

CUT TO

We see Nigel through the glass panels with HOTEL SECURITY guys. He points back to the bar, then walks to the lifts.

CUT TO

Dianne pays the barman for the drinks. She turns to find the two Security guys standing close behind.

SECURITY#1

Come on Suzie, the Nova's off limits. Didn't the girls tell you?

DIANNE

What are you talking about?

SECURITY#1

Soliciting our guests. Lets go.

The Security guys grip an arm each and lift Dianne off the stool. She protests. They hustle her quickly out.

DIANNE

But I'm with the conference. My name's not Suzie. It's Dianne, Dianne Knight. I have a badge...

CUT TO

The lift doors open. Nigel tosses Dianne's name tag into the trash bin and steps into the lift.

58.INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING) NIGHT

Johnny's dismembered finger stands erect in the bowl of Snac-pacs on the table. The room is still in disarray. Venus and Elaine enter. They stop, horrified at the sight.

VENUS

Fuck, what a sick joke!

ELAINE

What is it? Oh shit no!

VENUS

Yeah! The guy from the funeral.

ELAINE

Vee this is too creepy, let's get out of here. I think maybe we should get a flat.

VENUS

We should get a dog, a big one.

Venus goes to the pile of video tapes. Elaine tip-toes a few steps in. She signals to Venus.

ELAINE

What if he's still here, inside? Venus, what are you doing?

VENUS

They're trying to scare us.

ELAINE

Well they're doing a good job. Leave the videos, let's go.

Venus holds up the case of *Gone with the Wind*.

VENUS

This is what they're after.

ELAINE

Gone with the Wind? Your joking! They can have it.

Venus checks to see the drugs are still there.

VENUS

No, this.

Venus shows Elaine the pack inside the cassette case. Elaine swallows hard, her face pales.

ELAINE

Let them have that too.

VENUS

It's Johnny's.

ELAINE

Venus that's what fucking killed him.

VENUS

They're not getting it, and they won't make us leave either!

ELAINE

How much is that much worth?

VENUS

I've no idea, but I need some  
place to stash it for a while.  
Somewhere safe...yes...perfect!

Venus dumps the case in her bag.

ELAINE

Where?

VENUS

With Johnny. Come on, I'll  
tell you.

The two rush to leave. Venus stops half out the door and  
turns to see the finger.

Venus' POV sees the finger beckon her back.

She blinks a double take, grabs it and stuffs it in her  
bag. They leave.

59.INT NOVA HOTEL(FOYER) NIGHT.

Venus pushes through the glass doors and fronts the  
reception desk. There's a phone enquiry and she's directed  
to the lift. A young attendant, GLENN, summons the lift.

60.INT NOVA HOTEL(LIFT) NIGHT.

Venus slumps against the wall. Her bag slips off her  
shoulder and slides to the floor. It spills open and  
Johnny's finger rolls out. Glenn looks surprised to see it.  
He nudges it towards the bag with his shoe.

The lift stops and the doors open. Venus picks up her bag,  
unaware of the errant finger.

GLENN

Ah Miss, is that your finger,  
on the carpet?

Venus glances down, it's an awkward moment. Glenn whips out  
a napkin and they both ease down to retrieve the digit.  
Their eyes meet.

VENUS

Oh, no it's my boyfriend's, I'm  
just looking after it.

GLENN

I had a girlfriend once.

VENUS

What happened?

GLENN

She still had all her fingers  
and I gave her a ring. We didn't  
work out though. This is your  
floor here. She gave it back.

They straighten up and step out of the lift.

VENUS

Thanks for the ride...What sort  
of ring was it?

GLENN

An Irish claddah, though it  
was probably made in China.

VENUS

They're real nice. See you!

Venus turns and skips down the hall. Glenn gives a wave.

GLENN

Hey! What's your name? I'm Glenn.

Venus stops, turns back and smiles.

VENUS

Venetia, but no one asked me.  
Call me Venus.

Venus continues down the hall.

61.INT NOVA HOTEL (ROOM) NIGHT

Nigel opens the door to Venus.

VENUS

I didn't see you, after the  
funeral...I'll go if you're busy.

NIGEL

No, come in. Let me take your bag.

Venus steps into the room. Two identical clay urns catch  
her attention. She runs her fingers lightly over them.

VENUS

They're Johnny's ashes! How come  
there's two?

NIGEL

Karen had them divided. Her way of  
apportioning responsibility, I guess.

VENUS

Least now you can scatter one  
of them. Can I give you a hug?

Nigel and Venus embrace with awkward tenderness. Hold the moment against the picture backdrop of the city. Venus pulls back with excitement.

VENUS

Can we get room service? I've got money. We can have a wake.

NIGEL

Alright. Order from the bar and they'll send it up.

VENUS

Johnny's favourite cocktail was a French Kiss. He'd drink it when he wasn't using. There was another, Angel something. Do you want to?

Nigel agrees. Venus plants a big kiss on him and climbs across the back of the lounge to reach the phone.

VENUS

Hello! Is this room service? We would like to order some drinks. Have you got a pen?

62.INT NOVA HOTEL (HALLWAY) NIGHT

We move down the hall to the lifts. The doors open and the ATTENDANT pushes a trolley carrying the food and drinks.

VENUS (V/O)

Six French Kisses, we'll do the fire bit up here. And four Angel 69'ers? ... Okay?...Two of those as well. And some beer...Tooheys Old.

The lights down the hall flicker erratically. We see wisps of smoke and a lick of flame under doors. The wall paper sweats and peels away.

Through the shimmering heat, the Attendant reaches the door and delivers the trolley.

JOHNNY (V/O)

And finally the moment. Into the deep blue. A gasp for air, the head arches back, nipples stand like moon rockets.

63.EXT BEACH (SECLUDED) DAY

We see a video image of Venus. She explodes from the water, tossing her head back and gasping for air. She races from the water and up the beach. We follow her.

JOHNNY (O/S)  
 Venus, the goddess of love,  
 born from the sea. One glimpse  
 of the naked nymph and all  
 is lost for me!

Venus grabs her towel, she turns to ensure we're still following. With the towel held high, she sails on up the beach. The image is erratic as she climbs up the dunes to the car.

JOHNNY (O/S)  
 And so began, seduction on  
 the sedan!

We see Johnny and camera reflected in the car mirror, then to Venus warming herself across the bonnet. She looks up as the camera moves in.

VENUS  
 That's pretty terrible. Why  
 not butt on hot bonnet...

Venus takes the camera from Johnny and frames herself.

VENUS  
 Let's call it V and J's  
 big day...at the beach.

Johnny moves around and into frame, kissing her neck and shoulders. He leans into the camera. The towel slides away.

JOHNNY  
 Sin on the sand! No? What  
 about, sin on the tin?

Venus responds, leaving the camera balanced on the bonnet. Their passion grows, so too the movement on the car.

The camera slips down and gradually we lose sight of them, over the edge of the car. The camera falls and we focus under the car, on their feet.

The sound of their love making is passionate. We see their feet writhe and dig into the sand as they reach climax.

CUT TO

64.INT ELAINE'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) NIGHT

Elaine is watching the video in bed.

JOHNNY (O/S)  
 Shit! Where's the camera?

VENUS (O/S)  
 It fell off.



Elaine leans across to the VCR and fast forwards the tape. We see Johnny and Venus clothed, with arms around each other. They talk to camera.

JOHNNY

It contains adult themes  
and frequent feet scenes.

VENUS

And Elaine, the beach is not  
always the big bogey.

The tape cuts out. Elaine removes it and places it in a drawer with a number of others. She snuggles in and turns out the bed lamp.

65.INT NOVA HOTEL (ROOM) DAY

Morning light fills the apartment. The door to the bathroom is open and the shower's running. We move through to the bedroom and find Venus curled up asleep in a tangle of sheets. There's a knock on the apartment door.

CUT TO

Nigel, half dressed, opens the door to Clements and Edwards.

CLEMENTS

Mr Kinsella? I'm Detective  
Sergeant Clements and this  
is Detective Edwards. It's  
a little early I know, but  
we'd like a few words with  
you if we could?

Edwards looks past Nigel into the room. He sees last night's drinks on the table and the two urns on the mantle.

NIGEL

All right then. I'll see you  
down in the foyer, when I'm  
dressed.

Nigel closes the door. He clears the doona and pillow from the lounge and finishes dressing. Venus, wearing last night's shirt, comes to the door.

VENUS

Good morning! Some night! I  
could use a replacement head.  
What day is it?

NIGEL

It's the morning after! There's  
some police down in the foyer.  
They want to talk...

VENUS

What now! What about?

NIGEL

Probably about Johnny. I'll go down. Then we'll go and get breakfast. Okay?

Nigel leaves and Venus is across the room to her bag. She rips the pack of heroin from the video case and plonks it on the sideboard between the two urns. There's a moment of indecision. Venus drops the case on the table and grabs the nearest urn.

VENUS (V/O)

It occurred to me this was stupid, but I knew then it'd be safe from the cops. The way things were, I didn't feel it was right to go and flush Johnny's dope down the toilet.

Venus empties the ashes from one urn to the other, then drops the packet into the empty one. She screws tight the lids and sets them back on the mantle.

VENUS (V/O)

This way Oxtter would never have it, and there'd be an even chance to get it back. I guess that was on my mind at some stage. Last night was too!

Venus blows clear any loose ash on the mantle. She steps back and checks the placement of the vases.

CUT TO

Water streams from the shower rose. Venus takes a shower.

66.INT NOVA HOTEL (FOYER) DAY

Nigel and Clements talk. It's strained but civil.

NIGEL

I came here for my son's funeral. He had a problem of heroin addiction and he died from an overdose. I read the coroner's report.

Clements leans forward. She is quietly emphatic.

CLEMENTS

I am sorry about your son,  
Mr Kinsella, and I know this  
is difficult. We believe he  
was acting as a courier for  
others, and it's likely there  
are drugs unaccounted for.

Edwards joins them. Nigel gets up to leave.

NIGEL

Detective, John paid the price  
and what you're suggesting is  
nothing but speculation, right?

CLEMENTS

We can't dismiss the possibility.

NIGEL

Or the chance to score a few  
runs on the board. Will that  
be all?

Clements extends her hand to Nigel, they shake.

CLEMENTS

Yes, and thank you for your  
time. I hope we haven't  
imposed on your morning.

Clements watches after Nigel.

CLEMENTS

Oh, one thing. You've met  
the Kennedy girl? She shared  
the studio with your son?

Nigel stops and listens to Clements. He turns to her.

NIGEL

Yes, she was at the funeral.

CLEMENTS

We're a little concerned for her.

NIGEL

You could try her parents.

CLEMENTS

Well, thanks again Mr Kinsella.

Nigel exits the foyer. Edwards looks at Clements

EDWARDS

According to reception he had a  
visitor last night.

CLEMENTS

Miss Kennedy?

EDWARDS

That's right, they had drinks.

The two watch the lift doors close on Nigel.

67.EXT OXTER'S FLAT DAY

It's a block of four units with a common balcony entrance. Two local police officers, BAXTER and CURRIE, knock on the door of number three. Oxter is surprised when he opens it.

BAXTER

Mr Oxter? This is Constable Currie and I'm Sergeant Baxter. We'd like to ask you a few questions about your missing outboard motor.

Oxter keeps the door just open.

OXTER

It's not a good time, I'm running late and to be honest, I'm not sure what this is about.

BAXTER

It'll only take a few minutes sir. It was left at the station. If you'd rather, we'll go down there?

Oxter opens the door for the officers to enter.

OXTER

Ah, look no, come in. There must be some misunderstanding.

BAXTER

It was reported stolen some time ago, but the puzzle is, it's now turned up with your name and address written on it.

Oxter hesitates a moment, then closes the door.

68.INT MACDONALDS DAY

It's busy and a number of people queue at the counter. We see Nigel and Venus finishing their breakfast.

VENUS

It won't be the same, but I really want to keep it. It's either that or go home.

NIGEL

You get on though, at home?

VENUS

Yeah! They're okay, a bit intense some times. I usually take Elaine around, you can't fight in front of guests.

NIGEL

That idea of letting go, it's difficult at first.

VENUS

Dad's cool about it, but with Mum, it's like this big conspiracy.

NIGEL

The mother daughter conflict. That's normal.

VENUS

No! It's a control thing. First she hangs this guilt trip on me about sacrifice. And now she wants to be my friend.

NIGEL

She wants what's best for you. You said Elaine's moving in?

VENUS

Yeah, I keep telling her she's got to start somewhere.

NIGEL

She seems quiet, very serious.

VENUS

A serious basket case. There's times she'll stay in her room for days. Puts her life on permanent replay...It makes me so angry.

NIGEL

You obviously worry about her.

Venus distracts herself with the last pancake.

VENUS

She's getting better...Why don't we sort through Johnny's things? It's mostly junk, except the prints.

NIGEL

I expect Karen will want them. The place is like a gallery.

VENUS

Is that where you both lived?

NIGEL

Until the divorce. She got the house and John, and it became difficult for me to see him. That control thing. It was a relief to get away.

VENUS

What about when Johnny got older?

NIGEL

The phone calls and holidays became less frequent, and we had less to say. Eventually we gave up, we'd become strangers.

VENUS

That's sad, because he used to talk about you.

NIGEL

Venus, was Johnny dealing drugs?

VENUS

If he was I didn't know about it. And he didn't make any money.

Venus is distracted. She sees Roland turn from the counter. He is carrying a double serve take-away. He looks at them and walks right past and out the door.

Venus stretches across the table and plants a kiss on Nigel's cheek. She hugs him and whispers in his ear.

VENUS

Look at that beefcake. I've seen him before, somewhere.

NIGEL

Yeah! Girls' night at the Workers Club? Come on, let's go.

Venus and Nigel leave the restaurant.

69.INT GYMNASIUM(RECEPTION) DAY

Roland sits at the mini bar feeding on the take away food. Between mouthfuls, he gives himself a shot of insulin. Oxtter watches on with casual amusement.

OXTER

Christ Roly, you're a walking synthesiser! Big Mac, to muscle. You should arrange a franchise. You'd be your own best client.

Roland packs the needle kit away behind the bar. He eases himself off the stool and hands Oxter a dumbbell, as though it were a pencil.

ROLAND

Listen sad-sack, we're not here for my arrangements. We're here to talk about yours.

Oxter struggles with the dumbbell.

OXTER

I left the finger like you said...

ROLAND

And she chose to ignore it. Must have her own agenda. The question is, with who?

OXTER

We don't know that there is anyone else.

ROLAND

No, we don't ...At least I don't know.

OXTER

The inference here is, I do?

ROLAND

You're the one that's dealing with her. Maybe you're part of her agenda?

Roland stalks around Oxter like a caged beast.

OXTER

Roland, let's show a little intelligence here. That insulin's got to your brain.

Roland slams Oxter into the wall, lifting him off the ground by the throat. His feet kick a strangled dance.

ROLAND

I said I'd wind this up. Now, who is this bitch?

Roland's rage subsides. Oxter collapses to the floor.

OXTER

You would've seen her at the funeral. Look, trust me, you'll have the hammer, I promise.

Oxter scrapes himself off the floor. Roland holds the door for him and they exit.

70.EXT CITY BEACH DAY

It's a Newcastle view, with a flotilla of container ships far offshore. The sky and sea blend.

SUPER TEXT:       *"The time has come," the Walrus said,  
                      "To talk of many things;  
                      Of shoes - and ships - and sealing-wax,  
                      Of cabbages - and kings.  
  The Walrus and the Carpenter  
  Lewis Carroll*

We move down and see Venus on the beach. She is building a sand castle over a rock covered with oysters. The sides are smoothed and decorated with shells and seaweed. Nigel skips stones in the water. He admires the handiwork.

NIGEL

That looks quite dangerous.

VENUS

Not if you like sand-castles.  
Otherwise, it'll mess your  
toes up real bad.

Nigel presses a few flat rocks on top of the castle.

NIGEL

In future, I'll treat sand  
castles with great respect.

71.EXT CITY BEACH(PARKING BAY) DAY

Venus and Nigel climb up the rocks to the car. They rest on the bonnet and take in the view.

NIGEL

It's quite unique isn't it?  
The ocean and the city behind.

VENUS

Yeah, it's a Newie thing.  
We'd come here and watch the  
cars. Ciggies, bourbon and  
burn-outs. Talk about hopeless,  
just killing time till you got  
pregnant...or worse.

Venus turns away on the verge of tears. She bites her lip hard. It bleeds. Nigel wipes the blood from her mouth.

VENUS

All the videos in the world  
won't help Elaine.



Venus seeks comfort against Nigel's shoulder. Her eyes fill with tears.

DISSOLVE

72.EXT CITY BEACH(PARKING BAY ) NIGHT

We see Venus and Nigel as before. Car lights arc across Venus' face. The tears glisten. We follow the headlights as one car, then a second, swing into the parking bay. Laughter and yahoos erupt in the night, as YOUTHS spill out of the vehicles.

Elaine is one of them. She stands aloof from the group, her coat pulled tightly around her.

A couple grapple on the bonnet, as tins of beer are handed around. There's an arc of piss in the car lights, as blokes stagger to stay upright. Music pumps from the radios.

Elaine detours to the back of the first car. She opens the door and we see Venus in the back seat. There's a guy all over the top of her.

ELAINE

Venus, I'm going home. Come on,  
come with me. Please let's go.

Elaine walks off into the night, ignoring the invitations to stay. Venus continues with her back seat grope.

73.EXT BEACH(DUNES) DAWN

We see footprints lead up the beach. An erratic torch beam lights the way. In the dunes we find a shoe and clothing, half buried in the shifting sands. We follow the drag marks further, and out of the gloom we see Elaine. She is half kneeling, her face covered by a tangle of hair and sand.

VENUS (V/O)

I still see her there...  
Like she was praying for it  
to be over.

Venus covers Elaine with a coat and helps her up.

74.INT ELAINE'S HOUSE(BATHROOM) DAY

Elaine sits in a tight ball at the end of the bath. We see bruising and abrasions to her body. She stares in shock.

ELAINE

He seemed alright. We sat down  
and then the others were there,  
they must have followed. There  
were three of them.

VENUS

Elaine! Listen, please listen to me. We have to report it. They raped you. We've got to tell the police.

ELAINE

Why would they believe us, believe me? You weren't there. There was three of them. It's their word against mine and they'll just say I'm lying.

VENUS

Look, they can do tests to prove it. But if you stay in there, all the evidence will wash away.

There's a look of anguish from Elaine. Venus comforts her. Then with deliberate care, Elaine soaps the hand-towel and begins to wash herself.

75.EXT CITY BEACH(PARKING BAY) DAY

Nigel and Venus sit in the car. A moment to reflect.

VENUS

And that was the beginning of Elaine's hell!

NIGEL

And your guilt. Venus you're not responsible for what they did.

VENUS

I guess not. Sometimes though, I think this world's cracked.

Venus starts the car and they drive off.

76.EXT WAREHOUSE(STREET) DAY

Venus and Nigel pull into the kerb. A late model Commodore cruises around the corner and stops opposite.

NIGEL

Looks like our company from this morning.

Clements and Edwards cross over. She leans in window.

NIGEL

Now why do I get this feeling we're being followed?

CLEMENTS

You can't go far without you meet someone you know. It's the nature of the town. Miss Kennedy, a few more questions.

VENUS

I told you it all before. Do you want me to make something up?

CLEMENTS

Was Johnny involved with a gym?

VENUS

What, like for exercise?

CLEMENTS

Yeah, those fitness centres.

Venus laughs at the suggestion.

VENUS

Johnny's idea of exercise was fishing, with a six pack.

CLEMENTS

Fishing? Where did he go fishing?

VENUS

Out in the harbour mostly.

NIGEL

Detective, why are we discussing fishing? More speculation?

CLEMENTS

Mr Kinsella, these narcotics are picked up in the harbour by fishing boats. This is not an isolated case.

NIGEL

But you found no other drugs.

CLEMENTS

They don't know that, and they'll come looking.

NIGEL

Well when they do, we'll be sure to tell them. Exactly who are they, detective? So we know who we're dealing with?

CLEMENTS

I feel this conversation has reached it's logical end.

Nigel gets out of the car. He turns back to Venus.

NIGEL

Venus, shall we go and look at those prints? If there are no more questions?

CLEMENTS

You're on leave from the university, I understand?

NIGEL

Yes, compassionate leave.

CLEMENTS

I bet your students miss you! Well Venetia, I'll leave you with the good professor. If you think of anything, we're just a call away.

Venus gets out of the vehicle. She and Nigel enter the warehouse. Clements and Edwards exchange a look then go to their car.

77.INT WAREHOUSE(LIFT) DAY

Laughter can be heard as the lift ascends.

VENUS (O/S)

Well Mr Good Professor, I think that detective has the hots for you. She's getting dirty and dangerous.

The lift stops at level two. Venus grips the metal cage, penning Nigel in.

NIGEL

Thought she was going to slap the cuffs on me.

VENUS

You wish, Nigel! She's only a call away.

Venus spills out of the lift. She leans provocatively against the door to the studio. Nigel responds, arms blocking any exit, save through the door.

VENUS

And tell me about all these students that miss you! Eh! Go on, tell me.

NIGEL

You want me to make something up?

VENUS

I think this conversation has  
reached a logical end.

Venus kisses Nigel on the mouth, then opens the door and  
escapes inside. Nigel, a little stunned, follows.

78.INT WAREHOUSE(LIVING) DAY

A number of framed litho-prints are propped up around the  
the walls. Venus stands the last few in position. Nigel  
appears quite surprised as he examines the works on show.

VENUS

You can't give them all to  
Karen. She certainly wouldn't  
want these.

Venus singles out a couple of nude drawings of herself.

VENUS

She didn't think much of me,  
even with my clothes on.

NIGEL

They're good, so very good.  
I would've thought they're  
worth an exhibition.

VENUS

Johnny wasn't into that scene.  
I like this. Self portrait!

The print depicts a character slumped over a couch, arm  
outstretched, about to hit up.

NIGEL

You should keep any you want.

Venus digs around in a tin of tobacco and finds a joint.  
She straightens it out and lights it.

VENUS

I know what Karen would like.  
They're not framed or anything.

Venus takes a drag and hands the joint to Nigel. He tries a  
couple of small puffs.

NIGEL

It's been a while.

VENUS

Just remember to inhale.

Venus unrolls a number of smaller drawings. They're  
classic, ink line sketches, of a federation terrace house.  
She holds one up for Nigel to see.

VENUS

He was out there for days  
doing these. Just sitting  
across the street.

NIGEL

That's Merewether, our house.

VENUS

Shit, really? I thought he  
was just doing them to sell.

Venus takes the joint and flops back on the floor. Nigel  
eases against the couch.

NIGEL

Those definitely should go  
to Karen...You know Venus,  
you're right. The world is  
cracked.

They break into stoned laughter. Venus crawls across the  
floor and sticks the joint in Nigel's mouth.

VENUS

Hello! Professor! If you do  
think of anything, it's just  
a call away.

NIGEL

We're too stoned to think,  
Serg. That's the nature of  
the town.

Venus sinks down onto Nigel and curls up against him. He  
stares at the drawing of the Merewether house.

79.INT NOVA HOTEL (ROOM) DAY

Nigel sets aside a couple of drawings of the Merewether  
house. Flicking through the roll of prints he finds a  
folded map. He spreads it out on the table.

It's a marine navigation map of the harbour. There's an  
arrow pointing to a beacon, and *4.20am Tuesday-15th*,  
scrawled beside it.

Nigel contemplates the significance for a moment. He picks  
up the empty case of *Gone with the Wind* and stares at the  
cover.

80.EXT/INT MEREWETHER HOUSE DAY

Across the street, we see the federation terrace from the  
line drawings. Nigel opens the gate, he is carrying a  
collection of prints and one of the funeral urns. Karen  
opens the door.

KAREN

Nigel, come in, please. I'm sorry about all that at the chapel. And thanks for taking care of things.

Karen takes the vase and embraces Nigel.

KAREN

Come on through. You'll have to excuse the place, it's just total chaos.

Nigel follows Karen down the hall.

81.INT MEREWETHER HOUSE (KITCHEN) DAY

Karen shows Nigel the kitchen. There's only patches on the floor where the cupboards and fridge once stood.

