NEW ZEALAND FILM POSTERS:

THE CINEMA (posters) OF 'UNEASE'

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Advertising -

the most unobserved of film arts,

yet ironically,

the most commonly seen -

must grab,

imprint,

impress.

Peter Wells (1986) p 109
Content/Context: A Survey of Recent New Zealand Art
Editor: Luit Bieringa
National Art Gallery: New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

This treatise is an analysis of selected New Zealand film posters. The research undertakes to consider that the representation of the 'dark-side' of New Zealand culture is portrayed through a semiotic analysis of contemporary New Zealand film posters. The research method is based in the semiotic praxis of Roland Barthes, Ferdinand Saussure, Christian Metz, Umberto Eco and the associated 'science' of semiotics. Essentially it is argued that the bleak undertones and sense of 'unease' that exist in New Zealand culture is evident in New Zealand film and thus will be implicitly reflected in the publicity posters for these films.

INTRODUCTION

The marketing of a film is an extremely important component of film making. If a film is poorly publicised, this will affect the way it is perceived by the audience and will in turn affect the financial return and profit of the film. The film poster is an essential mechanism in the publicity of a film. "In earlier days, movie posters were magic gateways promising new worlds of adventure and fantasy. The theatre owner with the help of these highly coloured and imaginative posters, bought these strange visions into each community, giving young and malleable minds their first taste of worlds beyond their own."[1]

Posters have a resonance that makes them desirable for collectors. The likes of the science fiction, fantasy horror, and Hollywood nineteen forties posters are among some of the hottest collector's items overseas. As Rebello and Allen note in ***Reel Art***: "Since the late sixties, film poster prices have spiralled beyond the range of pocket money, to the hyped up atmosphere of high rolling dealers and auctions at which a ***King Kong*** poster fetches $15,000 and a ***Casablanca*** even more."[2 3]. New Zealand's appreciation of the film poster has largely focused on, or been associated with, foreign, in particular Hollywood, film. Such an example is the high demand for the very noir ***Pulp Fiction*** poster of Mia Wallace (Uma Thurman). This poster adorns many a flat and bedroom wall. However, 1994 in New Zealand saw the release of a film for which there was a similar demand for the poster. The ***Once Were Warriors*** film poster attracted unprecedented demand, and video stores were hounded by people wanting to obtain copies. Previously, film posters and other film advertising and promotional material has been devalued and seen as low culture artwork (if it has been viewed as art at all!). This devaluation arises because posters

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[1] Bruce Lanier-Wright, Yesterday's Tomorrows, 1993, p v.
[2] Stephen Rebello and Richard Allen, Reel Art, 1988, p 9.
[3] Also noted by Michael Hawkes in Kathryn Scott's Lobby Cards - The Classic Films, 1987, p 9.

(and before them lobby cards), for all their merit and skilled production techniques are advertising material and meant to be disposable. "With each new film the theatre owner acquires an assortment of promotional materials including lobby cards and various sized posters, as is today's television guide, they were tossed out to make room for advertising new entertainment."[4] Similarly, video stores put their out-of-date promotional posters in give-away boxes (if fans are lucky) or throw them in the bin.

The film poster is a calculated attempt to attract viewers to the film they publicise. They aim for a market segment and consequently try to isolate that element of the film which will appeal to the specific target. The film poster is a highly specialised form of advertising.

Yet, now it is becoming apparent to audiences that the film poster is a tangible expression of a film. This thesis features film posters which, I believe, have intrinsic merit as most are the product of very skilled designers and each can be viewed as valid artworks, but such research must also be about the films themselves. The images discussed in this treatise make a useful survey of the 'new wave' of New Zealand film, but the selection is not comprehensive. I have selected posters based on defined categories (outlined in methodology).

This treatise opens with a consideration of the literature available on the generic 'poster' and extends to an exploration of the film poster. While the literature review does not specifically concentrate on the film poster, studies of the advertising poster, poster histories and collections of the poster are relevant to this research. Following the review of literature is the methodology of this research, which flows into a detailed consideration of the boundaries of my research question, with specific reference to the words 'un-ease' and 'New Zealand culture'. Because I have used these words in the title of my research, I believe it important to clarify and address the concepts and implications of these terms in chapter three. The analysis of the posters forms chapter four.

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[4] Kathryn Leigh Scott, Lobby Cards: The Classic Films, 1987, p 9.

This chapter takes the form of a detailed semiotic analysis of ten New Zealand film posters, organised under five headings emblematic of the 'unease' in New Zealand film: hostile landscapes; the Gothic: repression versus liberation; 'Otherness'; the 'beast'; and archetypes. The research is concluded by a summary of the way in which the 'unease' or 'darkness' in New Zealand film is manifest in the film posters for these films.

CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature is not strictly bound to the parameters of the film poster, rather it extends to cover the broader category of the poster in general. While the review considers the antecedents of the poster, these antecedents hold true for both the film poster and poster advertising. A brief exploration of what would perhaps, have been the antecedent to the film poster - the lobby card - flows into an investigation of the two foremost studies of the film poster by Stephen Rebello and Richard Allen (***Reel Art: Great Posters from the Golden Age of the Silver Screen***, 1988) and Gregory Edwards (***The International Film Poster,*** 1988). The remainder of the chapter critically reviews contemporary literature regarding poster collections; the poster as advertising; and semiotics and the poster. The review concludes with brief words on the future of the poster.

THE HISTORY OF THE FILM POSTER - THE ANTECEDENTS

"The art of poster advertising can be traced back to the ancient Egyptians, who understood the advantages of mural advertisements and also to Athens and Rome where booksellers advertised their latest productions on their shop walls."[1] In New Zealand, early posters took the form of official proclamations and public announcements; sporting, entertainment and educational notices; the printed propaganda of social causes; politics and war; and all forms of display and commercial advertising.[2] "The earliest poster printed in New Zealand came from the mission presses ... when organised settlers came, after 1839, they brought presses and there was soon a newspaper press in every large settlement. From economic necessity the newspaper office took on the

[1] Gregory Edwards, The Book of the International Film Poster, 1985, p 9.
[2] AH Reed, and AW, The NZ Poster Book 1830-1940, p ii.

function of the jobbing printer, producing proclamations, public and political notices, and paybills."[3]

Discussion of general poster history is well detailed in several books. I have relied on John Barnicoat's ***A Concise History Posters*** (1972); Alain Weill's ***The Poster - A World Wide Survey and History*** (1985); and Dawn Ades' ***Posters - The Twentieth Century Poster. Design of the Avante Garde*** (1986). Weill comprehensively outlines the predecessors of the poster and considers its global development, concluding with two useful chapters on *Painting, Culture and the Consumer Society* and *The Poster Today*. Barnicoat provides an excellent commentary on the origins of the poster in regard to transition of the fine arts into the more prescribed function of advertising. Also chapter four *Posters and Society - the popular idiom* is particularly relevant here. Barnicoat says in this chapter,

> ***posters frequently reflect the popular idiom because their function is to communicate as well as to be decorative. Because visual communication is the first justification for their existence, it is the character and extent of popular influence on their appearance that establishes the peculiar nature of posters as such. In fact it is in this area of expression that one finds the essential qualities of the poster as opposed to its near relations, the painting of the graphic image.***[4]

Dawn Ades follows a similar theme, opening her book with a quote from Susan Sontag which reflects the above comments from Barnicoat, "In art, 'content' is ... the pretext, the goal, the lure which engages consciousness in essentially formal processes of transformation."[5] Ades notes in response to Sontag's words, "In the printed poster form and content are united, as the message is primary. Yet posters reflect many of the same philosophical and stylistic attitudes that underlie the more esoteric art forms, and on occasion their visual force transcends their practical function."[6]

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[3] Ibid.
[4] John Barnicoat, A Concise History of the Poster, 1972, p 183.
[5] Dawn Ades, Posters: The Twentieth Century Poster. Design of the Avante Garde, 1986, p 7.
[6] Ibid.

Lobby cards were probably the first use of the pictorial image to advertise film and were displayed in theatre lobbies to lure movie goers into the theatre. The history of the lobby card is documented by Kathryn Leigh Scott. As Scott says, "since the first flickering days of the two reelers, lobby cards, posters and photographic stills have been issued by all major movie studios to publicise their films."[7] Scott's study illustrates the earliest lobby cards, plus many more from the 1940's. While the earliest of these cards is the ***Hund*** with Ford Sterling, made in December 1915, Scott's book begins its consideration with DW Griffith's 1919 ***Broken Blossoms*** (with Richard Barthelmess and Lillian Gish) and concludes with the 1943 lobby card for ***Casablanca.*** Scott's work essentially catalogues the lobby card collection of Michael Hawkes with a text accompanying each card that provides only brief details regarding the film's characters, plot, director and other incidental information. There is limited reference to the cards themselves. Although, Scott does provide four notable comments. In discussion of the 1925 film ***Don Q, Son of Zorro*** (starring Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Astor and Donald Crisp) Scott acknowledges that this card is one of the few with the artist's signature (George Holl).[8] Finding a contemporary film poster which acknowledges the artist is still relatively uncommon. Schapiro and Chierichetti in ***The Movie Poster Book*** (1979) indicate that "by the 1920's expensive artists were drawing more posters, but, with very few exceptions, the posters were not signed and the artists were not allowed to draw or paint in such a way that their individual styles might be perceived."[9]

In the 1931 card for the film ***Public Enemy***, Scott makes reference to the Production Code.[10] This is one of the few comments in the book concerning temporal specificity in terms of production values. In terms of the horror film, the lobby card for ***Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*** (1932) is unusual and rare. Traditionally in the horror genre the monster's appearance was customarily

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[7] Kathryn Leigh Scott, Lobbycards : The Classic Films, 1987, p 8.
[8] Ibid, p 30.
[9] Steve Schapiro and David Chierichetti, The Movie Poster Book, 1979, p 10.
[10] Ibid, p 66.

kept as a surprise for the audience. Rouben Mamoulian, the director of this film, was a stage director who was bought to Hollywood in 1929. Scott notes that he was a great experimentalist, and although the level of his input into the design of this card is debatable, she suggests that this uniqueness might be attributed to Mamoulian.[11] In 1935, MGM started to use quotes from the films on the lobby cards. The example Scott uses is ***Anna Karenina***.[12] The tradition of putting quotes and words on film posters (especially endorsements from critics and established/high culture magazines) to entice viewers to films has strengthened over time. (Compared with the theatre lobby cards for live drama.) In fact, the text on contemporary film posters is, in many ways, just as significant as the image itself.

