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

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Contents

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<u>Declaration</u>

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.

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).

Gothic life, like that of a giant poisonous plant with far-reaching tendrils, has found its sustenance by feeding off the credulities of its readers. This hot-house hybrid is constantly mutating, making new growths out of old as in its propensity for parody and pastiche…Having taken residence in its host, the Gothic replicates itself throughout our culture like a virus.

Marie Mulvey-Roberts[1]

The Gothic, as described by Marie Mulvey-Roberts in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature,* can be likened to a virus – a "dis-ease" – an impulse that has spread beyond the geographical confines of Britain, Europe and North America, and one that can be found in a number of cultures including the British colonized Australia and New Zealand. This dissertation explores some of the cultural effects of the spread of this Gothic impulse through examining Australian and New Zealand cinematic works in terms of their (postmodern) Gothic characteristics. In this study the placing of parentheses around "postmodern" in the phrase "postmodern Gothic" needs some theoretical explanation. The parentheses indicate the ideological interconnectedness between the Gothic and postmodernism as cultural modes and their merging in "Antipodean Gothic cinema". The parentheses are also used so that there is some distinction between a postmodern Gothic representative form that is usually associated with North American fiction and film, and a postmodernized version of the Gothic that is markedly antipodean – a version that does not always constitute the postmodern Gothic in the strictest theoretical sense. Along with this particularity is the use of the term "mode" rather than the term "genre" in relation to the Gothic, the latter term tying the Gothic to a specific set of characteristics and

1

point in history rather than allowing for its mutation in a variety of historical and cultural contexts.

This study is also interdisciplinary in its exploration of (postmodern) Gothic impulses in both antipodean nations' cinemas and is not limited only to film studies, but also draws from (although each field or discipline can be seen to inform other disciplines and can be included under the banner of cultural studies) literary studies, contemporary Gothic studies and Australian/New Zealand studies/history, in order to more fully explore the Gothic in the context of Australian/New Zealand culture(s) and their national cinemas.

Australian/New Zealand Gothic Cinema(s)

It has only been in the last ten to fifteen years that the Gothic has been seriously studied in Australian/New Zealand cultures or in their cinemas. The Antipodean Gothic Symposium held at Massey University in New Zealand in 2002 is testament to the growing academic field of Antipodean Gothic studies. At the 2002 conference a variety of papers were presented on an array of manifestations of the Gothic in Australian and New Zealand literature, film and popular culture.[2] In spite of the increasing popularity of Gothic studies within the academy and innovations in the area of Antipodean Gothic studies there has not been an entire study dedicated to exploring Gothic impulses in Antipodean cinema. There have however, been various chapters and sections within bigger works (usually on Australian/New Zealand cinemas or on national cinemas) that discuss the presence of the Gothic in Australian and New Zealand film.

Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka's *The Screening of Australia* (1988) is one such text that discusses a Gothic impulse in Australian cinema.[3] Dermody and Jacka mention the films *Homesdale* (1971)*, Wake in Fright* (1971)*, The Cars that Ate Paris* (1974)*, The Night the Prowler* (1978)*, Razorback* (1984)*, and the *Mad Max* trilogy (1979-1984) amongst others, as belonging to what they consider to be the Australian Gothic tradition in film. Their work also suggests that the emergence of the Australian Gothic in film coincided with Peter Weir's experimental film *Homesdale* and that there were also some Gothic elements present in the "anti-documentary" *Jack and Jill – A Postscript* (1970). Canadian director Ted Kotcheff's *Wake in Fright* is also identified as possessing uniquely Australian Gothic elements. Dermody and Jacka identify this period as the early cycle of Australian Gothic in film and see its characteristics as further reflected in Jim Sharman's *Shirley Thompson versus the Aliens* (1973) and in *The Night the Prowler*, adapted from Patrick White's short story. They suggest that the Gothic mode flourished in Peter Weir's first feature film *The Cars that Ate Paris* and in his later film *The Plumber* (1979). The Australian Gothic in relation to film is characterized in this instance as possessing "dark, inward comedy", and as using the normality of "the Australian suburban and small town strain" as "the hunting-ground for Gothic/comic hyperboles and motifs."[4] In films that possess these characteristics, Dermody and Jacka argue that the "normal is revealed as having a stubborn bias towards the perverse, the grotesque, the malevolent", and that "the best examples of Australian Gothic are intuitive and bizarre mixtures of B-grade genres."[5] The Australian Gothic film, in Dermody and Jacka's opinion, is one that

combines generic forms, including the "action, western, rock musical, sci-fi fantasy, teen film, bikie film", as well as employing self-mockery, a characteristic of the genre that moves it "away from conservatism."[6] This definition of the Australian Gothic film privileges kitsch and pop-trash styles over what Dermody and Jacka consider to be AFC (Australian Film Commission) style films such as *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) and *The Last Wave* (1977), which employ "self-conscious mysticism" instead of "self-mockery."[7]

In Dermody and Jacka's employment of the term Gothic, there is no reference to its use in literature, nor is any historical background given to connections between the Gothic and Australian culture. The phrase "Australian Gothic" is simply ascribed certain characteristics by Dermody and Jacka without any substantial exploration of the Gothic in Australian cinema.

Marek Haltof, in *Peter Weir: When Cultures Collide* (1996), draws on Dermody and Jacka's definition of Australian Gothic in his chapter "Weir's Australian Gothic." Haltof states:

> The characteristic feature of Australian Gothic is its perpetual reference to popular culture, its eclectic visual style and persistent use of the grotesque and the perverse, its suburban setting, and the absence of an immediately identifiable Australian landscape.[8]

Once again, the term "Australian Gothic" is used without any reference to what in the first place might constitute the Gothic, though these comments point to many of the characteristics usually associated with Gothic/postmodern forms of representation – electicism/pastiche, the highlighting of the perverse, and references to popular culture (in postmodern fiction and film).[9]

Roslynn D. Haynes also discusses the use of the Gothic in Australian film (rather than "Australian Gothic" *per se*) in *Seeking the Centre* (1998).[10] Haynes locates the Gothic in connection to Australian film in the chapter entitled "A Gothic Desert: Psychodrama in Fiction and Film." Haynes observes that the depiction of the desert in Australian visual art, film and fiction bears similarities to Gothic themes, and discusses this notion briefly in relation to *Walkabout* (1970), the *Mad Max* trilogy and *Wake in Fright*. In relation to the latter she comments: "Scarcely an adventure story since there is no hero, *Wake in Fright* evokes a distinctly Gothic sense of place…."[11] Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs, in their *Uncanny Australia* (1998), can also see the Gothic in Australian cinema, commenting in reference to the Australian film *Vacant Possession* (1994) that "The traumatic histories of nation and family are drawn together around the table, and the consequences are nothing less than Gothic…" [12]

The most extensive exploration of a Gothic impulse in Australian cinema can be found in Jonathan Rayner's *Contemporary Australian Cinema* (2000). Rayner places various Australian films in Gothic sub-genres in the chapter entitled "Australian Gothic", where he suggests that Australian Gothic film can be seen as "a mode, a stance and an atmosphere, after the fashion of American Film Noir, with the appellation suggesting the inclusion of horrific and fantastic materials comparable to those of Gothic literature."[13] Rayner sees the main characteristics of Australian Gothic film as:

> […] a questioning of established authority: a disillusionment with
> the social reality that authority maintains; and the protagonist's
> search for a valid and tenable identity once the true nature of the
> human environment is revealed.[14]

Like Dermody and Jacka, Rayner suggests that Australian Gothic film emerged in the early 1970s and argues that *Walkabout* and *Wake in Fright* pioneered elements that now characterize Australian Gothic film.[15] Two of these pioneering elements include the gothicization of the Australian landscape and the rural community or outback. Rayner writes:

> […] these films are credited with an influence and a pertinence because, not in spite, of their non-Australian directors. They itemise the subject matter of Australian Gothic: the pre-existing landscape, the human social construct, the human authority exerted more or less successfully on both, and the reaction of disempowered individuals to this spectacle.[16]

Rayner further discusses and explores the concept of Australian Gothic film by organizing it into sub-genres: the Gothic Rural Community, the Mad Max trilogy and Urban Gothic.[17] In Rayner's Australian Gothic sub-genres there are particular Gothic characteristics that come to the fore, depending on each film's dominant generic form and localized setting. The films *Homesdale, The Cars that Ate Paris, Picnic at Hanging Rock, Summerfield* (1977)*, Shame* (1987)*,* and *Incident at Raven's Gate* (1988)*,* are included in the rural sub-genre; the *Mad Max* trilogy receives its own designated space; and the films *Long Weekend* (1977)*, The Last Wave, The Night the Prowler* (1978)*, Harlequin* (1980)*, Heatwave* (1982)*, Ground Zero* (1987)*,* and *Deadly* (1993) are among the films included in the urban Gothic category.

   Along with his categorization of Australian Gothic film into sub-genres, Rayner discusses what he terms "New Gothic" in his chapter "New Glamour, New Gothic: Australian Films in the 1990s."[18] Among the films discussed in relation to "New

Gothic" are 1990s films *Nirvana Street Murders* (1991)*, Death in Brunswick* (1991)*, Golden Braid* (1991)*,* and *Bad Boy Bubby* (1993). Rayner characterizes the new Gothic as sharing similar preoccupations with previous Australian Gothic films, including an "unusual central protagonist." According to Rayner, these elements work in the new Gothic to deconstruct and defamiliarize the "modern urban environment" while simultaneously incorporating new representations of Australian-ness apart from their 1970s and 1980s Australian Gothic counterparts.[19]

Although the works mentioned above do locate the Gothic in Australian cinema, they do not do so in conjunction with a postmodern sensibility, nor do they fully explore the cultural factors that make Australian Gothic cinema different from manifestations of the Gothic in Hollywood or other national cinemas. While these sections and essays only give surface readings of the strong Gothic impulse in Australian cinema, this study delves theoretically deeper into the culturally specific version of the Gothic that permeates Antipodean cinema, and suggests that this version is one with strong postmodern overtones.

In relation to New Zealand/Aotearoa Gothic, the most suggestive work concerning an overall Gothic presence in New Zealand film is the documentary *Cinema of Unease* (1995).[20] Although the documentary does not directly call New Zealand cinema "Gothic", it is inferred by Sam Neill's hinting at an "alienating empty landscape" and the use of "uncanny suspense" in many New Zealand films.[22] The documentary is compiled using imagery from various New Zealand films interspersed with Sam Neill's commentary about his personal experiences growing up in New Zealand. His view of New Zealand and its film industry is

nothing less than Gothic – his commentary conjuring up past atrocities and a "backward", isolated, alienating country that has managed to build a "uniquely strange and dark film industry" since the 1970s. To Neill, Jane Campion's *The Piano* is "romantic, gothic, unique", while other films in the documentary to explain the "unease" of New Zealand cinema include *Bad Blood* (1981)*, Vigil* (1984)*, The Lost Tribe* (1985), *The Navigator: A Medieval Oddeyssey* (1988)*, An Angel at my Table* (1990), and *Heavenly Creatures* (1994). Neill muses in the closing sequences of the documentary: "If a national cinema is a reflection of ourselves – then ours is a troubled reflection indeed."

In William J. Schafer's exploration of Aotearoa Gothic in *Mapping the Godzone* (1998), the films of New Zealand director Peter Jackson are included as examples of the Gothic in New Zealand cinema. Jackson's *Braindead* (1992)*, Heavenly Creatures* and *The Frighteners* (1996) all contain, according to Schafer, "gothic-horror elements, tempered by outrageous comedy and parody."[21] In his chapter "Aotearoa at the Movies", Schafer says of Peter Jackson's *Braindead*: "A mischievously ghoulish horror-comedy, with comic stereotypes and ingenious special effects, fully exploiting New Zealand gothic."[22] Nicolas Reid's *A Decade of New Zealand Film* (1986), which pre-dates both Sam Neill's and Schafer's explorations of dark or Gothic elements in New Zealand cinema by a decade, locates the Gothic in the New Zealand film *The Scarecrow* (1982). Reid writes: "It remains a unique example of cinematic Gothic. Its plot is loosely melodramatic, its tone sometimes moody and lowering. But this is specifically New Zealand

Gothic."[23] To Reid, *The Scarecrow* is the epitome of what he terms "New Zealand Gothic" because of its use of black comedy and its small town setting.[24]

Not unlike the theoretically limited explorations of the Gothic in Australian cinema, Schafer's and Reid's locating of a Gothic impulse in New Zealand cinema is also at surface level. There are, in Schafer and Reid's work, certain characteristics prescribed to what is labelled Aotearoa/New Zealand Gothic cinema, but no explanation is given as to why these particular characteristics are unique to this national cinema. In this study the cultural impulses that shape an Antipodean cinema of the Gothic are fully explored and are closely connected with Euro-centric constructions of antipodean cultural identities in Gothic/(proto)-postmodern related terms.

The Gothic has also been located in the New Zealand film *The Piano* (1993) in film reviews and essays. Caryn James' article for *The New York Times,* "A Distinctive Shade of Darkness" (1993), observes, as the title of the article indicates, a unique strain of the Gothic in Antipodean cinema. James suggests that this Gothic pattern is clearly evident in Jane Campion's *The Piano,* which draws on the narrative/stylistic conventions of the European Gothic romance of *Wuthering Heights* and the Australian Gothic of *Picnic at Hanging Rock.*[25] Harvey Greenberg (1994) also observes this Gothic impulse in relation to *The Piano* (1993): "*The Piano's* literary antecedents include those lurid Gothic romances replete with frail heroines, exotic locales, and masterful/sinister noblemen…"[26] The strong Gothic sensibility in *The Piano* is more thoroughly dissected by way of Lacanian theory in Cyndy Hendershot's "(Re)Visioning the Gothic: Jane Campion's *The Piano*"

(1998). Hendershot [27] argues that Campion's film "seeks to work within the Gothic in order to deconstruct many tropes and themes embedded in that genre." One way in which the film undertakes this deconstruction is through, Hendershot suggests, a subversion of the conventions of the eroticized Gothic master. Through playing with Gothic (sexual) power structures, Campion's film, Hendershot argues, produces an alternative model of (Gothic) male subjectivity that works to destabilize patriarchal structures.

The most recent work(s) that explore aspects of the Gothic in Australian/New Zealand cinema(s) are Jonathan Rayner's ' "Terror Australis": Areas of Horror in the Australian Cinema' and Ian Conrich's "Kiwi Gothic: New Zealand's Cinema of a Perilous Paradise." These essays are two of many included in *Horror International* (2005)*, a collection of essays on the horror genre in a variety of national cinemas.[28] Due to the horror film theme of the book, Rayner's and Conrich's essays relate Australian/New Zealand Gothic only to the conventions of the North American horror genre, and as such demonstrate skewed views pertaining to the uses of the Gothic in Antipodean cinema. Rayner's essay draws extensively on his work on Australian Gothic cinema in his *Contemporary Australian Cinema* but, in keeping with the subject of the book, relates the Australian Gothic more specifically to the conventions of the North American horror film.[29] Conrich's essay separates the concept of a "cinema of unease" from the gothic horror of what he terms "Kiwi Gothic cinema", a New Zealand film genre which he explores in relation to both the New Zealand landscape and the family unit. Conrich lists *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* (1980)*, Bad Blood, Heavenly*

Creatures, Dangerous Orphans (1987)*, Scarfies* (1999)*, The Shirt* (2000), and *Crooked Earth* (2001) as examples of films that have gothic "moments" and that belong to what Sam Neill refers to as a "cinema of unease." Conrich argues that such films do not accurately embody the "essence of a Kiwi cinema of the gothic" and proposes instead that it is the more obvious appropriation of the conventions of the horror film in New Zealand cinema that typifies Kiwi Gothic cinema.[30] *Dead Kids* (1981)*, Trial Run* (1984)*, Mr Wrong* (1985)*, Bridge to Nowhere* (1986)*, Braindead, Noone Can Hear You* (2000)*, The Scarecrow*, and *Kung Fu Vampire Killers* (2002) are among the New Zealand films that Conrich considers to aptly demonstrate the essence of a Kiwi cinema of gothic horror.[31]

It can be seen in the above discussion that there are numerous understandings of exactly what may constitute an Australian or New Zealand Gothic cinema. However, in some of the above assessments of Australian/New Zealand Gothic cinema the terminology or language used makes indirect allusions to the close relationship between the Gothic and the postmodern in Antipodean cinema. For example, Dermody and Jacka suggest that Australian Gothic films can be characterized by their hybridity, by their appropriation of an array of Hollywood film genres. Haltof, as already briefly discussed, suggests that Australian Gothic films tend to draw on the stylings of popular culture, Rayner observes that established authority is questioned in Australian Gothic films, and Cyndy Hendershot alludes to a postmodernization of the Gothic in *The Piano* when she comments on the film's appropriation and deconstruction of Gothic themes/tropes.

It is with this (developing) postmodernization of the Gothic in post-1970s Antipodean cinema that this study is concerned.

Sketching the Text

While many film critics and academics have observed the darker aspects in Australian and New Zealand cinema, often labelling such aspects "Gothic", there is little (if any) theorization of what is meant by the term in the context of their reviews, critiques or exploration of Gothic impulses in both nations' cinematic works. In the instances where the term "Gothic" is evoked in analyses of Australian and New Zealand films, it is often employed without properly establishing its historical dimensions as a cultural mode, let alone its historical connections with Australian and New Zealand national and cultural identities. This study seeks to reveal what can be argued is a strong Gothic impulse in Antipodean cinema that merges with the postmodern. This (postmodern) Gothic impulse is historically and theoretically located by exploring the Gothic in terms of its proto-postmodern characteristics and its merging or collision with the postmodern in post-1950s Western culture(s), this convergence eventuating in what has only relatively recently been called the postmodern Gothic.[32]

This study is divided into two parts. Part one sets up a theoretical framework in order to locate the Gothic, and employs aspects of this mode to explore Euro-centric constructions of the Antipodes and the development of Australian/New Zealand cinema since the 1970s. In chapter one the Gothic is theorized as a cultural mode that bears uncanny resemblances to the destabilizing characteristics

associated with postmodernism in terms of its antithetical relationship with Enlightenment philosophy's totalizing impulses. Some of these characteristics include the Gothic's (as Marie Mulvey-Roberts points out) "propensity for parody and pastiche",[33] its highlighting of the ex-centric or the marginalized, and its fragmentation of the self. It is argued in this study that these destabilizing aspects of the Gothic are self-consciously appropriated in the latter half of the twentieth-century in postmodern Gothic texts.

In chapter two, Euro-centric constructions of the Antipodes (Australia/New Zealand) from ancient Greek times to contemporary times are explored in terms of the discourses of the fantastic used in European myth and voyage literature as well as in popular culture that, it is argued, construct the Antipodes as a Gothic/(proto)-postmodern space.[34] Parallels between the reconstruction of the Goths and their culture by the British/Europeans in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, and their constructions of Australian/New Zealand national or cultural identities as barbaric or uncouth are also drawn.[35]

Through exploring and theorizing such constructions in relation to elements seen as constitutive of the Gothic, it is then argued (in chapter three) that Antipodean cinema reflects and reproduces Euro-centric discourses that gothicize(d) Australian/New Zealand cultures. This gothicization manifests itself most clearly in Australian/New Zealand film from the 1970s onwards due to the need for a sense of national identity – the Gothic used as a surrogate history in order to distinguish Australian/New Zealand film from the Hollywood mainstream and other national cinemas. The post-1970s Antipodean film revival also occurred

at a time when postmodernism came to the fore in the cultural arena in fiction and in film,[36] the already strong Gothic impulse in Australian/New Zealand culture(s) becoming intensified by a developing postmodern sensibility or consciousness.

In part two, twelve Australian/New Zealand films are analyzed in terms of their employment of Gothic/postmodern narrative devices that work to undermine Enlightenment and bourgeois liberal-humanist (post-Enlightenment) values and ideals. The films examined include: *Wake in Fright* (1971)*, The Cars that Ate Paris* (1974)*, Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975)*, Summerfield* (1977)*, The Night the Prowler* (1978)*, Mad Max* (1979)*, Mad Max – The Road Warrior* (1981)*, Dogs in Space* (1987)*, Shame* (1987)*, The Piano* (1993)*, Bad Boy Bubby* (1993), and *Heavenly Creatures* (1994).[37] The sub-genres created draw on Rayner's categorization of Australian Gothic films [38] (for example, in the chapters of this study there are the sub-genres "Antipodean Rural Gothic" and "Antipodean Urban Gothic"), but do not necessarily adhere to his definition or structuring of each category. The films included in each sub-genre or cinematic context in which the Gothic is located are also not equally representative of both nations' cinemas. More Australian films than New Zealand films are included in this study, though all these films can be included in the broader category "Antipodean cinema".

It is of course not possible to include in this study all the antipodean films that display a postmodern Gothic sensibility, for instance, the films *Walkabout, Bliss, The Scarecrow, Vigil, The Navigator, The Last Wave,* and a host of others that could easily be read in (postmodern) Gothic terms. The films selected for this study are chosen for the varying ways in which they highlight the Gothic's proto-

postmodern characteristics and its ideological entanglements with postmodernism in post-1970s Antipodean cinema. The study also shows the multi-faceted nature of this particular utilization of the Gothic by discussing a cross-section of films that are seemingly from different cinematic genres. For example, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, considered a conservative piece, and as part of the AFC genre by Dermody and Jacka, appears to be miles apart in terms of style and subject matter from *Mad Max*. Both films, however, can be seen to utilize the Gothic as a subversive cultural mode, a mode that is interconnected with the postmodern.

By taking an interdisciplinary approach in exploring (postmodern) Gothic impulses or sensibilities in Australian/New Zealand cinema this study illuminates the complex relationship between the Gothic and the postmodern and their merging in two national cinemas.

Notes

Method of citation in notes

Full bibliographic details are given in the notes at the end of each chapter. The bibliography lists the authors or editors of books and journal articles, but not authors of chapters or sections.

1. Marie Mulvey-Roberts (ed) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature,* Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, p. xvii. The reference to the Gothic as a "dis-ease" in the first line of this study is also from this source.

2. The papers presented at the conference were unpublished, however, two of the papers presented on the Gothic in Antipodean cinema (one by Jonathan Rayner and one by Ian Conrich) have recently been published in *Horror International* (2005), and are discussed later on in the introduction to this study. To view a programme of the conference, go to: http://sscs.massey.ac.nz/agprogramme.htm. It is also worth mentioning (even though this study is concerned with cinema) that there are two PhD theses that deal with aspects of the Gothic in Australian literature. Gerry Turcotte's 1991 thesis *Peripheral Fear* was the first study to locate the Gothic in Australian culture (other than architecture), and is a comparative study of the Gothic in Australian/English-Canadian literature. The other is Alexandra Rombout's '*"Admitting the Intruder"*' (1994), which explores uses of the Gothic in five Australian novels, including: David Malouf's *Child's Play,* Tim Winton's *In the Winter Dark,* Elizabeth Jolley's *The Well,* Kate Grenville's *Dreamhouse,* and Peter Carey's *The Tax Inspector.* See the bibliography for further details.

3. See Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka, *The Screening of Australia: Anatomy of a National Cinema, Volume 2,* Currency Press, Sydney, 1988, p. 50.

4. ibid., pp. 51-2.

5. ibid., p. 51.

6. ibid.

7. ibid.

8. See Marek Haltof, *Peter Weir: When Cultures Collide,* Twayne Publishers, New York, 1996, p. 12.

9. See Allan Lloyd Smith, "Postmodernism/Gothicism", Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith, *Modern Gothic: A Reader,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996, pp.11-15. The shared elements of the Gothic/postmodernism are fully discussed in chapter one of this study, along with the postmodernization of the Gothic in postmodern Gothic texts.

10. See Roslynn D. Haynes, *Seeking the Centre: The Australian Desert in Literature, Art and Film,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 184-209.

11. ibid., pp. 192-3.

12. See Ken Gelder and J.M. Jacobs, *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation,* Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 1998, p. 37.

13. See Jonathan Rayner, *Contemporary Australian Cinema: An Introduction,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000, p. 25.

14. ibid.

15. ibid., p. 27.

16. ibid., p. 28.

17. ibid., pp. 28-57.

18. ibid., pp. 132-142.

19. ibid., p. 132.

20. See the Filmography for details. All following quotes are from this source.

21. See William J. Schafer, *Mapping the Godzone: A Primer on New Zealand Literature and Culture,* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1998, pp.137-8. Schafer also discusses Sam Neill's documentary.

22. ibid. p. 178.

23. See Nicolas Reid, *A Decade of New Zealand Film: From Sleeping Dogs to Came a Hot Friday,* John McIndoe Ltd, Dunedin, 1986, p. 70.

24. ibid., pp. 68-77.

25. See Caryn James, "A Distinctive Shade of Darkness", *The New York Times,* (Late Edition), 28 November 1993.

26. See Harvey Greenberg, "The Piano (movie review)", *Film Quarterly,* 1994, Vol. 47, No. 3, p. 46.

27. See Cyndy Hendershot, "(Re)Visioning the Gothic: Jane Campion's *The Piano*", *Literature Film Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 97-108. To view the article online search at www.findarticles.com Hendershot writes: "*The Piano* stands as a striking example of the Gothic's ability to reimagine gender." (p. 9 on the web version) Hendershot argues that the powerful and sexualized male Gothic villain/master in works such as *The Monk, Jane Eyre* and *Dracula* is radically altered in Campion's film by her "investing desire in a representative of marginal male subjectivity." This reimagining of gender relations is discussed in chapter four of this study but in 'queer' terms.

28. See Steven Jay Schneider and Tony Williams (ed), *Horror International,* Wayne State University Press, Michigan, 2005, pp. 98-127.

29. See Jonathan Rayner, ' "Terror Australis": Areas of Horror in the Australian Cinema', Schneider and Williams (ed), op.cit., pp. 98-113.

30. See Ian Conrich, "Kiwi Gothic: New Zealand's Cinema of a Perilous Paradise", Schneider and Williams (ed), op.cit., pp. 118-125 in relation to the landscape and family, and p. 115 in relation to the "cinema of unease" as differing from "Kiwi Gothic horror".

31. ibid., pp. 115-118, and p. 120.

32. For a discussion of the postmodern Gothic see Fred Botting, *Gothic,* Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 168-76.

33. See Mulvey-Roberts, ibid.

34. The brackets used here in the phrase "Gothic/(proto)-postmodern" indicate the shared elements of the Gothic/postmodernism, for instance "queerness". They also indicate the movement or shift from early Euro-centric constructions of the

Antipodes in Gothic/proto-postmodern terms to more contemporary constructions that can be considered postmodern Gothic. Along with this the parentheses around "proto" more generally indicates the gradual merging of the Gothic with the postmodern, and is used throughout this study.

35. For information about the Goths see Robin Sowerby, "The Goths in History and Pre-Gothic Gothic", David Punter (ed), *A Companion to the Gothic,* Blackwell Publishers Ltd, Oxford, 2000, pp. 15-26.

36. For a brief overview of the rise of postmodernist theory in the academy see: David Macey, *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory,* Penguin Books Ltd, London, 2001, p. 306. In relation to the rise of postmodernist fiction and film in the 1970s there are a few examples that immediately come to mind: Angela Carter's *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr Hoffman* (1972) and *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), and Jim Sharman's *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975).

37. See the filmography for full details.

38. Rayner, op.cit., pp. 28-57.

Part One

THEORIZING THE (POSTMODERN) GOTHIC IN ANTIPODEAN CINEMA

A Gothic/Postmodern Poetics

Two Convergent Cultural Modes

We live in Gothic times.
ANGELA CARTER [1]

Under the general demand for slackening and for appeasement,
we can hear the mutterings of the desire for a return of terror,
for the realization of the fantasy to seize reality. The answer is:
Let us wage a war on totality; let us be witnesses to the
unpresentable; let us activate the differences and save the
honor of the name.
JEAN-FRANCOIS LYOTARD [2]

Why a Poetics?

Linda Hutcheon[3] uses the term "poetics" in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* to describe

what she sees as the constitutive elements (which are paradoxically ever-changing

and fluid) of postmodernism. Hutcheon sees "poetics" as an alternative to the more

fixed and stable term "theory", a poetics of postmodernism allowing instead for

change. She suggests that such a poetics should not advocate any "essence for

postmodernism" or any "transcendental identity":

> Instead, I see it as an ongoing cultural process or activity, and I
> think that what we need, more than a fixed and fixing definition,
> is a "poetics," an open, ever-changing theoretical structure by
> which to order both our cultural knowledge and our critical
> procedures. This would not be a poetics in the structuralist sense
> of the word, but would go beyond the study of literary discourse
> to the study of cultural practice and theory.[4]

Hutcheon's use of the term "poetics" can be applied in theorizing the Gothic, as it is also an "ongoing cultural process or activity" which can be seen to foreshadow many of the narrative characteristics usually associated with postmodernism. This study combines both literary and film theory because most work in relation to the Gothic and postmodernism has been done in literary studies rather than in film studies. The reason for this may be that film studies has only relatively recently been accepted as a legitimate area of cultural study in the academy.[5] Fiction and film can also be seen, as suggested by Graeme Turner[6] in *National Fictions*, as narrative forms that construct and produce cultural meanings, and it is for this reason also that literary theory can be employed in exploring (postmodern) Gothic impulses in Antipodean cinema.

In this chapter the term "Gothic", its innumerable meanings and its antithetical, though also paradoxical relationship with eighteenth-century Enlightenment ideals are discussed, and interconnections made between the Gothic and postmodernism as cultural modes. Such interconnections theorize the Gothic as a proto-postmodern cultural mode with a proclivity for pastiche, nostalgia, the fragmentation of identity, and for the highlighting of sexual taboos through what can be seen as a queering of sex/gender norms. Such characteristics are highlighted also in academic discourses concerning postmodernism. The term "queer", due to its numerous uses or differing meanings throughout history, in popular culture, and in the academy, needs some discussion at this point to establish the way it is mobilised in this particular study.

The term "queer" has had (and still has) a myriad of meanings and uses, some of which include: a derogatory term for gay men, a term that describes something "peculiar" or "abnormal" (apart from sexuality), or, since the 1990s, a term that in the academy suggests a radical questioning of stable sexual and gendered identities.[7] It is this latter meaning of "queer" that this study is concerned with. Annamarie Jagose in *Queer Theory* traces the development of and potential subversive-ness of the term "queer" and its recent reintroduction or mobilisation into contemporary academic thought. Part of the postmodern and poststructuralist rejection of Enlightenment grand narratives that see identity as whole and stable, and informed by the theories of Althusser, Freud, Saussure, Lacan, Foucault, as well as gay and lesbian studies and post-structuralist feminism, queer theory advocates a denaturalizing of sexed/gendered boundaries and identities, a decentring or incoherence of the sexual/gendered self.[8] Queer theory can be said to concern itself with the (sexually taboo) topics of homosexuality, bisexuality, cross-dressing, hermaphroditism, transsexualism, and general "mismatches between sex, gender and desire."[9] David Buchbinder in *Performance Anxieties* discusses this more recent use of "queer" and its questioning of distinct sex/gender categories, suggesting that "queer" can be used to defy, destabilize, and blur boundaries between ideologically produced sex/gender categories, "*advocating instead a range or spectrum* of various subject-positions in regard to sex, gender and sexuality."[10] Queer theorizations can be seen to question the binary logic that separates male from female, masculine from feminine, heterosexual from homosexual, confusing categories and the hierarchies that such binaries imply.[11]

Queer theory however, is not without its critics, and the recent "queering" of sexed/gendered identities is a "subject of violent debate"[12] within the academy, a debate which is ongoing. While the use of queer theory is seen in some academic quarters as a useful set of theoretical concepts that help to unpack heteronormative constructs, it is seen in other quarters as problematic for gay/lesbian or feminist activists, in that such a rejection of identity itself, for example woman/female or gay/lesbian, renders any attempt to assert women's or gay and lesbian rights redundant if their identities are construed as not really identities. However, queer theory, it can be argued, provides a useful theoretical framework whereby multiple and different or ex-centric sexed/gendered subject positions can be included, subject positions that may not "fit in" so easily with the more rigid and fixed demarcations of "woman", "gay" or "lesbian" identity models, models that arguably inadvertently reinforce heteronormative assumptions about sexed/gendered identities by complying with binary logic.[13]

It is, for the most part, this particular understanding of "queer" as a term that interrogates and subverts stable sexed and gendered identities that this study utilizes in its theorizing of the Gothic as a proto-postmodern cultural form and in its locating of the (postmodern) Gothic in Antipodean cinema. To a much lesser extent this study uses the term "queer" not only in relation to ex-centric sexual/gendered identities but also in describing a disintegration or breakdown of the dividing line between self/other in relation to national or cultural identities.

In the remainder of the chapter the Gothic as a cultural mode that challenges Enlightenment philosophy is traced from eighteenth-century Europe (especially

England) and the appearance of the first Gothic novel, through to the appearance of postmodern Gothic literature and film in the latter half of the twentieth century. Exploring the Gothic in terms of its proto-postmodern aspects, and the eventual self-conscious appropriation of these particular aspects by postmodernist writers and filmmakers, establishes a theoretical context in which post-1970s Australian and New Zealand films can be examined in terms of their use of Gothic/postmodern modes of representation.

Some Gothic Background

No study of the Gothic would be complete without first discussing its historical dimensions and thematic preoccupations. There have been numerous twentieth-century academics and critics, outlined by David Punter in his survey of Gothic literature in *The Literature of Terror* (1980), who have engaged themselves in explorations of the Gothic. Studies in the Gothic include Edith Birkhead's *The Tale of Terror* (1921), Eino Railo's catalogue of Gothic themes and motifs in literature in *The Haunted Castle* (1927), Michael Sadleir's *The Northanger Novels* (1927), J.M.S. Tompkins' work on developments in Gothic literature in *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800* (1932), Montague Summers' *The Gothic Quest* (1938) and his assertion of Gothic as the "aristocrat of literature", Devendra Varma's connection between surrealism in art and Gothic art forms in *The Gothic Flame* (1957), and Robert Kiely's suggestion that Gothic fiction or literature is "not novelistic but poetic and dramatic" in his *The Romantic Novel in England* (1972).[14] In the last twenty years there has been an increased number of studies that theorize

and explore the Gothic in literary and cultural studies, including (but not limited to) studies by Coral Ann Howells, Elizabeth MacAndrew, David Punter, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Elizabeth Napier, Eugenia C. Delamotte and Robert Miles. These studies use feminist, Foucauldian, Freudian, Marxist, Bakhtinian, and deconstructive theoretical approaches in reading key Gothic literary texts and, to a much lesser extent, Gothic cinematic texts.[15] The word Gothic has gained a wide variety of meanings and is used in a range of academic disciplines/fields – "as a literary term, as a historical term, as an artistic term, as an architectural term" and even has differing applications within each of these fields. However, the most notable use of "Gothic" has been in literary studies, where it is used to describe a group of novels from the 1760s to the 1820s by Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, C.R. Maturin and Mary Shelley.[16] These Gothic works usually include characteristics such as archaic settings, gloomy castles or buildings, mad (wo)men, wild weather, incarceration, torture, tyranny, the supernatural, suspense, villains and heroines, and explorations of the taboo.[17] As David Punter in *The Literature of Terror* writes: "Gothic fiction is the fiction of the haunted castle, of heroines preyed on by unspeakable terrors, of the blackly lowering villain, of ghosts, vampires, monsters and werewolves."[18] The Gothic is also, according to Rosemary Jackson[19] in *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981), a sub-genre of the fantastic. According to Jackson, fantastic narratives are not escapist but are based in or on reality, unsettling boundaries between real/unreal and truth/untruth. This subversion of such binary constructs is characteristic also of Gothic fiction or narratives. Postmodern Gothic writer Angela Carter likewise sees the Gothic as a

subversive mode that "ignores the value of our institutions…".[20] A key meaning given to "Gothic" in literary and cultural studies, apart from its association with medieval castles, monsters, "the fantastic", and its status as a subversive literary mode or form, is its connection to the Goths. Although the Gothic's association with the Goths is now only tangentially related to what can be considered "Gothic" in the contemporary sense of the word, it still retains connotations of the barbarity or primitiveness that became associated with the Germanic tribes.

What became known as the Enlightenment or the Classical Age, is thought to have become conscious of itself as a movement in the 1740s, and was influenced by the seventeenth and eighteenth-century philosophical writings of Voltaire, Diderot, the French Encyclopedists and Kant.[21] During the eighteenth-century the Enlightenment emphasis on order and symmetry became highly valued in art, these values informed by classical Greek/Roman art and philosophy. According to Fred Botting in *Gothic:*

> The dominance of classical values produced a national past that was distinct from the cultivation, rationality and maturity of an enlightenment age. This past was called 'Gothic', a general and derogatory term for the Middle Ages which conjured up ideas of barbarous customs and practices, of superstition, ignorance, extravagant fancies and natural wildness…But characteristics like extravagance, superstition, fancy and wildness which were initially considered in negative terms became associated, in the course of the eighteenth century, with a more expansive and imaginative potential for aesthetic production.[22]

In this period the term Gothic became associated with a fascination with medieval history and the Dark Ages – anything preceding the mid seventeenth century – and became linked with "the archaic, the pagan, that which was prior to, or was

opposed to, or resisted the establishment of civilized values and a well-regulated society."[23] According to Robin Sowerby [24] in "The Goths in History and Pre-Gothic Gothic", though the original meaning of the word "Gothic" was slightly removed from its original connection to the Goths – Northern European/Germanic tribes who sacked the Roman capitol and claimed part of the Roman Empire in AD250, reigning in Gaul, Spain and in Italy – it still "retained connotations of barbarity", and was constructed as uncouth and uncivilized, in opposition to dominant eighteenth-century cultural values. The Goths were constructed from the time of their first literary appearance as quite mysterious due to a lack or absence of literary fragments concerning their culture. Sowerby argues that eighteenth-century Gothic was built upon this absence – a filling in of "the gaps" concerning Goth history. The Goths, Barbarians, or Vandals as they were also known, were, in the eighteenth-century, constructed as the antithesis of Enlightenment ideals including rationalism and classical beauty. According to Sowerby, there is also no known literature of the Goths and limited knowledge of their society(s) and culture. Sowerby[25] states: "Not only is there no written literature, but there is no later record of Gothic oral tales in prose or verse. In this absence of any literature or art of their own the Goths came to be seen merely as the corrupters and destroyers of the culture of the Romans…." Historians during the Renaissance and during the Enlightenment period saw the Goths as barbaric and uncouth, ignorant, uneducated and warlike. The eighteenth-century construction or perception of the Goths can be said, drawing on Sowerby's work, to have contributed to the development of Gothic literature – a kind of repossessing of the Dark Ages and the otherwise

unknown. What is interesting about this historical construction of a "lost" past through fiction and through historical writing is the suggestion that the Goths profoundly influenced Britain's laws and society. Eighteenth-century historian Edward Gibbon[26] writes in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*:

> But the warlike Germans, who first resisted, then invaded, and at length overturned, the western monarchy of Rome, will occupy a much more important place in this history, and possess a stronger, and, if we may use the expression, a more domestic, claim to our attention and regard. The most civilized nations of modern Europe issued from the woods of Germany, and in the rude institutions of those barbarians we may still distinguish the original principles of our present laws and manners.

Similarly Samuel Kliger in *The Goths in England* (1952) [27] asserts that the Goths, or at least the historical construction of their culture, formed the basis for English democracy and liberty. He writes:

> The term 'Gothic' came into extensive use in the seventeenth century as an epithet employed by the Parliamentary leaders to defend the prerogatives of parliament against the pretensions of the King to absolute right to govern England. To this end the Parliamentarians searched the ancient records of English civilization for precedent and authority against the principle of monarchical absolutism. An antiquarian movement flowered, and in the ancient records the Parliamentarians discovered that the original forebears of the English were the Germanic invaders of Rome whom they called not Germans but Goths, substituting the name of only one of the Germanic tribes to denote all the barbarians collectively; the Goths, they thought, founded the institutions of public assemblies….

The historical construction or repossession by Europeans and the British in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries of the Goths had, according to Kliger "little to do with the actual facts of Gothic history…" and more to do with the way the present was applied to the past.[27] The British fascination with the mysterious Goths

is pertinent to this study due to, as I propose in chapter two, the re-creation of the European or more specifically, British desire to recapture what was perceived as a lost Goth culture, this unconscious desire finding an outlet with the colonization of the already mythically gothicized Antipodes.

In the eighteenth-century the term "Gothic" became a trope for the "free"[28] and was contrasted against the restraints of Roman classical/Augustan ideals. The term "Augustan", applied to the eighteenth-century European quest for social order, was taken from the Augustan period of the Roman Empire – champions of the "Enlightenment" comparing this Roman period before the invasion of "the barbarians" and the consequent downfall of the Roman Empire, to their own. This attitude was present in Augustan literature and art forms where order and conservative rules were highly valued and protected at all costs.[29]

An example of Augustan philosophy at work, according to Punter, can be clearly seen in Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733), where it is argued that writers and artists should accept limits and "the Law", so that restraint and control are pitted against any literary wildness or spontaneity. These conservative values were contrasted with Gothic values in the eighteenth-century, which manifested a growing interest in antiquity and a nostalgia for what was perceived as a "lost" past, clearly seen in the preservation and even building of Gothic ruins, the emergence of "a poetry of defiance and divine aspiration" otherwise known as "graveyard poetry", and the appearance of the first Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764).[30] The Gothic, then, can be seen as a reaction against Augustan and Classical ideals, a reclaiming of a lost history in relation to the Goths, as a reaction

to, but also part of the Enlightenment project, and intertwined with European political and economic upheavals of the eighteenth century, including the French Revolution (1789) and industrialization.[31]

The Gothic as a proto-postmodern cultural form

Although they are not synonymous with one another, the Gothic and postmodernism can be seen to have much in common as cultural modes. Allan Lloyd Smith writes in his essay "Postmodernism/Gothicism" that: "There are some striking parallels between the features identified in discourses concerning postmodernism and those which are focused on the Gothic tradition."[32] The Gothic, a once reviled form seen, until more recent times, as "popular trash" has become a source of intrigue for serious academics and is indicative of the postmodern convergence of high and low culture. As Fredric Jameson comments in his essay "Postmodernism" (1984):

> The postmodernisms have in fact been fascinated precisely by this whole 'degraded' landscape of schlock and kitsch, of TV series and Readers' Digest *[sic]* culture, of advertising and motels, of the late show and the grade-B Hollywood film, of so-called paraliterature with its airport paperback categories of the gothic and the romance, the popular biography, the murder mystery and science-fiction or fantasy novel…[33]

This postmodernist focus on cultural forms that were previously ignored by the academy as unworthy of critical attention has in recent times seen the proliferation of Gothic studies, the Gothic being located and analyzed in every cultural form imaginable. The Gothic has not only been given serious attention in terms of its ideological challenging or subversion of realist forms of representation and

meaning, but has itself also been compared or paralleled with characteristics associated with postmodernism.

The appearance or development of Gothic literature in the eighteenth-century has been theorized more recently as a reaction to and as part of the advent of industrialization in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, and postmodernism is similarly understood or theorized as a "moment" or cultural "break" responding to, or as a part of, post-World War II society and the economic and technological changes that have occurred in the latter half of the twentieth-century. Allan Lloyd Smith[34] parallels these cultural changes in "Postmodernism/Gothicism", suggesting that the notion of "When it all changed" is what connects "the Gothic with the postmodern in an aesthetic of anxiety and perplexity", with both cultural modes responding "to the confusing new order" or "dis-order" in different Western culture(s) in a similar fashion. David Punter[35] also connects the Gothic to the emergence of industrial capitalism in the eighteenth-century:

> The period which saw the birth of the Gothic novel was that in which the early forces of industrialization were producing vast changes in the ways people lived and worked. Rural patterns of life were being broken up by enclosure of land and by the labour demands of urban-centred industry. The stability of an at least theoretically long-accepted social structure was being dissolved amid the pressure of new types of work and new social roles.

The effect of industrialization on the social sphere and the birth of the Gothic novel can be paralleled to Jameson's suggestion that postmodernism is a cultural reaction to late or multi-national capitalism, postmodernist culture being marked by machines of reproduction rather than production, namely "the computer", and by new globalized and vast economic and information networks.[36] The advent of new

technologies (for instance, the internet) that can quickly spread information to all corners of the globe with relative ease is, it can be argued, one of the defining characteristics of late twentieth and early twenty-first century Western culture. Similarly, the Gothic novel and literature appeared at a time where there was more access to information through the expansion of the printing press and the creation of circulating libraries, leading to the widespread consumption of literature by the middle-classes and to a lesser extent, domestic servants.[37] Both the Gothic and postmodernism are therefore cultural modes that are inextricably bound up with technological and economic changes, particularly in relation to the distribution and mass consumption of information.

Another parallel that can be made between the Gothic and postmodernism is their contestation of but simultaneous participation in or reinforcement of cultural bourgeois norms and Enlightenment ideologies, ideologies that form the basis of modernism's "own post-Enlightenment progressive dictates."[38] David Punter[39] remarks, in *The Literature of Terror* (1980) that the "Gothic can at one and the same time be categorized as a middle-class and as an anti-middle class literature." The Gothic, although constructed in oppositional terms to the order and reason that the Enlightenment advocated, did paradoxically participate in the bourgeois novel, combining what was seen in the eighteenth-century as a populist form (the Gothic) with serious art (the novel).[40] The Gothic literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries can also be seen as a paradoxical form through its simultaneous transgressing of moral boundaries and norms and its reinforcement or incorporation of the Enlightenment championing of rationality/reason and order, by

moralizing tales of criminality and corruption, or by providing rational answers to supernatural occurrences.[41] As Botting writes:

> These contradictions undermine the project of attaining and fixing secure boundaries and leave Gothic texts open to a play of ambivalence, a dynamic of limit and transgression that both restores and contests boundaries. [42]

Botting also suggests that this "play of ambivalence" in early Gothic literature sees a blurring (but not effacement) of binary oppositions between reason and unreason, between good and evil, the moral and the immoral, the real and the fantastic, the past and the present, the civilized and the uncivilized.[43]

Postmodernism has, like the Gothic, been theorized as paradoxical in similar terms. For instance Linda Hutcheon[44] argues in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* that postmodernism can be understood as a paradoxical cultural form because it relies on that which it seeks to contest. Hutcheon writes: "postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges." These concepts alluded to are modernist ideologies, ideologies that can be seen as extensions of the Enlightenment's emphasis on the rational and reason. Hutcheon also suggests that the term "postmodernism" has been "bandied about in both current cultural theory and contemporary writing on the arts…" [45] just as, it can be argued, has the term "Gothic", which is also difficult to define firmly through its differing and widely applied usage in a architectural, historical, literary or cinematic senses. A similar kind of ambiguity applies to "postmodernism", the term employed to describe (in usually either a negative or positive light) everything from contemporary capitalism to pop music and beyond, with often differing understandings of what it exactly means. The provisionality of

both modes has come under attack by some critics for lack of coherence or substance. Elizabeth Napier in *The Failure of Gothic* is one such critic who sees the fragmented nature of Gothic writing in a negative light,[46] likewise Fredric Jameson in *Postmodernism* sees postmodernism as lacking depth.[47] In light of these similarities between the Gothic and postmodernism as cultural modes, it can be argued that both provoke unease in terms of their simultaneous revocation of and participation in Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment (modernist) cultural forms and ideologies.

There are yet other interconnections that can be made between the Gothic and postmodernism. Allan Lloyd Smith[48] details eight main areas where postmodernism and the Gothic or Gothicism over-lap each other in terms of thematic and theoretical preoccupations in literature and film:

> the intention is merely to point out the curious parallel of a paradoxically legitimated illegitimacy, whereby the very hostilities and objections to both the postmodern and the Gothic have become, in the event, further endorsements of their effectiveness, their credibility as subversive and willfully contradictory taxonomies.

One area that Smith cites as a common subversive element or characteristic of both postmodernism and the Gothic is "Indeterminacy", which he suggests is both a "narrative necessity" in Gothic narratives that employ mystery and suspense, and is an "intellectual inevitability" in postmodernism as it ideologically opposes the ordering structures of the Enlightenment.[49] In Smith's own words: "In both we confront the embattled, deconstructed self, without sureties of religion and social place, or any coherent psychology of the kind observable in both the Enlightenment or modernist traditions."[50] Thus the Gothic, through its antithetical relationship

with the Enlightenment, can be seen to anticipate the undermining or questioning of liberal humanist ideals that postmodernist narratives (fiction and film) undertake. As Linda Hutcheon[51] explains:

> Like much contemporary literary theory, the postmodernist novel puts into question that entire series of interconnected concepts that have come to be associated with what we conveniently label as liberal humanism: autonomy, transcendence, certainty, authority, unity, totalization, system, universalization, center, continuity, teleology, closure, hierarchy, homogeneity, uniqueness, origin.

Through its challenging of the rationalization of, and scientific explanation for, the experience of self and life, through its preoccupation with the supernatural, its sentimentality, its resistance to the normalizing and unifying mechanisms of the Law (institionalized authority),[52] and its longing for the past instead of for progress, the Gothic anticipates the postmodern attack on, or complete loss of faith in, the grand narratives produced by Enlightenment thought. The death of grand narratives, as theorized by Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition,* can be understood as a "loss of faith in totalizing stories such as capital-H History, capital-S Science, or capital-R Religion."[53] These master narratives are replaced in postmodern culture with micro-narratives that do not seek any singular universal truth but rather plural localized truths, resulting in the delegitimation of knowledge and the widespread decentring of Western cultural norms.[54]

Smith[55] also suggests that postmodernism and what he terms "Gothicism" share similiar aesthetic styles, both using what Smith refers to as "aesthetics of surface." He refers to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's observation in *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* that the Gothic in fiction/film makes use of music, colour, and

landscape to enhance the narrative's effect on a reader/viewer. Postmodernism has been criticized by some academics for being apolitical, superficial, and as lacking depth. Jameson makes this assertion when he links the "depthless image" with postmodern art in his comparison of Van Gogh's *Peasant Shoes* and Warhol's *Diamond Dust Shoes*: Jameson writes of "the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense…"[56] The Gothic, in Smith's argument, through its emphasis on surfaces, and its two-dimensional characters, can be seen to foreshadow what Jameson sees as the depthlessness and simulacra of postmodernism,[57] that is, the proliferation in postmodern culture of signs, the "effacement of the referent" and the "celebration of the signifier."[58]

In both Gothic and postmodernist fiction/film, pastiche, intertextuality, nostalgia, and, to a lesser extent, parody also present themselves as shared characteristics. As explained by Smith, the Gothic in itself (in its earliest forms) was eclectic and often included or made use of "folk tales, superstitions, scientific enquiries, theology, graveyard poetry, German romanticism…theories of the sublime, travel guides, dictionaries, legal and religious testimony, and melodrama."[59] Fred Botting also emphasizes the Gothic's eclecticism when he suggests that the Gothic is a hybrid form "incorporating and transforming other literary forms as well as developing and changing its own conventions in relation to newer modes of writing."[60] Botting adds: "In many ways the multiple origins of Gothic writing highlight its diverse composition."[61] There are various examples of Gothic fiction's foreshadowing of postmodern narrative forms. For example,

Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), generally considered the first Gothic novel, was, upon its release, presented as a lost medieval manuscript that had just been translated into English for the pleasure of its readers, and combined narrative with poetry.[62] Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) was also intertextual and included direct allusions to Shakespeare, incorporated poetry, and included a sub-story entitled "History of Don Raymond" within the larger narrative.[63] Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1818) was subtitled: a *romance, interspersed with some pieces of poetry,* and displays a similar kind of narrative eclecticism.[64] Even in nineteenth-century Gothic literature, including Bram Stoker's famed *Dracula* (1897), the work is presented or masquerades as something other than itself. *Dracula,* for instance, is compiled of a series of diary entries from each of the main characters offering differing and personal views of the events as they unfold, and can be seen as a dispersal of narration. Stoker's novel also includes a fictional newspaper cutting that is included in Mina's diary.[65]

Postmodern fiction similiarly draws from various literary but also historical sources (comic books, fairy tales, newspapers, advertisements, legal documents) to create its narratives, but self-consciously and deliberately sets out to debunk modernist conceptions of uniqueness and history as objective.[66] Hutcheon suggests that in postmodern fiction, or what she terms "historiographic metafiction", a literary form which subverts clear distinctions between history and fiction, there are usually two main modes of narration, including either an overtly controlling narrator or a dispersal of narration through the representation of multiple points of view. Hutcheon names D.M. Thomas' *The White Hotel* (1981) and Graham Swift's

Waterland (1983) as examples of these modes of narration that undermine the traditional author/reader relationship through their revealing of the constructedness of fiction writing itself, and their problematizing of modern concepts of stable subjectivity.[67] Other examples of postmodern fiction's deliberate undermining of realist narrative codes include Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) and Iain Bank's *Complicity* (1993). These texts play with the coherent author/reader relationship through their mixing up of first, second and third-person narrative voices.[68]

Not unlike postmodern fiction, postmodern cinema also challenges the concept of the author or director as having a unique style or original vision. In *Beginning Postmodernism* (1999), Tim Woods discusses the aesthetic and ideological differences between a modernist cinema and a postmodernist one, the latter marked by its "pastiche, self-conscious narrative, game-playing, polyvalence…", characteristics that undermine the representation of "the image" and its "reference to reality."[69] Modernist cinema, by contrast, is characterized by its emphasis on meaning production, its investigation of the "transparency of the image", and the creation of the auteur. While modern directors or *auteurs* such as Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles, or Jean Luc Godard have strong and discernible personal styles, postmodern directors, including Quentin Tarantino and Derek Jarman, pay homage to famous or classic scenes from other films and appropriate a multiplicity of past styles into their work.[70] As Woods comments in relation to modern auteurism: "Postmodernist film departs from this by uncoupling style from the author-director, which opens up the arena for a plurality of styles and voices which circulate within

a flattened, dehistoricised space."[71] The creation of such a "space" in postmodernist cinema, can be seen in what Jameson calls the "nostalgia film" ('la mode rétro'). The "nostalgia film" replaces history with "historicism", so that there is no historical "referent", only aesthetic or stylistic allusions to the past and its 1930-ness or 1950-ness, this stylistic collage showing that the past is comprised of "nothing but texts."[72] The nostalgia mode in postmodernist cinema is where, Jameson argues, "the history of aesthetic styles displaces "real" history."[73] An example of this kind of nostalgia and stylistic history can be seen in Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994), where styles are borrowed from a multiplicity of eras of the twentieth century and where cinematic sequences are appropriated from numerous classic films, including, according to Woods, Godard's *Bande A Parte* (1964), Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), Boorman's *Deliverance* (1972), and Besson's *La Femme Nikita* (1990), as well as a host of other intertextual cinematic references.[74]

  Although Jameson laments the loss of "real" history, Linda Hutcheon sees postmodern nostalgia in a more positive and constructive light, arguing that postmodern fiction or, more specifically, historiographic metafiction is fundamentally interrogative and subversive in that it questions the "objectivity" of history by treating it as a series of literary texts, revealing that history can only be known "through its textualized remains." In "Postmodern Film?", Hutcheon advocates that "postmodern parody" is a more politically positive term for Jameson's concept of pastiche (blank parody) and what he theorizes as the nostalgic and ahistorical tendencies of postmodern cinema.[75] In this study,

however, the term "parody" is reserved for those instances of obvious satire or ridicule of a cinematic style, genre or "outside" institutions.

I concur with Jameson that pastiche is the dominant representational mode in postmodern fiction and film. Put another way: if *Postmodernism* were a new film and Parody and Pastiche were characters in it, Johnny Depp would be Pastiche and someone from the *Big Brother* television series would play Parody. Pastiche is the major "star" of postmodernism, while parody has much less "star" power and is in a mostly insignificant and supportive role. According to Allan Lloyd Smith,[76] pastiche rather than parody is also the dominant representational mode in much early Gothic fiction, which, as mentioned previously, drew from and appropriated various kinds of literary styles and forms. This hierarchy is evident in the antipodean films discussed in part two of this study where various cinematic styles/genres are incorporated into an eclectic mix as mere imitation rather than mockery, these imitations sometimes combined with moments of satire.

The challenging of the omnipotence of the author/director and the drawing of attention to the process of writing or creation in postmodernist fiction and film through pastiche and nostalgia can be seen as foreshadowed by early Gothic fiction's dispersal of narration or stories within stories, its inclusion of a variety of literary forms (poetry/folktales/myths), and its own brand of nostalgia that looked back to the Dark and Medieval Ages. Mishra[77] suggests that Walpole's' *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) raises questions about authorship and authenticity, and suggests that the eighteenth-century Gothic provided a site of contestation "against the essentially humanist conception of authorship and subjectivity." He argues that the

theory of authorship in western theory can be seen to parallel the bourgeois notion of ownership. Mishra sees both concepts as historically constructed but as occupying an important place in European eighteenth-century society/culture coinciding with the rise of the novel, and outlines how Walpole's Gothic novel founded a "discursive practice" that can be termed "Gothic", this discursive practice revealing similarities to postmodernist literature or narrative forms. He writes: "*The Castle of Otranto*, presents itself as internally ruptured and discontinuous and endorses a very postmodern claim about its own lack of originality." This conscious lack of originality has (as indicated above) to do with Walpole first presenting his work as translated from the "Original Italian of Onuphrio Muraltu, Canon of the Church of St Nicholas at Otranto by William Marshall", as well as the use of various folktales and poetry, and the combining of these elements into novel form. Mishra[78] also suggests that Gothic novels/literature saw a radical re-reading of the eighteenth-century notion of character, and that this radical re-reading in the Gothic genre suggests "forms of textuality that constitute the postmodern." The Gothic characters presented in eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Gothic novels, rather than "social persons" or "carriers of consciousness" were "figures" who were

> disfigured, fragmented, disembodied voices, physical residues, ambiguously placed between logical and psychological reality. "Characters" are shadowed by others and their individuality, their radical difference and uniqueness, dismantled through a technique of duplication or uncanny repetition.