KAREN

It's long overdue, but it's so much trouble. We've been living on pizzas all week.

Karen places the urn on the mantle piece and rearranges the symmetry of the other items.

KAREN

I can't even offer you coffee. The water's off. We could go down the street. Anything to escape here.

Karen trashes a couple of pizza boxes in the waste bin.

NIGEL

That'd be fine. Not a lot's changed in all these years.

KAREN

It's Newcastle, you can't expect too much. Just seeing us together will set the tongues wagging.

Karen slides on sandals and they exit down the hall.

KAREN

Did you speak to that girl, the friend of John's?

NIGEL

Venus? She's fine.

Karen gives Nigel a doubtful look.

NIGEL

Holding on like the rest of us.

Their voices trail off. The door shuts.

82.INT      KENNEDY HOME (FAMILY ROOM)      DAY

Becky puts a CD in the player. She spins and waves the cover in front of Venus. Venus tries to grab it.

VENUS

Awe! That's not out yet. Where did you get it?

Becky snatches it away.

BECKY

From Beau-M's, it's a preview. Oxter got it for me.

VENUS

Oxter!

BECKY

You know, Johnny's friend. He previews them for Street Press.

VENUS

Becky! How do you know him?

Becky's shocked by Venus' reaction. She becomes defensive.

BECKY

Well, I don't really. He came round here...

VENUS

Here! To our house? What for?

BECKY

To give you this drawing that Johnny did. It was of you.

Venus, increasingly agitated, tries to think.

VENUS

Hold on! You're saying Oxter came here. Where were Mum and Dad?

BECKY

They were out. Don't worry, I hid it upstairs.

VENUS

Worry! Did you let him inside?

Becky nods and backs away. Venus persists.



VENUS

And why the CD?

BECKY

We were just talking about music and what we like, and he saw your poster.

VENUS

In your room! Becky, he was in your bedroom. Oh, shit!

Becky tries to hold back the tears.

BECKY

We just talked and then he left. Nothing happened.

Venus softens and hugs the distraught girl.

VENUS

Awe, come on Becky, I'm sorry I didn't mean it like that. Does Mum know?

BECKY

I didn't tell her because of the drawing.

Venus wraps an arm around Becky.

VENUS

He's the creep I was talking about. Come on let's play it.

Venus and Becky rush the CD player.

83.EXT/INT OXTER'S FLAT DAY

Venus bashes hard on the door of the unit. The next flat opens with the disturbance. Finally Oxter gets the door.

VENUS

I'll get your stuff, but you stay away from my house and my sister.

Oxter tries to calm things down. The NEIGHBOUR comes out onto the balcony looking concerned.

OXTER

Sorry about this, we've had a bit of a family tragedy. Do you mind?

Oxter tries to hustle Venus inside.

OXTER

Come inside, you're upset.  
Don't forget I lost a pal  
here too.

VENUS

Pal! You chopped his finger  
off.

Venus pushes past Oxter rummaging through her bag.

VENUS

Here, let me show you who  
you live beside. I've got  
the finger. This is what he  
did, look...

Neighbour backs away. Oxter roughly grabs Venus and drags  
her back, shoving her towards his flat door.

OXTER

You get inside now. Have you  
taken your medication?

Oxter stops and throws his hand up to Neighbour.

OXTER

She's not well, believe me.  
Now will you piss off.

Neighbour backs into his unit and closes the door. Oxter  
hauls Venus inside. He presses her up against the wall.

OXTER

That was very funny, that stunt  
with the motor. Next time I see  
Becky we'll have a good laugh.  
She likes a bit of fun.

VENUS

I said I'll get it.

OXTER

Now listen carefully. We're not  
the only players in this. They'll  
be your fingers in the bowl next  
time, and it won't stop there.  
When do I get the dope?

VENUS

It's hidden, but I can get it  
tomorrow, I think?

OXTER

Think smart and we can avoid  
any more grief. I'm all you've  
got. Don't disappoint me.

Oxter releases Venus. He offers a caring touch and smooths her crumpled top.

OXTER

We could be friends when this  
is over.

Venus edges out the door.

84.EXT GYMNASIUM DAY

The building is closed, contrary to the opening hours on the door. Clements leans on the night buzzer. Edwards peers in through a window.

CLEMENTS

According to this, the place  
should be open.

EDWARDS

Maybe they've changed their  
business hours.

Clements turns back to the car.

CLEMENTS

Maybe they've changed their  
business.

They get in the Commodore and u-turn back up the street.

85.EXT THE VENUE NIGHT

Roland and a couple of other bouncers are on the door. There's a few early arrivals, but otherwise quiet. A car pulls into the kerb and the window drops a little. We see Tulkus lean over. Roland sees him and comes across.

TULKUS

Get in.

Roland obliges and gets in beside Tulkus. The window shuts.

TULKUS

Do you know what RDO means?

ROLAND

A day off?

TULKUS

No, it means Roland delivers  
ontime. You've become a liability,  
to all of us.

ROLAND

Tulkus, twenty four hours. Tell  
him that's all I ask.

Tulkus taps the wheel impatiently.

TULKUS

It's a question of attitude,  
you don't set a good example.  
That has a detrimental effect  
on morale.

ROLAND

Just give me the chance to put  
it right.

TULKUS

I'll loosen the leash, but don't  
abuse my discretion. Because that's  
all you've got.

Roland gets out of the car and closes the door. The window  
comes down again.

TULKUS

Roly, stay off the insulin, it  
makes you twitchy.

The window slides up. Roland watches the car pull into the  
night. He crushes his fist into his palm.

86.INT      WAREHOUSE(LIFT)      NIGHT

There's a clunk as the mechanical cage descends. We look  
down into the gloom of the lift well, as it grinds to a  
halt on the ground floor.

87.INT      WAREHOUSE(BEDROOM)      NIGHT

Venus wakes and listens a moment. She gets up and quietly  
moves into the living area.

CUT TO

The lift ascends. We see the hydraulic hoses coil and snake  
between the metal struts.

CUT TO

Venus carefully selects a knife from a drawer in the  
kitchen. She reties her pyjamas, then creeps to the door.

CUT TO

We see the sliding metal doors of the lift open.

CUT TO

Venus is crouched inside her door with the knife. There's a  
light knock and the handle is tried. The lift descends.

CUT TO

The lift doors open on the ground floor. It's empty.

CUT TO

Venus slips the safety bolt and pulls the door open. She steps onto the landing and looks down the lift well. A hand touches her shoulder.

It's Nigel. He steps back to avoid the knife as Venus slices the air.

NIGEL

Careful! I don't know which is more dangerous, you or the lift. It just took off.

Venus checks for damage, then folds into Nigel's embrace.

VENUS

Scare me! I could've killed you. What are you doing?

NIGEL

I don't know. I thought...

Venus stops the talk with a serious kiss. Slow at first, then the passion rises. She wraps her arms around him, the knife dangerously close to his ear.

A shift in position and the knife nicks him. They pull apart. There's a trickle of blood from Nigel's right ear. Venus looks horrified.

VENUS

Shit Nigel! I cut your ear.

Nigel feels for his ear.

NIGEL

Well, I think it's still there.

Venus drags him inside.

NIGEL

What's that song? Stuck in the middle with you...

VENUS

It's not that bad.

Venus closes the door and locks it.

88.INT WAREHOUSE (BEDROOM) NIGHT

The single lamp throws shadows against the iron wall. Nigel sits on the edge of the bed. Venus tends his wounded ear.

She dabs delicately with a cotton ball. The medicine colours the ear blue. Venus admires her handiwork, but can't contain the laughter.

VENUS

You look like the Jumblies.

NIGEL

And who are the Jumblies?

VENUS

They had blue ears and went sailing in a sieve.

NIGEL

A pretty silly thing to do.

Venus tears a strip of adhesive from a roll and feigns taping Nigel's mouth. She wiggles and sings a few words.

VENUS

Fools to the left, and jokers  
to the right, Here I am...

Venus kneels across Nigel and applies the tape to his ear.

VENUS

Now you're one of the Knights.

Venus mock wrestles Nigel back onto the bed. He's lost to a tangle of flanno pyjamas.

VENUS

And he's holding on in the  
tackle! She's trying to play  
the ball!

The play becomes passion. They kiss and kiss again. Venus straddles Nigel. She unbuttons her top and slings it over the bed rail.

It swings with the dream-catcher, casting a weird shadow across the corrugated wall. They make love.

89.EXT WAREHOUSE (STREET) DAY

Elaine unloads a boot load of bags from Venus' car. She moves them into the entrance.

90.INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING) DAY

Elaine drags in a suitcase. She has an arm full of VHS tapes. Venus drinks coffee, curled up on the couch.

VENUS

And madame arrives, complete  
with her own porn set.

Elaine unloads the tapes on the table.

ELAINE

They're funny, but I couldn't leave them for Mum. And you should keep them.

Venus acknowledges the sentiment. Elaine shoves another box into the room and collapses over it.

ELAINE

I'm sorry about this morning, barging in. Where's Nigel?

VENUS

He went out to the Uni I think?

ELAINE

He might run into your Dad.

VENUS

Awe shit! That'd be so weird. We're going out to Nic's later, do you want to come?

Elaine goes back out to the landing.

ELAINE(O/S)

No, I've got all this to sort out. I'm going to be organised. Not like you.

VENUS

Come on, it's his last day.

ELAINE(O/S)

So you spend it with him.

Elaine wheels her bike in and props it against the wall.

VENUS

Is there much more stuff?

ELAINE

No, that's it. My world, in five boxes and a bike.

Venus blocks Elaine. She's anxious.

VENUS

Elaine, you disapprove, don't you? It just happened.

VENUS

Truly, I don't. I can see why.

Elaine offers Venus comfort. The two girls hug each other.

91.INT TRATTORIA GAMBINO NIGHT

We see Nicholas carry plates of food to Venus and Nigel's table. He tops up their wine.

NICHOLAS

You make sure you tell Elaine what she's missing out on.

VENUS

We'll take some back in a doggie bag Nic.

NICHOLAS

I'll make you up a special to take home.

Nicholas removes the entree plates.

VENUS

Saint Nic, he's a legend.

NIGEL

Obviously fond of Elaine.

VENUS

He's an old flirt. If you weren't here, he'd be sitting there, or in my lap.

NIGEL

Well he cooks fine food.

Nigel enjoys the meal.

NIGEL

Elaine didn't want to come?

Venus acknowledges with her mouth full.

VENUS

She went home, I think, to give us space.

Nicholas weaves through the tables with more food.

NIGEL

At this rate we'll need all the space we can get.

He makes room for the extra plates

92.EXT WAREHOUSE (STREET) NIGHT.

A taxi pulls to the kerb. Elaine gets out with a couple of carry bags. She pays the fare and make a call on her mobile. There's no answer. She pockets the phone and carries the gear to the entrance.



93.INT WAREHOUSE(LIFT) NIGHT

Elaine steps out of the lift and lets herself in.

94.INT WAREHOUSE(LIVING) NIGHT.

It's dark, save for a TV flicker on the iron walls. Elaine is cautious. She places the bags down and moves through to lounge area. We see the TV playing silent. The image is Venus and Johnny engaged in sex. Elaine looks around.

ROLAND

You're just in time for the climax.

She screams as Roland switches on the lamp. He casts a huge shadow on the wall behind. Elaine tries to escape back to the door. Roland springs out of the couch and grabs her.

ROLAND

You can't leave now.

ELAINE

Who are you? What do you want?

ROLAND

It's an Oscar performance. Let's sit down.

Roland forces Elaine back to the couch.

ELAINE

No, please. What are you doing?  
You were the one at the funeral?  
Look I don't know anything.

ROLAND

Shhh! It's romantic, just the two of us.

He hangs his arm around Elaine and forces a cuddle. She is near hysterical. The video plays and Venus talk to camera.

ROLAND

They're nice breasts.

Roland ups the volume on the remote. We hear the sound of intense pleasure. The image is erratic and close on Venus' face. She whispers to us.

VENUS

Elaine, it feels good, it's right,

Venus reaches for the camera. Then there's static.

ROLAND

Venus, you missed the money shot. But it's never too late.

Elaine twists trying to break his grip. Roland snaps her head back and forces her mouth open.

ROLAND

That might be big enough.  
Let's see what you can do.

Roland fumbles to unzip his pants. Elaine bites hard on the hand holding her mouth. He howls in pain and thumps Elaine clear from the couch.

CUT TO

Roland searches the fridge. He finds an icy pole and folds it over the bite.

CUT TO

Elaine claws her way across the floor, to the door. Roland drags her back to the table and sits over her. He pulls from his pocket a pair of secateurs, gloves and tape.

ROLAND

We could've kept this friendly,  
but now it's going to hurt.

Roland severs the end of the icy pole, with the secateurs. It drops to the floor in front of Elaine.

ROLAND

You and your dead boyfriend  
have caused me a lot of stress.  
What's more appalling, is you  
thought you could make it up  
along the way. No respect.

Another piece drops to the floor.

ELAINE

I don't know anything. Honest!

Roland takes Elaine's hand. He fondles her fingers.

ROLAND

Do you hope to marry, Venus?

ELAINE

I'm not Venus. I don't know  
where they are.

He opens the jaws of the shears over Elaine's finger.

ROLAND

Oh, but you do, so let's be  
sensible. I get the gear and  
you keep your finger.

Elaine is desperate to keep control.

ELAINE

They're with the ashes. At his  
mother's.

He flicks a tear from Elaine's cheek with the secateurs

ROLAND

See, I knew we could cooperate.

95.EXT/INT GYMNASIUM NIGHT

The door to the loading bay rolls up. Headlights cut across  
the floor of the gym, lighting the work stations. Oxter,  
agitated, paces before the car.

OXTER

Roly, a little patience here.  
We'll have the shit tomorrow.

Roland gets out of the car and ambles into Oxter's face.

ROLAND

You're sure about that now?

OXTER

I just finished speaking with  
her. She saw reason.

ROLAND

Why do I get the feeling you're  
not telling it straight.

OXTER

You need to have a little trust.

ROLAND

Let me show you something.

Roland shoves Oxter to the rear of the car. The boot lid  
yawns open. Elaine, bound and gagged, is lying in the well.

OXTER

Who the fuck is this? Oh shit  
man, you've lost it. I can't  
believe...

Roland watches Oxter pace back and forth throwing his arms  
about. He slams the boot shut. Oxter punches a speed ball.

ROLAND

It was a simple transaction,  
and you fucked up. Now I  
intend to finish it.

Roland steadies the ball against the steel ring.

Oxter drags his fingers through his hair in frustration.

OXTER

How could I get involved with  
someone so terminally stupid?  
I'll be no part of this.

ROLAND

But you were part of this.

OXTER

No no! Who the fuck is she?  
I tell you she's not the  
Kennedy bitch.

ROLAND

I'm not here to debate. I want  
to conclude this.

OXTER

You fucking bonehead, you've  
got this girl trussed up in  
the boot and you don't know  
who she is.

Roland twitches a little and the veins strain on his neck.

ROLAND

You undermine my respect, and  
I can't allow that.

Oxter backs away from Roland's rage.

OXTER

Whoa! Roly let's stay rational.  
We have a situation here and  
we'll deal with it.

Oxter's retreat is blocked by a heavy punch bag. He dances around it. Roland explodes with a bear hug around Oxter and the bag. We see his shoulder muscles flex as the pressure is applied. There's a groan and Oxter drops to the floor.

CUT TO

Roland opens a wall cupboard. We see various items of bondage equipment. He selects a pair of thumb cuffs.

96.INT      MEREWETHER HOUSE (UPSTAIRS BEDROOM)      NIGHT

Karen tries on dresses before a full-length mirror. There's a range of them on the bed.

KAREN

Will there be catering tonight?

Andrew is shaving in the adjacent en suite.

ANDREW  
I'd expect so, at the price  
of the tickets.

She strikes a pose in an elegant red evening dress.

KAREN  
Good, I'm famished. What do  
you think, too risqué?

Andrew gives a whistle.

ANDREW  
Positively indecent! Are we  
trying on the whole wardrobe?

Karen spins and flounces off for another dress.

KAREN  
It's a time warp, I've found all  
these clothes I can fit into.  
We should renovate the kitchen  
more often.

ANDREW  
Not sure I follow...

KAREN  
No kitchen, no food, simple.  
Okay, which one. Sexy red or  
sensible and sedate.

Karen holds two gowns, gracious beige or stunning red.

ANDREW  
The beige looks nice.

Karen gives him a dumb look. Andrew turns on the shower. He straps the razor a few times and steps in. She puts on a bathrobe and goes down stairs.

97.EXT        MAIN ROAD        NIGHT

The arterial road has a moderate flow of traffic. Roland's vehicle pulls to the kerb and parks.

98.INT        MEREWETHER HOUSE(LIVING AREA)    NIGHT

Karen descends the stairs with the red dress. She draws the curtains across the glass door to the patio, then pulls the ironing-board from the cupboard beneath the stairs.

99.INT/EXT        MAIN ROAD        NIGHT

In the car, Roland stuffs a dumbbell in a heavy sock. There's an insulin kit on the seat beside him. He gives himself a quick hit in the upper thigh.

Roland goes to the rear of the car. He pats the boot.

ROLAND  
 Won't take a minute, look  
 after the car.

He walks off down a side street.

100.EXT MEREWETHER HOUSE NIGHT

From across the street we see the federation terrace. We move closer, then down the side access.

101.INT MEREWETHER HOUSE(LIVING AREA) NIGHT

There's a sound from the patio. Karen investigates. She listens a moment, then sweeps the curtain aside. REX the dog is scratching to get in.

KAREN  
 Rex! What are you doing out  
 there? Did they lock you out?  
 Come on, in you come, that's  
 the boy.

Karen unlocks the door and slides it open. The curtains blow in on her. Rex trots in to an affectionate pat.

KAREN  
 You're a hungry boy? We'll  
 see what we can do.

Karen opens a tin of dog food. She wrestles with the curtains and closes the sliding door.

KAREN  
 Talk about a lucky dog Rex!  
 At least you can eat.

Karen shakes the can into Rex's dog bowl. He fusses around the food. She continues at the ironing board.

A sound distracts Rex, his ears stand alert.

There's a crash of glass and a gloved hand reaches in and unlocks the door. Roland steps through a tangle of curtains.

Karen stands frozen in disbelief, iron and dress in hand. Rex retreats to his box. Roland frees himself from the curtain. They stand fronting each other.

Karen bolts for the stairs. Roland lunges. He grasps her ankle and yanks her leg from under her. She flat dives into the steps. Roland drags Karen back down, kicking and twisting to free her ankle. She spins and drives the iron into Roland's face.

It sizzles as they back-flip to the bottom. Karen, dazed, starts to crawl back up the stairs. Roland howls as the iron slides from his cheek

He crawls after Karen and twists the red dress around her head, then hauls her back. Her feet thump down the steps.

CUT TO

Andrew turns off the shower. He hears a sound down stairs.

ANDREW

Karen! Are you okay there?

He covers with a towel and goes to check.

CUT TO

Andrew descends the stairs. He sees the broken glass door.

ANDREW

Karen? What the hell...Karen!

Andrew turns and see Karen, crumpled on the floor, the red dress wrapped around her head. Roland stands over her, the sock sling swings at his side.

Andrew circles gamely, then charges him. They crash through the railing on the stairs. There's a desperate struggle. Roland manages a king hit with the dumbbell. Andrew collapses.

Amidst the wreckage, Roland staggers to the mantle piece. He steadies himself a moment, then grasps the urn. His legs buckle and he slides to the floor. Roland slumps against the wall, clutching the urn. Sweat drips from his face.

All is quiet. Rex nibbles a little at his food.

Roland's POV is blurred. He looks around the room. There's Karen, lying there, with the dress around her head. He sees the phone and an empty pizza box beside it. He sees Rex, eating his food. The room spins out of control.

Roland sweats and shakes his head. His breathing is slow and heavy.

FADE TO BLACK

102.EXT      MAIN ROAD              DAY

Morning traffic is banked up on the clearway. Roland's car is wheel clamped and towed away. It's winched onto the flat top truck.

We see the boot of the vehicle pulled into view.

103.EXT CAR YARD DAY

The gates to the yard swing open and the truck carrying Roland's car drives in. It dumps the car in one of the endless rows of impounded autos. We pull back, till we lose sight of it in a sea of vehicles.

104.EXT MEREWETHER HOUSE DAY

From across the street, we see the federation terrace. The front drive is a buzz of activity. An ambulance siren wails as it speeds up the street. Police vehicles, vans and a mobile dog pound clog the access.

Yellow tape is stretched across the property and keeps onlookers back. Edwards takes a statement from a TRADESMAN.

EDWARDS

You arrived just after eight  
and you have a key?

TRADIE

We'd be earlier, but we had  
to pick up the fridge.

EDWARDS

And you let yourself in the  
front door?

TRADIE

Yeah, I went through to open  
the side door. I saw the glass  
smashed and then I saw them.

A local television crew is covering the story. We pick up on a JOURNALIST giving a stand up to camera.

JOURNO

At this stage, police are  
still uncertain as to the  
motive. It's possible this  
was a random home invasion  
that went tragically wrong.  
One has to ask, has Newcastle  
become... Cut it. Can we do  
that again and get the police  
light, in the background.

The CAMERA and SOUND, reposition themselves.

105.INT MEREWETHER HOUSE(LIVING AREA) DAY

A fridge blocks the door to the patio. Clements stands amidst the mayhem. She has a dictaphone in her hand.

Two forensic officers, DOUGLAS and KLEIN, take evidence.



CLEMENTS

My guess is the big bloke came through the glass door and surprised them. Or surprised her and he came down. He put up quite a fight.

We see the chalk lines, where Andrew and Karen were found. Klein lifts up the weighted sock. Clements records.

CLEMENTS (to mic)

We have a heavy weight, in a sock. Probably used to break the glass and gain entry. Could also have been used as a weapon.

Klein drops it in a bag. Douglas inspects the red dress.

DOUGLAS

Nice dress! Almost see through!

Clements gives Douglas, a look of tolerance.

CLEMENTS

That's what probably saved her life, Douglas. The fact the material was so thin.

Klein checks Roland's wallet.

KLEIN

We've got a possible ID on this brute Clements. Roland Prentice.

Klein bags and seals the wallet.

We see Roland sprawled out, face down in Rex's food bowl. There is blood from a number of wounds to his neck. Beside him lies an empty pizza box and the telephone hand piece.

Clements takes the phone and presses redial. She listens.

CLEMENTS

Detective Sergeant Clements from Bolton Street. Could you check a delivery order around eight last night, to Hatfield Street...

Klein pokes at vomit around Roland's mouth. Clements holds on the phone.

KLEIN

Looks like severe convulsions, and this frothing at the mouth... What do you think?

DOUGLAS

These big blokes pump so much into their system, it just shuts down.

KLEIN

What ever, it saved those other two.

Edwards comes in through the side door.

CLEMENTS

Not collected?... Four large pizzas, right...We'll need a statement from the courier.

Clements hangs up. She takes a closer look at Roland's face. We see the name Rex on the bowl.

CLEMENTS

It appears he had quite an appetite, but couldn't wait. So he settled for dog food.

DOUGLAS

No doubt that upset Rex, which would account for the bite marks.

Clements picks up the urn from the floor. She unscrews the lid and checks the contents.

CLEMENTS

Certainly signs of confusion. But Roland Prentice suggests a motive.

Clements shows Edwards the contents of the urn.

CLEMENTS

They're ashes Edwards.

EDWARDS

There were two urns Serg.

CLEMENTS

Of course, they're divorced.

Clements screws the lid on and hands the urn to Edwards.

106.INT WAREHOUSE (BEDROOM) DAY

Nigel is asleep in bed. He stirs and rolls over. On the pillow beside him he sees a video tape with a note stuck to it. He reads it and smiles.

107.EXT MEREWETHER HOUSE (STREET) DAY

Venus drives around the corner and sees the police cars at the front of the house. She cruises slowly past the drive and pulls up across the road.

Parked in front of her is a mobile dog pound. The DOG RANGER closes the cage door on Rex. Venus jumps out and runs to the truck.

VENUS

What's happened? Hey Rex,  
what's going on boy?