[11] Ibid, p 76.
[12] Ibid, p 110.

Doug McClelland has approached the use of lobby cards in a different manner to Scott. McClelland uses the cards to support oral histories from Hollywood. His book, ***Forties Film Talk, Oral Histories of Hollywood*** (1992), is divided in two, with part one detailing interviews in which participants discuss their films from the forties. Part two follows a similar track, but with more "succinct, standing comments from the outstanding forties film folk."[13] McClelland's aim is that these two main sections should jointly provide a comprehensive record of the output of the screen's "most glittering decade in the words of those who made it sparkle."[14] McClelland's dialogue is interspersed with various lobby cards (120 in total) but, unfortunately, there is no reference to the cards by those interviewed or by McClelland, the interviewer.

While any writing directly concerned with the film poster is somewhat limited, there are two books which are useful in presenting comprehensive histories. Historians and screenwriters Stephen Rebello and Richard Allen have produced a book centred on the American film poster titled ***Reel Art: Great Posters from the Golden Age of the Silver Screen*** (1988) and Gregory Edwards has compiled a study of the ***International Film Poster*** (1988). When these books are considered in conjunction with each other, they provide a broad and comprehensive review of the history of both the American and international film poster. Although, these studies concentrate, to a large degree, on the Western (ie. American and European) motion picture industry, to the exclusion to Asian, Indian and other Eastern films and posters. Two other text which combine historical elements with movie poster collections are Steve Schapiro and David Chierichetti's ***The Movie Poster Book*** (1979) and Joe Morella's ***Those Great Movie Ads*** (1972).

Rebello and Allen's collection concentrates on posters which, at the time, had not appeared in previous books and they chart the changing advertising conventions of several decades rather than attempting to cover the entire

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[13] Doug McClelland, Forties Film Talk. Oral Histories of Hollywood, with 120 Lobby Posters, 1992, introduction

[14] Ibid.

spectrum. In their opening chapters, they broach the thorny debate of movie posters as art by quoting Adolph Zukor (founder and president of Paramount Pictures) - "it is generally agreed ... that what is good art is good advertising and that the most satisfying design will sell the product best."[15] As the authors note, Zukor was merely employing the box-office-minded tautology "what's good sells". But he has a valid point. "In those few instances where Tinseltown art and commerce were happy bedfellows, the progeny was spectacular."[16] One of the significant features about this book is that, while other movie poster collections have been published before, this is one of the first to be produced by a "great *art* book publisher." (As the blurb at the back of the book suggests!)

Rebello and Allen concisely outline the antecedents of the movie poster stating that lobby cards spring directly from handbills and posters for wild west shows, carnivals, the popular stage and the circus. Rebello and Allen also note (in accordance with Gregory Edwards) that the antecedents stretch back even further - looking to the Greeks, Egyptians and Romans who painted warnings and notices on city gates, temples and tombs. Rebello and Allen go so far as to state that the movie poster is also a distant cousin of cave painting and stone or animal skin engravings.[17] Gregory indicates that the first printed bill in England was produced by William Caxton in 1477. These printed bills, "used for official proclamations and adverts for meetings and theatres, were displayed on walls, hoardings and posts."[18] ("Even theatrical plays of the time made frequent reference to the posting of play bills. For instance in the play "***A Warning to Fair Women*** of 1599, Tragedy accuses Comedy declaring 'Tis you have kept this theatre so long, Painted in playbills upon every post!'"[19]). However, Rebello and Allen conclude that the form of film posters harks back most directly to the theatrical posters of Jules Cheret (1836-1932).[20]

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[15] Stephen Rebello and Allen Richard, Reel Art, 1988, p 13.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid, p 14.
[18] Gregory Edwards J, The International Film Poster, 1985, p 9.
[19] Ibid. This comment signals the overwhelming emphasis on, and popularity of, comedy compared with tragedy in the early theatre.
[20] Ibid, p 15.

While Bass Otis is credited with America's first lithograph in 1819, Cheret's lithography "liberated posters from copper and wood," creating what probably were the first pre-cinema stock posters for the projections Artistiques of 1890.[21] Barnicoat reiterates this, stating that "in 1866 Jules Cheret ... started to produce colour lithographic posters from his own press in Paris ... The form of the poster as we know it dates from this time because of the coincidence of two factors: certain technical improvements in lithographic printing and the presence of Cheret himself."[22]

Working at a similar time, in a similar medium, it is interesting to note that Henri Toulouse-Lautrec's (1864-1901) posters enjoyed far less public acclaim than did Cheret's. Gregory Edwards also links the origins of the movie poster to Cheret and Toulouse-Lautrec. Edwards notes that Cheret submitted a poster design to the Lumiere brothers, which was apparently rejected. The three existing Lumiere posters were designed by Henri Brispot, Abel Truchet and Auzolle. Auzolle's poster of 1896 depicts an audience viewing the Lumières' humorous ***Lárroseur Arrosé*** (Watering the Gardener). "This simple gag shows a gardener hosing his garden, while a boy sneaks up behind him and puts his foot on the hose, halting the flow of water. The puzzled gardener looks down the nozzle and gets a soaking when the boy takes his foot away." Edwards, Schapiro and Cheirichetti indicate that the film ***Lárroseur Arrosé,*** shown on the screen in the poster, is generally considered to be the first fiction film made[23]. This style of poster was used internationally for all variations for the Lumières' Cinematograph and would often show a beam of light or the projector, so that the public did not mistake the events as being a stage play.[24] The use of these types of graphics on the posters served to introduce the new film medium.

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[21] Ibid.
[22] John Barnicoat, A Concise History of Posters, 1972, p 7.
[23] Steve Schapiro and David Chierichetti, The Movie Poster Book, 1979, p 6.
[24] This discussion is paraphrased from Gregory J Edwards, The International Film Poster, 1985, p 14. See also Steve Schapiro and David Chierichetti, The Movie Poster Book, 1979, p 6.

Yet Barnicoat argues that "Lautrec's contribution to the twentieth century was indirectly reflected in all poster design, for he helped to establish the direct quality of the poster as an art form ... no poster artist of his calibre followed him in France - the impact of his work affected painting, for example, through the work of Pablo Picasso."[25]

Edwards cites other early examples of the use of the poster to advertise film. Around 1900 in the United States, the American Entertainment Company used a poster portraying the audience of a sumptuous theatre watching a black and white image of a marching band on screen. Also the stock poster became popular when the day's attractions were either indicated by, or appeared on a card held by, a beautiful woman.[26] The example Edwards uses is the poster for ***Salle d'Etoile*** designed by Louis Coulet in 1902. Schapiro and Chierichetti also indicate this, noting that: "Stock posters featuring lovely ladies holding up cards announcing a cinema's entire program, much like a vaudeville bill, came into favour. The posters could be used week after week simply by pasting each new program on top of the last, leaving the lovely ladies intact."[27] Several other early film makers like the Pathé brothers and Leon Gaumont sought out creative workshops to produce their posters. Interestingly, Edwards notes that the use of royalty in these early posters was a device to assure the general public of the respectability of the cinematograph.[28]

An important shift in the production of the movie poster in America came when movie studio heads began to standardise national movie campaigns and began to undertake national publicity. One product of this which appeared around 1917 was the 'press book' or 'showman's manual'. Each book was a primer on movie exploitation, advising theatre owners on how to publicise their films. For example, a 1932 pressbook for ***Love me Tonight*** suggests a contest to find actress Jeanette MacDonald "an ideal hubby".[29]

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[25] John Barnicoat, A Concise History of Posters, 1972, p 26.
[26] Gregory J Edwards, The International Film Poster, 1985, p 15.
[27] Steve Schapiro and David Chierichetti, The Movie Poster Book, 1979, p 6.
[28] The information in these three sentences is from Gregory Edwards, The International Film Poster, 1985, p 15.
[29] Stephen Rebello and Richard Allen, Reel Art, 1988, p 37.

Initially posters were printed on inexpensive paper, and shipped to exhibitors in a variety of sizes. Among poster choices was the one sheet measuring 27x41 inches (69x10 centimetres), the earliest and most common format. These one sheeters were relatively cheap to produce in the thirties (about .15 cents each) and, depending on the studio, annotated to signal a different style of the same poster. One poster format usually stressed romance to appeal to women or urban audiences, another would favour action over romance.[30]

As Rebello and Allen note in Chapter Four (*Movers and Shapers: Art Directors and Illustrators on the Job*) "movie poster campaigns were the province of advertising and publicity directors, advertising art directors and illustrators ... film advertising made much use of a simplistic consumer psychology."[31] Above all else, Charles Matlack Price, poster critic, believed the graphics had to possess "clear simplicity of motive."[32] For Charles Schlaifer, former advertising vice-president for 20th Century Fox, no motive could have been simpler "My main concern with a poster was, would people look, rush to the box office and buy a ticket?"[33] Paramount had consultation with the Hanft-Metzger advertising agency to assist in the studios advertising look. Then Robert Gillham became the studio's full time director of advertising and publicity. "Zukor contended that that poster design and layout must, of necessity, be in the hands of experts, and a great deal depends on what will sell the picture."[34] Mark Croft of Everard Films in New Zealand says the media is to blame for ***The Last Tattoo's*** (1994) disappointing box-office showing.[35] "Tattoo opened on 15 screens to a first week take of $58,083. Business plummeted by 63% in its second week, and didn't quite make $90,000 after three weeks." Such lack of interest in the film was tied to poor reviews, but it is questionable whether the publicity material had the edge it needed to attract the viewers?

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[30] Ibid, this paragraph is paraphrased from p 41.
[31] Ibid, p 47.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid, p 49.
[35] On Film, 'Media Blamed for Fast Fading Tattoo', March 1995, p5.

Rebello and Allen note that "film posters seemed to have attained a new level of importance in corporate thinking when, in 1926, Adolph Zukor proclaimed, "The future for poster art and poster advertising is unmeasured, and, as competition increases, so will the value of the medium increase."[36]

At this point, the studies of Rebello and Allen, and Gregory diverge. Rebello and Allen launch into a consideration of the poster in conjunction with the American studio system concluding that it is possible to discern a "studio look" or a "corporate identity". This discussion then extends to a consideration off aesthetic shifts with regards to the Hays Production and Advertising Code and other shapers or influences of the visual aesthetic which leads into the production of the posters and associated 'litho' houses. While Rebello and Allen restrict their consideration to the American film poster, Gregory Edwards, after acknowledging the film poster's antecedents, provides quite detailed notes on different genres of the international film poster. His exploration generally reflects certain movements in the fine arts (expressionism to new realism, constructivism and montage - tools of the Russian revolutionary artists) and poster art which signals the strength of a political stance, such as in the New Cuban Cinema. He also considers the commercialism of Hollywood; British studio work; the artist as auteur and concludes his study with realism and romanticism in Poland and Italy.