This kind of fragmentation can be paralleled with the postmodern notion of shattered subjectivity sometimes referred to as the death of the modern

subject/monad and also the death of the author.[79] Roland Barthes[80] in his essay "The Death of the Author" (1968), argues that the Author, a "modern figure" emerging from "the Middle Ages and English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation" has, in contemporary times come under attack and has met its "death." Barthes explains that when the Author is found in a text by the reader/critic the text can then be explained by personalizing the Author and her/his relationship with society, with history, or with her/his own psyche. Once, however "the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing."[81] When a text is made up of multiple writings revealing its own intertextuality, and consequently the intertextuality of writing itself, the Author is revealed to be fiction, raising questions about the notion of ownership that the modern conception of Author implies.[82] It could be argued (as Mishra does) that, given Gothic fiction's re-reading of the role of the Author and of character in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries through a dispersal of narration *(Dracula)*, presentation of the "unauthored" text (*The Castle of Otranto*), and repetition, "Gothic" is constitutive of a proto-postmodernist sensibility. Furthermore, the popularity of Gothic fiction in the eighteenth-century particularly which, it has been suggested, consisted of a largely female readership,[83] can also be connected to Barthes's assertion, and the general postmodern notion, of the "death of the Author." As Barthes[84] comments, "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author…". In the eighteenth-century, romance and Gothic novels, through the repetitiveness of their themes and characters, through their

"superficiality", can be seen to have privileged "the reader" rather than the seriousness or "personality" of the Author.[85]

Another mutually important area for both the Gothic and postmodernism, one that Smith does not detail, is their similar versions of the sublime.[86] There are many types of sublime(s), but in all its manifestations the philosophical/theoretical concept of the sublime can be defined as the "desire to present that which is unpresentable", and when the mind is faced "with an idea too large for expression."[87] The Gothic sublime, however, the one most relevant to this study, is that which both David Morris in his essay "Gothic Sublimity" (1985) and Vijay Mishra in *The Gothic Sublime* (1994) discuss. The Gothic sublime, unlike its Burkean or Romantic cousins,[88] is not transcendent or escapist. Morris[89] makes this clear when he distinguishes between an eighteenth-century version of the sublime that is based primarily upon Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), a version of the sublime which focuses on bodily or physiological reactions to the terror and fear provoked by objects (mountains, storms, the supernatural, etc), and the "visionary" and "hermeneutic" Romantic version of the sublime, which takes its cue from Immanuel Kant's theorization of the sublime in *The Critique of Judgement* (1790).[90] The Romantic sublime is psychological, in that it threatens the self or mind with dissolution, but the Romantic subject does not surrender to the sublime's obliterating forces, seeking instead to interpret and understand a sublime experience in order to elevate the self and reach a higher level of existence.[91] The Gothic's version of the sublime, however, according to Morris, is a version of the

43

sublime, that unlike the Romantic sublime, "takes us deep within rather than far beyond the human sphere."[92] The Gothic sublime is, in contrast to the Romantic sublime, implosive, paralyzing and destructive rather than transcendental and uplifting. In other words, the self's experience of the sublime in the Gothic is primarily a negative one, while the Romantic self's or ego's experience is primarily positive. Morris also suggests that Freud's concept of the uncanny can be used to theorize the Gothic's version of the sublime because of its emphasis on terror and the subconscious:

> "The Uncanny" is especially relevant to the Gothic novel because it is not only a theory of the sublime but also, simultaneously, a theory of terror. The specific subclass of terror which Freud describes as the uncanny differs strikingly from the Burkean catalogue of wild, exotic, [*sic*] and overpowering dangers. For Freud, the uncanny derives its terror not from something external, alien, [*sic*] or unknown but – on the contrary – from something strangely familiar which defeats our efforts to separate ourselves from it. [93]

Morris also comments, in his reading of Gothic sublimity in uncanny or Freudian terms, that the Gothic sublime draws "its deepest terrors from a return of the repressed" and "explores a terror of the unspeakable, of the inconceivable, of the unnameable." [94] Mishra,[95] like Morris, understands the Gothic sublime as a version where there is "no hope of self-transcendence available…", where "the subject simply dissolves into the pleasure principle and, finally, death…". The "triumph" experienced in the Kantian sublime from which the Romantic sublime draws its ideas of self-transcendence and elevation, is ultimately shattered. Mishra explains:

> The Gothic narrative is to be located at that indeterminate moment of the near-abyss where the subject says, I am my own abyss, and is faced with a horrifying image of its own lack of

totality. Where the Romantic version of this narrative reestablishes a totality as the ego under the security of reason embraces the magnificence of storm or holocaust, the Gothic subject has none of the capacities of the supremely confident, overpowering (though often insecure) Romantic ego….

It can be surmised from Morris' and Mishra's definitions that the Gothic sublime is a sublime of terror but also of horror due to its annihilating and paralyzing affect upon an individual. The transcendental aspects of the Kantian and associated Romantic sublimes become, in the event of a Gothic sublime experience, replaced with a sense of emptiness and usually some sort of physiological reaction, such a reaction being the hallmark of horror. Fred Botting[96] writes in his explanation of the term "horror": "Horror dissolves a being's sense of definite identity, a dissolution often metaphorically linked to absolute darkness and death." Botting however, suggests that horror "has nothing to do with the sublime",[97] a theoretical notion that can be dated back to Ann Radcliffe's distinction between terror and horror in "On the Supernatural in Poetry" (1826).[98] Although horror may not have anything to do with the Kantian and associated Romantic sublime where there occurs a transcendent experience that awakens the faculties, it can be theorized as an affect of the Gothic sublime which, according to Morris and Mishra, is able to leave a being's sense of self as whole or total in tatters.

In "Beyond the Gothic Sublime: Poe's *Pym* or the Journey of Equivocal (E)motions", Marita Nadal suggests that the horrors represented in the Gothic, including corpses, the criminal, and putrefaction, can be understood in relation to Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject.[99] In *Powers of Horror* (1982) Kristeva describes the abject as that which is immoral, sinister, unspeakable, violent, and

ultimately self destroying.[100] Abjection, it can be argued, is therefore a component of the Gothic sublime due to the destruction of a stable and unified self. Abjection is also a strong component of the Gothic in general due to the Gothic's constant representation of abject and taboo acts (rape, murder, incest, and suicide), and the depiction of such acts plays a defining role in the antipodean Gothic films discussed in part two of this study.[101]

Mishra[102] sees the discursive formation of the Gothic as signifying "a break in the continuum of history" which can be read as "a category of the postmodern" due to its problematizing of totalizing impulses. The Gothic, in Mishra's formulation, is theorized as a proto-postmodern form that is intrinsically unstable and is preoccupied with the "possibilities of representation…"[103] Mishra[104] argues that what can be termed the postmodern sublime "has had its antecedent in the Gothic." Mishra draws parallels between the Gothic sublime and the postmodern sublime by comparing the Gothic's version of the sublime with Lyotard's and Jameson's invoking of the sublime to theorize the postmodern condition. According to Mishra,[105] Jameson's theorization of postmodernism, not unlike Lyotard's, conjures up theories of the sublime to offer insight into late capitalist or postmodern culture. The Gothic and postmodernist versions of the sublime can be collectively considered as anti-Enlightenment sublimes, and leave the subject/the mind fragmented and in a state of disarray, uncertainty, confusion, without any of the totalizing comfort that the Kantian and Romantic sublimes offers. Although the postmodern sublime shares common ground with the Gothic's version of the sublime in terms of its fragmentary effects, it constitutes, according to Andrew

Teverson[106] in his essay on the sculpture of Anish Kapoor, an "evolution" of the Gothic sublime. Teverson, drawing on Mishra's work on the subject, suggests that the Gothic sublime leaves the self or subject (when faced with the unpresentable/unknowable/unspeakable) in a cowering state whereas the postmodern sublime converts this sense of terror into "a form of terrorism that exalts in the destruction of those orders and systems that the Gothic first found itself the antagonist of." This exaltation, which Teverson suggests is an affect of the postmodern sublime, can be paralleled with Jameson's theorization of postmodern "intensities" (sublime) and the "peculiar kind of euphoria" that results from such (anti-modernist) feelings.[107] The Gothic sublime, then, can be interpreted through the above theorizations as a sublime of psychological terror and physiological horror, a sublime that foreshadows the postmodern sublime in its refusal to allow the self to transcend a sublime encounter/experience through rational means. It is this non-totalizing impulse that can be characterized as a proto-postmodern aspect of the Gothic.

The fragmentation of self associated with the Gothic sublime includes the fragmentation of the sexual self or identity and can be explored in relation to the postmodern emphasis on the marginalized or the ex-centric. The postmodern notion of the ex-centric concerns a rejection of the bourgeois, white, heterosexual, male modernist ideology, and a focus on difference in terms of nationality, ethnicity, gender, race or sexual orientation. Difference is thus emphasized in postmodernism as opposed to the modern concern with consensus or a seemingly homogeneous view of society. This emphasis or concern with the marginal or the ex-centric in

postmodernist terms means a questioning of stable and centred subjectivity that usually accompanies liberal humanism.[108] The postmodern emphasis on the marginalized can be paralleled with theorizations of the Gothic as a mode that allows marginalized voices to speak. Eighteenth and nineteenth-century Gothic literature, it is often suggested, provided a means of expression for those otherwise silenced due to their difference from mainstream (middle-class, white, hetero, male-dominated) society. For instance, the Gothic novel or literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, it has been suggested by numerous academics, provided a means for women to articulate their oppression by patriarchal structures.[109] Due to this emphasis on silenced or marginalized voices, much work has been done in the academy or, more specifically, in the field of Gothic studies on what is termed the "female Gothic". The female Gothic is characterized by Alison Milbank in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature* as a sub-genre of the Gothic that can be written by any gender (though it is predominantly aligned with women), and usually presents a narrative that concerns itself with the imprisonment of a heroine by a patriarchal tyrant or villain who "threatens death or rape." [110] However, the Gothic also can be seen to emphasize more fluid sexual and gendered identities, emphasizing difference in terms of its delving into taboo realms that challenged developing modern conceptions of the self as unified or whole during the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries.

In the eighteenth-century, coinciding with the appearance of the first Gothic novel there was, according to Michel Foucault[111] in *The History of Sexuality*, a proliferation of sexual discourses and from the Enlightenment onwards, there

occurred a more intense focusing on sex and sexuality and its regulation through various institutions and institutional practices. These complex relationships between the proliferation of sexual discourses and the regulation and "containment" of sex in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries form the background to the prevalence of sexual motifs in the Gothic. David Punter[112] suggests that the Gothic, in presenting or trying to present the taboo, displays "areas of emotional ambivalence" and "ambivalence about matters to do with sexuality." Punter[113] also suggests that Gothic fiction or the Gothic is "erotic at root" and that "it knows that to channel sexual activity into the narrow confines of conventionality is repressive and, in the end, highly dangerous, that it is a denial of Eros and that Eros so slighted returns in the form of threat and violence." Much Gothic literature and film presents the predicament where a character sexually desires another, and when this desire is acted upon, social norms are transgressed allowing the characters to enter into the realm of the taboo. Once in this realm, the sexual energy kept at bay in Gothic narratives usually erupts into violence.

Gothic fiction is, in Punter's opinion, a literature of transgression, a cultural form that frequently delves into taboo realms. For example, Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* sees the incestuous rape of Antonia by Ambrosio, and Matilda, a devilish seductress, first masquerades as a boy; Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911) reveal fears concerning the advent of the "new woman"[114] and of female sexuality itself, whereby the "passive", "fair", sex turns aggressive thus blurring sex/gender distinctions; Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) has a lesbian subtext;[115] Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1794) and Poe's *The Fall of the House*

of Usher (1839) use the taboo practice of incest to unsettle sexual boundaries;[116] and both Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819) and Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) have been read as having homo-erotic subtexts.[117] Add to this the speculations on the controversial private lives of some Gothic authors who either identified themselves as homosexual or were accused of crossing gender boundaries by the public,[118] and the Gothic becomes a means through which the unspeakable in terms of sexual taboos can be explored.

Mishra[119] suggests that the "Genealogical and the sexual sublimes invade the realms of the Gothic sublime and give it its possible narratives." Given the prevalence of sexual taboos in much Gothic fiction, it can be argued that the sexual sublimes, that Mishra mentions, have to do with what is unrepresentable in normative terms – namely, with what is queer. Milbank in her section on the sublime in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature* writes: "The unrepresentable in the Gothic sublime is often sexual difference itself, which is a subject of general concern during the eighteenth-century."[120] It could, however, be argued here, that the "unrepresentable" in the Gothic sublime has less to do with sexual difference than with sexual collapse, which would throw sexual/gender boundaries and categories into disarray and chaos. It is at this point that queer theory can be utilized in reading the Gothic as a cultural mode that emphasizes the sexually ex-centric, a mode that anticipates postmodernist challenges to modernist and associated liberal humanist totalizing assumptions that suggest continuities between sex and gender rather than discontinuities.

However, in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Gothic fiction, the fragmentation of the (sexual) self is a source of terror, for instance in *The Monk* and *Dracula*, where the blurring of boundaries between male/female and masculine/feminine occur but where moral order is restored at the conclusion of such tales of transgression.[121] In much postmodern fiction and film the fragmentation of the (sexual) self is not so much a source of fear but is rather, simply part of the postmodern "attack" on the grand narratives of the Enlightenment, the unravelling of moral and sexual norms used to deliberately undermine rational and distinct boundaries or binary oppositions. For example, this unravelling of the stable sexual self without any lamentation or moralising can be clearly seen in much of David Lynch's cinematic work and in Angela Carter's fiction. Both Lynch's and Carter's work are considered examples of the postmodern Gothic by academics in this area of study.

The Postmodern Gothic

In contemporary times postmodernist writers and filmmakers have borrowed, according to Smith, "certain particular qualities of the Gothic to pursue their own agendas."[122] These "particular qualities" that Smith mentions in his paralleling of the Gothic and postmodernism are the proto-postmodern aspects of the Gothic, and include pastiche, nostalgia, an aesthetic emphasis on surfaces, and the fragmentation of the (sexual/gendered) self, all of which have already been discussed in this chapter. In Botting's[123] formulation in *Gothic,* the postmodern Gothic is concerned with the "horror of textuality." Self-conscious and self-

reflexive about its representations and cultural position, it draws from the narrative devices of early Gothic literature:

> In the questioning of narratives of authority and the legitimacy of social forms, what can be called postmodern Gothic, is akin, in its playfulness and duplicity, to the artificialities and ambivalences that surrounded eighteenth-century Gothic writing and were produced in relation to the conflicts of emerging modernity. [124]

Botting lists Robert Coover's *Pricksongs and Descants* (1969), Angela Carter's *Heroes and Villains* (1969), *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr Hoffman* (1972) and *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) and Umbert Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1980) as literary examples of the postmodern Gothic because of their mixing of fragments from an array of literary genres, and their revealing of how Gothic fictions "construct identities, fantasies, fears, and desires."[125] Botting includes in his brief discussion about the cinematic postmodern Gothic the film *Angel Heart* (1986), and David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) and *Twin Peaks* (1990-2), because of their playing with "various narrative conventions", including those of the Gothic.[126]

Postmodern Gothic forms, however, unlike earlier eighteenth-century and modern Gothic forms, do not, according to Botting, maintain distinctions between self/other, good/evil, real/unreal, truth/untruth.[127] While eighteenth and nineteenth-century Gothic hinted at the disintegration of such binaries, it usually maintained normative order at the conclusion of its transgressive narratives, as previously discussed in this chapter, and herein lies one of the major differences between early and modern Gothic forms and postmodern Gothic forms of representation. Another difference that can be drawn from Botting's theorization of early Gothic, modern Gothic, and postmodern Gothic forms is that while early and modern Gothic forms

tend to close down a text in terms of their restoration of moral and social order in a story's conclusion, postmodern Gothic narrative forms tend to leave a text open to interpretation and, rather than seeking to restore (moral) order, revel in the disorder maintained throughout the storyline.[128] This revelling in the fragmentation of narrative or in the fragmentation of characters in postmodern Gothic literature and cinema is concurrent with the celebration of fragmented subjectivities and fluid sexualities that the postmodern version of the sublime, as discussed previously, suggests. An example of this kind of celebration that the postmodern Gothic advocates rather than the early Gothic's or the Gothic sublime's associated recoiling or cowering in the face of the self's fragmentation, is *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) which was, incidentally, written by a New Zealander, Richard O'Brien, and directed by an Australian, Jim Sharman.[129] In Sharman's film there is an intertextual mix of cinematic genres, including science-fiction, horror, the musical and comedy, as well as significant uses of well-known Gothic figures such as the vampire, and the reworking of the Frankenstein story. The film also "celebrates", according to Botting, polymorphous sexualities, that is, there is no differentiation between male/female sex roles, or masculine/feminine gendered identities.[130] Dr. Frank 'N' Furter, a "sweet" transvestite from the planet Transylvania, has sexual relationships with both men and women, including the seemingly sexually conservative and newly engaged Brad and Janet. The loss of stable sexual and gendered identities on Brad and Janet's part is neither mourned nor feared in this film but rather celebrated as the straight couple become more and more intrigued by Dr. Frank 'N' Furter's queer world.

In David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* (2001) [131] there is also a breakdown of stable (sexual) identities, not as the source of fear or terror but rather only as a self-conscious use of Gothic narrative devices that renders meaning void, nonsensical or incoherent. In *Mulholland Drive* identities, sexual or otherwise, are interchangeable, and there is no clear resolution to the film's mysteries. Betty, an aspiring, blonde, young and innocent actress, arrives in Hollywood to become a star. Upon arriving at her new apartment (owned by her aunt), she finds Rita, a dark-haired femme fatale who has lost her memory due to her involvement in a car crash. The two women begin a sexual liaison, Betty falling in love with Rita. During the course of the film, Betty becomes Dianne Selwyn and Rita is renamed Camilla Rhodes, the already surreal story suddenly changing into a story of passion, jealousy and murder. Without going into too much detail about the film's twisted plot, *Mulholland Drive* is entirely about narrative play, the meaning of the film remaining secondary to its complete subversion of Hollywood narrative form, with its clear beginning, climax and resolution.

Alternatively, or in conjunction with Botting's formulation, the postmodern Gothic can be seen in terms of a focusing in on consumer/pop culture combined with Gothic motifs. For instance, Jesse W. Nash's article "Postmodern Gothic: Stephen King's *Pet Sematary*" suggests that the postmodern Gothic is an amalgamation of traditional Gothic themes and references to popular culture. Nash writes:

> King's novel is an example of what we might fruitfully think of
> as "postmodern Gothic," which is a transformation or historical
> mutation of the traditional Gothic tale. Such a designation takes
> seriously King's ties to the traditional Gothic genre but also

recognizes the influence of the prevailing postmodernism of much of late twentieth century popular culture. [132]

In the film version of *Pet Sematary* (1989),[133] these allusions to popular and consumer culture are apparent. For instance, trucks marked with the logo "Orico" speed along the road that runs past the Creed family home. The family's toddler, Gage Creed, is killed instantly when he attempts to retrieve a kite from the road. Gage's father, who is particularly distraught and guilty at his son's passing (as he was unable to reach Gage in time), then tries to resurrect his son in the same manner that he resurrected his daughter's cat Church in an ancient Indian burial ground near the local pet cemetery, with disastrous and horrific consequences. The inclusion in the film of what appears to be a fuel company provides social commentary on the advent of big business in consumer culture, multi-national capitalism killing those much smaller, in terms of business, (as symbolized by Gage), than themselves. In the scene in which Gage is killed, the truckdriver's concentration is seemingly distracted just before the accident through his listening to the punk-pop band The Ramones' "Sheena is a Punk Rocker." Incidentally The Ramones also wrote and released a promotional pop song for the film entitled "Pet Sematary", complete with video clip.[134] The Ramones' film clip is but one example of how postmodern Gothic cinema combines popular culture with traditional Gothic themes. In the film there is also an intertextual reference to the classic Gothic 1960s television sitcom *The Munsters.* The actor playing Mr Crandall is the very same actor who plays the monster-like Herman Munster, and he acts as the catalyst for the horror that unfolds in *Pet Sematary.*[135] These references to pop or consumer culture are examples of the combining of Gothic themes, such as

supernaturalism (the dead returning, etc) with post 1950s consumer and popular culture, and these elements combined can be seen as constitutive of the postmodern Gothic.

Similarly, Ruth Heyler[136] also explores the merging of the Gothic with the postmodern in her article "Parodied to Death: The Postmodern Gothic of *American Psycho*." In Brett Easton Ellis' 1991 novel *American Psycho* (which was also made into a film), many of the Gothic's thematic preoccupations such as moral transgression or ambivalence and creepy surroundings are appropriated but set within postmodern consumer culture. In Ellis' narrative the serial killer protagonist kills his victims with designer label weapons, and this aspect of the story reveals anxieties about postindustrial or late capitalist Western culture(s).

Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* (1990)[137] can also be considered a postmodern Gothic text in its reworking of the Frankenstein tale and its cinematic allusions to James Whale's film version of *Frankenstein* (1931). In Burton's film, Edward's father/inventor, played by legendary horror film actor Vincent Price, dies before completing his masterpiece. Edward is thus left with shears for hands and continues his solitary life "living alone in the attic of a gothic castle."[138] After being discovered by an Avon lady doing her rounds, he moves in with her and her suburban family. Edward, however, is too abnormal for the townsfolk, and in a scene reminiscent of Whale's *Frankenstein* is driven from town by the suburbanites.[139] While Burton's film makes intertextual and self-conscious references to classic Gothic cinema *(Frankenstein)* and Gothic cult icons (Vincent Price), it also mixes up eras, creating a sense of the other-worldly in the film's

suburban landscape. As Russell A. Potter comments in "Edward Schizohands: The

Postmodern Gothic Body":

> In the commodity-fetishism of Burton's suburbs, chronology is
> deliberately scrambled, such that commodities, like the clip-art
> cutouts of postmodern collages, drift about in their own free play
> of signification. 90s appliance, such as CD players, exist side-by-
> side with 50s fixtures such as boomerang tables and lava lamps;
> the parents are from 60s sitcoms but the kids are from 21 Jump
> Street.[140]

The deliberate scrambling of the pop culture from different eras of the twentieth

century resulting in the creation of alternate realities and the other-worldly can also

be seen in much of David Lynch's work, including *Twin Peaks, Blue Velvet* and

Mulholland Drive. For example, in *Mulholland Drive* Lynch has a '50s jitterbug

sequence at the beginning of the film, the dancers dressed in '50s style sweaters

and full skirts. Throughout the film Lynch mixes '40s film noir with '50s and '90s

fashion and décor, one scene including a cabaret version of Roy Orbison's *Crying*

(1961), performed (mimed) in Spanish by a woman.[141] *Mulholland Drive* is a prime

example of postmodern Gothic cinema, or what Graham Fuller refers to in an

article on the film in *Sight and Sound* as "postmodern Hollywood gothic",[142] it

employs a variety of traditional Gothic themes, including the döppelganger motif (a

motif that runs through much of Lynch's work), mystery, queerness (lesbian sex

scenes), crime and corruption, subverting normative narrative conventions through

its seemingly incoherent and non-linear narrative.

It is worth noting here, in order to illustrate the postmodern Gothic's

appropriation and transmutation of Gothic narrative traits, that while the

eighteenth-century Gothic displays nostalgia for a lost antique past (the Goths and

the lack of literary information about them, as well as medievalism), postmodern literature and cinema similarly display a nostalgic tendency but for a more immediate and textually known past. It is retrospective, as discussed earlier in this chapter, in relation to the eras of the twentieth-century and their associated fashions, music and general aesthetic style. Some other examples of postmodern Gothic films might arguably include: Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), David Fincher's *Fight Club* (1999) and E. Elias Merhige's *Shadow of the Vampire* (2001).[143] In these films there is an obvious pastiche of other film genres and aesthetic styles, including 1940s film noir, science fiction and punk-Goth fashions, along with references to consumer culture and commodity fetishism (as seen in *Blade Runner* and *Fight Club*). There can also be seen in postmodern Gothic films the re-production of classic scenes from earlier Gothic cinema (as in *Shadow),* as well as the self-conscious utilization of Gothic motifs, including the double, the decaying and corrupt city, and the vampire.[144]

The postmodern Gothic, then, as outlined or defined in the above accounts, is the self-conscious playing with, and utilization and appropriation of, Gothic narrative conventions (as suggested by Botting), and/or the merging of traditional Gothic themes with intertextual references to pop or consumer culture. Although the Australian and New Zealand films included in part two of this study may not display in their entirety the same level of postmodern self-consciousness that Botting advocates is constitutive of the postmodern Gothic, they nevertheless can be seen to have postmodern Gothic tendencies. For instance, *The Cars that Ate Paris* (1974)*, The Night the Prowler* (1978), Mad *Max 2* (1982)*, Dogs in Space*

(1987) and *Heavenly Creatures* (1994) all include in varying degrees Gothic motifs combined with references to pop/consumer culture and borrowings from Hollywood film genres. These references could not have existed prior to the 1950s, or to what Jameson sees as the advent of the postmodern condition.

Other aspects associated with the postmodern Gothic discussed by Botting and mentioned in this chapter include its refusal to close texts, the complete disintegration of real/unreal distinctions and the self-conscious use of the Gothic itself. Peter Weir's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), with its strong Gothic overtones, provides no resolution to the mystery it presents to the viewer, as well as effacing the line between fact and fiction in its employment of documentary style techniques, making many believe that it is based on a true story. Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993) can be seen to use and subvert the narrative conventions of the female Gothic. Furthermore, *Picnic* and *Summerfield* (1977) both make use of, or refer directly to, the literature of the nineteenth-century Gothic writer Edgar Allan Poe. In *Picnic* lines are loosely quoted from Poe's poem "A Dream within a Dream", while *Summerfield* draws extensively on the symbolism and storyline of Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) and on Roger Corman's 1960 film version of Poe's tale.[145] Although these references to the Gothic itself perhaps do not quite constitute the more self-conscious or self-reflexive qualities of the postmodern Gothic seen in Burton's *Edward Scissorhands,* Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* or Merhige's *Shadow of the Vampire,* these antipodean films do reflect a postmodern Gothic sensibility through direct use or inclusion of the narrative aspects of earlier Gothic literature and cinema.

Part two explores, in a variety of contexts in Antipodean cinema, the Gothic's proto-postmodern characteristics and aspects of the postmodern Gothic discussed in this chapter. These interconnections can also be employed to characterize and analyze the European construction of the Antipodes as a Gothic/(proto)-postmodern space. This construction, it is argued, influences what can be seen as a strong Gothic presence that is intertwined with the postmodern in post 1970s Australian and New Zealand cinemas.

Notes

1. Angela Carter, *Fireworks: Nine Stories in Various Disguises,* Harper & Row, Cambridge, 1974, pp. 132-133.

2. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1989, pp. 80-81.

3. Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*: *History, Theory, Fiction,* Routledge, New York, 1988, pp. 13-14.

4. ibid. p.14.

5. The emergence of cultural studies can be traced to the 1960s and coincides with the serious analysis of film by the academy. See Graeme Turner, "Cultural Studies and Film" in John Hill and Pamela Church-Gibson (eds), *Film Studies: Critical Approaches,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 194.

6. Graeme Turner, *National Fictions: literature, film, and the construction of Australian narrative,* Allen & Unwin Australia Ltd, 1986, p. 17.

7. Anne Cranny-Francis et al; *Gender Studies: Terms and Debates,* Palgrave Macmillan Press, Houndmills, 2003, pp. 74-5.

8. Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory,* Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 1996, pp.1-3 and pp.75-83).

9. ibid, p. 3.

10. David Buchbinder, *Peformance Anxieties: Re-producing Masculinity,* Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1998, p. 152.

11. ibid. See also Cranny-Francis, op.cit., p. 76.

12. Jagose, op.cit., p. 2.

13. Cranny-Francis, op.cit., p. 75-8.

14. For a summary of these works, see David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: The Gothic Tradition – Volume 1,* Longman, New York, 1996, pp 14-16. For information concerning the development of Gothic studies and criticism see Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, "Gothic Criticism" in David Punter (ed), *A Companion to the Gothic*, Blackwell publishers Inc, Oxford, 2000, pp. 209-228.

15. Some notable and influential studies in the Gothic include Howells' *Love, Mystery and Misery* (1978); MacAndrew's *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (1979); Punter's *The Literature of Terror* (1980) and *Gothic Pathologies* (1998); Sedgwick's *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (1986); Napier's *The Failure of Gothic* (1987); Delamotte's *Perils of the Night* (1990); and Miles' *Gothic Writing* (1993). See the bibliography for complete details. For summaries of most of these studies see Punter, *Literature of Terror,* op.cit., (1996), pp.209-16. Punter discusses the Gothic in relation to horror films in *Modern Gothic* (the second volume of his *Literature of Terror).* Punter discusses manifestations of the Gothic in British and American horror films from 1930-1980, including the Hammer films, Hitchcock's *Psycho,* and *The Exorcist.* See David Punter, *The Literature of Terror, Volume 2: Modern Gothic,* Addison Wesley Longman Limited, Harlow, 1996, pp. 96-118.

16.Punter, *Literature of Terror, Vol. 1,* 1996, op. cit., p. 1. The quote is also from this source.

17. ibid. See also David Morris, "Gothic Sublimity" in *New Literary History* (Winter, 1985), p. 301.

18. Punter, op.cit., p. 1.

19. See Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion,* Methuen & Co. Ltd, London; New York, 1981, pp. 95 in relation to the Gothic and its relationship with 'fantasy', and pp. 34-5 for the Fantastic (and Gothic) blurring of real/unreal boundaries.

20. Carter, op. cit., p.133.

21. See Lester G. Croker (ed), *The Age of Enlightenment: A Volume in the Documentary History of Western Civilization,* Macmillan, London, 1969, p.2.

22. Fred Botting, *Gothic,* Routledge, London, 1996, p. 22.

23. Punter, op. cit., p. 5.

24.Robin Sowerby, "The Goths in History and Pre-Gothic Gothic" in David Punter, *A Companion to the Gothic,* Blackwell Publishers Ltd, Oxford, 2000, p. 15-17. The following quotes are also from this source.

24. ibid., p. 16.

26. See Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* Wordsworth Editions Ltd, Hertfordshire, 1998, p. 208.

27. Samuel Kliger, The *Goths in England: A Study in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Thought,* Octagon Books, New York, 1972, p. 1. Kliger's study was first published in 1952.

28. ibid., p. 3.

29. Punter, op. cit., p. 28.

30. ibid. pp. 29-37. Graveyard Poetry is considered a precursor to the Gothic
due to its incorporation of similar macabre themes and its emphasis on unreason and feeling. Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is thought to be the first Gothic novel. Walpole was the son of Whig politician Sir Robert Walpole, who, in 1721 became British Prime Minister. For further details on Walpole see Marie Mulvey-Roberts (ed) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature,* Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, pp. 246-9.

31. Botting, op.cit., pp.46-47

32. Allan Lloyd Smith, "Postmodernism/Gothicism" in Victor Sage and Allan
Lloyd Smith (eds), *Modern Gothic: A Reader,* Manchester University Press, Machester, 1996, p.6.

33. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism*,* or The cultural logic of late capitalism", *New Left Review,* No 146, 1984, p.55.

34. Smith, op.cit., p. 15.

35. Punter, *Literature of Terror,* Longman, New York, 1980, p. 413.

36. Jameson, op.cit., pp. 76-8.

37. See Punter, *Literature of Terror* (1996 edition), p. 20-21. Circulating libraries were libraries "which lent out books for a membership fee" thereby cutting down on costs for people who could not afford to buy books and increasing literature consumption.

38. See David Punter and Glennis Byron, "Gothic Postmodernism" in Punter and Byron, *The Gothic,* Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Malden, 2004, p. 53.

39. See Punter, *Literature of Terror* (1980), p. 423.

40. ibid.

41. Botting, op.cit., pp. 6-9.

42. ibid., pp. 8-9.

43. ibid.

44. Hutcheon, op.cit., p. 3.

45. ibid.

46. Napier's work suggests that because Gothic works cannot be easily categorized that the Gothic fails to constitute a genre. See Elizabeth Napier, *The Failure of Gothic: Problems of Disjunction in an Eighteenth Century Form,* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987. For a criticism of Napier's argument and her normative theorizing of Gothic literature see David Punter, *The Literature of Terror* (1996), p. 210.

47. Jameson, op.cit., pp. 58-61, sees the supposed lack of depth in postmodernism negatively in relation to modernist conceptions of depth and affect. Hutcheon, op.cit., p.11, also discusses Jameson's negative view, and writes that Jameson (and some other postmodern theorists) "see the loss of the modernist unique, individual style as a negative, as an imprisoning of the text in the past through pastiche…"

48. See Smith, op.cit., pp. 6-7.

49. ibid, p. 7.

50. ibid.

51. See Hutcheon, op.cit., p. 57.

52. See David Punter, *Gothic Pathologies: The Text, the Body, and the Law,* Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, p. 211. Punter argues that the Gothic "resists the role of the law" due its proclivity for "the multiple" and its subversion of canons.

53. See Lyotard, op.cit., pp. 37-41. For the quote see Veronica Hollinger, "Fantasies of Absence: The Postmodern Vampire" in Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger (eds) *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture,* University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1997, p. 199.

54. ibid.

55. Smith, op.cit., pp. 8-10.

56. Jameson, op.cit., p. 60.

57. ibid., p. 58.

58. See Tim Woods, *Beginning Postmodernism,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999, p.217. Woods makes this assertion in relation to his assessment of Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) as a postmodernist film.

59. Smith, op.cit., p.11.

60. Botting, op.cit., p.14.

61. ibid.

62. See Vijay Mishra, *The Gothic Sublime,* State University of New York Press, Albany, 1994, p. 51. See also Marie Mulvey-Roberts' *The Handbook to Gothic Literature,* Macmillan Press Ltd, Houndmills, 1998, p. 247-8.

63. See Lewis' substory "History of Don Raymond" and inclusion of Shakespearean quotes and other poetry in Howard Anderson (ed), *The Monk,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, pp. 95-191.

64. See Bonamy Dobrée (ed) *Ann Radcliffe: The Mysteries of Udolpho: A Romance Interspersed with some Pieces of Poetry,* Oxford University Press, London, 1966. See also Mulvey-Roberts, op.cit., p. 186-7 for information on Ann Radcliffe.

65. In Stoker's *Dracula* a number of characters (Mina Murray/Harker, Lucy Westenra, Jonathan Harker, Dr Seward) keep diaries of their thoughts about recent strange happenings and their encounters with Dracula.

66. See Hutcheon, op.cit., pp.133-4.

67. ibid., pp. 117-8.

68. For a discussion concerning Pynchon's narrative subversions in *Gravity's Rainbow,* see Brian McHale, *Constructing Postmodernism,* Routledge, London, 1992, pp. 96-103. In relation to Bank's *Complicity,* see Punter and Byron, op.cit., p. 51.

69. See Woods, op.cit., p. 210.

70. ibid., p. 210-11. For instance Jarman's *Jubilee* (1977) has a historical figure (Queen Elizabeth I) transported forward in time to a futuristic wasteland, and features the punk groups and figures of the time. The film both displaces "real" history and makes extensive use of pop culture.

71. ibid., p. 211.

72. Jameson, op.cit., p. 66.

73. ibid., p. 67.

74. Woods, op.cit., p. 211.

75. In relation to historiographic metafiction see Hutcheon, op.cit., p. 119. In relation to Hutcheon's essay "Postmodern film?" see Peter Brooker and Will Brooker (eds), *Postmodern After-Images: A Reader in Film, Television, and Video,* Arnold, London, 1997, pp. 36-42. Hutcheon argues against what she sees as Jameson's "view of postmodern parody as trivial and trivializing…" (p. 39)

76. See Smith, op.cit., p. 11. Smith notes that Jane Austen parodied the Gothic in her novel *Northanger Abbey* (1818) but argues that the Gothic was, due to its eclecticism, already a "parody of itself." Smith writes: "Pastiche is I think the preferable terms for this, because the essence of the mode was to incorporate such imitations without observable parodic implication."

77. Mishra, op.cit., pp. 49-51. The following quotes are also from this source.

78. ibid., p. 54. The following quote is also from this source.

79. See Jameson, op.cit., p. 63. See also Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" in Phillip Rice and Patricia Waugh (eds) *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader,* Edward Arnold, London, 1989, pp. 114-118.

80. Barthes, op.cit., p. 118.

81. ibid., p.117.

82. ibid., p. 118.

83. See Susanne Becker, *Gothic Forms of Feminine Fiction,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999, p. 18. Becker discusses the way in which women became a major market for Gothic novels and literature. The appeal of Gothic novels for women lay in the Gothic's inclusion of imprisoned heroines in castles and haunted houses, both of which, according to Becker, symbolize the domestic sphere and a patriarchal system for which women, like the archetpal Gothic heroine, wish to escape.

84. Barthes, op.cit., p. 118.

85.See Morris, op.cit., pp. 302-3. Morris, in his analysis of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in Freudian and Gothic sublime terms, sees exaggeration and repetition as the two major narrative tropes of the early Gothic novel.

86. Theories of the sublime gained importance in eighteenth-century thought due to Nicolas Boileau's translation (1674) of a Greek text *Peri Hypsous* ("On the Sublime"), and became a key concept in aesthetic debates in Europe. For a discussion about the development and transformations of the sublime, see Mulvey-Roberts, op.cit., pp. 226-232.

87. Mishra, op.cit., p. 19.

88. See Morris, op.cit., p. 300. Morris suggests that there is no essence of the sublime but only "family resemblances". This is why different versions of the sublime can be referred to in familial terms.

89. Morris, op. cit., pp. 299, and 301-2.

90. See Mishra, op.cit., p. 35. Mishra writes: the "Kantian sublime is defiantly Romantic…"

91. For an account of the defining features of the Kantian and Romantic sublimes see Mishra, op.cit., pp. 32-5, and p. 40.

92. Morris, op.cit., p. 306.

93. ibid, p. 306-7.

94. ibid., p. 307 and p. 312.

95. Mishra, op.cit., p.38. The following quote is also from this source.

96. See Botting, op.cit., p. 124.

97. ibid.

98. See Marita Nadal, "Beyond the Gothic Sublime: Poe's *Pym* or the Journey of Equivocal (E)motions", *The Mississippi Quarterly,* Vol. 53, Issue 3, Summer 2000, pp. 374-5.

99. ibid., p. 378.

100. See Julia Kristeva (trans. Leon S. Roudiez), *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1982, p. 4.

101. The inclusion of these criminal and taboo activities in early and more contemporary Gothic narratives shows it to be one of the defining and continuing features of the Gothic.

102. Mishra, op.cit., pp.43-5.

103. ibid., p. 43.

104. ibid., p. 49.

105. ibid., p. 39 (for Lyotard) and p. 46 (for Jameson).

106. See Andrew Teverson, "The Uncanny Structure of Cultural Difference in the Sculpture of Anish Kapoor", *Gothic Studies,* 5/2 (November 2003), p.89.

107. See Jameson, op.cit., p. 64.

108. For a discussion about the postmodern emphasis on the ex-centric or de-centring see Hutcheon, op.cit., p. 57-67.

109. See for instance Alison Milbank's section on the "Female Gothic" in Mulvey-Roberts, op.cit., p. 53-4, where she comments on the fact that some of the earliest Gothic writers were women (for instance Ann Radcliffe and Mary Shelley). See also Becker, op.cit., p. 2, for the status of the Gothic as a "women's genre" and its "popularity with women both as writers and as readers…"

110. Mulvey-Roberts, op.cit., p. 54. There have been various works on the 'differences' between a female Gothic literary tradition and a male Gothic literary tradition since Ellen Moers coined the term 'female Gothic' in *Literary Women* (1977) in her assessment of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as a birth myth (p. 95). For instance Robert Miles, in his essay 'Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis' (in Punter, *A Companion to the Gothic,* pp. 41-57) separates a male Gothic tradition from a female one, the male tradition (influenced by Matthew Lewis) a fiction of (sexual) transgression, and the female (influenced by Ann Radcliffe) one that is "absorbed in the struggle for sexual and political rights, together with cash…" (pp. 41-45). Though Miles connects the male Gothic with queer theory and the female Gothic with feminism (the latter influencing the former), it can be argued that since both so-called "strands" of the Gothic disturb normative gender patterns in so far as female Gothic writers were advocates of women's cultural and economic rights, that they can both be understood or encompassed within a queer theoretical framework. See the bibliography for full details of these sources.
111. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1,* Penguin Books Ltd, London, 1998, p. 18.
112. See Punter, *Literature of Terror* (1980), pp. 410-11.
113. ibid., p. 411.
114. In the nineteenth century, the "new woman" was the label given to women employed outside the domestic sphere and in the public sector. This change in women's social role was perceived as a threat to men and traditional gendered and sexual roles. There were social fears that women were becoming masculinized and men feminized and this is reflected in Stoker's *Dracula.* For information about the "new woman" and *Dracula* see: Martin Tropp, *Images of Fear: How Horror Stories Helped Shape Modern Culture (1818-1918),* McFarland & Co. Inc, Jefferson, 1990, p. 159. Also see Marie Mulvey-Roberts, "Dracula and the Doctors: bad blood, menstrual taboo and the new woman" in William Hughes and Andrew Smith (eds), *Bram Stoker: History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic,* Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, p. 79.
115. See Ken Gelder, *Reading the Vampire,* Routledge, London, 1994, p. 60.
116. In relation to the suggestion of incest in *Castle of Otranto* see: Morris, op.cit., pp. 305-6. In relation to Poe's tale see Mulvey-Roberts, *Handbook to Gothic Literature,* op.cit., p. 179.
117. Gelder, op.cit., p. 58.
118. Horace Walpole, author of *The Castle of Otranto* is thought to have taken an interest in the homoerotic, while William Beckford, author of the oriental Gothic novel *Vathek* (1787) was publicly accused of sodomy and "endured almost complete ostracism for most of his life because of it…" See Raymond Bentman, "Horace Walpole's Forbidden Passion" in Martin Duberman (ed), *Queer Representations: Reading Lives, Reading Cultures,* New York University Press, New York, 1997, p. 278. Matthew Lewis, author of *The Monk* is also thought to have had "male-loves"; See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, p. 92-3. Oscar Wilde's trial for "acts of gross indecency" with other "male persons" (1895), for which Wilde was sentenced to two years hard labour, is one of

the most famous cases of perscrution for non-normative sexual orientation. Wilde's Gothic novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) is often thought to mirror Wilde's own experience of living a "homosexual double life", and was used against him in his trial as evidence. See Robert Mighall (ed), *Oscar Wilde: The Picture of Dorian Gray,* Penguin Books, London, 2000, pp. ix-xv. Also go to: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Wilde.

119. Mishra, op.cit., p. 61.

120. See Mulvey-Roberts, op.cit., p. 56.

121. For instance in *The Monk* Ambrosio is severely punished in hell for his transgressions (ie. raping his sister Antonia and murdering his mother Elvira). In Ambrosio's descent into hell, insects drink his blood and sting him, while eagles tear his flesh and peck out his eyeballs (Lewis/Anderson, eds, op.cit., p. 442). In Stoker's *Dracula*, the vampire is killed and expelled from normative culture.

122. See Smith, op.cit., p. 14.

123. Botting, op.cit., p. 168-71.

124. ibid., p.157.

125. ibid., p. 169.

126. ibid., pp. 173-6

127. ibid., p. 173 and p. 176. Botting discusses these elements in his analysis of *The Name of the Rose* and *Twin Peaks* as examples of the postmodern Gothic.

128. ibid., pp. 168-9. Botting's theorization of the early Gothic as a form both of limit and transgression was discussed earlier in this chapter. The modern Gothic as the prefix suggests, is a combination of Gothic motifs with modernist conceptions of history and the self.

129. See the filmography for details. In relation to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and its antipodean connections, see: Nick Perry, *Hypperreality and Global Culture,* Routledge, London; New York, 1998, p. 5.

130. Botting, op.cit., p.168.

131. See the filmography for details.

132. See Jesse Nash, "Postmodern Gothic: Stephen King's *Pet Sematary"*, Journal of Popular Culture, (Spring, 1997), p. 152.

133. See the filmography for details.

134. To view The Ramones' video clip for "Pet Sematary" go to www.mtv.com/bands/az/ramones/audvid.jhtml. "Pet Sematary" was released on the album *Brain Drain* (1989).

135. For information on *The Munsters* and the actor Fred Gwynne (who played Herman Munster) go to: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki.org/wiki/Fred_Gwynne.

136. See Ruth Heyler, "Parodied to Death: The Postmodern Gothic of *American Psycho*", *Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 46, Issue 3 (Fall 2000), p. 729-30 and p.736.

137. See the filmography for details.

138. See Mark Salisbury, *Burton on Burton* (revised edition), Faber and Faber Limited, London, 1995, p. 96-8.

139. ibid., pp. 98-9.

140. See Russell A. Potter, "Edward Schizohands: The Postmodern Gothic Body", Postmodern Culture, Vol. 2, No. 3 (May 1992), p.9. Go to: http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/pmc/text-only/issue.592/potter.592

141. See Graham Fuller, "Babes in Babylon", *Sight and Sound,* December 2001, pp. 14-17. Fuller notes the jitterbug sequence in *Mulholland* and the film's "cross-fertilising" of film noir and '50s pop flicks. See also Stephen Holden's article in the New York Times "Hollywood Seen as a Funhouse of Fantasy", October 6, 2001, for his observation that Lynch's women in *Mulholland* are reminiscent of Hitchcock's women in *Vertigo* and *Marnie.*

142. Fuller, op.cit., pp. 14-7.

143. See the filmography for full details.

144. Woods, op.cit., pp. 216-18, discusses *Blade Runner* as an example of a postmodernist film in terms of its pastiche of other film genres and mixing up of twentieth century fashions and styles, as well as its references to consumer culture, apparent in the advertisements that occupy the film's futuristic sky. *Shadow of the Vampire* reproduces scenes from Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) re-telling the making of Murnau's film. In *Shadow* Max Schreck (the actor who played the vampire *Nosferatu*) is in fact a real vampire who Murnau has act as a vampire in his film. *Shadow* reveals "the vampire" as a celluloid creation when it has the vampire'/Max burn as a cinematic image on film reel rather than as flesh and blood or as supernatural.

145. Details of the *Picnic* myth and borrowings from Gothic literature and cinema are given in later chapters.

Antipodean Gothic/(Proto)-Postmodern Connections

The European Unconscious and the Cultural Construction of the Antipodes

The memory of prehistoric impulses and deeds continues to haunt civilization: the repressed material returns, and the individual is still punished for impulses long since mastered and deeds long since undone.

<div align="right">HERBERT MARCUSE[1]</div>

ALICE: "I wonder if I shall fall right *through* the earth! How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downwards! The antipathies, I think - …but I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. Please, Ma'am, is this New Zealand? Or Australia?"

<div align="right">LEWIS CARROLL[2]</div>

CECILY: I don't think you will require neckties, Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.
ALGERNON: Australia? I'd sooner die.
CECILY: Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia.
ALGERNON: Oh well! The accounts I have received of Australia and the next world are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

<div align="right">OSCAR WILDE [3]</div>

The Antipodes as a Gothic/(Proto) - Postmodern Space or Place

This chapter explores, through psychoanalytic theory (including Freud's theory of "the return of the repressed" and "the uncanny"),[4] the way in which European antipodean myths, the British fascination with the Goths[5], and the appearance of Gothic literature in the eighteenth-century,[6] has resulted in Gothic/(proto)-postmodern national constructions of Australia and New Zealand. Freudian psychoanalysis is used to analyze these constructions due to its close theoretical

and historical relationship with the Gothic[7] and also with postmodernism, a shared characteristic or feature of all three being the acknowledgment (although in varying degrees) of the instability of the self.[8] Through these Gothic/(proto)-postmodern constructions, Australia and New Zealand are depicted or represented as the antithesis of Enlightenment values and ideals. European depictions and accounts of the Antipodes construct it as a place that is in stark contrast to the Enlightenment's emphasis on order, progress, beauty and the value of art (in the Classical sense)[9]. Instead, these values are replaced, in association with the Antipodes, by chaos or disorder, de-evolution, ugliness, and the denigration of art.

The Antipodes, as discussed in the following sections, is perceived or imagined as a land or place of disorder and the irrational, European norms subverted through both an imagined world that contained all manner of strange and hideous creatures, and through the actualization of this world upon colonization or "discovery." The Antipodes is also constructed in line with Darwinian evolutionary theories that see it as existing in a state of regression or de-evolution because, particularly in relation to Australia, the creatures and plants seemed primitive or archaic, reverting back to a lost or forgotten time, consequently challenging rational thought, such "anomalies" appearing to exist outside the norms of European time.[10] The Europeans, and, as will be discussed later in the chapter, the North Americans for the most part constructed the Antipodes as an undesirable place to visit, let alone one in which to live indefinitely. The Antipodes is represented in European myth and literature from ancient Greek times through to the pop culture of contemporary times as an utterly vulgar, backward and barbaric place. This barbarism,

particularly alluded to in pop culture, is predominantly associated with Australia. However, New Zealand can also be seen as constructed in similar terms. It is due to this association that parallels can be made between the British reconstruction of the Goths, and the transference of this reconstruction upon Euro-centric perceptions and constructions of Australian and New Zealand national or cultural identities.[11]

It can be argued that just as the Gothic in the eighteenth-century shadowed progressive ideals, so too did the Antipodes shadow the Northern Hemisphere in mythic terms and finally in actuality. The myths surrounding the Antipodes can be seen in Gothic/proto-postmodern terms in that they blur the line between fact and fiction and raise questions concerning the stability of knowledge and truth[12] – the "existence" of the Antipodes a topic of debate up until it was "discovered" by Europeans in the seventeenth-century. Questions were raised about the existence of a Southern race and their strange customs, challenging the European worldview and constructing the Antipodes as ex-centric or abnormal in relation to Europe and the Northern Hemisphere.[13]

The construction of the Antipodes as ex-centric can also be linked to other Gothic and postmodern characteristics. As outlined in chapter one, Smith[14] sees a sense of "indeterminacy" as a defining feature of both the Gothic and the postmodern, and this observation can be used to characterize Australian and New Zealand colonial experience(s). Due to the Antipodes being defined in relation to European norms, it can also be argued that the colonial experience in the Antipodes consisted of a certain sense of indeterminacy because the "Southern Continent" was portrayed as other-worldly and as unknown by ancient myth and imaginary voyage

literature.[15] As Gerry Turcotte[16] comments: "From its inception the Gothic has dealt with fears and themes which are endemic in the colonial experience: isolation, entrapment, fear of pursuit and fear of the unknown." Although this colonial experience is also part of other Western nations' histories (for example Canada and the United States), the added element to Australia and New Zealand's histories is that they were already seen as strange and topsy-turvy worlds long before colonization due to their imagined geographical location in the Southern Hemisphere.[17] The positioning of the Antipodes as ex-centric, or as defined in relation to European norms, can also be linked to what is considered in this dissertation to be a European queering of the Antipodes, or the construction of the latter as a space where cultural boundaries seem no longer valid due to its "up-side-down-ness" – a place where sex and/gender roles are reversed and sexual anarchy prevails. As discussed in chapter one, the postmodern notion of the ex-centric can be employed in order to highlight non-normative sexual identities, paralleled by the Gothic's inclination toward drawing attention to what is taboo, which in the context of Western culture(s) can be said to include sexual identities which lie outside of heteronormativity. As we will later see, the Antipodes was, it can be argued, defined as a queer space, other-ed not just in terms of its geographical location, but in every conceivable way.

Myth and European Impressions of the Antipodes

In spite of the traditional perception that it can only be European in all its forms, the Gothic, it can be argued, is easily located in Australian and New Zealand literature/film and is informed by the European construction of the Antipodes as a

Gothic/(proto)-postmodern space and the British cultural reconstruction of the Goths. Australia and New Zealand can be seen to have been constructed, and as still constructed, as antipodean – as "other" to Europe and the Northern Hemisphere. This Euro-centric construction of both cultures can be seen as influenced by the various accounts given by European explorers and cartographers from ancient times to the time of colonization in the eighteenth-century. Robert Hughes[18] in *The Fatal Shore* discusses how Pomponius Mela and Ptolemy, two late classical geographers, first suggested the existence of the Antipodes. According to Hughes, in A.D.50 Pomponius claimed that the Northern land mass must be balanced by a Southern continent, this continent subsequently named *Terra Australia Incognita.*

In the Middle Ages however, the Antipodean space was less concentrated on than its supposed inhabitants. The Antipodes were, as a "race", according to John Block Friedman[19] in *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought,* thought to be "opposite footed" with their feet turned backwards, and were also able to walk upside down. The notion that at the "extremities of the world" there were "unusual" creatures/beings was common, the logic behind such an assumption being that "extreme peoples will be found in extreme places."[20] Simon Ryan in *The Cartographic Eye* also details how the Antipodes as a race were "othered" in medieval thought as "monstrous" by quoting Ranulf Higden from Higden's fourteenth-century *Polychronicon*. Higden comments: "at the farthest reaches of the world often occur new marvels and wonders, as though Nature plays with greater freedom secretly at the edges of the world than she does openly and nearer us in the

middle of it."[21] Friedman [22] further demonstrates that inhabitants of the "Southern

Continent" were thought to be barbaric and monstrous by analyzing part of a poem

composed by the Clerk of Enghien in 1290. Found in an "Old French verse

translation of Thomas of Cantimpre's third book of the *De Naturis Rerum*" entitled

"De Monstruosis Hominibus", the following verse clearly "others" the Antipodes

as a race:

> There are yet other men here
> …
> Who have the soles of the feet transposed
> Who are terrifyingly ugly to see
> As you can imagine
> Thus I wish to describe them to you
> A vile, low people they are
> And vile and evil their law and customs
> For there is no accord between them
> And there are battles between them every day
> And thus one kills the other
> Without one crying to the other 'merci'! [23]

Ryan details the various and conflicting views concerning the existence of the race

Antipodes and the existence of a Southern landmass that came to be known as the

Antipodes. According to Ryan, Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius (AD 399-422)

suggested that there existed Southern landmasses that may be inhabited by

Southern beings. However, Cicero thought that the idea a race could stand with

their feet directly opposite to the North illogical, and the Egyptian monk Cosmas

Indicopleuestes saw the myth of the Antipodes as nothing more than "old wives'

fables."[24] Augustine in his fifteenth-century *The City of God against the Pagans*

argued that there was no rational reason to believe that the Antipodes even existed.

Augustine believed that the Southern area may just be covered with water, and

argued that even if the land did exist, it probably would not be inhabited.[25] Along

with debates about the very existence of the Antipodes and its strange inhabitants, Ryan[26] points out that in medieval maps the Antipodes is either absent or represented as a "blank" where the continent or landmass was thought to lie, thus constructing the "the continent as a screen on which European fantasies may be projected." Such speculations about whether or not the Antipodes (as a place) or the Antipodes (as a race) existed, generated a great deal of mystery and intrigue where the Antipodes and its strange inhabitants were concerned, the fascination with this imagined space or "blank" continuing well after the Middle Ages.

Ryan and Hughes detail the numerous publications influenced by the notion of the existence of the Antipodes and its construction as the antithesis of European values and norms. Ryan [27] writes:

> The 'upside-downness' of the antipodes encouraged its construction as a place where everything was reversed. This joined with the geographical prejudice of medieval maps, where Europe embodied the norms which dictated what was 'human', and all that was not human belonged to Asia or, more likely, Africa. The 'extreme' regions of the earth were the repository of all that was abnormal or perverse.

Ryan[28] cites Tomasso Campanella's *The City of the Sun* (1602); Joseph Hall's *Another World and Yet the Same* (1605), Richard Brome's play *Antipodes* (1636), and Gabriel Foigny's *La Terre Australe Connue* (1676) as reflecting and constructing the myths surrounding the existence or nature of the Antipodes. These texts see the Antipodes and its inhabitants as "perverse", a place where hermaphrodites, "unnatural" rule of women over men, and cross-dressing are common. As Ryan[29] comments: "Long before the antipodes was 'discovered' cross-dressing was already popular there." There were stories by the end of the

sixteenth-century of monsters and "deformities" in the Southern Continent – the above texts, written in the seventeenth-century, were based on reports from explorers and travellers in Southern parts such as Vietnam and India that there were "dog-headed men" and other "abnormalities" in "the South."[30] As Robert Hughes[31] suggests in *The Fatal Shore*:

> It made sense, of a kind, to assume that the further south one went, the more grotesque life must become. What demonic freaks, what affronts to normality, might the Southern Continent not produce?…this imagined country was perhaps infernal, its landscape that of Hell itself. Within its inscrutable otherness, every fantasy could be contained; it was the geographical unconscious.

The Antipodes was, as can be seen from these accounts, even before colonization already constructed via European myths as perverse, grotesque and full of "unnatural" oddities. This construction of the Antipodes as "other" shares a number of thematic preoccupations with the Gothic, for instance, the blurring of boundaries in terms of gender and sexuality (queerness) in antipodean myths, and the Gothic feelings or emotions – terror and anxiety – expressed at the thought of a world of "reversals" existing in complete contrast to Europe.