Venus pats Rex through the wire mesh.

RANGER

Mind your hand there love,  
he's savage.

VENUS

This is Rex. Why's he in  
here? What's happening?

RANGER

Apparently he mauled some  
intruder pretty bad.

VENUS

Rex wouldn't hurt anyone.

Ranger tosses the lead in the back and climbs in the truck.

RANGER

I just pick them up love.  
They'll hold him for a week.

Venus leans in close to the mesh and scruffs Rex's ears. He responds with a lick to her her face.

VENUS

Awe Rex, the world's cracked,  
that's for sure. I never had  
this in mind when I kept that  
stuff. It wasn't much you know?

The truck pulls away. A sad Rex looks back from the cage. Venus, with tears in her eyes, watches him disappear down the street.

We hear a guitar introduction, then Johnny's voice singing a Lou Reed song.

JOHNNY (V/O)

I don't know/Just where I'm  
going/But I'm gonna try/For  
the kingdom if I can...

108.INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING) DAY

We see a video image of Johnny playing his guitar and singing the Lou Reed song "Heroin". Nigel is watching.

JOHNNY (song, con't)  
Cause it makes me feel like  
a man/When I put a spike into  
my vein/Things aren't quite the  
same when I'm rushing/And I feel  
just like Jesus' son...

109.EXT CITY STREET DAY

In the distance we see Venus' car beside a phone box.

JOHNNY (V/O song, con't)  
And I guess that I just don't  
know/That I guess I just don't  
know...

We move closer and see Venus in in the box. She hangs up and punches the numbers again.

110.EXT CAR YARD DAY

At the end of the yard, three workers take a smoko. JC and KRAB sit in one vehicle, GARTH on a milk crate opposite. Their whipper-snippers are propped against Roland's car.

GARTH  
Seen this thing called The  
Cars Ate Paris, on TV. You  
see it?

Krab has his lunch box. JC and Garth eat pies and milk.

JC  
Those foreign films shit me  
when you've got to read what  
they're saying. You might as  
well read a book. Hey!

GARTH  
Your books have got pictures  
anyway, what's the diff. It's  
not foreign JC, it's Australian.

JC  
That's just as bad. What's Paris  
got to do with it then?

GARTH  
It's the name of the town. The  
cars, they're fucking outrageous.  
They trash the the place. A serious  
attitude problem, I tell you.

JC

You seen Christine? That's attitude! It's about this Chevvy, or Buick. Hey! Any rate the guy who owns it, he's chocking it up this babe in the front seat, and Christine, that's his car, gets jealous and kills her. That's a mean mother act, kill your girl. Hey!

Garth takes a piss behind Roland's car. Krab digs into his lunch box again. Garth sniffs the air.

GARTH

Whew! Something stinks! One of you dirty fucks fart?

JC

It's Krab's lunch-box.

GARTH

What ever it is, it's dead.

Krab waves an over-ripe German sausage at them.

JC

That's disgusting! No wonder they call you Krab. Hey!

GARTH

What happens to this Christine?

JC

They put her in the crusher. But they can't kill her. Hey! The radio keeps playing.

Garth zips up. The sound of a phone ringing can be heard.

GARTH

That your phone?

JC checks his mobile phone.

JC

It's not mine.

Garth listens, then puts his ear to the boot of the car.

GARTH

It's coming from in here!

JC

Well, answer the fucking thing.

GARTH

Err! The boot's locked, JC.

JC climbs out of the front seat and saunters to the boot of the car. He pulls a screw-driver from his back pocket.

JC

Not for long Narelle.

A fiddle and a thump and JC releases the boot. He flips the lid. They look stunned as they stare in. We see Elaine, she is alive and squirming. Garth finds the phone and answers. It's Venus calling.

GARTH

Hello! ( Hello, who's this)  
 It's Garth. (Garth who? Where's Elaine?) Has she got dark hair, sort of long? (Yes. Look Garth, where is she?) In the boot.  
 (What boot? Put her on. Let me speak to her) All right! She'll be a minute, she's tied up.  
 (What do you mean, tied up?)

JC

I'm sorry, there's no kind way to do this. Hey!

JC tears the tape from Elaine's mouth and frees her wrists. There's tears of relief. In an awkward fashion JC attempts to comfort Elaine. He removes his coat and pulls it around her shoulders. Garth hands the phone across to Elaine.

111.EXT/INT GYMNASIUM DAY

Edwards, Clements, Klein and Douglas stand in the loading bay. Edwards hits the switch and the door grinds open.

They step inside, their torch lights play across the apparatus. All four stop in their tracks.

EDWARDS

Oh! Shit!

The beams of light show Oxtor, thumb cuffed and suspended by his elbows, at the top end of a gym station. He dangles, dead, in a half crucified position.

DOUGLAS

Whew! Tough way to finish a work-out.

Clements sighs and clicks the voice recorder.

CLEMENTS (to mic)

Another penetrating analysis from Douglas. Time 10.40 am.

Clements switches off.

CLEMENTS

For god sake! Get the photos  
over and get him down.

Douglas moves around, flashing the grizzly scene.

DOUGLAS

A real orang-outang our boy.  
Look Ma! On top of the world.

KLEIN

Jimmy Cagney, White Heat.

Clements sighs heavily and shakes her head. Edwards removes  
the weights and lowers the body.

112.EXT CAR YARD DAY

Venus waits, while Krab opens the gate. JC leans in the  
passenger side and offers Elaine a tube of cream.

JC

Here, rub that on the burns,  
it's got lanolin.

JC lightly touches Elaine's face as they drive off.

113.INT VENUS' CAR(OCEAN ROAD) DAY

We see the two girls in the car. Venus drives. Elaine is  
beside her, wearing JC's coat.

ELAINE

Just give the drugs back.

VENUS

That's what I'm trying to do.

ELAINE

Well which urn are they in?

VENUS

I don't know they look the  
same. But if they're at Karen's  
we can thank Rex. They'll still  
be there.

Venus cracks up laughing. Elaine looks confused.

ELAINE

Rex?

VENUS

He bit that big prick last night.

ELAINE

And if they're in the other urn?

VENUS

We have to find Nigel before  
he dumps them in the sea.

Venus accelerates down the road. Elaine hangs on. The car  
corners recklessly close to the edge.

ELAINE

Venus! Slow down or we'll end  
up in the sea...or dead.

VENUS

We'll be dead if we don't get  
this stuff to Oxtor today.  
Least I will be.

ELAINE

Oh! And who spent all last  
night in the boot of a car?

Venus concentrates on her driving. Elaine folds her arms  
and stares out the side window.

VENUS

It's a nice coat. Where did  
you get it?

ELAINE

It's JC's. He said I should  
keep warm, in case I get  
delayed shock.

VENUS

He's real cute, this JC. And  
he gave you the cream too. Did  
he ask you out?

Venus gives Elaine a teasing shove.

ELAINE

Said we ought to see a movie  
or something, when I bring  
back the coat. What do you  
think?

Venus gives Elaine a warm smile.

VENUS

How could you say no.

114.INT NOVA HOTEL (RECEPTION) DAY.

The RECEPTIONIST consults the registry.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry, but he's already  
checked out.



VENUS

Are you sure of it?

RECEPTIONIST

Yes. I am sure.

VENUS

Look, I think I left something  
in his room, can I check...

RECEPTIONIST

The cleaners have been through  
and nothing was handed in, miss.

Venus leans over the desk and whispers to the woman.

VENUS

Is it that time of the month,  
or are you always a sour old  
slag?

She turns and walks out.

115.EXT NOVA HOTEL (DRIVE) DAY

Venus pushes through the doors and walks to the car. Glenn  
is loitering outside having a smoke. He sees Venus.

GLENN

Hey! It's the finger girl,  
Venus! If you're looking for  
that guy you just missed him.

Glenn tags alongside.

VENUS

When did he leave?

GLENN

Just then. Got a cab out to  
the breakwall.

Venus moves fast to get in the car. Glenn is almost knocked  
over by the door.

GLENN

Are you doing anything later?

VENUS

Shit! Look I got to go.

Venus starts the car. Glenn gives a half wave and shouts,  
as the car pulls away.

GLENN

Let's do lunch sometime?

The tyres squeals on the drive as Venus plants the foot.

CUT TO

A Commodore swings into the drive and is nearly cleaned up. It's Clements and Edwards, and they see Venus. After a three point turn, they take off in pursuit.

116.EXT VENUS' CAR(INDUSTRIAL DRIVE) DAY

The docks and city flash by as Venus speeds along harbour foreshore. The sea and breakwall come into view.

117.EXT BREAKWALL(PARKING) DAY

Venus slews the car to a halt. She's out and running down the breakwall.

118.EXT BREAKWALL(POINT) DAY

At the far end of the wall, we see Nigel with the urn.

CUT TO

Venus closes the gap and sprints towards the end. She screams out to Nigel.

Venus' POV sees only the urn and Nigel's hand, about to lift the lid. She screams again.

CUT TO

Nigel looks back and sees her.

CUT TO

Further back we see Clements and Edwards, moving fast onto the break wall.

CUT TO

Nigel places the urn down. Venus collides with him. It's a heavy embrace, spinning together, she shouts to the sky.

VENUS

What about down at the boat shed? It's Johnny's place.

Venus see the police, over Nigel's shoulder. They're close.

VENUS

Awe shit who gives a damn? Johnny wouldn't. Let's just do it. To the wind!

Venus grabs the urn and twists at the lid. It's jammed tight. Things are desperate, it won't budge.

VENUS

Johnny, fuck don't do this  
to me.

Clements slaps a cuff on Venus' wrist and clicks it tight.

119.INT POLICE STATION (INTERVIEW ROOM) DAY

The room is functional. Venus and Nigel sit opposite Clements and Edwards. There's a microphone on the table, and a video camera records the interview. The urn sits on the table between them.

VENUS (V/O)

So we all sat around, like it was some tea party. "Pull your finger out" took on a whole new meaning when the police searched my bag. They were confident, but I thought there was even chance. Then they said they'd found the other urn with ashes. All round things were pretty tense. I could see my fifteen minutes of fame, sitting on that table. Clements could see hers too. I thought of Johnny, and a lot of things.

Edwards screws the lid off the urn and slides it to Venus.

CLEMENTS

For the record, we're showing Miss Kennedy the contents of the urn.

Venus looks to Nigel. He smiles at her. Slowly she leans forward and sneaks a look over the rim. There's a moment, then she explodes with laughter. Clements, Edwards and Nigel all peer in.

CUT TO

Their POV sees a pile of ashes at the bottom of the urn.

VENUS (V/O)

But I never thought life could be this weird. Don't ask me to explain it, because I can't. But when I looked into that urn and saw the ashes, I swear and cross my heart, I heard angels singing. How's that, I don't even believe in angels.

120.INT PRIVATE HOSPITAL (ROOM) DAY

We see a NURSE with a pair of secateurs trim the stems on a bouquet of flowers. He arranges them in a bedside vase.

Karen is propped up with pillows. She still wears the scars of her ordeal. Andrew, nursing a bruised face, holds her hand. Nigel sits at the end of the bed.

VENUS (V/O)

Nigel said his goodbyes, to Karen, the woman who he once knew.

Nigel gives Karen a kiss and leaves.

121.EXT BOAT SHED DAY

There's a light rain over the harbour. Venus and Elaine share an umbrella. Nigel scatters Johnny's ashes at the water's edge.

VENUS (V/O)

To Johnny, his son, who he never really knew, and to me, a girl he only just knew. We had a good time of it though, considering all the shit that was happening.

The three walk on, up the path past the boat shed.

122.EXT CENTRAL STATION DAY

The Northern Express is about to depart. Nigel throws his bag on board and turns to Venus. They embrace and kiss as the last whistle sounds, then Nigel climbs on board.

He pulls the video case of *Gone with the Wind* from his coat pocket and hands it down to Venus.

NIGEL

And if you're wondering, I think this says it all.

Venus watches as the train pulls away from the platform.

VENUS (V/O)

But here's where the story stops. This story, I mean.

123.EXT WAREHOUSE (STREET) DAY

Elaine cycles down past the red brick walls and saw-tooth roofing. In the carry basket she's got a few groceries and a bun from the bakery.

VENUS (V/O)

We made the warehouse really something. Becky wanted to stay over every weekend. Now, for another story. Elaine gave JC his coat back, and so far they've seen three movies. Sounds serious to me.

Elaine pulls up and wheels into the building.

124.INT WAREHOUSE (BATHROOM) DAY

Venus sits astride the toilet, pyjamas around her ankles. She watches closely the plastic test strip in her hand. The expression on her face, a resigned grimace, reflects the positive indicator.

VENUS

Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!...Shiiit!

Venus places the spent strip along-side three others. They're all positive.

125.INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING) DAY

Elaine wheels her bike in and props it against the wall.

ELAINE

You got your butt out of bed yet? It's such a perfect day, you'll miss it.

Elaine carries the groceries through to the kitchen.

126.INT WAREHOUSE (KITCHEN) DAY

Venus is still in her pyjamas. She fills the jug.

VENUS

Do you want some tea to go with it?

ELAINE

Yep! And with this, it's still warm.

Elaine whips out the bun and waves it under Venus' nose. Venus pales and grips the sink to steady herself.

She then promptly vomits in it.

ELAINE

Venus! I'll get a towel.

Elaine sits Venus down and goes for the towel. There's silence from the bathroom. Elaine appears at the door holding the test strips.

ELAINE

What are you going to do?

Venus shrugs her shoulders and leans heavily on her elbows.

VENUS

I don't know.

Elaine sits opposite. The two girls contemplate the event. Venus smiles, then starts to giggle.

VENUS (V/O)

And I didn't then, but I did care, so it mattered which way I went to get there. Which makes as much sense as a grinning cat.

Elaine joins in. Their laughter builds.

127. A SERIES of STILLLS.

Venus and Elaine stand arm in arm outside the warehouse. Venus shows pregnant.

The Kennedy family stand around the barbecue. Barry has his arms around Becky and Venus.

Venus and Glenn stand back to back, overlooking the sea.

Elaine and JC, pose before a movie poster at the cinema.

JC and Elaine, Venus and Glenn, all arm in arm at the foreshore with a Newcastle harbour backdrop.

Venus stands, one arm around Nigel and the other leans on a television. We see the image of Johnny chalking a menu.

A very pregnant Venus, poses her belly.

VENUS (V/O)

I did have lunch with Glenn, and we started seeing each other. He gave me the claddah ring, said I should wear it and that it looked good on my hand. I didn't mind that it was sort of second hand, same as Glenn didn't mind I was pregnant. And I guess, like everyone, you're wondering whose child is it? It's mine... and that's another story.

FADE TO BLACK

END CREDITS

## Appendix two





# SLAM

a screenplay by  
John Prescott

final draft, # 2 revision  
10th September, 2006

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FADE IN

1 EXT/INT SCHOOL CHAPEL DAWN

A shroud of mist hangs heavy over the school grounds. The buttress walls of the chapel rise ghost-like out of it. The first rays of light strike the apex. The sound of YOUTHFUL VOICES, accompanied by ORGAN MUSIC, sing praise to the lord.

In the distance we see a girl running down the path towards the chapel. Her name is JANET FRANCIS. (Daddy called her BAMBI and it stuck). She's seventeen years old, athletic and attractive. Her dark eyes flash with an edgy intensity. Fresh from the shower, she dresses on the run.

We DESCEND to the chapel steps and TRAVEL in through the heavy oak doors as they draw shut, then down the rows of pews to the alter. At the feet of the crucifix is a glass case with a FIGURINE of a peasant girl lying in it. It's that of Saint Maria Goretti. The singing ends.

FATHER MARTIN(VOC)  
In the name of the Father, the  
Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The congregation of YOUNG GIRLS and the occasional PARENT, kneel and bow their heads in prayer.

2 EXT SCHOOL CHAPEL(STEPS) DAWN

Bambi races up the steps to the front doors. She pauses a moment to catch her breath and steels herself for entry. There's a solid clunk as she turns the iron handle. The door remains closed. Bambi deflates with frustration. Missing mass, means trouble. She sinks onto the steps, her spirit matched by her lank and matted hair.

3 INT SCHOOL CHAPEL DAY

In CLOSE on the figurine. The bluish stab wounds to the girl's torso are a savage contrast to the fine porcelain.

FATHER MARTIN(VOC)  
Most loved little Saint, Maria  
Goretti, who valued your virgin  
purity above earthly pleasures.  
Help us to resist temptations  
of the world so as not to stain  
our souls with sin.

4 EXT SCHOOL CHAPEL(STEPS) DAY

Bambi sits, slumped over her knees and stares at the ground. A shadow falls across the steps. She squints into the sun.

OLIVER(VOC)  
You're locked out? I know  
how it feels.

A figure appears haloed in the light. It's OLIVER MELLORS, the gardener. He wears a game-keepers leather apron with an assortment of tools and secateurs hanging from a belt. He is a slight but tall man in his late 30's and walks with the assistance of a calliper on his left leg.

Oliver crosses to the side of the chapel. As he limps, the tools jangle, the calliper creaks. It's a distinctive sound.

OLIVER  
Course you could always use  
the side door.

5 EXT SCHOOL CHAPEL (ROSE GARDEN) DAY

Bambi follows, catching up and measuring her step to his. She's curious and a little provocative.

BAMBI  
Yeah, sure! Do cartwheels.  
Hey everybody, I'm late.

OLIVER  
We'll get you a rose and you  
can make amends.

Oliver grabs a step ladder from the side of the chapel. He stands it in one of the garden beds amongst the roses.

BAMBI  
Total romance. Can I pick it?

OLIVER  
It's penance, for sleeping in.

Oliver hands Bambi the pair of shears and points out a rose high on a branch. He kneels down to steady the ladder.

OLIVER  
Now that's the one, up there.  
Definitely for Saint Maria.

BAMBI  
Yeah! A real virgin.

Bambi hitches her uniform up under her belt. A WHITE GLOVE falls from her pocket as she steps onto the first rung. The ladder sink into the soil. She grips Oliver's shoulder to regain balance. It's innocent, but flirtatious.

BAMBI  
You promise to catch me,  
won't you, Mister Mellors?

Bambi climbs higher and leans right out to reach the rose. Her thigh presses against Oliver's forehead as he struggles to keep the ladder from toppling over. He tries not to look.

Bambi takes forever to snip the rose. She's aware how much she's in his face and enjoys the carnal moment.

BAMBI (VOC)  
It's a beauty. The petals are moist and just opening.

6 EXT SCHOOL CHAPEL (STEPS) DAY

The congregation of school girls leave the chapel and move down the steps. Bambi slips in and mingles with a GROUP of GIRLS. Confident she's not been sprung, she waves the rose teasingly in their faces.

BAMBI  
Guess who gave me this?

The Girls collectively express their disbelief.

GIRL#1  
I'll tell Ollie you've been raiding his flowers.

GIRL#2  
Bambi, you're a slut! And with Limp-along?

BAMBI  
Mister Mellors...and he wasn't limp. He was hot for me.

The girls rib each other over the sexual joke. Suddenly the laughter stops as SISTER BRIGID appears. She detains Bambi.

SISTER BRIGID  
Perhaps Bambi, you could ask for guidance, to follow our dear little Saints' example.

7 INT SCHOOL CHAPEL DAY

We GLIDE in CLOSE on the figurine of Saint Maria Goretti. Slowly we move up her body, lingering on each wound as we come to it. Her inner thigh, the pubic mound, her belly, the rib cage, her breasts, shoulders and neck. Finally the serenity of her face, tilted upwards and the blank stare of lifeless eyes.

Bambi kneel in the front pew. Her head rests on her hands. They're clasped tight in prayer. A shaft of morning light spill from the stained glass windows above the alter. It's a picture of reverence and tranquillity.

Bambi is startled by an eerie sound. She looks up to see the front doors swing closed. The iron bar drops and locks them.

A gust of wind from the side entrance turns the pages of the chapel bible, as though searching for a passage to read.

The light touches the face of the figurine and the eyes shine like translucent pools; a restless spirit behind them.

Bambi is transfixed, mesmerised by the image, and scared. She creeps cautiously towards the side door as if trying not to disturb anything. Then she bolts outside.

8 EXT SCHOOL CHAPEL (ROSE GARDEN) DAY

The rose beds alongside the chapel path block the way. Bambi makes her escape by going through them. The thorny branches snare and catch her uniform as she picks her way clear.

Suddenly Oliver comes into view at the end of the chapel. He sees her and starts towards her.

Crouching low, Bambi crawls between the bushes. Already there are flecks of blood on her arms and legs. She pauses a moment to free her hair caught in the spurs. She hears the creaking sound of Oliver's calliper as he limps down the path. Bambi freezes like an animal caught in a trap; still, to avoid being seen. He shuffles on getting ever closer.

CUT TO

The IMAGE of the Maria Goretti figurine falling slowly back through rose branches, mortally wounded.

CUT TO

Oliver stops a moment to adjust the strap on the leg brace. As he straightens up his eyes meet Bambi's. He fumbles in the pocket of his apron.

In sheer panic, Bambi rips herself free leaving behind a tangle of hair. Thorns cut and scratch her face, as she scrabbles her way out and stumbles back to the side door and the safety of the chapel.

9 INT SCHOOL CHAPEL DAY

Bambi heaves the door closed and shoves the slide-bolt home. There's a moment of relief and she sinks to the floor. Her breathing is short and sharp; almost sobbing. She can taste the blood on her face. A shadow blocks the light under the door and the heavy iron handle slowly turns.

Bambi scurries back to the alter and the glass case with the figurine. She listens. The distinctive sound of Oliver can be heard beyond the door. The handle is turned again. Bambi closes her eyes for a moment, trying to shut everything out. She sees the rose lying on the slate floor, the rose that started it all. She picks it up and kneels before the Maria Goretti. The sounds of Oliver fades to silence. The gloom of the chapel is comforting.

Suddenly there's a dull thud from the organ as one of the wind stops falls open. It sighs and wheezes a deep moan as if life has expired. This galvanises Bambi. She races to the front doors, listens a moment, then quietly lifts the catch. Gently she eases the doors open and steps out.

10 EXT SCHOOL CHAPEL(STEPS) DAY

Oliver reaches out from behind the door. He offers Bambi her white glove. The reaction is electric. She screams wildly and fends off his advance. The glove and rose fall to the floor. Oliver goes to pick them up.

Bambi backs away, then she sees the cutters hanging from his belt. Her eyes flash. She grabs them and with a blur of manic fury drives the steel blade into Oliver's neck. He tries to get up, staggers, then collapses dead on the slate. The white rose and glove fall from his hand. A pool of blood spreads out around them. Bambi looks down horrified.

Then in a compelling moment filled with desire, she picks up the bloody glove and raises it to her lips. Beyond the door, Bambi sees the crucifix; and it sees her. She snarls back, defiant and angry, then drops the glove and backs away.

A FLASH of LIGHT and we see a B/W NEWS-PRINT IMAGE of:

11 EXT SCHOOL CHAPEL(STEPS) DAY

The body of Oliver Mellors lies on the steps to the school chapel. There's crime-tape around it. This is a cutting from a newspaper. It's taped into an old PHOTO ALBUM. The headline reads: "YOUNG GIRL FIGHTS OFF ATTACKER"

ADULT SLAVONIKA(V/O)  
The newspapers had their story,  
They called it, Bloody Sunday.  
The coroner called it self-defence.  
And the church claimed it was a  
miracle. We finished school that  
year...

The pages of the album are turned back to reveal a large b/w print, hand touched up with colour crayons. It is:

12 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR DAY

This is an impressive turn of the century rural building. The imposing stone tower with parapets and gabled roof line, give it an unusual Gothic look.

ADULT SLAVONIKA(V/O)  
...but our story starts back  
on the farm.

We move in closer on the photo, across manicured lawns and wrought iron fences. The page TURNS to another PRINT. It is:

13 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR(FARM SHEDS) DAY

JUSTINE and RICHARD FRANCIS stand posed before an early 70,s Mercedes. They're dressed in country catalogue Fletcher Jones clothes. A young girl, SLAVONIKA, sits on the bonnet. In Richard's arms is baby Janet.(Daddy's Bambi).