Edwards makes some astute observations. Perhaps the most significant for this treatise is from the introduction to his work. Edwards states, "until recently the cinema poster has been viewed by producers and public alike almost exclusively as a selling tool, advertising the claim of the latest film attractions as widely as possible. Ironically, as the mass appeal of the cinema has appeared to decline, posters from an earlier era are increasingly in demand by some collectors as serious works of art."[37] While the decline of the cinema is debatable, the collectability of posters cannot be denied.

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[36] Stephen Rebello and Richard Allen, Reel Art, 1988, p 52.
[37] Gregory J Edwards, The International Film Poster, 1985, Introduction.

POSTER COLLECTIONS

More often than not, published collections of film posters have concentrated to a large degree on the science fiction or horror genre. This is perhaps due to the films which the posters advertise attracting cult status, or because these posters are often gaudy, extravagant and generally outrageous. One such collection is compiled by Bruce Lanier -Wright titled ***Yesterday's Tomorrow's - the Golden Age of Science Fiction Movie Posters*** (1993). Lanier-Wright makes an important point in his introduction: that his book features science fiction movie posters, but primarily such a collection must be about the films themselves. However, he does acknowledge that perhaps in most cases documented, the posters are better works of art than the films. "Moreover they are often cheats, calculated to lure unwary viewers to the movies that had little or nothing to do with the lurid and exciting images depicted in the poster."[38] In this collection, Bruce Lanier-Wright provides adequate sociological commentary and generally grounds comments in the political, ideological and historical context of the time.

The science fiction and horror genre is significant to this thesis in supporting a consideration of the 'Other'. Lanier-Wright notes that the future America faced after the war, while a time of prosperity, held a quiet insistent fear that lurked at the edges of public consciousness - "A Golden Age of Paranoia, an unease symbolised by those civil defence spots on radio and television: 'this is only a test', they promised, but would the day come when the warning was in earnest?"[39] Lanier-Wright states, to the American at this time the 'Other' was "that Bear, bottled up in its frigid, disagreeable territories across the sea? ... possessing the atom bomb."[40] The 'Reds under the bed' mentality was prominent. While in New Zealand fear of the 'Other' was and still is apparent

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[38] Bruce Lanier-Wright, Yesterday's Tomorrows, 1993, pp vi-vii.
[39] Ibid, p 1.
[40] Ibid.

and manifests itself in numerous ways. Indeed, the threat of nuclear war also touched us in the eighties. "According to pulpwriter HP Lovecraft, 'the most merciful thing in the world ... is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. That foreboding phrase, written in 1926, neatly captures America's attitude towards the atomic age it ushered in at Hiroshima - an attitude characterised above all by denial."[41] As Lanier-Wright indicates that while in the United States, nuclear holocaust seemed virtually walled off from conscious thought and public debate, as a topic too terrible to be considered[42] (and the associated fear thus transported into the science fiction form) in New Zealand the film ***The Quiet Earth (1985)*** overtly considers the reality of nuclear disaster. While on a denotative level the film and film poster combine images of nuclear devastation, the subtext is concerned with alienation and signals the epitome of the man/woman alone syndrome so often identified in New Zealand art work.

The title of Hayward and Blance Cirker's collection of posters - ***The Golden Age of the Poster, European and American Posters of the 1890's*** (1971) indicates that the golden age of the poster fell in the 1890's.[43] Dawn Ades also indicates "that it was in the late 1860's that Jules Cheret brought together his technical experience as an apprentice lithographer in England and the lesson of the Japanese colour woodblock print with its bold shapes and flat washers of brilliant colour, which had been a powerful influence on impressionist and post-impressionist painting in Paris, to create the conditions for the poster boom in the 80s and 90s."[44] However, collections of film posters generally indicate that the golden age of the film poster was the 1940's. Schapiro and Chierichetti note that "the cinema was born into an era rich in poster tradition throughout the Western world, an era generally considered to be the golden age of the poster." The popularity of the poster as a means of advertising was, according

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[41] Ibid, p 9.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Hayward and Blance Cirker, The Golden Age of the Poster : Seventy European and American Posters of the 1890's in Colour, 1971.
[44] Dawn Ades, Posters: The Twentieth Century Poster : Design of the Avante Garde, 1986, p 25.

to Schapiro and Chierichetti, attributed to both sociological and technical limitations at the turn of the century:

> ***...radio and television were undreamed of, and while newspapers and magazines were numerous, high illiteracy rates made them a poor medium for advertising. Posters, with their brilliant colours and few words, had the greatest impact on urban populations that lived much of their lives on the street. Plastered on walls and kiosks, posters were used to sell every product, and this included cinema, right from the start.*** [45]

The 'golden age' of the film poster has been captured in a collection of 'black cast' posters titled ***A Separate Cinema*** (1992) by John Kisch and Edward Mapp. While this collection covers the years 1915-1965, the majority of posters are from 1935 to 1950. The historical perspective of African American cinema is outlined in Don Bogle's introductory essay. Spike Lee, in the preface to this collection, indicates that Don Bogle is one of America's most notable black-cinema historians. Bogle says:

> ***The posters here, which were used in the past to promote or publicise the old films and which were often on display at the theatres, capture some of the spirit and energy of that earlier black film history during the first half of the century. In some cases they salute icons, touch on an era's mood and perspective, and bring us closer to what a certain type of movie going experience was once like. Mainly they open our eyes to a long line of past African American film makers ... struggling ... to make some kind of statement on film*** ...[46]

Judith Adamson uses her collection of ***Australian Film Posters 1906-1960*** in a similar way to Kisch and Mapp. Although Adamson is more direct in her connection of the posters to Australia's cinema history and general history, and also in terms of what was occurring internationally. She indicates in the introduction "The history of Australian film till 1960 is told in the following

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[45] Steve Schapiro and David Chierichetti, The Movie Poster Book, 1979, p 5.
[46] John Kisch and Edward Mapp, A Separate Cinema, 1992, p xxxiii

pages, as the posters call the roll of the most famous film makers."[47] Bush legend features in Australia's first feature film - ***The Story of the Kelly Gang*** (1906)[48] and outback drama in ***Bondage of the Bush*** (1915). Australia's participation in the First World War is captured in ***Hero of the Dardanelles*** (1915)[49], and the documentary tradition associated with the Second World War is evident in ***The Rats of Tobruk*** (1944) and ***Assault on Salamaua*** (1943).[50] Adamson links what was happening historically on the international level to the timeframe in Australian film history. For example she notes that "Nineteen Twelve was a year notable for human interest news: The Australian government started three years of prosecutions against 27,000 young men for evading compulsory military service...the Titanic sank and Andrew Carnegie announced that he had placed in the Carnegie Corporation of New York all his fortune ... On the Australian film front, from 1912 to 1918 films were growing in the variety of subjects they tackled and the sophistication of their techniques ..."[51] One film Adamson relates directly to history is ***Smithy*** (1946) on the life of pioneer aviator Charles Kingford-Smith.[52]

Significantly, Adamson notes in her introduction that there are advantages to analysing posters today. "For one thing we can look at them properly. Posters are ephemera, short lived, mostly unsubtle advertisements." Yet she acknowledges that "poster collection has not seemed as urgent a task as trying to find the old films themselves and look after them or copy them before the last copy disintegrates (nitrate film stock, in use till 1950, has a limited life-span)." A similar situation to New Zealand. The comments Adamson cites by Australian Filmmaker Charles Chauvel, defending before a Royal Commission Australian's right to make their own films, also has a resonance with the New Zealand film industry: "Does giving films international appeal mean that we have to make pictures similar to those that are made in Hollywood? If we did,

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[47] Judith Adamson, Australian Film Posters 1906-1960, p 7.
[48] Ibid, p 8.
[49] Ibid, p 12.
[50] Ibid, p 40.
[51] Ibid, p 12.
[52] Ibid, p 40.

they would not have international appeal. The only way we can give an Australian picture international appeal is to make it Australian."[53]

As mentioned, posters are significantly popular as items for collection. Similar in history to the development of the film poster is the 'rock' poster. As Paul D Grushkin details in his collection titled ***The Art of Rock - Posters from Presley to Punk*** (1987),

> ***Rock posters have become a leading popular art form that has greatly influenced such related graphic fields as advertising. Rock art is tied directly to the changing music of a thirty five year period ... because there are rock concerts there are inevitably rock posters. It is true that rock music has reflected, even as it has helped to shape, its thirty five year span of American and International culture. And so the posters are a visual history not only of the music, but also of a little bit of the world that produced the music.***[54]

These comments could also be made about the film poster. The development of the rock posters shares the antecedents of the film poster in that they owe much to the advertising art associated with carnivals, circuses, vaudeville and minstrel shows and in that they were "initially functional objects, colourful pieces of cardboard advertising that had a specific and unsophisticated function. For the very reason that the posters were intended to be utilitarian rather than aesthetic, few survive today."[55] This functional advertising aspect of the film poster should not be underestimated, diminished or ignored in favour of a discussion of aesthetics.

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[53] The quotations cited in this paragraph are from Judith Adamson, Australian Film Posters 1906-1960, p 7.
[54] Paul D ,Grushkin, The Art of Rock: Posters from Presley to Punk, 1987, p 7.
[55] Ibid, p 11.

THE POSTER AS ADVERTISING

William M O'Barr addresses the construction of 'Otherness' in advertising in ***Culture and the Ad - Exploring Otherness in the World of Advertising*** (1994). The main argument developed in this book "is that the representation of foreigners and other categories of outsiders who appear in advertisements provide paradigms for relations between members of advertising's intended audience and those defined as outside it. These paradigms constitute an ideological guide for relations between the self and others, between us and them."[56] O'Barr poses three related analytical questions which prompt consideration of how advertising constructs idealised images of people; indicates their patterns of interacting with others; and places them in the social hierarchy. "By looking for recurrent themes in how advertising portrays such people, we begin to understand the idealised images constructed in the world of advertising."[57] Advertisements also depict social relationships. O'Barr asks "how do people in the category relate to others".[58] What emerges from this question is an understanding of ideas about appropriate and idealised social relations in which people in the constructed category operate. O'Barr's third paradigm focuses on inequality and power and he asks "what is the quality of the relationships depicted?" He notes that in the "discourse of advertising relationships are seldom egalitarian."[59]

While O'Barr's study concentrates on an analysis of foreigners and other outsiders in the world of travel advertising and photography, the central issue in this book is concerned with the "ideologies about 'others' that are constructed within the discourse of advertising."[60] Therefore, his three-step paradigm is helpful in an examination of the construction of any group of people, their social relationships and associated issues of power.