European explorers and colonizers in their accounts concerning Australia and New Zealand can be seen to further reinforce the view or notion that the Antipodes is a world of reversals as the ancient and classical myths suggest. Brian Elliot in *The Landscape of Australian Poetry* (1967) discusses European explorers' first impressions of the Australian coast and landscape. Elliot writes:

> Luis de Torres was the first European actually to sight the Australian coast (1606), but he left no account of it. Certain Dutch captains touched at various places on the western side, but,

says A.W. Jose, 'they were not attracted by the look of the land, which they described as barren, while "wild, black and barbarous –cruel, poor and brutal", were some of their adjectives for the native inhabitants'. In 1642 Tasman went ashore at a point on the island now called after him, Tasmania; but hastily withdrew, terrified because his men reported the spoor of what they thought must be giants or ogres, and the tracks of an animal like a tiger.[32]

The discourse of the fantastic used in this account and in other explorers' accounts to describe the land and the native inhabitants is not unlike the discourse used in myth and legend to describe the "monsters" of the Antipodes, except in this case, the monsters become the indigenous inhabitants, European depictions of Aborigines in historical accounts as "perverse" and as "devils" also being discussed by Ryan.[33]

The association between the indigenous inhabitants of both Australia and New Zealand and the barbaric or primitive can be further seen in other European accounts. Hughes[34] discusses how William Dampier, an English seventeenth-century explorer, described the Australian Aborigines in 1688 as "the miserablest people in the World." In *A Voyage to New Holland* (1699), Dampier also describes the Indigenous inhabitants as having the "most unpleasant Looks and the worst Features of any People *[sic]* that ever I saw…"[35]

The New Zealand Maori were also described in less than favourable terms; Charles Darwin[36] writes in his account of his voyage on the H.M.S. Beagle: "I believe we were all glad to leave New Zealand; it is not a pleasant place; amongst the natives & of the English the greater part are the very refuse of Society. Neither is the country itself very attractive." It can be seen here that Darwin perceives both the natives but also the English New Zealanders as "the dregs" of civilization, on

the lower rungs of his evolutionary model. Darwin's first impression of Australia as he entered Port Jackson on the Beagle was also negative; Darwin[37] writes: "Having entered the harbor, [*sic*] it appeared fine & spacious; but the level country, showing on the cliff-formed shores bare & horizontal strata of sandstone, was covered by woods of thin scrubby trees that bespoke of useless sterility." For the most part Darwin found the Australian landscape "monotonous" and "the woods" "desolate and untidy" due to the native trees' shedding bark. Darwin also expressed his wonderment at the platypus and at the "strange character of the animals in this country as compared to the rest of the World."[38]

Forty years later in 1876, Australian writer Marcus Clarke echoed Darwin's comments concerning Australia's "strange" flora and fauna. Clarke, however, sees this "uniqueness" as an asset. Clarke [39] writes: "What is the dominant note of Australian scenery? That which is the dominant note of Edgar Allan Poe's poetry – Weird Melancholy." Clarke goes on to describe the Australian landscape and its mountain forests as "funereal, secret, stern"; white cockatoos "shrieking like evil souls"; the Bunyip rising from a lagoon "like monstrous sea-calf". The Australian landscape is, in Clarke's description, "All fear-inspiring and gloomy."[40]

P.R. Stephensen, another Australian writer and cultural critic, also sees the Australian landscape as "gloomy" and as containing "strange beasts and birds."[41] Writing in his *The Foundations of Culture in Australia* (1936), Stephensen[42] describes the Australian landscape:

> Australia is a unique country. All countries are unique but this one is particularly so. Visitors, such as D.H. Lawrence, have discerned a spiritual quality of ancient loveliness in our land itself. The flora and fauna are primitive, and for the most part

harmless to man, but to the visitor there is another element, of terror, in the Spirit of the Place. The blossoming of the waratah, the song of the lyrebird, typify the spirit of primitive loveliness in our continent; but the wail of the dingo, the gauntness of our tall trees by silent moonlight, can provide a shiver of terror to a newcomer.

These early Australian writers/critics draw on European notions that construct Australia and New Zealand as antipodean through what can be seen as a Gothic impulse. The Antipodes is terrifying because it is "other" to Europe, and even before the first land "sighting", Australia's and New Zealand's coastlines were depicted in ancient myths concerning the "South Land" as perverse, grotesque, monstrous, queer, and, essentially, as Gothic. The Australian and New Zealand landscapes were, once "sighted", similarly perceived as "desolate," as "unattractive", as possessing the same "weird melancholy" as Edgar Allan Poe's poetry, and as able to produce a "shiver of terror to a newcomer." [43]

The notion that the Antipodes or Southern lands were upside-down and monstrous in relation to Europe and to the Northern Hemisphere in general, has been duly reproduced in popular culture. In the 1942 horror film *Bowery at Midnight,* starring Bela Lugosi (who arguably played the most memorable Dracula in the 1930s film of the same name), a map of Australia hangs rather peculiarly over the door that leads downstairs to a "death room" where a professor of criminology (Lugosi) has murdered various men who are then resurrected as zombies by a schizophrenic doctor, the zombies attacking the professor at the film's end. [44] The association between Australia and "down below" connotes most obviously the "down under" tag usually associated with Australia or the Antipodes,

but also associates Australia with "the monstrous", with "the criminal" and hence with the Gothic.

The '70s British comedy series *The Goodies* [45] aired an episode in 1975 entitled "Scatty Safari" during which they visit Australia in order to capture Rolf Harris for their celebrity zoo. One scene shows the three Goodies wolf whistling at three Australian ladies. The ladies are male cross-dressers who hit the Goodies with their handbags, calling them "sexist." The scene resonates with the long-held belief that in the Antipodes there are cross-dressers and affronts to normality. Similarly in the U.S. cartoon series *Sabrina* (1999) [46] an episode entitled "Field of Screams" sees Sabrina try to outsmart monsters from the "netherworld" that want to take over Greendale via baseball. In one scene Sabrina mentions that the monsters are from Australia: here the myths concerning the race Antipodes as monstrous are employed in the most literal sense. Perhaps the most well-known reference to the Antipodes in pop culture can be seen in an episode of *The Simpsons* [47] entitled "Bart vs. Australia", where Australia is shown as "backwards" – the toilet water flushes the other way for instance, and corporal punishment takes the form of kicking the perpetrator in the backside with "the boot". These "backward" customs result in the Simpson family fleeing the country. Such representations show that older myths concerning the Antipodes and its perceived degeneracy are still well and truly alive. The episode synopsis on the official Simpson website further reveals that the Antipodes is still seen as backward or primitive stating: "Appalled by such savagery, Homer refuses to allow the Australians to "boot" his son, further fraying Australio-American relations."

Along with these American and British representations of the Antipodes as a monstrous and degenerate place there are Australia's Gothic related representations of itself as a nation. For instance, in the closing ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympics, drag queens were one of the main attractions, an inclusion that caused some controversy at the time. The featuring of drag queens (inspired by the popular Australian film *Priscilla – Queen of the Desert*) in the Olympics closing ceremony illustrates how antipodean myths concerning gender bending and transvestism are very much etched into the Australian national consciousness.[48] That Dame Edna Everage (a.k.a. Barry Humphries) is also a popular Australian icon lends credence to the suggestion that the myths concerning the Antipodes have heavily influenced or informed the (continuing) construction of an Australian national or cultural identity.[49]

These examples relate more specifically to Australia rather than New Zealand. However, New Zealand has in contemporary times been the location for various fantastic (to which the Gothic is closely related) [50] films. George Lucas' *Willow,* the television shows *Hercules* and *Xena*, and Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *King Kong* [51] are all set against the New Zealand landscape, the strange and fantastic worlds created by these films reflecting the way New Zealand was construed by the European imagination before and at the time of colonization. As Schafer[52] writes in relation to fantasy and European perceptions of New Zealand: "From the pakeha perspective, the sudden appearance of the shining, silvery-white mountains and clouds of New Zealand were like the apparitions in medieval romance, like the unpredictable and incomprehensible magic of sorcerers and

genies in fanciful oriental tales…" Thus, the construction of both Australia and New Zealand, even in contemporary times, through Europeanism (and North Americanism) as antipodean and as "other-worldly" has resulted in a gothicization of Australian and New Zealand (antipodean) cultures and national identities.

Goths, Gothic, & the Return of the Repressed

When Australia was colonized in 1788 and New Zealand in 1843,[53] the first Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* had been published, Gothic "ruins" erected, and Gothic romances became popular.[54] The myths surrounding the Antipodes and its direct or indirect appearance in "imaginary voyage" literature and in accounts of explorers' voyages were common.[55] In his essay *Inventing Australia* Richard White contends:

> Not only is the very idea of national identity a product of European history at a particular time, but each addition to the Australian identity has reflected changing intellectual needs and fashions in the West. In other words, not only is the idea of "Australia" itself a European invention, but men like Charles Darwin and Rudyard Kipling have contributed as much to what it means to be Australian as Arthur Streeton or Henry Lawson. The national identity is not "Born of the lean loins of the country itself", as one ardent nationalist put it, but is part of the "cultural baggage" which Europeans have brought with them, and with which we continue to encumber ourselves.[56]

Similarly Claudia Bell [57] writes, in *Inventing New Zealand,* of the impact of British settlement on the construction of New Zealand as a nation:

> The new residents had a clear national identity where they had come from. They arrived here, still referring to their place of origin as 'home'. They had brought with them many components of British identity: their allegiance to the British crown, language, customs, social rituals, food traditions, and so on. The new

colony they were creating drew heavily from the ideas of culture
that the British settlers brought with them.

This "cultural baggage", it could be argued, can be tied to particular European events and preoccupations prior to and at the time of the colonization of the South – the widespread systematization of the printing press, the exploration of the Antipodes, the fascination with the Goths and the appearance of Gothic architecture and literature.[58] In spite of these obvious British-Gothic links to both Australia and New Zealand, in his *The Fiction Fields of Australia* (1856) Frederick Sinnett[59] dismisses the idea of any European Gothic links to Australia or its literature due to its lack of "acquired" age: "It must be admitted that Mrs Radcliffe's genius would be quite thrown away here; and we must reconcile ourselves to the conviction that the foundations of a second "Castle of Otranto" can hardly be laid in Australia during our time." Sinnett seems to have wrongly attributed Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* to Ann Radcliffe and expresses the view that Australia, or the newly colonized lands (including New Zealand) do not have sufficient antiquities or ghosts that would enable Australian writers to utilize the Gothic.

Gerry Turcotte explains in his article "Footnotes to an Australian Gothic Script" that he faced this same view when he told other scholars that part of the research he was conducting for his PhD thesis was on the Gothic and Australian literature. Turcotte [60] explains:

> Six years ago, when I told people of my research interest, I was often met with disbelief. "Surely there's not much Australian Gothic Literature," [*sic*] said one researcher studying Christina Stead. Another, who had just read through Hal Porter's short stories, suggested that the Gothic was all in my mind. A British scholar I met on a guided tour of Saint Mary's Cathedral in

> Sydney thought I was mad. Australia was provincial, he said, but Gothic never. So I took him to the University of Sydney and pointed out a Kangaroo Gargoyle on one of the principal towers of the main quadrangle – all of which, like Saint Mary's Cathedral, is built in the Gothic style. And just for good measure, I read him a passage from Barbara Baynton's *Bush Studies.*

That the Gothic in all its forms can only be resolutely European is a common misconception concerning the existence of Gothic impulses in Australian and New Zealand culture(s), in spite of the profound European and British influence on both culture(s).

A scholar suggests to Gerry Turcotte that the Gothic in relation to Australia is all in his "mind", and while this comment suggests that the Gothic does not exist in Australian culture or its literature, film (and anything else for that matter), it aptly describes the Gothic and its relationship to the Antipodes; the European imagination/unconscious constructing a land and its people before actually viewing or experiencing it. The focus on "the mind" and "the unconscious" is a thematic preoccupation in the Gothic and the imagining of the Antipodes and the Southern Continent was, it could be argued, all in "the mind." To theorize this "imagining", a psychoanalytic approach is useful because of its focus on the unconscious and its close relationship with the Gothic.

Michelle A. Massé [61] suggests in her essay "Psychoanalysis and the Gothic" that both the Gothic and psychoanalysis emerge from "the same cultural unease", so that the Gothic and Freudianism are "cousins" and complement one another. Furthermore, the Freudian notion of "the uncanny" – which David Morris in "Gothic Sublimity" connects to the Gothic's version of the sublime (see chapter one of this study)[62] – can be seen at "the heart" of the Gothic, psychoanalysis

providing a "tool-box" of "interpretative strategies" for analyzing its themes. Massé suggests that many of the preoccupations or themes in the Gothic are complemented or present in psychoanalytic interpretation or subject matter. For instance, Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams,* in which Freud suggests that dreams are a result of a wish or desire and are linked to "older" concerns, can be paralleled with the Gothic's "dream-like" approach to narration in both literature and film and its reliance on symbolism. Both Gothic novels/films and psychoanalysis, according to Massé, also usually explore "the ostensibly irrational or 'distempered'", and the "repetitiveness" of Gothic themes and characterization represents or becomes "'a pointed reminder of cultural amnesia.'" This "cultural amnesia" can be theorized in relation to Freud's theory of "the return of the repressed" and can be employed in making connections between the construction of Australian and New Zealand cultures and the transportation of the Gothic as a cultural mode via British colonization.

Freud's theory of "the return of the repressed" suggests that in both individuals (ontogenetic) and in cultures (phylogenetic) [63] material and memories that are considered "dangerous" by the ego become repressed and are then only present in the unconscious – these dangerous impulses, thoughts, and recollections never disappear but are eventually reawakened by some event or "by some new precipitating cause." Due to the ego not allowing the repressed memories to surface in the conscious the unconscious seeks another way or path to let the material escape into the "waking" world.[64] As Freud [65] explains in relation to the "need" for this material to be released:

> […] since the path to normal satisfaction remains closed to it by what we may call the scar of repression, somewhere, at a weak spot, it opens another path for itself to what is known as a substitutive satisfaction, which comes to light as a symptom, without the acquiescence of the ego, but also without its understanding. All the phenomena of the formation of symptoms may justly be described as the 'return of the repressed'. Their distinguishing characteristic, however, is the far-reaching distortion to which the returning material has been subjected as compared with the original.

In relation to the European construction of the Antipodes as a Gothic and proto-postmodern space, "the return of the repressed" can be theoretically applied through suggesting that the European, and more specifically, the British fascination with the Goths and the proliferation of Gothic literature influenced, and perhaps was released into, the "waking" or physical world through the colonization of Australia and New Zealand.

Freud explains "the return of the repressed" in terms of the ego fending off any "dangerous" material or thoughts, and this has particular relevance to the appearance of Gothic literature in the eighteenth-century. The Gothic in eighteenth-century England was considered "dangerous" – dangerous to readers of the Gothic lest they be tempted to imitate art (in terms of breaking social rules and taboos); dangerous to Augustan ideals of order, symmetry and control;[66] and perhaps dangerous also, because informing Gothic literature or the Gothic novel were "the pillagers" and barbarians who overthrew the Roman Empire, whose cultural values formed the basis for Enlightenment ideals and European eighteenth-century thought and society.[67]

Samuel Kliger[68] suggests in *The Goths in England* that the Gothic romance/novel was influenced by the "re-construction" of the Goths and their alleged "idealization" of women as well as their sense of liberty and chivalry. Furthermore, Kliger suggests, the construction of the Goths or rather the re-construction of their culture(s), also influenced the building of the British nation and its customs and laws. Given that British culture, which includes the Gothic, was transported in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries to Australia and New Zealand,[69] the influence of this re-construction and interest in the Goths can be seen to have played, and indeed to continue to play, a significant role in Australian and New Zealand cultures, this "influence" subsequently reflected in each nation's cinema. There are various connections between the European/British construction of the Antipodes and their cultural re-construction of the Goths. Both the Antipodes (as a mythical race) and the Goths (or Germanic tribes) were depicted by ancient and classical writers as barbaric, uncouth and as abnormal to some degree, particularly in relation to gender and sexuality.[70] There are in fact some uncanny parallels that can be drawn between this perceived blurring of gender roles in relation to the Goths and the political events in Australia and New Zealand concerning women's suffrage.

The eighteenth-century historian Edward Gibbon [71] writes in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88) that Germanic women were considered "equal" to their male counterparts:

> The Germans treated their women with esteem and confidence, consulted them on every occasion of importance, and fondly believed that in their breasts resided a sanctity and wisdom more than human…. The rest of the sex, without being adored as

> goddesses, were respected as the free and equal companions of soldiers; associated even by the marriage ceremony to a life of toil, of danger, and of glory.

Kliger's[72] suggestion that the re-construction of "Gothic" culture, particularly in eighteenth-century thought, informed the British notions of democracy and liberty can be linked to the women's suffrage movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries in Britain and in other Western nations. The Gothic idea/notion, or at least the eighteenth-century construction of what constituted "Gothic" or Germanic culture and customs, suggests that women were considered "equal" and were included and important in public assemblies; consulted on issues of public concern; that "it was peculiar to the Celtic nations not to march, or fight, without the advice of women…"[73] Despite the strong suffrage movement in Britain and in spite of Kliger's suggestion that Germanic customs influenced British culture, it was in the Antipodes that women's political rights were first acknowledged in a modern Western democracy. In 1893 New Zealand was the first Western nation to grant voting rights to women; South Australia followed this lead in 1894, and in 1902 "The Commonwealth Franchise Act" made it possible for Australian women to have voting rights even if their state laws did not, and was the first country in the world to "permit women to stand for election to parliament." However, Aboriginal women did not win "the vote" until the 1967 referendum. It was 1920 before the entire United States gave women "the vote" and 1928 before British women won the vote "on the same terms as men." [74] Reasons given for New Zealand and Australia leading the way in terms of granting voting rights for women include that

they were relatively new nations from a Euro-centric point of view and that the old British class structure and customs had supposedly been "turned on its head." [75]

However, other contributing reasons it could be argued, were the influence of myths concerning the Antipodes and its sexual abnormalities or queerness in which women were thought to rule over men in a kind of sexual "upside-down" or "inverted" world that undermined British social norms,[76] and the European projection upon the constructed "blankness" of the Antipodes, a projection informed by the British "reconstruction" of "Gothic" customs and culture – "Gothic" women thought to have been valued by their male counterparts as advisors.[77] I am proposing then, through using a combination of historical material and Freudian psychoanalytical theory, that the European fantasies, myths and constructions concerning the Antipodes and the Goths, especially in relation to gender roles, were played out in Australia and New Zealand.

Along with the queerness associated with the Antipodes there are other similarities or parallels that can be drawn between British/European perceptions of the Goths and the manifestation of these ideas and fantasies in Australian and New Zealand culture(s). Australians and New Zealanders have a certain reputation in the international arena as "drinkers" and gamblers, as possessing athletic prowess, but as lacking in the arts or cultural areas; in short, they are considered "barbarians." Stereotypical images of Australia and New Zealand generally include "ocker" types, beach frequenters[78] and sporting "heroes" [79] – none of whom is "cultured" in terms of the appreciation of art in any sense, nor can they be attributed with the pursuit of intellectual interests. These constructed national characteristics bear

striking similarities to the constructed cultural characteristics of the Goths. Tacitus[80] writes in relation to the Germanic peoples: "To drink away the day and night disgraces no one. Brawls are frequent, as is normal among the intoxicated, and seldom end in mere abuse, but more often in slaughter and bloodshed." He goes on to describe Gothic culture: "Surprisingly gambling for them is a serious matter, in which they engage when sober, so recklessly do they win and lose that when all is gone they stake their bodily freedom on the last and final throw." In relation to alcohol and Australian culture, Fiske, Hodge and Turner[81] state: "The Australian image has had an alcohol problem from the earliest days of the colony…"

Along with alcohol or "drinking" associated with the national and perhaps international Australian image, gambling is also a popular national pastime with one fifth of the world's electronic gaming machines in Australia, and 82% of adult Australians participating in the gambling industry – the highest rate in the world.[82] New Zealand can also be seen as a gambling nation, the website for the New Zealand Gambling Problem Helpline Service stating: "New Zealanders have a reputation as some of the world's heaviest gamblers." [83] The Goths were also depicted by the Romans and by Classical thinkers as warlike, and both the construction of Australians and New Zealanders as athletic or as able to excel at sports reveals another parallel between both cultures. George Orwell [84] writes that "serious sport…is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of the rules and a sadistic pleasure in watching violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting." Peter Kell [85] in *Good Sports* suggests, "sport has played a vital role

in nourishing the symbolism, rituals and attitudes that characterized Australianness." In New Zealand also, sport has played a defining/influential role in nation building; as Robin McConnell and Margot Edwards [86] write in *Sport in New Zealand Society*: "Sport is one of the prevailing domains of social experiences in New Zealand."

Sport, in both Australian and New Zealand cultures, is also given higher status than anything in "the arts." For example, Peter Kell [87] explains why the choice of Mandawuy Yunupingu, the lead singer of Yothu Yindi, as 1992 Australian of the Year, and the choice of artist Arthur Boyd for the same award in 1995 received harsh criticism, particularly on talkback radio. Talkback radio hosts Alan Jones and Stan Zemanek both questioned what the two artists had done for Australia, Zemanek commenting, in relation to the choice of Boyd, that the selection panel for the "Australian of the Year" awards were a group of "artsy, fartsy wankers." However, when Mark Taylor, the captain of the Australian cricket team won Australian of the Year in 1999, praise was bestowed on the cricketer, and mainstream talkback radio did not question the choice. As Kell observes:

> In referring to the selection panel of the Australia Day awards as a group of "artsy fartsy wankers", Zemanek reveals the philistine streak in Australian society that marginalizes the arts as a meaningless pastime and sees sport as a universally popular element in Australian society.

The perceived barbarity and uncultured nature of Australians has also been highlighted in popular culture. In *The Goodies'* "Scatty Safari" (1979) [88] Australians are shown to be uncultured, their barbarism made apparent in a scene just after the Goodies have arrived in Australia. A sign is shown, stating:

Sydney Opera House
Home of Aussie Culture
Tonite
Wallabies Wrestling in Mud

Similarly, in the U.S. television mini-series *Life With Judy Garland – Me and My Shadows* (2001), in a scene where she has returned from an Australian tour having been heckled off the stage, Judy Garland (ironically played by Australian actress Judy Davis), calls Australians "barbarians."[89] Australian and New Zealand cultures are like the Goths, constructed through Europeanism (and North Americanism) as the antitheses of Enlightenment ideals through the cultures' elevation of physical or warlike activities in the form of sport, and the denigration of "the arts" and artists.

The Fantastic Uncanny and the Queering of the Antipodes

Freud's theory concerning "the return of the repressed" is associated with "the uncanny", which may be applied to the European construction of the Antipodes as the antithesis of Enlightenment ideals. The uncanny contains two levels of meaning: *das Heimlich* (homely and familiar) and *das Unheimlich* (the "unhomely" and unfamiliar).[90] The *Unheimlich* works to reveal what is "hidden" by *Heimlich,* and both work simultaneously to produce an uncanny effect. The uncanny is thus associated with a doubling impulse or effect, what is old and familiar returning or reappearing in a new or "other" form(s). [91] According to Freud,

> [an] uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary reappears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full function of the thing it symbolizes, and so on. [92]

Freud [93] also suggests that there are perhaps two reasons for "the uncanny" to occur: "an uncanny experience occurs either when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more confirmed."

The latter definition of "the uncanny", where primitive beliefs are overcome and again revisited can be applied to the European relationship with the mythic Antipodes. Its very existence disputed in the Middle Ages, antipodean myths were revisited in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, and the line between the imaginary and the real became blurred through European voyages and exploration.[94] Through this blurring of the line between the unreal and the real it can be argued in psychoanalytical terms that, due to the existence of the Antipodes as a "space" or place in the European imagination long before colonization, the colonial experience of both Australia and New Zealand was/is "uncanny". In other words, due to myths surrounding the Antipodes or the "Great South Land" as a place(s) of perversity and abnormalities in relation to Enlightenment ideals, it is not surprising that these depictions or stories concerning what are now known as Australia and New Zealand might influence the actual experience of the place upon European "discovery" and colonization. European familiarity with the Antipodes through myth together with unfamiliarity with it in a physical/actual sense, might well produce the effect of "the uncanny".

Rosemary Jackson's explorations of the fantastic (with which the Gothic is closely aligned) in *Fantasy* can be applied to the construction of Australia/New Zealand as European "other" and as a Gothic/(proto)-postmodern space.[95] While

the Euro-centric construction(s) of Australia and New Zealand differs through Australia's function as a penal colony and New Zealand's as the last chance for a British utopia,[96] as nations they were both construed via a Euro-centric discourse that locates them in the realm of the fantastic and in the realm of the uncanny. The European perceptions of and construction of the Antipodes as "topsy-turvy", "inverted" or some kind of "reversal" of nature [97] can be understood in fantastic terms. Jackson defines the fantastic as a literary mode that is on "the edge", between, beyond, underneath, inverted, or reversed.[98]

Furthermore, New Zealand was perceived by the British as some kind of "double" or replica of Britain, and a strong or constant theme in the fantastic, and more specifically in the Gothic, is "the double" or the *doppelganger*.[99] The Antipodes, it could be argued, was the subject of so much myth and legend surrounding the existence of the Southern Continent that when it was actually seen, when it metamorphosed from the imaginary to the real in the European experience, it collapsed real/unreal distinctions. This imagining of, and subsequent making "real"/colonization of Australia and New Zealand can be seen to have fulfilled a need in the European imagination/unconscious; fulfilled the absence or loss of history, particularly, I am proposing, in connection with the Goths.[100] As discussed previously, the European, and particularly the British construction of the Goths in the eighteenth-century, seemed to fill in the blanks (so to speak) in relation to the lack of literature and information about the Germanic tribes that overran and occupied Rome for a time. This European fascination with the Goths coincided with the advent of the printing press, and the European willingness to fill the void

left by the so-called illiterate and uneducated Goths, is perhaps connected to their overall desire to fill in all perceived historical "empty" spaces in order to give them meaning, to make the spaces or blanks textual. Since Australia and New Zealand were considered two of the last empty spaces to be written upon or filled in with European meaning,[101] and given that their colonization occurred in the eighteenth-century at a time when the first Gothic novel appeared, and when there was a general interest or fascination with the elusive Goths and their apparent lack of history and artifacts, it is not beyond the realms of possibility, that the meaning inscribed into these new spaces was a projection of the British, or more broadly, the European unconscious desire to recreate Gothic or Goth culture.

Rosemary Jackson's explorations of the fantastic through psychoanalytic means in *Fantasy* can be employed to illuminate further the construction of Australia/New Zealand (the Antipodes) as the negation of European norms, and as a space in which European desires could be projected. Jackson[102] draws from Todorov's work on the fantastic in literature but modifies his understanding of fantasy by including psychoanalysis as a means to analyze "the fantastic". Jackson explores the Freudian concept of the uncanny, the construction of the subject, the subject/object relationship, and the history of the Gothic and the fantastic, the former seen as related to the latter. Todorov[103] divided "the fantastic" into four main types: Pure Uncanny, Fantastic Uncanny, Fantastic Marvelous, and Pure Marvelous. The "Fantastic Uncanny" is that in which "strangeness" is perceived through the subject (the unconscious/the mind),[104] and can be applied to the Australian/New Zealand colonial experience due to the colonists' subjective imagining of the southern

continent before actual colonization. Jackson[105] also discusses Freud's stages of development of the subject and of culture working from the "animistic" or "auto-erotic" stage; to the point when "the subject" idolizes something greater than the self (God(s)); to "the scientific" or rational stage, when supernatural events and the unexplainable are contained within rational discourse(s). Freud's theory underpinning this model suggests an uncanny experience or effect occurs because of the desire to return to the first stage where the self or the subject defines itself in relation only to its self and not to external objects. Jackson[106] suggests that this theory works toward "undifferentiation"- a blurring of boundaries between the imaginary and the real: the subject desires the first animistic stage, thereby producing an uncanny effect due to the tension between the rational and what can be considered "the irrational".

Freud's psychological evolutionary model associates queerness with a return to a more uncivilized state. Freud's stages of individual and cultural evolution or development advocate that humans have evolved from a hermaphroditic or bisexual state of being to two distinct sexes, same-sex desire being considered closer to "the primitive". Freud [107] writes: "long-familiar facts of anatomy lead us to suppose that an originally bisexual physical disposition has, in the course of evolution, become modified into a unisexual one, leaving behind only a few traces of the sex that has become atrophied." As Steven Angelides[108] observes in *A History of Bisexuality*: "For Freud, civilization was almost synonymous with heterosexuality. Any residual trace of the atavistic bisexual disposition was a regression to a state of primitivity." Freud, according to Angelides, drew heavily upon Lamarckian and Darwinian

evolutionary and scientific theories in the creation of his psychological model,[109] Darwin,[110] writing in *The Descent of Man* (1871), observed: "some remote progenitor of the whole vertebrate kingdom appears to have been hermaphrodite or androgynous." This association between queerness in terms of unclear sexual/gender boundaries and primitiveness also contributes to, or can be located in, the European construction of the Antipodes. Although Darwinian and Freudian theories concerning sexuality and evolution came to the fore in the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries well after Australia's and New Zealand's colonization by the British, both nations were still being constructed in terms of cultural identities (an ongoing process), and such evolutionary theories perhaps reinforced European myths that imagined the Antipodes as populated by cross-dressers and hermaphrodites. These Darwinian and Freudian evolutionary theories were in vogue long before "the Renaissance" in the Australian and New Zealand film industries in the 1970s, and their connections between what can be termed queerness and "the primitive" can be seen as duly reproduced in certain antipodean films in the second part of this study, and as such contribute to the Euro-centric gothicization of the Antipodes.

In part two of this study, where Australian and New Zealand films are analyzed in terms of their use of the Gothic as a proto-postmodern/then postmodernized cultural form, there are various instances where primitiveness is associated with the blurring of sexual boundaries and an emphasis on the ex-centric, or with what can be called polymorphous sexualities. The ex-centricity or queerness associated with

the Antipodes and its cinema(s) is pointed out by Ros Jennings and Loykie Lominé in "Nationality and New Queer Cinema: Australian Film":

> One way of explaining Australia's complex and often dissonant antipodean relationship to global culture is that Australia is looking awry at dominant Western culture. As such, Australia occupies a marginal space that could even be interpreted as resembling a 'queer' space.[111]

Although only Australia is located in Jennings' and Lominé's essay as able to be theorized as a queer space, New Zealand, due to its similarly constructed antipodean status can be seen to constitute a queer space also. The ex-centricity of Antipodean cinema that is implied by Jennings and Lominé is explored in the next chapter of this study.

This chapter has attempted to illustrate the European construction of the Antipodes as a Gothic/(proto)-postmodern space, suggesting that European fantasies concerning the Goths and the Great Southern Land culminated in the acting out of an unconscious desire to recreate myths and fantasies concerning the Antipodes, such fantasies made real upon the British colonization of Australia and New Zealand. Along with the mythic element present in the construction of the Antipodes as a monstrous, perverse, and, as advocated in this chapter, a Gothic or gothicized space lies the historical dimension in this argument: the colonization of Australia/New Zealand occurring at the time of the rise of the Gothic novel and literature. This combination of historical and psychoanalytic theorization of the European construction of the Antipodes as a Gothic and hence, proto-postmodern space, is used in chapter three to show how in Australian and New Zealand cinema(s), the Euro-centric cultural constructions of the Antipodes in

Gothic/(proto)-postmodern terms is reflected or reproduced in both nations' feature

film industries, and is central to the "Antipodean social imaginary."

Notes

1. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Enquiry into Freud,* Abacus, London, 1972, p. 62.

2. See Lewis Carroll, "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (1865) in Hugh Haughton(ed), *Lewis Carroll: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass and what Alice found there, Penguin* Books, London, 1998, p. 11.

3. See Oscar Wilde, "The Importance of Being Earnest" (1895) in Richard Aldington and and Stanley Weintraub (eds), *The Portable Oscar Wilde*, Viking Penguin Inc, Harmondsworth, 1981, p. 463. It can be seen in this dialogue that Australia is constructed as other-worldly and as uncivilized – for instance, "neckties" are not needed. It is also constructed as in-between "this world" and the "next world."

4. See Sigmund Freud, "The return of the repressed" in James Strachey and Anna Freud (eds), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Hogarth Press, London, 1964, pp. 124-7. See also Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' (1919) in Albert Dickson (ed), *Sigmund Freud, Volume 14: Art and Literature,* Penguin Books Ltd, 1990, pp. 335-76.

5. Samuel Kliger, *The Goths in England: A Study in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Thought,* Octagon Books, New York, 1972, pp. 1-3.

6. David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: The Gothic Tradition,* Longman, New York, 1996, p. 5.

7. Michelle Massé, "Psychoanalysis and the Gothic" in David Punter (ed), *A Companion to the Gothic,* Blackwell Publishers Inc, Oxford, 2000, pp. 230-1. Massé suggests that the Gothic has influenced the development of psychoanalysis, and that psychoanalysis "illuminates the Gothic explicitly and implicitly."

8. See Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 1996, p. 79. Jagose points out that psychoanalysis or psychoanalytical approaches have "radical implications for the common-sense assumption that the subject is both whole and self-knowing" through the split between the unconscious and the conscious and so can be connected to the postmodern fragmentation or fracturing of self.

9. Punter, op. cit., p. 28.

10. See Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia,* Cambridge University Press, New York, 1996, pp. 107-12, where he discusses Euro-centric constructions of the Antipodes as a perverse and abnormal place.

11. For an account of the use of Australia as a penal colony, see Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore: A History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia, 1787-1868,* The Harvill Press, London, pp. 84-203. See Kliger, op. cit., p 1, in relation to the British reconstruction of the Goths.

12. See Ryan, op. cit., pp. 105-11, in relation to the construction of the Antipodes through European myth(s). In relation to the blurring of fact and fiction in eighteenth-century "imaginary voyage" literature that included the use of myths about the antipodes see: Paul Longely-Arthur, "Capturing the Antipodes: Imaginary Voyages and the Romantic Imagination", Elizabeth Ruinard and Elspeth Tilley (eds), *Fresh Cuts: New Talents 2001,* p. 192. He writes: "By convention,

eighteenth century imaginary voyages closely simulated the rhetoric and literary conventions used in actual European sea voyage accounts. And because the Antipodes remained largely unknown to European readers, there were no accepted standards from which to make reliable measurements of the Antipodes in imaginary voyages."

13. Ryan, op. cit., pp. 107-11.

14. See Allan Lloyd Smith, "Postmodernism/Gothicism" in Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith (eds), *Modern Gothic: A Reader,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996, pp. 6-7.

15. Longley-Arthur, op. cit., p. 191, states: "One of the most striking and typical features of imaginary voyages is their projection of visions of European colonization onto unknown regions in the Antipodes."

16. Gerry Turcotte, "Australian Gothic" in Marie Mulvey-Roberts (ed), *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*, Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, p. 11.

17. For information concerning differences between the colonization of the Antipodes and of other Western nations, especially the United States of America, see: Ross Gibson, *South of the West: Postcolonialism and the Narrative Construction of Australia,* Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1992, p. 12. See also Ryan, op. cit., p. 105, for his suggestion that Australia/the Antipodes is unique compared with the European construction of Africa or America, as it is, through European cartography "…formed as a blank" and "filled occasionally by fantasy", a projection of "blankness" itself. Ryan suggests that Africa and America were, through European cartography, constructed as empty spaces, but "subsequently filled", while Australia is "filled in" "by projections of blankness."

18. See Hughes, op. cit., pp. 43-4.

19. See John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought,* Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1981, p. 11 and p. 47.

20. ibid., pp. 42-3.

21. Ryan, op.cit., p. 107. Also see Friedman, op.cit., p. 43.

22. Friedman, op.cit., pp. 126-7.

23. ibid., pp. 127-8.

24. Ryan, op. cit., p. 106.

25. See Augustine, "Concerning the City of God against the Pagans" in R.W. Dyson (ed), *Augustine: Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans,* Harmondsworth, New York, (Book xvi), p. 664. See also Ryan, op.cit., p. 107.

26. Ryan, op.cit., pp. 107-9. In relation to the representation or, rather, non-representation of the Antipodes on medieval maps, go to pp. 115-7. The quote is from p. 117.

27. ibid., p. 107.

28. ibid., p. 108-9.

29. ibid., p. 109.

30. Hughes, op. cit., p. 44.

31. ibid.

32. Brian Elliot, *The Landscape of Australian Poetry,* F. W. Cheshire Publishing, Melbourne, 1967, p. 6.

33. For information in relation to European constructions of Australian Aborigines as perverse or as devils see: Ryan, op.cit., pp. 111-112 and pp. 141-144.

34. Dampier as cited in Hughes, op. cit., p. 48.

35. See William Dampier, "A Voyage to New Holland" in James Spencer (ed) *William Dampier: A Voyage to New Holland – The English Voyage of Discovery to the South Seas in 1699,* Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd, Gloucester, 1981, p. 147.

36. See Darwin in Nora Barlow (ed), *Charles Darwin's Diary of the Voyage of H.M.S. "Beagle",* Cambridge University Press, London, (1839) 1933, p. 375. Darwin visited New Zealand at the end of 1835 and visited Australia in 1836. Darwin's evolutionary theories, where humans evolve from what are perceived to be lower animal forms, were used in science, sexology and psychology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These theories were used to prove white heterosexual man's "superiority" to "lower" species of human; namely blacks, women, and homosexuals (basically anything other than the bourgeois white hetero male). See Steven Angelides, *A History of Bisexuality,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001, pp. 31-2 and pp. 40-43.

37. Darwin, op.cit., p. 375.

38. ibid., pp. 377-8 and pp. 382- 3.

39. See Marcus Clarke's "Preface" to Adam Lindsay Gordon's "Sea Spray and Smoke Drift" (1876) in Michael Wilding (ed), *Marcus Clarke*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1976, p. 645.

40. ibid., pp. 645-6.

41. See P.R. Stephenson, *The Foundations of Culture in Australia: An essay Towards National Self-respect,* The Forward Press Ltd, Sydney, 1936, p. 11.

42. ibid.

43. ibid.

44. For more details see the filmography

45. See the teleography for details.

46. See the teleography.

47. See a synopsis of "Bart vs Australia" at www.thesimpsons.com in the "episode guide." See the teleography for more details.

48. For instance see the transcript for a story entitled "Glittering Ceremony" that *Lateline* ran on 23/08/2000. Go to: www.abc.net.au/lateline/stories/s166926.htm The featuring of a "float of drag queens" in the closing ceremony is criticized by some as "offensive and a poor reflection of Australia."

49. For information on Melbourne housewife and "megastar" Dame Edna Everage go to: www.dame-edna.com. For information on Edna's alter ego Barry Humphries go to www.can.net.au/articles/barryhumphries.

50. Jackson sees the Gothic as expressive of the fantastic; She writes: "As a perennial literary mode, fantasy can be traced back to ancient myths, legends, folklore, carnival art. But its more immediate roots lie in that literature of unreason and terror which has been designated Gothic." See Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion,* Methuen& Co Ltd, London, p. 95.

51. For information concerning the films *Willow* and *Hercules,* see: Helen Martin and Sam Edwards, *New Zealand Film, 1912-1996,* Oxford University Press, Auckland, pp. 179, 194, and 198. Go to www.escapeto/xenaworld and to the

section "New Zealand" for information concerning *Xena.* In relation to *The Lord of the Rings* and connections to New Zealand see Peter Calder, "'Kiwi lord of 'rings'", *Variety* magazine, October 16-22, Vol. 380, Issue 9, 2000, p. 105. Peter Jackson, the director of the film, is quoted as stating: 'The landscape and the raw beauty of these places is ideal for the story.' More recently Peter Jackson used the New Zealand landscape for the fantastic world required for his remake of *King Kong* (which is yet to be released).

52. William J. Schafer, *Mapping the Godzone: A Primer on New Zealand Literature and Culture,* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1998, p. 59.

53. See Hughes, op. cit., pp. 84-128, for an account of the British colonization of Australia. In relation to New Zealand see Claudia Bell, *Inventing New Zealand: Everyday Myths of Pakeha Identity,* Penguin Books, Auckland, pp. 3-7.

54. See Mulvey-Roberts, op. cit., pp. 246-49, for information regarding *The Castle of Otranto* and pp 90-102 in relation to Gothic ruins or the Gothic revival. Also see Fred Botting, *Gothic,* Routledge, London, 1996, p. 32. For further detail on the popularity of Gothic romances or Sentimental novels see David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: The Gothic Tradition,* Longman, New York, 1996, p. 27.

55. See Longley-Arthur, op. cit., p. 186-195.

56. See Richard White, "Inventing Australia", in Gilllian Whitlock and David Carter (eds) *Images of Australia: An Introductory Reader in Australian Studies,* University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1992, p. 24.

57. Bell, op. cit., p. 6.

58. For information concerning the systemization of the printing press in the Renaissance see Gibson, op. cit., pp. 1-10. Gibson suggests that the creation of the printing press along with increased explorations and voyages eventuated in the world 'being written into European history.'(p. 5). See also Walter J. Ong, 'System, space, and intellect in Renaissance symbolism', in his *The Barbarian Within and Other Fugitive Essays and Studies,* The Macmillan Company, New York, 1962. See Punter, *Literature of Terror*, p. 5, and Kliger, *Goths in England*, p. 3, concerning the Goths and Gothic literature and architecture.

59. Sinnett (1856) in Cecil Hadgraft (ed), *Frederick Sinnett: The Fiction Fields of Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1966, p. 23. Either Sinnett has mistakenly attributed *Castle of Otranto* to Radcliffe or he means that both Radcliffe's novels and a Gothic novel such as *Otranto* could not be written in an Australian context. Sinnett's comments have been interpreted as attributing Walpole's work to Radcliffe. See for instance Rebecca McNeer's article "'What Might be True"; the Diverse Relationships of Australian Novels and Fact' in *Antipodes: A North American Journal of Australian Literature,* Vol. 18, No. 1. 2004, pp. 68-71. McNeer writes: "Sinnett aptly notes that a novel similar to Ann Radcliffe's *The Castle of Otranto* would be impossible in Australia…"(p. 70).

60. Gerry Turcotte, "Footnotes to an Australian Gothic Script", *Antipodes: A North American Journal of Australian Literature*, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 127.

61. See Massé, op. cit., pp. 230-6. The following quotes are also from this source.

62. See David Morris, "Gothic Sublimity" in *New Literary History,* (Winter, 1985), pp. 299-319.

63. For an in depth discussion concerning ontogenetic and phylogenetic evolution, see Marcuse, op. cit., chapter two and three.

64. See Freud, "The return of the repressed", op. cit., pp. 126-7.

65. ibid., p. 127.

66. For the "dangers" posed by the Gothic to Augustan ideals and to readers of Gothic literature see: Fred Botting, *Gothic,* Routledge, London, 1996, p. 26 and p. 32.

67. Kliger, op. cit., p. 220.

68. ibid., pp. 1-3 and p. 220.

69. Gerry Turcotte, "Australian Gothic" in Mulvey-Roberts, op. cit., p. 10. Turcotte writes in relation to the "transportation" of the Gothic to Australia: "…the fact that settlement began in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, during the rise of the Gothic as a sensationalist and resonantly influential form, contributes to its impact on the literature of Australia."

70. See Friedman, op. cit., p.11, pp. 46-9, and pp.126-7, for information concerning the Antipodes as a mythical and perverse race. See also Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* Wordsworth Editions Ltd, Hertfordshire, 1998, p. 199, in which the Goths are depicted as abnormal in terms of gender roles and social customs.

71. Gibbon, op. cit., p. 199. All following quotes are from this source.

72. Kliger, op. cit., pp. 1-3.

73. ibid., p. 222.

74. See Kirsten Lees, *Votes for Women: The Australian Story,* Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, St Leonards, 1995, p. xiii.

75. ibid., p. xv.

76. See Ryan, op. cit., p. 109.

77. Gibbon, op. cit., p. 199.

78. See John Fiske, Bob Hodge, Graeme Turner, *Myths of Oz,* Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1987, p. 64.

79. See Peter Kell, *Good Sports: Australian Sport and the Myth of the Fair Go,* Pluto Press, Sydney, 2000, p. 23.

80. Tacitus, op. cit., pp. 86-7.

81. Fiske, op. cit., p. 1.

82. See Justin Healey (ed), "Gambling in Australia", *Issues in Society*, Volume 153, 2001, p. 8, www.spinneypress.com.au

83. See "What is Compulsive Gambling" under "General Information" at the "Gambling Problem Helpline Service" website, www.gamblingproblem.co.nz

84. Orwell as cited in Kell, op. cit., p. 24.

85. ibid., p. 23.

86. Robin McConnell and Margot Edwards, "Sport and Identity in New Zealand" in Chris Collins (ed), *Sport in New Zealand Society,* Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, NZ, 2000, p. 117.

87. Kell, op. cit., pp. 114-16. The quotes are from p. 115.

88. See the teleography for details.

89. See the teleography for details.

90. Sigmund Freud, "The uncanny", op. cit., p. 345.

91. ibid., p. 356 and p. 363.

92. ibid., p. 367.

93. ibid., p. 372.

94. See Augustine, op. cit., p. 664, in relation to the argument that the Antipodes did not exist. See Ryan, op. cit., pp.109-10, for information concerning the European realization that the South Land did exist, and for an exploration of the connections between the myths of perversity and the South Land and the colonizers' descriptions of perversity when they did arrive.

95. Jackson, op. cit., links the Gothic to the fantastic, pp. 95-122.

96. See Hughes, op cit, p xi-xvi, for a history of Australia as a penal colony. See Schafer, op.cit., p. 18, in relation to the construction of New Zealand as the last chance for a European utopia.

97. See Ryan, op. cit., pp. 109-12, for his suggestion that Europeans saw Australia or the Antipodes as perverse. Or see Turcotte, "Australian Gothic", op. cit., p. 10, for his suggestion that Australia appeared to be a world of reversals from a British/European point of view.

98. See Jackson, op. cit., p. 65.

99. See Schafer, op. cit., p. 18, in relation to New Zealand as a "replica" of Britain, and see Mulvey-Roberts, op. cit., p. 264, in relation to "the doppelganger" as a theme/motif in the Gothic.

100. See Jackson, op cit, p 32, for an explanation of "the Fantastic-Uncanny". For a discussion about the British/European fascination with the Goths and their lack of history see: Robin Sowerby, "The Goths in History and Pre-Gothic Gothic" in Punter, *A Companion to the Gothic,* op. cit., p.16.

101. See Gibson, op. cit., p. 6. In his discussion concerning the Renaissance and the widespread systemization of the printing press in the sixteenth-century, coinciding with sea voyages and exploration, Gibson suggests that Australia was one of the last "sites" to be known or mapped.

102. See Jackson, op. cit., pp. 13-82.

103. See Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre,* Western Reserve University, Cleveland, 1973, p. 44.

104. ibid. See also Jackson, op. cit., p. 32, where she analyzes Todorov's categories of the fantastic, describing the Fantastic-Uncanny as where "strange events" have a "subjective origin." See also Todorov, op.cit., pp. 44-5, for his explanation of the 'Fantastic-Uncanny' as a literary sub-genre of the fantastic. In literature that falls under Todorov's Fantastic-Uncanny sub-genre, events that are perceived as supernatural by both character and reader are explained in rational terms at a story's conclusion – the "strange" events either occurring in the mind of the character rather than existing in reality, or the strange events do take place but can be rationally explained. This is relevant to the European imagining and colonization of the antipodes due to the subjective origin of the constructed strangeness of the land(s) "down-under" and the fact that eventually the mysteriousness of the Antipodes was "known" and able to be explained.

105. Jackson, op. cit., p. 71, summarizes Freud's (*Totem and Taboo*) stages of phylogenetic and ontogenetic evolution. Jackson links the animistic or first stage to the uncanny through its defiance of "the reality principle." The animistic (first)

stage is linked to narcissism and auto-eroticism; The second, or religious stage is where "power is transferred to gods, yet the individual believes he has some influence with them", the third or scientific stage is where the "subject becomes resigned to the laws of necessity and the inevitability of death" and where there is an abandonment to the "reality principle."

106. Jackson, op.cit., p. 72, suggests that the fantastic "can be seen as corresponding to the first stage in Freud's evolutionary model…when primitive man and the young child have no sense of difference between self and other, subject and object worlds."

107. See Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works" in Angela Richards and Albert Dickson (eds), *Sigmund Freud, Volume 7: On Sexuality,* Penguin Books Ltd, London, 1991, p. 52.

108. See Angelides, op. cit., p. 62.

109. ibid, pp. 50-1.

110. See Darwin, "The Descent of Man" (1871) in the Modern Library series (there are no editors' names given), *Charles Darwin: The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man,* Random House Inc, New York, (date not stated), p. 525.

111. See Ros Jennings and Loykie Lominé, "Nationality and New Queer Cinema: Australian Film," in Michelle Aaron (ed), *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader,* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2004, p. 145.

Antipodean Cinema

An Uneasy Background

Less constrained by the imperative of soap opera to appeal to the broadest possible audience, Australian feature films reflect a more diverse, and often disturbing, image of 'the lucky country'. As a group, Australia's filmmakers have probed the darker depths…   Debi Enker[1]

Parts of Australian culture are monstrous – but no more monstrous than parts of other cultures. The difference is that Australian self-denigration is an important component of the culture alongside its celebratory self-promotion. It is a disarming feature of Australian film-making and culture generally that it should be so prepared to emphasize and dramatize the worst parts of the culture; and to present these as representative of it.

Tom O'Regan[2]

I've often had the feeling that, perhaps this is the edge of the world and maybe these narrow islands really are adrift, and we may all just topple over the edge into oblivion. This sense of the precarious is something one often feels in New Zealand films - the feeling that something awful, is about to begin.

Sam Neill[3]

Antipodean cinema, the Gothic, and postmodernism

While government support of the Australian/New Zealand film industries in the

1970s and 1980s produced what can arguably be considered highly nationalistic

and conservative films as *The Man from Snowy* River (1982) and *Crocodile*

Dundee (1986),[4] it also gave rise to films that utilize the Gothic in varying degrees.

In the 1980s, while *Crocodile Dundee* did famously well at the U.S. box office and

at home, so too did the *Mad Max* trilogy.[5] The Peter Weir films *The Cars that Ate*

Paris (1974) and *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), though never breaking into the

U.S. or Hollywood mainstream, did reasonably well in art-house cinemas in

various countries, as well as at the Cannes Film Festival, receiving critical acclaim.[6]

During the 1970s and 1980s Australian-made films *Wake in Fright* (1971)*, The Cars that ate Paris* (1974)*, Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975)*, Summerfield* (1977)*, The Night the Prowler* (1978)*, Shame* (1987), the *Mad Max* trilogy (1979-1985) (and a host of other films), can be seen as making use of Gothic/postmodern forms of representation through their exploration of taboo subject matter, including the queering of gender/sex identities, along with their proclivity for intertextuality, parody and pastiche. Similarly, in the 1990s the Australian film *Bad Boy Bubby* (1993)*, and the New Zealand films *The Piano* (1993) and *Heavenly Creatures* (1994) all display Gothic/postmodern tendencies in their subject matter and cinematic styles.[7] According to Tom O'Regan in *Australian National Cinema* (1996), Australian cinema, is not usually classified as postmodernist, and sometimes not even as modernist, naturalism and realism generally thought to be its dominant ideological modes of representation. O'Regan comments: "It is apparently a cinema yet to grasp its mission as cinema; while the Hollywood cinema with its self-referentiality, its emphasis on myth and its negotiation of the imaginary is seen as modernist and even post-modernist."[8]

That Australian cinema is not usually critically assessed in terms of postmodernism is surprising, considering that North American culture and its cinema, with which postmodernism is usually associated, has had a massive impact on Australian culture, most noticeably from the 1950s onward.[9] The fact that the Australian film industry became more fully established during the 1970s, when

postmodern forms of representation came to the fore in fiction, film and rock music[10], also begs the question why Australian cinema has been continually and ideologically located for the most part, in naturalistic and realist terms. In spite of this general interpretative trend Gothic/postmodern forms of representation have been located in both Australian and New Zealand films, and even in the construction of Antipodean culture(s) itself.[11] For instance, through the concept of "antipodean camp" Nick Perry indirectly alludes in *Hyperreality and Global Culture* (1998) to a Gothic/proto-postmodern sensibility that has developed into a postmodern cultural self-awareness in Antipodean cinema.[12] Perry, who is mostly concerned with the manifestation of "antipodean camp" in New Zealand culture, names Roger Donaldson's *Smash Palace* (1981), Vincent Ward's *The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey* (1988), Peter Jackson's *Braindead* (1992) and *Heavenly Creatures,* as well as Jane Campion's *The Piano* as examples of New Zealand films that are prone to "excess and exaggeration" and that play with "stylistic surfaces."[13] "Antipodean camp" is, in Perry's work, a stylistic term that describes the simultaneous appropriation and subversion of dominant North American and European cultural elements in the culturally and geographically marginalized and post-colonial Antipodes.[14]

The Euro-centric construction of the Antipodes as an ex-centric or queer space is central to Perry's conception of "antipodean camp." Although Perry does not explicitly link the Gothic with the postmodern in his exploration of Antipodean culture and its "kitschy"[15] tendencies, it is argued in this chapter that Euro-centric constructions of Australian and New Zealand cultures in Gothic/(proto)-

postmodern related terms is highly evident in Antipodean cinema. Furthermore, as will be fully demonstrated in part two of this study, this Gothic impulse over the course of time (most noticeably since the 1970s) has become intertwined with postmodernist narrative devices in what can be termed "Antipodean Gothic cinema."

There is often debate about what actually constitutes the Australianness or New Zealandness of each antipodean nation's cinema. Perhaps the only link between both industries and what constitutes them is their status as national cinemas – that is, cinemas that are ex-centric to Hollywood (the mainstream). Tom O'Regan[16] defines national cinema as:

> a term reserved by critics, film-makers, policy makers, audiences and marketers for national cinemas other than the US one. For them, national cinemas provide a rubric within which cinema and television product can be differentiated from each other and from the dominant international Hollywood cinema. There is Hollywood and there are national cinemas. Hollywood is an avowedly commercial enterprise. National cinemas are mixed-commercial and public enterprises.

As well as being constructed as ex-centric to Hollywood cinema, national cinemas receive a higher degree of "formative government assistance" than Hollywood or U.S. films, and this assistance is required to both create and sustain indigenous or local film industries. Apart from the United States and India, where the "national cinema *is* the cinema", Western nations along with Australia and New Zealand, such as Britain and other European countries, do not dominate their own local film market.[17] O'Regan[18] also explains that there is "considerable fuzziness" surrounding the idea of national cinemas through the combination or appropriation of both Hollywood themes or styles into localized settings or through Australian

and New Zealand directors working with American/British casts but with local crews.

This blurring between nationalities, or between what is considered global and what is considered local, makes defining Antipodean cinema problematic. Not only is Antipodean cinema difficult to define in national terms, it is extremely fluid in its cinematic stylings, appropriating an array of Hollywood genres as well as aspects of the European art film.[19] This fluidity and appropriation of different cinematic styles in Antipodean cinema can be seen to utilize the Gothic/postmodernist trope of pastiche.[20] Evidence of this is in the numerous Australian and New Zealand films that appropriate and mix-up various kinds of narrative and visual styles. For instance, in *The Cars that Ate Paris* and the *Mad Max* trilogy the genre of sci-fi is drawn upon as well as the Hollywood action, Western and horror genres; *Picnic at Hanging Rock* draws inspiration for its depiction of the Australian landscape and picnic mise-en-scene from the Heidelberg school, as well as making references to the pre-raphaelites and European romanticism; *The Piano* bases its premise upon the Gothic novel *Wuthering Heights*; *Shame,* its title parodying the Hollywood film *Shane*, sees a female protagonist coming to town on a motorcycle rather than a man on a horse to change the townsfolk's lives; while *Summerfield,* as mentioned in chapter one, makes strong allusions to Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Fall of the House of Usher" and the 1960 film version, through its similar imagery and its exploration of incest.[21]

Australian and New Zealand national cinemas are, through the combining of local settings and appropriation of Hollywood and European narrative conventions,

as O'Regan points out, "marked by their relational character and by the co-presence of, on the one hand, the local and national and, on the other hand, the international."[22] Australian and New Zealand cinemas can, as mentioned in chapter two of this study, along with other national cinemas, be seen as ex-centric in relation to Hollywood (mainstream) product. Both Australian and New Zealand national cinemas are, however, unlike other national cinemas doubly marginalized through the Euro-centric construction of the Antipodes as a degenerate, grotesque and essentially Gothic/(proto)-postmodern space.[23] There are, however, other factors that have contributed to the construction of Antipodean cinema as ex-centric which further illuminate the prevalence of the Gothic and its postmodernization in post 1970s Antipodean cinema.

The Revival: the Gothic as surrogate history

It can be argued that the 1970s "revival" concerned a need or desire to establish national identities for both Australia and New Zealand, and through this need for difference and international acceptance of the newly emerging film cultures, the Gothic was utilized as a mode of expression that was able to highlight the ex-centricism of Antipodean cinema, as well as national identities. After World War II in the late 1940s through to the 1960s, locally produced Australian and New Zealand films were virtually non-existent. There were mostly British and North American films that used Australia and New Zealand as exotic locations taking advantage of their "cheaper costs."[24] As Brian McFarlane[25] comments:

> It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that there was no indigenous
> cinema in the twenty years after the war. Australian filmmakers
> made newsreels and documentaries while American and, to a

lesser extent, British films occupied cinema screens, American
and British production companies being responsible for most of
the major films made here in the 1950s and 1960s….

New Zealand's cinema history is similar to Australia's in that a feature film
industry emerged in the 1970s.[26] The British influence upon New Zealand culture,
however, can be seen as considerably stronger than upon Australian culture,[27] and
during the 1950s New Zealanders were, according to Sam Neill in *Cinema of
Unease*, "determined to be as English as possible from the other side of the
world."[28] Although the New Zealand film industry has in common with Australian
cinema its status as antipodean, and although both nations have similar colonial
histories in terms of their colonization by the British which led to the displacement
of indigenous populations, as well as, more recently, American or U.S. influence in
the media and film, there are some differences. New Zealand, like Australia, has
according to Roger Horrocks in "New Zealand Cinema", a "triangular relationship
between the American, the British and the local…"[29] Apart from its British and
American influences, New Zealand is subject to an increasing Australian influence
and, as Horrocks observes: "it is clear that British influence has declined and
American influence is increasing, along with Australian influence."[30] Australian
cinema prior to World War II produced numerous films and documentaries,
including laying claim to producing (arguably) the world's first full-length feature
film, *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906).[31] New Zealand, on the other hand, was
not as productive as Australia in terms of feature film-making at this time, and
apart from Rudall Hayward's films and John O'Shea's films in the 1950s and
1960s, there were only, for the most part, newsreels and documentaries on New

Zealand life.[32] The so-called decline of Australian and to a lesser extent New Zealand film[33] after the second World War has been attributed to economic, political, and also cultural factors including U.S. and British imperialism, the merging of "certain key Australian exhibition, distribution and production companies…",[34] the leaving of many Australian actors/actresses, directors and technicians to find available work overseas, as well as the lackadaisical attitude of Australians toward maintaining an indigenous cinema.[35] All these factors can be seen to contribute to the decline of Australian/New Zealand film production up until the 1970s.