ADULT SLAVONIKA (V/O)  
I'm Slavonika, that's me on  
the car. I was adopted. And  
that's Mum and Dad and baby  
Janet. They were so happy when  
she was born. Dad called her  
Bambi, we all did. We loved  
those early days together...

We MOVE DOWN to another PHOTO. It is:

14 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR (EAST WING) DAY

This view shows the rooms in east wing of the Manor. We move  
in CLOSER on the photo and FOCUS on a large ornate window.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (BEDROOM) DAY

Through the window we see the body of Justine laid out on a  
grand Victorian bed. She's clothed in a white lace dress.

Slavonika and Bambi, now young girls, sit beside her and  
gently brush her hair. A cat is curled up asleep on the end  
of the bed. Richard, dressed in a funeral suit stands by.

ADULT SLAVONIKA (V/O)  
...then Mum died. Bambi could  
never accept her death. If  
this was his will, then he  
was a cruel God.

16 EXT RURAL CEMETERY DAY

Light rain falls across the countryside. A group of MOURNERS  
stand alongside the grave site. We move down to the coffin,  
to the flowers lying on top of it.

PRIEST (VOC)  
God giveth and god taketh away...

The voice fades.

ADULT SLAVONIKA (V/O)  
And he did, he gave us Bambi.  
Then he took our mother...

17 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR (TOWER PARAPET) DAY

From high up on the tower parapet Bambi and Slavonika watch  
the mourners in the distance. The wind whips their hair  
across their faces.

ADULT SLAVONIKA (V/O)  
...everything would change  
from then on...

Bambi nurses the cat in her arms and shelters it. She leans  
dangerously close to the edge.



18 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR (TOWER BASE) DAY

The cat's eyes stare lifeless as it lies at the bottom of the tower. Dark blood stains the blue stonework beneath it.

ADULT SLAVONIKA(V/O)  
 ...first Hesta moved in. She  
 was the house-keeper, then  
 she became our new mother...

19 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (BASEMENT) DAY

We look up to see HESTA WARTON closing the trap-door to the basement. We descend the steps into the gloom. A candle lights the young girls as they huddle together below.

ADULT SLAVONIKA(V/O)  
 ...Bambi and I hated her,  
 all the beatings and being  
 locked away. Then Hesta had  
 the accident.

20 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR (GRAIN SILO) DAY

Grain spills from a conveyor belt into a huge silo. Closer in we see Hesta's face. She screams and sinks beneath the sea of wheat. The diamond ring glints on her finger as she reaches out for the sky. Bambi looks down from the gantry.

21 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR DAY/DUSK

A solid wooden stake is pounded into the ground. We see the "FOR SALE" sign attached to it. Like a sundial, a shadow sweeps across the ground as the sun move beyond the zenith and drops down behind the western rim. The sign is obscured, a dark floating FRAME, silhouetted against the evening sky.

ADULT SLAVONIKA(V/O)  
 Dad gave up on the farm.  
 Later he died in a car crash,  
 with a broken heart. There  
 was insurance and the trust  
 fund and...

The FRAME becomes a window to the blackness beyond.

DISOLVE

22 EXT GALAXY NIGHT

We see an overview of the solar system against a spectacular wheel of stars. The celestial bodies, large in foreground move into a straight alignment.

ADULT SLAVONIKA(V/O)  
 ...one last strange night,  
 before we were sent away  
 to school.

They eclipse each other leaving a slivered curve at the rim.

23 EXT RURAL CEMETERY NIGHT

A burning pentangle ignites around a marble grave site. The inscription on the headstone reads:

*"Justine Francis, In loving memory of our mother..."*

Bambi spits onto the stone and continues to sharpen a small knife. Slavonika lies across the slab, her hands buried between her legs. She looks like some sacrificial offering.

ADULT SLAVONIKA(V/O)

It was weird, all the things that happened, some said it was a curse... I thought a coincidence. That night we made our pledge.

Slavonika removes her hands from her pants. They're covered in blood. Bambi takes them and touches the blooded fingers to her lips.

Bambi kneels over Slavonika, stretches her own top down to expose her chest then slices the blade across her flesh. She lifts Slavonika to the bleeding wound.

The two girls cling to each other. They look to the heavens to see the line of planets move across the sky and eclipse the moon. Darkness falls over them.

DISSOLVE TO COLOUR: FLAMES

24 TITLE CREDIT : **SLAM**

The text is black on a matte red. A double edged axe dangles from the "S". It morphs and unfolds into a pair of bat wings and flies off; joined by hundreds of other bats silhouetted against the dawn.

DISSOLVE

25 EXT RIVER DAWN

The bats fly low across the river. They fan out into the mangroves along the bank. Midstream TWO ROWERS emerge from the mist. The white tips of their oar blades slice the water in perfect rhythm. We travel with them as they glide past the embankment.

26 EXT RIVER'S EDGE DAWN

In closer through the mangroves we find the bats roosting. Side by side along the branches they hang upside down, their black webbed wings wrapped tight. Above the tangle of trees a bridge crosses the river.

27 EXT HIGHWAY(BRIDGE) DAWN

A dust caked utility speeds over the old iron girder bridge. We can make out two people in cowboy hats as they pass. In the tray sits a granite headstone.

28 EXT THE WAREHOUSE DAY

From a set of doors on the second floor a loading jib hauls the headstone out of the ute. The old steel pulley strains as the block inches up the side of the building.

BAM and SLAV, (adult Bambi and Slavonika) lean against the ute's tailgate and watch the progress. They have an ice bucket with a bottle of wine and true to the picnic atmosphere, a colourful parasol to shade the sun. Bam's haunting paleness contrasts with Slav's European appearance. They're now in their mid twenties, their dress is expensive, leather, denim, boots. An arresting couple; they turn heads.

SLAV(V/O)

Like angels cast from heaven...  
we found our own light and Bam  
gathered the family around.

Bam moves inside. Slav follows.

29 INT WAREHOUSE(LIVING AREA) DAY

The Warehouse is a renovated inner-city wool shed. Bam and Slav climb the stairs into the living space. They step over a number of headstones that already decorate the area. The new addition swings in through the doors and they guide it down amongst the others. We see the inscription on the stone; it's their mother, Justine.

30 EXT COUNTRY SHOWGROUND DAY

The "Agfest" field day is a showcase of rural lifestyle. The latest machinery and equipment is on display as well as home crafts and animals. Family entertainment events include wood chopping, equestrian and rodeo competitions. Amidst the excitement and activity we find CAT and CHICCI.

Cat is a student in her early twenties with a bright and breezy attitude. She looks physically strong, as she carries an assortment of lenses and professional camera gear.

Chicci is seventeen years old and attractive in a plain, forthright manner. She embraces the carnival atmosphere with girlish enthusiasm. She wears a silver labrys (double edged axe) on a neck-chain and occasionally sucks it.

We follow them through the colourful and testosterone charged landscape. Cat takes photos, Chicci poses for them.

We see a moving MONTAGE punctuated with STILL frames.

The leather-craft; wearing cowboy hat, boots and spurs, Chicci swings a platted whip to the applause of a crowd.

The wood-chop event; with a quizzical cock of the head Chicci watches a mountain of a man demolish a log.

The food stand; stuffing her mouth, Chicci holds out her other fist. It's full of oozing hot dog. Cat runs into frame. They're caught in camera like pigs at the trough.

The rodeo area; finds Chicci doing gymnastics above a huge bull. She balances on the rails of the chute and spreads her legs in preparation to straddle the beast, a provocative and dangerous pose.

Another timer shot; Cat and Chicci perch on the fence of the holding yard above the cattle. Arm in arm, thumbs hitched in their belts, they show-off the big "winning" rodeo buckles.

31 INT COUNTRY SHOWGROUND (BARN) DAY

Cat and Chicci wander down past the cattle stalls. It's quiet save for the sound of the animals. One of the bays is filled with loose hay. Chicci stops and smiles at the possibility. She nuzzles into Cat and whispers.

CHICCI

Cat! What do you say, to a roll in the hay?

Cat looks a little perplexed at the mound of hay.

CAT

It's...not a loft.

CHICCI

Does it have to be? It's hay.

CAT

Fuck Chicci! We'd itch for weeks. Why don't you give that a spin.

Cat nods to a giant D9 bulldozer parked at the end of the shed. Chicci sizes up the challenge. Her smile is confident.

CHICCI

You don't think I can, do you? Watch this.

Chicci's on the run to the machine. She turns back to Cat.

CHICCI (con't)

Set up the camera.

Cat spreads the tri-pod and mounts the camera. Chicci hauls herself up onto the tracks and climbs along to the cabin. She folds the door back.

CHICCI (con't)

Where do you want it?

CAT

Just there, stay on the tracks. Hold it. Good. Again!

Cat fires a number of frames. She pauses a moment.

CAT(con't)  
Give us an industrial look.

Chicci stands on the treads, arms akimbo.

CHICCI  
What's that? Dirty or something?

CAT  
No! Like you mean business.

CHICCI  
All right! Filthy business.

Chicci grabs a hard hat from the cabin seat and jams it on. She pulls her top off, unzips her jeans and slides them over her butt. Swinging off bits of dozer she strikes a number of calendar poses. The shutter goes into overdrive.

CAT(con't)  
We've got melt down here,  
that's great.

Cat unplugs from the view-finder. Chicci heaves her jeans up and climbs into the cabin. She fumbles the ignition wires.

CHICCI  
Now where do you want this  
dozer?

CAT  
I don't, we've got it here.  
Dozer girl!

A couple of initial sparks then the engine grinds into life. Diesel blows from the exhaust stack as the giant tracks spin the machine. Chicci's elation turns to terror.

CAT(con't)  
Chicci! Okay! I believe you.  
Turn it off.

The controls don't respond. The dozer accelerates and veers into the wall of the building. Chicci panics and abandons the cabin. She slips catching the heel of her boot in the steel treads.

We see their relentless force as they bite into the dirt. Cat screams as Chicci's dragged over the front rollers towards the ground.

CUT TO

32 EXT COUNTRY SHOWGROUND (BARN) DAY

The blade of the dozer explodes through the wall opening the iron up like knife.

CUT TO



Cat looks exasperated and bites into the fruit.

CAT  
What is it with guys, a  
challenge?

ROBERT  
It's the leather and that  
Jane Austen look.

Robert flirts his hands over the vest. Cat stands akimbo  
munching on the apple.

CAT  
This is to keep them out of  
the way of the arrow.

ROBERT  
Thank god it does. What a  
turn on though!

Cat gives Robert the apple and switches the DVD camera off.  
She fits another arrow and takes aim.

CAT  
Robert, in your garden,  
there are no tits.

We spiral out from a red and black target board. The arrow  
finds the mark dead centre.

36 INT CARRIAGES (GREEN ROOM) NIGHT.

The bar consists of lounge style booths screened with indoor  
plants. It's an up market venue and frequented by the gay  
community, predominantly lesbians. Cat fronts the bar and  
gets a beer. She tosses back a draught and checks the crowd.

MILLY A young woman down the bar catches her eye. She smiles  
tentatively to Cat.

CLAIRE and RUTH a couple in their mid thirties, push a  
state-of-the-art pram loaded with shopping. They pass the  
bar on their way out. Cat salutes the pram with her beer.

CAT  
So, congratulations! You  
finally did it.

Ruth and Claire exchange a sheepish look.

RUTH  
Well, not quite yet. It's  
part of the incentive plan.

CAT  
It's a fashion statement, Ruth.  
Just need the Saab.

CLAIRE  
This month Cat, fingers crossed.

CAT  
Great shopping trolley anyway.

Ruth and Claire steer the pram to the door. Cat turns back to the bar. Milly, pulls a stool up beside her. Cat checks her over, impressed and flattered with the interest shown.

MILLY  
Can I join you?

CAT  
Sure. What are you drinking?

MILLY  
The same as you. I'm Milly, short for Mildred but that's just so formal.

CAT  
I'm Cat. As short as it gets. You're new around here?

Cat extends her hand to Milly. She responds politely.

MILLY  
Everyone talks about the green room so I thought I'd check it out.

Milly's drink arrives. They touch glass.

CAT  
Well cheers Milly! You want a glass?

MILLY  
No, I prefer the bottle.

Cat drinks and Milly sips at her beer. It's clear she's a little unsure of territory.

37 INT WAREHOUSE(LIVING AREA) NIGHT

Bam takes refuge in her own indoor cemetery. She is draped across a slab of marble with her flushed cheek flat against the cold stone.

There's a line of cocaine on an old fashioned hand mirror. She looks gaunt and wasted as she snorts the powder.

BAM  
The family, they're all together now Slavonika...

Slav sits alongside stroking her hair.



SLAV  
 Let me run a bath, you'll  
 feel better.

Bam stares at her reflection in the hand mirror.

BAM  
 God! Just look at me. Talk  
 of the living dead. I was  
 beautiful once, wasn't I?

SLAV  
 You still are, absolutely  
 gorgeous and vain.

Bam responds rolling over with coquettish innocence.

BAM  
 And a little bit sexy?

SLAV  
 Always, you know that.

Slav kisses Bam lightly as though comforting a child. Bam grasps her and holds on, a look of desperation in her eyes.

38 EXT MILLY'S PLACE NIGHT

Cat and Milly, beers in hand, weave through the garden to a small studio behind the main house. Cat nurses a take-away six pack while Milly fumbles her key in the door.

CAT  
 So, that's your parent's house,  
 and what this?

MILLY  
 It used to be the coach-house  
 and servant's quarters.

CAT  
 And now it's your garden condo!  
 It all makes sense, I think.

Milly holds the door for Cat. She lurches inside.

39 INT MILLY'S PLACE NIGHT

The renovations disguise the original interior. A lounge with small kitchen, a bedroom and ensuite. Cat drops herself into the couch. Milly pops the lid on a small jewellery box and offers Cat a pre-rolled joint.

CAT  
 We are well prepared.

Cat lights the joint and hands it to Milly. She declines the offer and goes to the bathroom.

MILLY(O/S)  
I've had too much beer,  
I'm bloated.

Cat opens another bottle and relaxes with the smoke. Milly appears dressed in a bathrobe. She places a folded towel on the table and pats it nervously.

MILLY  
Do you want to take a bath?

CAT  
Aw! Milly...This is not such a  
good idea.

MILLY  
I've got this.

Milly quickly unfolds the towel to reveal a large plastic penis shaped dildo, complete with elastic straps.

CAT  
Fuck! Mildred, what do you  
plan to do with that?

Cat can hardly contain the laughter. Milly's embarrassment shows on her face.

MILLY  
I don't know...it's new.

CAT  
It's revolting. Does it work?

Cat checks out the apparatus. She twists the end and starts it vibrating then places it upright on the table. They watch the animated dick shake around in front of them.

CAT(con't)  
You've got a rocket launcher  
Milly. Careful, it'll take off.

It clunks off the edge of the table. Milly picks it up and turns it off. She sit head bowed holding the dildo. There are tears in her eyes. Cat lets her down gently.

CAT(con't)  
Milly, hey! Shit I'm sorry,  
I shouldn't have come back  
here. I've got a girlfriend.  
You remind me of her and how  
much I miss her.

Cat brushes back her hair and gently wipes the tears away.

CAT(con't)  
If it's what you want, you'll  
find someone, believe me...

Cat lightly kisses Milly's cheek, then leaves. We see her shadow move across the side of the house. The doors to the studio swing open in the breeze. Milly, feeling forlorn remains staring at the floor. She looks vulnerable.

40 EXT WAREHOUSE (STREET) NIGHT.

The car lights to the utility flick on as the vehicle turns. The beam of light illuminates the side of the Warehouse then moves up the darkened street. The twin tail lights glow red against the blackness.

41 EXT CITY MALL NIGHT

The night trade is closing down. A few STRAGGLERS try for a taxi. Others stumble home. A COUPLE grab a moment of passion in a side alley. A bus pulls away from the curb. Cat gives chase. It doesn't stop. Resigned to the walk she continues down the street. The occasional car cruises slowly past with offers. It's a hostile time down-town.

42 EXT THE PARK NIGHT

The footpath skirts the park. It's broken and uneven by the roots of huge fig trees. The buttress trunks and over hanging bows seem to swallow Cat as she walks past. The pale street lights offer little security against the night.

The moon rides high, drifting through dark banks of cloud.

43 INT WAREHOUSE (LIVING AREA) DAWN

Slav sits on one side of the bed, the other side is empty. She is dressed in pyjamas, another pair are neatly folded on the pillow beside her. She caress the garment gently. The reading lamp is on as the first light of dawn reaches into the room and touches the headstones.

SLAV (V/O)

We had the family back, but there were restless nights. Bam was seeing the doctor again and it must have done something, she'd be alright for a while...But always, it would creep back, stronger each time...like some hunger and I wasn't enough to satisfy her. For Bam, night-time was play-time.

44 EXT RIVER'S EDGE (DOWNSTREAM) DAWN

The Two Rowers rest on their oars. The current carries them down towards the boatshed.

On a grassy patch of the embankment we can make out a small pile of neatly folded clothes, placed on a pair of shoes.

Then we see the lower torso of a BODY protruding from the mangrove roots. It's face down, covered in mud and leeches and impossible to discern the gender. The rowers drift past with a look of horror on their faces.

45 INT WAREHOUSE (STAIRS) DAWN

Slav pulls on a bath-robe as she hurries down stairs. We hear the sound of someone rattling around in the kitchen.

46 INT WAREHOUSE (KITCHEN) DAWN

Slav pushes through the door to find Bam. Her hair is matted and she looks like shit. Startled, Bam spills the coffee everywhere. Slav promptly cleans it up.

SLAV

Was she young and exciting?

BAM

I just needed the night, I feel better now. Come here, I'll show you excitement.

Bam holds her arms out and they embrace. Slav clings on.

SLAV

I'm sorry, I guess I'm just a possessive bitch.

Slav picks a strand of hair from Bam's coat and brushes absently at a dark stain on the sleeve.

BAM

I like that. It's good to feel wanted.

Bam sucks her fingers provocatively then slides her hand under the bath-robe. Slav steadies herself against the bench as she relinquishes to the pleasure.

47 EXT RIVER'S EDGE DAY

Crime tape stretches across the embankment. A body-bag is loaded in a van and driven away. The Two Rowers look on. Detectives, TERRY HALL and ALLEN WARD, both in their mid forties, stare down the embankment.

DET TERRY HALL

There's something wrong here. You know what I mean?

DET ALLEN WARD

Yeah! I know what you mean.

DET TERRY HALL

There's no sign of a struggle. They came here willingly.

DET ALLEN WARD  
Well they got one hell of a  
surprise. The head was nearly  
severed.

DET TERRY HALL  
The stab wounds to the chest  
suggest a violent frenzy.

DET ALLEN WARD  
Yeah! But what about the  
teeth marks.

The detectives look out across the river. The light dances  
and sparkles off the water.

DET TERRY HALL  
That's what's wrong.

48 INT PSYCHOTHERAPIST'S ROOMS DAY

We see a VIDEO PLAYBACK of a therapy session. A static frame  
is focused on the patient in a comfortable lounge chair. The  
patient is Bam and she talks to Dr Vivian off screen.

BAM  
On Sundays we always went to  
church in the morning. Daddy  
stayed at Greystone working.  
There was no rest for the  
wicked he used to say. He was  
right I deserved to be punished.  
It was my church dress and I  
always folded it up afterwards,  
but this time I hid it, because  
of the blood.

Bam tucks her legs up into the lounge and hugs them. A  
protective gesture against the memories.

BAM(con't)  
It seeped through my pants.  
I prayed for it to stop, but  
it kept on bleeding.

The video image pauses a moment then rewinds a little. We  
pull back from the monitor to see DR VIVIAN operating the  
remote. She is an attractive woman in her early forties and  
wears a smart but casual outfit, no jewellery and little  
makeup on her face.

BAM(con't)  
I prayed for it to stop, but  
it kept on bleeding.

Dr Vivian pauses the tape again. She activates a dictaphone  
and speaks to it.

DR VIVIAN

I believe this incident is quite significant. The first menstruation for many girls can cause anxiety, but Bam experienced extreme guilt and it's associated with the church, perhaps a feeling of, moral decadence!

Dr Vivian runs the tape.

BAM

Our new mother beat us both with the flex. Poor Slavonika, it wasn't her fault. I promised I'd make it up to her though. Daddy never knew.

Dr Vivian pauses and records comments.

DR VIVIAN

There's conflict here, between the maternal authority and the father's law. This is central to feminine abjection. For Bam the abject manifests with different personalities.

The tape continues.

BAM

He was saved from that...  
and I saved him from her.

We hear Dr Vivian's questions on the recorded video tape.

DR VIVIAN(voice)

What do you think your father would've said, if he knew?

We see Bam shift in the lounge. She is more aggressive to Dr Vivian and shifts focus to the camera.

BAM

(defensive)

He didn't know. Why do you care about Daddy? What's he to you?

DR VIVIAN(voice)

You said he was saved. What was Daddy saved from? From her, your new mother? Tell me, how did Bambi save Daddy from your new mother?

BAM

(hostile)

Can you smell it? The blood?  
It'll mess up your lounge  
Dr Vivian. It messed up the  
church. I saved Daddy, but I  
couldn't save her. No one  
could save her. Just like  
Maria. Not even god.

Bam twists out of the lounge chair. She claws up her dress and shoves her thighs towards the camera. Her pants are soaked with blood.

BAM(con't)

Look it's everywhere. I'm  
bleeding like a pig. Why  
don't we get a close up.  
Do you want taste it?

Bam holds out her bloody hand.

BAM(con't)

(conciliatory)

But you don't need blood,  
you're young and beautiful.

Bam puts her fingers to her mouth. Blood smears her lips. Dr Vivian pauses the tape and makes comment to the recorder.

DR VIVIAN

A precondition of narcissism  
the erotic fantasy of ritual  
death. I don't believe this is  
the dominate personality, but  
definitely dangerous. Should  
the balance shift...

The sound of a curtesy BELL RINGS. Dr Vivian stops the recorder, turns off the tape and gets the door.

It's Bam, dressed in a smart suit and carrying a briefcase. Her manner is confident. She's a different personality. She's CHARLIE.

DR VIVIAN

Bam, come on in. I've just been  
reviewing our previous session.

BAM/CHARLIE

Charlie, Dr Vivian and please  
accept my apologies for that  
outrageous behaviour. I spoke  
with Bambi, there was no excuse.  
I don't know what got into her.  
I'm ashamed and I told her as  
much. She assured me it won't  
happen again.

Dr Vivian closes the door and takes Bam's coat.

DR VIVIAN

Don't be ashamed, sometimes  
it's better to get it out  
there. Now, where would you  
like to sit, Charlie?

BAM/CHARLIE

Anywhere! Here will be fine.

Bam places the briefcase on the desk and sits. Dr Vivian  
sits opposite. She moves a crucifix paperweight to one side.

BAM/CHARLIE

Bambi tried to apologise in  
her own way, she asked for me  
bring this.

Bam opens the briefcase. Inside it are the dress and pants,  
she was wearing in the previous taped session, clean and  
neatly folded.

49 INT UNIVERSITY GALLERY DAY

A video monitor is placed on a plinth against the wall. We  
see the image of Cat giving a direct address to camera.  
Robert is adjusting the sound levels.

CAT(v/tape)

Godard said, "Art is not the  
reflection of reality, it is  
the reality of that reflection."  
I ask you can I use the image  
of this woman with impunity.

The image cuts to the photo-print of Chicci posed on the  
tracks of the D9 bulldozer. A slow zoom in frames her body  
from waist to thigh.

CAT(v/tape, con't)

And can you as a spectator  
engage without complicity...  
And of course there's the  
matter of money to own this  
work of art! What's for sale?  
That's the conundrum!

Robert stops the tape and rewinds it. Milly steps into the  
gallery space. She is holding a large bunch of flowers.  
Robert is startled by her presence.

ROBERT

Whoa! Flowers, are they for me?

MILLY

Actually I was looking for Cat!



ROBERT

Well join the queue. It's her exhibition and she disappears.

MILLY

I thought I'd say good luck.

ROBERT

I'll tell her, whenever! Nice card.

Robert takes the flowers. Milly is distracted by the large photo-prints stacked against the wall waiting to be hung. The one of Chicci titled "Dozer girl" is quite arresting.