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[56] William M, O'Barr, Culture and the Ad : Exploring Otherness in the World of Advertising, 1994, p 2.
[57] Ibid, p 3.
[58] Ibid, p 4.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid, p 12.

Film posters are ostensibly about the films they advertise. However, they convey in their secondary discourse an ideology about the relations of dogma and power that is repeated in other posters. "This secondary discourse depicts some of our culture's most pervasive ideas about other people and the circumstance of their lives."[61] Such images "help construct for their intended audience ideas about those who are defined as outside the audience."[62] Representational patterns of 'Otherness' will be explored in more detail in chapter four. However, throughout this treatise and analysis I undertake to adhere to O'Barr's three analytic paradigms of advertising and will by doing so initiate a shift in our perception of film poster advertising by defamiliarising these texts and accepting them as both valid works of art and worthy of investigation.

SEMIOTICS AND THE POSTER

> ***In the cities in which we live, all of us see hundreds of publicity images every day of our lives.***
> ***No other kind of image confronts us so frequently.***
> ***In no other form of society in history has there been such a concentration of images, such a density of visual messages.***
> ***One may remember or forget these messages but briefly one takes them in, and for a moment they stimulate the imagination by way of either memory or expectation. The publicity image belongs to the moment ... Publicity images also belong to the moment in the sense that they must be continually renewed and made up-to-date. Yet they never speak of the present. Often they refer to the past and always speak of the future.***[63]

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[61] Ibid, Chapter Three, p 45.
[62] Ibid.
[63] John Berger, Ways of Seeing, 1972, p 129-130.

Berger insightfully notes that we are so accustomed to seeing publicity and poster images that we hardly notice their total impact, let alone recognise their subtext of non verbal signs.[64] In the analysis of the image, semiotics has been to the fore since the 1970's and has been instrumental in defamiliarising the visual text. Semiology (or semiotics) is, essentially, the study of a complex form of visual language. The nature of semiotic analysis will be discussed in detail in chapter three (methodology). However, at this point, there are several important studies that need to be outlined. Amongst the most influential papers written on the image are Roland Barthes's *"the photographic message"* (1961) and "*rhetoric of the image*"(1964).[65] While Barthes focused his semiotic writings on both press and advertising photography, and later on selected personal and 'art' photographs, it is with the his analysis of the image of advertising that is of most interest here. "Barthes's interest in photography as a site of semiological productivity begins in the 1950s with some of the essays published in ***Mythologies***"[66], in particular *Myth Today*, with its much celebrated analysis of the Paris Match cover photograph of a Algerian soldier saluting the French flag. "According to Barthes, photographs may come into the world as un-coded and analogous of it - (although this is debatable) - but they cannot remain free of the simultaneous accretion of cultural connotations which do require decoding."[67] In *rhetoric of the image* (1964) Barthes considers the advertising image which feeds directly into his work in ***Camera Lucida.*** As Lawrence McDonald notes, "he concludes by locating the most fruitful area for the study of the signifying aspect of ideology in photography at the level of the sets of connotations which make up the 'rhetoric of the image'.[68]

John Berger, in ***Ways of Seeing*** also explores the advertising image in which he links the language of publicity with that of the oil painting. Berger notes a direct continuity stating that "there are many direct references in publicity to

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[64] Ibid.
[65] Lawrence McDonald's 'Pictures on the Wall: Photography and Theory in Education', Delta 45, 1991, pp 5-16.
[66] Ibid, p 6.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Lawrence McDonald, 'Pictures on the Wall Photography and Theory in Education', Delta 45, 1991, p 6.

works of art from the past. Sometimes a whole image is a frank pastiche of a well-known painting."[69] This use of classical painting or artwork, Berger believes, lends an authority, a sense of dignity or wisdom to the publicised item because oil painting or, for example, sculpture, belongs to our cultural heritage. But this correspondence between advertising and the oil painting goes far deeper than the level of pictorial similarity - "it operates at the level of the sets of signs used".[70] Berger posits that the publicity image depends upon the visual language of oil painting because "oil painting, before it was anything else, was a celebration of private property. As an art-form it derived from the principle that *you are what you have*".[71] Berger notes further, that publicity is, essentially, nostalgic - to sell the past to the future then references to quality and the visual language use are inherently bound to be retrospective and traditional.[72] "In the language of oil painting these vague historical or poetic or moral references are always present. The fact that they are imprecise and ultimately meaningless is an advantage: they should not be understandable, they should merely be reminiscent of cultural lessons half learnt."[73]

This comment from Berger alludes to the notion of myth, a concept explored by Barthes's in ***Mythologies*** (1973), especially in the last section *Myth Today.* Barthes's says here:

> ***...myth is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it: it is a second-order semiological system ... we must recall here that the material of mythical speech (the language itself, photography, painting, posters, rituals, objects, etc.), however different at the start, are reduced to a pure signifying function as soon as they are caught by myth. Myth sees in them only the same raw material; their unity is that they all come down to the status of mere language.***[74]

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[69] John Berger, Ways of Seeing, 1972, p 134.
[70] Ibid, p 138.
[71] Ibid, p 139.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid, p 140.
[74] Roland Barthes, Mythologies, 1973, p 114.

THE FUTURE OF THE POSTER

While in many ways the film poster is gaining in popularity as a collector's item, and its role in the ever competitive world of film marketing is escalating, Armin Hofmann, teacher of graphic design at the Allgemeine Gewerbeschule, Basel, in Switzerland and Director of the Yale Summer Program in Graphic Design, cautions that "electronic advertising media will strongly compete with the poster. The poster has a chance of survival only if it recollects its most innate strength: size, clarity and simplicity. Of course, these formal necessities must be realised within the context of more complex information ... the designer of tomorrow will have to pursue research in the area of the sign."[75]

Allan Weill concludes that, given the activity taking place surrounding the production and criticism of the poster, that "all this activity is the surest indication and a positive proof that the poster continues to evolve and, above all, to fascinate artists as much as advertisers."[76]

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[75] Dawn Ades, Posters : The Twentieth Century Poster. Design of the Avante Garde, 1986, p 93.
[76] Alain Weill, The Poster: A Worldwide Survey and History, 1985, p 373

CHAPTER TWO
METHODOLOGY

All advertising is a message: it involves a source of utterance, which is the firm owning the product being launched (and praised), a point of reception, which is the public, and a channel of transmission ... every message is the encounter of the level of expression (or signifier) and a level of content (or signified).[1]

The analysis of posters in this study utilises the techniques of semiotics. Semiotics is a method for the analysis of both verbal and non verbal messages. It is not primarily concerned with art, but rather with meaning and modes of cognition.[2] Ellen Sieter notes in ***Semiotics and Television*** (1987) that, "as a tool for the study of culture, semiotics represents a break from traditional criticism, where the first order of business is interpretation of an aesthetic object or text in terms of its immanent meaning. Semiotics first asks *how* meaning is created, rather than *what* the meaning is."[3]

SEMIOTICS

Semiotics is used extensively in the analysis and discussion of visual imagery to lay bare the details of how visual messages are constructed and acquire their meaning from amongst the family of signs within a culture. While semiotics can cover language, words and gestures[4], this study will be specifically concerned with how meaning is conveyed via pictorial or graphic means and symbols.

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[1] Roland Barthes, The Semiotic Challenge, 1988, p 173.
[2] Arthur Asa Berger, Media Analysis Techniques, 1982, p 39.
[3] Ellen Sieter, 'Semiotics and Television', in Channels of Discourse, Edited by Robert C Allen, 1987, p 17.
[4] Ellen Sieter says "Semiotics is the study of everything that can be used for communication: words, images, traffic signs, flowers, music, medical symptoms and much more..." Ibid

Semiotics has also been used extensively for the analysis of the televisual image. The 1994 ***Analysis of Television and Liquor Adverts*** undertaken at Massey University for the Alcohol Liquor Advisory Council used semiotics to analyse approximately 129 liquor advertisements to identify the main structure and lines of appeal. "The objectives of such an analysis are to decode and deconstruct liquor advertisements in such a way than not only the meanings are exposed but also the techniques used in the communication of these meanings."[5] As the adage indicates "one picture is worth a thousand words". At the same time, images may also embody a complexity and ambiguity which can be greater than might have been the case if words alone had been the vehicle.[6] This complexity is highlighted in the post-doctoral work undertaken by Lynne Star with regard to passion and resistance in the sports discourse. Star's work-in-progress paper ***Macho and his Brothers: Passion and Resistance in Sports Discourse***, begins to explore the limits of traditional resistance to patriarchal imperatives of hypermasculinity[7] within selected aspects of New Zealand rugby.[8] As Star notes "The recent incorporation of rugby as televised electronic spectacle has produced an explosion of hypermasculine signifiers."[9] She notes that elaborate systems of codes govern performance and meaning in every sphere of the rugby match - on field and off, for players, fans, administrators and all involved.[10]

The use of signs and the way they communicate has a long history. Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis indicate in their text ***New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, Post Structuralism and Beyond*** (1992) that linguistic speculations are found in classical texts of Greek, Indian and Chinese culture and that Greek pre Socratic philosophers explored the issue of

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[5] Graeme Bassett and Chris Watson, Analysis of Television Liquor Advertisements for the Alcohol Liquor Advisory Council, 1994, p 5.
[6] Graeme Bassett, Massey University, 1992, p 2.
[7] Hypermasuline: an excessive or overblown masculinity asscociated with the practices and codes of male behaviour.
[8] Lynne Star, 'Macho and his Brothers: Passion and Resistance in Sports', Discourse Sites, No 26 (Autumn 1993): pp 54 -78.
[9] Ibid, p 54.
[10] Ibid, p 55.

motivation of signs. Subsequent to the classical period, the stoics also showed interest in the process of symbolisation with stoic philosopher Sextus Empiricus distinguishing three aspects of the sign: the signifier, the signified and the referent. However, Stam et. al. note that the first truly rigorous semiotician, according to Todorov, was St Augustine, and the first modern philosopher to use the term 'semiotics' was John Locke.[11]

Modern semiotics has its beginnings in the work of French linguist Ferdinand Saussure (1857-1913) and the American philosopher CS Peirce (1839-1914). Saussure's division of the sign into two components: the signifier (or 'sound image'), and the signified (or 'concept') and related suggestion that the alliance between these two components is arbitrary, was of crucial importance to the development of semiotics. Peirce, on the other hand, focused on three aspects of signs: their iconic, indexical and symbolic dimensions.[12] In the 1960's some leading European intellectuals dedicated themselves to the study of semiotics and used it to analyse many different systems. "Roland Barthes carefully analysed fashion, French popular culture, and a novella by Balzac. Umberto Eco turned his attention to Superman comics and James Bond novels. (In 1983, Eco published an international best seller, a peculiarly semiotic detective novel entitled ***The Name of the Rose***.) Christian Metz set out to describe the Hollywood cinema as a semiotic system."[13] Interestingly, Asa Berger noted in 1982 that semiotics had only recently been taken seriously in the United States and was not widely taught there. He believed that this was due to the United States tendency to favour pragmatic and down-to-earth approaches, and that abstruse, theoretical and formalistic methodologies were not congenial. He also proposed that there is a kind of international lag and it takes a while for

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[11] Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis, New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, Post Structuralism and Beyond, 1992, pp 1-2. Arthur Asa Berger notes the long history of the use of sign communication by also citing John Locke's interest in the linguistic sign, Media Analysis Techniques, 1982, p 15.