Antipodean Gothic cinema can be seen to have developed in connection with "the revival" of the Australian and New Zealand film industries in the 1970s and 1980s. Although Gothic themes can be located in films prior to this – for instance the numerous convict and bushranger films that depict exile, incarceration, and cannabalism[36] – it is suggested by film critics such as Jonathan Rayner, Susan Dermody, Elizabeth Jacka and Caryn James that Australian and New Zealand Gothic film emerged with "new wave" cinema in what has become known as "the renaissance" in the Australian and New Zealand film industries.[37]

In the mid-1960s there was a call from lobbyists for the reestablishment of an Australian film industry that would be revived through government financial support.[38] In New Zealand filmmakers and lobbyists also wanted the government to establish a national cinema with government funding to encourage New Zealand film production.[39] The establishment of both an Australian and a New Zealand film industry through government support (though to varying degrees for each nation) in

the 1970s can be attributed to a rise in national consciousness or the search for a national identity(s). For instance, when the New Zealand Commission was established its aim was both to assist and to encourage filmmaking and its distribution, but also to, according to Helen Martin and Sam Edwards in *New Zealand Film,* enable "the world to see New Zealanders as they see themselves."[40] Similarly the Australian Film Commission (formerly AFDC) was established to aid the creation of an Australian cinema that could reflect local concerns or Australian culture, as Jacka and Dermody comment: "The task of the AFC and of its predecessor, the AFDC, was to foster the development of an Australian cinema that was cultural enough and Australian enough to justify its direct subsidy; but it was also charged with steering the industry towards eventual financial viability."[41] In both film commissions then, there was, and still is, the belief that Australian and New Zealand cinemas should reflect their difference from Hollywood and other national cinemas. Paradoxically, though, the appropriation of Hollywood film conventions and genres as well as influence from European cinema and any number of other sources means that what is unique or different in both cultures is combined with the imperialist cinema (Hollywood) and media that it sought and still seeks to contest or to counter.[42]

Thus, Antipodean cinema tries to articulate its difference from Hollywood but at the same time uses Hollywood conventions "to make the films more universally commercial…"[43] Dermody and Jacka call this difference from, and the appropriation of Hollywood conventions, the "double bind", which "simultaneously excites and denies a desire to establish or recognize national

identity within an economic and political posture that, both implicitly and explicitly, accepts dependence."[44] Dermody and Jacka also see Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian cinemas as "second" cinemas; that is, film industries that operate in the "second world" – they write: "A second cinema may be expected to present some evidence of resistance, but primarily it will accommodate the dominant stylistic paradigm of Hollywood film."[45] Dermody and Jacka see Australian cinema, along with other second cinemas as "asserting and also withdrawing from an identity that can never be taken for granted while it remains in accommodating dependence."[46]

This ambiguity concerning national identity and visual style in Antipodean film is influenced by the European construction of the Antipodes as a Gothic/(proto)-postmodern space, both Gothic and postmodern forms of representation, in differing degrees, highlighting the unstable nature of a fixed identity. Dermody and Jacka also explore, through drawing on Thomas Elsaesser's work on the German cinema and the "social imaginary", the concept of an Australian social imaginary which can be characterized by this sense of an unfixed or "obscure" national identity.[47] The social imaginary is, according to Dermody and Jacka, a term or notion that

> points out the need to imagine a way in which both the major conflicting desires of recent film theory – history and the unconscious – can make sense of each other and of an entity like an Australian film industry or national cinema. It offers a way of making the notions of form and textual practice in a definable family grouping of films, like that of national cinema, historically specific. [48]

As has been previously argued in this dissertation, the Gothic has strong ties with Euro-centric constructions of Australia and New Zealand as antipodean. These cultural constructions heavily influence or feature in both nations' social imaginaries. In chapter two of this study the Freudian concepts of "the return of the repressed" and "the uncanny" were employed to suggest that the British may have unconsciously re-enacted their fascination with the mythic Antipodes and the Goths in their construction of the newly emerging Australian and New Zealand national and cultural identities. This psychoanalytical approach was combined with "the historical" – the British "discovery" and colonization of Australian and New Zealand occurred at a time when Gothic literature was prevalent and increasingly popular in Europe.[49] It can therefore be argued that an Antipodean social imaginary may be characterized or is informed by earlier Euro-centric cultural constructions of the Antipodes as a Gothic/proto-postmodern place, these cultural constructions becoming manifest in Antipodean cinema in terms of the marketing of both cinemas as dark or quirky, and in the pastiche or appropriation of Hollywood genres as well as the visual and narrative stylings of the European or foreign art film.

A rise in nationalism can be considered a contributing and catalytic factor in the establishment of the Australian and New Zealand film industries, this national awareness duly influencing the kind of films that both nations produced in terms of their cinematic thematic preoccupations and visual styles. Ross Gibson[50] in *South of the West,* summarizing John Hinde's argument in *Other People's Pictures*, writes: 'national cinemas arise at times of social crisis or turbulence, when there

exists a "seminal audience" which is in need of either self-definition or self-congratulation.' Gibson uses this argument to suggest that "Australia in the 1970s, emerging as it was from more than two decades of conservative rule and economic stagnation, constituted such a seminal audience and that the unifying myths of nationalism were required and welcomed by a local population." The suggestion that national cinemas arise out of a local need for self-definition can be theorized in relation to the use of the Gothic as a surrogate history. In *Mapping the Godzone* William J. Schafer [51] discusses the way in which the Gothic can be used as a kind of "surrogate history", and this concept can be applied to the '70s film revival in both Australia and New Zealand. Schafer suggests that the feelings of alienation and "sense of horror" featured in the Gothic, are, in postcolonial nations (such as Australia and New Zealand), "simply disguised historical fictions":

> In the process of self-definition, cultures need to pass through a stage of hauntedness. This may be a simple analogy for the birth of historical consciousness – one way to gain historical rootedness in other than an abstract, intellectual way is to feel that the past is a horror waiting to reinvade the present. If you feel raw, young, unformed, lacking in historical status, a way to gain stature is to acquire suitably ancient ghosts.[52]

Schafer also suggests that the uncanny is strongly connected to this use of the Gothic as a surrogate history; he writes: 'The uncanny experience – that is, creation of a haunted landscape, a geography that admits the existence of ancient terror – is one instrument for building a national or cultural identity…a place that haunts you can be "home."' In this instance no division is made between real or historical memory and the memory of dreams, fantasies or reveries, this blurring of the

boundary between what is real and what is imagined being characteristic of Gothic narratives.[53]

Schafer sees Freud's concept of the uncanny as instrumental in the creation of (Western) postcolonial cultural identities; he writes: "The transition from *unheimlich* to *Heimlich* is the process of nation building, of acculturation. We move from a sense of alienation and rootlessness – being separated and detached from the landscape around us – to a sense of being rooted in it, sprung from it, possessed and haunted by it."[54] Or, as Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs [55] point out in *Uncanny Australia,* the uncanny experience in postcolonial nations and, more specifically, in Australia, is the sense that people are both in place and out of place simultaneously, occupying a sort of limbo state. In relation to Australian and New Zealand cultures the Gothic has been (and is) utilized as a literary and cultural mode in order to express Australian and New Zealand colonial and post-colonial experiences, and has been most notably identified in the literary works of various antipodean writers including: Barbara Baynton, Henry Lawson, Marcus Clarke, Hal Porter, Patrick White, Allen Curnow, and Ronald Hugh Morrieson, to name just a few.[56] Regarding what is considered "the revival" period in Antipodean film, the Gothic can be seen as bound up with the way in which many films from the 1970s into the 1990s attempt to identify or reflect Australian/New Zealand national identities through a gothicization of both place and history, while at the same time problematizing this search for a unique identity through their dependence or reliance upon Hollywood cinematic genres and European norms.

An example of the use of the Gothic as a surrogate history or a means for a "new" nation to try to define its difference or identity is Sam Neill's documentary *Cinema of Unease*. Neill's documentary was part of the BFI's *Century of Cinema* series, and was the representative piece for New Zealand, featuring alongside documentaries on various national cinemas, including those of Australia and Britain.[57] New Zealand's representative piece portrays the nation's cinema as dark and as "quirky" and was criticized in some quarters are giving a homogeneous view of New Zealand cinema by concentrating on "the weird" and grotesque, and leaving out other types of New Zealand films.[58] Although the documentary was criticized mainly by New Zealand reviewers, it was positively and enthusiastically embraced overseas, one reviewer describing the documentary in *The New York Times* as "first-rate."[59] In New Zealand, when the documentary was aired on TV3, the word "unease" was avoided in its publicity for the piece and local film reviewers were concerned with what they perceived as a perpetuation of stereotypes in regard to New Zealand and its culture.[60]

What can be seen here is the way in which the Gothic illuminates "the national" and is able to assert difference or ex-centricism in relation to other cultures, but also, through this gothicization, raises uncomfortable themes/issues for the local or national culture, which it attempts to represent or define. For instance, Jane Campion's *The Piano* was reviewed favourably by overseas critics, but in New Zealand, where the film was set, there was a lukewarm response to her depiction of New Zealand and Maori culture in her Gothic colonial tale.[61] Annie Goldson

comments in "Piano Lessons", in relation to this response from New Zealanders to Campion's work and use of the New Zealand landscape:

> Objections were raised about the director's expatriate status, the film's lack of New Zealand stars (its only New Zealand star was also an expatriate), the poetic license the film took with our landscape (it mixed North Island and South Island bush with impunity), and its questionable representation of Maori. In the international marketplace however there were few doubts. Miramax's successful packaging of *The Piano* as a film about New Zealand 'history' and landscape means that few overseas viewers would question its New Zealand-ness.[62]

The image of New Zealand depicted in *The Piano* was thus viewed by locals in a different way from that of overseas viewers, which implies that the packaging and marketing of New Zealandness, the selling of its national identity, is bound up with the representation of the landscape and history in Campion's film and its Gothic tone. Goldson also comments that "many Pakeha themselves were uncomfortable watching the film's representation of Maori."[63] This discomfort on the part of New Zealanders themselves is perhaps indicative of the "uneasy" relationship between Pakeha (colonizers) and Maori (the colonized) in New Zealand's relatively short colonial history, Campion's film raising questions about New Zealand identity itself and the tense relationship between Pakeha and Maori New Zealanders.

In Australia, the use of the Gothic as a surrogate history or as a means to define national identity in order to market films as "Australian" to overseas viewers is also identifiable. Although the above examples of the relationship between the Gothic and New Zealand national identity reveals that New Zealanders are, generally speaking, uncomfortable or uneasy with their depiction in the international arena as weird and "dark", the image of Australianness which is sold to the world in a

similar vein seems to be largely welcomed by Australian audiences. The most pressing concern for reviewers or critics of Gothic Australian films such as Peter Weir's *The Cars that Ate Paris* and *Picnic at Hanging Rock* was namely, the films' reluctance to conform to conventional Hollywood narrative structure or (in the case of *Picnic*) "conservative" depictions of Australian landscape and history, which were perceived as a cultural reinforcement of Australian stereotypes and Anglo-centric myths.[64]

In an interview with Jan Dawson, Peter Weir comments on the critical reception of *Cars* in Australia: "Curiously, it wasn't attacked for putting across an unflattering image of Australia: I sensed that some of the film's detractors would have liked it to be more vicious…They objected to it essentially on the grounds that it belonged to no genre."[65] Weir's observation that Australian film critics may have desired the film to be more "vicious" is echoed by Tom O'Regan's suggestion in *Australian National Cinema* that Australian films are more than prepared to present and celebrate the "worst" parts of the culture and that this kind of self-denigration is part of Australian national identity.[66]

The Australian "use" of the Gothic to define national identity and its national cinema is exemplified by the front cover of *Australian Cinema* (1994). A woman who is standing in a wooden rowboat and is surrounded by water graces the book's cover. The woman, shrouded in a black cloak, holds a crucifix staff in one hand, whilst other religious ornaments, including a second crucifix, lay at her feet in the front of the boat.[67] This image is a scene from Ray Lawrence's *Bliss* (1985) [68], and is decidedly and traditionally Gothic with its medieval overtones. This cinematic

still was chosen above all other stills that could have been selected from any number of Australian films to represent Australian cinema. The choice of such a Gothic image clearly illustrates the use of the Gothic as a means to define Australian national cinema, and is indicative of the Euro-centric gothicization of an Australian cultural identity.

Drawing upon O'Regan's comments and the above examples of the utilization of the Gothic to define both nations' cinemas, it appears that self-denigration and the highlighting of "the grotesque" and "the monstrous" are acceptable forms of representations of Australianness. And although both Australian and New Zealand cinemas are marketed internationally as more "ugly" or "eccentric" than Hollywood cinema in terms of their content and visual style,[69] Australians, it appears, more readily accept this "ugliness" as part of their constructed national identity, while New Zealanders are somewhat uncomfortable with "dark" representations of New Zealandness in cinema. This discomfort on the part of New Zealanders can perhaps be attributed to the nation's tourism industry selling New Zealand as a utopian place, Gothic representations of New Zealand not fitting in with the untouched paradise image.[70] In both national cinemas, however, the Gothic is utilized to define their difference or ex-centricity to other cinemas and is used to sell Antipodean cinema to the rest of the world.

Some Gothic Themes in Antipodean Cinema

There are various thematic preoccupations in Antipodean or Australian/New Zealand cinema, and these have been traced and outlined by film critics and

academics alike. One of the major themes usually identified in Australian and New Zealand cinema is the obsession with, and reference to, landscape and "the land." The landscape is usually depicted in Antipodean cinema as an empty and alienating space that threatens to obliterate its colonizers through its otherness. This particular representation of the landscape is antithetical to Romantic ideals associated with the totalization or wholeness of self. As discussed in chapter one of this study, the Gothic sublime, unlike the Romantic sublime, obliterates any sense of a stable self and is a sublime of not only terror but horror (abjection) that delves deep into the recesses of the mind to reveal a void, a nothingness. The mind's realization that there is no stable self eventuates in an identity crisis and leaves the individual in a cowering or paralyzed state in both emotional and/physical terms.

In *National Fictions* Graeme Turner unwittingly locates this Gothic sense of profound and grotesque loss in relation to the ideological construction of the Australian landscape in fiction/film:

> The Romantic desire to find oneself spiritually in Nature has in Australia to deal with a material version of nature that is antithetical to Romanticism: inverted in season, in mood and meaning, the Australian landscape as mirror to the soul reflects the grotesque and the desolate rather than the beautiful and the tranquil.[71]

In New Zealand cinema also the landscape is usually represented in Gothic terms – it is similarly depicted as "gloomy", its mountainous beauty marred by a sense of foreboding. The "prettiness" of the country depicted in many New Zealand films is, according to Schafer, countered "by making the landscape an object of fear and apprehension…"[72] This "countering" can be seen to subvert the uplifting and

Romantic experience of transcendence when faced with a vast and mountainous landscape.[73] Cinematic representations of the Australian and New Zealand landscapes can thus be seen to embody the Gothic's version of the sublime because of the sense of terror, horror, emptiness, and apprehension that is usually associated with them. This gothicization of the landscape can be seen in various films, including *Wake in Fright, Picnic at Hanging Rock*, the *Mad Max* trilogy, *The Piano,* and *Heavenly Creatures.* In all these films the landscape provides the background to, and sometimes is the catalyst for, personal trials and tribulations, murder, rape, general violence and sexual awakenings. This gothicization of the antipodean landscapes in Australian and New Zealand cinemas can be attributed, as was discussed in chapter two of this dissertation, to Euro-centric constructions of the Antipodes as a Gothic/(proto)-postmodern space.

Although the landscape in both Australian/New Zealand film is a central and dominant theme, other motifs that are combined with the Gothic can be identified in both national cinemas, including depictions of urban, suburban and rural life, as well as a fetish for films that concern car culture. Debi Enker comments in "Australia and the Australians" that Australian films explore the "darker depths" and these darker depths can be seen in what Enker identifies as settings or themes in Australian cinema, including the Urban, the Suburban, and the Rural.[74] The Antipodean gothic sub-genres created in part two of this study build on the already existing classifications of Australian/New Zealand (Gothic) cinemas, but are modified by the theorization of the Gothic as a proto-postmodern cultural form and the convergence of the Gothic/postmodernism in post-1970s Antipodean cinema.

Jonathan Rayner, for instance, suggests that the "urban gothic" in Australian cinema is recognizable by the inclusion of conspiracies that are uncovered, authority that is questioned, and a general confusion concerning personal perception and the fallible nature of Truth.[75] Rayner does not discuss the ideological interconnectedness between the Gothic and the postmodern in his work on Australian Gothic cinema, though, as was discussed in the introduction to this study, he often indirectly alludes to a developing postmodern Gothic sensibility.

In part two the Australian films *Dogs in Space* (1987) and *Bad Boy Bubby* (1993) are explored not only in terms of a Gothic questioning of authority and subversion of bourgeois reality and truth, but are analyzed in terms of their postmodernization of these Gothic traits, which become intensified through a postmodern attack on the grand narratives of Enlightenment philosophy. Of the "suburban" in Australian film or what, in this study is termed "Antipodean Suburban Gothic", Enker writes: "Suburban life in the Australian cinema is only rarely an existence in a rich emotional heartland. The predominant image is of a soulless brick wasteland, where characters are estranged from each other and the emotional coldness is chilling."[76] In the films *Winter of Our Dreams* (1981), and Jane Campion's *Sweetie* (1989) and *Celia* (1989) "the suburbs function as an emotional straitjacket"[77], a place that is repressive, intolerant and resistant to new ideas. This intolerance and repressiveness is also illustrated or represented in Jim Sharman's *The Night the Prowler* (1978) and Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures* (1994), the protagonists in both films seeking to escape bourgeois norms. The films reiterate the depiction of the antipodean suburbs as repressive through using

Gothic/postmodern narrative devices, installing and undermining the dictates of Freudian psychoanalysis and the institutionalized practices of psychology and psychiatry.

Films set in rural Australia similarly depict the outback as "empty" and its inhabitants as suspicious of outsiders. Enker writes: "In the outback, as in the suburbs, there is a pervasive sense of hollow, ritualized behaviour, of conventions that can't be broken and of unfulfilling patterns of behaviour that are doomed to repetition."[78] What Rayner[79] terms "the Gothic rural community" follows this same sense of emptiness in the portrayal of its characters and their environment, and is apparent in the Australian films *Wake in Fright* (1971), *Summerfield* (1977) and *Shame* (1987). In Rayner's conception of the Australian "rural gothic" film, the small community's intolerance of difference is accompanied by "aggressive masculinism" and paranoia.[80] In the above mentioned films these traits can be identified, but can be explored in not only Gothic but also postmodern terms, these films delving into taboo (sexual) realms and queering sex and gender roles, the depiction of unstable sexual or gendered identity a shared feature (though with differing narrative and subjective affect) of both cultural modes.[81] What can be termed "Antipodean Sci-Fi Car Crash" films, can also be categorized as a sub-genre, and is one that employs a number of (postmodern) Gothic elements, as seen most notably in Peter Weir's *The Cars that Ate Paris* (1974) and George Miller's *Mad Max* and *Mad Max – The Road Warrior* (1979-81).[82]

Another sub-genre in Antipodean cinema where some films can be seen to reflect a postmodern Gothic sensibility include what has been dubbed the "period

film." The period film, otherwise known as the AFC genre, proliferated in Australian cinema in the 1970s, and is typified by its past or nostalgic setting, and long and atmospheric shots. Such films are often based on novels, and are designed to show some kind of Australianness – hence the reading of this genre by some critics as conservative.[83] Some examples of "period" films include *Picnic at Hanging Rock, The Devil's Playground,* and *My Brilliant Career.*[84] Although the term "period" is used to connote a particular genre of Australian cinema, in part two of this study, the sub-genre "Antipodean Colonial Gothic" refers to Australian and New Zealand period films, namely Peter Weir's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and Jane Campion's *The Piano,* but is more specific in its description of the films analyzed in order to avoid pre-conceived notions concerning what has in the past been referred to as the AFC genre or period film genre in Australian film criticism. Like the other Antipodean Gothic films in this study, both *Picnic* and *The Piano* employ the (postmodern) Gothic in a fashion that subverts Enlightenment and associated liberal humanist ideals, and can therefore be read not as "conservative" cinematic works, but rather as cultural texts that undermine modern conceptions of the self as whole. The gothicized colonial experience is represented as having destabilizing effects.

In part two of this dissertation, the films chosen and the Antipodean Gothic sub-genres created reflect a cross-section of Australian/New Zealand cinema that explores what is usually considered taboo in Western society(s) and that engages in a subversion of Enlightenment and bourgeois liberal humanist ideals. The purpose of part two is not to undertake a comparative analysis of Australian cinema and

New Zealand cinema, but is instead concerned with the way in which both national cinemas have been, and still are, constructed as antipodean, and how this construction contributes to the prevalence of a Gothic and developing postmodern Gothic sensibility in their cinema(s). Each chapter undertakes an analysis of the uses of the Gothic and its ideological interconnectedness with postmodernism within differing antipodean cinematic contexts, thereby highlighting a unique antipodean spin on (postmodern) Gothic forms of representation.

Notes

1. See Debi Enker, "Australia and the Australians" in Scott Murray (ed) *Australian Cinema,* Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, St Leonards, 1994, p. 211.

2. See Tom O'Regan, *Australian National Cinema,* Routledge, London, 1996, p. 249.

3. See Sam Neill and Judy Rymer (directors), *Cinema of Unease: A Personal Journey by Sam Neill,* 1995. See the Filmography for further details.

4.Scott Murray, *Australian Film 1978-1992,* Oxford University Press in association with The Australian Film Commission and *Cinema Papers,* Melbourne, 1993, p. 103 and p. 188.

5. ibid., p. 188 and p. 41.

6. Jonathan Rayner, *Contemporary Australian Cinema: An Introduction,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000, pp. 63-4.

7. See the Filmography for complete details of these films

8. O'Regan, op. cit., pp. 201- 4. The quote is from p. 204.

9. See Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", *New Left Review,* No. 146, 1984, p. 17. Jameson contends that postmodern culture is the "internal and superstructural expression" of a "whole new wave" of American global imperialism.

10. In relation to the establishment of the Antipodean film industries in the 1970s see: Nicholas Reid, *A Decade of New Zealand Film: Sleeping Dogs to Came a Hot Friday,* John McIndoe Ltd, Dunedin, 1986, p. 10. Also see Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka, *The Screening of Australia: Anatomy of a Film Industry, Volume 1,* Currency Press, Sydney, 1987, pp.48-66. Although there was movement toward establishing the Australian film industry and more local content in the 1960s, it was not until the 1970s that these ideas were put into practice in the form of the Australian Development Corporation (AFDC) and the Australian Film Commission (AFC). In regard to postmodern forms becoming more noticeable during the 1970s, a few examples come to mind: Angela Carter's fiction, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show,* David Bowie's creation of his alter-Rock-ego *Ziggy Stardust.* For a very brief overview of the development of postmodern cultural theory in the academy in the 1970s also see: Macey, David, *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory,* Penguin Books Ltd, London, 2001, p. 306.

11. For instance, as discussed in the introduction to this study, the Gothic has been located in Antipodean cinema. Postmodern forms of representation have also been located in Australian/New Zealand film. An example of this is Mick Broderick's "Heroic Apocalypse: *Mad Max*, Mythology and the Millennium" where Broderick observes that the *Mad Max* films utilize "the postmodern concepts of pastiche, bricolage and parody." For this essay see Christopher Sharrett (ed), *Crisis Cinema: The Apocalyptic Idea in Postmodern Narrative Film,* Maissoneuve Press, Washington, D.C., 1993, pp.251-71. The quote is from p. 255.

12. See Nick Perry, *Hyperreality and Global Culture,* Routledge, London; New York 1998, pp. 8-9. Perry briefly suggests that there is some kind of "affinity" between the Gothic impulse in New Zealand film and what he calls "antipodean

camp" (postmodern tendencies). Perry, however, suggests that there is no such affinity between "Gothic foreboding" and camp in Australian cinema.

13. ibid., pp. 12-14 and pp. 18-21.

14. ibid., p. 18.

15. ibid., p. 11. Perry suggests that "mockery and condescension towards cultural pretension" is very much a part of Australian/New Zealand cultures, the cultural cringe not so much transcended but assimilated into their cultural realms.

16. See O'Regan, op. cit., p. 46.

17. ibid.

18. ibid. For instance, Baz Luhrmann, Jane Campion, Peter Weir, and Peter Jackson.

19. In relation to the appropriation of the conventions of the European art film in Australian cinema (most notably in *Picnic at Hanging Rock*) see: Graeme Turner, 'Art Directing History: The Period Film' in Albert Moran and Tom O'Regan (eds), *The Australian Screen,* Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, 1989, pp.99-117. See also Jonathan Rayner, *The Films of Peter Weir,* Cassell, London; New York, 1998, pp. 53-4. Jane Campion's *The Piano* is another example of the European art film style in Antipodean cinema.

20. See Allan Lloyd Smith, "Postmodernism/Gothicism" in Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith (eds), *Modern Gothic: A Reader,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996, pp. 6-19.

21. In relation to *Picnic* see Franz Kuna and Petra Strohmaier, "Reluctant admiration: Australian films of the 1970s and their critics" in Deborah Verhoeven (ed), *Twin Peeks: Australian/New Zealand Feature Films,* Damned Publishing, Melbourne, 1999, p. 143. See also Scott Murray, "Australian cinema in the 1970s and 1980s" in Scott Murray (ed), *Australian Cinema*, op.cit., p. 80. Murray suggests that the film draws on the artistic style of the "Heidelberg School". See Rayner, op. cit., pp. 32-5, concerning the Gothic elements in *Summerfield* (he suggests that the film in parts resembles *Wuthering Heights*) and also for the suggestion that the Australian film *Shame* can be seen to parody the Hollywood western *Shane.*

22. O'Regan, op. cit., p. 76.

23. See O'Regan, op. cit., p. 47. O'Regan contends that the Australian film industry can be described as "structurally marginal". In chapter two it was argued that Australia/New Zealand as nations are still seen as antipodean and as grotesque and backward in relation to the Northern Hemisphere and that this can still be seen in popular culture (For instance see *The Simpsons* episode "Bart vs. Australia").

24. See David White, *Australian Movies to the World: The International Success of Australian Films since 1970,* Fontana Australia/Cinema Papers/Film House TV Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1984, p. 19. Also see Nicholas Reid, *A Decade of New Zealand Film: Sleeping Dogs to Came a Hot Friday,* John McIndoe Ltd, Dunedin, 1986, p. 10.

25. Brian McFarlane, *Australian Cinema, 1970-1985,* William Heinemann Australia, Melbourne, 1986, p. 13.

26. Roger Horrocks, "New Zealand cinema" in Verhoeven, op. cit., p. 129.

27. ibid., p. 132.

28. See the Filmography for details.

29. See Horrocks, op. cit., p. 132.

30. ibid.

31. White, op. cit., p. 17.

32. Reid, op. cit., p. 10, mentions that apart from Rudall Hayward and John O'Shea's films in the 1950s and 1960s that there were only newsreels and documentaries made by New Zealanders.

33. ibid. New Zealand's film industry did not so much as decline during war years but did not really exist. An ongoing feature film industry in New Zealand was not established until the late '70s.

34. McFarlane, op. cit., p. 7.

35. See Sylvia Lawson, "Not for the likes of us" (1965) in Albert Moran and Tom O'Regan (eds), *An Australian Film Reader,* Currency Press Pty Ltd, Paddington, 1985, pp. 150-71. Lawson notes that the Vincent Report (1963) (an enquiry into the production, or lack of production of Australian television and film) revealed that the Australian public had a "general lack of film-consciousness." (p. 153) The fact that the Vincent Report came from a senate committee primarily appointed to suggest ways to encourage local productions for television (film production an afterthought) also indicates the lack of enthusiasm for an Australian cinema.

36. For example, films like *The Kelly Gang* (1906) and *For the Term of his Natural Life* (1927) can be seen to portray alienated protagonists and as containing some Gothic themes such as exile, opposition to the law, and also cannibalism (in the latter).

37. See Rayner, op. cit., chapter two; Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka, op.cit., pp. 48-66; Caryn James, "A Distinctive Shade of Darkness", *New York Times,* November 28, Late Edition, Section 2, 1993, p. 13.

38. McFarlane, op. cit., p. 19.

39. See Helen Martin and Sam Edwards, *New Zealand Film, 1912-1996,* Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1997, p 13.

40. Martin and Edwards, op. cit., p. 13.

41. See Jacka and Dermody, *The Screening of Australia: Anatomy of a National Cinema, Volume 2,* Currency Press, Sydney, 1988, p. 12.

42. ibid., pp. 23-4.

43. ibid., p. 14.

44. ibid., p. 23.

45. ibid., p. 24.

46. ibid., p. 25.

47. ibid., pp. 16-17 in relation to Elsaesser, and p. 20 in relation to the Australian social imaginary.

48. ibid, p. 25.

49. See Gerry Turcotte, "Australian Gothic" in Marie Mulvey-Roberts (ed), *The Handbook to Gothic Literature,* Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, p. 11. For the link between British culture and 'the Goths' see: Samuel Kliger, *The Goths in England: A Study in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Thought,* Octagon Books, New York, 1972, p. 1. For links between the barbarian Goths and the term "Gothic" (which was discussed in chapter one of this study) see: Robin Sowerby, "The Goths in History and Pre-Gothic Gothic" in David Punter (ed) *A Companion to the Gothic,* Blackwell Publishers Ltd, Oxford, 2001, pp. 15-27.

50. See Ross Gibson, *South of the West: Postcolonialism and the Narrative Construction of Australia,* Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1992, p. 70.

51. See William J. Schafer, *Mapping the Godzone: A Primer on New Zealand Literature and Culture,* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1998, pp. 138-9

52. ibid., p. 138.

53. ibid., p. 142.

54. ibid., p. 144.

55. See Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs, *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation,* Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 1998, p. 23.

56. See Turcotte, op. cit., pp. 15-16 for Australian Gothic novels/literature, and also Schafer, op. cit., pp. 148-159 for an analysis of the Gothic in Ronald Hugh Morrieson's novels.

57. Horrocks, op. cit., p. 129.

58. ibid., pp 129-130. According to Horrocks, New Zealand film critic Helen Martin made the comment that Neill's documentary relied on a "creaky thesis", and that examples of "dark" and "brooding" films can be found in any nation's film industry if it is looked for. Martin's comment is a valid one, however, the fact that the documentary focused on these darker aspects of New Zealand cinema is perhaps evidence of both the Euro-centric construction of New Zealand as a Gothic space and also indicative of the need to market New Zealand cinema as differing from mainstream product.

59. ibid., p. 129.

60. ibid., pp. 129-130.

61. See Annie Goldson, "Piano lessons" in Jonathan Dennis and Jan Biering (eds), *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand,* Victoria University Press in association with the New Zealand Film Commission, Wellington, 1996, p. 198. Reportedly New Zealand audiences found *The Piano* to be "lacking."

62. ibid., p. 195.

63. ibid., p. 198.

64. See Jan Dawson, "Picnic under Capricorn", *Sight and Sound,* Spring Issue, 1976, http://www.peterweircave.com/articles/articleg.html. For a critique of *Picnic* as a conservative film, see: Dermody and Jacka, op.cit, p 33-4. Dermody and Jacka write in relation to what they call the AFC genre in which *Picnic* is included: "The AFC genre engages 'history' as a way of marketing a safe product, inviting gentle nostalgia for a moment seen passing harmlessly under glass." For a discussion about some Australian film critics' impression of "period" films as conformist and conventional also see: Graeme Turner, op.cit., pp. 99-105.

65. See Weir's interview in Dawson, ibid.

66. See O'Regan, op. cit, p. 249.

67. See Scott Murray (ed), *Australian Cinema,* op.cit. (see the front cover).

68. *Bliss* is Ray Lawrence's cinematic adaptation of Peter Carey's novel of the same name.

69. See O'Regan, op.cit., pp. 243-50. O'Regan argues that "ugliness" and "ordinariness" are components of Australian national cinema and are used to set it apart from other cinemas. He writes: "The need to differentiate the local product

sees Australian ugliness staked out as Australia's territory in the cinema – an antidote to the pretty, well-dressed and well-coiffured people on offer in some genres of the cinema."

70. See Claudia Bell, *Inventing New Zealand: Everyday Myths of Pakeha Identity,* Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, Auckland, 1996, pp. 48-9. Bell discusses how New Zealand sells itself in the tourism industry as a clean, green and beautiful place. An example of this "green" national image can be seen in the more recent "100% Pure New Zealand" tourism campaign. To see the '100% Pure' television advertisment go to www.newzealand.com

71. See Graeme Turner, *National Fictions: Literature, Film and the Construction of Australian Narrative,* Allen and Unwin Australia Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1986, p. 30.

72. Schafer, op. cit., pp. 180-3. The quote is from p. 183. Schafer drawing, extensively upon Edmund Burke's account of the sublime calls the combination of pleasure and pain in the representation of the New Zealand landscape in cinema, "Aotearoa Postmodern Sublime." Schafer equates the postmodern sublime with new technologies, namely "the cinema", rather than focusing on the differing subjective experience(s) of the postmodern version of the sublime from earlier or other versions. Ian Conrich in "Kiwi Gothic: New Zealand's Cinema of a Perilous Paradise", also discusses the gothicized role of the landscape in Kiwi Gothic horror films. Conrich describes the protagonist's experience of the "formidable" New Zealand landscape in films such as *The Lost Tribe* and *Vigil* as one that generates an "overwhelming sense of isolation and incapacitation…" (p. 119).

73. The transcendent nature of the Romantic sublime was discussed in chapter one. See David Morris, "Gothic Sublimity", *New Literary History,* (Winter, 1985), p. 306. See also Vijay Mishra, *The Gothic Sublime,* State University of New York Press, Albany, 1994, pp. 32-5, pp. 37-8, and p. 40.

74. See Enker, op.cit., p. 211.

75. See Rayner, op. cit., p. 44.

76. Enker, op.cit., p. 211..

77. ibid.

78. ibid., p. 216.

79. See Rayner, op. cit., pp. 28-36, for his theorization of "The Gothic Rural Community".

80. ibid., p. 29.

81. The differing kind of "affect" I am referring to here involves the difference between the postmodern queering of identities and gendered boundaries in positive terms and the Gothic's utilization of queerness as a source of fear and horror. This difference was discussed in chapter one of this study.

82. See Dermody and Jacka, op. cit., p. 94. The "car crash movie", suggests Dermody and Jacka, became "recognisably Australian."

83. Dermody and Jacka, op. cit., pp. 31-38, refer to the "Period Film" as an AFC genre and see it as essentially conservative.

84. See Murray, op. cit., pp. 79-80 and Turner, op. cit., pp. 99-117, for a description or discussion of what the "Period Film" genre is generally thought to consist of.

Part Two

ANALYZING THE (POSTMODERN) GOTHIC IN ANTIPODEAN CINEMA

Antipodean Colonial Gothic

Picnic at Hanging Rock and *The Piano*

All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream

<div align="right">EDGAR ALLAN POE [1]</div>

There is a silence where hath been no sound
There is a silence where no sound may be
In the cold grave, under the deep deep sea.

<div align="center">THOMAS HOOD [2]</div>

In his work on the Australian Gothic, Gerry Turcotte[3] argues that the Gothic appealed to colonial writers because it was "one of the most appropriate modes to express the New World experience" due to its dominant themes of alienation, disjunction, terror, and conflict. Turcotte[4] writes:

> The colonist is uprooted, estranged, terrified, on alien territory, and pursued (if sometimes only in the imagination) by a daunting predator: which in Australia was alternatively perceived as the Bush, the convict past, bush rangers or the Aboriginal population. It is this overlapping territory shared by the Gothic and the colonial that makes the one useful to the other.

The colonial experience, then, can be expressed by using the Gothic to articulate feelings of unease and the *Unheimlich.* Just as Australian and New Zealand colonial writers used the Gothic as a means to explore national identities and life in the New World,[5] Peter Weir's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) and Jane Campion's

The Piano (1993) explore both nations' European colonial beginnings through a gothicization of the antipodean landscape(s) and its indigenous inhabitants. Both films contrast Augustan Europeanism with a gothicized antipodean new but simultaneously ancient world that threatens to obliterate the colonisers' sense of a stable self. The destabilization of identity in the films is indicative of not only a strong Gothic impulse, but also a developing postmodern self-consciousness about modernism's essentializing impulses. This co-existence highlights the close ideological interconnectedness between the Gothic and postmodernism in Antipodean Gothic cinema.

Although *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *The Piano* were made almost twenty years apart, they can be paralleled in terms of their representation of a gothicized antipodean landscape(s) and their employment of Gothic/postmodern narrative devices. Weir's *Picnic at Hanging Rock,* based on Joan Lindsay's novel of the same name, tells the story of three schoolgirls (Miranda, Marion and Irma) and a teacher (Miss McCraw) who go missing at the mysterious Hanging Rock in the Mount Macedon region in Victoria during a school picnic on St Valentine's Day, 1900. One of the schoolgirls (Irma) is found, but the others are never seen again (dead or alive). In Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993), a Victorian mute Scottish woman (Ada) and her daughter (Flora) travel to New Zealand to join their new husband and stepfather (Stewart). Upon arrival in New Zealand Ada, however, is not willing to become a dutiful wife, and falls in love with a less wealthy and less refined man (Baines) for whom she eventually leaves her husband. In both films, characters can be seen as contrasted – as either embodying the Augustan principal

of order or as subverting this sense of order through fanciful, erotic, and essentially Gothic means.

The employment of pastiche and a degree of self-consciousness about the use of other texts within the films suggests a (postmodern) Gothic sensibility that works to undermine Enlightenment and modern ideals of subjective and narrative totality or unity. For instance, *Picnic* appropriates the aesthetic look of 1960s European modernist art cinema while *The Piano* combines the narrative conventions of the Hollywood melodrama with the aesthetic sensibility of the European art film, both films also making allusions to various literary and visual texts.[6] One example of *Picnic's* foregrounded intertextuality is the film's inclusion of lines from Edgar Allan Poe's poem "A Dream within a Dream". In the film's opening scene part of the poem is loosely quoted by an off-screen voice-over.[7] The voice of Miranda is heard by the viewer while Hanging Rock and the Mount Macedon region is revealed through a ghostly mist: "What we see, and what we seem, is but a dream. A dream within a dream…"[8] Edgar Allan Poe is one of the best known Gothic/proto-postmodern writers, and the self-conscious incorporation of Gothic textuality into the film, is characteristic of the postmodern Gothic.[9]

In the scene at the picnic grounds the schoolgirls read Shakespeare's love sonnets[10] and de Poitiers, the French Governess, exclaims that she now knows that Miranda "is a Botticelli angel," this scene showing the likeness between Miranda and a picture of a Botticelli angel in an art book de Poitiers is perusing.[11] The whole mise-en-scene of the picnic also resembles and is based on the paintings of the Heidelberg School, the first school or group of Australian painters to paint the

Australian landscape or scenery in "a naturalistic manner" rather than adhering to earlier Europeanized interpretations of it.[12]

There are also allusions to Greek myth, with Miranda symbolized by a swan in Michael's reveries after her disappearance and presumed death. In Greek myth(s) a swan symbolizes both love and death, and there are two Greek myths that illustrate this connection. In one myth Zeus assumes the form of a swan to court Leda, daughter of Thestius, the King of Aetolia, and wife of Tyndareus.[13] In another myth, Kyknos, the son of Apollo and Thyrie, throws himself into Lake Canope, his mother also throwing herself into the same lake when she learns of her son's death. Soon after this tragedy Apollo turns both mother and son into swans.[14] In Greek myth birds often represent a link between the mortal world and the immortal world or are utilized as "symbols of eternal grief."[15] In *Picnic* both swans and parrots are represented in these mythic terms. A swan appears to Mike several times after Miranda's disappearance and morphs into the missing girl before Mike's eyes. Parrots, symbolizing the link between the mortal and immortal worlds (the picnic grounds), fly away noisily when the gates to the picnic grounds are opened by Miranda.

Similarly *The Piano* draws on an array of literary sources, some of which include *Bluebeard*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott,* aspects of which are thrown into *The Piano's* narrative melting pot. In the film some locals give a performance of *Bluebeard*, a classic fairytale that warns "against the dangers of curiosity and feminine disobedience."[16] One scene in this performance shows Bluebeard decapitating his wives with an axe. This scene is re-enacted in *The*

Piano when Stewart becomes enraged after learning of Ada's continued infidelity and her disobedience, and he punishes Ada by chopping off one of her fingers.[17] The silhouette of Bluebeard with axe in hand shown in the locals' play, becomes part of Stewart's "performance" when he too uses violence against his wife. *The Piano* is rather "Carter-esque" through this self-conscious use of fairytale, through its exploration of feminist issues and its utilization and postmodernization of classic Gothic themes.[18] New York Times film critic Caryn James in her article "A Distinctive Shade of Darkness" (1993) notes the heavy use of the Gothic in Campion's film: 'Ada evokes generations of Gothic heroines, from Catherine in "Wuthering Heights" to the schoolgirls who vanish in the woods in Peter Weir's classic 1975 film "Picnic at Hanging Rock."'[19] Ada does indeed embody what can be considered the classic Gothic heroine, but the film also evokes much Romantic imagery that is filtered through a postmodernized Gothic lens.

Water is a constant motif in much Romantic poetry and visual art and is often associated with a heroine's death or suicide. This thematic preoccupation is most notably epitomized in nineteenth-century Pre-Raphaelite art depicting Shakespeare's tragic heroine Ophelia as either contemplating her own death beside her "watery grave" or as lying in it.[20] Another Romantic heroine is the "Lady of Shalott" who was created by Tennyson in a poem of the same name, and who is also depicted in Pre-Raphaelite art. In Tennyson's poem the lady, having been "forbidden to look directly at the world", can only experience the world visually through reflections in a mirror. Growing weary of her cursed life, the lady looks directly at Sir Lancelot and at Camelot, this visual crime resulting in her leaving the

tower, after which she lies down in a boat and floats downstream to Camelot where her dead body is found.[21] *The Piano* gothically incorporates these literary texts into its narrative, this incorporation intensified by way of a postmodern self-awareness about both the art of cinema and storytelling. For example, the film reproduces the Romantic notion of a tragic heroine who must die. This is revealed in the scene where Ada attempts suicide by placing her foot in the rope attached to her piano when it is thrown overboard into the sea after she leaves Stewart's home with Baines. In this scene Ada, like Ophelia, succumbs to her death wish, dragged down not by her clothes but by her piano. Unlike Ophelia however, Ada chooses life instead of death and frees herself from the piano. In this scene, the self-consciousness of Ada's choice and the recognition that Romantic heroines are supposed to die at the end of a tale indicates a postmodern sensibility. Ada says:

> What a death!
> What a chance!
> What a surprise!
> My will has chosen life!?
> Still it has had me spooked, and many others besides! [22]

Ada's surprise at her own choice together with the insinuation that "others" are also "spooked" by her decision to live, suggests that the dialogue is self-conscious because it reveals Ada as a character, and that she is caught up in the grand narrative of a Romantic tradition in which the heroine must always die. It is Ada's awareness of her difference from other Romantic heroines, as well as the film's incorporation of different forms of textuality and its subversion of a "romanticized" ending, that can be classified as a postmodern utilization of the Gothic.

The Piano, according to its director and writer Jane Campion, was conceived as a Gothic kind of tale, she explains: "I feel a kinship between the kind of romance that Emily Brontë portrayed in *Wuthering Heights* and this film. Hers is not the notion of romance that we've come to use, it's very harsh and extreme, a gothic exploration of the romantic impulse. I wanted to respond to those ideas in my own century."[23] In both *Picnic* and in *The Piano* this exploration of a Romantic impulse through a (postmodern) Gothic sensibility takes place through the representation of a Romantic femininity that does not conform to Romantic ideals, the films subverting the expectation that the heroine must die. For instance in *The Piano,* as has been discussed, the heroine self-consciously chooses to live instead of to die, and in *Picnic* a heroine (Irma) returns from the dead.[24]

The films also display a postmodern Gothic sensibility through the open-endedness of their narratives. For instance in *Picnic* the mystery of the girls' disappearance is never solved, and *The Piano* can be interpreted as having a double ending. Jonathan Rayner discusses the inconclusiveness of *Picnic* in *The Films of Peter Weir:*

> *Picnic* asserts the presence of the unknown and unattainable in its unclosed narrative. Rather than aspiring to tell all of a concluded action, it alludes to a wider artistic and sociological context by incorporating references which are worthy of interpretation in their own right as well as in the service of the inconclusive narrative. [25]

Rayner's comments allude to *Picnic's* use of pastiche and intertextual references throughout the course of the film, the incorporation of various mythic and literary texts as well as cinematic and visual styles drawing attention to the fact that it is a cinematic rather than a true representation of a historical period. While *Picnic*

completely defies the rational desire for a neat end to a narrative, *The Piano,* though appearing to have resolved the conflicts it presents throughout the film, also refuses to close down its text.[26] The more than happy ending in *The Piano* is undermined or usurped by the other violent and unsettling events (Ada's journey to New Zealand and Stewart's aggression) that previously characterize Ada's existence. Ada's happiness at the film's conclusion can be interpreted as highlighting the constructed nature of the uncomplicated fairy-tale ending. If she chooses death but then changes her mind at the last minute and chooses life, she can just as easily change her mind again. The closing scenes in the film reveal that Ada still thinks of death, that it is always a choice for her: "At night I think of my piano in its ocean grave, and sometimes of myself floating above it. Down there everything is so still and silent that it lulls me to sleep. It is a weird lullaby and so it is; it is mine."[27] The ending scenes in the film constitute a double ending or alternate reality ending which show Ada both happy with Baines in Nelson, having chosen to live, but as also having chosen to die with her piano. The ending of *The Piano* is neither as concrete nor as stable as it might appear at first glance.

It can clearly be seen, then, that both *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *The Piano* make use of a Gothic/postmodern sense of indeterminacy, a common constitutional element of these two converging representational modes (see chapter one), and one that undermines narrative unity.

Picnic's effacement of the imaginary line between fact and fiction also indicates a Gothic/postmodern subversion of modernist narrative structures. In the opening scene of the film, text appears on the screen in documentary style: "On Saturday,

14 February, 1900, a party of schoolgirls from Appleyard College picnicked at Hanging Rock near Mt Macedon in the State of Victoria. During the afternoon, several members of the party disappeared without a trace."[28] The film thus masquerades as something "other" than itself, employing documentary style techniques in a fictitious story resulting in a disintegration of the dividing line between truth/untruth and authentic/inauthentic, a strategy utilized by both the earliest Gothic novels and much later postmodernist fiction. At the end of the film this documentary style is also employed to give the impression of truth. A presenter or journalist-type voice-over states:

> The body of Mrs Arthur Appleyard, principal of Appleyard College, was found at the base of Hanging Rock on Friday, March 27, 1900. Although the exact circumstances of her death are not known, it is believed she fell while attempting to climb the Rock. The search for the missing schoolgirls and their governess continued spasmodically for several years without success. And to this day their disappearance remains a mystery.[29]

Because the novel, and, particularly the film, efface the line between fact and fiction, popular opinion still echoes the belief that the story of schoolgirls disappearing at Hanging Rock is true.[30] *Picnic* also effaces the line between history and national mythology, and, in substituting one for the other raises questions about how the past can really be known, and how reliant on texts such knowledge is. This effacement of the line between fact/fiction and truth/untruth goes beyond a Gothic blurring: such binaries, though indeed blurred, are usually maintained at the conclusion of earlier and modern Gothic narratives. This effacement is instead connotative of a postmodern Gothic disintegration of these binary distinctions. For instance, whereas Horace Walpole apologized in the second edition of *The Castle*

of Otranto to the reading public for his presentation of his novel as a lost medieval manuscript, there is no such apology from Peter Weir to the public for his presentation of *Picnic* as based on real events. [31]

The popular notion that the story is true also implies a close relationship between Australia's colonial past and the use of the Gothic as a surrogate history through which national identity can be seen as heightened or enhanced.[32] The substitution of fiction for fact leads to the occurrences in *Picnic* becoming not only a part of national mythology but also a part of Australian history, reinforcing the "real" notion that the Australian landscape is more powerful than the people who occupy it. Paradoxically, the film's construction of the landscape as all-powerful is undermined by its disintegration of the line between fact and fiction, the "fact" that the film is based on a fictional story subverting the Australian grand narrative concerning the powerful and mysterious forces of the landscape. Linda Hutcheon points out that such a paradoxical impulse, whereby grand narratives are invoked in a text only to be subverted, is characteristic of much postmodern fiction and film.[33] That *Picnic* has been read as either a culturally conservative film, or as a willfully subversive film is testament to its engagement with postmodernist Gothic narrative techniques.[34]

Augustan and Enlightenment ideals associated with order, unity, progress and Europeanism are also subverted in *Picnic* through the film's representation of the Australian bush in Gothic/postmodern terms. In the film, Appleyard College and its headmistress, Mrs Appleyard, whose office is ordered, and where the steady ticking of a clock is heard at all times, embody Victorian rigidity. Miss McCraw, who is

most rational and a mathematician, is also portrayed in strictly Augustan terms. Similarly, Marion Quade, one of the students who later disappears at the Rock, also embodies Augustan ideals of order, rationality and the Enlightenement championing of science, and is shown in the film as extremely logical and as scientifically interested in nature.[35] Irma, who is eventually found at the Rock, also embodies European Augustan ideals, even though later in the film she expresses the desire to be free of the College when she removes her shoes and stockings at the Rock.

Irma's association with "the rational" is revealed in the scene at the picnic grounds when de Poitiers asks Miranda for the time and learns that Miranda no longer wears her "pretty little diamond watch" because she cannot stand it ticking above her heart. Irma, having heard the conversation, says that she "would wear it always. Even in the bath." Miranda can be seen here to represent a reaction against the Augustan ordered notion of time, and her irrational and gothicized status is confirmed when she opens the gates to the picnic grounds, simultaneously opening the portal to a supernatural realm. Miranda also tells Sara, an orphan who is obsessed with her, that she "should learn to love someone apart" from herself as she may not be coming back. In the scene where the girls are on the Rock, having been asleep or unconscious for some time under the Rock's power, Miranda is the first to wake to the sound of birds, and leads the other girls between two rocks away from Edith, who screams hysterically after them. Thus the Australian bush and Hanging Rock are represented in the film as a Gothic/(proto)-postmodern space – a reaction against Augustan ideals and the portrayed Victorian rigidity in the film.

The gothicized power of the Australian landscape represented in *Picnic* spirits away the schoolgirls and Miss McCraw from the ordered confines of their daily lives at Appleyard College.

The College, representative of Augustan ideals and Europeanism, is ultimately destroyed by the Rock's strange power, the tragic disappearance of the schoolgirls and their teacher haunting those left behind. The Rock's mysterious power incites the girls to act violently and riot in the gym scene where they scream at Irma to tell them what happened at the Rock even though Irma can remember nothing. It causes Sara to jump to her death or alternatively, causes Mrs Appleyard to murder her because of her frustration with the public's interest in the "missing girls" story. The Rock's power also causes the death of Mrs Appleyard who, we are told at the film's conclusion, is found dead at the base of the Rock, apparently having fallen to her death after attempting to climb it. Throughout, the film contrasts the rigid and controlled lives played out at Appleyard College against the timelessness and freedom associated with the Australian bush. For instance, after the girls reach the Rock they remove their shoes and stockings, preferring to walk barefoot, Irma is found with her corset missing (freed of its restriction), and timepieces in the vicinity of the Rock stand still at 12 noon on the day of the picnic. All of these events or happenings operate to portray the Australian bush as a place that can subvert European and Augustan notions of time and rationality. Such a representation invokes antipodean myths that construct Australia or the Southern Continent as a Gothic/(proto)-postmodern space.

The Piano repeats this conflict between Augustan ideals and the gothicized antipodean landscape. Upon arrival in New Zealand, Ada and Flora wait in their colonial attire for Stewart on a New Zealand beach. Ada's corseted black dress, complete with bonnet and hooped skirt – signs of European civilization – starkly contrasts against the wild and primitive nature of the crashing waves and the seamen that bring her ashore. Through Flora, Ada (Ada signs to Flora) communicates with a seaman, who asks: "Does your mother prefer to come on with us to Nelson?" To which Ada replies as interpreted by Flora: "She says, No. She says she'd rather be boiled alive by natives than get back into your tub."[36] Ada's reference to natives shows that she is aware she is on foreign soil and that in the Antipodes there are dangers not in her homeland, Scotland.

In another scene Ada and Flora wait by the piano, a symbol of "culture" and refinement, to be collected by Stewart on the beach, suddenly, the ocean tide rushes underneath the piano crate, collecting some boxes as it rushes back out to sea. The tide's speed surprises both Ada and Flora and the unpredictability of the New Zealand beach or shoreline can be seen to challenge their sense of order and their Augustan cultural values. Shortly afterwards Ada and Flora are shown sitting in a tent they have made from a hooped petticoat. This image clearly contrasts European civilization with the uncivilized New Zealand landscape, and further reinforces the film's representation of a European Augustan sensibility that is in opposition to the anti-Augustan/gothicized New Zealand landscape.

The contrasting of Augustan ideals associated with Europe (the Old World) and a gothicized New Zealand (the New World) is also articulated in the film through the

culturally opposed Baines (Ada's lover) and Stewart (Ada's husband). Stewart can be seen to represent order, the rational and Europeanness, while Baines, due to his ambiguous cultural status, represents disorder and the irrational. Baines has Maori tattoos on his face, he is able to speak to the Maori in the film in their own language and seems to have a close relationship with them. Stewart, by contrast, is portrayed as embodying Victorian rigidity in terms of his dress, his sophisticated manner, and his ignorance concerning the local Maori relationship with the land. Baines' depiction as a barbarian or as an antipodean Goth emerges when Stewart informs Ada that Baines has swapped some land with him for Ada's piano and wishes her to teach him. Ada replies angrily to this arrangement, her answer relayed to Stewart by Flora: "She says it's her piano, and she won't have him touch it. He's an oaf, he can't read, he's ignorant."[37] Ada's comments clearly suggest that she sees Baines as primitive or uncivilized, as "other" in relation to her Augustan values. However, in spite of Ada's comments about Baines' ignorance, she participates in the erotic games that he suggests during their piano lesson time. Baines says to Ada: "You see, I'd like for us to make a deal. There's things I want to do while you play. If you let me you can earn it back. What do you think, one visit for every key?"[38] Ada finally agrees that there can be "one visit" for every black key that she plays, and so the erotic games begin, resulting in Ada and Baines sleeping together and Ada falling in love with, or at least feeling affection for, the man she had previously reviled as an "oaf." Ada, however, will not let Stewart touch her in any sexual way or even in any affectionate way, in spite of his refined countenance.

Ada's preference for Baines as a lover shows how New Zealand, as a gothicized place, is able to challenge the modern notion of a stable or core identity. For example, Ada arrives in the new colony with European cultural pretensions but ends up leaving Stewart for the culturally ambiguous and less affluent Baines. Ada's decision to have an affair with Baines is not a rational one, nor is it driven by her desire to acquire wealth or status. Her decision is fuelled purely by the irrational, by the erotic and by passion. Through her affair with Baines Ada risks her reputation, risks securing a future with Stewart and his wealth, and finally risks her life when, in spite of Stewart's warning to her not to contact Baines again after he finds out about the affair, she contacts Baines anyway and is physically assaulted by Stewart who, as mentioned above, chops off one of her fingers with an axe for her transgression.

These passionate and intense emotional responses by the characters in both *Picnic* and *The Piano* can be attributed to the setting up of a binary between Augustan notions of order and rationality, associated with Europeanism, and the Gothic notions of disorder and the irrational, associated with the Antipodes. The characters that come into contact with the gothicized antipodean landscape(s) are forever changed, their European identities altered.

Picnic at Hanging Rock and *The Piano* resonate with European myths concerning the Antipodes' strangeness and depict a gothically sublime landscape that has the ability to destroy its colonisers' sense of identity. In *Picnic* the haunting soundtrack combined with the mist-covered Australian bush in the opening scenes, suggests that the Australian bush is mysterious and strange, a "fantastic" place, the

repeated wide and long shots of this landscape throughout the film indicating the central and menacing role the landscape plays in the film. Similarly, in *The Piano* the crashing waves of a New Zealand beach, jungle-like bush and muddy ground provide the backdrop throughout the film for its narrative. There is, in both films, a symbiotic relationship between their characters and the portrayed Gothic sublime nature of the landscape. The Gothic sublime, as discussed in chapter one, is where "the mind" faces "its own abyss", where there is dissolution of the self in contrast to the transcendence of self that occurs with a romanticized sublime experience or moment.[39] This dissolution can be tied to the colonist's experience of a foreign land, where the self is forced to question its own identity and, in doing so, tries to create another. The unity of self thus faces disintegration, and the rational and "the norm" that were once part of this unity are now obliterated, total chaos ensuing. It can be seen in both films that encounters with new colonies and their environments provide a catalyst for change of self or identity in relation to the films' protagonists, the Antipodes providing strange encounters in order for these transformations to occur.