50 INT        DETENTION CENTRE (GYM)        DAY

A block of weight units crash to the base, then slowly creep up again. A number of work stations are in action. We see Chicci working out on a shoulder press. Physically, her muscle definition attests to many hours in the gym. She is wearing standard issue singlet and tights. The silver labrys swings on her chest. Chicci finishes the set.

MEGAN, her weight mate stands by. A bell signals the session is over. Megan drapes a towel around Chicci's neck and gives her shoulders a quick massage.

CHICCI

You got credit Meg? The Toad took my mobile.

MEGAN

Yeah! Is Cat coming for you?

Megan hands Chicci her phone credit card. Chicci halts her towel around Megan's neck and twists it tight.

CHICCI

I'll strangle her if she doesn't.

Chicci brushes a kiss on Megan's nose, then tows her off with the towel. They join a FEW OTHERS leaving the gym.

51 INT        DETENTION CENTRE (CORRIDOR)        DAY

Chicci, Megan and the Others from the gym jostle each other down the corridor past the recreation room. There's an ACAPPELLA CHOIR group in practice. We see them briefly. Their song carries throughout the detention centre. It's a rendition of "On the Inside" from the series "Prisoner"

52 INT        DETENTION CENTRE (PHONE BOOTHS)        DAY

Chicci uses the credit phones. There's a look of despair to Megan as the answer machine takes the call.

CHICCI  
Cat, It's me. Where are you?  
(to Megan) She's probably  
drowned in the darkroom!

53 INT THE BUNGALOW (LIVING ROOM) DAY

We move through the darkened room. On the couch we can see Cat's archery gear and beside it the red light on the answer machine flashes. Chicci's voice is heard.

CHICCI  
Cat, pick up...Well don't  
forget tomorrow! Bye.

The machine clicks off.

54 INT RESTAURANT NIGHT

Slav has all but finished her meal. Bam sips wine and occasionally pushes her food around on the plate. She can just tolerate being there.

SLAV  
Bam, you've hardly touched it.

BAM  
Just the thought of food...  
You help yourself if you want.

Bam pushes the plate towards Slav. She pulls a compact from her bag and busies herself with it. We see she is wearing an unusual neck-chain with a steel clasp. Bam pauses and shakes her head with disgust.

BAM  
God! I look like a carcass.  
What's the point.

SLAV  
Perhaps if you ate! Do you  
want something else.

BAM  
You know I do, but it's not  
on the menu.

Slav quietly places her knife and fork down and prepares for the altercation.

55 EXT RESTAURANT (ARCADE) NIGHT

Slav steers a reluctant Bam out of the restaurant and down the arcade.

SLAV  
Now Bam we'll go home, and  
you take your medication.

BAM

It doesn't work. I know what  
I need...I need colour back  
in my cheeks. Help me Slav.

CUT TO

MIKE and TWO TEENAGE MATES hang about at the end of the  
arcade. They boost each other's confidence with a few cans  
of rum and cola. Mike spots Bam and Slav and sniffs the air.

MIKE

Can you smell something? I  
smell vagina-mite.

Mike pushes his mates back against the wall and they stand  
at attention. It's a smart-alec gesture and gets a snicker.  
Bam and Slav walk past ignoring the antics.

MIKE

Fucking mick lickers.

Bam stops. Slav urges her on. Mike's confident as he swigs  
from the bottle.

MIKE

The lesos need a good cock!

Bam turns and walks slowly back. Mike grabs at his crotch.

MIKE

Whoa! She's keen. Why don't  
you suck this?

Bam steps up to him real close and stares him down. She  
caresses his thigh.

BAM

That depends on how good it  
is and if you can get it up.

Mike is taken back. He can't believe his luck. Bam removes  
the can of drink and hands it to Slav.

BAM

Slav, give me a moment. I'll  
see what this cock can do.

SLAV

No! Come home...please Bam!

BAM

Just a little taste.

SLAV

God Bam! Don't... No...

MIKE

You're seconds, give the  
boys here a chew, hey!

Bam leads Mike by his belt into the shadows of the carpark at the end of the arcade. Mate#1 offer encouragement.

MATE#1

You give it to her Mike.  
(to Slav) You fancy it?  
We've got a car.

SLAV

What sort of car?

MATE#1

Come and we'll show you.

Slav hands Mate#1 the can.

SLAV

Finish your drink first.

A SCREAM from the carpark can be heard. Mike staggers into the arcade. The front of his shirt is covered in blood. He collapses into Mate#1. Slav disappears into the shadows. The dark Cola spills out as the can rolls across the tiles.

56 INT WAREHOUSE(LIVING AREA) NIGHT

Slav sits on the floor against a headstone. Bam is curled in a foetal position on her lap.

BAM

They're dead. This family  
is dead. We need someone  
young, to give us life.  
Slav please.

Slav draws a small blade across her palm. The blood runs. Bam clutches the hand and greedily sucks the wound. Slav rests her head against the cold stone.

SLAV(V/O)

Bam heard echoes, like putting  
a seashell to your ear. There  
were voices and she couldn't  
sleep. I thought at first it  
was all fantasy, but she was  
making it real. I was part of  
it, at times Charlie was too.  
Our descent into hell... And  
she was searching for someone  
to come with us.

57 EXT DETENTION CENTRE(SHOWER BLOCK) DAY

Wafts of steam rise out of the vents and hug the wall. In the far background we can see the razor wire on top of the perimeter fence. It's bleak and depressing despite the sounds of muffled laughter.

58 INT DETENTION CENTRE(SHOWER BLOCK) DAY

The gym group soap up and scrub down. It's an open bay of three showers, offering no privacy. The inmates shrug it off with a "so what bare all" attitude. LAURIE and TWO GIRLS finish showering. Chicci and Megan get dressed.

A prison officer called VT(vinegar tits) steps in and with perverse delight screws the main water tap off.

VT  
Time's up girls.

LAURIE  
Vee, they've still got soap  
in their hair!

The Girls are caught short with a head full of shampoo. They stand helpless, their eyes shut tight.

VT  
Well, we'll fix that.

VT turns a cleaner's hose onto them. They dance against the blast of cold water. The others continue dressing trying to ignore the situation. Chicci whispers to Megan.

CHICCI  
God she's a fucking toad!

VT  
And we'll just wash that  
remark away Chicci?

VT swings the hose onto Chicci. She stands her ground. The stream of water hits, soaking singlet and pants to the skin. Hold the moment of defiance.

PROF MARJ(V/O)  
"The woman does not exist."

Chicci blows off the droplets of water on her face, turns slowly and walks away.

59 INT UNIVERSITY(TUTORIAL ROOM) DAY.

Prof. MARJ stands at the lectern. An over-head lamp projects the words: "The woman does not exist", on the screen behind. She draws a line through the word "The"

PROF. MARJ  
Lacan's famous, misunderstood  
phrase. What he means is the  
fantasy of woman is false not  
that woman don't exist.

The STUDENTS start to pack their books. We see Robert is among them. Prof. Marj pauses and leans over the lectern.

PROF. MARJ  
Which reminds me has anyone  
seen Caitlin?... Robert?

Prof. Marj directs her inquiry to the group and to Robert in particular. Robert indicates he hasn't seen her.

PROF. MARJ  
If anyone does could they ask  
her to contact the gallery  
about her exhibition. And for  
next week, Creed chapter eight,  
Vagina Dentata..etc. Thank you.

The students exit the room.

60 INT DETENTION CENTRE (THE LOBBY) DAY

The Lobby is the first and last call for all inmates. It's run by a taciturn WARDER. Chicci sighs, impatient to be out of there. A small suitcase and a few personal items are handed across to her.

VT watches over the release procedure with contempt.

VT  
Keep her name on the locker.  
This trash always comes back.

Warder shoves the clipboard over for Chicci to sign. She does so ignoring VT's taunt. Amongst the few personal items are a couple of POLAROID SNAP. (One shows Chicci and Cat, arms linked, sitting on a fence. The other, Chicci standing on a bulldozer) VT examines the photo.

VT(con't)  
So will your girlfriend be  
outside? Three months, the  
heart can wander!

VT tosses the photos back on the counter. She jabs her finger at the "dozer girl" image to emphasise her words.

VT(con't)  
Pull a stunt like that again  
and we'll make you permanent.

Chicci smiles and tucks the pictures into her back pocket. She collects her gear and heads for the gate.

VT(con't)  
It's your imagination Chicci,  
it's over active.

She looks back at VT with absolute loathing.

Chicci's FANTASY POV sees VT crouched over with a huge CANE TOAD mounting her. The sound of toads mating, fills room.

Chicci stands motionless, transfixed by the image. She is on the verge of exploding with laughter. She bites her lip hard to prevent it, then exits the gate.

61 EXT        DETENTION CENTRE        DAY

The gates close behind Chicci. The imposing wall with it's mangle of razor wire runs off into the distance. It dwarfs her figure as she paces in front of it, anxiously searching the road for any sign of a vehicle.

Chicci opens the suitcase and rummages around til she finds her mobile phone. She tries to activate it. The battery is down. In utter frustration she hurls it back into the case. Chicci is on the verge of tears. She gathers up her stuff and starts walking.

In the distance she spies a car travelling fast towards her. It draws closer. Chicci drops the case, folds her arms and stands motionless, waiting it's arrival.

The vehicle brakes hard and slides to a halt. Cat gets out. She leans back against the bonnet and takes a deep breath. There's a moment as the two lock eyes across the dusty parking bay. Chicci holds her reserve.

Cat peels herself off the car and ever so slowly starts moving in a rhythmic Irish jig. Turning half circles, hands clasped behind her back she sashays towards Chicci.

The hint of a smile touches Chicci's lips and she responds with a few neat steps around her suitcase. Gradually their ritual dance brings them together. They circle each other then freeze. It's their moment of delight.

There's an explosion of joy and Chicci leaps bodily into Cat's arms. Cat staggers back with the impact and collapses under the weight. Chicci showers kisses all over Cat's face and finishes long and passionate on her mouth. Chicci with a tangle of legs around Cat pauses a moment.

CHICCI

I missed you Cat!

CAT

Let's get out of here princess.

They dust themselves off and run for the car. Chicci chucks her case in the back then shoots herself in through the passenger window feet first.

62 EXT        HIGHWAY        DAY

Cat and Chicci travel along the highway. The windows are down, the wind's in their hair. They're excited to be together again.

63 INT CAT'S CAR (HIGHWAY) DAY

Chicci's perched on the seat alongside Cat. Her exuberance is infectious. She throws her head back. The wind sweeps across her face. Cat smiles and tries to concentrate on the road.

CHICCI

It's so good, just to be  
free of it. No bars, no bells,  
no Vinegar Tits telling you  
what to do. God, she's a rank  
old toad.

Chicci leans across and distracts Cat with a hug and smoochy ear nibble. Cat tries to keep the car on the road.

CAT

Just look at these...muscles  
like a labourer!

Cat's fingers explore Chicci's arms and shoulders.

CHICCI

And a grip of iron. Feel this!

Chicci grabs Cat's thigh and squeezes. Then moves higher up.

CHICCI (con't)

There's no escape. You give up?

Cat pushes back into the seat. Her dress rides up over Chicci's hand.

64 EXT HIGHWAY (REST STOP) DAY

The car swerves erratically then veers off down a track to a rest area. A dust cloud engulfs the vehicle as it stops.

65 INT CAT'S CAR (REST STOP) DAY

Cat reclines the seat as Chicci crawls over her. They kiss deep and passionate, oblivious to the confines of the car. Cat's foot grips the dash as she thrusts upwards to Chicci's touch. The intensity grows. Cat repositions as Chicci pushes hard into her. A knee collects the hazard warning switch. The sounds of their pleasure over-rides everything.

66 EXT HIGHWAY (REST STOP) DAY

A vehicle slows to a crawl then stops. The driver, ELWOOD BALE, a kind elderly farmer type sees the hazard lights flashing. He hurries the best he can down to the car and peers in the window. There's a moments hesitation, then he tries the door. Chicci catches sight of him as it opens.

CHICCI

Fuck! Who are you?



Cat howls. It's a frightful climax. Elwood stumbles back. Both Chicci and Cat scramble to get upright.

ELWOOD

Are you girls okay? I saw your distress lights. Are you having trouble with your breathing?

Cat tries to get a little composure.

CAT

It's my asthma. Came on real sudden, but we're alright now.

Elwood feels a little more comfortable with the situation.

ELWOOD

That's the trouble with them new modified crops. You don't know what you're getting.

Cat switches off the hazard light and adjusts the seat upright. Chicci tries not to laugh.

CAT

Yeah! I never thought of that.

ELWOOD

It's not natural. No sir!

CAT

We'll take it easy from here. Thanks for stopping anyway.

Cat pulls back onto the highway. Elwood watches after them.

67 INT EAST CITY POLICE STATION DAY

The INSPECTOR, a dour bloke in his 50's drops a folder on the desk in front of Detectives Terry Hall and Allen Ward. Det Hall flips the folder open. We see large format black and white photographs of the riverbank body.

INSPECTOR

It's all there in the report. There were traces of human saliva in the neck wound.

The Inspector shoves his hands in the pockets of his coat. Det Hall studies the photo then hands it to Det Ward.

DET TERRY HALL

Comes with the teeth.

DET ALLEN WARD

Likes it rare, that's for sure. The papers will like too.

Det Hall examines a small sealed plastic bag with a business card inside.

INSPECTOR  
A calling card, left in the  
victim's mouth.

Det Hall hands the business card over to Det Ward. The Inspector leaves.

DET TERRY HALL  
A novel way to promote ones  
business!

We see the business card of "Dr Vivian, psychotherapist".

68 EXT EAST CITY POLICE STATION(STREET) DAY

The two Detectives descend the stairs to their car. A flier from a streetside news stand catches their eye. The headline reads: "RIVERBANK RITUAL KILLING"

69 INT THE BUNGALOW(LIVING ROOM) NIGHT

Cat and Chicci's share place is a small federation cottage. The kitchen dining area has been opened out. There is one bedroom to the rear and a second spare/junk room. It's typical student rental accommodation.

Cat, beer in one hand, stares into the open fridge. She is stoned. A dead joint dangles from her mouth. She thumbs her lighter a number of times, cursing it. Chicci sits before a pyramid of empty beer cans. She knocks them as she gets up from the table. Then blows a stream of smoke in Cat's ear.

CAT  
The beer's all gone.

CHICCI  
I think I'm having trouble  
breathing Cat!

CAT  
Must be the cold air, or it  
could be them new crops.

Chicci meanders across the room. She drops the butt in a bottle and collapses on the couch.

CHICCI  
Yeah! It must be.

Cat leans over the back of the couch. A stick of licorice dangles from her mouth. She wiggles it in Chicci's face. Chicci reaches up, pulls Cat down and chomps off the end. They mock wrestle over the stub of licorice. Chicci grabs a handful of singlet but Cat slips out of it. Chicci sniffs the singlet and holds it up a moment.

CHICCI

Do you know what would look  
good on you?....Me!

Cat crawls over the couch and the play gets serious. They kiss, hungry for each other. Cat moves down on Chicci, slowly, freeing her clothes and finding her. The passion grows as Chicci responds to Cat's touch. Their loving is harshly interrupted by the phone ringing. Chicci hurls a cushion, knocking the phone to the floor. The answer machine activates.

CAT(machine/voice)

We can't come to the phone  
right now. Leave a message  
if you like!

Cat continues, ignoring the distraction. Chicci allows pleasure to prevail. The voices of Claire and Ruth can be heard on the answer machine.

CLAIRE(m/voice)

Aw! Shit Cat, pick up. Are you  
there? Cat...It's Claire, come  
on, Cat. Ruth there's no answer.  
Cat, we're stuck in traffic and  
the pizza's getting cold!

RUTH(m/voice)

Claire, give me the phone. Cat,  
we're a few minutes away, fuck  
this traffic. Look we'll swing  
by I hope you don't mind. Here's  
Claire. Fuck I hope that key's  
still under the mat!

CLAIRE(m/voice)

I'm sorry Cat. It does have draw  
backs. You really need it on hand.

RUTH(m/voice)

You mean in your hand Claire!

The answer machine cuts out. The sound of Chicci reaching climax fills the room. Cat holds on to Chicci who hold onto anything within reach. Chicci sinks back into the couch.

CHICCI

Did I hear Pizza, mentioned?

CAT

Arriving any minute.

CHICCI

Yum, I hope there's anchovies.

Cat smiles as Chicci snuggles into her. They kiss.

DISSOLVE

The sound of urgent knocking then a key in the lock can be heard. The door opens to Claire and Ruth carrying a thermo pizza satchel. Cat and Chicci are half dressed on the couch.

CLAIRE

Cat your here! Thank god. It's a bit of an emergency. Do hope you don't mind?

Ruth moves Claire into the kitchen and unstraps the satchel.

RUTH

Hi Chicci! When did you get out? The fucking traffic it's backed up to the freeway.

Cat comes over to assist.

CAT

This has become a monthly routine. (to Claire) You know where the bath is.

CLAIRE

Maybe just a quick shower. Will you be right with all that stuff Ruthie?

RUTH

You get yourself ready. We can manage, but we should fucking hurry. It's a pity Andrew doesn't live closer.

Claire goes to the bathroom. Ruth empties a plastic bag on the table. The contents, a large plunger syringe, straws and a kidney dish.

CAT

Why doesn't he go to you and deliver it there.

RUTH

He needs Cameron to assist his performance.

Cat unzips the satchel and removes a large pizza box. She flips the lid and sitting wedged into the topping is a small vial wrapped in tissue. Cat examines the amount.

CAT

Deserves a standing ovation for this.

Chicci lights joint and wanders into the kitchen.

CHICCI

I can smell Hawaiian delight.

Chicci picks off a piece of pineapple, inspects it, then pops it in her mouth. Cat and Ruth prepare the syringe.

CHICCI

Yum, who doesn't like pineapple?  
Ruth? Ah! Anchovies?

Chicci peels off a long sliver of anchovy and nibbles at it with satisfaction. Cat hands the syringe to Ruth.

CAT

That's it for Andrew. Lets hope there's some strong swimmers.

Chicci piles extra pineapple on a slice of pizza. She holds it ready to stuff into her mouth. An afterthought.

CHICCI

I hope this Andrew has been tested? What about Claire, does she like pineapple?

Ruth takes the syringe into the bedroom. Cat helps herself to the joint and slumps onto a chair. Chicci munches on.

CAT

That's the trouble with turkey basting. You don't know what you're getting.

CHICCI

Like them new crops! Yeah?

CAT

There's got to be an easier way than this.

Chicci sways a little unsteady. She leans in earnestly.

CHICCI

There is it's called fucking.

70 INT THE BUNGALOW (BEDROOM) NIGHT

The door to the bedroom appears to be upside down. Chicci steps in carrying a slice of pizza.

CHICCI

Can you eat like that?

Chicci twists sideways and offers Claire the pizza. Claire is propped upside down with pillows on the bed. Ruth sits alongside. She takes the slice and eats.

RUTH

All this excitement, makes you peckish.

CAT(off/screen)  
Chicci, get out of there and  
leave them alone.

Chicci sways about. The room starts to spin a little. She places her pizza slice on the bed beside the syringe.

CHICCI  
This is for you Claire. You  
like pineapple? Aw! Shit I'm  
not good around needles.

Chicci's FANTASY POV; sees the needle, It looks big and dangerous. Claire appears to be laughing deliriously.

CLAIRE  
Maybe it'll help if I kick.

Claire jiggles her legs around. For Chicci the situation becomes monstrously absurd. She stares horrified at Claire.

CHICCI  
Aw, no! I think I'm going to  
vomit. It's coming out!

Cat comes in and manages to drag Chicci from the room.

CAT  
You're a walking drama Chicci,  
now come on.

Chicci's FANTASY POV; sees Claire giving birth. There's blood and carnage as a large baby, with a turkey's head is birthed.

Claire and Ruth cradle and gush over the thing.

71 INT WAREHOUSE(LIVING AREA) DAY

Bam is dressed in a bold embroidered kimono. The incense is burning and a small "new age" mobile hangs from a spot desk lamp. She leans over a heavy oak table and studies an elaborate celestial chart. She adjusts the configuration and lines up the planets.

BAM  
It's perfect, look. They're  
in harmony, complete alignment  
with all the planets and it's  
the equinox.

Slav brings her coffee over and examines the chart. She traces a finger over the drawings.

BAM  
You know what this means Slav?

Bam's conviction is intense. Slav gives her a rueful look.

SLAV

Yes, your excited and you've  
not taken your medication.

Beside the table stands a MANNEQUIN, a curiosity piece used as a clothes hoist. It wears a natty little hat. Bam plucks it off and tries it on. She poses before a wall mirror.

BAM

It's time to go back to  
Greystone. For a family outing.

Slav steps around the headstones trying to reason.

SLAV

But the family are here.

BAM

They're dead. We're the living  
family and we must go home.  
You promised to help.

Bam looks up to a framed print of "Greystone Manor". It depicts the gothic mansion in all it's original splendour.

SLAV

If you promise to see Dr Vivian?

Bam charms Slav with a playful reprimand. She flips the hat back on the mannequin and slides her butt onto the table.

BAM

Alright, Slavonika. Sometimes  
your so difficult.(to mannequin)  
As stiff as her. Now come here.

Bam's legs open slightly as she lies back and spreadeagles herself across the celestial chart. Slav responds to the provocative gesture, gently pulling the waist sash and letting the kimono fall away. With teasing kisses she moves slowly down Bam's body.

The print of Greystone Manor dominates the wall behind.

72 INT UNIVERSITY GALLERY NIGHT

It's opening night for the student exhibition. A formal dress up occasion with champagne and finger food. There are a number of works on display. Cat's photo-prints hang prominent on one wall. The video installation plays below them. Small GROUPS of PATRONS do the gallery drift, drinks and catalogue in hand.

Robert doing the rounds with a plate of food is waylaid by Chicci. She dips in for a number of serves smiling politely while she stuffs her face.

We see Prof. Marj and academic colleague, DR KEITH, viewing the art works. It's the photo-print "dozer girl". We catch their subjective gaze as they move before the print.

DR KEITH

The manipulation of these elements will allow us to create an imaginary construct. Formalists called it the fabula.

DR KEITH(con't)

From our privileged point of view we distort the material and change the fabula.

PROF. MARJ

Keith, given the subject matter and your male gaze. Contextually speaking I think your "fabula" is implicit and anatomically derivative.

Chicci almost chokes on a mouthful of food.

CHICCI

Aw!.. What a crock-of-shit!

ROBERT

(gingerly)

Ah...Chicci! It's just an opinion! (mouthing) Lecturers!

Robert looks around a little self-conscious. His attention is distracted across the room.

ROBERT

Talk of shit though, look who's just flown in. Bam and Slav.

CUT TO

Coming through the doors of the gallery are Bam and Slav. They breeze in straight to the drinks tray.

CUT TO

Chicci stares at Bam through the mangle of people. There's a brief moment when they sight each other.

CHICCI

So that's Bam and Slav! Wow!

ROBERT

And armed with their cheque book no doubt! Go on last one.

Robert urges Chicci to finish the plate and weaves off through the crowd. Chicci's attention remains focused across the room. She chews away on the last piece.



Prof. Marj and Dr Keith move on to another exhibit. We see the video image of Cat's address to camera playing on the monitor below the "dozer girl" print.

CAT(v/tape)

And of course, it takes money  
to own this work of art! What  
is for sale and what's the cost?  
That's the conundrum! In the  
production of "art" the first  
casualty is "truth".

Cat's address on the monitor ends. There's a wistful smile on Chicci's face as she contemplates her naked image in the photo-print.

Milly, over dressed and made up for the occasion, wanders up beside Chicci and scrutinises the work.

MILLY

(to photo)

It's a nice touch, the hard  
hat! But I don't think she  
looks like me, do you?

Chicci's response is immediately guarded.

CHICCI

It's hard to say, with your  
clothes on, but I know she  
looks like me!

Milly turns to Chicci. Her recognition feels disingenuous.

MILLY

Of course, it's you. You're  
wearing the same chain. You  
look different...from in the  
photo. It's softer but that's  
probably the light.

CHICCI

That was three months ago,  
I probably got harder.