[12] Such information can be found in texts about semiotics. These comments are taken from Arthur Asa Berger, Media Analysis Techniques, 1982, p 15.

[13] This discussion is from Ellen Sieter, 'Semiotics and Televison', in Channels of Discourse, Edited by Robert C Allen, 1987, p 17.

movements that are significant in the European intellectual scene to become accepted in the United States.[14]

Semiotics flowed out of Russian and Prague structuralism in the early twentieth century and developed from within the same intellectual climate as Russian Formalism. As Roland Barthes notes in ***The Semiotic Challenge*** (1988), the Russian Formalists Vladimir Propp and Claude Levi-Strauss produced influential work regarding approaches for the study of narration, especially in terms of the synchronic and the diachronic. Propp undertook one of the first structural analyses of narrative by analysing "some hundreds of Slavic tales and succeeded in establishing the invariability of elements (characters and actions) and of relations (concatenation of actions) which definitively constitutes the form of the folktale."[15] The essential narrative unit that Propp used in the ***Morphology of the Folktale*** was what he labelled a "function". Barthes indicates that "Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action."[16] He has stated that everything in a narrative is functional " ... everything in it, to varying degrees, signifies." [17] Berger notes that Propp's work has great significance for us as we can adapt his concepts to film, television, comics and other types of narrative forms.[18]

Meaning is conveyed by the process of signification and the relationship between the signifier and the signified. "This relation may be determined by convention, or common agreement, in which case the relationship is said to be 'arbitrary' or unmotivated".[19] The sign is the combination of a concept and a 'sound image'. A combination that cannot be separated. "A three part concept where the sign itself is the sum of the signifier and the signified. It is a

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[14] Arthur Asa Berger, Media Analysis Techniques, 1982, p 16.
[15] Roland Barther, The Semiotic Challenge, 1988, p 137. 136
[16] Ibid, p 103.
[17] Ibid, p 104.
[18] Arthur Asa Berger, Media Analysis Techniques, 1982, p 25.
[19] Graeme Bassett, Massey University, Television and Education Study Guide 2, 1992, p 4. This quality of the sign is noted frequently: see Arthur Asa Berger (1982) p 17 and in Signs in Contemporary Society (1984) p 10. Also O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders and Fiske, Key Concepts in Communication (1983) p 12 and Fiske and Hartley, Reading Television (1978) pp 38-39.

signifying construct and has meaning beyond the simple fact that an item is, for example, a rose. It covers all the extra meanings that this object might have for people." Berger importantly indicates that "how we perceive a sign depends on the cultural experience that we bring to it." This idea is also built into later versions of Shannon and Weaver's model of communication incorporating 'noise' (elements which make understanding difficult). For example, culturally different readings. The components which combine to make up a sign are the "signifier which has a physical existence that carries the meaning (can be a word, image or whatever) and the signified which is the mental concept that carries the meaning."[20]

Saussure believed that, as well as meaning being a function of the relationship between the signifier and the signified, the meaning of a sign was also largely determined by its relationship to other signs. Two types of such relationships were identified by Saussure - one called syntagmatic and one called paradigmatic.[21] Syntagmatic analysis involves identifying the relationship of a sign to other signs in terms of how they combine together in a sequence. "It is important to recognise that the meaning of a sign may also be determined by what it is not - by what it does not mean- how one sign is differentiated from another sign, gives it a particular meaning, called paradigmatic meaning. This is where a sign's meaning is defined in opposition to others in its paradigm or grouping."[22] Paradigmatic meaning is determined by rules of selection.

The process of signification has three levels: the denotative, the connotative and the intersubjective or ideological level. Denotation involves iconic meaning where the signifier means what it is, and this meaning is self contained. Connotation involves cultural myths and is tied to attitudinal and emotional responses. Human intervention into the production of the image at an expressive or subjective level is also significant here. At this second level is the concern with meanings which embody the myths of a culture. Barthes

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[20] Arthur Asa Berger, Media Analysis Techniques, 1982, p 19.
[21] Graeme Bassett, Massey University, Television and Education Study Guide 2, 1992, p 5.
[22] Ibid, p 8.

notion of cultural mythology and semiotic analysis operates within this second level of signification and centres on myth. The most well known representation of this form of analysis is Barthes' discussion of the young Negro soldier saluting the French flag on the cover of a ***Paris Match*** magazine.

Figure 2. Front cover of *Paris-Match* no. 326 June 1953. 35 × 26·3 cm. original in colour. Photograph by courtesy of *Paris-Match IZIS*.

The third level of signification is 'intersubjective reality'. Here the meaning is understood in terms of a coherent, organised view of the world expressed in ideology. Meaning at this level is related to a commonly held set of beliefs and values, formed into a system which provides a common perception of reality.[23]

Implicit in the signification process is the use of symbols to carry particular meaning. O'Sullivan et. al. outline the main uses of the word:

1. ***Shannon and Weaver, Ogden and Richards, and Berlo, tend to use the word in a broad sense as referring to any type of sign. This use should, where possible be avoided.***
2. ***Peirce uses the term to refer to a category of sign where there is no resemblance between it and its object. He contrasts it with his other types of sign - icon and index.***
3. ***Freud uses it to refer to an object or act that stands in place of something that is taboo or unpleasant to think of. In the Freudian use there is some resemblance between the symbol and what it stands for, even though this resemblance may be indirect or metaphoric.***
4. ***Barthes uses it to refer to an object or act that stands for an abstraction or a value. A gold coin can symbolise wealth, a shepherd and land can symbolise the relationship of Christ to his followers. Religious practices and social rituals are frequently symbolic in this sense...***
5. ***There is also a literary and artistic use of the term which is similar to uses (3) and (4) in so far as it includes a resemblance between symbol and object. In literature and visual art, the symbol demands attention in its own right, sometimes even demands more attention than that which it stands for.***[24]

According to O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders and Fiske, Roland Barthes was chiefly responsible for popularising and extending semiotics in the 1960's and

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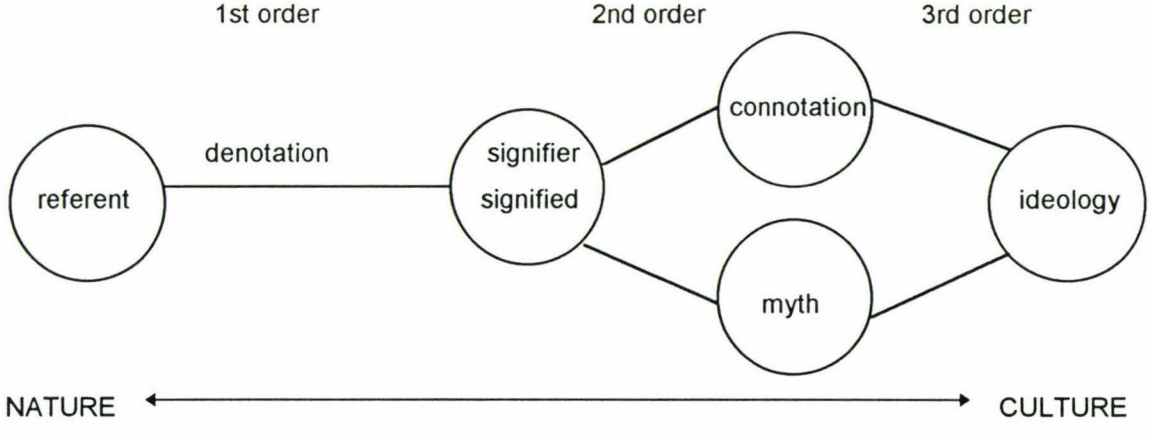
[23] This information is adapted from the Massey University Television and Education Study Guide 2, 1992, pp 11-14. However, this information is detailed in many semiotic texts.

[24] Ibid, p 14.

they indicate that Barthes makes a much bigger contribution to the concept of signification than did Saussure. Barthes uses the concept of signification to refer to the way that signs work in culture: "he adds the dimension of cultural values to Saussure's use of the term." Barthes is largely concerned with the second order of signification as it relates to myth. "Barthes' rather specialised use of the term ***myth*** refers to a chain of concepts widely accepted throughout a culture, by which its members conceptualise or understand a particular topic or part of their social experience."[25]

Barthes' model utilises the three orders of signification already mentioned. Firstly denotation (what Saussure calls signification), which refers to the literal relationship of a sign to its referent. This relationship is objective and value-free. The second order of signification is that of myth and connotation, when "the denotative reading of a sign stands for the culture or the person using it."[26] This relationship operates at an associative, expressive, attitudinal or evaluative level.[27] The third order of signification, according to Fiske and Hartley (1978), "suggests that the connotations and myths of a culture are the manifest signs of its ideology".[28]

O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders and Fiske provide a useful diagram to illustrate Barthes' levels of signification: (Ref: O'Sullivan et. al., Key Concepts in Communication, 1983, p211)



[25] This paragraph is paraphrased from O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders and Fiske, Key Concepts in Communication, 1983, p 216.
[26] Ibid, p 215.
[27] Ibid.
[28] cited at the reference above.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first task in this research was to establish whether or not a sense of 'darkness' or 'unease' was evident in New Zealand film. This discussion forms the third chapter in this treatise and considers aspects of New Zealand culture and colonisation; whether or not New Zealand has a film culture and if there is a 'darkness' evident in New Zealand film. The second section to this chapter considers how this 'darkness' is enunciated. This overall thematic analysis of the 'unease' in New Zealand cinema precedes the detailed semiotic analysis of the film posters which comprise chapter 4.

