

## Abstract

Although various film critics and academics have located the Gothic in Antipodean cinema, there has been no in-depth study of the Gothic and its ideological entanglements with postmodernism within this cinema. This study is divided into two parts and locates the (postmodern) Gothic in twelve Australian/New Zealand films ranging from Ted Kotcheff's *Wake in Fright* (1971) to Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures* (1994).

Part one theorizes the Gothic as a subversive cultural mode that foreshadows postmodernism in terms of its antithetical relationship with Enlightenment ideals. Interconnections are made between proto-postmodern aspects of early Gothic literature and the appropriation and intensification of these aspects in what has been dubbed the postmodern Gothic. The dissertation then argues that the Antipodes was/is constructed through Euro-centric discourse(s) as a Gothic/(proto)-postmodern space or place, this construction manifest in, and becoming intertwined with the postmodern in post 1970s Antipodean cinema.

In part two, a cross-section of Australian/New Zealand films is organized into cinematic sub-genres in line with their similar thematic preoccupations and settings, all films argued as reflecting a marked postmodern Gothic sensibility.

In its conclusion, the study finds that "Antipodean Gothic cinema", particularly since the 1970s, can be strongly characterized by its combining of Gothic/postmodernist modes of representation, this convergence constitutive of a postmodernized version of the Gothic which is heavily influenced by Euro-centric constructions of the Antipodes in Gothic/(proto)-postmodern related terms.

# **Antipodean Gothic Cinema**

A Study of the (postmodern) Gothic in Australian and New Zealand Film  
since the 1970s

By

Romana Ashton

Doctor of Philosophy

Central Queensland University  
School of Humanities – Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education

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## Declaration

I declare that the main text of this dissertation is the original work of the undersigned and that it has not been submitted in any form for another award. All information presented in quotations or references has been duly acknowledged, and a complete list of references is included.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Romana Ashton', written in a cursive style.

Romana Ashton

*For Drew*

Much Madness is divinest Sense –  
To a discerning Eye –  
Much Sense – the starkest Madness –  
'Tis the Majority  
In this, as All, prevail –  
Assent – and you are sane –  
Demur – you're straightway dangerous –  
And handled with a Chain –

(Emily Dickinson, Poem 435).