Milly scrutinises the photo again. Chicci studies Milly.

MILLY

It's such a great photo, I  
love it. How did you get the  
bulldozer?

CHICCI

I stole it.

MILLY

Wow! Really?

Chicci quietly acknowledges it, weighing up Milly.

MILLY  
Look, I'm Mildred. It's funny,  
Cat said I reminded her of you.

CHICCI  
Did she! What do you think?

MILLY  
I don't think we look much alike.

CHICCI  
Neither do I. Guess Cat saw  
it different. This happen  
while I was inside?

MILLY  
We just met at the Green Room  
one night and had a few drinks--

CHICCI  
--And now we have flowers for  
the opening!

Chicci tries to hide the hurt. Milly smiles pleasantly. Her  
manner is somewhat perverse.

CHICCI (con't)  
Funny, she didn't tell me...  
about that night?

MILLY  
There wasn't really anything  
to tell.

CHICCI  
Really?

MILLY  
Nothing happened! We just  
smoked a joint at my place.  
Look she was missing you.

CHICCI  
What were you missing ...  
your clothes?

Chicci turns away determined to hide the hurt. She sees the  
CURATOR red spot the print of "dozer girl" and take it down.  
Chicci looks around confused, then tries to intervene.

CHICCI  
Hey! She's not for sale.  
Didn't Cat tell you.

Chicci's outburst brings silence to the room.

CUT TO

The sound of Bam tearing a cheque from her book. With the transaction completed Bam and Slav stand by the door. The Curator brings the print over to them.

SLAV

I thought she wouldn't sell it,  
but then to let it go now!

BAM

Very emotional, but money  
helps those anxieties.

SLAV

Where will we put her?

BAM

Beside Greystone Manor.

Bam and Slav exit the gallery carrying the photo-print.

CUT TO

Robert is engaged with a couple of students and notices the departure of Bam and Slav. He expresses his distain.

ROBERT

Fuck! The original Valkyries.

73 EXT UNIVERSITY GALLERY (STEP) NIGHT

Chicci is halfway down the steps. Cat hurries through the doors after her.

CAT

Chicci come back, I'll explain.

Chicci turns back hurt but still defiant.

CHICCI

What? That you sold her. She  
didn't even hang around for  
opening night so why should I!

CAT

Bam wanted it now and she paid  
a lot for it. Chicci, I can  
do another print for us.

CHICCI

I'm sure you can. By the way,  
who's Mildred?

Cat looks confused.

CHICCI (con't)

Your flower girl from the  
Green Room?

CAT

Aw! Milly! Is she here?

CHICCI

It's Milly, is it? You didn't think to tell me? Why bother I wasn't going anywhere.

CAT

There was nothing to tell. We had a few drinks, yes I suppose she tried to come on to me, but I went home. That's it, all there was to it..

CHICCI

And I did three months for nothing. Fuck off Cat.

Chicci storms down the steps into the darkness of the carpark. Cat calls after her.

CAT

Chicci, at least take the keys. We'll talk later.

Chicci stops a moment, then turns back. She sees Milly at the doors behind Cat. Near to tears she watches them. Her voice breaks with emotion.

CHICCI

Keep your car. There's plenty out here.

Chicci stumbles off and is lost to the night. Cat turns to see Milly. She brushes past her back into the gallery.

CAT

Thanks!

74 EXT UNIVERSITY(CARPARK) NIGHT

Silhouetted against the pale security lights we see the figure of Chicci as she works the lock on a car door. A moment or two and it's open. Suddenly headlights flick on and catch her as she climbs in. She freezes as the utility swings alongside. Slav's driving. Bam opens the door.

BAM

Well sweet snails! It's the genuine article, at work too. Hop in honey, you'll get more than three months next time.

Bam gets out and offers Chicci a seat.

BAM(con't)

This girl's got style Slav! Most impressive.

Chicci looks at the photo-print propped up in the tray.

CHICCI

Cat promised it to me.

BAM

I just fell in love with it,  
we both did, but honey if it's  
promised to you we'll take it  
right back.

CHICCI

Doesn't matter now, anyway.

BAM

Strange Cat didn't say anything,  
just took the money.

CHICCI

I guess she forgot...Forgot  
a lot of things.

Bam wraps a comforting arm around Chicci.

BAM

Was a tough few months, Hey?  
This night calls for a party.

Bam encourages Chicci into the car.

BAM(con't)

After all, you've got some  
time to catch up.

The three drive off. Their voices trail into the night.

BAM(con't)

Let me guess, you're a speed  
girl? No? Cocaine?

CHICCI

I don't mind a good bong.

BAM

Well you cheer up honey. We'll  
see what we can find!

75 INT      WAREHOUSE(LIVING AREA)      NIGHT

Slav adjusts the "dozer girl" photo-print on the wall. It hangs alongside the print of "Greystone Manor". Chicci steps back to admire the hangings and almost knocks the mannequin off it's feet. With bong in hand she offers an apologetic salute. She is definitely stoned. The sound of a bath running can be heard.

CHICCI

I'm glad she sold it now,  
kind of looks good here.

Bam finishes a line of cocaine on the table. She tosses her head back and rubs the sting.

BAM

You'd look good anywhere dressed like that. You know we grew up in that old house. Lots of memories.

CHICCI

Wow! Are you two sisters?

BAM

Big sister Slavonika, and she promised to take me back home. Didn't she?

CHICCI

Whereabouts is it?

Slav goes across to the bathroom.

SLAV

Out in red neck country. A long way from here.

Chicci touches a light to the bong and draws deep. She holds a moment then exhales loudly.

BAM

You still promised we'd go back Slav, soon. Why don't you come with us Chicci? Slav, we could take Chicci.

CHICCI

Like a hoe-down holiday. Yeah!

Slav turns off the bath and slides the door open. She stands firm, hands on hips.

SLAV

Bam, the bath is ready, and don't forget Dr Vivian with all this holiday talk.

BAM

I won't, alright. Here, relax.

Bam hands Slav the straw as she goes into the bathroom.

BAM(o/s)

Chicci, Slav says it's okay if you want to come. Are you any good with caravans?

Slav holds her hands up in a gesture of resignation. She studies Chicci for a moment. Chicci looks up and smiles.

CHICCI

Easy pease, just hook them up  
and the car's no problem. Slav  
you want this cone?

Chicci's excitement shows as she packs another cone. She offers the bong to Slav and lights it up for her.

BAM(o/s)

We've got the car, so we're  
on holidays! This deserves  
champagne Chicci.

Slav sinks into the couch and bongs on. Chicci pulls a bottle of champagne from the fridge and pops the cork. She lets out little whoop and a half jig spin as she catches the bubbles in her mouth.

76 INT WAREHOUSE(BATHROOM) NIGHT

The bath is a raised Scandinavian style spa. It's deep and there's not a ripple on the surface, just the dancing shadows from the candle. Chicci carries in the bottle of champagne and glasses. She looks around a little confused.

CHICCI

Bam! Hello, where are you?

Chicci sits on the bath step and fills the glasses. She leans down and slurps the fizz as it overflows the brim. Bam's face slowly rise up from the bath. Chicci meets her eyes across the surface of the water. It's a predatory moment. Bam's hair is slicked back and the bath oil glistens on her breasts.

Bam takes the champagne , the contour of her body is just visible beneath the water. Chicci sees the tattoo on her shoulder.

CHICCI

That's a great tat.

BAM

Do you like it?

Bam gives Chicci a closer look.

CHICCI

Yeah! It's real cool.

Chicci traces her finger across the tattoo. It's a finely detailed black rose entwined around a Celtic cross sword. A variation of the Sword of Damocles.

BAM

Slav has one the same, It  
looks better on her. (to Slav)  
Slav, show Chicci your rose.

Slav wanders in with the bong.

SLAV  
Is this some flesh fest?

Bam gets out of the bath. She turns to Chicci as she towels herself down. Chicci draws breath at the sight of her body.

BAM  
Not with my bag of skin.  
Show her your beautiful butt.

Slav hitches her pants down and shows the rose.

BAM(con't)  
Isn't that sweet? It's our  
family crest!

77 INT PSYCHOTHERAPIST'S ROOMS DAY

Detective Terry Hall sits across the desk from Dr Vivian. The plastic sleeve with the business card sits on the desk between them. Dr Vivian leans forward, her manner is direct.

DR VIVIAN  
Detective Hall, you must understand that with many of my patients, their behaviour is unpredictable. That's why they're in therapy, but in my opinion I don't believe any are capable of a crime like this.

DET TERRY HALL  
With due respect Dr Vivian, surely finding your card is quite a coincidence.

Dr Vivian examines the card in the plastic bag.

DR VIVIAN  
It certainly is, but there is no appointment time on it so I can't check. We had a briefcase stolen recently, with prescription books and cards. Could there be some drug connection?

DET TERRY HALL  
From the evidence this homicide was a ritual, an act of drinking blood. And to leave your card...Well frankly, it doesn't strike me as drug related.



DR VIVIAN  
 No. Not the sort of actions  
 you'd expect, but it's getting  
 a little out of my field.

Dr Vivian returns the card.

DET TERRY HALL  
 Maybe they've got a sick  
 sense of humour. I respect  
 the patient confidentiality,  
 but if there is anything...

Det Terry Hall collects the evidence from the desk. He  
 leaves his card in it's place. Dr Vivian is thoughtful.

DR VIVIAN  
 Perhaps it's a cry for help.  
 A desire for redemption.

Hall examines the crucifix paperweight and muses to himself.

DET TERRY HALL  
 We all seek atonement.

Det Hall pushes his chair back to leave.

DR VIVIAN  
 The card was to ensure that  
 we'd have this conversation.

DET TERRY HALL  
 Of course Dr and I was hoping  
 that you'd be able to assist  
 us. Again if there's anything.  
 Okay? And remember, you might  
 also be in danger.

Dr Vivian shows Det Hall out.

78 INT THE BUNGALOW (BEDROOM) DAY

Chicci stuffs a few clothes into her suitcase, determined to  
 get on with it, despite Cat's presence.

CHICCI  
 How was practice? Did you  
 score a bulls-eye?

Cat leans against the door. She holds her archery gear.

CAT  
 Chicci, you're making this up  
 in your head. Yes, I went back  
 to Milly's place and I smoked  
 a joint. I guess she wanted  
 more. She was confused.

CHICCI

Cat, I'm not interested.

CAT

Well I'm telling you. She brought out this chick-dick. This awful plastic dildo and I laughed. The poor girl just burst into tears.

CHICCI

Lucky she had you there to comfort her. Poor little Milly.

CAT

Chicci, I went home and cried.

CHICCI

I cried for three months. Dozer girl was for me. That's why I was in jail. Remember! Bam wanted to give it back.

Chicci exchanges last night's dress for a pair of jeans and top. We see the tattooed rose on her butt.

CAT

And I wanted the money. It's for you to finish school. I can do another print.

CHICCI

Don't bother. It looks good in Bam's place anyway.

Cat sees the tattoo and responds with cool indifference.

CAT

What's that on your arse?  
Has Bam had you branded?  
Shit Chicci! And where are you going?

Chicci snaps the suitcase shut and heads for the door.

CHICCI

A holiday, lost time to makeup.

CAT

And I'll tell that to your probation officer? You're supposed to stay here.

CHICCI

If they come, I'm out.

CAT

Where's the holiday, with Bam?

Chicci stops at the front door and turns back to Cat. Her last words are vitriolic.

CHICCI

As a matter-of-fact yeah!  
Call up Milly if you get  
lonely. She can strap on  
her dick.

Cat is confused at the acrimonious outburst. She stands and watches Chicci walk out the door.

CAT

Chicci, No... she's bad.

79 INT PSYCHOTHERAPIST'S ROOMS DAY

Bam sits at the desk. Dr Vivian sets the camera to record.

DR VIVIAN

This is not your regular  
session, but I had a couple  
of things I wanted to ask.

She sits beside Bam in a non-confronting manner.

BAM

That's fortunate because I'm  
going home for few days. So  
fire away.

DR VIVIAN

I was wondering if you might  
have been down East City Park  
in the last few days.

BAM

No, I do enjoy a walk in the  
park, (severe) but lately I've  
found there's just too much  
dog crap around.

Dr Vivian takes a card from the desk holder and shows Bam.

DR VIVIAN

Right! It's just one of my  
cards, one of these, was  
found on the embankment.

Bam examines the card closely, as though she had never seen it before.

DR VIVIAN

Charlie, would tell you if  
she went to the park?

She places the card on the desk. Bam seems preoccupied with it. A clever smile touches her lips.

BAM

I expect so Dr, but I haven't been to the park. (harsh) And neither has Charlie.

Bam slips her small knife from the sheath chain around her neck and with deft precision slices the card into three. She appears to be pleased with her handiwork.

BAM(con't)

The holy trinity. Isn't that cute. Psycho - the - rapist.

Bam separates the pieces so the word PSYCHOTHERAPIST becomes PSYCHO THE RAPIST. Dr Vivian instinctively shifts away. She is obviously concerned.

DR VIVIAN

Well, we have no dyslexic problems do we, but mind that knife, you'll score the desk.

Bam's look is confident, almost covetous. Dr Vivian moves around the desk to the camera.

BAM

Fear always makes the eyes more attractive. Bigger pupils. You're very beautiful Dr Vivian.

DR VIVIAN

We'll finish for today. No doubt you'll have packing to do for your trip home.

Dr Vivian maintains eye contact with Bam. She fumbles for the off switch on the camera.

BAM/CHARLIE

It wasn't my intention to cut the table. You had other questions? And please leave the camera on.

80 EXT CARAVAN YARD DAY

The caravan display lot is fenced with a paved driveway. Bam, Slav and Chicci step into foreground. It's a tough stance, legs and butts fill the frame. Handcuffs dangle from Bam's belt. Slav wears gaffer tape on her wrist.

A profile across the faces, sees jaws set hard and eyes narrowed. Chicci sucks on a stick lolly. They stride on in.

BAM

Remember Chicci, distraction is the key to success.

Bam snaps a button undone on Chicci's vest, revealing more. The sales JOCK steps out of the yard office and greets them.

JOCK  
Good morning ladies, can I help you with anything?

BAM  
I hope so. We'd like to inspect your vans.

Jock tears his attention from Chicci's chest.

JOCK  
Your choice, where do we start? That's a six berther, or there's the smaller four berth job.

CHICCI  
I just love that colour. What do you think?

BAM  
It's cute, take a look Chicci.

Jock leads them towards the blue van. Slav flips the sign to "closed" on the office door.

CHICCI  
Does it have a double bed?

JOCK  
Certainly does and it's very comfortable. Come in and try.

Jock holds the door for Chicci to enter then follows her in.

BAM  
Now don't you two get up to anything in there.

81 INT CARAVAN DAY

The van rocks as Chicci bounces on the bed and flops back. Jock casually stands watching Chicci's antics.

CHICCI  
It's so cosy and everything's within reach. That's what I love about caravans.

Jock's all wit and charm as he flirts with her. His fingers knead the mattress with masterful dexterity.

JOCK  
They're very compact. The bed, it's moulded ribbed rubber!

Chicci whistles, she's impressed.

CHICCI  
See how it bounces with two!  
Come on. I bet you have fun  
selling vans.

Jock needs little encouragement to join Chicci in the romp.

JOCK  
That depends on whose buying.  
But we could arrange a discount,  
GST included.

CHICCI  
Ooh! Goods and service. How  
good is the service?

Jock's gaze is totally lost down Chicci's cleavage.

JOCK  
Show us the goods and I'll  
show you the service.

Chicci bounces to her knees and challenges her chest in  
Jock's face.

CHICCI  
Sure you're up to this?

Slowly, with teasing precision she undoes the last buttons  
on her vest. Jock is beside himself with anticipation.  
Chicci performs a curtain call and exposes her breasts.

JOCK  
Oh! Jesus! They're perfect "C"

Jock cups his hands as if the grail itself is within grasp.

82 EXT CARAVAN YARD DAY

Slav and Bam are coupling the van to their utility. They  
exchange looks on hearing Jock's inanity.

BAM  
Do you feel neglected Slav?

Slav acknowledges and tears off a strip of gaffer tape. They  
climb into the van.

83 EXT MAIN ROAD DAY

Through the line of traffic we see the utility towing the  
caravan. It draws near and we see Chicci and Slav studying a  
large road map spread across the dash. Bam negotiates the  
driving.

84 INT HOSPITAL WARD DAY

Detectives Allen Ward and Terry Hall step from the curtained cubicle. We see Mick with his shoulder bandaged in the bed.

DET TERRY HALL  
 Poor kid, thought he was in  
 with a chance. Not much of  
 a description.

DET ALLEN WARD  
 If he stayed around for one  
 he'd be in the morgue like  
 the other.

DET TERRY HALL  
 Well, we know they stalk  
 in pairs. I think another  
 visit to our psycho doctor.

The detectives turn to go. A word of advice to Mick as an after-thought.

DET ALLEN WARD  
 Thanks Mick, in future I'd  
 keep it zipped up, that goes  
 for your mouth too.

Mick tries for a laugh, but cripples over in pain.

85 EXT COUNTRY TOWN(LOOKOUT) LATE DAY

The utility and caravan pull over the rise into view and park at the lookout. Bam, Slav and Chicci share a joint. In the valley below, lights twinkle on in a small country town.

CHICCI  
 They look like fairy lights  
 from up here.

BAM  
 Fairy's not the word for this  
 town honey. Which hotel, Slav?  
 The Russell?

SLAV  
 It's just a cut above the  
 pig-pen.

Bam starts the utility.

86 INT RUSSELL HOTEL(BAR AREA) NIGHT

The bar has that fake "wagon wheel" country atmosphere. Wood panelling with lights that assault the senses. A COUPLE of BAR SLUGS cling to their stools and in the corner a GROUP of YOUNG SUITS play pool. PLAYER lines up the black ball.

PLAYER  
Play in the left pocket.

SUIT-BOY, a funny bloke with an arrogant veneer, chalks his cue. He eyes off Chicci as she juggles three drinks out to their table on the verandah.

SUIT-BOY  
I wouldn't mind playing in  
her pocket.

There's a snicker of laughter as Player pockets the ball.

PLAYER  
There's only one way. Set  
them up.

Player drops the frame on the table and pulls another round of balls. He wanders off towards the verandah.

87 EXT      RUSSELL HOTEL (VERANDAH)      NIGHT

Chicci slides the drinks in front of Bam and Slav. She stumbles into her seat almost losing the lot. The glasses on the table indicate they've had a number of drinks. Player comes across to the table and offers the pool cue.

PLAYER  
Had the evening planned  
alone...you care for a game?

BAM  
We're hopeless with ball games.  
Are you any good Chicci?

CHICCI  
I can play cricket.

BAM  
I think they had pool in mind.

CHICCI  
I can play pool too! What's  
on the table?

Chicci's bravado is backed with a heavy slug of beer. Bam and Slav look a little surprised and amused.

PLAYER  
Whoo! A hustler. What ever you  
care to put out there babe.

Player presents Chicci with the pool cue, bows and steps aside. Chicci scrapes out of her chair and grabs her beer.

BAM  
I think we must back our  
girl, Slav.



88 INT        RUSSELL HOTEL (BAR AREA)        NIGHT

Bam places a fifty dollar note on the edge of the pool table. The tension with the Suits is visibly upped. Player returns a hundred dollar bill on top of it. He holds Bam's eyes with a challenging smile.

PLAYER

Double it for a dance with  
you beautiful girls.

With both hands "gun-cocked" Player points to Bam and Slav. He's feeling confident. Bam and Slav consider the wager and turn to Chicci.

BAM

Our fate in your hands, honey!

CHICCI

I'll need a drink to calm the  
nerves. Toss for break?

Suit-boy is on stand-by with a round of drinks. He plonks one in Chicci's hand. Player tosses a coin. Chicci breaks.

SLAV

They're desperate times out  
here. A girl could make a  
killing.

BAM

Might have to, if we lose this  
one...or dance with playboy.

Player pockets a couple of balls in a row. Chicci grimaces a look to Bam and Slav.

SLAV

I forgot that sort of dancing.

BAM

We're going to get a lesson  
real soon.

Chicci leans across the table and lines up a shot. It seems to take forever and Suit-boy is totally focused on her butt. Everyone around the table is. Bam taps the wager money.

BAM

Hey! If we're twenty five a  
piece. What's Chicci worth?

Suit-boy drops thirty dollars down on the table.

SUIT-BOY

No wall flowers tonight.

Chicci misses the shot and all but expires on the table.

CHICCI

Sorry Bam!

Player delivers a series of shots and cleans up the game.

Chicci's FANTASY POV sees; a collision of balls bounce off cushions and into pockets at rapid speed. The game is over.

89 INT RUSSELL HOTEL(LOUNGE) NIGHT

The mirror ball with it's revolving chunks of light add the final depressing touch to dance floor. A country style three piece delivers a pretty ordinary cover song accompanied by overloud digital drums. A NUMBER of COUPLES bump around the floor and appear to be enjoying themselves.

Bam and Slav try to keep their line dance of three in step. Player is mighty pleased with himself to have these babes on each arm. He's kicking it up, the town will talk for weeks.

90 INT RUSSELL HOTEL(BAR AREA) NIGHT

Suit-boy slides up to Chicci with a couple of drinks. She tries to decline. He insists.

CHICCI

Give those to your mates,  
It's my shout, what are  
you drinking?

SUIT-BOY

No, It's my hospitality, your  
the guest in town.

CHICCI

I think I need the bathroom.

SUIT-BOY

Allow me to escort you.

Chicci bursts out laughing at Suit-boy's stupid suggestion.

CHICCI

I think I can do a piss on  
my own. Just point me in the  
general direction.

Suit-boy, humiliated at the outburst of laughter, withdraws.

SUIT-BOY

Down past the bar and outside.

CHICCI

You didn't say what you're  
drinking.

SUIT-BOY

I was drinking beer.

Chicci, with glass in hand weaves off in the direction of the toilets. Suit-boy turns back to his mates.

SUIT-BOY

Like a slash at that gash!

91 INT RUSSELL HOTEL (LOUNGE) NIGHT

The band's between songs. Some couples wait, others retire. Bam and Slav are leaving a reluctant Player.

PLAYER

It was twenty five a piece,  
There's two of you, by my  
maths that's two songs.

BAM

But you took both pieces with  
one song.

PLAYER

You needed emotional support.  
Come on, you owe me a song.

The band winds into their next song.

BAM

Alright! But I'm in the middle.

SLAV

Why don't we join hands.

Eventually they sort it. The three kick around in a circle.

92 INT RUSSELL HOTEL (TOILETS) NIGHT

Chicci occupies one of the cubicles. Her beer rests on the paper dispenser. We hear a door opening and she sees a shadow fall across the space beneath her door.

Suit-boy steadies himself against the wall and digs into his wallet. He extracts the thirty dollars and slowly lowers himself to his knees.

Looking under the door he offers the money to Chicci.

CHICCI

Fuck off! Fuck off out of here.

Suit-boy's face stays under the door. Stunned by the outrage Chicci listens to his logic.

SUIT

It's for the dance, but a  
blow job won't take as long.

CHICCI

Piss off you fucking pervert.

Chicci empties her beer into Suit-boy's face.

He falls back from under the door. His eyes sting as he wipes the beer off.

Chicci scrambles to get her jeans up.

Suit-boy savagely kicks the door in. The impact collects Chicci and knocks her back onto the pedestal. Suit-boy unbuckles his belt as he pushes into the cubicle.

SUIT-BOY

You shouldn't have done that,  
you slut.

Suit-boy backhands Chicci across the face and throws the screwed up ball of money at her.

SUIT-BOY

Now take it and you swallow  
hard.

His weight crushes down on her. Suddenly Bam's hand reaches in and with a violent jerk hauls Suit-boy backwards out of the cubicle.

He crashes his head against the wall and slumps to the floor. Suit-boy, with his pants askew around his knees, looks vulnerable. Bam and Slav stand over him.

BAM

Slav, you and Chicci finish  
your drinks. I'll deal with  
this animal.

Slav helps Chicci out. TWO MATES, from the group stand aside and let them pass. They head into the toilets.

Slav stops a moment, she's relieved to see Bam come out.