Viewing a random selection of 20 posters enabled a summary of aspects of 'darkness' evident in New Zealand film and film posters to be compiled. This discussion forms the conclusion to chapter three. The generalised points in this summary are picked up and expanded in chapter four. From this review of the poster material several key aspects of darkness evolved and formed the five major heading under which the analysis of the posters took place. The five headings are: hostile landscapes, the gothic: repression versus liberation, the 'Other', the 'Beast', and archetypes.

Two posters from each category are used to illustrate the way each aspect of 'darkness' is manifest or enunciated. This discussion forms the fourth chapter and takes the form of a detailed semiotic analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

WILL THE SLEEPING DOG AWAKE FROM THE NIGHTMARE?

SOME WORDS ON THE CINEMA [posters] OF UNEASE[1]

> ***... or is he Orpheus, leaving my daylight kingdom to learn***
> ***Eurydice for who he enters the dark god's home?***
> ***Hermes, show him this woman, in her cerecloth cloud of***
> ***sleep. She is not prey to the subtle worm which wears away***
> ***at my cheek, no lord unlocks her face***
> ***or answers him out of that silent country ...***[2]

The silent country has found a voice, but this voice often speaks in a dark and surreal manner. The surreal, the dark, the ambiguous, are words which have become synonymous with New Zealand film and recently there has been a burgeoning awareness of this quality in our films. While many who discuss New Zealand film use terms such as the 'dark-side' (Coney, 1985, Martin, 1984), and the 'unease' (Neil, 1995), conjuring images of the 'shady' and the 'underbelly', few would seem to adequately or comprehensively qualify these subjective, and often problematic, terms. Perhaps the recent awareness of the 'darkness' in our film industry has arisen from the realisation that New Zealand can, now, confidently claim a film culture and that aspects of New Zealand culture can be reflected or refracted via the filmic text. However, while recognition and discussion of this unease might be a nineties trend, earlier reference to this quality in our films has been noted. One of the first references

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1 ***The Cinema of Unease*** is the title of Sam Neill and Judy Rymer's 1995 documentary on the New Zealand film industry made for the British Film Institute.

2 Stanza 6 from Mary Stanley's poem 'Sestina' in Private Gardens, An Anthology of NZ Women Poets (ed: Riemke Ensing), 1977, p 126.

to this 'darkness' in New Zealand film was made by Sandra Coney in a ***Broadsheet*** review of ***Heart of the Stag*** in 1985. Coney specifically identifies the sexual violence which runs through New Zealand film like a "dark stain". [3]

It is time these representations were documented. This chapter will identify from whence such notions of unease and 'darkness' have sprung; how they relate to New Zealand culture and the New Zealand psyche; and whether such representations are found in New Zealand film and the New Zealand film poster. Central to this exploration will be Jung's concept of the psyche and associated notion of the archetypal shadow side. Jung's symbolic theories of the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious provides an interesting and relevant framework in which to discuss the 'unease' in New Zealand film and assists in throwing some light on the 'darkness' , which I claim is inherently evident in these films and posters.

NOTION OF NEW ZEALAND CULTURE

While most of the Western World outside the United States has, to a large degree, become adept at rejecting and ignoring its own cultural uniqueness, it would appear that New Zealand celebrates its individuality by scorning or deconstructing dominant trends. Yet as Bill Willmott outlines in ***Culture and Identity in New Zealand*** (1989), to examine the New Zealand identity, we need to recognise that our culture appears differently from different positions within our society, so it requires an examination of many different aspects.[4] The filmic medium and the film poster provides a record not only of artistic, aesthetic and technical trends but also of issues and events of the time and place that produced them. Thus the film and the film poster have an aesthetic visual sensibility and appeal as well as historical and ideological value, consequently providing a central focus for a consideration of a nation's culture.

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[3] Sandra Coney, Broadsheet Review, Jan/Feb 1985, pp 46-47.
[4] Bill Willmott, and David Novitz, (eds), Culture and Identity in New Zealand, 1989, p 9.

Much of New Zealand's uniqueness springs from the notion of counterculture. Due to our geographical location we are far enough from the immediate influences of foreign trends to create and maintain an individual flavour most noticeable in our music and artwork – artwork which often challenges or works counter to overseas convention as it tries to locate itself in the local milieu. From this tension springs the work's energy, spirit, personality and uniqueness. For as Watson states "all artwork is coloured by the society in which it is created and that will always be a varied and interesting thing." [5]

However, New Zealand is still largely dominated by European and American markets (and the political power of the United States) and inherent in the nature of New Zealand's location is a sense of inferiority. New Zealand lies in the shadow of several larger producers. In the introduction to the screenplay of Vincent Ward's ***Navigator*** (1988), Ward states "I liked the parallel of the little, isolated village in Cumbria being a pocket skipped over by the plague, and of New Zealand, too, being a pocket separate from the rest of the world. In both these cases, two small and isolated places have the belief that, to some degree, they can affect their own destiny - even though the odds seem against them".[6] This isolation, I believe, dictates the establishment of a 'counterculture' in that the artwork, especially film, will inherently work 'counter' to overseas trends. While on the one hand this isolation can cause alienation, it has also produced a group of highly creative, visionary crafts-people, and at times, misunderstood genius.

Yes, there is an identifiable sense of inferiority, but it is because of this conception that New Zealand strives to be 'best' or 'better' than other nations. This suggests an almost smug, congratulatory superiority, an arrogance borne of insecurity, which is especially evident in New Zealand's conception of sporting achievement and the high regard for physical prowess.[7] This

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[5] Chris Watson, , 'The Effect of Funding Policies on NZ's Film Culture', An Australian Reader, Ed: A Moran, Griffith University Press, 1994 pp 121-133.

[6] Vincent Ward, , Screen Play for the Navigator, 1989, Faber and Faber Ltd, London, pxiii.

[7] See also Nick Perry's discussion of the television advertisment for 'Nilverm', which highlights transtasman competition and notions of New Zealand self satisfaction, The Dominion of Signs, 1994, p 67.

perception is also intrinsic in our anti-nuclear policy and maintenance of the 'clean', 'green' image which is so important to the tourist industry, inherent in which is the belief that New Zealand is 'God's Own Country'. Perry takes this tenet further by noting:

> ***The traditional slogans ... were that New Zealand is 'God's Own Country', and a 'great place to bring up kids', and that we are 'one people' committed to security and equality and that 'she'll be right'. These related sentiments were once part of a formally approved popular rhetoric of Nationalism, understood and promulgated as cultural givens ... What is now routinely questioned is not just their empirical status, but their appropriateness as social and cultural ideas.***[8]

The advertising surrounding the 'major' sporting events in 1995 signal the priority placed on sport (especially rugby) in our culture. It is interesting the way the media intentionally link sport and notions of nationalism and patriotism. Prime Minister Jim Bolger said in an IRN news bulletin on 25 May 1995, with regard to the America's Cup, that New Zealand "had not seen an outpouring of emotion so spontaneous since World War Two". Connecting the emotion of the race with the Second World War conjures up feelings of nostalgia, nationalistic pride and a sense of community 'one-ness'. The placement of advertisements for the America's Cup also signals the operation of a surreptitious ideology. On 26 May 1995, Television One screened their promotion 'Together We're One' followed by an infomercial about Bastion Point. The Rugby World Cup again allowed media the opportunity to capitalise on this nationalistic spirit and concepts of the iconic 'NZ man'. On a local Palmerston North Radio station (2 June 1995) a song composed to the tune of 'If you haven't got your feet in your gumboots ...' (by the Kiwi male icon and 'good, keen man' Fred Dagg) with the words indicating that 'we'll never be real Kiwi's till we've won that Rugby Cup'.

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[8] Nick Perry, The Dominion of Signs, 1994, p 47.

"Culture is not simply art, music and literature, it is the total collection of behaviour patterns, values and beliefs that characterise a particular group of people."[9] This notion of culture as outlined by Noritz and Willmott, and also Nick Perry, alludes to the concept of *Volksgeist*.[10] A word coined by Hegel which means a communal essence, national soul or collective personality. Nick Perry, in an interview with ***Pavement Magazine's*** Bernard McDonald about his book ***The Dominion of Signs*** (1994), indicates that "New Zealanders are used to the idea of culture as something that's man-made, that's artifice, and we can be sardonic and distancing about it at the same time that we're taking pleasure in it."[11]

The essence of a nation's culture is often reflected in its literary work and arts. The sense of alienation, dislocation and cultural displacement (man/woman alone) of immigrants to New Zealand during colonisation is clearly evident in their early poetry with reference to things English. Settlers "were not intending to create something different but were merely bringing their British culture with them and attempting to foist it upon the indigenous population they found here."[12] During time, the landscape has become an implicit component of both literature and visual arts. Pakeha culture is characterised by an ongoing struggle between the indigenous and the imported. "When artists began to express their desire to find a national art ... poets and writers were soon arguing indigenous versus imported styles, themes and conventions."[13] Vivienne Jepson in her 1994 New Zealand Reed Fiction Award winning novel ***The House of Olaf Krull,*** aptly, if not somewhat sardonically, describes New Zealand as:

> ***...God's Own Country, Beautiful New Zealand, Land of the Long White Cloud with all its colourful people mingling happily under the sun, which, in spite of the hole in the ozone layer, never gets too hot. No, in that land of perpetual spring the summers are hot (but not too hot) and***

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[9] David Novitz and Bill Willmott, Culture and Identity in New Zealand, 1989, p 5.
[10] ibid p 5.
[11] Bernard McDonald, Pavement Magazine interview, 1994, issue 6, Aug/Sept , pp 38,39,68.
[12] David Novitz and Bill Willmott, Culture and Identity in New Zealand, 1989, p 9.
[13] ibid p 5.