The invocation of the Gothic sublime in *Picnic* is evident in the psychological and obvious physiological effects on the schoolgirls and others who visit the picnic grounds at Hanging Rock. Botting[40] argues that horror results in the annihilation of the faculties and can leave individuals who experience it in "states of shuddering or paralysis." Along with a whole array of physiological reactions, horror can also render its victim(s) speechless and unconscious. In *Picnic,* the feelings of horror brought on by an encounter with the Gothic sublime induce these "states" in those

who have contact with the Rock and the area immediately surrounding it. This can be seen when the schoolgirls (Miranda, Irma, Marion and Edith) approach or climb up the Rock and are immediately awestruck by its power and status. Miranda exclaims "Look! Not down there Edith. Way up there in the sky!" The viewer is not shown what Miranda and the other girls see, but it is implied, from the way Miranda exclaims with awe and wonder, that it is perhaps something unable to be properly articulated through words – that it is sublime. The girls have not as yet entered a Gothic sublime realm, as their faculties and senses appear heightened with their first contact with the Rock. However, as the girls make their way further up the Rock, they are overcome by the Rock's power and are shown slowly rolling down their stockings revealing bare legs and bare feet, all except Edith, who yells out after the other girls as they move to another part of the Rock, carrying their shoes and stockings. Irma is shown in this scene on a rocky outcrop, with bare legs and feet, in some kind of trance, dancing to music or sounds that perhaps only she can hear. The girls then fall asleep or become unconscious as they lie on the Rock's surface. Meanwhile, down at the picnic grounds at the base of the Rock, the other schoolgirls and their teachers are also unconscious – all humans in the Rock's vicinity are physically affected by its Gothic sublimity.

When the girls finally awake from their deep sleep, they walk mesmerized and trance-like, Miranda leading the way into a crevice or gap between two rocks, leaving Edith screaming out "Miranda!" The scene shows in slow motion the girls disappearing into the gap, the camera then panning across to Edith, who lets out a bloodcurdling scream, running away from the Rock, terrified at whatever she has

seen, heard or felt. As David Morris points out in "Gothic Sublimity": "A scream is the original and recurrent language of terror, which Gothic sublimity reinvents as a wordless speech incapable of naming exactly what it fears." [41] So it is with Edith: incapable of properly articulating her experience at the Rock, her only means of communication is a primal scream that alludes to some horrific event or happening but cannot name what that happening exactly is.

When it is discovered that the three schoolgirls and their schoolteacher, Miss McCraw, have all disappeared at Hanging Rock, a search party is launched to find them. When the search party finds nothing, Michael Fitzhubert, a British adolescent visiting relatives in the Mount Macedon region, decides to try to find the girls himself. Michael, having seen Miranda and the others crossing a creek on the day of their disappearance, is obsessed with Miranda and, having been visited by her in his dreams in the form of a swan, hopes to find her at the Rock. Michael, upon searching the rock for the second time leaves a trail of paper on the trees behind him, but finally he, too, succumbs to the Rock's Gothic sublime powers. Mike hears the missing girls' conversations and the events of the picnic on the day of their disappearance as if he was actually there with them, and his sense of time is disturbed or confused. He wakes up with the sound of Edith's scream ringing in his ears and calls out Miranda's name as, paralysed by contact with the Rock, he crawls along the ground, dragging himself by his arms.

Another example of the film's use of Gothic narrative conventions and its version of the sublime is the scene in which Albert (an employee of Mike's uncle) discovers Mike at the Rock. When Mike is found, he is shaking and visibly dazed,

unable to speak, and physically injured, with numerous cuts on his face and hands. Mike reveals to Albert in his previously clenched fist a piece of a schoolgirl's dress that he obviously discovered at the rock. Albert, going back to the Rock where Mike was found, stumbles upon Irma who is unconscious but alive. The sight of the unconscious Irma reduces Albert, previously characterized in the film as a somewhat unemotional "bloke", to tears. Hysterically sobbing while he holds Irma in his arms Albert cries out: "Jesus! Jesus!" Mike's and Albert's emotional and physical reactions to the Rock clearly indicate that they are have had a Gothic sublime experience(s). The horror of finding Irma destabilizes their sense of self, the refined Michael reduced to a trembling wreck, Albert, the tough Aussie bloke, unable to keep himself from sobbing uncontrollably.

There are more moments in *Picnic* when the destabilizing powers of the Gothic sublime can be seen to invoke physical and emotional reactions. There is the loss of memory experienced by all who encounter the Rock and its horrific secrets, perhaps resulting from the shock of confrontations with death. When the schoolgirls arrive back at Appleyard College after their disastrous picnic during which three of their classmates and one of their teachers go missing, they are unable to speak – they only sob and, according to Mrs Appleyard, have all "taken leave of their senses." Edith, although having been at the Rock with the now missing girls, will not speak of her experience straight away and can apparently remember nothing when questioned by the local police. After recuperating for some time after her ordeal, Irma, too, remembers nothing about the day's fateful events concerning the picnic. When Mademoiselle de Poitiers asks her if she can

remember anything, Irma begins to cry, sobbing as she tells de Poitiers: "I remember nothing." Both Edith and Irma suffer from amnesia after their experience at the Rock, and thus are unable to speak "the unspeakable" or explain "the unexplainable".

When Irma visits her classmates in the gym before leaving for Europe, it is clear that the schoolgirls' emotionally grapple with the unrepresentable nature of death and the inexplicable happenings at Hanging Rock. In this scene Irma and the other schoolgirls are given time to talk before Irma leaves for Europe. The other schoolgirls glare at her angrily, silence pervading the room. Suddenly, incited by Edith screaming: "Tell us Irma! Tell us!" the girls quickly become hysterical and surround Irma, aggressively demanding that she tell them what happened at the Rock. The Gothic sublime powers of Hanging Rock thus affect the college and its inhabitants long after the actual disappearance of the girls. The physical/emotional reactions displayed by characters in the film are invoked by contact with the Rock either directly or indirectly, and can be attributed to the film's invocation of the Gothic sublime. Examples of this "invocation" in the film include: the schoolgirls' trance-like state when they go exploring the Rock, the unconscious state experienced by the schoolgirls at the picnic and also by Mike when he searches for the missing girls, general incoherence, speechlessness, paralysis, fits of rage or anarchic behaviour, amnesia, and uncharacteristic sobbing. These "states" are, induced in the film, by contact with a gothicized Australian landscape, a landscape depicted as dangerous, able to cause mental confusion, to induce physical reactions, and to change characters' behaviour(s) at will.

The Piano, like Weir's film, foregrounds an antipodean landscape that can be characterized in Gothic sublime terms and that is able to evoke physical reactions and emotions. In Campion's film, the landscape, namely, the bush and the beach, provide metaphors for the passion experienced by those in the love triangle (Stewart, Ada, Baines) and for the resulting violence. Jane Campion has commented in relation to the use of the New Zealand bush in *The Piano* that the "bush has got an enchanted, complex, even frightening quality to it, unlike anything that you see anywhere else. It's mossy and very intimate, and there's an underwater look that's always charmed me. I was after the vivid, subconscious imagery of the bush, its dark, inner world."[42] In *The Piano* this "dark, inner world" of the New Zealand bush or landscape becomes symbolic or representative of Ada's inner world and her struggle for identity in a foreign land (New Zealand). Ada's "mind's voice" reveals at the start of the film: "I have not spoken since I was six years old. No one knows why, not even me. My father says it is a dark talent and the day I take it into my head to stop breathing will be my last."[43] In the film Ada's "dark talent" is paralleled by the dark landscape, its Gothic sublime qualities mirroring her unexplained muteness, her speechlessness, her silence, all of which indicate some sort of earlier traumatic event from which she never fully recovered. However, Ada is able to reinvent herself through contact with the New Zealand landscape. Ada's extramarital erotic relationship with Baines is one such way she is able to reinvent herself sexually and to free herself from the restraints of the Old World. Ada's contact with the antipodean "space" and its landscape, constructed in the film as able to induce Gothic sublime experience(s), forces her in the end to

155

abandon altogether her former self, and transforms her life. One example of the power of this landscape to profoundly change its subjects/colonists is that, a mute when first arriving in New Zealand, Ada learns to speak after she leaves Stewart for Baines and settles in another part of the country.

The main reason for Ada's change and the event in the film which is most indicative of the Gothic sublime and the horror and terror that accompany it, is when Stewart learns from Flora that Ada has disobeyed his commands and is still in contact with Baines. In this scene Stewart charges after Ada with an axe, forcibly places her hand on the chopping block and chops off one of her fingers, while Flora watches on in utter horror and disbelief as the man she has come to recognize as her father disfigures her mother. Flora screams for Stewart to stop but the axe falls, blood spurting on Flora's white pinafore. Ada, in shock at the sight of her bloody hand with a missing finger, walks in a daze for a short distance before collapsing to the ground in the rain and mud. In this scene Ada is confronted with her own mortality and her dazed disposition indicates a Gothic experience of sublimity that obliterates any sense of a stable self. It is only after this event that Stewart tells Baines to take Ada and Flora away, Stewart's carrying out of the bloody deed not guaranteeing his immunity from feeling mental confusion and frustration – emotions that can also be induced by the Gothic sublime.

Ada's final confrontation with a Gothic sublime moment, when her self faces the ultimate abyss, is her attempted suicide. The scene shows Ada deliberately place her foot in the rope connected to her piano, her means of emotional communication with the world up until this moment. Both Ada and the piano are

shown in the ocean slowly moving downwards, the piano dragging Ada to a cold and watery grave without a struggle. However, Ada suddenly comes alive, and struggles to rid the rope from her ankle by removing her shoe in order to untangle herself from the piano. In this scene Ada's choice of life over death can perhaps be seen as a kind of transcendent sublime whereby the self and its faculties are heightened and awakened. After all, Ada is able to speak after this encounter with the sublime.

However, it could also be argued that given the preceding events in the film whereby Ada's identity becomes fragmented due to her arrival in a new and antipodean colony, this seemingly transcendental experience is countered by the self-consciousness of the dialogue in the scene, and indicates a postmodernist sensibility. As mentioned previously, the dialogue in this scene, when Ada surprises others and even herself at her decision to live, can be seen as self-conscious about its female protagonist and her relationship with death, and aware that many Romantic heroines choose to die, to commit suicide, rather than to live. Ada's choice can therefore be seen as subverting the Romantic inclination that sees femininity, beauty and death intertwined, instead enabling the heroine to live. The abyss faced or the mind fractured in this instance is not Ada's but the viewer's/audience's as the film's narrative refuses expectation of her death. This scene can also be read as symbolic of Ada's baptism as a New Zealander. Ada's death under the water is replaced by her new life as a colonist, a new identity that is already fragmented due to her Scottish past. Thus, there emerges a disjunction

between what she is or was (Scottish), and what she has now become, or wishes to become (a New Zealander).

In both *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *The Piano* the Australian/New Zealand landscapes are depicted as gothically sublime. This can be clearly seen in the films through the portrayal of both landscapes as having powerful influence upon, or indeed being the source of, the horror and terror experienced by the protagonists/antagonists. In both films characters' lives are altered, their identities and selves fractured and dislocated through their colonist status.

The grappling with the Gothic sublime experienced by these characters can be linked to the films' emphasis on "the taboo", which can be theoretically understood in connection with "the uncanny" and "the queer". In both *Picnic* and *The Piano* the employment of "the uncanny" is evident not only in the tension between the colonizers and the antipodean landscape but also in the blurring or queering of sexual boundaries. In *Picnic* "the uncanny" is intimated through the "primitiveness" of the Rock and its powers over the schoolgirls and the region surrounding it. This sense of uncanniness is illustrated in the film through the representation of a disjunction between the colonizers (the British or Europeans) and the "new" and strange land(s) of which they are both at once a part of, but also distanced from. This disjunction between the Australian bush or landscape and Europeanism, is, in the film, evident in the juxtaposing of the rigid and ordered nature of Appleyard College with the Australian landscape's ability to disturb this order. The uncanny can also be seen in the film through the crossing of various boundaries between usually separated "states". Fred Botting[44] suggests that the

uncanny signals a return of repressed desires and the confusing of life and death, and is a constant Gothic thematic preoccupation. In the film, this blurring between life and death is a strong narrative motif. For instance, after the girls and Miss McCraw disappear at the Rock, it is uncertain whether they are in fact dead or just lost. At the end of the film the audience is told that no bodies belonging to the missing persons were ever found at the Rock and that the disappearance remains a mystery. Although the schoolgirls and Miss McCraw are presumed dead – indeed, a poster with their photographs states this assumption – the lack of evidence of their deaths only poses more questions, and the film and the mystery remain unresolved. In this way *Picnic* reflects or moves toward a postmodern Gothic sensibility through its refusal to close a text and through the posing of questions that either have no answers or invite numerous possibilities as answers.

There is, in the film, uncertainty concerning the missing persons' alive/dead status in the minds of those left behind. Because no bodies are found in the film, except for Irma's, who remains largely unscathed after her contact with the Rock, there is no physical loss or symbol to mourn. Accordingly, without proof of physical death, the missing girls and Miss McCraw still seem alive to those at the College. However, at the same time the missing persons are presumed dead (as the "missing" posters show), the people left behind in effect mentally burying the schoolgirls and Miss McCraw alive. Live burial in the Gothic generally suggests an invocation of the taboo, particularly sexual taboos, and in Gothic tales like Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" it is connected with incest.[45] However, in *Picnic* what is taboo, and what the girls are punished for, is not incest

but rather their subversion of gender norms and their breaking of sexual prohibitions. The taboo is "the unspeakable" and "the unrepresentable", so that contact with objects or persons considered taboo results in feelings of unease or horror. The taboo, according to Freud's[46] explanation in *Totem and Taboo,* concerns "the unapproachable", meaning, on the one hand, what is "sacred" or "consecrated" and, on the other, all that is "uncanny", "dangerous", "forbidden" and "unclean." Freud [47] states in relation to the taboo: "The source of taboo is attributed to a peculiar magical power which is inherent in persons and spirits and can be conveyed through them through the medium of inanimate objects." The basis of a taboo, according to Freud, has to do with "prohibited action", and the person who violates a taboo is deemed dangerous and also "contagious", that is, able to tempt others to transgress prohibitions as well. In *Picnic* "the taboo" can be seen as transgressed and also as spread to the College and the surrounding area through contact with Hanging Rock, an inanimate object charged with spiritual power. The taboo also has to do with "the archaic", the past haunting the present. In this light, the Rock can be seen as an ancient, sacred, and also uncanny site that confuses boundaries between life and death, and between the present and the past.

In the opening scenes of *Picnic,* and throughout the course of the film, the ancient status and mysterious quality of Hanging Rock is evident. The clearest indication of the Rock's age occurs when Miss McCraw comments on the way to the picnic that the Rock is a million years old and that it was once volcanically active. Freud[48] suggests in *Totem and Taboo* that Indigenous Australians are a "distinct" and archaic people, commenting that the Australian environment has

"much that is archaic and that has perished elsewhere." The suggestion that the Antipodes' inhabitants and their environment are backward or primitive is made clear here, and *Picnic* injects this primitiveness or archaism with a dangerous power. In the film the archaic Hanging Rock is portrayed as much more powerful than European newness, and European values prove no match for the magical influences of the Australian bush. These magical qualities of the Rock can be interpreted in terms of Australian Aboriginal culture, the Rock an Aboriginal sacred site that is hence a prohibited and a magical zone, infusing people who visit its grounds with a strange power. In this instance the past (Aboriginal culture) comes back to haunt the present (the new colonizers) and infects them through their breaking of "the taboo", the breaking of prohibitions associated with the Rock. The Rock as a taboo site can be seen in the film when Mrs. Appleyard warns the schoolgirls before they set out for their picnic not to explore the Rock, as it is "extremely dangerous." When Miranda opens the gates to the picnic grounds and to the Rock, birds fly away and the horses are spooked, marking the breaking of the prohibition. Once the girls have climbed the Rock and are soon after considered missing, the effects of their entering into a taboo and other-worldly realm are felt throughout the Macedon region.

The most notable effect is shown in the gym scene. Irma, the only survivor of the girls who go missing, is herself taboo because her intimate contact with the Rock makes her contagious and dangerous to others. Irma's taboo status in the gym scene is revealed when her classmates, perhaps recognizing her as a taboo person and also infected by the Rock's powers, suddenly become hysterical and

anarchic. In this scene contact with the Rock can be understood as the reason behind the schoolgirls' uncontrolled behaviour, its influence transmitted through Irma. The powerful influence of the Rock is also exerted on the College, disrupting its sense of order and European values, killing Sara and Mrs. Appleyard, who feel the after-effects of the picnic incident.

The blurring or crossing of boundaries considered taboo can also include sexual boundaries, and the Gothic/postmodern, as discussed in chapter one, can be seen to emphasize "the ex-centric" and "the queer". In *Picnic at Hanging Rock,* the queering or destabilization of sexual boundaries and gender norms can be seen as influenced, or informed by, the queering of the Antipodes in European myth, literature and historical accounts. This queering is able to be identified through the film's representation of Hanging Rock as archaic and as belonging to the animistic stage of human/cultural development, where there is a collapsing of self and other – a collapsing of sexual boundaries.[49] Such a collapse is suggestive of the Gothic's proclivity for queerness, a proclivity that is intensified by postmodernism's more politically motivated and pro-active emphasis on "the ex-centric". Thus, the open-endedness of the film and the lack of any apparent moral order are indicative of a postmodernist influence on the film's Gothic narrative construction. Moreover, early Gothic literature (see chapter one) usually reinstated such boundaries by a narrative's conclusion, whereas postmodern Gothic fiction and film tend to leave narratives open for interpretation.

In the film, Hanging Rock is represented as a sacred and taboo site that possesses both female and male characteristics. The Rock is a place or space that

collapses sexual identities and thus can be considered hermaphroditic. As John Rickard [50], in his essay concerning Aboriginal beliefs and customs explains, the features of the land were, and are, considered spiritual beings in Aboriginal culture, and these spirits can appear as male or female or "draw on the sexuality of both." In the film, as the girls make their way up the Rock, its pinnacles are shown towering above them. The pinnacles can be seen to symbolize "the phallic" and the gaps or chasms can be seen to represent "the maternal", thus combining both male/female principles and confusing or queering the sexual binary division.[51]

Later, Edith remembers that she and the other girls saw a red cloud on their way to the Rock, and this redness can also be seen to symbolize what is female and also taboo: menstruation. Edith also remembers in this scene that she saw Miss McCraw walking toward the Rock in her bloomers, without a skirt, also indicative of the link in the film between the Rock and the breaking of European norms in terms of sexuality. Perhaps the queerness associated with Hanging Rock is the reason for Mrs. Appleyard's warning to the schoolgirls that they should by no means explore the Rock or engage in any "tomboy foolishness", warning the girls that in the vicinity of the Rock there are "venomous snakes and poisonous ants of various species."[52] Mrs. Appleyard's warning suggests that exploration is for boys and that the girls would be wise not to blur any distinction between femininity and masculinity. Mrs Appleyard's comment regarding snakes and ants can also be read in relation to the snake as a symbol of menstruation. In a variety of ancient cultures snakes were associated with inducing menstruation in girls or women, and ants have long been associated with the notion of "timelessness."[53]

The mention of both snakes and ants suggests both sexual/erotic dangers and also the danger of disrupting order or linear time. The disruption of sexual norms and linear time in *Picnic* is associated with the Australian landscape, and these disruptions can be contrasted with the Augustan notions of sexual restraint and the importance of order. The girls (Miranda, Marion, Irma, Edith), however, defy these conventions and explore the Rock in spite of the warning issued to them. Edith finds the Rock "nasty" and is horrified by its queerness – she really only tags along with the other three girls, who all display some blurring of sexual boundaries or gender norms in the film. For instance, Miranda is idolized and worshipped by Sara, who, according to Edith, writes poetry in "the dunnie" about Miranda, and whom Miranda instructs to love others other from herself. Marion is shown as interested in all things "unfeminine" and scientific, and Mrs Appleyard describes Miss McCraw as possessing a "masculine intellect." Irma, however, though joining Miranda and Marion in taking her shoes and stockings off on the Rock, is not shown in the film to blur gender boundaries, and this is perhaps part of the reason why she is not entirely accepted by the Rock. That Irma is clearly associated with Europe in the film is perhaps also why she is the only survivor at the Rock. She simply retains too many European Augustan values to completely surrender her rational senses.

Although Irma can be seen as returned to normal life by the Rock, her brush with the queer Rock precipitates a sexual awakening. Irma enters the gym wearing scarlet, the blood-like colour symbolic of her sexual maturation (menses). In this scene the other schoolgirls' violent reaction towards Irma can be attributed to her

heightened sexuality. Their chants or screams of "Tell us Irma! Tell us!" have as much to do with what has transpired at the Rock in terms of the missing girls, as it has to do with their curiosity concerning their own looming womanhood and what that entails. Since menstruation is a taboo topic,[54] the schoolgirls' desire to "know" can be seen to stem from the prohibition against speaking about it, and the Rock becomes not only associated with queerness but also with (in the Western world) the historically taboo areas of sexuality and sexual development. The girls in the gym become hysterical due to both the queerness associated with the Rock and the sexuality radiated by Irma – Irma's scarlet attire representing her passage into her newfound womanhood.

In *The Piano* the subversion of gender norms and an emphasis on sexuality are presented through the foregrounding of Ada's erotic awakening in her relationships with both Stewart and Baines. In the film, voyeurism, usually associated with men viewing women as sexual objects, is reconfigured so that women view men as sexual objects. In the scene where Baines is naked before Ada, his body is shown to the viewer as much as Ada's. In another scene where Baines walks around naked in his hut and gently caresses the piano, an erotic symbol representing Ada, the camera shows his body in detail as he moves through the room. The voyeurism invoked here is not one of men viewing women, but rather a display of the human body irrespective of gender as erotically "charged" and as capable of inducing pleasure. Although Baines strikes up a deal with Ada where he gets to do "things" to her when she plays the black keys on the piano, the relationship is not one way, with Baines as the instigator. Ada agrees to the deal, and although at first she is

shown to be shocked by Baines' touching her and finally by his nudity, she clearly is neither repelled nor so frightened that she is not able to return time and time again to his hut for "piano lessons". Although Baines' and Ada's deal can perhaps be seen as a kind of prostitution whereby Baines' receives sexual favours for the exchange of goods, the piano, it can also be argued that this deal is not the whole relationship but a way in which Baines and Ada can be together. This is highlighted when Ada becomes upset with Baines for breaking their deal and giving her piano back. It is, in the end, Ada's choice to keep her relationship with Baines: it is not forced, nor did she have to agree to make a deal with him for the piano, whereas her marriage to Stewart was not her choice but her father's.

Another way in which *The Piano* subverts normative gender relations is through its playing with and subversion of the narrative conventions of the female Gothic. Stewart wants a wife and a family, marrying Ada from the other side of the world – their wedding picture is taken in the New Zealand rain and mud shortly after Ada arrives. Ada is not a compliant wife in any traditional sense, sexually or otherwise, and Stewart is frustrated at her lack of affection for him and thinks that Ada may be "brain affected." Stewart finally learns the reason behind Baines' inability to play the piano, and, having seen through a crack in the wall Ada and Baines having sex in Baines' hut, he intercepts Ada on one of her "visits". In this scene Stewart chases Ada through the jungle-like landscape and pulls her to the ground. Aroused by what he has seen in Baines' hut Stewart clearly seeks the same erotic experience with Ada. Stewart's aggressive libido is dampened when Flora calls out for her mother and he willingly lets Ada go.

In these scenes the film gothically combines sexual passion with violence, this "marriage" further highlighted by Stewart's lingering and perhaps even intensified lust for Ada after he chops her finger off. After Stewart becomes aware of Ada and Baines' relationship, he makes Ada a prisoner in his home by boarding up the windows and locking the doors – he tries to keep her *his* by physically controlling her movements. Stewart's imprisoning of Ada draws on the narrative conventions of the female Gothic, in which the heroine lies at the mercy of her patriarchal oppressor.[55] However, Campion, subverts these conventions by having Ada assume sexual power while imprisoned by her master. During this time, Ada, who misses the eroticism she experienced with Baines, touches and caresses Stewart's body. In these scenes the camera shows close-ups of Stewart's vulnerable naked body as he lies on his stomach while Ada touches him at will. Ada, however, will not allow Stewart to reciprocate this touching in any way. It is in this scene that Ada's sexual power comes to the fore and gender norms become disrupted. Ada is the instigator of intimacy even though she feels no love for Stewart. Viewing him in a voyeuristic manner, she does not allow Stewart to view her. As Jane Campion comments:

> Ada actually uses her husband Stewart as a sexual object – this is the outrageous morality of the film – which seems very innocent but in fact has its power to be very surprising. I think many women have had the experience of feeling like a sexual object, and that's exactly what happens to Stewart. The cliché of that situation is generally the other way around, where men say things like, 'Oh, sex for its own sake.' But to see a woman actually doing it, especially a Victorian woman, is somehow shocking – and to see a man so vulnerable. It becomes a relationship of power, the power of those that care and those that don't care.[56]

In *The Piano,* then, the role of man as voyeur and woman as the object of his gaze is questioned and destabilized,[57] blurring boundaries between what is considered

masculine and what is considered feminine behaviour – the woman becoming the voyeur, the man the object of *her* gaze. This destabilization allows questions to be raised concerning the validity of male/female or masculine/feminine sex and gender constructs, because if a woman can be the voyeur and a man a sexual object, then the attributes usually associated with each construct are revealed *as* constructs and hence subject to cultural change. The sexual or erotic fluidity shown in the disintegration of these heteronormative constructs reveal a disjunction between sex and gender and can therefore be seen as queer – the breakdown of heteronormative constructs allowing for the possibility of what can be considered ex-centric sexualities (homo/bi/transexual). This breakdown of heteronormative constructs in *The Piano* can, due to its queering of gender roles be seen, like *Picnic,* to explore what is considered taboo in Western societies – that is, it foregrounds the fluidity of sex and gender constructs and erotic pleasures, its dialogue concerning sexual power relations attempting to speak "the unspeakable".

In *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *The Piano* the utilization of Gothic/postmodern representational modes to depict antipodean colonial settings operates to bring about a queering of cultural boundaries, sex/gender roles and identities, as well as a questioning of the modern notion of a stable and centred self. The films' incorporation of a variety of literary references, their appropriation of Gothic themes, their pastiche of cinematic and visual styles, and the open-endedness of their narratives also clearly indicate a developing postmodern Gothic sensibility. In the next chapter the subversive potential of the Gothic and its partnership with postmodernism in "Antipodean Gothic cinema" is further explored in the

Australian films *Dogs in Space* (1987) and *Bad Boy Bubby* (1993). Unlike *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *The Piano* these films are set, not in the Australian or New Zealand colonial bush, but rather in ruinous cityscapes populated by sub-cultural "ex-centrics" and serial killers.

Notes

1. Richard Gray (ed), *Edgar Allan Poe,* J M Dent/Orion Publishing Group, London, 1996, p.13. Taken from Poe's poem "A dream within a dream", these lines, a direct 'borrowing' from a Gothic text are loosely quoted in the opening scene of *Picnic at Hanging Rock.*
2. See Thomas Hood's "Sonnet: Silence" (1823) in Joy Flint (ed) *Thomas Hood: Selected Poems,* Carcanet Press Ltd, Manchester, 1992, p. 40. These lines are quoted by Ada in the closing scene of *The Piano.*
3. Gerry Turcotte, "Footnotes to an Australian Gothic Script", *Antipodes: A North American Journal of Australian Literature,* Vol. 7, No. 2, 1993, p. 129.
4. ibid.
5. Some colonial writers that employ the Gothic as a representative mode include: Allen Curnow, Barbara Baynton, Marcus Clarke and Henry Lawson. See Turcotte, op.cit., pp. 127-134, or his section on "Australian Gothic" in Marie Mulvey-Roberts (ed) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature,* Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, pp. 12-19. For New Zealand writers and use of the Gothic see William J Schafer's section entitled 'Aotearoa Gothic' in *Mapping the Godzone: A Primer on New Zealand Literature and Culture,* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1998, pp. 137-159.
6. For *Picnic's* appropriation of the aesthetic style of 1960s European art cinema see: Grame Turner, "Art Directing History: The period film", in Albert Moran and Tom O'Regan (eds) *The Australian Screen,* Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, 1989, p.104. For *The Piano's* use of the narrative conventions of the Hollywood melodrama see: Samir Dayal, "Inhuman Love: Jane Campion's *The Piano*", Postmodern Culture, Vol. 12, No. 2, (January 2002), p. 2. To view the article go to: www3.iath.Virginia.edu/pmc/issue
7. See Gray, op.cit., pp. 13-14 for the loosely quoted lines in the film from Poe's "A Dream Within a Dream."
8. See Cliff Green, *Picnic at Hanging Rock: A Film,* Cheshire Publishing Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1975, p. 1.
9. Marita Nadal argues in "Beyond the Gothic Sublime" that Edgar Allan Poe in his novel *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838) displays a postmodernist sensibility due to the novel's lack of closure and describes Poe as a "cunning proto-postmodern artificer" (p. 387). See Nadal, "Beyond the Gothic Sublime: Poe's *Pym* or the Journey of Equivocal (E)motions," *The Mississippi Quarterley,* Vol. 53, Issue 3, (Summer, 2000), pp. 373-87.
10. See William Shakespeare's "Eighteenth Sonnet" in Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (eds), *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works,* Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988, p. 753. The first two lines from this sonnet: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate" are recited by a schoolgirl at the picnic grounds.
11. Peter Weir (Director) *Picnic at Hanging Rock,* 1975. All subsequent references to the film are from this source unless otherwise indicated. See the Filmography for more details.
12. Marek Haltof, *Peter Weir: When Cultures Collide,* Twayne Publishers, New

York, 1996, p. 33.

13. See C. Kerényi, *Myth and Man: The Gods of the Greeks,* Thames and Hudson, London, 1951, pp. 105-8. See also Michael Grant, *Myths of the Greeks and Romans,* Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1989, p. 441.

14. For the mythic significance and symbolism of the transformation humans into birds/animals or vice-versa see: PMC Irving Forbes, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths,* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 257. For other works that discuss *Picnic at Hanging Rock* in relation to symbolism or mythology see Anne Crittenden, "'Picnic at Hanging Rock': A Myth and its Symbols", *Meanjin,* Vol. 35, 1976, pp. 167-174; Donald Barrett, 'The Mythology of Pan and *Picnic at Hanging Rock*', *Southerly,* Vol. 42, 1982, pp. 299-308; Joan Kirkby, "Old Order, New Lands: The Earth Spirit in *Picnic at Hanging Rock*", *Australian Literary Studies,* Vol. 8, 1978, pp. 255-268.

15. Forbes, op.cit., p. 119 and p. 121.

16. For a summary of *Bluebeard* go to: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bluebeard

17. Campion (Director), *The Piano*, 1993. All subsequent references to the film are from this source unless otherwise indicated. See the Filmography for further details.

18. Angela Carter rewrites *Bluebeard* in her short story "The Bloody Chamber" (1979) telling the narrative from "the perspective of the young wife." Carter has the young woman's mother instead of the woman's brothers (which is in the original tale), rescue her from her savage husband. See Carter's *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories,* Penguin Books Ltd, London, 1981, pp. 7-41. For a summary of Carter's writing style and her combining of legend/myth and fairytale with a postmodernist twist see David Punter and Glennis Byron, *The Gothic,* Blackwell publishers, Malden, 2004, pp. 101-2.

19. See Caryn James, "A Distinctive Shade of Darkness", The New York Times (Late Edition), 28 November 1993, p. 1. Article sighted at: http://80-global.factiva.com

20. See Jan Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Women*: *Images of Femininity in Pre-Raphaelite Art,* Phoenix Illustrated/Orion Publishing Group, London, 1998, p. 138. In particular see the chapter "Pale Ladies of Death" where Marsh discusses both John Everett Millais' *Ophelia* (1852) and Arthur Hughes *Ophelia* (1852) as examples of the representation of a femininity that is inextricably linked with death, such a combination a hallmark of much Pre-Raphaelite art.

21. Marsh op.cit., pp. 149-150, discusses the various representations of the nineteenth century Romantic poet Lord Alfred Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott* in Pre-Raphaelite art. Two representations (amongst others) that Marsh discusses are John Everett Millais' painting (1854) depicting "the lady" floating down the river and the depiction of "the lady" by J.W. Waterhouse (1888) as she casts off her boat.

22. Campion, op.cit., p. 121.

23. ibid., p. 140.

24. Irma is the only girl that survives the experience at the Rock and her upsetting of life/death boundaries is discussed later in the chapter in relation to the Freudian uncanny.

25. See Jonathan Rayner, *The Films of Peter Weir,* Cassell, London; New York, 1998, p.55.

26. See Smith, op.cit., p. 7 for his suggestion that both the Gothic and postmodernism use the narrative strategy of "Indeterminacy." See also Marita Nadal, op.cit., p. 387.

27. Campion, op.cit., p. 122..

28. Green, op.cit., p. 1.

29. ibid., p. 105.

30. See Jan Dawson, "Picnic Under Capricorn", *Sight and Sound,* Spring Issue, 1976, p. 1, http://www10.pair.com/~crazydv/weir/articles/articleg.html. Dawson explains that the novel provoked "the belief that it's based on a true, but undocumented incident." It can be argued that the film further reinforced this notion in pop culture. An example of this popularization of the myth as a true story can be seen in the August (2005) edition of the RACV's *Royal Auto* magazine. The magazine features an article entitled "Rock of Ages" (pp. 23-25) that details the "spookiness" that visitors feel when they visit the tourist destination of Hanging Rock and that some people have reported ghostly sightings.

31. See the preface to the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto* in Peter Fairclough (ed) *Three Gothic Novels,* Penguin Books, London, 1986, p. 43.

32. See Schafer, op.cit., pp. 140-2, concerning the use of the Gothic as a kind of surrogate history for postcolonial Western nations. This was discussed previously in chapter three of this study.

33. See Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction,* Routledge, New York, 1988, p. 3 and pp. 120-1 in relation to the paradoxical nature of postmodernism.

34. Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka, for example, (as was discussed in chapter three) see *Picnic* as a thoroughly conservative film. Jonathan Rayner on the other hand suggests that the film subverts normative narrative conventions through its inconclusive-ness and its appropriation of the aesthetics of the foreign art film instead of the aesthetics of the television drama (a look which later period films adopted). See Dermody and Jacka, *The Screening of Australia: Anatomy of a National Cinema, Volume 2,* Currency Press, Sydney, 1988, pp. 31-8. Also see Rayner, op.cit., pp. 53-5.

35. In the film Marion wants to take some measurements at the base of the Rock on their excursion. She also (as shown in the opening scenes of the film) takes flower pressings not for romantic reasons but for scientic ones.

36. Campion, op.cit., pp. 15-6.

37. ibid., p. 42.

38. ibid., p. 52.

39. See Vijay Mishra, *The Gothic Sublime,* State University of New York Press, Albany, 1994, p. 37-8.

40. See Fred Botting, "Horror" in Mulvey-Roberts, op.cit., p. 123- 4.

41. See David Morris, "Gothic Sublimity", *New Literary History,* (Winter, 1985), p. 313.

42. Campion, op.cit., p. 139.

43. ibid., p. 9.

44. Botting, op.cit., p. 127.

45. See Marie Mulvey-Roberts, op.cit., p. 178-9.

46. See Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo,* Routledge, London, 2001, p. 21.

47. ibid., pp. 24-5.

48. ibid., p. 2.

49. For a summary of Freud's stages of evolution including the animistic stage, see: Jackson, op.cit., pp. 71-2.

50. See John Rickard, "Aborigines" in Gillian Whitlock and David Carter (eds), *Images of Australia: An Introductory Reader in Australian Studies,* University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1992, p. 61.

51. See Haltof, op. cit., p. 29. Haltof makes note of the Rock's sexual connotations- its "phallic peaks" and "vaginal caves."

52. Green, op.cit., p. 7.

53. See Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis,* Routledge, London, 1993, p. 64. Creed discusses how in some ancient cultures the full moon, snakes and bats were associated with a woman's menstrual cycle. Creed writes: "Many early myths state that the young girl begins to bleed when the snake-goddess or god which live in the moon, bites her." For the symbolism of the ant and its association with Australia and timelessness see Brian Elliot, *The Landscape of Australian Poetry,* Cheshire, Melbourne, 1967, pp. 21-22.

54. See Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works", in A. Richards (ed), *Sigmund Freud, Volume 7 – On Sexuality,* Penguin Books Ltd, London, 1991, pp. 269-70. Freud suggests that menstruation and virginity are taboo in Western culture(s); He states: "one might almost say that women are altogether taboo."

55. For an overview of the narrative conventions of the female Gothic see Marie Mulvey-Roberts, op.cit., pp.53-7. These conventions are more fully discussed in chapter one of this study.

56. Campion, op.cit., p. 139.

57. In relation to some feminist arguments that suggest that Ada is the "visual pleasure" in Campion's film "aimed at gratifying the 'male gaze'" through her "pale, mute beauty…"see: Annie Goldson, "Piano Lessons" in Jonathan Dennis and Jan Biering (eds), *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand,* Victoria University Press with assistance from the New Zealand Film Commission, 1996, pp. 195-6. In contrast to this view is the one that Ada "transgresses sexual traditions", refusing to be a "good" wife to Stewart, disobeying patriarchy and the Law of the Father and asserting her own desires. This disobedience thus makes her the subject of desire rather than the object of desire. See also Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", in her *Visual and Other Pleasures*, The Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1989, pp. 19-25. Mulvey contends that pleasure derived from the cinema can be split between the woman as image or spectacle and man "as bearer of the look" or as voyeur. Queer theory can question this split as it breaks away from this heteronormative structure and can draw attention to the heteronormative assumptions made in Mulvey's argument. Why, for instance, is it necessarily a man who views a woman sexually or voyeuristically – why can it not be a woman viewing a woman in this way or a man viewing a man in the same fashion? For

another work that explores the deconstruction or destabilization of the male gaze in Campion's film, see: Cyndy Hendershot, "(Re)Visioning the Gothic: Jane Campion's *The Piano*", *Literature Film Quarterly,* 26/2, 1998, pp. 97-108. Hendershot writes: "Baines' renunciation of the position of voyeur in relationship to the naked female body works to renegotiate heterosexuality."(p. 6 on web version: www.findarticles.com) Hendershot does not, however, explore this renegotiation in relation to queerness but rather suggests that this destabilization "reimagines" a new kind of heterosexuality. (p. 9, web version)

Antipodean Urban Gothic

Dogs in Space and *Bad Boy Bubby*

We're living off dog food, so what!

<div align="right">IGGY POP [1]</div>

I have never regretted my experience with drugs. I think I am in better health now as a result of using junk at intervals than I would be if I had never been an addict. When you stop growing you start dying. An addict never stops growing.

<div align="right">WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS [2]</div>

In this panoptic society of which incarceration is the omnipresent armature, the delinquent is not outside the law; he [*sic*] is, from the very outset, in the law, at the very heart of the law…. The delinquent is an institutional product.

<div align="right">MICHEL FOUCAULT [3]</div>

As in chapter four, the films looked at in this chapter are read in terms of their use of Gothic/postmodern modes of representation, of which, as has been argued in this study, the destabilization of (sexual) identity as well as pastiche and nostalgia are shared elements. The location of these elements in the Australian urban Gothic films *Dogs in Space* (1987) and *Bad Boy Bubby* (1993) further illustrates the manifestation of an antipodean social imaginary that is informed by earlier Euro-centric constructions of the Antipodes in Gothic/proto-postmodern related terms. That this cultural impulse can be located in a variety of antipodean cinematic contexts, including urban settings, also illustrates its multi-faceted nature.

The phrase "urban gothic" intimates that the action in the literature/film of this sub-genre takes place in an urban setting amidst high-rise buildings, congested traffic and cramped living conditions. The "urban gothic" is usually characterized by its representation of the city as an uncanny site: "a place of ruins, paradoxically always new but always decaying…" In urban gothic literature and film the psychological experience of characters is frequently foregrounded, characters experiencing "paranoia, fragmentation and loss of identity."[4] Nineteenth-century Gothic literature often makes use of urban settings; some examples include R.L. Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).

In more recent times urban settings have been combined with a postmodern Gothic sensibility, a sensibility evident in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) and David Fincher's *Fight Club* (1999). While these examples are more obvious ones in terms of their urban (postmodern) gothic affiliations, there can be found in the Australian films *Dogs in Space* (1987) and *Bad Boy Bubby* (1993) similar preoccupations with the fragmentation of identity in an urban environment. Rayner[5] contends, in his configuration of "urban gothic" in relation to Australian film, that: "flawed heroes uncover conspiracies, reveal iniquitous forms of authority and experience disconcerting alterations in their circumstances and perceptions." Along with these there is usually, Rayner[6] suggests, disturbance on a "psychological level" for individuals, which is mirrored by disruptions in the "physical world" that render reality unstable and in flux. Both *Dogs in Space* and *Bad Boy Bubby* exhibit such alterations in the perception of reality, along with a questioning of authority in

the form of the police, institutionalized religion (mainly Christianity) and middle-class family values or norms. Moreover, these Australian films use the Gothic theme of excess[7] to question the moral majority by presenting characters that push the limits or boundaries of what is considered morally right or normal. Owing to their subversion of Enlightenment/modernist concepts of the self as unified and whole, and their representation of the paradoxical and complex power relations between dominant ideologies and opposing ideologies, the bourgeois and the anti-bourgeois,[8] both films can be read in (postmodern) Gothic terms.

The utilization of Gothic/postmodern modes of representation in *Dogs in Space* is evident in the film's narrative structure or non-structure, and in its representation of fringe dwellers or ex-centrics who subvert bourgeois norms but whose anti-bourgeois identities are also produced by these very same norms. The film, set in the Melbourne inner-city suburb of Richmond in 1978, explores the day-to-day lives of the "alternative" members of a chaotic household. Tim Groves[9] in *Senses of Cinema* (2001) succinctly summarizes the characters:

> The household nominally comprises Sam (Michael Hutchence), his lover Anna (Saskia Post), Tim (Nique Needles), Luchio (Tony Helou) an earnest engineering student, Grant (Adam Briscomb) a stud, and hippies Tony (Peter Walsh) and Jenny (Caroline Lee). Assorted hangers-on include the adolescent runaway, the Girl (Deanna Bond), and Leanne (Sharon Jessop), a pregnant Westie trying to snare Luchio, and there are occasional visitors such as a socialist to whom nobody listens, a land rights activist (Gary Foley, more or less playing himself) and Chainsaw Man, a bloke obsessed with his equipment (Chris Haywood, in a marvellous cameo).

The cinematic style of *Dogs in Space* is a collage of differing types of people associated with different and sometimes opposing subcultures, including punks and

hippies. The film also includes, in its chaotic narrative, footage of the first Russian space mission in the '50s and news bulletins concerning Skylab (a U.S. space station that eventually fell out of orbit, some pieces scattering over Western Australia),[10] which interrupts the presentation in the film of parties, drug-taking, band gigs, casual sex and the drag racing of Volkswagen "Beetles". Footage of David Bowie on *Countdown* watched on T.V. (which is always turned on) during his tour of Australia in 1978, as well as footage of Nick Cave from The Boys Next Door film-clip for the cult classic "Shivers" are also included in the array of imagery and news from the late 1970s.[11]

Through its presentation of bits and pieces from 1978 as well as celebrities (most obviously Michael Hutchence) [12] at the time of its making, *Dogs in Space,* can be read as extremely intertextual, the film a pastiche of a past era in Melbourne in the late 1970s. *Dogs in Space,* suggests Groves[13], is basically a nostalgia film concerning the punk/new wave music scene in Melbourne in the late '70s.[14] As discussed in chapter one of this study nostalgia, pastiche and an aesthetic emphasis on surfaces are shared constitutional elements of Gothic/postmodern modes of representation.[15] Although both cultural modes have different kinds of nostalgia and differing intertextual references (as discussed previously), *Dogs in Space* highlights their convergence in "Antipodean Gothic cinema".

Dogs is a film of surface aesthetics; it gives an impression of reality and late '70s Melbourne, rather than concerning itself with facts by giving a "coherent historical account." Through its preoccupation with historical surfaces the film creates a de-historicized space, which, as theorized by Jameson, is a defining

feature of much postmodernist cinema.[16] The film commences with a quote from punk icon Iggy Pop (above as epigraph states), then a voice-over on a radio that keeps changing stations announces: "Ladies and gentlemen, the stories you are about to hear are true. Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent."[17] The film further blurs the line between fact and fiction by the inclusion of a Michael Hutchence film clip[18] at the end of the film, confusing Sam and his band Dogs in Space with a real rock star (Michael Hutchence), Hutchence's image inexplicably linked to the real band INXS. Is it a clip of a Dogs in Space song (who have now hit the "big time") or is it a "real" band? The film is ambiguous about boundaries between what is real and what is unreal, and it is this ambiguity that is indicative of a (postmodern) Gothic sensibility.

The portrayal of various "types" in *Dogs in Space* also reveals the film's utilization or engagement with Gothic/postmodern modes of representation, the film highlighting the constructedness of subjectivity through the presentation of two-dimensional or cardboard cutout figures or characters. Gothic fiction and film (see chapter one), often presents two-dimensional types, placing an emphasis on surfaces.[19] This emphasis, as was argued in chapter one is a proto-postmodern aspect of the Gothic[20] and one that becomes intensified in the postmodern Gothic, reality becoming effaced and replaced with simulacra. As Groves[21] comments in relation to the film's narrative construction:

> The film moves gradually towards its inevitable tragic conclusion, yet it has little dramatic tension. Nor are the characters developed in depth. Rather, they exist on the surface Lowenstein creates, constantly moving, as if trying to avoid sustained interaction with other people. Indeed serious conversations are rare, brief and truncated, and the awkwardness

of these moments is reinforced by some inconsistent acting. However this loose, even shallow, structure is a deliberate strategy.

This "deliberate strategy" in regard to the film's depthlessness suggests that *Dogs* subverts normative or modernist narrative form(s). As has been discussed, *Dogs* can be read as a film that is intertextual, that is, nostalgic – a pastiche of a past era in Australian (sub)cultural history, it reveals the social/cultural constructedness of "the individual" through its emphasis on surfaces. *Dogs* can also be read in Gothic/postmodern terms beyond these more technical narrative aspects and other traces of these ideologically related cultural modes pervade the film.

In *Dogs* various representations of subcultures and the politically ex-centric such as hippies, punks, Goths, socialists, anarchists, radical feminists and Aboriginal rights activists – are perhaps the only half recognizable focal point of the film. Although these disparate subcultures or belief systems seem to lack unity, they all pose a threat to bourgeois norms because of their challenging of "the establishment" or "the law". There is evidence of the questioning of authority at numerous intervals in the film. One such incident involves a violent punk girl, who, at a party that the householders attend, verbally abuses the police, shouting at them: "Oi, you! Suck my motherfuckin' dick!" The punk girl not only challenges institutionalized authority but also queers gendered language when she refers to her "dick."

The challenging of authority can also be seen in a scene where a socialist calls the Fraser government "fascist", the film also making allusions to the organizing of meetings and concerts that voice opposing views to those of the government. The

fact that Sam is not employed or seeking any work (nor do the other householders appear interested in being bound by a regular job), can be also be seen to give the middle finger (so to speak) to both the government and bourgeois values that demand they work a nine-to-five job to pay the bills in order to be financially contributing citizens for the good of the nation. The entire film and its portrayal of subcultures that are generally associated with subverting the culturally normative and "the mainstream" constitutes one giant "FUCK YOU!" to bourgeois sensibilities through its disordered narrative, the equally dis-ordered figures that populate its urban landscape, and the ruinous house that the film's characters occupy. That house can be seen as reminiscent of the ruins of a Gothic castle or a decaying city, such imagery common in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Gothic literature.[22] The house that the film's ex-centrics occupy is in a state of decay, is cluttered, full of people, dirty dishes and old furniture, and by the film's end everyone has been evicted and the house appears trashed. The house itself (as produced by the householders' habits) can be read as an anti-Augustan symbol but also as anti-bourgeois through this disregard for order and symmetry,[23] and this is but one example of the deployment of the Gothic in the film.

Associated with all the subcultures in *Dogs* is the use of illegal drugs (marijuana, amphetamines and other narcotics), the inclusion in the film of drug use blurring and even effacing distinctions between the real and the imaginary, the film also appropriating or making reference to a key Gothic figure, the vampire. David Punter[24] suggests in *Gothic Pathologies* that both "the terrorist" and "the monster" are key and recurring figures in the Gothic, both of which are invoked in

Dogs, though not in an obvious way. Punter explains that "the terrorist" "confronts us with an excess of control, with the notion that the springs of the world can be unwound, that the ramifications of the law can be eluded by a mere effort of mind." In this way then, the householders in the film and the other fringe dwellers are terrorists through their refusal to fit in with dictated norms and expectations to conform to dominant bourgeois ideologies. The householders and their friends drag race VW "Beetles" on the way to a party, they sleep during the day and party at night, take spontaneous midnight trips to the country, revel in casual sex and drugs, and generally cause disturbances in the neighbourhood, revealing that "the law" can be defied (to some extent) through lifestyle choices and also through "the mind", by merely thinking in terms that oppose or disturb the law.

The other Gothic figure that Punter[25] discusses is "the monster":

> The monster comes to transcend the law: the monster owes no allegiance to a society in which it is always an orphan, but the monster is also a figure for our own need to deal – powerfully, violently – with our own sense of abjection, to become a serial killer, a child abuser, an absolute ruler of a kingdom of death and decay. This monster is not in the end a figure of terror, but a figure of the terrorized; its very physicality, its obdurate and egregious body, is precisely an extrusion of abjection, doomed always to reappear and always again to be slain.

Probably the best known and most used Gothic monsters are Frankenstein's monster and Dracula, especially the latter, since vampirism appears in many novels and films.[26] According to Alan Ryan in his introduction to *The Penguin Book of Vampire Stories,* vampires have come to symbolize in Western cultures what can be seen as the ex-centric. Vampires threaten "all normal society; they drink blood, they kill; and, even worse, they make their victims like themselves."[27] In *Dogs,*

Sam can be seen as the archetypal vampire figure – he sleeps by day, is awake at night and recruits others (Anna) to join him in his feeding habits, leading subsequently to Anna's untimely death. Perhaps one of the most telling comments made in the film that links Sam and also "the junky" to vampirism is Tim (one of the householders) saying to Sam as he staggers outside after a night sleeping on the stairs: "Careful you don't get any sun on you Sammy. You'll shrivel up and die." Considering Ryan's comments about "the vampire" "standing outside", or in opposition to cultural norms, and Punter's[28] suggestion in *Gothic Pathologies* that "the body of the addict is not under the control of the law", highlighting, rather, the "limits" of the Law, Sam's drug taking can be symbolically interpreted as a kind of vampirism.

Sam is also a queer figure and queerness has been associated with vampirism since its inception in Gothic literature[29] as well as being one of the defining features of the Euro-centric gothic-ization/(proto)-postmodernization of the Antipodes (see chapter two). Nearing the start of the film where teens and twenty-somethings are lined up sitting on the sidewalk, waiting overnight for tickets to the long awaited Bowie concert (a queer figure himself),[30] a platform shoe-wearing homophobic hoon who pulls up in his car with his hoon friends singles out Sam for abuse. The hoon taunts Sam: "Are you from the planet poofter? Or the planet stupider?" When Sam will not respond to the taunts, the hoon starts to kick him, a punk girl coming to the rescue by smashing a bottle across the hoon's face and Anna, Sam's girlfriend, telling the hoon to "Fuck off!"

Sam's behaviour in relation to this incident is not typically masculine in that he will not resort to violence even to defend himself – two girls leaping to his defence instead. Good-naturedly, Anna comments to Sam after this run-in with the hoons, "You were supposed to be protecting me!" Sam is a queer figure through his subversion of masculine norms.[31] For instance, he wears Anna's eyeliner to a Dogs in Space gig and his drug-taking through the use of needles also symbolizes a queer practice. The penetration of the body (leaving marks like vampire bites) by the needle (a phallic symbol), followed by the release of fluid (semen) into the body, results in an orgasm, as made clear in the film by Sam and Anna's apparent ecstasy after "using". The drug-taking in *Dogs in Space* also subverts the notion of a stable singular reality through the experiencing of differing realities, revealing a plurality of human experience/existence, which in turn blurs the usual distinctions between self/other, inside/outside, since the external drug is internalized within and the identity of the taker altered through this internalization.[32]

According to Helen Keane in *What's Wrong with Addiction?* addicts, or those who dabble in illicit drug-taking, upset boundaries between the real and the unreal by obtaining illusory pleasure and states of euphoria or bliss through losing "interest in the real in favour of the simulacrum."[33] This disintegration of the real and fragmentation of the self through which a state of euphoria is achieved can be read in terms of Jameson's theorization of postmodern intensities (the sublime), which is "dominated by a peculiar kind of euphoria."[34] This particular kind of sublimity in which the self does not mourn the loss of truth or reality but celebrates it, exulting in the face of the stable self's distintegration, is, it can be argued,

experienced by Anna and Sam, who, in the film, become euphoric when they are "using". It is, according to Keane (who draws upon Derrida), not the "pleasure *per se*" derived from illegal drug-taking that upsets normative values in Western culture(s), but rather the fact that this pleasure is obtained "in an experience without truth." The addict's pleasure is seen within medical and pharmacological discourses as "inauthentic" and also "unnatural" because it lacks truth, supposedly derived from a sense of reality that everyone shares.[35] It can be seen through this normative construction of "the addict", or drug-takers in general, that they pose a threat to essentialist beliefs in a stable "I" and a common reality in that they experience alternative states of being and many different realities.

In *Dogs,* the most obvious scene in the film that shows a distintegration of "the real" is the one in which Anna, having apparently died from a heroin overdose, walks through the household, seeing all her friends, and is taken away by a ghost limousine waiting for her out the front of the house along with her lover Sam. The film shows Anna's moment of pleasure when she climbs into the limousine and then cuts to her cadaverous face back in normative reality. Although the film does take a moral stance on drug-taking and its sometimes fatal consequences, it also undermines the moral ending to the narrative. It simultaneously highlights the tragic nature of Anna's premature death by showing her friends to be deeply affected by her sudden departure, while also showing Anna happy in her other-worldly or alternative reality.

As Fred Botting[36] comments, in *Gothic,* in relation to the use of excess and the sometimes moral endings to Gothic tales: "Some moral endings are little more than

perfunctory tokens, thin excuses for salacious excesses…" *Dogs in Space* is a film about excess, a film meant to capture sub(cultural) lifestyles and their difference from mainstream culture. While an attempt is made to show what might happen if the "rules of social behaviour are neglected…",[37] the film simultaneously glamorizes drug use through its association with rock/punk stardom, with youth, and with freedom from the constraints of bourgeois values.

In *Dogs in Space*, "the addict" or drug-user's corporeality is, like "the vampire" body, a site of decay and dissolution but is also symbolic of new (and eternal) life, as intimated by Burroughs' comment that the junky never stops growing (see above epigraph).[38] Both "the addict" and "the vampire" are unruly figures who test the limits of "the law" through their constructed otherness, this otherness also created in conjunction with "the law". Punter[39] comments that the addicted (along with the possessed, compulsive and obsessive) stand as figures that resist the normative, but can also be seen as " those who have already given way, who have abandoned the struggle for individuation…" Not unlike Gothic monsters, drug addicts or junkies can be seen as abject – they disturb "identity, system, order" and do "not respect borders, positions, rules."[40] The drug addict's blatant disregard for borders and systems, particularly in relation to "the law", can be understood in terms of Gothic/postmodern versions of the sublime in which the self or the mind is fragmented when faced with the unknown.[41] Both versions of the sublime, although differing in their final effect on the individual, one left in shock and mourning this fragmentation (Gothic), the other left in a euphoric state celebrating this same

fragmentation (postmodern), can be theorized in relation to Kristeva's notion of "the abject."

Abjection occurs when the "I" is expelled and the "other" possesses the subject. This other can be theoretically interpreted as an outside substance (drugs) that possesses its host.[42] People who use illegal drugs can be seen as standing in direct opposition to the law, although, they are also constructed within its confines. Keane further explores the way in which the addict is construed in opposition to normal health or the "proper" body, and questions essentialist assumptions concerning drug addiction: "Medical and pharmacological discourses often reproduce familiar dichotomies of natural/artificial, inside/outside, self/other and truth/falsity in their accounts of drugs and addiction, despite their desire to simply describe chemical and physiological processes."[43] Moreover, Keane, drawing on Foucault's theorization of knowledge and power relations, argues that, "discourses of addiction can be understood as part of a peculiarly modern regime of disciplinary power and knowledge." These regimes or hierarchies work to normalize all aspects of life, and are necessary for the maintaining of their "regulatory ideal of rational, autonomous subjectivity", and the categorization of bodies that are "unnatural, disordered and self-destructive."[44]

Thus, while in *Dogs in Space* illegal drug-taking challenges bourgeois values/ideals, it also keeps those values in place through its constructed otherness and ex-centricism in relation to mainstream culture, and is reflective of the paradoxical relationship that the Gothic and postmodernism have with Enlightenment/post-Enlightenment (modernist) philosophies.[45]

Evidence of this paradox wherein what opposes the norm also simultaneously reinforces it, can be seen in the relationship between what the householders represent or signify (the anti-bourgeois) and the backgrounds they come from, which are largely white, middle-class, and suburban. In the film it is learned that Sam, perhaps the most anti-bourgeois character, comes from a religious middle-class background, his mother bringing Sam dinner and some clean clothes, saying "Hello" to him from Father Francis, and letting Sam know that he can return home if he wants to. There is evidence in this scene that there is some tension between Sam and his father or his mother's partner, as Sam's mother comments that he can come home because she is on her "own now." When Anna is in an emotional state over Sam's flirting with and kissing of the "runaway girl", she returns home, the scene showing her in a modest home watching television with her family. Similarly, when some of the householders watch for Skylab, they go to one of their families' middle-class suburban homes to wake them up for the event. In another scene, two "goth" girls reminisce about their days at their Catholic high school. Thus, although the householders are represented as delinquents, anti-middle-class or anti-establishment, they are also shown to be products of bourgeois ideals and institutions such as schools and the Church.

As was discussed in chapter one of this study, the Gothic is both a middle-class (bourgeois) and anti-middle-class (anti-bourgeois) cultural form. *Dogs in Space* clearly utilizes this aspect of the Gothic, along with a number of other Gothic/postmodern narrative devices. It queers sex/gender roles, blurs the line between the real/unreal, makes references to popular culture, and challenges

188

differing forms of institutionalized authority as well as subverting essentialist notions of stable subjectivity.