93 INT      RUSSELL HOTEL (BAR AREA)      NIGHT

Slav offers Chicci her drink. She puts the glass to her bruised mouth, then stops and stares over to the pool table. There's a look of sheer dread in her eyes.

Chicci's FANTASY POV sees; Bam standing beside the table. The other Suits and Player continue with their game. Bam has a fist full bloody flesh and casts it onto the green velour in front of them. They all look on horrified. In CLOSER on the balls, they tremble and quiver like jelly, then roll across the table and stuff themselves into a side pocket.

94 INT      UTILITY (PARKED)      DAY

Chicci sleeps fitfully. She is covered with a blanket. We see her swollen face and in her hand she clutches her mobile phone. A restless movement and it slips from her grip.

95 INT BUNGALOW (LIVING ROOM) DAY

Cat is slumped in a chair. The sound of Chicci's voice on the answer machine adds to her depression.

CHICCI (A/M voice)  
 Hi Cat, it just me. You're obviously not there. We're at this place they call Gulargambone. It's full of cockatoos...The holiday... wasn't such a good idea. Bam's pretty weird, they both are.. and I'm kind of stuck out here..shit the battery, look I'll try..

The voice cuts out. Cat tries to dial Chicci's phone. There is no response.

96 INT WINERY (TASTING AREA) DAY

This is a small boutique vineyard with large oak barrels around the walls. They are visually striking and give the place a timeless feel. A number of bottles are lined up on the tasting bench. Bam and Slav are working their way through them.

There's another THREE TASTERS enjoying the wine, a woman and two men in their mid thirties. The VINTNER uncorks a bottle for them.

VINTNER  
 This is our ninety nine Pinot.  
 It's quite light but will improve with a few years.

The Woman Taster holds the glass up to examine the colour. Her actions are a little pretentious.

WOMAN TASTER  
 Very rich colour.(sniffing) Mm, strong berry, actually quite peppery.

The Men Tasters agree as all three follow the ritual of swilling and spitting.

Bam watches their actions. Her distain is obvious. Vintner moves down to them.

VINTNER  
 What about the Pinot?

BAM  
 We'll try the Semillon.

Bam and Slav taste the wine.

BAM

Do you have accommodation?

VINTNER

There's the Mill Lodge. It's not far from here.

The Men Tasters turn their attention to Bam and Slav.

MAN TASTER

We're staying there, it's rather nice.

BAM

All three of you?

MAN TASTER

There's plenty of room and the food, is terrific.

Woman Taster interrupts asserting her position in the space.

WOMAN TASTER

Richard, the Lodge is perhaps a little quaint for these girls.

Bam leans closer to the Woman Taster. Her attention is focused on the string of pearls around her neck. She smiles.

BAM

You know, we're really quite old fashioned, aren't we Slav? Are they cultured?

Woman Taster instinctively puts her hand to the pearls. Slav puts her arm casually around Bam's shoulders.

SLAV

Yes, we are.

97 EXT RIVER BRIDGE DAY

A highway patrol car is parked on the side track leading down under a bridge. There's an older male OFFICER and a young female CONSTABLE. They can clearly see the caravan down by the bridge. The Officer eases his bulk out of the vehicle and starts down the track.

The metallic snap of a safety catch sounds loud and distinctive. Officer turns to find Constable with revolver at the ready. Her stance is prepared for engagement.

CONSTABLE

(eager)

Can't be too careful sir.

OFFICER

You can't. Just don't shoot me!

Officer continues down the track with Constable following as backup. The bridge pylons offer some cover as they near the van. Officer edges along the side to the door. Constable crouches in a position for cover fire. The dramatics are almost comical.

There's a nod from Officer and he forces the door. It comes clear easy with the weight of Jock's bound and mutilated corpse. He lurches out onto Officer. They both crash to the ground. A flash and Constable is there, with the gun poised over dead Jock's head. In deference to TV cops she screams.

CONSTABLE

Freeze arsehole!

And holds cover position.

98 EXT      MILL LODGE      NIGHT

A heavy mist settles around the lodge. The moon casts a pale glow over the old brickwork. Bam leans against open French doors and breathes in the night air. She smiles, comfortable with the night.

99 INT      MILL LODGE (LOUNGE)      NIGHT

A large open fire welcomes the guests for the evening. The three tasters enjoy an after dinner cheese platter and port. Bam closes the French doors and joins them. A television news report can be heard from the annex room adjacent.

NEWSREADER

The small rural community of Gulargambone are in shock following the gruesome discovery of a body in a caravan, in what police have described as a macabre, ritualistic killing...

The report and Bam's response to it, catches the others' attention. Determined not to hear further details Bam walks over and turns it off. She gives a casual explanation.

BAM

God knows there's enough savagery in the world, and the media just feed off it. How's the port?

MAN TASTER

Superb drop. Care to try?

Bam checks the colour and aroma of Woman Taster's glass.

BAM

Just a touch to the lips.

Bam takes a languid sip, allowing the wine to fill her lips.

100 INT BUNGALOW (KITCHEN) NIGHT

Cat and Ruth sit at the table, finishing the last of a pizza. The television plays in the lounge. It's News time.

CAT

I shouldn't have sold it.  
They plunder people with  
their money and their looks.

Claire comes in with the insemination gear. She takes the last slice of pizza and looks at the other two.

CLAIRE

Others just take all the pizza!  
Thank you very much.

RUTH

Calories Claire. (back to Cat)  
It's not about selling the  
print, it's the Milly night.

Cat deflates with a look of despair. Ruth is more critical.

CAT

Fuck Milly!

RUTH

Did you?

CAT

Shit! Ruth! No! I told her,  
absolutely nothing happened.

RUTH

You know Chicci's imagination.  
It's stuck in her head. That's  
why she's gone. She's jealous.

Cat hears the news report and goes to the lounge.

NEWSREADER

The body of a man was found  
in a caravan outside the town  
of Gulargambone. Police have  
few details, but believe it  
could be linked to an earlier  
homicide at East City Park.  
We'll be back with further  
news after this break.

Cat turns off the television and grabs her car keys.

CAT

Let your self out. Got to go.

Cat leaves in a hurry. Claire and Ruth clear the table.



101 INT MILL LODGE (ROOM#1) NIGHT

The room is a twin share. Chicci sits on one bed, suitcase beside her. She stares a moment out the window, her thoughts elsewhere. Chicci grabs her wallet and hurries out. The room TV plays with the sound down. It's a local news bulletin covering the homicide. Slav steps in and turns it off.

102 INT MILL LODGE (LOBBY) NIGHT

Chicci calls on the phone. She gets the answer voice. Frustrated, she bangs the hand piece and hangs up. She tries again. Slav watches her from an adjoining door then slinks back into the shadows.

103 INT BUNGALOW (LIVING ROOM) NIGHT

The red light on the answer machine flashes as it engages the incoming call.

CAT (machine/voice)  
We can't come to the phone  
right now. Leave a message  
if you like.

CHICCI (answer/voice)  
Why can't you come to the  
phone? And who's we? You  
and poor little Milly!

We hear the machine click off.

104 INT MILL LODGE (LOBBY) NIGHT

Chicci holds her head and rocks against the panel walls of the Lodge. The action is one of anguish and pain. She stares upwards, tears crash down her cheeks.

105 INT BUNGALOW (BATHROOM) NIGHT

Water sprays hard from the shower rose. Through the frosted screen we can just discern Cat's figure. She grips the taps and leans her forehead against the tiles.

Chicci's FANTASY POV sees; A hand reach in and slide the screen open. Milly lets her bathrobe slip to the floor. As she steps into the shower we can see the straps of the plastic dildo. She closes the door.

The two figures blur behind the glass. We hear the sound of laughter. It distorts to sadness and grief.

106 INT MILL LODGE (LOBBY) NIGHT

Chicci slides down the panel wall and buries her face on her knees. Arms over her head, she tries to shut out the world.

107 INT MILL LODGE(LOUNGE) NIGHT

Bam stokes the open fire, it burns fiercely. Her eyes reflect the intensity. She is alone in the lounge. A light breeze through the French doors catches her hair. Slav appears from the shadows, her manner is urgent.

SLAV  
Chicci must know. Why else  
the call.

BAM/CHARLIE  
Then we leave tonight.

SLAV  
Charlie?

BAM/CHARLIE  
It's a shame to cut her  
holiday short.

108 INT MILL LODGE(ROOM#1) NIGHT

Chicci sleeps in her bed by the windows. A breeze drifts on the curtains. Moonlight casts shadows across the room. Slav and Bam materialise in the doorway and watch over her.

109 EXT WAREHOUSE NIGHT

A brick with a towel for padding shatters a window. A gloved hand fiddles the latch open. Cat climbs in.

110 INT WAREHOUSE(LIVING AREA) NIGHT

Cat searches the area with a pencil torch. Suddenly there's a crash as she trips over the headstones. The torch spins out of her hand. She retrieves it and traces the beam across the granite blocks. The full impact of stumbling into a graveyard dawns on her.

She finds the oak table and the celestial chart. A steel ruler indicates the alignment of the planets. Cat opens a folder to find newspaper clippings on ritual killings. There are illustrated images of vampires and books on the occult.

One falls open at a picture depicting the sacrifice of young virgins. We catch a glimpse of the gothic print.  
"Countess Elizabeth Bathory, the Hungarian noblewoman who in order to maintain eternal beauty, drank and bathed in the blood of young women".

The torch light swings across the wall to the "Dozer girl" print, then to "Greystone Manor". The imposing building looms above her. Cat steps back straight into the arms of the hatted mannequin. It's a heart stopping moment as the two dance a faux fight. Cat breaks free and delivers a right hook dislodging mannequin's head. It roll across the desk.

111 INT MILL LODGE(ROOM#2) NIGHT

The room is similar in decor to Room#1. Twin share beds, moonlight through the windows and a light breeze on the curtains. We see a figure that appears to be asleep. There is an arm stretched over the side of the bed. Blood runs the length of it and drips into a pool on the floor.

Bam looks up as if disturbed, her eyes wild, her face smeared with blood. She slumps over Woman Taster obscuring her face and continues to feed.

112 EXT HIGHWAY#66WEST DAY

Cat almost loses control of the car on a dangerous bend in the road. She is travelling at excessive speed.

Up ahead a police vehicle is parked. The PATROLMAN flags her down. He ambles over to the car and gently pats the roof.

PATROLMAN

She's forgiving on those corners.

CAT

Sorry officer, it just crept up.

PATROLMAN

Where are you headed?

CAT

To the mountains, camping.

PATROLMAN

Take care where you sleep, we've got another homicide and the killers are still loose.

CAT

What happened?

PATROLMAN

Was a young woman. Particularly nasty. That's all we know.

Cat is visibly shocked. She grips the wheel a moment.

113 EXT LAKESIDE DAY

It is a natural idyll. Lush green forest reaching down to the waters edge. Further up nestled under a rock overhang we can just see the front of the utility. Bam and Slav shelter in the shadows of the cliff. Bam is agitated and repeatedly checks her appearance in her compact.

BAM

Chicci's been gone too long!  
God, look at my face. I'm  
burning up!

Slav puts up a large black umbrella to shield Bam from the light filtering through the trees.

SLAV

Bam wait here, I'll find her.

BAM/CHARLIE

Slav, I will get us home,  
(assertive) have I ever let  
you down?

SLAV

No.. Charlie, you haven't...  
and neither has Bam.

Chicci appears on a small path leading out of the foliage.

CHICCI

There's one down here. I can  
get it if you want.

BAM

Okay honey! Show us your magic.

SLAV

And neither has Chicci.

Slav turns away and watches Chicci run back down the path.  
There's a moment of sad resignation reflected in her eyes.

SLAV

(to herself)

A lamb to the slaughter!

114 EXT LAKESIDE (FURTHER) DAY

A COUPLE of CAMPERS have their caravan set up in a clearing beside the lake. The van is an early model tourer. It looks like a flat box on wheels, with a lift up rear section. The Campers, an elderly couple, are dedicated birdwatchers. They sit rigidly still at the rear of the van, binoculars fixed to their faces.

Chicci wanders in with a disarmingly innocent smile.

CHICCI

Hi! What are you watching?

CAMPER#1

Shhh! The silver throated tree  
warbler.

CAMPER#2

I don't think it's adult...  
Could be...could be female.

Camper#2 consults a hefty bird book on her lap.

Chicci checks herself in a small mirror attached to the van. She fidgets about, noting the keys are in the ignition.

CAMPER#1

I think it is. Here's the male and he's dancing. Is the recorder on?

Camper#2 rejoins the vigil. The two remain engrossed.

Chicci quietly climbs into their car, starts it and drives off. The van accelerates up the track as bits and pieces fall out of the rear flap. The Campers are left seated on their stools amidst their scattered belongings.

They raise their glasses for a closer view of the receding van before it's lost to the bush.

115 INT PSYCHOTHERAPIST'S ROOMS DAY

The usually quiet, austere rooms have been turned upside down in a search for clues. They're now a crime scene. Detectives Terry Hall and Allen Ward stand amidst the chaos. Hall rewinds the video tape from Dr Vivian's last session.

We see the blurred images in reverse of Dr Vivian thrown across the desk.

DET TERRY HALL

She lost so much blood. I thought there was no chance.

Hall pauses the tape then plays it forward. We see the video image of Bam picking up the crucifix. She lunges over the desk, grasps Dr Vivian by the hair and drags her bodily over the table.

DET TERRY HALL

There, that's the change. It's Bam who picks up the cross and now she's someone else. I don't know, probably this Charlie. Who ever, she's more masculine...Listen.

DET ALLEN WARD

And a lot stronger. Our doctor must weigh a good seventy kilos

We see the video image of Dr Vivian sprawled on the table. Bam in a deranged frenzy on top of her tears at her clothes. She has the crucifix in her hand. Dr Vivian kicks and fights back desperately.

The image topples to the floor as the camera is knocked. We see side on the couch and the cracks in the floor boards. It resembles a surrealist still-life.

The sound of the rape is muted but still audible.

DET ALLEN WARD  
 This wouldn't stand up.  
 A wide angle lens and we  
 would've had it all on tape.

Hall looks disturbed by Ward's comment.

The bloody crucifix drops to the floor in the video image.  
 Hall stops the tape.

DET ALLEN WARD (con't)  
 Keep it on, look, this is  
 where we get to see this  
 fuck's hand-i-work. It's  
 the calling card again.

Hall plays the tape again. We see the video image as the  
 camera is picked up off the floor and then Dr Vivian's face  
 is framed and focused. Taped across her forehead is the cut  
 up business card. "PSYCHO THE RAPIST"

Hall stops the tape.

DET TERRY HALL  
 Do you know what she said?  
 She was just glad it was  
 Charlie, not Bam.

116 EXT COUNTRY ROAD DAY (PM)

The mountainous terrain is softened by the setting sun.  
 There are bursts of light followed by long shadows. In the  
 distance we see the Camper's car towing the van.

117 INT CAMPERS CAR (COUNTRY ROAD) DAY

Slav drives and Chicci is asleep beside her. They pass "the  
 skull", an ancient rock outcrop that teeters over the road.

SLAV (V/O)  
 Bam was out of control. She  
 said she'd turned. There were  
 times I didn't know who she  
 was. Who was talking inside  
 her head. I held on, because  
 I've always loved her, but she  
 was going down that tunnel and  
 I was scared.

Slav, with tears in her eyes looks across to Chicci. She  
 gently brushes a strand of hair from her bruised face.

SLAV (V/O, con't)  
 I'm sorry Chicci, that I'm  
 not stronger. I fear how  
 this journey will end.

118 EXT      CROSSROADS              DAY (PM)

Standing beneath a sign post is a young back-packer called HITCH. He's in his twenties, a college boy on vacation. He lights a cigarette and stamps about impatiently.

In the distance he sees a car. Stepping out on the road, he extends his thumb. The Camper's car and van pulls along side. Chicci leans out the window.

CHICCI

Hey, hitcher where are you going to?

HITCH

Anywhere away from here. What happened to your face?

CHICCI

I was playing a game of pool.

Hitch throws his pack into the back and climbs in. His voice trails off as they pull away.

HITCH

I won't ask who won. I tell you I'm mighty grateful you guys came along, I thought they'd bury me out here.

119 INT      CAMPER'S CAR (ON ROAD)              NIGHT

Slav drives. Chicci and Hitch negotiate the road map. All three pass a joint around.

CHICCI

According to this we take the next turn.

HITCH

You call this place, the Beehives? Was it made by bees?

SLAV

Yeah, big bees.

120 EXT      TURN OFF              NIGHT

The vehicle swings off the bitumen onto a dirt track. The van fishtails along the gravel before a cloud of dust.

121 EXT      THE BEEHIVES              NIGHT

The headlights arc across an open space illuminating a number of huge brick kilns. It's an abandoned brickworks and the remains resemble large beehive mounds. The three sit in the car stoned and amazed at the sight.

HITCH  
That's prehistoric. These bees  
aren't still around are they?

CHICCI  
Imagine the honey.

Bam slowly pushes up the rear section of the van and climbs out. She steps up beside the window, leans in and taps the glass. Hitch freaks out seeing Bam's face so close in his.

HITCH  
Shit and glory! Where did you  
come from?

BAM  
I've been following you. Seems  
like the party's started.

Bam reaches in for the joint. Her manner is flirtatious.

BAM(con't)  
I've a bit of catching up  
to do. Who's our guest?

CHICCI  
This is Hitch. We found him  
back there on the roadside.

Slav looks somewhat apprehensive.

SLAV  
Hitch, meet Bam... or is it  
Charlie?

BAM  
It's the party girl. So let's  
party. What do you say Hitch?

Bam bestows the most accommodating smile and opens the door.

122 INT EAST CITY POLICE STATION NIGHT

Det. Terry Hall hangs up the phone. He turns to a large map of NSW and traces a red circle around a section of the Upper Hunter Vineyards, then scrawls cross in the middle of it. Det. Allen Ward continues to eat his lunch at the desk. He appears more interested in his sandwich filling.

DET TERRY HALL  
All major routes are covered.  
They're in there, and so are we.

DET ALLEN WARD  
The chopper's down.

DET TERRY HALL  
Then we'll take the road.



DET ALLEN WARD  
Be lucky to make it by breakfast.

DET TERRY HALL  
Least we've got a packed lunch.

Det Hall gathers his coat and case. Det Ward closes his lunch box and the two leave.

123 EXT BEEHIVES NIGHT

The camp fire light plays over the brick mounds. Slav and Chicci slow dance together with a bottle of whisky. Music plays from the car radio.

Bam and Hitch lounge on a blanket and smoke a joint. Everyone appears pretty out of it. Bam grabs another can of beans from a box of provisions. She pulls the top and shares the food, spoon feeding Hitch.

HITCH  
This is mighty generous.

BAM  
Maybe you can repay it.

Bam pulls Hitch close and kisses him hard. Their mouths swim with beans as the passion grows.

Slav and Chicci notice them and sway to a stand still. Hitch is unaware of the others watching. Bam checks him a moment.

BAM  
Hitch, we have an audience.  
Why don't we find our own hive  
and drink from the honeypot.

Bam takes the blanket and pulls Hitch to his feet. She gives Slav and Chicci a winning smile and they weave off into the night.

BAM  
It's my party, night girls.

Chicci promptly sits. Slav eases down beside her and stares after them.

CHICCI  
Slav, are you just going to  
let this happen?

SLAV  
(quietly)  
It won't be honey she drinks.

Chicci takes the bottle from Slav, swigs on it and slumps into a melancholy heap.

CHICCI

Yuck! and you don't care?  
I thought you and Bam were...  
Should've stayed at the pub.

Slav's confused at first, then realises what Chicci's about.

SLAV

Aw, Chicci! Come here.

Slav pulls Chicci close and hugs her. A maternal gesture.

CHICCI

Why do you let her?

SLAV

It's not what you think. It's  
much worse.

Slav brushes the hair back from Chicci's face. It's a tender moment. The firelight adds a touch of romance.

SLAV (con't)

Bam does what she wants and  
I can't stop her. I've learnt  
to live with it.

Slav leans down and lightly kisses Chicci on the lips. There is a moment of restraint, then Chicci responds with passion. They kiss hard. There's an edge of desperation. Suddenly Slav pull back. The moment is lost, she's dead serious.

SLAV (con't)

You've got to get away from  
here. She'll kill you.

CHICCI

What?..What do you mean?

Slav hushes Chicci's confusion and continues with urgency.

SLAV

Chicci listen, your not safe.  
The guy in the caravan and  
that woman at the Lodge. Bam  
killed them. She kills people.  
And you're next.

Slav physically drags Chicci up and urges her to go. Chicci hesitates a moment on the edge of the light.

CHICCI

What about Hitch?

A eerie moan breaks the night silence. Slav shakes her head.

SLAV

Please Chicci go now.

CHICCI

Why don't you come with me?

SLAV

Bambi's my life, I can't leave  
her now, or ever.

Slav turns away, her manner one of serene resignation.

Chicci watches a moment, then the fearful sounds of the night see her take flight into the darkness of the bush.

124 EXT BEEHIVES#2 NIGHT

Bam and Hitch find seclusion behind another mound. It is partially overgrown with lantana. Bam leans back against the curved bricks as Hitch goes down on her. In the pale moonlight we see the pleasure on her face as she responds to his touch. She moans loudly.

Hitch is down on his knees. He hangs on. Bam runs her fingers through his hair and pulls his face into her thighs.

Her free hand grips the chain on her neck.

125 EXT BUSHLAND NIGHT

Branches slap and tear at Chicci as she charges through the bush. She stumbles and picks herself up. Fear drives her on.

126 INT CARAVAN DAY

Chicci's FANTASY POV sees; the Caravan Jock hand cuffed, taped and covered in blood. He's thrashing around in side the van trying to escape. The image hurls into her face.

127 EXT BUSHLAND(GULLY) NIGHT

Chicci crashes down a steep gully. Her face is scratched and bleeding and her clothes torn. Panic urges her on.

128 INT MILL LODGE(LOUNGE) NIGHT

Chicci's FANTASY POV sees; the Woman Taster standing in the lounge by the fire. She holds up a glass of wine and tastes it. Blood flows freely down her cleavage and soaks the front of her dress.

Her head lolls around, like a side-show clown with a double mouth, contorted in laughter and spewing wine.

129 EXT BUSHLAND(EMBANKMENT) DAWN

Chicci claws up a rough bank onto the road. She looks around as if totally deranged. The dawn breaks over the mountains and we see the bitumen strip before her. It stretches away to the horizon. Exhausted she limps on.

130 EXT STRAIGHT ROAD DAY

The broken white line down the macadam strip blurs and swims into the distance. Chicci steers a course down the centre of the road. She sees a vehicle approaching. There's a moment of hesitation then she scurries off the carriage way and hides. The car draws near and flashes by. Chicci scrambles onto the road and waves, but to no avail. She turns back to the trek ahead.

131 EXT STRAIGHT ROAD (FURTHER) DAY

Heat waves rise up off the road. The landscape shimmers and like an apparition in the middle of nowhere there's a PHONE BOX. Chicci sees it and a smile lights up her face. She runs for it, punching the air as if she's scored the winner.

132 EXT ROADSIDE PETROL STORE DAY

Cat studies a road map on the bonnet of her car. A petrol ATTENDANT fills her tank.

Tabloid fliers at the shop door read:  
"Mill Lodge Murder" "Sydney Socialite Victim"

"HUNT FOR VAMPIRE KILLERS, "LESBIAN MANHATERS"  
 Cat has the local paper. The front page reads with similar headlines. She pays the Attendant. He tap the tabloid with a finger and shakes his head.

ATTENDANT

It's a damn perversion this.

CAT

I don't believe that vampire stuff.

ATTENDANT

That's weird too, but them lesbians, it's bloody unnatural.

Cat attends to the map.

CAT

Where does this road go, do you know?

ATTENDANT

I couldn't say. I've not been out there.

Cat folds the map and gets in the car.

CAT

You should get out more often.

She drives off.

133 EXT STRAIGHT ROAD(PHONE BOX) DAY

The booth door is open and the phone cord has been severed. Chicci is slumped in the dirt beside the box. A mixture of despair and resignation grips her. The phone handpiece lies on the ground and slowly she covers it with rocks.