> ***the winters are cold but never too much so and everything grows and grows and the forests are ever green and the grass is lush and flowers bloom and blackberry leaps and it was*** something nobody counted on ***- the way things would turn into noxious weeds after being transplanted to this loving South seas bosom ...„***[14]

Identifiable in New Zealand film is a link with New Zealand painting. Many film makers have emerged from the art schools at Elam and Ilam (such as Vincent Ward, Alison Mclean and Leon Narby). Thus springs an intense realisation of the 'visual' and the 'tactile' which is clearly manifest in New Zealand film. Scenes in Vincent Ward's ***Vigil*** (1984) have a resonance with the paintings of Toss Woollaston, Morrison's ***Constance*** (1983) with the urban landscapes of Siddell and Roger Donaldson's cottage in ***Smash Palace*** (1981) with the paintings of Robin White.[15] Although, to explore this further, consideration would need to extend to the background of the cinematographers, such as Alun Bollinger (who incidentally was the camera person for the 1995 documentary ***The Cinema of Unease***)

Characters in our films, novels and poems are often seen as figures in a vast and desolate landscape, and community (often rural) as a cut-off and isolated thing, forcing characters to turn inwards upon themselves to the "visionary realms within that might be equal to the non human grandeur without."[16] Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka in ***The Imaginary Industry: Australian Film in the Late Eighties*** (1988) have called this the "New Zealand genre".[17] Characters are seen to be on the fringe of society just as New Zealand is on the fringe of the world. The notion of the white man/woman at odds with his/her environment, with his/her country and with himself/herself, has been a theme of many New Zealand films. This theme persists up to the present and is deeply etched into the national psyche. It is why Merita Mita has described the New Zealand film industry as being a "white, neurotic one." What Merita Mita finds

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[14] Vivienne Jepsen, The House of Olaf Krull, 1994, Minerva, Reed Publishing NZ Ltd, Auckland.
[15] Chris Watson, NZ Film Extracts for **Is there a NZ film culture?**, 86.333 Educational Media.
[16] Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka, The Imaginary Industry : Australian Film in the Late Eighties, 1988, p 152.
[17] Ibid.

so interesting is the way that these films repeatedly fail to analyse and articulate that colonial syndrome of dislocation that is evident in these works. In many ways New Zealand films never articulate the subject of identity, and are driven by fear and repression. She believes that something deeper than the symptoms must be probed.[18]

According to Jock Phillips (in ***A Man's Country: the image of the pakeha male, a history***, 1987), national identity has arisen via the male stereotype, rather than the female, and that New Zealand has defined itself through national icons and male heroes.[19] This has links to Victorian Britain in the subordination of women. The "male stereotype in New Zealand is clearly an amplification of the home experience." [20] The work was largely manual and outdoors which placed status on physical prowess. "The most striking fact about nineteenth century New Zealand was how long it remained a frontier world."[21] Phillips notes that learning to "rough it" became central to the male experience in the colonies and, due to the nature of the work that had to be done, there was always the prospect of death by accident.[22] Out of this harsh work situation, colonial mateship was founded. Relationships of circumstance formed and certain patterns of mateship ritual were established. Rituals, out of which notions of 'hero-ship' have arisen, such as the rugby match, the centrality of the pub, and the war experience endure in contemporary society. Yet, interestingly Phillips indicates that these 'mateships' were not lasting, and loneliness was a common experience as often the nature of the physical work (for example, gumdiggers and miners) forced men to live by themselves. "When men wanted a psychological prop or antidote to oppressive loneliness, they turned to the bottle." [23] A distinctive pattern of drinking emerged which manifested itself in the 'binge'. As Phillips notes this was "because many of the frontier workers did not live close to a pub ... Instead of the moderate 'nip' the

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[18] This discussion is a paraphrase from Merita Mita's words in Dennis and Bieringa's Film in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1992, pp 47/98.
[19] Jock Phillips, A Man's Country, The Image of the Pakeha Male - A History, 1987, p vii.
[20] ibid p 4.
[21] ibid p 11.
[22] ibid p 22.
[23] ibid p 26 and p 56

men would come to town to 'have a burst' or a 'spree' - to drink themselves silly for as long as the money lasted."[24] Six o'clock closing of taverns and pubs in 1964 continued the binge phenomenon and the need to 'swill' quantities of alcohol in a limited time frame.

Drinking was also associated with other rituals of male culture, in particular sport. The male bravado, initially experienced on the foreign battlefields of World War One, was transported to the rugby field. Indeed, sport functioned as a moral code or mode of social control. Philips notes that the mateship of the team was perceived to be like the pioneer community - an egalitarian group. [25]

Significantly, these aspects of machismo are still apparent in contemporary New Zealand society. Random glances at local and metropolitan newspapers indicate that New Zealand is a society with a high level of aggression, inherently related to alcohol and the physicality of the pioneer experience. Recently the Television Three documentary ***Inside New Zealand, Booze Culture - Aspects of Drinking in New Zealand*** acknowledged that alcohol played a central role in our social functions and acted as a prerequisite for most social interchange. Indeed, occasions for drinking lie in many of our significant life milestones such as birth, death, marriage, new job, sports functions and the small town pub remains the site for weekend relaxation and social contact.[26] A worrying sociological trend which has resonance with the mateship pattern of drinking is the mass drinking now evident in society by adolescents, such as the pub crawl and New Year's Eve revelry. Patterns of drinking, while releasing inhibitions, often lead to the inappropriate expression of aggression. As noted by Phillips, "the violence and dissolute behaviour that went with drink was never hidden ... the effects of alcohol do not seem to be universal in all cultures, but in the West the effect of alcohol has characteristically been to release inhibitions and give free reign to violent and

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[24] ibid p 34.
[25] ibid p 100 and p 116.
[26] From the Palmerston North Evening Standard, May 26, 1995, p 13.

aggressive impulses."[27] Research released by the Otago Medical School in 1995, which studied nearly one thousand, twenty one year old Otago-born men and women, "found that more than half of the men and a third of the women had been victims of some form of assault - including sexual assault - in the previous year." The researchers believe that the figures they have presented show that "violence is very much part of young New Zealander's experience". Alcohol was reported as a contributing factor in most of the serious assaults.[28]

As Sandra Coney has noted in her 1985 ***Broadsheet*** review of ***Heart of the Stag,*** "sexual violence has run like a dark stain through the most recent New Zealand movies. Male film makers have been so ambivalent in their depiction of this violence that audiences haven't recognised it for what it is".[29] Coney cites one reviewer of ***Smash Palace*** who believed "the scene where Al rapes his wife from behind gave a glimpse of how good and tender their love making had been."[30] Coney indicates in her 1982 review of this film that the "male violence was certainly the leit motif of ***Smash Palace*** ... And this violence is understandingly, even sympathetically, portrayed, so that Al emerges as the anti-hero, a pugnacious, inarticulate little guy, with a soft spot for his daughter, who, when frustrated, uses violence as his form of communication (the car, his fists, his cock, his gun)." Coney accurately notes that "feminists have been working for years to expose the true nature and extent of male violence and engender some long overdue public understanding of it. It thus seems socially reprehensible for Donaldson to present this violence in the loving detail and uncritical light he does."

Heart of the Stag is perhaps one of the first New Zealand films which makes the 'dark stain' its unambiguous subject matter. "This film doesn't sidle up to its subject matter. There is no ambiguous titillating voyeurism here. We know about the incest from the first frames."[31] In fact Coney believes that New

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[27] Jock Phillips, A Man's Country: The Image of the Pakeha Male - A History, 1987, p 59.
[28] The Dominion, June 29, 1995, p 6.
[29] Sandra Coney, ,Broadsheet Review, Jan/Feb 1985, p 46.
[30] Sandra Coney, Broadsheet Review, April, 1982 pp 45/46.
[31] These three quotes are from the article referenced above at 30.

Zealand film makers are obsessed with the 'yuck' factor. She says, "its hard to think of a New Zealand movie where sexuality is celebrated as passion, eroticism, well-being and love, as opposed to furtive, violent, coercive ...".[32]

A startling realisation of this violence and reflection of the 'man alone' syndrome is the rate of male suicide in New Zealand. As reported in the ***Sunday Star Times***, eighty percent of all suicides in New Zealand are men, sixty six percent of all murder victims are men, seventy six percent of all admissions to hospital are men and seventy nine percent of pathological gamblers are men.[33] Auckland Men's-Line head Bruce Mackie says, "men are not in a healthy state. Yes, men are hurting women, but they are also hurting other men."[34] Recently there has been a re-acknowledgment of the position and needs of men. One example is the book titled ***Manhood*** by Steve Biddulph in which the author demands "respect for the nobility and heroism of men ... which has become lost among the taming influences of suburban life and overwhelmed by the ascendancy of feminism." They say "society has battered men ... emasculated and alienated them from their essential masculinity".[35] Significantly, in regards to colonisation of New Zealand as a frontier nation, Biddulph, notes that one of the steps to 'manhood' is the freeing of the "wild spirit". He says, "the god of men does not dwell in the suburbs or the office towers. Men need to find a spiritual basis for their inner life that is specifically masculine and based in nature and as we grow older this will be a source of strength and harmony, freeing them from fear and dependency."[36]

So strong was the notion of the alienated male that it dominated the New Zealand film industry in the late seventies and early eighties. "It was revealing", Phillips indicates, "that when the New Zealand film industry re-emerged from its slumber in the late seventies, the themes which it explored

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[32] Correspondence with Coney, 21 August 1995.
[33] Sunday Star Times, 30 July, 1995. ('It's For Real Man' by Sara Stuart).
[34] ibid
[35] ibid
[36] ibid

were highly recognisable. Kiwi males on the Road (***Sleeping Dogs***, ***Good-bye Pork Pie***); women as sluts or moral prudes (***Skin Deep***); man alone against the law (***Bad Blood***, ***Beyond Reasonable Doubt***, ***Smash Palace***)." It was not until the mid eighties that the local film industry began to diverge from the male violence, repression and insecurity associated with the 'bloke' film to allow women central roles and women film makers to present an alternative vision.[37]

NEW ZEALAND CINEMA - A FILM CULTURE?

In 1986 Nick Reid wrote, "In terms of race, belief and setting, then, New Zealand films are only beginning to explore national identity". [38] I believe Reid to be correct here. However, in 1996 (a decade on) we can confidently claim a 'film culture' which explores national identity and it is time to start investigating the nature and parameters of the beast.