Rolf de Heer's *Bad Boy Bubby,* like *Dogs in Space,* also displays a postmodern Gothic sensibility through its questioning of authoritative figures and cultural institutions, its fragmented central characters, and its gloomy cinematic style. In the film, the childlike 35-year-old Bubby has been imprisoned his entire life in a dungeon-like dwelling by his mother, with whom he has an incestuous relationship. Bubby's mother, to keep Bubby from venturing outside, tells Bubby that there is poisonous gas that will kill him if he dares go outside their dank and dark dwelling. Bubby's mother makes this seem more real by donning a gasmask every time she decides to leave.

The other threat that keeps Bubby prisoner is the notion that Jesus sees everything, which is coupled with Flo's assertion that she'll beat him brainless if he moves at all. Bubby mimics his mother's behaviour, wearing his mother's clothes and pretending to be her while he makes a stray cat play his role. In this scene Flo reminds Bubby what is waiting for him outside if he disobeys her:

> **Flo:** And if the poison don't get you?
> **Bubby:** God will.
> **Flo:** And don't you bloody forget it.[46]

Bubby finally wonders why, if the air outside is poisonous, the cat that he keeps is not in need of a gasmask, even though it comes from outside. Flo tells Bubby that cats do not breathe and shows him what "not breathing" is by nearly suffocating him, growling: "That ain't breathin." Bubby tests this theory by wrapping his cat in cling wrap, and the cat dies from this "breathing experiment".

Shortly after, Bubby's long-lost alcoholic father, Harold (whom he has never met), a man of God, complete with priest's collar, arrives to start another relationship with Flo as he is only "preaching part-time" now. Bubby starts to call Harold "Pop" and irritates Harold, who verbally abuses Bubby calling him "a poofter", a "weirdo" and a "pervert", eventually throwing Bubby outside. The turbulent relationship with his father results in Bubby cling-wrapping both his parents, leaving his domestic prison, achieving some success through fronting a rock band and adopting the stage-name "Pop".

The questioning of authority in the form of institutionalized religion is a constant and recurring theme throughout the film, and depicts such institutions as corrupting and hypocritical. This may be understood as reflecting the questioning of religion, particularly Catholicism, in early Gothic literature. According to Botting[47], Gothic novels produced in "northern European Protestant countries often had an anti-Catholic subtext", moreover, the Goths/the Germanic nations associated with the Gothic in the eighteenth-century were thought to have conquered the Roman empire, and were therefore a symbol of all that was not Roman in terms of cultural values and religious beliefs (Catholicism being associated with the Roman empire). In *Bubby,* can be seen not only an anti-Catholic subtext but also, more generally, an antipathy toward institutionalized religion as subtext that critically interrogates the role of religion in perpetuating fanaticism and violence, as well as raising existentialist questions of the need for a God or gods at all.

In the film, Bubby's mother uses Jesus as a threatening force that keeps Bubby obedient. Jesus is thus combined with Flo's violent threats until one stands for the

other in Bubby's mind. This is shown in the scene when Bubby, having been arrested for harassing a woman at a restaurant and spending the night in jail where another prisoner rapes him, is drawn into a church by the sound of an organ. To the organ player (who turns out to be something of an existentialist), Bubby states matter-of-factly: "Jesus can see everything I do, and he's gonna beat me brainless." Jesus, rather than a loving saviour, is in Bubby's world a ruthless and violent tyrant who keeps him prisoner in both a literal and abstract sense, by helping Flo keep him in his dungeon and by keeping him a captive of his own sense of inferiority and powerlessness.

The organist becomes the instigator of Bubby's transformation into "Pop" and his "taking responsibility" for his own circumstances. He tells Bubby:

> We are all just complicated arrangements of atoms and subatomic particles. We don't live, but our atoms do move about in such a way as to give us identity and consciousness. We don't die. Our atoms just rearrange themselves. There is no God. There can be no God. It's ridiculous to think in terms of a superior being.

The organist also tells Bubby: "It is our duty to think God out of existence", adding: "Fuck you, God!" The blasphemous musings that the organist shares with Bubby reveal contempt for the grand narratives of institutionalized religion that dictate rules for existence and that purport a singular truth. Another instance in the film when the questioning of institutionalized religion occurs is when one of Bubby's band members (Bubby having hooked up with a band on his travels and becoming their frontperson) explains to Bubby (in order to stop Bubby from cling-wrapping people) that through the ages people have killed each other due to

differing religious beliefs. He goes on to tell Bubby that killing due to difference is "all pointless."

Another scene in the film where religious authority is questioned is when Bubby has dinner with his girlfriend Angel and her religious parents, the latter call Angel a "fat slut", telling her: "God doesn't like fat people." Bubby tries to defend Angel by saying that she is "beautiful" and that "God be a useless cunt", but his comments only make matters worse, and he leaves Angel behind in tears and at the mercy of her fanatical parents. When Angel learns of the death of her parents, having been cling-wrapped by Bubby, though she is unaware of this, she tells Bubby that her parents were full of "poisons" and were just waiting to die anyway. Bubby comments: "If the poison don't get you, then God will." Bubby, the architect of his own existence, thus also becomes God and strikes down those he thinks deserve punishment. Ironically enough, all of Bubby's victims are violent and cruel and use their religious belief in God as a means to control others.

Parallels can be drawn here between the depictions of people whom Bubby cling-wraps as Christians (Flo, Harold and Angel's parents), and the link between Catholicism and, more broadly, Christianity and the Roman Empire. Bubby can be seen to revolt against these religious ideals and also against the Augustan ideals of rationality and reason[48] by letting his passions and emotions guide him in his choice of victim, rather than worrying about the consequences of "the law". Bubby's opposition to Augustan ideals and "the law" positions him as a Goth-type figure that subverts authoritarian rules and principles. As was discussed in chapter two of this study, the British desire to fill in the textual blankness of the Antipodes

coincided with their fascination for the anti-Roman Goths. It was proposed that the British recreated what they perceived as Goth/Gothic culture when they mapped and colonized Australia/New Zealand, thus constructing the cultures in anti-Augustan terms. Bubby, then, is an expression of this cultural construction, his anti-Roman or anti-Augustan stance a further indication of the Euro-centric gothicization/(proto)-postmodernization of the Antipodes and its manifestation in "Antipodean Gothic cinema".

Bad Boy Bubby, like *Dogs in Space* is a film of excess: it poses ontological questions vis-à-vis the fracturing or fragmentation of identity or subjectivity; it pushes the limits of morally acceptable behaviour, and subverts but is also *of* or *within* "the law". *Bad Boy Bubby* reveals that identity is changeable and fluid, and in this way, questions essentialist assumptions about a stable and core self. A pastiche of all the people he comes into contact with throughout the course of the film, Bubby parrots people's conversations and applies them to new social situations or contexts. He makes a new persona, "Pop" (based on his father) through the assemblage of bits and pieces from his life, and subsequently has some success as a performance artist in what seems to be a combination of Australian pub-rock and the avant-garde. Bubby seems to mirror back to people their own identities: for instance, he dresses up in his father's priest attire and sticks hair on his face, mimicking his father's voice while repeating parts of conversations that his father and mother have had. He also mimics a police officer who, earlier in the film, punches Bubby in the stomach and verbally abuses him. In the scene where he mimics the police officer Bubby is, ironically enough, robbing a service station. He

punches the attendant in the stomach, repeating the cop's exact same words: " I don't like fuckin' smart cunts." In fact, most of what Bubby says in the film is what other people have said to him, and this highlights Bubby's unstable identity.

As can be seen, in *Bad Boy Bubby,* identity is fragmented and shown as multiple through Bubby's role as mimic but also through Bubby's differing names and the differing "acts" he performs throughout the course of the film. Bubby becomes "Pop", a performance artist in a band, and drawing on his past, recreates his contact with various people on stage. Bubby/Pop is also the "Cling-Wrap Killer", as he is named in a newspaper, having cling-wrapped four people whom he leaves to suffocate and rot in their own homes.

The film reveals that identity is subject to change and that, rather than being stable, it can be multiple, different personas conjured up to deal with various circumstances. Through its representation of Bubby's multiple personas, the film can thus be seen to be interrogative in terms of its exploration of the construction of subjectivity or identity, Bubby invoking the postmodern question "What will I do today?" instead of "Who am I?" The former question emphasizes action, whereas the latter is concerned with a core being.[49] Through its foregrounding of self as performative, the film actively engages with postmodernist philosophies or theories that challenge modernist conceptions of subjectivity. This is combined with the film's gothicism which also highlights the instability of subjectivity and the sexually taboo and is instantiated in Bubby's assumption of various guises[50], his serial killings, his gloomy upbringing, and his incestuous relationship with his mother. This convergence of Gothic with postmodern modes of representation in

Bad Boy Bubby is indicative of a developing postmodern Gothic sensibility, a cultural impulse that, it can be argued, is heavily informed by the gothic-ization/proto-postmodernization of the Antipodes in European myth and literature, an impulse that intensified through the coincidence of the "rise" of postmodernist fiction and film and the revival of the Australian cinema in the 1970s.[51]

In de Heer's film, Bubby possesses a child-like innocence (if there is such a thing as "innocence" since, according to Punter[52] in *Gothic Pathologies*, everything and everyone is already "ruined" in the Gothic), but is also a murderer – a serial killer. Botting,[53] in discussing the use of excess in the Gothic, writes that in the eighteenth-century with the rise of the Gothic novel Gothic plots "appeared to celebrate criminal behaviour", and through the creation of violent and "other" worlds "challenged the forms of nature and reality advocated by eighteenth-century social and domestic ideology." In *Bubby,* the creation of such a world, particularly in the first part of the film, when Bubby is imprisoned in his "dungeon" by his mother, can be seen to resonate with these kind of Gothic traces, the viewer unsettled through the constant threat and use of violence until it erupts into outright murder. Serial killing or premeditated murder are also considered by Punter[54] as part of "the monstrous" in Gothic literature and can be seen as abject, revealing the "fragility" of "the law". Bubby kills his parents with cling-wrap, and, having a limited understanding of life and death and indeed "the law" itself, does not really comprehend that he has committed a crime.

When Bubby develops a romantic relationship with Angel, a nurse at a home for the disabled (the ex-centric) and meets her cruel parents, he is fully aware of what

he is doing when he decides to cling-wrap them. The film shows Bubby, having left Angel's parents' house after her parents call her various abusive names, picking up some plastic/cling-wrap. The killing of Angel's parents is not shown, though the audience learns that they have been "wrapped" and that Angel, relieved that her parents are dead, remains unaware that Bubby is her parents' murderer. Bubby is the "Cling-wrap Killer" but he is also both loving and kind. The killings are represented in both cases as "mercy" killings, as both Bubby's and Angel's parents are depicted as cruel and as "full of poison." In this way *Bad Boy Bubby* seems to present an ambiguous view on murder, seen less as a crime then as one way to rid "poisonous" people from the planet. Although a member of the band explains to Bubby that he must stop killing people just because he dislikes them, providing some moral guidance in the film, Bubby still has the potential to kill again in spite of his innocent exterior, and this "talk" cannot undo what has already been done where the murders are concerned.

Bad Boy Bubby's ending, like that of *Dogs in Space,* is a token one in that it reinscribes normative and bourgeois values in order to counter the excesses it presents to the viewer. Bubby becomes somewhat of a success with his band, attracting a cult following who wear priest collars, know the words to the songs/spoken word he performs, and, mimicking the way Bubby/Pop speaks, chant at gigs "Where be Pop!" The other band members, their heads cling-wrapped, represent part of Bubby's or Pop's past, and Pop's entire performance as an enigmatic front person is drawn entirely from all his conversations or "run-ins" with people during his life. The film basically shows that good can come of tragic

circumstances, once people take control of their own lives, which is exactly what the film has Bubby do.

At the conclusion of the film, Bubby/Pop lives with Angel and has two sons with her, the "happy family" shown in the backyard of a modest home in an industrial-like suburb, Bubby/Pop playing with his sons. While this ending seems happy, it cannot erase all the darker events of the film, and in fact, through this kind of fairy-tale ending where everyone lives happily ever after, attention is drawn to how this happy ending came to be. Bubby is where he is because, not in spite of, his criminal acts, his murdering of people that made him unhappy. Bubby escapes his circumstances and his imprisonment through breaking "the law", through abject acts. Kristeva[55] contends that any crime "draws attention to the fragility of the law" but that premeditated murder is particularly abject because it heightens "the display of such fragility." Kristeva cites a criminal with a "good conscience" as an example of an abject figure because such a subject disintegrates the good/evil binary. Accordingly, Bubby's depiction as a likeable and "innocent" serial killer, a "family man", with Angel and their two children, may indicate the end of his killing ways. However, this rather token "closure", as in the fairy-tale ending to *The Piano,* also signals the "darkness" that lurks beneath, for behind the façade of the innocent Bubby is the abject monster known as the "Cling-Wrap Killer", and who knows if, how, or when, he will strike again.

As can be seen, *Bad Boy Bubby* is yet another example of the merging of Gothic/postmodern narrative devices in "Antipodean Gothic cinema", and like *Picnic at Hanging Rock, The Piano* and *Dogs in Space*, can be seen to display a

postmodern Gothic sensibility that, it can be argued, constitutes an antipodean version of the Gothic. As was discussed in chapter three of this study, Australian/New Zealand cinema(s) were more fully established in the 1970s at a time when postmodernist theories, fiction, and film came to the fore in the cultural arena. At this same time, both nations' cinemas attempted to highlight their national difference through a Gothic impulse that was already part of the antipodean social imaginary. *Bad Boy Bubby,* along with the other films that have been, and will be discussed in part two of this study, are cinematic manifestations of the coincidence of a rise in national consciousness in Australian and New Zealand cultures in the 1970s which found a voice through Gothic means, and the rise of a postmodern consciousness through which this Gothic impulse came to be filtered.

This chapter has discussed the Australian films *Dogs in Space* and *Bad Boy Bubby* in (postmodern) Gothic terms, the films subverting essentialist notions of a stable and core self as well as exploring the power relations between "the law" and the law-less, between bourgeois and anti-bourgeois sensibilities. Both films were also read in terms of their transgression of moral boundaries and limits, the films' characters revelling in excess, revealing the fragility of "the law" and challenging differing forms of authority. These Gothic and postmodern elements that have been located in the films are, it can be argued, manifestations of the Euro-centric Gothic/(proto)-postmodernization of the antipodean "space" and the cultural construction of an Australian national identity that simultaneously opposes but is created by Enlightenment ideals. In the next chapter, "Antipodean Suburban

Gothic", a developing postmodern Gothic sensibility is similarly located in Jim Sharman's *The Night the Prowler* (1978) and in Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures* (1994). The following analysis of these films further reflects the multi-faceted nature of "Antipodean Gothic cinema", the films' suburban settings providing a backdrop for a queering of sex/gender roles and the undermining of the grand narratives of psychoanalysis.

Notes

1. Punk icon Iggy Pop as quoted at the beginning of *Dogs in Space*. Iggy Pop was the lead singer of the seminal and influential punk band *The Stooges* formed in the late 1960s, and is known for his onstage antics such as nudity and self-mutilation. See Iggy Pop's biography on his website for more information - www.iggypop.com

2. See William S. Burroughs, *Junky,* Penguin Books, London, 2002, p. xxvii. Burroughs' comments concerning drug addiction can be paralleled to the Gothic figure of "the vampire": the puncturing of the flesh, the exchange of fluids and the suggestion that junkies never stop "growing" suggests a kind of eternal life.

3. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* Penguin Books, London, 1991, p. 301, where he discusses power relations between "the law" and the law-less.

4. See Alexandra Warwick's explanation of the "urban gothic" in Marie Mulvey-Roberts (ed), *The Handbook to Gothic Literature,* Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, pp. 288-9.

5. See Jonathan Rayner, *Contemporary Australian Cinema: An Introduction,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000, p. 44.

6. ibid.

7. For information concerning "excess" as a Gothic theme see: Fred Botting, *Gothic,* Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 1-6.

8. See Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction,* Routledge, New York, p. 3, for her suggestion (as discussed in chapter one) that postmodern art forms simultaneously inscribe and subvert normative values. See also an analysis of Foucault's work in Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, "Foucault and the Critique of Modernity", in their *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*, Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1991, p. 54. Best and Kellner discuss Foucault's theories of domination and resistance and Foucault's suggestion that "We move in a world of perpetual strategic relations". See also David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day,* Longman, New York, 1980, p. 423, for his suggestion that the Gothic is *of* the middleclass but also anti-middleclass.

9. Tim Groves, "Dogs in Space", *Senses of Cinema,* Issue 15, July-Aug 2001, p. 1. Go to http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/15/cteq/dogs_in_space.html

10. Skylab, the first U.S. space station, received much media attention especially in 1978 when it fell out of orbit. There was some concern as to where pieces of it might land. Eventually some pieces of Skylab did fall, scattering over Western Australia (but not Melbourne). For more information go to:
   www.super70s.com.Super70s/Tech/space/Missions/Skylab.asp

11. Nick Cave was lead singer of The Boys Next Door in the late '70s and "Shivers", was included on their first album "Door, Door" released in 1979. For an overview of the late 1970s and goth/punk/avant-garde bands in Australia (particularly in the Melbourne/St Kilda area) see: James Cockington, *Long Way to the Top: Stories of Australian Rock & Roll,* ABC Books, Sydney, 2001, pp. 223-233. Also see Vikki Riley's chapter "Death Rockers of the World Unite! Melbourne 1978-80 – Punk Rock or no Punk Rock?" in Phillip Hayward (ed),

From Pop to Punk to Postmodernism: Popular Music and Australian Culture from the 1960s to the 1990s, Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, North Sydney, 1992, pp. 113-127.

12. Michael Hutchence (1960-1997) was lead singer of Australian band INXS in the 1980s and 1990s, achieving commercial success both in Australia and overseas.

13. Groves, op.cit., p. 2.

14. See Cockington, op.cit., pp. 223-233 about the punk scene in Melbourne in the late 1970s and also Riley, op.cit., pp. 133-7.

15 See Allan Lloyd Smith, "Postmodernism/Gothicism" in Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith (eds), *Modern Gothic: A Reader,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996, pp. 8-14.

16. The quote is from Groves, op.cit., p. 2. For the reference to Fredric Jameson see: "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", *New Left Review,* No. 146, 1984, pp. 66-7.

17. Richard Lowenstein (director) *Dogs in Space,* 1987. All subsequent quotations are from this source unless otherwise indicated. See the Filmography for details.

18. See Groves, op. cit., p. 2. Although INXS as a band was not involved in the film, Michael Hutchence was known as the lead singer of the band and so the association between the fictional band Dogs in Space and the real band INXS becomes blurred.

19. See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions,* Methuen Inc, New York, 1986, p. 142.

20. See Smith, op.cit., pp. 8-10, for his analysis of postmodernism, the Gothic, and their use of "an aesthetics of the surface".

21. Groves, op.cit., pp. 1-2.

22. See Warwick's definition of "urban gothic" in Mulvey-Roberts, op.cit., pp. 288-9.

23. As discussed in chapter one, Augustan/Enlightenment values or ideals are generally considered to be order, symmetry, rationality or reason, and emotional control, and were associated with the Augustan period of the Roman Empire. These values can be seen to contrast with the Gothic's emphasis on, or use of emotional excess and anarchy in the eighteenth-century Gothic novel. For the way in which the Gothic became associated with all that opposes Classical ideals see: Punter, op.cit., p. 28; Samuel Kliger, *The Goths in England: A Study in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Thought,* Octagon Books, New York, 1972, p. 3; Robin Sowerby, "The Goths in History and Pre-Gothic Gothic" in David Punter (ed), *A Companion to the Gothic,* Blackwell Publishers Inc, Oxford, 2000, p. 17.

24. See David Punter, *Gothic Pathologies: the Text, the Body, and the Law,* St Martin's Press, New York, 1998, pp. 204-5.

25. Punter, op.cit., p. 204.

26. For a detailed exploration of vampirism and its different guises especially in relation to film see: Nina Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1995, p. 1. Auerbach argues that vampires embody (Western) societies' fears and desires.

27. See Alan Ryan (ed), *The Penguin Book of Vampire Stories,* Penguin Books, London, 1987, p. xiv. Ryan suggests that "the vampire" stands "outside" normal society and this is where "the vampire" can be said to be ex-centric.

28. Punter, op.cit., p. 8, uses William Burrough's writings as an example of where the addict body can be seen as testing the limits of "the law".

29. See William Hughes, "Fictional vampires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" in David Punter (ed), *A Companion to the Gothic,* op.cit., p. 145. Hughes suggests that "the vampire" disrupts sexual and gendered categories, blurring boundaries between heterosexuality and homosexuality through its adoption of either a male or female body, and preying on everyone and anyone, regardless of sex. It is through this kind of sexual ambivalence or ambiguity that "the vampire" can be considered queer.

30. David Bowie's pop/rock career has spanned several decades, but he is perhaps most well known for his alterego Ziggy Stardust, the cross-dressing, sexually ambiguous and glamorous rock star in the 1970s. For pictures of Bowie as Ziggy (including where Ziggy, performs "fellatio" on guitarist Mick Ronson's guitar) see (and listen to) The 30th Anniversary 2CD Edition of *Ziggy Stardust* (2002).

31. Sam can be seen to subvert masculine norms through his passivity in this violent situation, questioning the homology masculine is to feminine as aggressiveness is to passivity. For an overview of the construction of gender norms see: Antony Easthope, "Part V: Masculine/Feminine" in his *What a Man's Gotta Do*: *The Masculine Myth in Popular Culture,* Routledge, New York, 1992, pp. 115-122.

32. See Helen Keane, *What's Wrong with Addiction?,* Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 2002, p. 29.

33. ibid., p. 31.

34. See Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", *New Left Review,* No. 146 (July-August), 1984, p. 64.

35. Keane, op.cit., p. 32.

36. See Botting, op.cit., p. 8.

37. ibid., p. 7

38. See Burroughs, op.cit., p. xxvii.

39. Punter, *Gothic Pathologies,* op.cit., p. 210.

40. See Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1982, p. 4.

41. See Vijay Mishra, *The Gothic Sublime,* State University of New York Press, Albany, 1994, pp. 37-8. See chapter one of this study for parallel between the Gothic and postmodern sublimes and their non-totalizing impulses.

42. Kristeva, op.cit., pp. 3-12. Although Kristeva contends that the sublime is a different "moment on the journey" in relation to abjection, in Mishra's conception of the Gothic sublime abjection can be seen as a part of the Gothic's version of the sublime due to the obliteration/fragmentation of self without transcendence or the expansion of the self.

43. Keane, op.cit., p. 16.

44. ibid.

45. The paradoxical relationship between the Gothic/postmodern and Enlightenment/post-Enlightenment ideologies was discussed in chapter one of this study.

46. Rolf de Heer (director) *Bad Boy Bubby*, 1993. All subsequent quotations are from this source unless otherwise indicated. See the Filmography for more details.

47. Botting, op.cit., p. 5.

48. See note 23 concerning the opposition or relationship between Augustan values and the Gothic.

49. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,* Routledge, London, 1990, p. 136. Butler discusses the notion of "performativity" that emphasizes "acts" rather than a stable identity. Butler suggests that (particularly in relation to the gendered body) " acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance…", and that these "enactments" "are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means". See also David Buchbinder, *Performance Anxieties: Re-producing Masculinity,* Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1998, pp. 153-4. Buchbinder discusses queer theory and its ideological emphasis on what one *does* or what one *performs,* rather than asserting a single and new identity.

50. In Gothic fiction/novels, particularly in the eighteenth-century, there is usually confusion concerning identity through the wearing of disguises. For instance, see Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (Howard Anderson ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, pp. 57-9, where the boy novice Rosario reveals himself to the monk Ambrosio to be a woman by the name of Matilda.

51. For the "rise" of postmodernism in relation to cultural theory and fiction in the 1970s see: Macey, David, *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory,* Penguin Books Ltd, London, 2001, p. 306.

52. Punter, op.cit., p. 12, suggests that an emblem of the Gothic is that everything "is already ruined."

53. Botting, op.cit., pp. 6-7.

54. Punter, op.cit., p. 210.

55. See Kristeva, op.cit., p. 4. She writes: "The traitor, the liar, the criminal with a good conscience, the shameless rapist, the killer who claims he is a savior…. Any crime, because it draws attention to the fragility of the law, is abject, but premeditated crime, cunning murder, hypocritical revenge are even more so because they heighten the display of such fragility". In the film, Bubby is both a saviour figure and a criminal "with a good conscience", and as such can be seen as abject.

Antipodean Suburban Gothic

The Night the Prowler and Heavenly Creatures

In the street she became more purposeful, her mind less blurred by memory and the instincts. Her body grew muscular inside the protective skin of slithery leather … All the normal, timid virtues homed, though the ice-blue lights continued blooming, under civic instruction to protect stragglers from the kinds of violence they most expected.

Patrick White[1]

I worship the power of these lovely two
With that adoring love known to so few.
'Tis indeed a miracle, one must feel
That two such heavenly creatures are real.

Pauline Parker[2]

Debi Enker[3] in her essay "Australia and the Australians" suggests that in Australian film the suburbs are often depicted as "an emotional straitjacket", with non-conformity seen by a suburban community as nefarious. Enker mentions the Australian films *Sweetie* and *Celia,* among others, as examples of the representation of suburbia as an oppressive space. In New Zealand film the suburbs are also often depicted as stifling their occupants' spirits, likewise constructing a "sinister" undercurrent beneath the "proper" façade of family life and respectability.[4] In the Australian film *The Night the Prowler* (1978) and in the New Zealand film *Heavenly Creatures* (1994)*,* a dark undercurrent beneath the respectable lives of a small community that lives in what can be considered the suburbs makes its presence felt. The films depict the suburbs as a place that

embraces the mundane, an ordinariness disturbed in the films by ex-centric characters and extraordinary events. In the films boundaries between the normative and the non-normative are transgressed through a Gothic emphasis on the taboo and the criminal as well as a Gothic/postmodern queering of gender/sex roles. The films further utilize Gothic/postmodern modes of representation through their nostalgic settings, *The Night the Prowler,* set in Sydney in the 1960s, and *Heavenly Creatures,* in 1950s Christchurch. In both films female protagonists rebel against the conservative attitudes of their suburban communities through their crossing of gender/sexual boundaries, abandoning "the normative" in search of an existence outside their mundane and restrictive lives.

The Gothic is strongly evoked in the films through their engagement with Freudian psychoanalytic discourse, emphasizing the workings of the subconscious and the sexual development of the self through the Oedipus complex. Other Gothic themes can also be identified in the films including the representation of fantastic, dreamlike and medieval worlds, as well as the use of symbolism to depict the "inner" lives of the protagonist(s). Although the films utilize many of the staple concepts of Freudian psychoanalysis, concepts, which the Gothic has frequently been theorized in relation to, they simultaneously attack, in postmodern fashion, the grand narratives of Freudian psychoanalysis. That *The Night the Prowler* and *Heavenly Creatures* utilize the Gothic in conjunction with a postmodern deconstruction of the essentializing impulses of Freudian psychoanalysis, along with the institutionalized practices of psychology and psychiatry is indicative of a postmodern Gothic sensibility in Antipodean cinema.

As discussed in chapter two, the Gothic and psychoanalysis can be considered cousins through their apparent development from "the same cultural unease" or the uncanny and their emphasis on the unconscious.[5] Perhaps the most subversive power(s) possessed by the Gothic as a cultural/representative mode and by Freudian psychoanalysis as an interpretative tool for the Gothic, is their highlighting of non-normative sexual identities. A queer reading of both suggests that sexed and gendered identities are more fluid than asserted by the moral majority or those with Victorian values, for whom reproduction is the chief reason for sex, and by whom sex is constructed strictly as between one man and one woman.[6]

Freud's[7] writings on sexuality, including his discussion of homosexuality or "inversion", female sexuality, child sexuality and the Oedipus complex, provide at least a forum for discussion of sexuality and gender roles, even if his theories can now, seen from the vantage of post-structuralism and queer theory, be considered essentialist. It is with this emphasis on sexuality – and in particular on (to use Freudian terminology) "deviations" from sexual and gender norms, or what can be called "the queer", that is, the disturbing of normative sex and gender boundaries – that *The Night the Prowler* and *Heavenly Creatures* can be examined.

In Jim Sharman's *The Night the Prowler* (1978),[8] Felicity Bannister, the daughter of bourgeois parents, seeks to escape from her ordinary existence through becoming less "ladylike" and more masculine by adopting skin-tight black leather attire and a more aggressive attitude. The film, set in Sydney's suburbs in the 1960s, uses a series of flashbacks and makes use of the Freudian concept of "the

unconscious" or repressed memories to give insight to the viewer in relation to Felicity's upbringing and her relationship with her parents, a relationship depicted as driving her to rebel against her parents' conceptions of normal and appropriate behaviour for a girl or young woman.

The film's narrative tells in non-linear fashion of Felicity's rebellion where gender roles and bourgeois values are concerned. A prowler climbs through Felicity's bedroom window into her bed, apparently seeking sexual favours. However, Felicity turns the tables on the intruder when she aggressively attacks him, punching him in the face, taking his knife and forcing him to drink her father's "good Napoleon" with her. Then, after allowing the prowler to leave, Felicity arranges a crime scene, tearing her nightdress and screaming out for her parents. Her parents assume that Felicity has been raped and call the police, despite Felicity never actually saying that she was, to use Mr Bannister's words, "interfered with." Felicity complies with the notion that her parents have – that she lost her virginity to "the rapist", and she uses this "loss" to break off her engagement to her fiancé John, who her parents, particularly her mother, find so honourable and decent. Felicity uses "the rape" to change her life from the "proper" one her mother wants her to lead to one that questions and subverts those bourgeois norms with which she has been inculcated since she was born. John, her fiancé, who has a job with the government and works in Canberra, is discarded by Felicity, the film showing that like her parents he offers her respectability but not passion or excitement.

In the scene when Felicity breaks off her engagement to John, her lack of enthusiasm for him as a love interest is clearly seen. Having received a letter from

her expressing the reasons why she cannot marry him, John simply cannot accept the letter as "rational", telling Felicity that he would not go back on an "agreement."

> **Felicity**: Oh, I knew you'd keep your word, John. But I suddenly felt I mightn't be able to keep mine. I found I didn't love you in the way you expect me to.
> **John**: But if you love me?
> **Felicity**: Yes, I love you. Only it isn't what I expect of love.[9]

In this same scene, Felicity also draws an analogy between marriage and rape when John suggests that two people take part in a marriage, telling John: "They can – and sometimes one of them doesn't. As in a rape."[10] Through this analogy Felicity explains her own situation: trapped by her parents' expectations that she marry a "decent" man and become a wife and mother, if she were to marry John she would be submitting to her parents' wishes, "raped" by the norms imposed upon her. Mrs Bannister's reaction to her daughter breaking off her engagement to such a fine and upstanding young gentleman reflects how stifled Felicity has been by her parents' bourgeois value system:

> **Mrs Bannister**: Oh dear, what have you done to me!
> **Felicity**: But I'm the one who was engaged.
> **Mrs Bannister**: I can only say, Felicity, you've done something wicked and perverse. Why, I wonder, do you want to destroy us? [11]

As can be seen through Mrs Bannister's disappointment in her daughter's "perverse" behaviour, there is a clash in the film between what can be considered bourgeois norms and the challenging of these norms through Felicity's refusal to adhere to her parents' expectations of her. This anti-bourgeois stance of Felicity's can be seen to evoke the Gothic through her seemingly "irrational or "non-sensical"

behaviour – her breaking an engagement off with such a "decent" and "stable" man, and her queerness in playing the part of aggressor rather than victim when the intruder enters her bedroom.

Felicity's anti-bourgeois stance and her queerness can be seen to develop throughout the film. After the alleged rape occurs and she has broken her engagement to John (much to her mother's horror), Felicity changes jobs, moving from a conservative material store to a young vintage clothes boutique called "Pot Luck", the name intimating cannabis use. Her mother and her mother's friends notice that Felicity now dresses differently and hangs around with a different "crowd" who are shown in the film as taking drugs and having casual sex.[12] Felicity has also taken to prowling the suburban streets in her neighbourhood: wearing a tight fitting black leather jacket, leather trousers and boots, she carries a "shark" knife "for emergencies", as she tells a friend who asks her what the knife is for. This construction of Felicity in terms of her prowling has Gothic connotations, as Felicity becomes a kind of monster, an abject figure that roams the streets looking for her next victim.

The first house/mansion that she breaks into is one that reflects the wealth of its occupants or owners: portraits adorn the walls, and many luxurious objects litter the rooms Felicity visits. Felicity's disdain for this wealthy and excessive yet conservative lifestyle is evident from her uncontrolled destruction of objects in the house, including the trashing of the master bedroom, the smashing of a photograph of "Harvey", the man or patriarch of the house, the slashing of furniture, and the desecration of a portrait of the lady of the house. When Felicity ruins the portrait,

sexual symbolism is evident in her calculated placement of raspberry jam on the woman's cheeks, lips, and crotch, before she slashes the canvas with her knife. The jam, a brilliant red colour, can be seen to symbolize menstrual blood, and Felicity's application of it on the portrait of the woman with such force and anger suggests that Felicity is angry about the gender role that she has played for most of her life at her parents' behest. She releases in this scene the aggression that she has been taught to repress or subdue in order to be a virginal, clean, young lady. The woman in the portrait (one of the owners of the mansion) can also be seen to represent Felicity's mother, or at least the bourgeois and conservative values her mother stands for. Felicity's stabbing of the portrait and her smearing of menstrual blood (raspberry jam) over it is indicative of her hostility toward her mother's imposing of feminine norms upon Felicity and also her smothering and possessive personality where her "little girl" is concerned, keeping Felicity from developing a relationship with her father, Mr Bannister.

Freud[13] discusses female sexuality and the "feminine Oedipus complex", and suggests that girls may resent "being prevented from free sexual activity…" In Freud's formulation the mother guards both before and after puberty against any violation of her daughter's chastity, resulting in the daughter feeling hostility toward the mother, who then suffers "a great depreciation" in the daughter's eyes. A daughter may also resent her mother for not supplying her with a "proper penis" – for bringing her into the world as "female". In other words, the mother immediately takes symbolic phallic power away from the daughter.

Freud[14] suggests that part of this hostility toward the mother and the eventual seeking of affection from the father (the feminine Oedipus complex), can be explained in three phases of development. The girl first acknowledges her own castration and gives up "phallic activity", but then moves into a second phase when she may assert her masculinity before successfully making the transition to the "normal" feminine sexual desire for her father and, through him, for men in general. Although Freud makes the suggestion that the penis equals power, it is, not the "actual" penis that is powerful, but rather what it represents in a white bourgeois heterosexist and patriarchal hierarchy or system: the automatic right to rule others and to be in control of your own self.[15] Freud himself states in relation to his theories about the feminine Oedipus complex and female sexual development that "we are not as yet able to distinguish in this field between what is rigidly fixed by biological laws and what is open to movement and change under the influence of accidental experience."[16]

If queer theory is used here to explore more fully this apparent fluidity concerning sexuality and the concept of a feminine (or, for that matter, a masculine) Oedipus complex, the theory of desire by the child for the parent of the "opposite" sex is not stable. Even Freud[17] concedes that girls do not always emerge from the second phase of the Oedipus complex, when they are supposed to assert their so-called masculinity, which Freud attributes to "inversion" or "contrary sexual feelings." Queer can deconstruct Freud's heteronormative assumptions concerning sexual desire by disavowing the masculine/feminine binary that forms the ideological basis for Freud's theories of sexual development, revealing such

binaries to be cultural constructs. As Judith Butler points out in *Gender Trouble* (1990):

> The young boy and young girl who enter into the Oedipal drama with incestuous heterosexual aims have already been subjected to prohibitions which "dispose" them in distinct sexual directions. Hence, the dispositions that Freud assumes to be primary or constitutive facts of sexual life are effects of a law which, internalized, produces and regulates discrete gender identity and heterosexuality.[18]

In *The Night the Prowler* Freud's heteronormative masculine/feminine "dispositions" are installed, but by the film's end, discussed later in this chapter, are subverted by Felicity's refusal to fit neatly into a sexed/gendered Oedipal category. There are, however, other queer occurrences or moments that can be identified in the film.

Felicity can be seen to queer gender/sex roles through her role reversal in the incident of "the rape", in which she becomes the aggressor not the victim. Subsequently she changes from wearing dresses to wearing leather trousers for her nights out prowling, and also arms herself with a knife. Felicity's queerness, her blurring of sexual/gender norms, echoes European myths concerning the queerness of the Antipodes in terms of its hermaphroditic, cross-dressing and gender-bending inhabitants. At one point near the end of the film, when Felicity visits the park near her home, much to her mother's disbelief (as there are all kinds of "perverts" in the park), she "takes on" an all male group of hoods that approach her, scaring them away by swinging a bicycle chain above her head, running toward them and screaming: "Hey youse! P'raps we got somethun to say to each other. We dunno till we find out whether we don't see eye to eye…" Felicity's disdain for feminine

norms and the submissiveness and passivity associated with the female sex in relation to an aggressive maleness or masculinity is also represented in the scene in which she comes across some young Greek men in the park singing songs about love, and she is angered when she learns what their song is about:

> **Third Greek**: It's about a man who open up her corm – her body – and plant stones where her heart no be.
> **Felicity**: Those are the silly words of a song! The heart is in anybody – only waiting to be torn into – by somebody big enough – to perform the bloody act.[19]

In this dialogue there can be detected a subtext in which "the heart" represents a sexual organ, namely the penis, symbolizing sexual power or the Law of the Father (patriarchy). The Greeks' and Felicity's conversation can then be seen as about the idea of woman as lacking, as castrated, or, as Jean-Paul Sartre[20] wrote, as 'everything which "gapes open."' Felicity's response to the idea that "woman" is devoid of power reveals her dissatisfaction with gender and sex binaries which construct "man" as "the filler" of woman's "hole", and she tells the group of young men that absolutely anyone can have sexual power until it is stolen from them, perhaps by social/cultural norms in regard to gender/sex roles.

The young men are frightened by Felicity's outburst because she is aggressive, but are perhaps all the more frightened by what she says rather than how she says it, as Felicity questions their idea of "woman" and subsequently their powerful role(s) in the man/woman, male/female, masculine/feminine equation, in which the second term remains defined in relation to the first. It is even more evident that Felicity is here questioning normalized sex roles and gender construction when she screams at the night air after the young men desert her: "I fuck you God for holding

out on me!" In this statement Felicity challenges the ultimate patriarchal figure in the form of the "almighty Father" by assuming a dominant sexual role through her "fucking" of him, but also expresses her angst concerning his "holding out" on her – on making her "female", a perceived powerless castrated being within a heterosexist phallo-centric culture. Freud would probably suggest that seeking to possess a phallus to gain power, Felicity has not yet completed her masculinity phase, a phase that is belated due to her mother keeping her from developing a relationship with her father. Felicity can indeed be seen as embroiled in an Oedipus complex, her relations with her parents strained by her need for rebellion against their restrictions on both her personal and sexual development. However, it could be argued, that the film, rather than endorsing the Freudian notion of woman as castrated or as having "penis envy", uses Felicity to symbolize these ideas in the context of Freudian psychoanalytic discourse, which can be seen to permeate the film in its visual style and narrative subject matter.

In *The Night the Prowler* the use of Freudian psychoanalysis to discover Felicity's "inner life" is steeped in Gothic overtones in its depiction of Felicity as preferring a life of excess and of passion rather than one of order and normality or rationality. There are numerous points in the film when flashbacks show Felicity's unconscious/subconscious feelings about her relationship with her parents, and that deploy Freud's notion of the Oedipus complex, which hints at incestuous relationships in the nuclear family through the suggestion that a child eventually chooses one parent as its sole love-object,[21] growing hostile toward the "other". In the film, the nostalgic flashbacks show that Mrs Bannister is really the only parent

214

Felicity was familiar with in the formative years of her life, Mr Bannister (Humphrey) working away from home for most of Felicity's developmental years. When Mr Bannister arrives home, having been away for the first years of his daughter's life, he finds that he has no relationship with Felicity, and Doris (Mrs Bannister) appears keen to rectify this gap between father and daughter.

> **Humphrey:** I don't feel she's happy about the way I hold her. I haven't the right touch. Oughtn't you to take her back?
> **Mrs Bannister:** *(to Felicity)* Remember darling, you're Daddy's too. Otherwise Mummy shan't feel happy.[22]

In this scene Doris seems keen to help develop Humphrey's and Felicity's bond as father and child, but as Felicity grows a little older, Doris can be seen to act as perhaps both protector of Felicity in terms of the threat of incest or a sexual bond developing between Humphrey and Felicity, or as jealous of Felicity's love for Humphrey. Some eroticism is present in the scene where Humphrey gives Felicity (or Tchitchy as she is also called even in adulthood by her parents) her bath, the child sits in the bathtub while Humphrey allows water from a squeezed sponge to drip down her body, the camera lingering on Humphrey's almost sensual washing of his daughter. As this tension mounts, Doris breaks into the scene and takes over from Humphrey saying in a rather brusque manner: "Daddy and Tchitchy have had their lovely time. Now it's Mummy's turn to do the *hard* work." There are other instances where there is evidence of the threat of incest and the Oedipus complex in the film, including one scene in which Felicity, as a little girl, waits for her father to come home from work and jumps out at him from behind some bushes, grabbing hold of his leg and is reluctant to let him go. Again, such a threat is implicit in the

scene in which the family sits in their living room, and without warning Felicity suddenly pounces on her father and bites one of his ears, drawing blood.

One of the most telling scenes in the film concerning Felicity's sexual desire for her father and her position as "other" to him is that in which Mrs Bannister tells Humphrey to go and kiss Felicity good-night or else they will have "no peace". When Humphrey leans over to kiss Felicity on the cheek she suddenly kisses him on the mouth flinging her arms around him, much to Humphrey's surprise and discomfort. In this scene also, Felicity corrects Humphrey from the scene before, when he calls Felicity a "tiger" after she bites him on the ear, telling her Father: "It's tigress." By pointing out that she is the feminine form of "tiger", Felicity draws attention to the female child's perceived otherness to her father, which is central to the Oedipus complex, in which the child desires the parent of the "opposite" sex. In this way, the film seems to support the Freudian reading of parent/child and gender relations. However, Felicity's rejection of the restrictions placed on her in terms of her father's emphasis on a girl staying "virginal" until married, and her refusal of the bourgeois lifestyle not only question bourgeois morals or values but also queries the legitimacy of fixed sexual/gender roles. Felicity's resultant prowling thus queers normalized fixities, including Freud's theorization of the Oedipus complex.

Nearing the end of *The Night the Prowler*, Felicity, having become "the prowler" in the neighbourhood (as she is named in the local newspaper), and in Freudian terms having asserted her masculinity, is portrayed as not expressing "normal" feminine behaviour, but rather as disturbing and transgressing bourgeois

sexual/gender norms without any real resolution. Felicity, while wandering through the park, is confronted with a ruined and decaying house, and finds inside these ruins, an equally old and decaying man who lies naked on a dirty mattress amidst flies and rats. The man and the house come before Felicity like an apparition. They are real but also unreal, and the film's Gothic overtones come through most obviously in this scene because of the dreamlike presentation of Felicity's encounter with the man. The house can be seen to double Felicity's own family home, and the man can be seen as her double. The man and house in the park can be seen as representative of Felicity's own feelings about herself and her family: existing somewhere between life and death, she is located in a kind of bourgeois limbo where everything and nothing happens all at the same time.

In this scene, through what can be seen as a Gothic sublime experience, Felicity faces her own inevitable disintegration: she faces death in the form of the old man, death of one of her selves – the Felicity who complies with her parents' wishes, bourgeois Felicity. The scene with the old man also draws attention to or highlights the cultural constructedness of self and identity – the old man symbolizing "the nothing" that is left when cultural and social expectations concerning what is and what is not acceptable no longer have any relevance.

> **Old Man:** …I can honestly say I never believed in or expected anything of anyone. I never loved, not even meself – which is more than can be said of most people. I'm nothing. I believe in nothing. And nothing is a noble faith. Nobody can hurt nothing.[23]

Felicity's "double" being a man subverts gender and sex distinctions through *her* double being a *him.* Her encounter with the old man also produces a Gothic

sublime moment for Felicity in which one of her selves, the bourgeois self, faces dissolution and disintegration. Bourgeois Felicity in the form of the old man is stripped of all social decorum, pissing while lying on her/his filthy mattress. Finally the old man passes away, and despite this Gothic sublime experience, the film shows the maintained normality of Felicity's neighbourhood the next morning, its inhabitants going about their daily routines, and Felicity unabashedly making her way up the street in her "night" leather gear amidst this show of "the everyday" and mundane.

While the old man could be seen in Freudian terms as Felicity's masculine self, dying so that she can successfully become a woman, the ending of the film undercuts this notion when Felicity returns home in her leather masculine outfit, and when Felicity herself states to the police concerning the identity of the old man that she sort of *"knew* him" even though she had never seen him before. Felicity states: "I knew him…as I know…myself…" revealing that Felicity has more than one self. This in turn challenges notions of stable identity through the problem of a man fulfilling the role of Felicity's double, which then raises the question also of how well Felicity really can "know" herself, as she did not really "know" the old man. Moreover, the old man thought of himself as "nothing", so it can perhaps be suggested that Felicity also thinks of herself as "nothing" at the conclusion of the film. This nothingness represents the shattering of the unity and totality of self that Enlightenment/modernist ideals construct,[24] and highlights the postmodern notion that subjectivity is plural and thus changeable. The film's ending suggests a shift toward a postmodern Gothic sensibility through its inclusion of Gothic motifs with

an open-ended conclusion which leaves Felicity fragmented but also seemingly "exalted" by this fragmentation, an exaltation indicative of the postmodern sublime.[25]

The Night the Prowler can be seen to subvert Enlightenment/modernist ideals through its employment of Gothic/postmodern modes of representation. It is the films' utilization of these modes that not only indicates a postmodern Gothic sensibility in Antipodean cinema, but also shows that this sensibility is a manifestation of the antipodean social imaginary, the Euro-centric gothicization/(proto)-postmodernization of Australian and New Zealand cultures that has become so etched into each nation's consciousness. Similarly Heavenly Creatures, a film made more than a decade after The Night the Prowler, is yet another example of Antipodean Gothic cinema's merging of Gothic and postmodern modes of representation, a convergence that is indicative of both modes' significant roles in the construction of Australian and New Zealand cultural identities and in the post-1970s stylings of Antipodean cinema.

Peter Jackson's Heavenly Creatures (1994) [26] relates the true story of the 1954 New Zealand Parker/Hulme case, depicting the events leading up to and including Honora Parker/Rieper's murder. Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme, two fourteen-year-old girls, murdered Pauline's mother Honora Parker/Rieper, bludgeoning her to death with part of a brick in a stocking.[27] Focusing on the reasons behind the murder rather than depicting the girls as outright "evil", Heavenly Creatures takes a vastly more sympathetic view of the two girls then the media did at the time of the murder.[28] Central to this humanizing of both the two girls and a story about

matricide is the girls' close and intense relationship with each other, and their retreat into their own imagined worlds in order to escape their home lives, depicted as stifling both girls' spirits. As in *The Night the Prowler's* depiction of Felicity as feeling "hemmed in" (so to speak) by her mundane family life and the routine of "the everyday", *Heavenly Creatures* portrays both girls, especially Pauline, as trapped in some way by their home life and social expectations or moral standards. In the film Pauline and Juliet are depicted as coming from completely different social/class worlds but as wanting to escape these worlds, which they perceive as impeding their creative desires and their desire for each other. Like Felicity in *The Night the Prowler*, both Pauline and Juliet can be seen, from the perspective of Freudian psychoanalysis, as harbouring resentment and hostility toward their mothers, particularly Pauline. In *Heavenly Creatures,* as in *The Night the Prowler,* there are strong Gothic overtones that are meshed with a postmodernist sensibility, the film also subverting but even more obviously attacking the dictates of Freudian psychoanalysis and the institionalized practices of psychology/psychiatry.

Heavenly Creatures makes frequent use of Gothic/postmodern forms of representation in its representation of the inner lives and worlds of Pauline and Juliet. The film draws on traditional Gothic themes, including the representation of medieval worlds, as well as a Gothic and postmodern emphasis on queerness, on changing and fluid identities. Although this queer emphasis is a shared characteristic of both modes, as was discussed in chapter one, it is treated differently by each: here, queerness is either the source of absolute terror and horror (Gothic), or a means to further confuse and undermine the totalizing impulses of

modernist ideologies (postmodernism). In the film, the New Zealand Pauline, from a working-class family, forms an intense friendship with the upper middle-class English Juliet, [29] bonding over their shared interest and passion for "Biggles books, the singer Mario Lanza and James Mason films."[30] Elena Loizidou[31] writes, in relation to Pauline and Juliet's relationship in the film: "They find themselves in each other. Their world seems to become one. Even more, their shared world becomes blurred with the world of reality. Their shared world becomes one of fantasy, a world that dictates their existence until they have to face the limits of their fantasies."

Both Juliet's and Pauline's home lives are shown in the film to be quite mundane and ordinary in spite of their class differences, and the girls construct another version of reality to counter their experience within the one established for them by their families. Pauline's parents are shown in the film as uncultured and unquestionably dull in their daughter's eyes. When Pauline's father uses a fish for a microphone while miming to a Mario Lanza record that Pauline absolutely adores, he devalues the importance, in Pauline's eyes, of Mario Lanza as a cultural icon. Juliet's father, Dr. Henry Hulme[32] can also be seen to "clash" with Juliet, though less over cultural values than emotional comfort and support for his daughter. Henry is depicted as quite cold emotionally, and is clearly unsettled and disturbed by his daughter's flamboyant and exuberant personality. When Pauline first visits the Hulme household, Juliet puts on a record in spite of her father's (and mother's) request not to do so because Dr. Hulme wants to study quietly. Juliet disobeys their requests and plays the record loudly, first grabbing her father to dance, and then

dancing around excitedly with Pauline through the house. In this scene Juliet's father is shown as extremely uncomfortable with his daughter's excitable nature, and his strictness, although different from Mr Rieper's inability to understand Pauline's interests, can also be seen as part of a suburban, bourgeois and mundane backdrop that becomes inevitably set against Pauline and Juliet's "fourth world."

Through Pauline's and Juliet's blurring of the distinction between reality and fantasy, *Heavenly Creatures* conjures up the Gothic through both girls' existence in the gap or space between the two. Pauline and Juliet live in their ordinary family worlds but also live in their own world, and the film mirrors this blurring of boundaries between these worlds through its combination of a realist narrative in which a true story is reenacted, but in which Gothic disruptions occur. At different points in the film, the Gothic is clearly evoked as the girls' imagine medieval worlds and characters that, during the course of the film, become real to them. The most obvious reference in the film to the girls' creation of their own world is their discovery of another realm. This occurs after Juliet finds out that her parents are again abandoning her to go overseas. Juliet, upset and crying, starts to see another world open up in front of her, and soon Pauline can see this same world: the New Zealand landscape, devoid of brilliant colour is suddenly transformed into a magical place with landscaped gardens, flowers, unicorns and giant butterflies.

After this magical event takes place Pauline relates to the viewer that she and Juliet have, through this experience, discovered the "fourth world" which only they have the "key" to, and that only they can appreciate due to an "extra part" in their brains (which only ten people have). Soon after this Juliet is hospitalized with

tuberculosis, her parents leaving her in a sanatorium to recover while they go on their trip overseas. During her stay Juliet imagines that one of the figurines that Paul (Pauline) and herself have spent countless hours making as part of their Charles and Deborah story – a satire of Royal lineage set in the fictional Borovnia – slays a priest that tries to sell her Jesus. This figurine, through her murderous act, defies religious authority. Such a blasphemous deed, as discussed previously in relation to *Bad Boy Bubby,* can be seen as reminiscent of the stance taken by many early Gothic writers against Catholicism, and, more broadly, against institutionalized religion.[33] There are numerous instances in the film when the girls use their figurines and imagined world(s) to escape their ordinary reality, and most of the time their "escape" is related to an escape from gendered and sexual norms.

As mentioned previously, *Heavenly Creatures* can be seen as possessing a postmodern self-consciousness in relation to sexuality through focusing on "the ex-centric" in terms of homosexuality, and as depicting authoritative figures as absurdly misguided in their less-than-liberal views where homosexuality is concerned. In the film, Pauline, or Paul (as she is known to her friends), is taken to a psychologist by her mother when Dr Hulme, Juliet's father, brings to the Riepers' attention Paul's "unhealthy" affection for Juliet, suggesting that Paul is developing in a "wayward fashion." When taken to the psychologist and asked a series of questions to establish her "sickness" (her supposed developing lesbianism), Paul imagines that one of her characters, one of her sculpted figurines, the son of Charles and Deborah in their fictional Royal saga, stabs the psychologist in the back from behind, calling the psychologist, the authoritative figure, a "bloody

fool." This scene reveals quite a literal attack on the grand narratives of medical institutions or knowledge – in this case, psychology – and it is this attack that is constitutive of a postmodern sensibility. The combination of Gothic imagery in the film with this more than obvious disdain for the normalizing effects of psychology shows how the Gothic and postmodernism converge in *Heavenly Creatures*.

The doctor's diagnosis, which he reveals to Paul's mother, is that Paul has a mental disorder to which many adolescents are vulnerable, and as the doctor says "homosexuality", the camera shows a close-up of his mouth as he stumbles slightly over the word, because of its taboo status and associated perversity. Throughout the film there are many scenes that show a queering of gender and sex roles, and this can be seen as concurrent with numerous Gothic and postmodern texts where there is sexual ambivalence or ambiguity including the more traditional and early Gothic works: *Vathek* (1786)*, The Monk* (1796), *Dracula* (1897) and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911).[34] In the film, this suppression of desire between the two girls by authoritative figures, as represented by their parents and the scientific/medical establishment, is clearly shown to be the principal factor contributing to the murder of Honora Rieper. The girls, upon learning that they are to be separated – Juliet is to leave for South Africa for schooling, due to her parents' separation and impending divorce – become hysterical with grief and try to think of ways to be together, ways to raise the fare for Paul to go to South Africa with Juliet. In the end, however, their plans come to naught as Paul needs her parents' approval to get a passport, and it is after this realization that the girls' hatch the plan to "moider" Paul's mother.

Throughout the film Paul and Juliet act out various gender and sex roles through the creation of their fantasy worlds, their sexuality "performative" in the literal sense of the word,[35] and their sexual identities extremely fluid. They engage in acts of transvestism and have other names: Paul is also known as Yvonne to her parents, and is both Gina and Charles, two characters from the girls' fictional royal family, and Juliet is Deborah. While Juliet is recovering from tuberculosis in hospital, Paul writes to her as Charles, and Juliet writes to Paul as Deborah – Charles and Deborah are lovers in their story. Paul even thinks of Juliet/Deborah and their imagined medieval castle during her first heterosexual experience, which is depicted as most unpleasant: the older boy, John, formerly a boarder at the Rieper household (before he is kicked out after he is discovered in bed with Paul), pants away on top of Paul while she seems to be in pain and tries to think happy thoughts during the act by day-dreaming about Deborah and their relationship. In one scene the film shows Juliet as Deborah giving birth to a baby boy while Paul acts the part of Charles as he welcomes his son into the world. In another scene the girls' enact how each "saint" would make love. A "saint" is, in the girls' world, a term they use for film stars and other popular entertainers that they worship at a makeshift altar. As was discussed in chapter one, these intertextual references to the cinema and popular culture are also indicative of a postmodernist sensibility.

In the scene where the girls perform how each saint would have sex, Paul writes in her diary, her voice heard while the girls enact their sex scenes: "we spent a hectic night going through the Saints. It was wonderful! Heavenly! Beautiful! and Ours! We felt satisfied indeed. We have now learned the peace of the thing called

Bliss, the joy of the thing called Sin."[36] While the girls go "through the Saints" a medieval castle (a classic Gothic image), the home of Charles, Deborah and friends appears, and the figurines that populate it engage in orgiastic activities. The girls' release of their suppressed desire is mirrored in their fantasy or alternate world, which has become virtually indistinguishable from their parents' version of reality. An example of the stark constrast between the girls' version of reality and their parents' version, can be seen between Juliet and her father. The authoritative and patriarchal figure who brings Paul's "waywardness" to the Riepers' attention, Juliet's father is shown throughout the film as concerned, out of his own prudishness, about Paul and Juliet's relationship. He watches the girls in the rear-view mirror in the car as they hold hands, and listens at the bathroom door to see what perverse things they are up to, the girls often bathing together and also sharing a bed at the Hulmes' home where Paul likes to spend most of her time. All in all, the film depicts the girls as victims of New Zealand 1950s conservatism; especially where homosexuality is concerned.[37] This suppression of homosexual lust and desire is, it can be argued, seen as just as sinful as the girls' murder of Honora.

Freud's "feminine Oedipus complex" discussed previously in conjunction with Jim Sharman's *The Night the Prowler* is also made use of in *Heavenly Creatures,* although in the latter film, as in the former, there is no resolution of this "complex" in terms of the girls' feminine normality. In *Heavenly Creatures*, both Paul and Juliet show hostility toward their mothers, though for different reasons. Paul hates her mother because, as she tells the psychologist, she "nags" her, but perhaps also has hostile feelings toward her because after Paul is caught "in bed" with John, her

mother reacts to Paul's indiscretion by telling Paul she is a "disgrace" to the family and is a "cheap little tart." Paul can be seen as resentful of her mother acting as the guardian of Paul's chastity and virtue by imposing feminine norms upon her and, like Felicity in *The Night the Prowler,* Paul wishes to throw off the shackles of bourgeois normality and sexual mores.