A shadow drops across the dirt as the Camper's car pulls off the road. Slav is driving. Bam's scarf covers her face and sunglasses hide her eyes. She looks down at Chicci.

BAM

Looks like you had quite a night. So did I. Now get in.

Chicci offers no resistance. She climbs into the back seat. They drive off leaving the small cairn to the moment.

134 EXT BEEHIVE#2 DAY

We move in through the tangled branches of the lantana. The cicadas sound loud in the stillness of the bush. In closer and we find a boot, then another. They're hiking boots. Beside them there is a neat pile of folded clothes. Further in a foot protrudes from a blanket.

The foot moves as Hitch throws off the cover. He's naked, a little hungover but happy. He gets up, stretches and looks around.

135 INT SMALL TOWN(POLICE STATION) DAY

Detectives Hall and Ward have a temporary set up in the station. The two men sit either side of small card table used to extend the sergeant's desk. SERGEANT VINCE PRATT is a man in his late fifties. His promotion has stalled, but he still manages his town. He slides the phone down the desk.

SERG VINCE PRATT

Now if there's anything you gentlemen need and I mean anything Just put the hand up.

DET ALLEN WARD

That's appreciated Serg. It's good to know you're on side.

Serg Vince Pratt lifts himself out of his chair, puts on his hat and goes to the door.

SERG VINCE PRATT

It's Vince. We drop the formalities out here.(beat) I'd best go check on the natives.

Serg Vince Pratt bangs the office door shut after him. Det. Hall looks up. His tolerance paid to the limit.

DET TERRY HALL  
 What did we do to deserve  
 this? Two ornithologists  
 report their caravan stolen  
 and our Vince didn't think  
 it was significant.

DET ALLEN WARD  
 He didn't write it up, cause  
 he couldn't spell it.

DET TERRY HALL  
 They're bird watchers, for  
 Christ sake! Now we just sit  
 here and wait for another body.

DET ALLEN WARD  
 We could always play cards,  
 we've got the table.

Hall is not amused with Ward's wit.

136 INT/EXT CAT'S VEHICLE(TOURIST SIGN) DAY

Cat pushes it fast along a country road attempting to study  
 the map at the same time. She glimpses an old faded roadside  
 INFORMATION BOARD and breaks heavily.

Cat U-turns and pulls up before it. The sign depicts various  
 vineyards, tourist attractions and sites of historical  
 significance. "GREYSTONE MANOR" is listed. There is also a  
 telephone number.

Cat scrawls the phone number in lipstick on the inside of  
 the windscreen.

CUT TO

137 EXT STRAIGHT ROAD(PHONE BOX) DAY

Cat pulls up alongside the phone box. She can see that it's  
 been vandalised. She notices the curious pile of stones.  
 There's a moment, then she accelerates away in a shower of  
 dust and dirt. It settles over the small cairn.

138 INT CONVENIENCE STORE(COUNTRY TOWN) NIGHT

Bam and Slav push a trolley down the aisles. It's loaded up  
 with magnums of champagne and candles.

ANDREA a young checkout-chick gives her routine smile.

ANDREA  
 Hello, how are you this evening?

Bam notes the name on her uniform and smiles.

BAM  
 We're just fine Andie, what  
 about yourself?

ANDREA

I'm good, thank God this shift's over. Wow! Must be some party.

Andrea scans the bottles. Bam pays the cash.

BAM

Mmm, A little celebration. You could join us.

ANDREA

Mum would go right off.

BAM

She can only say no. We'll give you lift home you ask her.

Andrea passes across the change. Bam lightly clasps her hand and strokes her arm. Andrea blushes with the intimacy.

BAM

Such soft skin Andie. Isn't she just beautiful Slav?

Slav bags the bottles and candles. She sees a POLICE CAR move slowly through the car-park and alerts Bam.

SLAV

Bam, we don't want to miss the party now, do we.

BAM

Andie, we'll pick you up out the front.

Bam and Slav leave. Andrea closes her check-out.

139 EXT/INT CARPARK(CAMPER'S CAR) NIGHT

Headlights from the Police patrol car arc across the Camper's car and van. Chicci struggles in the back seat of the vehicle. Her hands are cuffed to the door, her mouth sealed with tape. She claws the door open and falls out onto the roadway, kicking desperately to attract attention.

CUT TO

140 INT POLICE VEHICLE(CARPARK) NIGHT

The police patrolman, COHAN, sees Chicci hanging off the door and kicking for her life. His lights remain trained on her. He reaches for the radio handset.

COHAN

Vince, it's Cohan. You know that caravan. The one with the sheilas...

141 INT SMALL TOWN POLICE STATION NIGHT

Serg Vince Pratt slouches back in his chair. He has the receiver in his hand. Det Terry Hall stands over him with his hand out demanding the radio.

SERG VINCE PRATT  
Hold on there Cohan. I'm getting a signal from one of the city blokes. I'll let you talk direct to them and good work son.

Serg Vince Pratt begrudgingly hands over the receiver. Det Terry Hall's manner is urgent by comparison.

DET TERRY HALL  
Cohan, this is detective Terry Hall from the CIU. Under no circumstances do you move on this. That understood?

COHAN(radio/v)  
But sir, There's only one, no sign of the other. Looks to me they've had a domestic.

DET TERRY HALL  
Cohan, no heroics. What's your location? Cohan!

A gurgling sound from the receiver gets increasingly louder. Hall examines the handset. He looks horrified.

142 EXT/INT POLICE VEHICLE(CARPARK) NIGHT

The lights from the police car blink out throwing Chicci into darkness. Det Hall's voice bubbles through the radio.

DET TERRY HALL(radio/v)  
Cohan do you hear? Give us your location.... Cohan... acknowledge directive...

The lights from the Camper's car swing across the police vehicle. Cohan is slumped over the steering wheel. He still clutches the radio hand piece. Blood splutters out of it.

143 EXT CONVENIENCE STORE(COUNTRY TOWN) NIGHT

Andrea paces in front of the store. She lights another cigarette and looks up and down the street. It's deserted. The manager MR KELTY closes the doors and flicks the lights. The street is now dim and deserted.

MR KELTY  
See you tomorrow Andie. Do you want a lift?



ANDREA

I'm right Mr K.

Kelty's car is parked on the curb. He gets in and starts it.

144 EXT STREET(COUNTRY TOWN) NIGHT

The Camper's vehicle pulls out of the carpark and moves slowly down the street towards the store.

145 EXT CONVENIENCE STORE(COUNTRY TOWN) NIGHT

Kelty is just pulling away when he stops. He opens the passenger door and beckons to Andrea.

MR KELTY

Andie, hop in, I'll give you a lift home.

Andrea looks anxiously back up the street, then gets in.

MR KELTY(con't)

Who'd be picking you up this time of night? Your mother know?

They drive off into the night. The Camper's car towing the flat box shaped trailer cruises past.

146 EXT GREYSTONE PROPERTY(VANTAGE POINT) DAY/PM

Bam and Slav stand on the edge of a prominent spur. The valley drops away below them. On the far side, the imposing structure of "Greystone Manor" dominates the countryside. The turn-of-the-century Gothic manor, complete with stone parapets, is still impressive despite being neglected.

Bam holds Slav close, her gloves, scarf and umbrella shield her from the light.

CUT TO

147 INT CAMPER'S CAR(VANTAGE POINT) DAY/PM

Chicci remains handcuffed to the door in the back. Her face, scratched and bruised attests to the ordeal she's suffered. Determined to escape, Chicci manages to remove her shoe and get her foot into the front seat. Bam's MOBILE is in reach. After a few contorted moments Chicci has the phone gripped with her toes. She curls over and drops it on her chest and grasps it. She punches out a number. It rings.

CHICCI

Come on answer...please ....

Bam's hand reaches in and snatches the phone from her.

BAM

I'm disappointed Chicci. You know tonight, is your night.

Haloed by the black umbrella, Bam's malevolence is all the more frightening. Chicci slides to the floor terrified.

148 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR DAY/PM

Bam, carrying the celebration supplies, strides across the verandah to the front door and lets herself in. Her boots sound loud in the rural silence. Slav follows with Chicci. We see the windows on the ground floor are boarded up.

149 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (FOYER) DAY/PM

In the fading light you can see the grand interior of the Manor. Bam lights a silver candelabrum.

BAM

There's a room down stairs  
for you honey. Just til we  
get things ready. Slavonika  
and I use to play here once.

Bam descend the staircase. Slav pushes Chicci after her.

BAM(con't)

It was a pity about Andie.  
You could've had company.  
Like a sleep-over...forever.

150 EXT COUNTRY ROAD (JUNCTION) DAY/PM

Cat accelerates down a gravel road to a T-intersection. The car slides into the ninety degree turn and halts. Cat gets out in a cloud of dust. She checks a skewed and shot-out sign post against the map in her hand. She is demonstrably frustrated at being lost and screams at the sign.

CAT

Fuck! Fuck! Fucking hell!

OLD MAN(O/S)

That's a dose of strong words.

Cat spins around in fright to find an OLD MAN and his DOG sitting on a small bench. The dust settles around them.

CAT

Shit! What the fuck, what  
you doing?

OLD MAN

Waiting for the bus.

CAT

God, you scared me. Listen,  
do you know the road to  
Greystone Manor?

Cat haunches down beside the Old Man. The dog watches her.

OLD MAN

Your car's pointed in the right direction. I'd say about... (to dog) What do you think Blue? Twenty? Maybe twenty five miles.

The dog responds, head up ears alert. Cat looks to the dog and then back, as though part of a three way exchange.

CAT

Right, thanks, both of you.

Cat's into the car and off.

151 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (DINING ROOM) NIGHT

Bam and Slav are putting the finishing touches to their sacrificial alter. On a heavy dining table a pentangle has been inscribed. Candles burn at each of the five points.

Strong leather straps are attached to the table to spread eagle the victim. The apparatus resembles some pagan offering from the Inquisition.

Bam applies make-up between rails of cocaine on the mirror. Slav does a line and washes it down with champagne. We see her reflection in the mirror. It's seductive. Both are so high and volatile they're dangerous to the extreme.

Bam leans in with the straw for another line. We see there is NO REFLECTION in the mirror. Just the straw as the powder disappears up it.

Slav highlights Bam's lips with a rich dark lipstick. It's an intimate moment shared as they kiss passionately. In the flickering candle light their eyes shine with desire. Bam unbuttons her top. It falls open as she drinks from the magnum. Champagne spills down her chest.

BAM

This night Slavonika, I'll transcend the judgement of time. The milk of youth will be mine.

Slav caresses and suckles her. Bam enjoys the pleasure, the intensity severe in her heightened state. She takes Slav and whispers close.

BAM

Let's go wake up the dead.

152 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR NIGHT

Bam closes the front door and turns the lock, leaving the heavy cast iron key in it. She links arms with Slav and they cross the verandah towards the car.

153 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (BASEMENT) NIGHT

Small barred vents high up the wall throw shafts of night light into the basement. Chicci is handcuffed to a steel pipe embedded in the concrete. She chips away at the bricks using an old steel chisel. It's hard work with little gain to be seen.

154 EXT RURAL CEMETERY NIGHT

The headstones and crosses stand like sentinels. Clouds race the wind across the night sky. As we move through the graves the SOUND of DIGGING gets closer. We find a group of headstones in a row that have been recently removed.

Bam and Slav rob the grave adjacent to them. They appear as though rising from the ground itself. Assisted with a magnum of champagne they take turns with the shovel.

155 EXT GREYSTONE PROPERTY (VANTAGE POINT) NIGHT

We see the lights on a car flick off as it pulls into a side culvert for cover. Down the valley we glimpse the Manor. Cat steps up to the vantage point. Slung across her shoulder is the bow and in her hand a bundle of arrows. A flicker of lightning on the mountains heralds her arrival.

156 EXT GREYSTONE PROPERTY (CREEK) NIGHT

A small stony creek runs through the property. Barefoot, Cat picks her way across, skilfully jumping from rock to rock.

157 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (BASEMENT) NIGHT

Chicci continues to chip away at the wall. She tries with what strength is left to rip it free. It remains firm. In tears of despair she slumps to the floor.

158 EXT RURAL CEMETERY NIGHT

Bam and Slav stagger about trying to haul a coffin out of a grave. Slav is down the hole pushing while Bam, showing extraordinary strength, drags the box up and dumps it along side the headstone.

Devoid of any reverence, Bam takes a bow to the headstone, then sits on the coffin and up-ends the magnum. Slav climbs out of the ground and joins her.

BAM

Remember last time Hesta, you  
were drowning in the silo.  
Welcome to the living dead.

Bam shrieks with laughter.

We see the headstone inscription is that of the step-mother. It reads; "Hesta Warton-Francis"

159 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR NIGHT

Cat pads onto the verandah. With the pencil-torch she finds the key in the front door and enters.

160 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (FOYER/DINING) NIGHT

Cat creeps through the foyer. She stops at the dining room door on seeing the make-shift alter with the candles still burning. Horrified, she's drawn into the room. The SOUND of TAPPING from the basement can be heard. Cat backs out and descends the stairs.

161 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (BASEMENT) NIGHT

Cat reaches the bottom step. The scraping and chipping sound continues behind the basement door. Cat, crouches down and slowly pushes the door. It creaks open.

Chicci positions herself against the wall, the steel chisel at the ready. As the door swings open she hurls it with lethal force.

It sticks deep into the door, at head high. Cat stands up.

CAT

Chicci?

CHICCI

Cat!

Cat pulls hard to get the chisel from the door.

CAT

Not still the Milly thing  
is it?

Cat hugs Chicci. Her shoulders heave with relief.

CHICCI

They kill people...for blood.

CAT

Shhhh! Let's get out of here  
princess.

Cat flashes the torch on the bar that holds Chicci captive.

162 EXT RURAL CEMETERY NIGHT

Bam and Slav wedge the coffin into the rear of the Camper's car. It sticks dangerously out the back door. Bam slugs down the champagne and passes the bottle to Slav. She gives the coffin a reassuring pat.

BAM

Seat belt, Hesta!

Bam wraps a dark scarf around her head and puts on her sunglasses. They get in the car and drive off. The light before dawn begins to show in the east.

163 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (SHED) DAWN

Cat, by torch light, rummages through old farm tools. She finds a hammer and hack-saw.

In her haste she knocks over a JERRY CAN, spilling petrol everywhere. She rights it quickly and leaves.

164 EXT/INT DIRT ROAD (CAMPER'S CAR) DAWN

Slav drives the Camper's car at reckless speed. The coffin hanging out the rear door remains with them. Bam is getting twitchy as they race the dawn.

SLAV  
Here! It might help.

Slav hands Bam a roll of black gaffer tape.

165 INT GREYSTONE MANOR DAWN

Cat saws the steel pipe that Chicci's attached to. It's hard going, but she's determined.

166 INT/EXT DIRT ROAD (CAMPER'S CAR) DAWN

Bam tears off strips of gaffer tape and covers her side window. Slav concentrates on the driving.

There's a LOUD BANG and the car slews erratically to a halt.

BAM  
What's wrong?

SLAV  
I think we've blown a tyre.

Slav gets out to look. She leans back in the window.

SLAV  
I'll have to change it.

BAM  
We should've brought the van!

SLAV  
You could always get in with her.

Slav indicates the coffin. Bam is not amused.

BAM  
That's saved for Chicci.  
We need to hurry.

167 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (BASEMENT) DAWN

Cat and Chicci are making progress. The pipe is nearly through. On either end of the saw they both pull and push. Suddenly the blade snaps. There's a collective "shit!"

168 EXT DIRT ROAD (CAMPER'S CAR) DAWN

Slav is down on her knees tightening the last of the wheel nuts. Bam paces around anxiously under the umbrella. The first rays of sunlight spill over the mountain. Slav releases the jack and the car slumps onto the road.

169 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (BASEMENT) DAWN

Chicci crouches down and pulls back hard against the pipe. The handcuffs bite into her wrist. Cat lines up the pipe with the hammer. They count to three. The heavy blow shears the steel pipe in two.

Chicci is propelled head long into the corner. She is momentarily dazed in the darkness and looks around for Cat.

CHICCI

Cat where are you?

CUT TO

170 EXT DIRT ROAD (CULVERT) DAWN

Down in a darkened ditch we come face to face with the skull of Hesta. The hollow eye sockets stare straight back at us.

171 EXT DIRT ROAD (CAMPER'S CAR) DAWN

Along the road we see the rest of the skeletal remains and the Camper's car as it disappears in a cloud of dust. The coffin still hangs precariously out of the rear window.

172 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (FOYER) DAWN

Cat and Chicci reach the top of the stairs and race for the front door. They pull it open.

173 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR (ROAD) DAWN

From the verandah they see the Camper's car tearing down the road to the Manor. It hits the creek with a spray of water.

174 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (FOYER) DAWN

Cat and Chicci retreat inside and secure the front door. They drive the slide bolts home and drag furniture up against the windows.

175 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR (VERANDAH) DAWN

Slav strides down the verandah to the front door only to find it locked and barred. She pounds heavily against it. We see the sunlight creeping across the verandah floor.

176 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (FOYER) DAWN

Crouched on the steps further back, Cat and Chicci watch the front door. Slav's voice can be heard outside.

SLAV (voice off)  
Bam, stay there. I'll get  
into the house.

There's the sound of Slav's footsteps crossing the verandah.

CAT  
Chicci, Slav can't stop us.

Cat and Chicci creep to the door and ease the slide bolts back. Suddenly an axe splinters through the door, narrowly missing Chicci's head. She screams. They recoil in horror. Slav's up close to the door. We see her eyes peering through the hole the axe left. She taunts them.

SLAV  
Chicci, I'll break it down.  
I can't help you. You belong  
to Bam now, just like me.

CAT  
(whispers)  
Well I don't... and she thinks  
you're alone.

Cat hands Chicci the bow and arrows.

CAT (con't)  
If she comes through that  
door shoot her. And watch  
the boob.

Cat hurries away leaving Chicci confused and uncertain. A shattering blow to the door gets her attention. She fits an arrow to the bow and draws it back. Another blow removes the hinges and the door crashes to the floor.

Slav steps into the door frame. The axe swings by her side.

Chicci's FANTASY POV sees; Slav a formidable amazonian figure silhouetted against the morning sun. She's wearing a bronze helmet with wings. In her hand she holds a gleaming double edged axe.

Slav takes a cautious step into the foyer and faces Chicci.

SLAV  
Chicci, we have to help Bam.  
We're family. You're with us.

CHICCI  
No. I'm with Cat. Now stop,  
or I'll let this go.



Chicci holds her ground, the arrow aimed at Slav's chest.

SLAV

So, Cat's here. I should've guessed.

Slav slowly leans the axe against the wall. She takes a further step towards Chicci.

SLAV(con't)

There, I put the axe down.  
Are you going to shoot me?

Chicci hesitates a moment.

CHICCI

You could ask yourself, am I feeling lucky? Is that how it goes?

SLAV

Alright Chicci, either shoot me now, here, right through the heart.

Slav rips open her top exposing her chest to Chicci.

SLAV(con't)

Or put it down and you and Cat leave. I'll look after Bam.

Chicci gradually lowers the bow. Slav takes the weapon and places it down. Without warning, Slav delivers a powerful backhander to Chicci's face, sending her sprawling across the floor.

177 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR(LAWN) DAY

The coffin lies alongside the caravan. Cat recklessly swings the jerry can splashing petrol all over everything in reach. The coffin, the van and all around.

The lid to the coffin inches up. It's barely a crack, but from inside we can see the back of Cat. She is vulnerable. Swiftly Bam rises up out of the box.

Cat is startled to see Bam and swings around with the can, dousing petrol all over her. Bam is unperturbed. She steps out and puts up the umbrella. Her inquiry is disturbingly unrelated and innocent.

BAM

I've just had this dry cleaned.  
Charlie said you'd come. Cat, it came as a shock to me too.

Cat backs away poring a line of fuel, then tosses the can. She flips the top on her lighter and thumbs a flame.

CAT

Don't make me. Now call Slav off.

BAM

Chicci's not exactly the angel in all this. With Slav and Charlie! Can you imagine how I feel?

CAT

You could feel a lot worse. Call her.

Bam moves a step closer. Cat holds out the lighter.

BAM

Matters of the heart. One never knows. The flame's out.

Cat strikes the lighter, to no avail. Again and again she tries. Bam steps in quickly, seizes Cat's wrist and takes the lighter. The two struggle.

Bam's strength overpowers Cat crushing her savagely. Cat grabs a handful of Bam's hair and pulls her down clawing desperately at her throat. She grips the chain and sheath around Bam's neck.

A vicious blow knocks Cat backwards to the ground. As she falls the knife comes free in her hand. It slices across Bam's face.

Bam feels the blood run on her cheek. She checks her hand. There's a look of astonishment on her face.

Cat, dazed and exhausted tries to get up. Her legs buckle.

178 INT GREYSTONE MANOR (FOYER) DAY

Slav has Chicci's arm through the banister rail and tries to open the handcuffs. Chicci registers what's happening and manages a powerful kicks sending Slav reeling.

She scrabbles to get away. Slav comes after her with the axe. They both clutch the wooden bar. Slav's advantage of weight forces it down over Chicci's neck.

In CLOSE on the silver labrys as the axe handle presses it into her flesh. Slowly Chicci's strength starts to win as she fights for her life.

A SCREAM from Bam defuses the battle.

179 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR (LAWN) DAY

Bam examines the damage to her face in the mirror on the side of the van. She screams at her reflection.

BAM  
My god! Look at me. Just  
look at me.

Cat screams back taunting her.

CAT  
You're a monster. No blood  
will ever change that.

Bam shrieks at herself, as though possessed. She tears at her hair and face. The lighter drops to the ground.

BAM  
My hair! What's happened?

Cat holds up the handful of hair like a Medusa prize. Bam collapses in the pool of petrol. Her eyes glazed in defeat.

CAT  
It's falling out and now  
you're bleeding... Cunt.  
God help you. Get back in  
your box you fucking corpse!

Bam sees the lighter and calmly retrieves it. She takes a moment to compose herself. Cat crawls to get away. Bam strikes the lighter and drops it. There's a loud WHOOSH as Bam, the coffin and the van are engulfed in a fireball.

Slav and Chicci reach the edge of the verandah. The fire is reflected and magnified in Slav's tear filled eyes.

180 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR (ROAD) DAY

Flashing police lights dance across the hedges that border the road into the property. Their sirens sound loud.

181 EXT GREYSTONE MANOR (LAWN) DAY

Slav sits before the remains of the burnt out caravan. In the dirt before her we see the outline of a crude pentangle. She repeatedly traces her finger over the lines.

SLAV (V/O)  
Chicci found the Emerald City,  
with Cat. For Bam the light at  
the end of the tunnel, was a  
fireball. And they all danced  
and sang, the witch is dead.  
The witch is dead.

We rise up from the mayhem and drift over the countryside.

182 EXT ROADHOUSE (DRIVEWAY) DAY

Chicci steps out of the Roadhouse with food and drinks. A bubble-gum machine distracts her. She twists a coin into the slot and retrieves the prize.

Cat is parked to the side of the drive. She is exhausted and impatient. She sounds the horn and Chicci hurries over.

CHICCI  
Foccacia was off the menu,  
I got us a Claire special.

With a flourish, Chicci shoves the pizza box in the window.

CAT  
Can we go now Chicci?

Chicci swings herself into the car and slams the door.

CHICCI  
Yep, just one thing first.  
A gumball for a sour puss.

She pushes a piece of gum into Cat's mouth and gives her a big hug. Cat lightens a little and reciprocates.

Chicci whispers in Cat's ear.

CHICCI  
And, I love you Caitlin.

Chicci nuzzles Cat's neck. Slowly her smile becomes a wicked grin, revealing a set of sharp fangs.

Cat's reaction is electric. She screams, spilling drink and pizza everywhere. Chicci retreats to her seat.

CHICCI  
Whoa! Cat...s-o-r-r-y!

She pulls a set of plastic 'vampire fangs' from her mouth.

CAT  
Christ Chicci! Really funny.

Chicci drops the fangs out the window as they drive off. Her voice trails away.

CHICCI  
It was just a joke...

Through the fangs we see the car disappear up the highway.

END CREDITS