Juliet, too, comes to resent her mother, though Paul's hatred of her own mother is shown as much stronger. Juliet catches her mother in bed with another man, and when she tries to blackmail her mother into giving her money for Paul's fare to South Africa by telling her that she'll inform "Daddy" of this event, her mother reveals that Dr Hulme already knows about her lover, and that it was agreed between them that they all live together until other arrangements can be made. Juliet, realizing that her plan to blackmail them is futile, and that she and Paul will be separated, screams at her mother, "I hate you!"

Through their rejection of their mothers and their distanced relationships with their fathers both girls, not unlike Felicity's family situation in *The Night the Prowler*, seek to escape their family life by rebelling against that particular reality and creating an alternative one that both questions and subverts parental and institutionalized authority, and embraces excess and irrationality. The climactic scene when Paul and Juliet murder Honora on a bush walk before Juliet is to leave for South Africa, depicts the girls as experiencing both horror and frenzied excitement as more than once they smash Honora on the head with their brick in a stocking. Paul sees Honora as an obstacle to achieving happiness, to being together with Juliet, and the killing of her mother can be seen to symbolize the killing of the

feminine norms, the killing of the Law of the Father that she so detests and wants to defy – her mother shown in the film wanting Paul to act in a proper and ladylike way in relation to her sexuality.

Although *Heavenly Creatures,* unlike *The Night the Prowler,* is based on real life events and a real murder, it can be argued that once those events are worked into a story and depicted on screen they are distanced from "the real" and take on a life of their own. The real events depicted in *Heavenly Creatures* are seen in a completely different light to what they would have been at the time. The film, it can be argued, views these events through a postmodernized Gothic lens, focusing on not only the girls' queerness but on the homophobic and heteronormative attitudes adopted by their families and by Psychology. Both *The Night the Prowler* and *Heavenly Creatures* can be seen to engage heavily with the Gothic but also use postmodern narrative strategies that inscribe and subvert the grand narratives of psychoanalysis or psychological discourse(s) by asserting the presence of the Freudian Oedipus complex and then refusing to resolve this complex. This subversion is evident in *The Night the Prowler* through the film's simultaneous return of Felicity to her bourgeois and normative life and her disavowal of these norms through her return to suburbia in her "prowling" and gender-bending attire. This installation and subversion of the Freudian Oedpius complex can also be seen in *Heavenly Creatures* in Paul's intense hostility toward her mother together with her and Juliet's equally hostile attitude toward all parental/institutionalized authority that impose feminine norms upon them. Juliet's and Paul's "path" to a normal feminine identity(s) as dictated by Freudian psychoanalytic discourse can

also never be truly realized due to their notoriety as both lesbians and murderers, terms that became inextricably connected during their trial, their act of murder not only disrupting constructions of "the feminine", but also unraveling moral norms.[38] As can be seen, both films show normality disrupted by irrational events, such disruptions revealing that "the abnormal" or "the ex-centric" has the ability to shatter heternormative bourgeois reality.

In the following chapter, "Antipodean Rural Gothic", the Australian films *Wake in Fright, Summerfield* and *Shame*, are examined in relation to their Gothic/postmodern representations of sexual "ex-centrics" and exploration of taboo topics, including incest and rape. As in *The Night the Prowler* and *Heavenly Creatures,* it is argued that the films' subversion of sexual and gender norms and exploration of taboo areas are connotative of the close and intertwining relationship between the Gothic and postmodernism in "Antipodean Gothic cinema."

1. This excerpt is taken from Patrick White's short story *The Night the Prowler* for which he also wrote the screenplay. See Patrick White, *The Cockatoos: Shorter Novels and Stories,* Cape, London, 1974, p. 147.

2. For the complete poem entitled "The Ones That I Worship" by Pauline Parker, concerning her intense relationship with Juliet Hulme during 1953 and 1954 see: Brian King (ed), *Lustmord: The Writings and Artifacts of Murderers,* Bloat, Hong Kong, 1996, p. 214. The girls were trialled for murder or "moider" (as Parker writes in diary entries), after bludgeoning Pauline's mother to death with a rock in a stocking in the Cashmere Hills outside Christchurch in New Zealand on June 22, 1954. Pauline's writings, including the poem quoted and diary entries concerning the "moider" plot, were discovered after the girls' arrest. In the court case, the close relationship the two girls shared was viewed as a lesbian relationship, thus linking homosexuality with "the monstrous" in the form of matricide.

3. See Debi Enker, "Australia and the Australians" in Scott Murray (ed), *Australian Cinema,* Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian Film Commission, St Leonards, 1994, p. 211.

4. See Nicholas Reid, *A Decade of New Zealand Film: Sleeping Dogs to Came a Hot Friday,* John McIndoe Ltd, Dunedin, 1986, pp. 73-4. Reid discusses how in *Scarecrow's* representation of the small and conservative 1950s community of Klynham, a "period veneer of respectability" is set against violence and grotesquerie. This same contrast between bourgeois normality and the "underbelly" that lurks beneath this normality can also be seen in *The Night the Prowler* and *Heavenly Creatures.*

5. See Michelle A. Massé, "Psychoanalysis and the Gothic" in David Punter (ed), *A Companion to the Gothic,* Blackwell Publishers Inc, Oxford, 2000, pp. 230-2. Massé sees the Gothic and psychoanalysis as "cognate historical strands made up of the same human hopes and anxieties…" which are then "woven into particular patterns by the movements of socio-historical change." This connection between the Gothic and psychoanalysis is more closely examined in chapter two.

6. See Michael Warner, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life,* The Free Press, New York, 1999, pp. 25-6, for his suggestion that what is 'normal' and 'natural' in Western culture(s) in terms of sexual relationships is between a man and a woman (preferably married), and for the purposes of procreation.

7. See Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works" in Angela Richards and Albert Dickson (eds), *Sigmund Freud: Volume 7, On Sexuality*, Penguin Books Ltd, London, 1991, pp. 46-9 (homosexuality/ 'inversion') pp. 367-393 (female sexuality), pp. 145-152 and pp. 367-393 (Oedipus complex).

8. Jim Sharman (director), *The Night the Prowler,* 1978. All subsequent references to the film are from this source unless indicated otherwise. See the Filmography for details.

9. See Patrick White, *The Night the Prowler: Short Story and Screenplay,* Penguin Books Australia/Jonathan Cape, Harmondsworth, 1978, p. 118.

10. ibid., p. 119.

11. ibid., p. 121.

12. In the film, Felicity's "new crowd" is shown just once where twenty-somethings lounge around in a smoke-filled room. This can be seen as a microcosm of '60s "free love" and drug experimentation, or at least a microcosm of the cultural reconstruction of that time.

13. Freud, op.cit., pp. 380-1.

14. ibid., p. 376.

15. ibid., pp. 113-4. Freud suggests that girls suffer from penis envy and really wish that they were boys. However, it could be suggested here that in both films analyzed although the Freudian notion of woman as castrated is invoked, the girls/young women do not wish to *be* male but seek to either escape from or destroy the Law of the Father, the law that dictates feminine norms (and masculine norms). See also Elena Loizidou, "Intimate Queer Celluloid: *Heavenly Creatures* and Criminal Law", in Leslie Moran, Daniel Monk, and Sarah Beresford (eds), *Legal Queeries: Lesbian, Gay and Transgender Legal Studies,* Cassell, London, 1998, 178-181, for her examination of *Heavenly Creatures* in terms of Pauline and Juliet's wish to "kill the law of the father". This desire to escape gender norms as portrayed in the film, leads to the murder of Pauline's mother who "lives to conserve the Law of the Father."

16. ibid., p. 391.

16. ibid., p. 49.

18. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,* Routledge, New York, 1990, p. 64.

19. White, op.cit., p. 157.

20. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotions,* Citadel Press/Kensington Publishing Corp, New York, 1987, p. 85. See especially his section on 'The Hole'.

21. See Freud, op.cit., pp. 148-152, for his connections between incest (which is usually successfully suppressed) and the affection displayed between parents and children; the child's sexual impulses toward a parent (of the "opposite" sex) constituitive of the Oedipus complex..

22. White, op.cit., p. 94. The following quote is also from this source.

23. ibid., p. 154.

24. See Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction,* Routledge, London, 1988, pp. 57-86. Hutcheon suggests that postmodernism/postmodernist fiction questions concepts associated with liberal humanism or Enlightenment ideals such as unity, closure and homogeneity. Although Hutcheon discusses novels in her analysis, this same subversion of liberal humanism can be seen in *The Night the Prowler* through its refusal to end the film with a coherent and unified Felicity.

25. The celebratory and euphoric affects of the postmodern sublime were discussed in chapter one of this study.

26. Peter Jackson (director), *Heavenly Creatures,* 1994. All subsequent references to the film are from this source unless otherwise indicated. See the Filmography for details.

27. See Michelle Elleray, "Heavenly Creatures in Godzone" in Ellis Hanson (ed), *Out Takes: Essays on Queer Theory and Film,* Duke University Press, Durham, 1999, p. 223.

28. See Sue Ellen-Case, *The Domain-Matrix: Performing Lesbian at the End of Print Culture,* Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1996, p. 58. The "sympathetic portrayal" of Pauline and Juliet by the film's screenwriters Fran Walsh and Peter Jackson is contrasted by Ellen-Case with the "negative stereotypes" "that circulated through the press, the testimony of court experts, and general apocryphal sources…" in the 1950s.

29. Elleray, op.cit., p. 224, discusses the girls' class differences in the film.

30. See Loizidou, op.cit., p. 167.

31. ibid.

32. ibid., p. 177. Juliet's father in the film, Dr Henry Rainford Hulme, was the rector of Canterbury University College in Christchurch at the time.

33. See Fred Botting, *Gothic,* Routledge, London, 1996, p. 5, concerning the anti-Catholic subtexts in some early Gothic works.

34. For information regarding Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* and its "perversions" see: Marie Mulvey-Roberts, *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*, Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, pp 146-9. For a summary of both Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and *Lair of the White Worm,* the latter the story of a white worm (serpent) that takes on female form and preys on humans, also see Mulvey-Roberts, op.cit., pp. 223-6; in relation to the sexual symbolism in *Dracula,* pp. 240-5. For the decadence that William Beckford's *Vathek* displays, apparently inspired by Beckford's own fascination with "Oriental androgyny and Greek love", see pp. 20-3. Of course there are numerous examples of sexual ambiguity or a fascination with "the perverse" not only in Gothic literature but in film also. Some obvious uses of the Gothic and its emphasis on queer sexuality can be seen in the following films: Tony Scotts's *The Hunger* (1983)*,* Ken Russell's *Gothic* (1986) and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1988).

35. See Judith Butler's theorization of "performativity" in relation to sex/gender identities, op.cit., pp. 134-41.

36. For this quote see: Julie Glamuzina and Alison J. Laurie, *Parker and Hulme: A Lesbian View,* New Women's Press, Auckland, 1991, op.cit., p. 63.

37.ibid., During the Parker/Hulme trial, T.A. Gresson, the counsel for Juliet Hulme, began the defence case by stating that both Pauline and Juliet were "mentally sick" and that "Their homosexuality was a symptom of their disease of the mind…", p. 88. In the 1950s, medical and psychiatric institutions treated homosexuality as an "abnormal condition", a disease and deviation from the heterosexual norm that was curable.

37. ibid., pp. 153-7.

38. ibid., p. 165. The Parker-Hulme case associated lesbianism with "violent death, criminality and insanity…", reinforcing anti-gay/lesbian attitudes in New Zealand.

Antipodean Rural Gothic

Wake in Fright, Summerfield, and *Shame*

A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.

<div align="right">John Milton[1]</div>

Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

<div align="right">Edgar Allan Poe [2]</div>

Not unlike the antipodean suburbs the rural communities and their inhabitants in the Australian films *Wake in Fright* (1971)*, Summerfield* (1977) and *Shame* (1987) are shown to punish those who wish to exist outside the communities' set norms. As Debi Enker[3] contends in "Australia and the Australians":

> Like the suburban communities, the outback settlements are seen as insular and limited, suspicious of outsiders and prone to putting newcomers through arduous initiation rites in order to earn a place in the group. They are places that test and usually break the human spirit, condemning their inhabitants to lives of soulless conformity.

In Jonathan Rayner's[4] configuration of what he terms "The Gothic Rural Community", small rural communities have secrets that are often uncovered by outsiders so that the rural townships' residents are depicted as perverse, as subverting the outsider's sense of what is considered normal and appropriate behaviour. In the three Australian films explored in this chapter, this representation of rural communities as having "dirty" secrets that are exposed by a middle-class, educated, and essentially "civilized" outsider or stranger from the city, or from the world beyond the rural community's world, can be clearly seen. The films juxtapose Enlightenment ideals against the European eighteenth-century conception of the Gothic and its associated barbarism[5], which ultimately works to unsettle the unitary and fixed views of the city outsiders' untainted and ordered worlds.

As in the films explored in previous chapters, the subversion of Augustan values such as order and rationality through what can be seen as a Gothic/postmodern emphasis on "the taboo", "the perverse" and "the ex-centric" can also be found in *Wake in Fright, Summerfield* and *Shame*. This "emphasis" is evident in *Wake in Fright's* disruption of its English protagonist's life through the destabilization of all aspects of his previous value system, including his sexuality. It can also be seen in *Summerfield's* depiction of incest as being able to invoke in its protagonist a moment of pure horror – a Gothic sublime experience. Similarly in *Shame,* a thematic preoccupation with the destabilization of a core (sexual) self is also apparent, the film's queer heroine having her bourgeois world shattered when she fails to save a young woman from a gang of male rapists. Each film's rural community is represented as able to undermine the outsider's fixed sense of self

through presenting "the outsider" with a sexual taboo (homosexuality, incest, rape) that unravels moral norms.

Ted Kotcheff's *Wake in Fright* (1971) [6] can be seen to blur or collapse boundaries between "the civilized" and "the uncivilized" through the portrayal of a young English teacher's journey into a hellish Australian rural or outback community. The film juxtaposes the middle-class schoolteacher John Grant against the harsh, uncouth and largely uneducated inhabitants of the Yabba. The distinction however, between John and the perverse Yabba residents soon becomes less clear as, during the course of the film's narrative, John begins to participate in the residents' favourite pastimes – heavy drinking, gambling, kangaroo shooting, casual sex, and suicide. As Jonathan Rayner comments in relation to John's "fall from grace":

> The young Englishman's inexorable slide from aloof reserve into
> full participation in the futile, mindless and violent pastimes of
> 'the yabba' [*sic*] rubbishes distinctions of class, race and
> education which his incongruous presence in the Outback had
> previously upheld.[7]

John, a teacher posted to the remote neighbouring town of Tiboonda, visits Bundunyabba (the Yabba) on his way to Sydney for a holiday to see his girlfriend Robin. He plans only to stay for one night in the isolated town but is drawn into a locals' game of two-up and into their habit of heavy drinking, losing all his money in the process. Unable to leave the town right away owing to his lack of money, he stays in the Yabba presumably until he can raise the money to leave. During this time John is befriended by Yabba local Tim Hynes, who offers John accommodation while he is "broke", and it is from this point that John's "slide"

from his comfortable bourgeois existence to a more unsettling "barbaric" one occurs.

The Yabba is depicted as challenging John's bourgeois and Augustan sensibilities. When John arrives in the town he is clean-shaven, immaculately dressed, well mannered if not rigid, and desperately wants out of his teaching position in Tiboonda. In contrast to this depiction of an ordered young man is the John who, upon finally leaving the Yabba, has killed a kangaroo with a knife, has had a homosexual affair, has wandered around the outback killing animals for food, and has attempted suicide. The Yabba is a town full of what can be seen as barbarians or Goths, in contrast to John's initial Augustan values – they have little respect for books or "the educated", they gamble frequently and drink alcohol (mostly beer) constantly, and engage in brawling.[8]

John embodies Augustan/Enlightenment ideals valuing order over the Yabba's perceived chaos, and carries with him a suitcase of books, which by the end of the film are dumped by John as he adopts the Yabba or perhaps Goth (in the eighteenth-century sense) way of life. Just as the Anglo-Australian characters in *Picnic at Hanging Rock* become "corrupted" by the Australian landscape and its odd inhabitants,[9] so too is John corrupted by the Yabba and its residents – his stable, bourgeois values subverted by his experience in the "warped" and "degenerate" Australian outback.[10] While these so called degenerate tendencies have been read negatively in the film – the teacher's "fall from grace" and his descent into a hellish nightmare from which he supposedly returns to "his job a sadder and wiser man…",[11] the film can, by contrast, be read in a more positive

light – that is, John's experience in the Yabba frees him from bourgeois norms, including sexual and moral norms, enabling an exploration of the queering of gender and sexuality particular in regard to Doc Tydon and John, who both seem to have unfixed or fluid sexual identities.

From the very beginning the Yabba is depicted in *Wake in Fright* as a licentious place, and there are numerous examples throughout the film of the challenging of "appropriate" sexual behaviour and gender roles. When John first arrives in the Yabba, he is faced with the hotel receptionist who, due to the heat, has a curious habit of sensually applying ice cubes to her neck while letting a small fan blow her hair, seductively caressing herself while revealing some cleavage. She barely acknowledges John when he books in and checks out of the hotel, as she is too preoccupied with her own senses to even care. Janette Hynes, Tim's daughter, takes John for a walk the first night John stays with them and tries to seduce him by lying on the ground and unbuttoning her shirt. John, however, presumably having had too much to drink, suddenly needs to throw up, which pretty much signals the end of any passion between them for the evening.

Perhaps the queerest character in the film is Doc Tydon, the local alcoholic doctor, who, though living in what can be described as a shack in a barren wasteland, also listens to opera, quotes poetry on occasion, and knows who Socrates is. Tydon's queerness resides in his views about gender and sex, and his comments to John can be seen to engage in sexual politics. When John, after becoming unconscious the night before through excessive drinking, has spent the night at Tydon's, the "Doc" talks to John about Janette and his own relationship

with her. Tydon sees Janette as an "interesting biological case" due to her apparently voracious sexual appetite, and her willingness to "experiment" with him sexually as incongruous with her gender. Tydon says to John: "If Janette were a man she'd be in jail for rape." Tydon goes on to say: "What's wrong with a woman taking a man because she feels like it?" adding as John tries his hardest not to listen: "Sex is just like eating – It's a thing you do because you have to, not because you want to."

Tydon here likens sex to a kind of primal or animalistic instinct, stripping it of any culturally imposed morals, contrasting with John's modern discomfort with discussing the topic of sex. Tydon also tells John in this scene that most of the Yabba townspeople think Janette is "a slut" but that he and Janette know "more about" themselves "than most people." In the film, Tydon represents the ultimate combination or subversion of the imagined line between "the civilized" and "the uncivilized" – he is educated, a medical doctor who has chosen to live not a bourgeois existence but a barbaric one. Tydon is completely aware of his own sexual urges and of his dependence on alcoholism, for which he makes no apologies. He appears comfortable with the choices he makes and is also aware of the "hellish" element to the Yabba that John experiences.

Tydon can perhaps be seen as John's older double, as the person John might become if he were to stay too long in the community or in the outback. John first meets Tydon in a pub where the local cop, Crawford, shows John the "best" steak he will ever eat (though John is far from impressed). John pokes his food with disdain, although somewhat amused by Crawford's relentless praise of what he

himself considers an awful place, and engages in a brief conversation with Tydon who sits across from him at the table.

> **Tydon:** All the little devils are proud of hell.
> **John:** You mean you don't think the Yabba is the
> greatest little place on earth?
> **Tydon:** Could be worse.
> **John:** How?
> **Tydon:** Supply of beer could run out.

This dialogue and interaction between the two "educated" men shows that both are aware of the Yabba's shortcomings, but while John finds it (at first) utterly repulsive, Tydon merely accepts its grotesqueness. In this scene Tydon pokes fun at John a little when the latter begins complaining about the Yabba, Tydon asking him if he would prefer the locals to perform operas, reminding John that he is in what he sees as an uncultured environment.

John's sense of himself, his stable identity as heterosexual and middle-class, is questioned by his experiences in the Yabba. For example, in one scene John participates in a bloody and ruthless kangaroo hunt, killing an injured kangaroo with a knife. In this scene John is egged on by the other men (but not Tydon) to kill the animal, and although John is hesitant at first to do so, once he kills the kangaroo he appears to enjoy the rest of the "boys' night out" and their barbaric practices. However, the event in the film that seems to be pivotal in inducing John's Gothic sublime experience – that is, John's realization that he is not in possession of a concrete and unchangeable identity or subjectivity – is his sexual encounter with Doc Tydon. In this scene the two men return from the kangaroo hunt to Tydon's shack and are extremely drunk. The two men joke around and begin to wrestle each other. During the course of this "bonding" Tydon shines one of the shack's ceiling

lights on John. The scene at this point can be seen to symbolize the previous

kangaroo-hunting scene, due to the representation of John as startled by "the

headlights". The two men struggle until John lies beneath Tydon on the bed, and it

is in this moment that their eyes meet while the light above swings back and forth.

The screen is then suddenly filled with light and the film cuts to the next morning,

when John awakens with a major hangover, covered with dirt and blood from the

night before. Although the Doc offers John breakfast, the latter is quick to leave,

taking the gun that "the boys" gave to him on their hunt. This scene, where sex is

intimated between the two men, has been misinterpreted by some critics of the film

as the rape or sexual assault of John by Tydon, though there is little evidence (if

any at all) to suggest that it is not consensual sex. Rayner[12] contends in relation to

John:

> His final degradation at the nadir of control and consciousness, is
> his attempted suicide after being sexually assaulted by the town's
> alcoholic doctor. Significantly, the doctor can be seen as the
> embodiment of societal collapse, since his decline and
> assimilation into the town's culture prefigures the teacher's
> degeneration

Similarly, Scott Murray's assessment of the film in *Australian Cinema*[13] assumes

that Doc Tydon rapes John:

> John Grant is an English teacher in an outback school. On his
> way to Sydney for a holiday he stops at a pub in the rough mining
> town of Bundanyabba, loses his money in a two-up game and
> finds himself stranded. Gradually, he is overwhelmed by the
> nightmare of life in the 'Yabba', especially the perpetual beery
> stupor of the locals and their insistent and claustrophobic
> 'mateship'. In despair, after participating in a violent kangaroo
> hunt and being homosexually assaulted by an alcoholic doctor,
> Grant is driven to attempt suicide.

These are, it can be argued, heteronormative and essentialist readings of the sexual relationship between Tydon and John. It seems that these analyses of the film assume that, because John has a girlfriend, he is resolutely "straight" and could not possibly want to have sex with a man. It can also be argued that Rayner sees Tydon as "the embodiment of societal collapse" not only because of his assimilation into Yabba rites such as kangaroo shooting and drinking, but also because of his apparent queerness.[14] John's supposed "degeneration" in Rayner's reading of the film can alternatively be attributed to John's crisis of self: his attempted suicide in this reading is symptomatic of his realization that his sexuality is fluid, rather than precipitated by the supposed sexual assault that Tydon commits. It could be argued that Tydon's earlier comments to John regarding the "primal" nature of sex and the positioning of John in the sex scene as "the hunted" (this scene drawing symbolically on the kangaroo hunt of the same night) can be interpreted as an indication that Tydon has forced himself upon John. There is, however, ample evidence to the contrary. For instance, at the moment when the two actually fall on the bed together, John seems to feel no fear, neither is he paralytic from drinking, nor does Tydon hold John down or exert any brute or hostile force. Instead, there is a moment of silence as John and Tydon gaze into one another's eyes until the screen is filled with light and the viewer is left to wonder exactly just what went on between the two. Overall, the tone of this scene is not, it would seem, connotative of any kind of sexual and violent assault; it is, rather, a romantic moment, even if set in the grotesque and ruinous shack Tydon inhabits, while both men are in a drunken stupor and covered in filth and kangaroo blood.

John's entire "crisis" – his Gothic sublime experience[15] – is triggered by his sexual encounter (but not sexual assault) with Tydon, so that when he awakes from his one-night stand with Tydon, he realizes that his actions the previous night are incongruent with his identity as bourgeois and heterosexual. His brutal (though somewhat nervous) killing of a kangaroo on "the hunt", his excessive consumption of alcohol, and his sleeping with Doc Tydon ultimately result in the realization that a once stable identity (at least, in John's mind or reality), has been subverted or even shattered through John's participation in "anti"-Augustan or bourgeois circumstances or events.

After John leaves Tydon's place, taking a rifle with him, he picks up his suitcases. One of his suitcases is full of books, and John promptly dumps the books by the side of the road, which is set against a barren landscape. He then proceeds to wander through this outback landscape in the sweltering heat. In this part of the film John seems to have abandoned his bourgeois sensibilities and his cultured and civilized self, in favour of his uncultured or barbarian self. Although long before this he quashes this civilized identity through participation in kangaroo hunting and general drunken debauchery with the other "lads" in the Yabba, it is when he strikes out on his own away from the influence of the Yabba locals that his own dissatisfaction with his previous bourgeois existence becomes most evident.

Although John's "taking off" on his own into the Australian outback has been read by critics as a reaction to his rape by Doc Tydon, the film can also be read as John's reaction against the mundanity that constitutes his schoolteacher identity. It is made clear near the beginning of the film that John is unhappy with his teaching

post in the neighbouring town, Tiboonda, and wishes to return to England with his girlfriend Robin, who lives in Sydney. However, it is perhaps not just the location where John teaches that has him hating the situation in which he finds himself, but the vocation itself. John is desperate to escape these rules and regulations, and after hitchhiking back to the city with a truck-driver, only to end up back where he started, in Bundanyabba, John attempts suicide in Tydon's shack. In this scene, John backs himself up in a corner of the shack and at first seems to want to shoot Tydon as he points the rifle toward the door. The film depicts John's thoughts as "perverse" sexual imagery and his experience in the Yabba occupies his mind in a Gothic dreamlike mix, with Janette, Tydon and Robin becoming sexually integrated in his surreal state. John, adversely affected by these reveries concerning the Yabba and the obliteration of his former self, puts the gun in his mouth and then to his temple, pulling the trigger as Doc Tydon walks through the door. The film then cuts to John in a hospital bed, his head bandaged: he has survived the suicide attempt. A tear rolls down his cheek as he signs a letter for Crawford (the cop) explaining that the incident was only an "accident", in order to keep the suicide rate or suicide attempt rate down in the Yabba (as it is extremely high).

What is perhaps the most telling scene(s) in the film concerning the relationship between John and Tydon, is when John, now clean-shaven and in teacher attire, is met outside the hospital by Tydon, who drives him to the train station. Tydon wryly comments to John that he did not think that someone who had won a "silver medal" in target shooting (as John had boasted on those drunken nights while hunting) could "botch" a suicide attempt, to which John responds with a smile. At the train

station Tydon sees John off, waiting by the tracks until the train pulls away, and although nothing is said by either of the men to each other, it is clear that they have made some kind of personal connection: Tydon watches the train leave and John looks back to where Tydon stands, perhaps each watching his double go another way. John's suicide attempt can be read in the film as fuelled not by Tydon sexually assaulting him, but by his own inability to handle a challenge to what he perhaps considered his unchanging self. This sense of a stable self faces annihilation through John's contact with the Yabba and its barbarian inhabitants.

John's own feelings toward the Yabba and his "holiday" there are unclear, and the film ends ambiguously as John arrives back at Tiboonda to his teaching job. Charlie, the bartender/boarding-house owner at Tiboonda, greets John as he arrives home: "Did you have a good holiday?" To which John replies: "The best." John's response could be interpreted as sarcastic; however, John, throughout the kangaroo shoot and the heavy drinking in the Yabba, seems to enjoy himself until he suffers an identity crisis after what is presumably his first homosexual encounter. Through this ambiguity concerning John's own feelings toward his holiday in the Yabba, the film can be seen as an open-ended text that allows the viewer to surmise whether John's "barbarian" escapades constituted the "best" holiday or whether John is just being sarcastically polite. It is this open-endedness and the film's engagement with Gothic motifs that is connotative of a moving toward a postmodern Gothic sensibility, as order is not clearly maintained at the conclusion of the film. At the film's conclusion John also appears to have accepted to some degree the (sexual) fluidity of his own self, and this shift from the absolute terror and horror John feels

because of this fragmentation, which results in his attempted suicide, indicates a sublime experience that lies somewhere between the Gothic and postmodern versions of the sublime. Although John is not left in a euphoric state after his fragmentation, a state that is indicative of the postmodern sublime, he is also not left in a cowering state, as experienced in the Gothic's version of the sublime. This "grey" area between the Gothic/postmodern sublimes shows the way the two work together in "Antipodean Gothic cinema" not only to undermine Enlightenment/modernist notions of a core self, but also as a movement toward an acceptance of the plurality of self.

Ken Hannam's *Summerfield*[16] engages heavily with Gothic themes and imagery, drawing its inspiration from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" and Roger Corman's film version of Poe's short story *The House of Usher* (1960), making use of the taboo subject of incest. As in *Wake in Fright,* a stranger enters a rural community and becomes involved with the locals, this involvement triggering life-changing events for the protagonist. Simon Robinson, a school-teacher like John Grant in *Wake in Fright,* arrives at Bannings Beach, a remote seaside community, to replace the previous teacher, Peter Flynn, who has disappeared under what seem to be mysterious circumstances. On his first day at the small school, Simon meets one of his students Sally Abbott, who lives near "the swamps" on an island called Summerfield. Sally invites Simon to dinner, as it appears the family had previously had a close relationship with Peter Flynn, but Sally leaves the classroom before Simon can decline the invitation. On the way to the beach, Simon accidentally knocks Sally off her bike, breaking her leg – the accident

occurs because Sally sees Simon going "the wrong way" and attempts to "cut" him off. Simon is forced to go to Summerfield to alert Sally's mother of her daughter's injuries. In this scene, Simon is shown scaling a locked high fence that separates Summerfield from the rest of Bannings Beach, and as he runs some distance to the family home, the menacing sound of the film score signals that Simon is entering a "forbidden zone" and that Summerfield may hide terrible secrets – the overhead view and long shot of Simon running through sparse bushland also emphasizing the island estate's isolation from the rest of the Bannings Beach community.

Through contact with Sally, Simon meets Jenny and David Abbott, Sally's mother and uncle. After Sally's accident, Simon offers to give Sally home lessons at Summerfield until she has recovered and is able to return to school, and during this time develops romantic feelings for Jenny, who appears to be a single mother. During his involvement with the Abbott family and the Bannings Beach locals, Simon comes to the conclusion that Peter Flynn is Sally's father as he, sleuth-like, puts together pieces of evidence that tie Peter to Sally. One such clue, a photo of an old ship's cannon on the Summerfield property that belonged to one of their ancestors, a sea captain, is found in Peter's jacket that had been left in the boarding house room in which Simon is staying. On the back of the photo all that is written is "Saltwater in the blood." This clue, combined with other photos of the Abbotts with Peter, has Simon wondering about the relationship between the Abbotts and Peter Flynn. The mystery deepens when the local doctor tells Simon that Sally has a rare blood disease and that the child's parents are thought to be blood-related in some way. It is the taboo topic of incest that is the most subversive and challenging

aspect of the film and it is this subject that allows the film to borrow significantly from the imagery of Gothic literature and film.

In *Summerfield*, there are numerous intertextual references to other Gothic works, most notably, "The Fall of the House of Usher" and *The House of Usher,* but also, to a lesser extent, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights.* Rayner[17] observes that David's killing of a litter of kittens because, according to David, they are all "inbred", echoes Hareton's killing of kittens in Brontë's Gothic novel. Although Rayner is able to see this reference to a traditional Gothic text, Poe's tale is perhaps the more obvious Gothic literary source for *Summerfield*. In the film, David and Jenny are both brother and sister, and father and mother to Sally (although Sally is presumably unaware of who her father is), and as in "The Fall of the House of Usher", their secret incest causes their downfall, as well as the end of the family name and estate.

In Poe's tale, an outsider visits the Usher family and witnesses the demise of brother and sister Roderick and Madeleine, the former struck by mystery ailments, the latter also afflicted with a disease and eventually buried alive by her brother. The visitor informs the reader, in relation to the bloodlines in the Usher family, that their ancestors had been known for "a peculiar sensibility of temperament", also making the observation that "the stem of the Usher race, all time-honoured as it was, had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, […] the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain."[18] The visitor or family friend also intimates incest between the brother and sister or within the Usher family when he relays to

the reader a conversation with Roderick during which the latter explains the "nature of his malady", which, he says, is "a constitutional and a family evil, and one for which he despaired to find a remedy…"[19]

The similarities between Poe's now famous Gothic tale and *Summerfield* can be seen here through the portrayal of a sexual relationship between a brother and sister and their punishment for their indiscretion by suffering from a "peculiar" illness. David and Jenny's illness or disorder in the form of the blood disease Thalassemia minor, is considered a rare occurrence in modern cultures, and Sally's hereditary illness rarer still. This, however, is not the only parallel that can be drawn between Poe's story and *Summerfield*: there is also the frequent allusion in the film to stringed instruments and to family bloodlines and ancestry – Summerfield like the Usher house having been in the family for generations. In "The Fall of the House of Usher" Roderick is particularly adept at artistic endeavours, both painting and music, and in *Summerfield* David also displays this same affinity with "the arts." The visitor to the Usher house describes how his time is spent with Roderick: "We painted and read together; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar."[20] In *Summerfield* David also plays a stringed instrument – a lute – and also enjoys painting, mostly depicting the abundant bird-life that populates Summerfield. The playing of a lute in the film can also be seen to draw upon Roderick's lute playing in the *The House of Usher*.[21] In both films the "peculiar" sounds described by the visitor in Poe's version are reproduced in the film score, the focus given to stringed instruments. Moreover, one unusual stringed instrument, which David has painted with birds, hangs on the front porch of the

248

Summerfield house. The playing of a lute has also been traditionally associated (especially during the Renaissance), with angels and death.[22] In *Summerfield* David's playing of a lute can thus be said to signify the approaching death of the Abbott family, enacted in a spectacularly horrifying manner.

Not unlike John Grant in *Wake in Fright*, Simon Robinson experiences a Gothic sublime moment, his bourgeois identity similarly subverted or fragmented. Simon's role as detective in the film, his educated piecing together of bits and pieces that he thinks constitutes a mystery, leads to the murder of Sally and Jenny, and to David's suicide. Having developed romantic feelings for Jenny and taking her out on a date to a classical music recital, Simon leaves Jenny at the gate on the bridge that separates Summerfield (the abnormal) from the rest of the community (the normal), failing to convince her to become more than friends with him. Indeed, Jenny tells Simon that it would be "best" if he did not pursue her. Shortly after this, Simon, still suspecting that Peter Flynn is Sally's father, is invited to Summerfield for dinner. However, after dinner when David drives Simon back to the bridge, Simon finds that his car will not start, and so heads back to Summerfield on foot only to discover the Abbotts' terrible secret. The mise-en-scene reveals Simon standing on the Abbotts' verandah and upon hearing "noises", approaches a window to investigate further. As Simon watches through the window he sees David and Jenny, completely naked, having sweaty sex, from which he eventually recoils in horror (but not before voyeuristically observing them for a time).

As Simon watches the Abbotts' incestuous love-making, the viewer sees what he sees and is placed in his position until both Simon and viewer are "found out"

by David who looks up to see Simon's stunned face at the window. David chases after Simon as he runs away from the ill-fated house. At this point, Simon's previous assumptions that Peter Flynn is Sally's father no longer hold true for him, and he realizes that David is both father and uncle to Sally. Now, however, Simon wrongly assumes that Peter's disappearance was due to David murdering him for finding out about the Abbotts' more-than-fraternal relationship. David searches for Simon, calling out to him and turning on a spotlight, but Simon will not respond to him, once again jumping to a conclusion that causes him to fear for his life, even though up to this point David is neither armed nor aggressive.

When David is unable to find Simon, perhaps to swear him to secrecy, particularly for Sally's sake, he becomes desperate and shoots both Jenny and his daughter before taking his own life in front of Simon. The murder of Sally and Jenny is not shown in the film. Instead, as Simon is leaving the property, he hears two gunshots and a scream. He promptly returns to the house, to find both Jenny and Sally dead and bloody from fatal gunshot wounds. Still reeling from this encounter with "the dead", Simon hears the cocking of a gun and drops to the ground, thinking that the bullet is meant for him. As Simon hears the gunshot, realizing he has been spared, he looks up to see David's bloodied face twisted in tragic agony, having taken his own life and his family's in order to keep the Summerfield secret.

All that Simon's "snooping" has achieved is the death of an entire family and the end of Summerfield. His ability to think rationally or to understand all circumstances in a logical, clear-sighted way is questioned, not only because of the

Abbotts' deaths but also because, shortly after this tragic event, Peter Flynn turns up looking for his belongings at the boarding house. It is revealed in this scene that Simon's assumptions and suspicions concerning the Abbotts' murder of Peter Flynn were completely misguided. Peter tells Simon that he just "had to split" and that his hasty departure had "Nothing to do with the school", and the camera moves in to reveal Simon's guilt ridden and terror stricken face – the very last image of the film is a close-up of Simon's horrified eyes. Through Simon's realization that his "educated" guesses and assumptions concerning the Abbotts and Peter Flynn have led only to disaster, Simon's moral outlook and identity is questioned, his methodical and rational world view destroyed by his contact with the taboo practice of incest.

There are allusions in *Summerfield* as in *Wake in Fright* to the Goths or "the barbarians", and a distinction is made between a bourgeois and civilized outsider and what can be considered the primitive or barbarian locals. In *Wake in Fright* the locals participate in all manner of debaucheries, including heavy drinking, brawling and gambling as well as casual sex, all of which can be seen to echo the eighteenth-century depiction of the Goths (as they became collectively known) as uncouth and degenerate. Similarly, in *Summerfield,* Simon is portrayed (like John) as educated, and with middle-class values and morals that are challenged by the alternative values and morals of a small community, which functions as the antithesis of bourgeois norms. As in *Wake in Fright,* the accommodation Simon inhabits during his stay also houses a licentious or provocative woman who, although married and the co-owner of the boarding house, climbs into Simon's bed in the middle of the

night and seduces him. Although in *Wake* the receptionist at the hotel is not as "forthcoming", but erotic nonetheless, Janet, like the boarding house owner in *Summerfield*, makes the first "move"– the passive role of women in hetero sex questioned by the sexual aggressiveness displayed by both women.

This juxtaposition between the bourgeois/civilized and barbarian/uncivilized is further evidenced in *Summerfield* when Simon and David compete against one another in a game of tennis. While David is shown in the film as "physical" or "rugged" – he drives a tractor, wears no shoes and working clothes – Simon, by contrast, is more "intellectual" and rigid, and nowhere is this contrast more clearly seen than in the tennis match. After playing tennis with Jenny, Simon is challenged by David to a game. Simon, fully dressed for the part of a tennis player all in white, loses to David, who plays barefoot and in his usual workclothes. Simon comments to Jenny in relation to David's obvious physical prowess: "I'm no match for your brother, that's for sure." This comment reveals not only the difference between the two men in terms of their value systems, but also hints that Simon cannot possibly compete against David and win Jenny's affection. The tennis match thus becomes a metaphor for both David's and Simon's romantic feelings for Jenny.

Of course, the main taboo topic in *Summerfield* is incest. Represented as a primitive practice, it is used to further juxtapose the moral bourgeois outsider Simon, who is horrified to discover the siblings are lovers, with the Abbotts, who practise it.[23] Furthermore, not only is Simon pitted against the small beachside community and its inhabitants (especially the Abbotts) in a civilized/uncivilized binary that is unravelled by the conclusion of the film, when Simon ends up with

the Abbotts' blood on his hands, but the small island estate of Summerfield in the film, can be seen to symbolically represent the entire island continent of Australia or perhaps the even smaller antipodean islands of New Zealand. Rayner[24] writes in his reading of *Summerfield:* "The seclusion of the island estate and the incestuous family inhabiting it can be seen to represent the entire continent…" If Summerfield can be seen to represent Australia in the film (or the Antipodes in general), then the depiction of the "primitive" practice of incest and the sexual assertiveness of Betty, the co-owner of the local boarding house resonate with myths surrounding the Antipodes and its inhabitants as perverse. In the film it has also been shown in this chapter that the locals of Bannings Beach are constructed as the antithesis of bourgeois norms – as Goths/barbarians in terms of their lack of "proper-ness" or rigidity particularly in terms of sexual norms. It can also be argued that the Antipodes itself is metaphorically represented by Summerfield, and is constructed in the film as the antithesis of European/Augustan values or ideals, culturally constructed as a place that is inhabited by barbarians.

Steve Jodrell's *Shame*[25] (1987), like *Wake in Fright* and *Summerfield,* can also be read in Gothic/postmodern terms in the way it plays with Hollywood film genres, its inclusion of taboo sexual subject matter, and its representation of rural locals as Goths or barbarians. In the film, Asta, a barrister from the city, has a minor motorbike accident while riding through rural Australia. Unable to fix her bike, Asta rides into a remote rural community and finds herself gradually embroiled in the town's sexual politics, learning that there have been numerous gang rapes in the town by the same group of young men, and that the local police

turn a blind eye to the sexual harassment and assault of women. Scott Murray[26], in summarizing the film's plot, writes: "Sexual molestation is encouraged by fathers who think their sons are entitled to some fun, forgiven by mothers who blame the victims and call them 'sluts', and protected by townspeople who wish to preserve the beloved status quo."

Having to stay in the town in order to have her bike fixed, Asta forms a friendship with Liz, the daughter of the garage-owner Tim (where she takes her bike for repairs), and convinces Liz and her family to press charges against the young men who raped Liz. Although Asta's intention is to protect Liz from the men who raped her within the supposed safety of "the law", she cannot in the end save her from tragedy: after being kidnapped from the local "cop shop" by two men against whom she wishes to lay charges, Liz is accidentally pushed out of their moving car when she tries to fight back (as Asta has taught her). As in *Wake in Fright* and *Summerfield,* a stranger from an urban environment, or at least an individual who embodies bourgeois values associated with the city, comes into contact with what is depicted in the films as rural barbarians and is profoundly changed or challenged by that experience. The stranger's unequivocal belief in liberal-humanist ideals is shaken by the lawlessness or barbaric set of values displayed by her/his rural counterparts. In *Shame* – the title in Rayner's[27] opinion a word play on the Western *Shane,* "in which the enigmatic titular hero brings justice and peace to the nascent civilizations of the plains … ", Asta can be seen as a queer figure: she crosses boundaries between masculine/feminine cultural constructs,

displaying the same admirable traits that a hero might display in the Hollywood action or western genre.

Rayner[28] comments in relation to Asta's role as action hero/heroine and her status as an urban outsider in the film:

> As an avenger of barbaric social inequality, Asta overturns several stereotypes, proving superior to the males in her handling of the motorbike and her fighting abilities. Her costume of black leathers and white T-shirt links her with the rebellious bikers of *The Wild One*, but morally she incarnates the urban, educated liberal majority appalled at the realities of rural existence.

There are numerous instances in the film when Asta can be seen to out-think, out-fight, and out-ride, "the boys" in the town. She single-handedly fights off a group of adolescent boys who corner her late at night at an abandoned train station when she picks up the motorbike part she has ordered to fix her bike. Asta picks up a brick and hits the boys with it, before jumping onto the bonnet of the car and injuring the driver by smashing the brick into the windscreen. Throughout, Asta subverts the notion that women are passive, and continually pushes against the boundaries of gender norms. When she first arrives in the town, she is shown climbing off her motorbike and entering the all-male space of "the pub", seemingly unperturbed by their sexist remarks. In another scene, Asta, walking at night with Liz's mother, confidently approaches abusive male youths in a car and tells them to "piss off." Toward the end of the film Asta is again shown as more than capable of taking care of herself, as well as others, when she attacks the leader of the rapist gang in order to learn where they have taken Liz.

In *Australian Cinema* Scott Murray[29] writes in relation to Asta's display of violence: "Some critics have argued this ending condones violence, as if the legal

'nicety' of a presumption of innocence is a hindrance to a true justice only brutality can achieve. It is hard to disagree, for the tone of the film at this point is clearly behind that black leather boot as it thuds into the male genitals." Although Asta indeed ends up, to some degree, on the same "uncivilized" level as the local men by resorting to violence, her actions may be seen as symbolizing her assimilation into the rural Goth-type world, where liberal ideals fall by the wayside and are in fact ineffective: brutality is the only means to existence and the only language understood by the locals.

The fact that Asta is a barrister and is well versed in "the law", can be seen as ironically symbolic of "the law's" ineffectiveness in the situation in which she finds herself. Although Asta tries to bring the young male rapists to justice through the correct and proper means, she ultimately fails, and in spite of her last attempt to communicate with the rapists by physically assaulting one of them, she is still too late to save Liz, who dies on the side of the road before Asta and the other townspeople can reach her. This failure on Asta's part to make "the law" work for her and the town's female rape victims reveals the fragility of "the law"[30], and this revelation resonates with Gothic overtones.

The Gothic is able, according to David Punter[31] in *Gothic Pathologies*, to illuminate or highlight "the criminal" and "the corrupt" (see chapter five), and frequently (in literature and film) alludes to "the law" as an institution that cannot always speak the truth, imposing norms on those "cases" it decides to hear. In *Shame*, it is the women who have been raped whom "the law" refuses to hear. Like most of the other townspeople, the local police blame the victims and do not wish

the peace of the town to be disturbed by an outsider, especially a woman. It is Asta's defiance of "the law", in spite of her association with it as a barrister and as someone who clearly aligns herself with liberal-humanist ideals that blurs boundaries between civilized/uncivilized and the rational/irrational. Her violent outburst, when she nearly kills (chokes) one of the rapists after kicking him to the ground, can be seen in Gothic rather than realist terms, Asta's violent actions symbolizing her own identity crisis rather than simply connoting a version of justice best achieved through brutality.

Justice is not, after all, achieved in the film through Asta's brutal actions – Liz is found dead by Asta, and her attack on "the rapist" is just as useless in gaining the desired result as "the law" has been up until this point. If anything, the film can be seen as supporting the trying of the rapists through "the law" – through the judicial system – and this is indicated when Liz's mother, having found her daughter dead, lets the local cop (Wal) know that the victims and their families are not yet through with the young men responsible for Liz's death:

> **Wal** (to Asta)**:** Well, I hope you're bloody satisfied.
> **Liz's Mother/Tina:** No, Wal – we're not bloody satisfied
> – Not by a long way – mate.[32]

Soon after Liz's mother makes it clear to Wal that she intends to press charges, Lorna, another young woman who has also been raped by the same men as Liz, decides that she too will now press charges; stating: "…'n' this time I'm not running away, 'Kay?"[33]

As in *Summerfield*, the camera shows, at the conclusion of the film, a close-up of the outsider's face and the look of horror and guilt that characterizes it. Like

257

Simon Robinson, Asta is represented as having experienced a Gothic sublime moment through contact with a rural or remote community and their taboo (uncivilized) sexual practices. In spite of her education, her law degree, her professional expertise, Asta is unable to save the day, and like Simon, is a harbinger of death and destruction to what is shown to be an already decaying community, though there is some hope in *Shame's* conclusion that the women in the town are now willing to press charges against the male rapists and will not stand for any bullying tactics. There is also some hope for the township in the gender role reversal – when the town's women aggressively wrestle some of the young male offenders to the ground – that occurs after Liz is kidnapped. Asta, not unlike Simon in *Summerfield* now has to live with the guilt associated with the part she has played in the ending of a life (in Simon's case, lives). Asta's guilt and emotional trauma caused by the loss of Liz, is the last image of the film, and reveals both the fragility of "the law" (Asta represents "the system" through her profession) and associated liberal-humanist ideals such as justice, of which there is little for Liz, who, in spite of everything Asta has taught her (how to "fight back" and be more confident), ends up a bloodied heap on the side of the road.

This chapter has explored the cinematic depiction of the Australian rural community in Gothic/postmodern terms, the films incorporating sexually taboo areas, incorporating Gothic textuality itself (as in *Summerfield*), showing a general disregard for the institutions of Law and Education, and appropriating the stylings of various Hollywood genres (most notably seen in *Shame*). This chapter has also explored how the representations of these remote communities are parallel to those

of the Goths/barbarians in eighteenth-century literature and historical writings, and so reproduce the Euro-centric notion of the Antipodes as a Gothic space populated by degenerates and barbarians. In all three films the protagonist, representing bourgeois ideals, is profoundly affected by contact with "rural barbarians", and subsequently any faith in Enlightenment philosophies and its associated institutions/systems, such as education and "the law", is shattered or at least seriously challenged. In the next chapter, "Antipodean Sci-Fi Car Crash Films and the Gothic", the European notion of the Antipodes as a perverse place or space is explored within the context of the Australian films *The Cars that Ate Paris, Mad Max* and *Mad Max-The Road Warrior*. All three films appropriate various Hollywood genres and make allusions to consumer/pop culture, along with a heavy utilization of Gothic motifs and "figures." This combination further indicates a marked postmodern Gothic sensibility in Antipodean cinema.

Notes

1. See Alastair Fowler (ed) *John Milton - Paradise Lost*, Longman Group Limited, London, 1971, p. 118-9. Milton's literary epic tells the story of the casting out of Satan from heaven and the creation of hell. The fall from grace that Satan (as well as Adam and Eve) experiences can be paralleled with all three protagonists in the films discussed in this chapter and their subsequent corruption by what can be seen as hellish rural communities. In *Wake in Fright,* in particular, Tydon makes an analogy between the Yabba locals as "little devils" and the town itself as "hell."

2. See Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Fall of the House of Usher', in J.S. Whitley (ed), *Tales of Mystery and Imagination: Edgar Allan Poe,* Wordsworth Editions Limited, Hertfordshire, 2000, p. 151. In *Summerfield,* parallels can be made between the Usher house and its ruinous state, and the Abbotts' home, which is also full of antiques and references to their ancestry. In both Poe's tale and Hannam's film, both "houses" (dynasties) come to an abrupt end in a tragic fashion.

3. See Debi Enker, "Australia and the Australians", in Scott Murray (ed), *Australian Cinema,* Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian Film Commission, St Leonards, 1994, p. 216.

4. See Jonathan Rayner, *Contemporary Australian Cinema: An Introduction,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000, pp. 28-9.

5. As discussed in chapter two, European eighteenth-century thought (particularly in Britain) constructed the Goths as the antithesis of Enlightenment values such as order, symmetry, and logical/rational thought. For some historical studies on 'the Goths' see: Samuel Kliger, *The Goths in England: A Study in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Thought,* Octagon Books, New York, 1972, pp. 1-3 and pp. 220-22; Tacitus in J.B. Rives (ed), *Tacitus: Germania,* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999, pp. 85-7; Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* Wordsworth Editions Ltd, Hertfordshire, 1998, p. 199.

6. Ted Kotcheff (director) *Wake in Fright,* 1971. All subsequent references are from this source. See the Filmography for further details.

7. Rayner, op. cit., p. 27.

8. The Goths, according to Tacitus, op. cit., pp. 86-7 (and as previously discussed), were thought to be heavy drinkers and gamblers and were renowned for their physical prowess and love of fighting. These characteristics can be paralleled with the casting of the Yabba locals in a similar light as the Goths or barbarians.

9. As discussed in chapter four, "Antipodean Colonial Gothic", *Picnic at Hanging Rock* also represents its English protagonists (namely, Mike and Mrs Appleyard) as challenged by the strangeness of the Australian bush and its inhabitants – spirits or ghosts of the Aboriginal Dreamtime.

10. See Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo,* trans. J. Strachey, Routledge, New York, 2001, p. 2, concerning what he sees as the "primitive" and "backward" nature of Australian flora and fauna and its original human inhabitants – Indigenous Australians. See also Simon Ryan's discussion of the depiction of the Antipodes as "perverse" and "degenerate" in both ancient and modern literature

and historical accounts in *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia,* Cambridge University Press, New York, 1996, pp. 105-117.

11. Rayner, op.cit., p. 27.

12. ibid.

13. See Murray, op. cit., p. 309.

14. See Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other works", Angela Richards (ed), *Sigmund Freud, Volume 7: On Sexuality,* Penguin Books Ltd, London, 1991, pp. 52-5. Bi-sexuality is theorized by Freud as reverting back to a state of "undifferentiation" in terms of sexual identity – he suggests that humans originally had a "bisexual physical disposition" but that through evolution this dualism became one (or, rather, two separate ones). Here bi-sexuality is constructed as reverting back to a primitive or uncivilized state, a view reproduced by Rayner and Murray in their readings of *Wake in Fright.*

15. See Vijay Mishra, *The Gothic Sublime,* State University of New York Press, Albany, 1994, pp. 19-23 and pp. 37-45.

16. Ken Hannam (director), *Summerfield,* 1977. All subsequent references are from this source. See the Filmography for further details.

17. Rayner, op. cit., p. 35.

18. Poe, op. cit., p. 149.

19. ibid., p. 152.

20. ibid., p. 153.

21. Roger Corman's 1960 version of Poe's tale *The Fall of the House of Usher* starred Vincent Price.

22. Go to www.s-hamilton.k12.ia.us/antiqua/lute.htm for information concerning the symbolic nature of 'the lute' in painting/art. According to the site the lute was a highly regarded instrument during the Renaissance and is usually associated (in paintings) with "Apollo, angels, or Orpheus, and is often mentioned at climactic points in tragedies". In *Summerfield,* David's playing of a lute can be seen to represent his own looming death and that of his family, echoing Corman's film version of Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* where Roderick also plays a lute.

23. See Freud, *Totem and Taboo,* op. cit., pp. 1-21. Freud uses Australian Aborigines as an example of a culture that enforces prohibitions against incest, coming to the conclusion that some "savage peoples" regard (like "civilized" people) the unconscious wish or drive to commit incest as stemming from "early incestuous wishes" as dangerous, and take "severe measures" to guard against such acts. See also Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and other works", op. cit., pp. 148-52 for his discussion of the incestuous desire of the child toward a parent – a desire that is subsequently repressed in modern culture.

24. Rayner, op. cit., p. 35.

25. Steve Jodrell (director) *Shame,* 1987. All subsequent references are from this source unless otherwise indicated. See the Filmography for further details.

26. Murray, op. cit., pp. 133-4

27. Rayner, op. cit., p. 29.

28. ibid., p. 32.

29. Murray, op. cit., p. 134.

30. See David Punter, *Gothic Pathologies: The Text, the Body, and the Law,* St

Martin's Press, New York, 1998, p. 3 (and more generally the entire work) for his suggestion that the Gothic is able to subvert "the law" and is often pitted against it in Gothic narratives.

31. ibid.
32. See Beverly Blankenship and Michael Brindley's screenplay for *Shame* in Stephen Crofts (ed), *The Case of Shame: Identification, Gender and Genre in Film,* Australian Film Institute, Melbourne, 1993, p. 175.
33. ibid., p. 176.

Antipodean Sci-Fi Car Crash Films and the Gothic

The Cars that Ate Paris, Mad Max, and Mad Max 2

It didn't sound like far, really – not until you added up all the little bits and realised that it totaled one thousand, two hundred and fourteen kilometers. And that was less than half the total distance – the boring, straight, completely flat half at that, along which the road came to look like a razor's edge, a crack, a tightrope, a hypodermic needle filled with black death, a terrible boundary with nothing one side and nothing the other. The mind, without a reference point, began to lose track of reality.

<div align="right">SEAN WILLIAMS [1]</div>

Crash, of course, is not concerned with an imaginary disaster, however imminent, but with a pandemic cataclysm that kills hundreds of thousands of people each year and injures millions. Do we see, in the car crash, a sinister portent of a nightmare marriage between sex and technology?

<div align="right">J.G. Ballard [2]</div>

Memories of accidents plague our highways and haunt the paths of our journeys. Every bad stretch of freeway and blind corner has its ghosts, casualties of automotive carnage.

<div align="right">MIKITA BROTTMAN [3]</div>

Science fiction and the Gothic may not on the surface appear to have much in common as literary/film genres – one concerned with the future, and one seemingly more concerned with the past. However, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, now considered a staple part of the Gothic literary canon, has also been "read by many critics as a prototype of the science-fiction genre."[4] This relationship between Gothic and science fiction literary genres – where concerns about possible futures in relation to human endeavours are depicted as tainted by the dark side of human nature – can also be found in H.G. Well's *Island of Dr Moreau* and in Ridley

Scott's postmodern Gothic film *Blade Runner*.[5] As David Seed[6] writes in the section "Gothic Science Fiction" in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*: "In fact Gothic motifs and narrative procedures have continued to appear in science fiction to articulate the reverse possibility to mankind's [*sic*] gradual expansion of knowledge through science." Considering that both the Gothic and science fiction in literature and film can be seen to highlight the dark side of humanity and its close but often tense relationship with technology, it is perhaps not too surprising to find both modes employed in depicting barbaric futuristic worlds that rely on the car and other forms of engine powered transport for survival. In the futuristic worlds depicted in *The Cars that Ate Paris* (1974), *Mad Max* (1979) and *Mad Max 2 – The Road Warrior* (1981), the car is central to the narrative and is used to symbolize repressed male homosexual desire – all three films associating queerness with the disintegration of societal norms and civilization. In the films the car becomes both a literal and metaphorical vehicle of expression for this desire, which it unleashes through violent means: the spectacle of the car crash.

According to Nicholas Zurbrugg[7], in "'Oh what a feeling!' – The Literatures of the Car": "One way or another, the motif of the car haunts the twentieth-century imagination, offering a fascinating index of successive dominant social, intellectual and cultural concerns." Zurbrugg[8] suggests that from E.M. Forster's *Howard's End* (1910) through to J.G. Ballard's *Crash* (1973), the car and the car crash can be seen as depicting social and cultural change in the Western world. A cinematic motif in Australian film, the car, in the films examined in this chapter, appears in (postmodern) Gothic forms of representation that depict futuristic worlds obsessed

with motor-powered transportation, revelling in the thrill of a car chase and in horrific car accidents. As Ken Gelder[9] writes in "*Mad Max* and Aboriginal Automation":

> […] there are now almost 11 million cars on Australian roads: they could not be any *less* central to contemporary life in this country. Over the past twenty years, since around the time the first *Mad Max* film was released, the number of cars on Australian roads has grown by 69 per cent. Australians are more dependent upon their cars than ever before, although this is a feature which rarely translates into popular cultural analysis, with cars barely mentioned at all in such broad-based studies as John Fiske, Bob Hodge and Graeme Turner's *Myths of Oz* (1988) or Verity Burgmann and Jenny Lee's four volume *The People's History of Australia* (1989).

In the three films discussed in this chapter, the car is central, the Australian nation depicted as reliant on trading car parts from car wrecks and searching for fuel, which has become essential for survival. Director George Miller's comments in relation to positioning the car as a narrative focal point for the creation of the future world in *Mad Max 2-The Road Warrior,* reflects or reinforces the notion that cars occupy a significant place in the Australian psyche, most citizens unable to see themselves existing without one. Miller[10] states:

> Every element in *Mad Max II – Road Warrior* was worked out from the present, and from the premise that, suddenly, there would be no energy, no electricity….There would be fights…We would have no gas for our vehicles. Very quickly, things would reach a Darwinian stage where people would have to survive as best they could.

Miller's observations indicate that fuel and a motorized form of transportation are essential for survival in a futuristic Australian context, and points to a cultural obsession with the car. Miller, a medical graduate when he first started filmmaking, also states in an interview with Sue Matthews[11] in *35mm Dreams* that the *Mad Max*

stories were inspired by both his and Byron Kennedy's (producer) interest in Australian car culture, and his own experiences with deaths resulting from car crashes:

> Working in the hospital I had developed a morbid fascination with the autocide we practise in our society: every weekend I'd see so many young people who'd been killed, or maimed for life, on the roads. You'd see the road toll in the paper on Monday morning and it was accepted with a shrug. It was almost like a weekly ritual, with people being randomly selected out as victims, as sacrifices to the car and the road.

In their analysis of Peter Weir's *The Cars that Ate Paris,* Dermody and Jacka also point out this connection between cars and car crash culture, and constructions of Australian national identity:

> While it reverts to the oblique and grotesque in its approach to the question of how to be an Australian film, *Cars* doesn't strain for its answer. It is, of course, commenting on something deeply embedded in the Australian ethos: that we would die without our cars, and to prove the point we daily risk dying in them.[12]

Dermody and Jacka[13] also suggest that *Cars* can be considered as "the first car crash movie…", and that this genre "became recognizably Australian and intensely popular in the wake of the first *Mad Max*." By making the car the focal point of their narratives and depictions of the future for Australia, these films are evidence of the culture's psychological dependence on the car as a means to overcome physical isolation within itself. The narrative centrality of the car indicates the desire to counter Australia's geographical isolation from the Northern Hemisphere and from what can be seen as its Western parents, Britain and the U.S.A.

This representation of the car as absolutely essential for human existence in a futuristic Australia as seen in *Cars, Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2*, merges sexual desire with "the crash". The blurring of boundaries between car bodies in crashes symbolizes the blurring of gender/sexual boundaries, the melding of male/female, of masculine/feminine. In all films, the breakdown of law and order and the eruption of anarchy mirrors this breakdown in sexual norms, with "the queer" irrevocably associated with less than civilized values and a reversion to barbaric ways.[14] Since the Gothic, according to William Schafer[15] in *Mapping the Godzone,* can be used as a surrogate history, a way of knowing the past and constructing national identity in postcolonial Western cultures/nations, the representation of the car in the following films discussed can be seen as emblematic of the Euro-centric construction of Australia as a queer space. Furthermore, this representation, combined with the use of Gothic motifs such as the exploration of the taboo and intertextuality in terms of the films' use of mythology, particularly in the *Mad Max* films, seems to suggest that the car and car crash culture clearly play a part in the Australian cinematic social imaginary.[16]

Peter Weir's first feature film, *The Cars that Ate Paris*[17], is set in the small rural town of Paris, which exists sometime in the near future. Here, the residents barter car parts from car crashes they cause, their victims and crash survivors usually ending up as "quarter", "half", or "full veges."[18] Although most outsiders who come across Paris end up in the local hospital in this way or are killed instantly in the horrific accidents, Arthur Waldo proves to be an exception and is "adopted" by the town's Mayor, who comes to look upon Arthur as his son, and is unwilling to

let him leave or escape the town. Weir's film can be seen as engaging with the Gothic in its representation of Paris and its local inhabitants. The film begins with a parody of advertising, in which a young couple, advertising a cigarette brand, set off for a drive in the country, only to career inadvertently off the road down a steep embankment, crashing their car. The film then cuts to a car and a trailer travelling on a similarly isolated country road, and shows the grotesque nature of the rural area by having the car pass men on the side of the road attempting to stuff a dead cow into the boot of their vehicle. In the next scene this same car travels along a country road at nighttime and shows a semi-conscious Arthur as the passenger and what is later revealed to be Arthur's brother as the driver. Like the young couple at the start of the film, Arthur and his brother's car careers off the side of the road and crashes. In this scene the brother – but not the viewer – sees *something* in front of him (the mystery "something" is later revealed to be the cars that terrorize Paris) and he is killed instantly, while Arthur, having survived the crash, is treated in the Paris hospital.

Filmed in a rural setting, *Cars* has some narrative devices in common with the rural Gothic films discussed earlier in this dissertation, including the arrival of a stranger from outside the community and the representation of the changes that this outsider experiences through her/his contact with a rural community.[19] In Arthur's case, these changes or this crisis, provoked by his involuntary prolonged contact with Paris, requires him to overcome his long-term fear of driving and cars. Due to Arthur's fear and supposed inability to drive any vehicle, he becomes stranded in Paris and becomes involved in the small town's local politics between the older

generation of the town (the authority figures) and the younger generation who adorn their cars with spikes and all manner of decorations, personalizing their cars and using them to terrorize the community. However, this "younger generation" also helps to sustain the town's "industry" by causing car crashes and by scavenging for car parts. Through their causing of accidents the younger men of the town also enable the local hospital to perform scientific experiments on the survivors of horrific accidents.

Cars displays an eclectic mix of Hollywood genres, including science fiction, the western and the horror film, and it is this pastiche of such genres, along with an emphasis on the grotesque and the taboo, that can be seen to display a postmodern Gothic sensibility.[20] Several scenes foreground these cinematic genres. For instance, the use of science fiction is evident in the radio announcements that give the impression that the Australian nation of the future is in some sort of economic and societal turmoil,[21] the Prime Minister addressing the country in a radio transmission: "The future promises great things for us and our country. The light is at the end of the tunnel, but have you the strength to travel the short distance that remains?" The science fiction quality of this state of affairs is strengthed by the Paris locals' trading in car parts via murder, their society, a microcosm of the nation, is on the brink of collapse.

In another scene, borrowings from "the western" are clear. Arthur, having been made a traffic warden and given authoritative powers as a traffic warden by the Mayor, confronts some youths in the deserted dusty main street of Paris. The young men adorned in costumes imitative of "Spaghetti Western villains"[22], will not obey

Arthur's orders to park elsewhere, and their defiance of "the law" results in one of the young men's cars being set alight (upon the Mayor's orders) as a warning to others who seek to defy the laws of Paris.

Throughout the film the conventions of "horror" are also used in terms of the bloody corpses shown to the viewer as a result of car crashes, and the suspense and unease associated with the Paris hospital, where scientific experiments are conducted on visitors to Paris. One scene shows the local doctor, a reworking of the Gothic figure of the mad scientist, about to drill into a man's head after he is carried unwillingly to the operating table and sedated.

In another scene "the veges" attend the town's fancy-dress pioneer ball, to which participants are to come dressed as historical figures who have played a part in the town's history. Interestingly enough, there seems to be a mix of differing national histories in what the locals (including "the veges") wear to the ball. The mayor resembles Abraham Lincoln in his choice of attire (U.S. president in the nineteenth-century), while one local wears the pointed hat stereotypically associated with some Asian cultures, and a sign around his neck that says simply "Chinaman." When "the veges" arrive at the ball – one of their few outings – the black comedy continues, these survivors of car accidents are adorned in white hospital gowns and home-made head gear made out of cereal boxes, so that they look like an army of cardboard-clad Ned Kellys. This mixture of Americanism (the Lincoln-esque Mayor and youths clad like cowboys) and (postmodern) consumer culture (the cereal boxes) [23] as well as the invocation of Ned Kelly's iconic image,

shows Australian cinema's reliance on Hollywood genres, but also highlights its difference, its ex-centricity.

There can also be found in this scene, some social commentary on the relationship between Australia and North America. The film's futuristic context and the history of Paris is made up of numerous references to consumer culture, which, when combined with the Gothic motifs that are also heavily present in the film, reflect a postmodern Gothic sensibility. These allusions to North American consumer culture reveal anxiety or concern that Australia already is, or will become, so reliant on American culture that in the future its historical figures will consist largely of advertising brands and imagery from television commercials. The presentation of a fictional cigarette ad in the opening scene of the film also lends credence to this suggestion, as Weir has this perfect couple, which symbolize the advertising world and Americanness, crash and die.

Another shared characteristic of Gothic/postmodern modes of representation that permeates *Cars* is a queer subtext, identified by the film's use of the car as a phallic and masculine symbol, and representation of Arthur as fearful of this symbol. When Arthur first arrives in Paris, he is depicted as timid, and as afraid of driving a car or even sitting in a car. However, in the climax of the film, he overcomes this fear in a spectacularly horrific and grotesque way: continually ramming his car into the side of one of the young men's car, he kills him and leaves the body a bloodied mess, before driving away from Paris at the same time of day as he arrived – at night. Why these narrative elements highlight the film's queer subtext is made more apparent in the following analysis.

Rebecca Johinke[24] in her essay "Manifestations of Masculinities: *Mad Max* and the Lure of the Forbidden Zone", discusses how the car can be seen as a phallic signifier, and writes in relation to the *Mad Max* film: "The gender and technology discourse is an important theme in the films, and in a world devastated by the effects of a global oil war, cars are particularly potent symbols of power and masculinity." Johinke[25] also suggests in her queer analysis of the *Mad Max* films that in the "1980s muscular action genre" male bodies can be seen to "offer themselves up to the gaze…", reversing the gender binary which permits the female body to be consumed voyeuristically by the (male) viewer. Johinke[26] argues that, in order to counter this gender role reversal, the male bodies in action films such as *Mad Max* are subjected to acts of violent mutilation in order to destroy any subversion of sex/gender roles and any homoeroticism that may be perceived between male action figures in such films. As Johinke[27] writes, "violent mutilation and sadism involving a male actor's body may result from a repression of erotic desire. Mutilation may be a violent wish to destroy the object of forbidden desire and thereby eliminate temptation." In male action films, Johinke [28] adds, "orgiastic acts of violence replaces [*sic*] that of the sexual act".

Although not an action film in the strictest sense, *Cars* likewise represents the "violent mutilation" of male bodies in the form of car accidents/crashes. Arthur's brother is killed instantly in a crash, a man is shown led unwillingly to an operating table after his crash, and Arthur continuously rams his car into a young man's car. Since in the context of male action films, violence (or crashes) signifies forbidden and taboo sexual encounters between men, the film can be read in queer terms.

Such a reading of the film reveals Arthur as repressing his sexual desire for other men, his fear of cars representing his fear of homoerotic desire. His eventual conquering of this fear is released in a frenzied attack, via the car, upon another male. Since the car can be seen to signify phallic/masculine power in the context of *Cars* (and in *Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2,* both of which will be explored later in the chapter), Arthur can be seen near the start of the film as lacking this power. He is depicted, in other words, as less than "manly" – his inability to perform the act of driving (or to perform sexually) an obstacle to his leaving Paris. The car can be seen in the film to symbolize or represent "the masculine", and although cars, ships, and other inanimate objects are commonly given feminine names, in *Cars* they are masculinized. The young men in the film who adorn their cars can be seen to consider them as extensions of themselves – as extensions of phallic power – the name Les painted on the side of one car indicates that it is named after its owner.[29]

When Arthur decides to "quit" the town shortly after being released from hospital, he experiences a state of homosexual panic.[30] He cannot bring himself to drive the car – he starts it, revs it up, and then experiences panic, banging on the driver's side window before realizing that he can get out the other side. When he does so, he removes his luggage from the boot and stays in Paris. In this scene, the car becomes the object of Arthur's desire – he so desperately wants to leave Paris, the car symbolizing not just a desire to drive away from an unfamiliar environment, but also symbolic of a sexual temptation that Arthur sees as forbidden and as morally contemptible. The challenge for Arthur in the film is to overcome his sexual fears concerning homosexuality and to release his homoerotic desire in order

to flee Paris. In another scene the queer symbolism of cars in the film also becomes apparent. Male youths with their painted/decorated cars terrorize the street outside the local church while other Parisians sing hymns. Cars are shown flying over one another – cars mount other cars, in what can be seen as some kind of auto-orgy.[31]

The most telling scene in *Cars* that can be read in queer terms is the scene where the cars attack Paris in a bloody confrontation. Growls and animals noises provided by the soundtrack suggest that the cars are alive and will now wreak vengeance on the Mayor and their fellow Parisians for setting one of the cars alight, in effect murdering a part machine/part human being – a cyborg. In the ensuing chaos, when the cars attack locals, Arthur is assisted by the Mayor in the murder of one of the youths who is part of the car gang, and who seems to invite Arthur to ram him by ramming his car into an empty car, which Arthur takes over as driver.

The Mayor guides Arthur as he reverses into the youth's car. Screams are heard from the young driver as the Mayor shouts at Arthur: "Now! Now! Now!" Arthur reverses into the young man until the man is nothing but mangled flesh and, realizing he has overcome his fear of cars, says happily: "I can drive." Arthur's car can be seen as an extension of his repressed homoerotic desire, which responds to the sexual advances symbolized by the young man's attack on the empty car. Arthur, invited to have sex with the youth, responds by continually ramming his car (a phallic symbol, in the context of the film) into his desired sexual object. Having overcome his fear of his sexual desire for men, he is now able to leave Paris, which is now in a state of ruin, destroyed by the cars – symbols of the phallic, the homoerotic and homosexual desire. This representative queerness in *Cars,* it can be

argued, is a manifestation of the Euro-centric gothicization/(proto)-postmodernization of the Antipodes in which the queering of sex/gendered identities plays a central and significant role.

In *Mad Max* and in *Mad Max – The Road Warrior*,[32] as in *Cars*, which can be seen as a precursor to many of the thematic preoccupations in the first two *Mad Max* films, there are marked (postmodern) Gothic characteristics. In both *Mad Max* films there is the self-conscious use of myth(s) in constructing Max as a hero/anti-hero, and also the confluence of a variety of Hollywood genres (as can be found in *Cars*) including the action, the sci-fi, and the western, combined with dark representations of humanity and references to traditional Gothic figures such as "The Wandering Jew." As Rayner[33] writes in relation to the *Mad Max* films and their postmodernist approach to storytelling and representation:

> Elements of the Western (the lone avenging hero, the beleaguered
> community, the desert landscape with its outlaws), science fiction
> (the collapse of civilization in the first film, the vestiges of post-
> apocalyptic society in the second and third), the biker movie and
> the police thriller are incorporated with a dynamic combination
> of self-consciousness and self-parody.

In both *Mad Max* films there can be seen a merging of Gothic/postmodern forms of representation. Each film however, although focusing on Max as a lone anti-hero, has a differing storyline and differing accentuations of the (postmodern) Gothic.

In the first *Mad Max* film, Max is a police officer and helps to apprehend villains in a society on the brink of disintegration. The film opens with a view of the "Halls of Justice" where law enforcers such as Max congregate, with superimposed text disclosing that the film is set in a "few years from now", before the camera cuts to a road sign labelled "Anarchie Road", an obvious reference to

the imminent break-down of law and order in a futuristic Australia. The following action scenes in the film show Max in a car chase pursuing "the Nightrider", a member of Toecutter's villainous biker gang. Max strategically faces his car toward the Nightrider's for a game of "chicken." Nightrider, meanwhile, completely loses his nerve as Max gives chase, sirens blaring. Nightrider begins to cry as Max gains ground on him. Max then rams Nightrider's car from the rear, causing Nightrider to collide with a truck. The resulting explosion completely obliterates Nightrider and his female companion, whereas Max emerges out of the chase unscathed and victorious.

Max's best cop friend Goose is killed mercilessly by Toecutter and another member of the biker gang, Johnny, by setting his car alight while he is trapped inside it, Goose having crashed while in pursuit of the villains. Goose's body is burned beyond all recognition – Max refers to Goose as "that thing" when, after hearing of the accident, he rushes to the hospital to see his now unrecognizable friend. After this horrific incident, Max decides to take a break from his vocation as a law-enforcer and attempts to escape from the daily violence and horror he witnesses by going on holiday with his wife/partner Jessie and their son Sprog. Jessie and Sprog are run down on the road by the biker gang while they are on holiday, and die from their injuries, upon which Max, now with absolutely nothing to lose, mercilessly hunts down the biker gang, killing every single one of them in vigilante fashion.

Max evidently experiences an identity crisis precipitated by his contact with the disfigured Goose and by the death of his own family. Such a crisis is indicative of a

Gothic sublime experience that traumatizes and fragments an individual's sense of a stable self. In becoming just as "bad" as the biker gang Max's identity as a "good" law-enforcement officer is seriously challenged. His "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" attitude reflected in his hunting down of the members of Toecutter's gang, during which Max shows as little emotion as the biker gang did when they killed his family and Goose.

In *Mad Max 2*,[34] Max, having lost his family, and having gone over to the "dark side" (although his position in both films as good/bad is rather ambiguous), wanders through "the wasteland", scavenging for food and fuel and anything else of value he is able to lay his hands on. The second *Mad Max* film, like the first, employs a variety of stylistic elements from various Hollywood genres, including that of sci-fi films and their representation of futuristic worlds. This is indicated in the opening scenes when a voice over (later to be known as the grown-up Feral Kid who becomes the leader of Pappagallo's tribe) informs the viewer that "the gangs" have now taken over the roads and that he remembers it as a "time of chaos", with "fuel wars" between two tribes creating a "firestorm of fear". In this barbaric world, the viewer is told, the Road Warrior (Max) became a "shell of a man" but learned to "live again" in the wasteland. In the film, references to the western and borrowings from the films *King of the Wild Frontier* and *Hondo* can be seen in the inclusion of "desperados" (Humungus' tribe) laying "siege to a colony"[35] (Pappagallo's tribe/village).

Adrian Martin[36] writes in relation to the various borrowings in the film: "Everything, mainstream and subcultural alike, is stirred into its consuming

minestrone, with an outrageously stylish sense of excess: punk haircuts, gay bondage wear, World Wrestling Federation make-up, Nazi-kitsch hood ornaments, Heavy Metal shoulder pads, spare auto parts as armour." These intertextual references to pop culture combined with an exploration of the dark side of humanity, which is considered a hallmark of the Gothic, strongly positions the film within the frame of the (postmodern) Gothic. Another element of *Mad Max 2* that indicates a postmodern Gothic sensibility is the film's appropriation of the myth of the "Wandering Jew", a myth that has been heavily used in Gothic literature.

In *Mad Max 2* there is a more obvious use of mythology than in the first *Mad Max* film, and this is acknowledged by Ross Gibson[37] in *South of the West* when he comments that *Mad Max 2* is "far less tied to the everyday", the second film in the trilogy depicting Max as a wanderer in a "purgatorial wasteland." George Miller also notes that there was more of a conscious effort in the second *Mad Max* to tap into mythology, commenting in an interview: "we wanted to make it more consciously mythological – more focused."[38] The mythology drawn upon for the film seems to invoke predominantly the myth of the Wandering Jew (Ahasuerus), and is evident in the representation of Max as in self-exile, whose merciless murders of the biker gang make him more like one of *them* (a criminal) rather than a law-abiding and "good" citizen. As Hans-Ulrich Mohr[39] writes in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*:

> The Legend of the Wandering Jew has as its nucleus a narrative motif which exists throughout the Western world and the Orient in almost all ethnic communities. It deals with a person who has committed a serious transgression against the basic and sacred values (of a simpler, rudimentary type) of human society, i.e. an outrageous murder and/or an act of blasphemy. His punishment is

restless exile for an almost infinite time. He has to wander on earth at least for several human life spans or centuries until his crime is atoned for or someone has taken the burden on him/herself.

George Miller has commented that there was a more self-conscious effort to make Max a mythological figure in the second film. Accordingly, he read Joseph Campbell's *A Hero with a Thousand Faces* for some ideas. The legend of the Wandering Jew seems to be the myth that Max has been born out of, and is arguably the reason why the films are often thought to have such a wide (or universal) appeal.[40]

The "wanderer" who is cast out for his sins/transgressions figures prominently in Gothic literature, most notably in Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1795) (in the Raymond and Agnes sub-story) and in Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820).[41] *Mad Max 2* seems to resonate with this particular aspect of the Gothic, the appropriation of this figure along with its references to pop culture reflecting a (developing) postmodern Gothic sensibility in Antipodean cinema. In Max's case, he has not only committed murder, crossing boundaries between good/evil and the law/lawless-ness, but he has also crossed sexual boundaries between straight/gay, hetero/homo, which will be discussed at length later. A brief synopsis of the film is perhaps needed here in order to make clear the queer analysis that follows.

In *Mad Max 2*, Max, while living in "the wasteland", meets the Gyro Captain, a kind of pilot with his own flying machine. Max holds him prisoner until Gyro shows him where he can get fuel. Gyro leads Max to the camp or wasteland city occupied by a tribe, led by Humungus, a gladiatorial warrior clad in sado-masochistic fetishistic garments. Max and Gyro observe the tribe's barbaric

practices voyeuristically through a telescope. Max watches some members of the tribe attack a man and a woman in their car, a male member of the tribe raping the woman before shooting her in the head with a crossbow. Max appears to want to come to the man and woman's aid but is in fact only after their fuel. It is at this moment that the male of the couple, who is just barely alive, makes a deal with Max that sets the premise for the rest of the film. The injured man promises Max that, if he takes him back to his tribe, Max can help himself to as much gasoline as he wants.

While Max is at the village, Lord Humungus, the "Warrior of the Wasteland", arrives outside the gates with villagers they have captured and tied to the front of their vehicles. Humungus wants the villagers' fuel, and tells them that if they leave their village no one will be harmed. Conversely, if they do not leave, there will be much bloodshed, Humungus giving them one day to decide their fate. Because Pappagallo (leader of the "good" tribe, signified by their white attire and flowing robes, as opposed to the Humungus' tribe's S&M and "punk" attire) will not honour the now dead villager's bargain made with Max, the latter offers to obtain a truck for the purposes of transporting the villagers' fuel in return for gasoline. Max is successful in his mission, despite a run-in with Humungus' tribe, and although he intends to leave the village with his hard-earned gasoline, he decides to drive the truck for them through the wasteland as a diversion, allowing most of the villagers to escape.

In the end the truck is shown to have had nothing but sand in it all along, and Humungus, his Mohawk-hair-styled deputy Wes, and other tribe members have

been killed.[42] In the closing scenes of the film, the viewer is alerted to the fact that the narrator is an older "feral kid" who is now the leader of the "Great Northern Tribe", the tribe having travelled North after their run-in with Humungus. The narrator informs the viewer that Max disappeared back into the Wasteland.

Mad Max and *Mad Max 2,* not unlike *Cars*, can both be read in queer terms through the substitution of violent acts for sexual acts, and by reading the car as an extension and expression of masculinity and phallic power. Film critics and academics alike have observed the use of references to gay subculture in the first two *Mad Max* films and the demonization of male homosexuality in both, through allusions to "gayness" which is associated with "badness." As Johinke[43] writes:

> It has been well documented that images of gay and lesbian characters in film and television are chiefly absent or aberrant. When not being ignored or sexually sanitized, homosexual characters are inevitably depicted as deviants….This appears to be how Miller has exhibited the bikies – as larger than life psychotics in S&M gear.

As Adrian Martin[44] also observes in *The Mad Max Movies*:

> These bad guys are a flagrantly perverse, homoerotic bunch: Toecutter…wraps himself in a white sheet, changes his colourful hairdo almost as often as his accent, pronounces each word of his dialogue with fruity overemphasis and has a classic camp moment when grizzly old May (Sheila Florence) points a rifle at him unexpectedly: 'I hate that!'

Although the bad guys in both *Mad Max* and *Mad Max – The Road Warrior* are depicted as more obviously camp or can be seen more clearly as representing sexual perversity (such as the S&M gear worn by Humungus' tribe) and as having homosexual relationships (as, for instance, when Wes becomes hysterical after the death/murder of his boyfriend),[45] the good guys can also be seen to dabble in some

gender-bending, and their relationships with each other can similarly be seen as homoerotic. As suggested in relation to *Cars*, the violent acts performed by male bodies in the aforementioned films can be seen as substitutive for sexual acts and as having cathartic benefit for repressed homosexual desire. Furthermore, it can be noted that the queerness associated with these futuristic worlds where the car is all important, is linked to the disintegration of civilization and also of (hetero)sexual norms.

As discussed in chapter two of this dissertation, the Antipodes can be seen as constructed as a queer space via a Euro-centric view that supported the notion that the Antipodes was more primitive than European culture(s), and that boundaries usually maintained by civilized society(s) – boundaries, for instance, between male/female and masculine/feminine – would be broken or crossed, resulting in sexual anarchy and all manner of "unspeakable" perversions. This notion can clearly be seen in the first two *Mad Max* films and still more evident in George Miller's comments in an interview, when pressed about the depiction of the villains as gay:

> We repeatedly asked ourselves what price sexuality would pay in this medieval world. It certainly wouldn't function as it does in our contemporary society. People wouldn't have time for recreational sex. There's not time for a woman to have a baby, to nurse infants, etc. It's very unlikely that a pregnant woman with a child could survive. This could be one of the things that result in homosexual relationships in both stories. One of the other things, however, was that we changed a lot of the sexes of characters without changing their roles…So the women and men and their sexual roles are not as defined in this primitive world as they are in our society. Men and women are simply interchangeable.[46]

Although the reasons given by Miller regarding his blurring of sex/gender roles in the films are inadequate, if not homophobic in relation to his comment about the "price" (hetero)sexuality "would pay", his comments in relation to sex roles being not as defined in the films' "primitive" worlds as compared to "civilized" society clearly mobilizes Darwinian discourse and echoes Freudian sexual theories in which the more "evolved" a being is, the more clearly defined her/his gendered sexual role in society is, namely, identification either as a hetero female or a hetero male.[47] This disintegration of distinct sexual roles in the futuristic world in the first two *Mad Max* films, however, can be seen to affect everyone in the society, as Miller's comments suggest, and the "baddies" are not the only ones who blur or bend gender norms.

It can be argued that in *Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2* the "good" guys clearly engage in homoerotic bonding, this assertion challenging some critics' assessment of the films, which read Max as the straight hero/anti-hero who rids the world of evil poofters. Johinke[48] opens her analysis of the *Mad Max* films in queer terms with the following: "Max Rockatansky is both straight and the best driver on the roads, and the villains in *Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2* are gay motorcyclists." Gelder[49] also comments on the straight is to good as gay is to bad homology supposedly present in the film, suggesting that Max asserts his "heterosexual manhood over a group of bikers who are also collectively coded as gay." However, this relationship between the binary oppositions straight/gay and good/bad, is not quite so clearcut. Although Johinke suggests that in the *Mad Max* films there is a demonization of male homosexuality represented by the bikers, later in her essay

Johinke suggests that the violence and car crashes in the films can be read as symbolic of repressed homosexual desire and also observes that the police chief in the "Halls of Justice", Fifi, is decidedly "campy."[50] Adrian Martin[51] suggests that the depiction of Fifi in *Mad Max* combines masculine toughness with feminine touches – a blurring of gender norms; he describes Fifi as "surely the strangest patriarch in cinema history: tall, muscular, bald, bare-chested, wearing a white scarf and playing jolly military music as he waters his flowers." Although Fifi can perhaps be seen as "bad" (that is, a bad influence on Max) for trying to keep Max a police officer, prying Max away from his domestic home life (his wife and child), and tempting Max to stay in the "justice" club, he is definitely not depicted as evil in the same vein as the bikies but, rather, can be considered (not unlike Toecutter and friends) to represent queerness.

Max himself can also be read as embodying a disintegration of the line between male/female and masculine/feminine, symbolized through the action he takes on the road in the first film and, in the second, his seeming lack of sexual interest in the "opposite" sex in favour of male companionship. Not unlike Arthur in *Cars*, Max's homosexual desire is depicted through his "ramming" of vehicles, expressing his unbridled violence toward the biker gang (and later Humungus' tribe). It seems to be assumed by Martin, Gelder and Johinke that because, Max is married with a child, he is "straight", and as such can be seen as dichotomously opposed to the biker gang and Humungus' tribe, who are represented as exclusively "gay".

More intriguing still is Martin's assertion that Max's lack of romantic interest in women in *Mad Max 2* is due to his having no time for sex because he is at war, and that, moreover, Max can be considered "libido-less."[52] Such assessments of the film would construct Max as lacking any sex drive at all rather than suggesting that he is gay. However, it can be argued that Max is indeed a gender-bender; that, as George Miller himself was shown to comment earlier in this chapter in relation to the blurring of gender-norms, there is in the *Mad Max* films a break-down in law and order and an eruption of anarchistic behaviour that correlates to a subversion of distinct sexual roles in the world Max lives in, and to which even Max is not immune.

There are numerous instances in both *Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2* when Max can be seen to exhibit homoerotic behaviour and can be seen, like Arthur in *Cars,* at first to resist his homosexual urges. When Fifi tries to convince Max to stay on the force, to be the hero so sorely needed in their nightmarish and ever-increasingly chaotic world,[53] the tense relationship between the two can be seen to imply in Max a battle against homosexual/bi-sexual inclinations, Fifi telling Max in no uncertain terms: "You'll be back Rockatansky! You're hooked and you know it!" This suggests that Max is perhaps "hooked" on both the car crashes (representing sexual acts between men) that occur on the roads and to the "high-octane homosocial environment"[54] at the Halls of Justice.

Another scene in *Mad Max* also reveals Max's concern about his job as "Interceptor" and the company he keeps. He tells his partner Jessie: "I'm beginning to enjoy it. Any longer out there and I'm one of them – you know? A terminal

crazy. I need a bronze badge to say I'm one of the good guys." By the end of *Mad Max* Max's role as a good guy is blurred when he murders members of the biker gang, and by the second film Max is depicted as a scavenger, out only for himself, not unlike Humungus' tribe. Like the latter Max dresses in black, in contrast to Pappagallo's white-attired tribe. Max's visual association with Humungus' tribe, through his black attire, is not only connotative of his ambiguous status as "good" or "evil", but also suggests a degree of ambiguity where his sexual orientation is concerned – Humungus' tribe, as we have seen, is aligned with queerness or gay subculture.

In both *Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2,* then, Max's sexual orientation is unclear and seems to be connected to the disintegration of sexual categories/norms sparked by a disintegration of law and order. As with *Cars*, car crashes can be seen to symbolize sexual acts, with cars as extensions of "the masculine" or "the phallic." Keeping this in mind, Max's "interception" of Nightrider in *Mad Max* and his performance of "vehicular sodomy"[55] – Max's car ramming the rear of Nightrider's vehicle, making Nightrider hysterical – suggests that Max cannot be unproblematically labelled as "straight" or "hetero", and that his membership of the homosocial and homoerotic "Halls of Justice" provokes in him a simultaneous fear of male homosexuality and a desire to be part of an environment that encourages close male relationships and bonding. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick[56] writes in relation to this paradox or "double bind":

> Because the paths of male entitlement, especially in the nineteenth century, required certain intense male bonds that were not readily distinguishable from the most reprobated bonds, an endemic and ineradicable state of what I am calling male

homosexual panic became the normal condition of male heterosexual entitlement.

This paradox, whereby men enter into so-called heterosexual manhood through that which they are constructed as opposed to (homosexuality), can be identified in *Mad Max*. These representations do not pit "straight" (good) men against "gay" (bad) men, but involve a complex exploration of "intense male homosocial desire as at once the most compulsory and the most prohibited of social bonds…"[57] and draws upon the literary conventions of "the paranoid Gothic", the paradoxical nature of homosexual/homosocial desire represented in the Gothic novels *Frankenstein* (1818), *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) and *Dracula* (1897).[58]

In these terms Max cannot really be seen as straight or even gay, but is an example of polymorphous sexuality through his subversion of gendered/sexual categories. Max is in a "hetero" relationship but experiences homosexual desire, which, in the context of the car-crash film, is connoted by cars – extensions/symbols of masculinity and "the phallic" – and car crashes. Max's sexual fluidity can also be seen as a Gothic state of existence, Max's sexual identity perhaps, like the Gothic itself, as suggested by Rosemary Jackson[59] in *Fantasy,* a "spectral" or undefined area between "the real" (the normative) and "the unreal" (the abnormal), Max blurring distinctions between what it means to be straight and what it means to be gay.

In this chapter, the Australian car crash film genre, as represented in the films *The Cars that Ate Paris*, *Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2*, has been discussed in relation to its utilization of Gothic/postmodern forms of representation. In the films there are evident borrowings from Hollywood film genres combined with the

manifestation of European myths concerning the Antipodes, all three films linking a breakdown of law and order in a futuristic Australia with a breakdown of sexual norms, echoing European myths and literature that construct the Antipodes as a place of perversity and queerness. In the films the representation of a futuristic Australia, combined with an emphasis on the car and car culture, is inextricably linked to constructions of maleness and masculinity, represented in the films in homosocial and homoerotic terms. The sexual identities of Arthur and Max can be defined within what Sedgwick[60] has termed the "double bind" or the "modern homosocial continuum", where distinct sexual categories of homo/hetero become less than clear, allowing for, it can be argued, a subversion of gender/sexual norms. Thus, considering that the car and car culture, is tied to constructions of Australian national identity, these queer representations of masculinity and car culture further indicate that the notion of the Antipodes as a queer space is, like the car itself, embedded in the Australian ethos. The queering of gender/sex roles or identities is a central component of Gothic/postmodern forms of representation, and the heavy utilization of these representational modes in the films discussed in this chapter further shows that their convergence is a defining feature of "Antipodean Gothic cinema."

Notes

1. See Sean William's short story "Going Nowhere" in Ken Gelder (ed) *The Oxford Book of Australian Ghost Stories,* Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994, p. 267.

2. See J.G. Ballard's introduction to *Crash,* Vintage, London, 1995.

3. See Mikita Brottman (ed), *Car Crash Culture,* Palgrave, New York, 2002, p. xi.

4. See David Seed, "Gothic Science Fiction" in Marie Mulvey-Roberts (ed), *The Handbook to Gothic Literature,* Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, p. 272. Seed briefly outlines the relationship between the two genres or modes.

5. ibid. According to Seed, H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896) "started out as a Gothic Fantasy." See also Fred Botting, *Gothic,* Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 162-4, for his suggestion that *Frankenstein* influenced Wells' in his writing of the above title. Wells' novel was adapted for several film versions, including: Erle C. Kenton's *The Island of Lost Souls* (1933), Don Taylor's *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1977), and John Frankenheimer's *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1996). *Blade Runner* (directed by Ridley Scott, 1982), can also be seen to represent its futuristic world through the use of a Gothic "sensibility". Botting writes: "In Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, the undertones of nineteenth-century Gothic are never far from the surface of the futuristic dark detective film."

6. Seed, ibid.

7. See Nicholas Zurbrugg, "'Oh what a feeling! – The literatures of the car" in Brottman, op. cit., p. 9.

8. ibid.

9. See Ken Gelder, "*Mad Max* and Aboriginal Automation: Putting cars to use in contemporary Australian road films and narratives", in David Thomas, Len Holden, Tim Claydon (eds), *The Motor Car and Popular Culture in the 20th Century,* Ashgate Publishing Limited, Aldershot, 1998, p. 59. Gelder suggests that the *Mad Max* trilogy can be seen as an allegory for 'white' colonization.

10. George Miller is interviewed in "The *Mad Max* movies (1979-1985)" in Lee Goldberg (ed) et al, *Science Fiction Filmmaking in the 1980s: Interviews with Actors, Directors, Producers and Writers,* McFarland & Company Inc Publishers, North Carolina, 1995, p.143.

11. See Sue Matthews, *35mm Dreams: Conversations with Five Directors about the Australian Film Revival,* Penguin Books Ltd, Melbourne, 1984, p. 236.

12. See Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka, *The Screening of Australia: Anatomy of a National Cinema, Vol. 2,* Currency Press, Sydney, 1988, p. 95.

13. ibid., p. 94.

14. See Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*: *How Explorers saw Australia*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1996, pp. 107-112. Ryan discusses the European construction of the Antipodes as "perverse" and "topsy-turvy", these constructions can be seen as complying with Darwinian theories concerning de-evolution. See also Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion,* Methuen & Co Ltd, London, 1981, p. 71. Jackson summarizes Freud's cultural stages of evolution, and theorizes the first and most primitive stage as the "undifferentiation" between self and other. See also Freud's "Three Essays on the

Theory of Sexuality and Other Works" in Angela Richards and Albert Dickson (eds), *Sigmund Freud Vol. 7 – On Sexuality,* Penguin Books Ltd, London, 1991, p. 52. Freud suggests that bi-sexuality is a "primitive" state, humans evolving from a "bisexual physical disposition" into one where there are two "distinct" sexes. For an overview of Darwinian and Freudian evolutionary theories in relation to bisexuality and its "primitiveness" also see Steven Angelides, *A History of Bisexuality,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001, pp 31-2 and pp 40-3.

15. See William J. Schafer, *Mapping the Godzone: A Primer on New Zealand Literature and Culture,* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1998, pp. 140-2.

16. See Dermody and Jacka, op.cit., pp. 17-23, for their theorization of what they term the "social imaginary" (this is more thoroughly discussed in chapter three of this dissertation). As was discussed previously in chapter two, antipodean myths can be seen to have constructed Australia as a queer and Gothic space.

17. Peter Weir (director), *The Cars that Ate Paris,* 1974. All subsequent references are from this source unless otherwise indicated. See the Filmography for details.

18. The hospital warden in the film explains to Arthur, who works at the Paris hospital briefly when he first arrives, that they have "quarter", "half", and "full veges" under their care.

19. As discussed in "Antipodean Rural Gothic", in *Wake in Fright, Summerfield,* and *Shame*, an outsider is portrayed as suffering from some kind of identity crisis through prolonged contact with a rural community. *Cars* can be seen to portray Arthur in a similar vein.

20. For parallels between the Gothic and postmodernism as cultural modes, including their incessant eclecticism or intertextuality see: Allan Lloyd Smith, "Postmodernism/Gothicism", in Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith (eds), *Modern Gothic: A Reader,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996, p. 11.

21. See Jonathan Rayner, *Contemporary Australian Cinema: An Introduction,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000, p. 30.

22. ibid., p. 31.

23. See Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitialism"*, New Left Review,* No. 146, July-August, pp. 53-92. Jameson calls the advent of mass consumerism in the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s late capitalism and links it to the appearance of postmodernist artforms.

24. See Rebecca Johinke, "Manifestations of Masculinities: *Mad Max* and the Lure of the Forbidden Zone" in Elizabeth Ruinard and Elspeth Tilley (eds), *New Talents 2001 – Fresh Cuts,* University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2001, p. 118.

25. ibid, p. 122.

26. ibid, p. 123.

27. ibid.

28. ibid.

29. In the scene where the Mayor orders one of the cars to be set alight in order to dissuade others from disobeying the laws of Paris, the name Les (the name of the owner) can be seen protruding from the top of the car, painted on as an added decoration.

30. See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet,* Penguin Books Ltd,

London, 1994, pp. 185-6. Sedgwick explains and defines the term "homosexual panic", as where the fear that one might be gay or fear of one's own homosexual desire incites paranoid or violent reactions. In Arthur's case, his panic in the car can be seen as a kind of paranoia.

31. See Johinke, op.cit., p. 119, for her use of the term "vehicular sodomy" when discussing the *Mad Max* films.

32. George Miller (director), *Mad Max,* 1979. All subsequent references are from this source unless otherwise indicated. See the Filmography for further details.

33. Rayner, op.cit., pp. 37-8.

34. George Miller (director), *Mad Max – The Road Warrior,* 1982. All subsequent references are from this source unless otherwise indicated. See the Filmography for details.

35. See Adrian Martin, *The Mad Max Movies: Mad Max, Mad Max 2/The Road Warrior, Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome,* Currency Press and ScreenSound Australia, Sydney, 2003, p. 39.

36. ibid., p. 49.

37. See Ross Gibson, *South of the West: Postcolonialism and the Narrative Construction of Australia,* Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1992, p. 160.

38. Matthews, op. cit., p. 243.

39. See Han-Ulrich Mohr, "Wandering Jew (Ahasuerus)" in Mulvey-Roberts, op.cit., p. 249.

40. See Martin, op. cit., pp. 39-40, for his discussion in relation to Miller's extensive reading of 'universal' mythology.

41. Mohr, op. cit., p. 250.

42. In the scene where Max fights the "bad" tribe he has some help from the Warrior Woman as well as the Feral Kid who also blur boundaries between gender/sex roles and distinctions between white/black. The Warrior Woman fights alongside the men, and is shown as a more able fighter than most of them, while the Feral Kid blurs distinctions between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australia through his use of a metal boomerang and ambiguous racial identity. See Martin, op.cit., pp. 51-2 for his discussion about the Feral Kid.

43. Johinke, op. cit., p. 21.

44. Martin, op. cit., p. 17.

45. In the film Wes' lover is killed by the Feral Kid's boomerang in a confrontation between Humungus' tribe and 'the villagers' when Humungus gives the "good" tribe an ultimatum.

46. Part of an interview with George Miller as quoted by Martin, op. cit., p. 18. The interview can be found in Noel King, "Things that move fast through a landscape: an interview with George Miller", *Metro,* No. 123, 2000, p. 28.

47. Freud, op. cit., pp. 52-5.

48. Johinke, op. cit., p. 118.

49. Gelder, op. cit., p. 56.

50. Johinke, op cit, p. 120, describes Fifi as a "camp commander".

51. Martin, op. cit., p. 18.

52. Martin, op. cit., p. 50.

53. In the scene where Max lets Fifi know that he wants out of the force, Fifi tries to convince Max to stay by telling him that he could give people back their heroes by becoming one. Max thinks that Fifi's rhetoric is "crap."

54. Johinke, op. cit., p. 120.

55. Johinke, op. cit., p. 19, uses the phrase "vehicular sodomy" in her essay.

56. Sedgwick, op. cit., p. 185.

57. ibid., p. 187.

58. For a discussion concerning the "paranoid Gothic" – where a male(s) "considers himself transparent to and often under the compulsion of another male", see: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, pp. 91-2. Sedgwick argues that paranoid Gothic plots common in Victorian Gothic novels, can be seen as indicative of nineteenth-century Victorian anxieties about homosexuality. In terms of the films discussed in this chapter, there is a similar preoccupation with articulating the rituals of male bonding and highlighting what can be considered an imaginary line between "bonding" or "the homosocial", and homosexual desire.

59. See Jackson, op. cit., p. 19. Jackson suggests that the mode of "the fantastic" which the Gothic (as a sub-genre) can be seen as connected to, is neither entirely real or unreal "but is located somewhere indeterminately between the two."

60. Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, op. cit., p. 188.

[…] what great gloom
stands in a land of settlers
With never a soul at home

ALLEN CURNOW [1]

In Australia alone is to be found the Grotesque, the Weird, the strange scribblings of Nature learning how to write…the dweller in the wilderness acknowledges the subtle charm of this fantastic land of monstrosities…

MARCUS CLARKE [2]

In 1856 Frederick Sinnett believed that the Gothic had no place in Australian culture, due to the nation's "newness" as a Western nation. In the late 1980s into the 1990s Gerry Turcotte was met with this same sense of disbelief when he would tell people about his research on the Gothic in Australian literature.[3] It seems odd that this cultural mode which, as has been argued in this study, seems prevalent in Euro-centric constructions of Australian and New Zealand national identities and their cultural output, should be deemed "inappropriate" for British colonized nations, which inherited much British and European culture (including the narrative themes of the newly emerging and popular Gothic mode.) So what is the cultural blindspot when it comes to suggesting that the Gothic has a place in antipodean culture(s)?[4]

It can be surmised that the strong presence of the Gothic in Australian/New Zealand literature and cinema was overlooked; its characteristic gloominess and opposition to Enlightenment ideals entrenched in the cultures so much so, that it

became difficult to see. Because of this "entrenchment", the Gothic became a cultural norm in the context of the construction of Australian and New Zealand national identities. This accounts for both nations' cinemas using the Gothic to assert their cultural difference in the international arena and for the use of the Gothic as a surrogate history – a means to know and construct a past in order to create national identities in the wake of the Australia/New Zealand film renaissance in the 1970s. Part one of this study explored this use of the Gothic and its presence in constructions of Australian/New Zealand cultural identities through a combination of historical and Freudian psychoanalytical analysis. Part one also argued that the gothicization/(proto)-postmodernization of antipodean cultural identities is manifest in both nations' cinemas and plays a significant role in what can be called the antipodean social imaginary.

Part two showed that these films clearly make use of the subversive potential of Gothic/postmodern narrative devices. In "Antipodean Colonial Gothic", *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *The Piano* were analyzed in relation to their Victorian or period settings, and in terms of their use of pastiche, intertextual references to and subversion of the narrative conventions of the (female) Gothic, as well as their depiction of the antipodean landscape(s) as the antithesis of Augustanism. The films were also shown to depict the Antipodes as a queer space – a place of sexual anarchy and disorder, a place that is able to destabilize the colonizer's sense of a stable self. "Antipodean Urban Gothic" read *Dogs in Space* and *Bad Boy Bubby* as films that represent "ex-centrics" by focusing on subcultures and those who do not fit into normative society. Both films were also analyzed in relation to their

queering of gender/sex roles – the highlighting of the cultural constructedness of identity, as well as the fragility of "the law"/institutionalized authority. "Antipodean Suburban Gothic" discussed *The Night the Prowler* and *Heavenly Creatures,* revealing their heavy use of Gothic/postmodernist narrative devices in terms of their creation of other worlds, their subversion of suburban middle-class values, and their simultaneous installation and subversion of psychoanalytic discourse. *Heavenly Creatures* was also discussed in terms of its postmodern self-consciousness about the normalizing affects of psychology and psychiatry, constructing these modern institutions as completely devoid of "Truth." "Antipodean Rural Gothic" observed that *Wake in Fright, Summerfield* and *Shame* all depict bourgeois city outsiders who are profoundly affected by their stint in the outback, their contact with rural barbarians or Goths a catalyst for the outsiders' identity crises in which their sense of law and order, morality and sexual normality are challenged. *Summerfield's* appropriation of imagery and many aspects of the incest narrative from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" and Roger Corman's film *The House of Usher* were also discussed.

The last chapter, "Antipodean Sci-Fi Car Crash Films and the Gothic" argued that in the films *The Cars that Ate Paris, Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2*, the recurring motif of "the car crash" symbolizes sexual acts between men. In the films the modern conception of a core sexual/gendered identity that remains unchanged is debunked by the film's queering of the hetero/homo binary. This queerness is, in the chapter, seen as a reproduction or reflection of the Euro-centric queering of the Antipodes as a space, as well as the queering of its inhabitants and culture. The

films were also discussed in terms of their borrowings from Gothic literature and popular culture. *The Cars that Ate Paris* makes references to consumer culture as well as to a Gothic figure, the "mad scientist". In *Mad Max,* but particularly in *Mad Max 2,* the story of the "Wandering Jew", a recurring motif in many Gothic stories and novels, can be seen as a central part of the films' storyline. In *Mad Max* the appropriation of the literary conventions of the "paranoid Gothic" were also identified, while in *Mad Max 2* the numerous stylistic borrowings from popular culture were discussed in relation to the film's combining of Goth/punk/S&M fashions.

In combining a variety of disciplines or fields apart from film studies, this study has deviated from the fixed definition of "Australian Gothic" or "New Zealand/Aotearoa/Kiwi Gothic" usually employed in the critical assessment of both nations' cinemas. It instead theorizes Australian and New Zealand cinema in line with the (postmodern) Gothic's characterization in literary and contemporary Gothic studies. In so doing, this study has more fully explored and illuminated the strong Gothic impulse in Antipodean cinema.

This study has argued that "Antipodean Gothic cinema" can be characterized by its combining of Gothic/postmodern narrative devices, a convergence that indicates a (developing) postmodern Gothic sensibility. As has also been argued in this study, this (developing) postmodernization of the Gothic in Antipodean cinema can be attributed to the rise of Australian/New Zealand cinema at a time when postmodernist theories and artforms came to the fore in the academy and in popular culture. The gothicization of Australian and New Zealand cultures which was, as

296

this study suggests, already deeply embedded in the antipodean cultural consciousness, came more clearly to the surface when Australian/New Zealand cinema attempted to define a national identity(s) that could be separated from the cultural content of the Hollywood mainstream and other national cinemas. Because the Gothic played a significant role in the early formation of Australian/New Zealand cultural identities, it was, as this study has argued, fully seized upon when the need or desire for a distinct Australian/New Zealand national cinema(s) arose in the 1970s.

Eduardo Cadava writes in *Words of Light* (1997): "[…] there is no word or image that is not haunted by history."[5] A postmodernized version of the Gothic haunts the antipodean screen – a haunting that is a manifestation of the Euro-centric gothicization/(proto)-postmodernization of the antipodean "space" and Australian/New Zealand cultural identities.

Notes

1. This is an excerpt from Allen Curnow's poem "House and Land" (1911), concerning the New Zealand colonial experience. See Ian Wedde and Harvey McQueen, *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse,* Penguin Books, Ltd, Auckland, 1986, pp. 197-8.

2. See Marcus Clarke's preface to Adam Lindsay Gordon's *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* (1876) in Michael Wilding, *Marcus Clarke,* University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1976, p.647.

3. See Frederick Sinnett, "The Fiction Fields of Australia" in Cecil Hadgraft (ed), *Frederick Sinnett: The Fiction Fields of Australia,* University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1966, p. 23. Also see Gerry Turcotte, "Footnotes to an Australian gothic script", *Antipodes: A North American Journal of Australian Literature,* Vol. 7, No.2, p. 127.

4. See Gerry Turcotte's section on "English-Canadian Gothic" and Allan Lloyd Smith's section on "American Gothic" in Marie Mulvey-Roberts (ed) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature,* Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1998, pp. 49-53 and pp. 2-10. The use of the Gothic has been located in both nations' literature and cultures much earlier than in Australia and New Zealand. Many American writers for instance, are generally considered a part of the Gothic literary canon (Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Brockden Brown, Henry James). The Gothic was seen as employed in Canadian literature (and used to characterize it) at least as early as the 1970s, Turcotte quoting Margot Northey in *The Haunted Wilderness* (1976) as identifying a "dark band of Gothicism" in Canadian literature. It was over a decade later that a study was done on the Gothic in Australian literature (Turcotte's 1991 thesis), and even then it was not solely on this topic, but a comparative study between uses of the Gothic in Australian and English-Canadian literature.

5. See Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History,* Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1998, p. xvii.

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Filmography

Bad Boy Bubby (1993 Fandango/Bubby Pty Productions)
Director: Rolf de Heer
Producer: Domenico Procacci, Giorgio Draskovic, Rolf de Heer
Cinematography: Ian Jones
Screenplay: Rolf de Heer
Cast: Nicholas Hope, Carmel Johnson

Blade Runner (1982, Warner Brothers)
Director: Ridley Scott
Producer: Michael Deeley
Cinematography: Jordon Cronenweth
Screenplay: Hampton Faucher, David Peoples (based Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*)
Cast: Harrison Ford, Sean Young, Daryl Hannah

Bowery at Midnight (1942, Banner Productions Inc/Monogram Pictures Corporation)
Director: Wallace Fox
Producer: Jack Dietz, Sam Katzman
Cinematography: Mack Stengler
Screenplay: Gerald Schnitzer
Cast: Bela Lugosi, Wanda Mckay, John Archer

The Cars that ate Paris (1974 Salt Pan Productions/Royce Smeal Film Productions)
Director: Peter Weir
Producer: Hal McElroy, Jim McElroy
Cinematography: John McLean
Screenplay: Peter Weir, Keith Gow, Piers Davies
Cast: Terry Camilleri, John Meillon

Cinema of Unease: A Personal Journey by Sam Neill (1995, BFI TV/New Zealand Film Commission, On Air, TV3 Network Services, Top Shelf Productions)
Director: Sam Neill, Judy Rymer
Producer(s): Paula Jalfen, Grant Campbell, Vincent Burke, Colin MacCabe, Bob Last.
Cinematography: Alun Bollinger
Screenplay: Sam Neill, Judy Rymer
Presenter: Sam Neill

Dogs in Space (1987,Central Park Films Pty Ltd, Entertainment Media, The Burrowes Film Group, Film Victoria)
Director: Richard Lowenstein
Producer: Glenys Rowe
Cinematography: Andrew de Groot
Screenplay: Richard Lowenstein
Starring: Michael Hutchence, Saskia Post

Edward Scissorhands (1990, Twentieth Century Fox)
Director: Tim Burton
Producer(s): Denise Di Novi, Tim Burton
Cinematography: Stefan Czapsky
Screenplay: Caroline Thompson (based on a story by Tim Burton and Caroline Thompson).
Cast: Johnny Depp, Dianne Wiest, Vincent Price, Winona Ryder

Fight Club
Director: David Fincher
Producer(s): Ceán Chaffin, Art Linson, Ross Bell
Cinematography: Jeff Cronenweth
Screenplay: Jim Uhls (based on the novel by Chuck Palahniuk)
Cast: Edward Norton, Helena Bonham-Carter, Brad Pitt

Heavenly Creatures (1994, Wingnut Films/ Fontara Film Productions GmbH/New Zealand Film Commission)
Director: Peter Jackson
Producer: Jim Booth
Cinematography: Alun Bollinger
Screenplay: Frances Walsh, Peter Jackson
Starring: Melanie Lynskey, Kate Winslet

Mad Max (1979, Warner Bros/Mad Max Pty Ltd)
Director: George Miller
Producer: Byron Kennedy
Cinematography: David Eggby
Screenplay: James McCausland, George Miller
Cast: Mel Gibson, Steve Bisley, Joanne Samuel

Mad Max – The Road Warrior (1981, Warner Bros/Kennedy-Miller)
Director: George Miller
Producer: Byron Kennedy
Cinematography: Dean Semler
Screenplay: Terry Hayes, George Miller, Brian Hannant
Cast: Mel Gison, Vernon Wells, Emil Minty

Mulholland Drive (2001, Universal Focus)
Director: David Lynch
Produce(s): Mary Sweeney, Alain Sarde, Neal Edelsfein, Michael Polaire, Tony Karantz
Cinematography: Peter Deming
Screenplay: David Lynch and Joyce Eliason
Cast: Naomi Watts, Laura Harring, Ann Miller

The Night the Prowler (1978, Chariot Films)
Director: Jim Sharman
Producer: Anthony Buckley
Cinematography: David Sanderson
Screenplay: Patrick White, based on his own short story
Cast: Kerry Walker, Ruth Cracknell, Terry Camilleri

Pet Sematary (1989, Paramount Pictures)
Director: Mary Lambert
Producer: Richard P. Rubinstein
Cinematography: Peter Stein
Screenplay: Stephen King (based upon his novel)
Cast: Fred Gwynne, Dale Midkiff

The Piano (1993, CIBY 2000, Jan Chapman production/ Australian Film Commission and NSW Film and Television Office)
Director: Jane Campion
Producer: Jan Chapman
Cinematography: Stuart Dryburgh
Screenplay: Jane Campion
Cast: Holly Hunter, Harvey Keitel, Sam Neill, Anna Paquin

Picnic at Hanging Rock (1975, South Australian Film Corporation)
Director: Peter Weir
Producer: Hal McElroy, Jim McElroy, Patricia Lovell
Cinematography: Russell Boyd
Screenplay: Cliff Green, adapted from the novel by Joan Lindsay
Cast: Rachel Roberts, Anne Lambert, Helen Morse, Dominic Guard

The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975, Twentieth Century Fox)
Director: Jim Sharman
Producer: Michael White
Cinematography: Peter Suschitzky
Screenplay: Richard O'Brien, Jim Sharman
Cast: Susan Sarandon, Tim Curry, Meatloaf, Richard O'Brien

Shadow of the Vampire (2000, Lions Gate)
Director: E. Elias Merhige
Producer: Nicolas Cage, Jeff Levine
Cinematography: Lou Bogue
Screenplay: Steven Katz
Cast: Willem Dafoe, John Malkovich

Shame (1987, Barron Films)
Director: Steve Jodrell
Producer: Damien Parer, Paul D. Barron
Cinematography: Joseph Pickering
Screenplay: Beverly Blankenship, Michael Brindley
Cast: Deborra-Lee Furness, Tony Barry, Simone Buchanan

Summerfield (1977, Clare Beach Films)
Director: Ken Hannam
Producer: Patricia Lovell
Cinematography: Mike Molloy
Screenplay: Cliff Green
Cast: Nick Tate, Elizabeth Alexander, John Waters

Wake in Fright (1971, NLT/Group W. Production)
Director: Ted Kotcheff
Producer: George Willoughby
Cinematography: Brian West
Screenplay: Evan Jones, based on the novel by Kenneth Cook
Cast: Gary Bond, Donald Pleasance

Teleography

The Goodies - "Scatty Safari" (Aired in the UK on the 17th of March in 1975 on the BBC)
Director: Jim Franklin
Starring: Graeme Garden, Bill Oddie, Tim Brooke-Taylor.
www.tvtome.com

Life with Judy Garland: Me and My Shadows (Aired in the USA on 25th and 26th February on ABC)
Director: Robert Allan Ackerman
Starring: Judy Davis
Production Company: Miramax

Sabrina – The Animated Series – "Field of Screams" (Aired in the USA on the 6th of October in 1999).
Executive Producer: Savage Steve Holland
Production Company: DIC Entertainment/Hartbreak Films/Savage Studios/Pearson Television International.
http://www.bcdb.com/cartoon

The Simpsons – "Bart vs. Australia" (Series 6, Episode 16.)
Creator/Executive Producer: Matt Groening
Network: FOX, USA.
www.thesimpsons.com