Exploration of New Zealand's film culture has been undertaken by Sam Neill in a documentary produced this year, for the British Film Institute series marking a centenary of cinema, titled ***The Cinema of Unease***. Neill says of the local cinema "What intrigues people about the New Zealand cinema is that it's so dark. It has this brooding quality, there's always the potential for violence."[39] This excursion into the New Zealand film industry is unapologetically nostalgic and personal. Neill, who wrote and co-directed the documentary with Judy Rymer, says "I was surprised, when I began to write, by how dark my view of New Zealand was. And how dark our cinema is."[40] Yet Neill never really enunciates from where this 'unease' originates.

However, a documentary on New Zealand film is significant because it has been acknowledged that written discourse on film making in New Zealand has,

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[37] Jock Phillips, A Man's Country: The Image of the Pakeha Male - A History, 1987, p 275.
[38] Nick Reid, A Decade of NZ Film, p 25.
[39] Sam Neill, in NZ Film, issue no 53, May 1995, p 9.
[40] ibid

in the past, been limited.[41] As Costa Botes says in a review of the book ***Film in Aotearoa New Zealand*** (1992) by Jonathan Dennis and Jan Bieringa, "There's no doubt that film is the poor relation when it comes to critical discussion of the arts in New Zealand. There's not too much to be found between the extremes of necessarily glib print reviews, and the impenetrably dense prose found in one or two specialist magazines."[42] Yet Botes slams the book because, he says, the text ***Film in Aotearoa New Zealand*** is dictated by political correctness in its focus on feminist, gay, Maori, and experimental film makers, and notes that blokes and populists are left out by plaintively asking "where are Roger Donaldson, Ian Mune, Sam Pillsbury, Bruce Morrison, John Reid, and John Laing."[43] Botes answers his own question with the harsh comment "... the editors just aren't interested in the strain of New Zealand culture these white male heterosexuals have explored in their movies, so they relegate them to the non-status of occasional footnotes."[44] Botes will no doubt be somewhat placated to note that ***The Cinema of Unease*** redresses this omission. Indeed, this documentary focuses almost entirely on the 'bloke', the 'populist' and the archetypal New Zealand movie hero - the alienated man. Yet Botes does pose some pertinent questions:

> ***What happened to the broad popular audiences won by movies like Sleeping Dogs, Good-bye Pork Pie and Smash Palace in the late seventies? Why are contemporary New Zealand movies either miserably unsuccessful at home, or else popular with a minority of urban, middle-class and middle-aged viewers? How did our commercial cinema become so fatally alienated from its grassroots, and what is the prognosis for the future?***[45]

Indeed, many commentators have observed that contemporary New Zealand film is generally not popular with young people and that many New Zealand films fail to find an audience. This is noted by Lindsay Shelton, Film

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[41] Noted by Mike Nicolaidi and Costa Botes in Review articles of Dennis and Bieringa's Film in Aotearoa New Zealand in OnFilm, Aug 1992, p 11.
[42] ibid
[43] ibid
[44] ibid
[45] ibid

Commission Marketing Manager, in an article titled ***Once were Turkey's*** by Steve Braunias.[46] Braunias believes that a certain innocence and naiveté has been lost in New Zealand's maturing film industry. He asks, "were the late seventies a time of energy and experimentation in New Zealand film - reminiscent of pioneering values?" "No", counters Jonathan Dennis, "it was an era of greed." "People were making things they were absolutely unprepared to make. But I guess there were a number of films that were so completely nutty and had so little going for them that in fact they built up a surreal pleasure in their inanity." Dennis cites as examples, ***Bridge to Nowhere*** (Ian Mune, 1985), of which he says "it was incredibly dumb [but] I actually enjoyed that", and ***Heart of the Stag*** (Michael Firth, 1883) which "was such a shambles, it made me laugh out loud many times. That moment when the stag actually jumps out at Bruno Lawrence is one of the great, hilarious scenes ever made here." But, he cautions, "no one should lose sight of the fact that these films aren't any good." Yet, essentially, it was a time of experimentation - an experimentation that has now perhaps been largely transported to the short film. "The current vogue for experimental shorts", Braunias believes, "points to a worrying trend of so called serious art."[47] As Roger Horrocks, senior lecturer in film at Auckland University and biographer of Len Lye, concludes in his chapter *Alternatives,* in ***Film in Aotearoa New Zealand,*** "our experimental films have tended to be less specialised and esoteric than those of other countries, concerned more often with literary or social content than with abstract or structural ideas ... [and] despite its restraint the local work has been received by many local audiences as sceptically as a message from outer space."[48] This point is illustrated by the 1995/1996 ***Five for Five*** series of short films ("view five New Zealand shorts for five dollars"). This series, compiled to promote New Zealand short or experimental films, has largely failed to find a viewing audience. Perhaps the debate between populist versus experimental can be summed up by what Merita Mita has said in the film makers manifesto in ***Alternative Cinema***:

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[46] Steve Braunias, 'Once Were Turkeys' in the Sunday Star Times, Oct 23, 1994, p D1.
[47] This discussion is adapted from the article referenced above at 46.
[48] Roger Horrocks in Bieringa and Dennis, Film in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1992.

> ***The trend in our feature film industry has been towards a 'think-big - think bucks' policy. The reality of a cultural richness in our nation is being forsaken for the illusion of a commercial market overseas littered with bank notes ... Let the feature film industry grow and flourish but not at the expense of our other types of films. The industry has a responsibility to Aotearoa's tradition in documentary making, its small but exciting experimental film group, the new developments in wimmin's*** [*sic*] ***films, Maori films and even the new band film clips.'***[49]

Films are important cultural products because they have the ability to reflect, transmit and refract the culture producing them.[50] Some of the flavour of our culture will emerge through storyline, characterisation, setting and ideas regardless of whether the films are 'realistic', fantastical or imaginative.[51] John Maynard, ex Director of the Auckland Art Gallery and film producer (including ***An Angel at my Table,*** 1990), has suggested that he and New Zealand film makers make films from somewhere, as opposed to films from nowhere. I believe that others would support his comment. He is a strong supporter of cinema with national identity.[52] New Zealand's film industry deals with a set of local concerns in a culturally specific manner, and in doing so challenges dominant conventions.

Nick Roddick in the introduction to Vincent Ward's screenplay for the ***Navigator*** (1988) states:

> ***"for all that Vincent Ward may deny it, he belongs to New Zealand cinema. Only in a new industry would a first feature unique as Vigil have been made. And without the experience of growing up in what Ward calls a 'culture that's very isolated, at the bottom of the world, the vision would never have had quite those elements of sharpness and***

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[49] Merata Mita, cited by Horrocks in Film in Aotearoa New Zealand (1992), p 87, orginally in Alternative Cinema,

[50] Noted by various sources: Martin and Cairns in Shadows on the Wall, 1994, p viii and Nick Perry in ***Pavment*** Interview with Bernard MacDonald.

[51] Barbara Cairns, and Helen Martin, ,Shadows on the Wall, 1994, p 11/12.

[52] John Maynard, -, cited in Reid's A Decade of NZ Film, 1986 p 24.

> ***strangeness, of intense practicality (see, for instance, the scene in which the spike is cast) and intense peculiarity ...".***[53]

Roddick believes that it's not just *in* Ward's films, but *on* them as well that a sense of 'place' exerts itself. The themes associated with New Zealand cinema stem from this sense of place and are implicitly linked with aspects of colonisation discussed in the first part of this chapter. For example, the man/woman alone theme and associated alienation. While I discussed a broad perception of the notion of 'counterculture' in the way New Zealand artwork challenges dominant conventions by working counter to the imported themes, another form of 'counterculture' operates within the filmic narrative. In popular culture the notion of 'counterculture' relates specifically to overt protest, conflict or contestation - often in the form of a movement which attracts a following or set of disciples, such as the anti-establishment communes of the seventies. To a large degree, this 'counterculture' in New Zealand film presents itself as rebellion against authority and a lack of respect for authority figures that can be linked with aspects of mateship and male bonding, for example, ***Good-bye Pork Pie*** (Geoff Murphy, 1981) and its humiliation of the traffic cop.

Represented consistently in literature about New Zealand film and New Zealand art in general is a preoccupation with the landscape. While the overwhelming majority of New Zealanders are now city and suburb dwellers, (Nick Perry notes "New Zealand is one of the most urbanised nations in the world. In the 1986 Census 83 percent of the population was defined as urban.")[54] feature films in New Zealand are predominantly rural and have small town settings. These isolated and rural settings are essential to the mood and narration of the films.[55] The popularity of the village setting has a resonance with early theatrical melodrama. As Michael Booth notes in ***English Melodrama*** (1965), the popularity of the village settings can be directly related

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[53] Nick Roddick, in the Introduction to Vicent Ward's Screen Play for the Navigator, 1989, Faber and Faber, London, pxi.

[54] Nick Perry, The Dominion of Signs, 1994, p 41.

[55] For further discussion of this point refer to Brian McDonnell's 'Images of Aotearoa : Rural and Urban Settings in NZ film', Alternative Cinema. Spring/Summer, 1984/85, Vol 12, Nos 3/4, pp 5-7.

to the needs of urban audiences. This urban populous welcomed the village common to melodrama for it was a place where the suffering and poverty of the industrial urban setting was temporary and the village represented nostalgia. "For those bought up in towns and cities who had no memory of the countryside, the ... village appeared by its very sweetness and simplicity, a remote and beautiful fairyland not dirtied or disfigured by ugliness and smoke."[56] The opening scene of ***Once Were Warriors*** highlights this cliché with the archetypal tourist shot presented on the motorway billboard. Yet, as Brian McDonnell notes, the rural is not always a safe haven, it is often portrayed as a region of danger, and source of alienation and isolation.[57] The landscape in New Zealand cinema has essentially become symbolic of a range of obsessive moods, a metaphor of the personal unconscious: the outward representation of the malaise or malignity within. As Barbara Cairns and Helen Martin also note in ***Shadows on the Wall*** (1994), "film makers and designers rely on the fact that viewers understand certain conventions in film language - in particular the use of well established cultural symbols." [58] The landscape has become an almost cliched example of this. A symbol of the turmoil within; a motif of the precarious nature of the world (both interior and exterior) that we inhabit. There are very few films which are grounded in the urban, or the suburban and "there is an absence of optimistic 'feel good' films which show the charm of city life, the colour and warmth of relationships, an absence of comedies of manners."[59] As Christina remarks to Lane in the opening moments of Alison Mclean's ***Crush*** (1993), "McCahon said it's a landscape with too few lovers."

The 'terrain vague' of the landscape is also a selling point for many films. In the article ***The Romance of Maoriland: Ethnography and Tourism in New Zealand Films*** (1990), Martin Blythe notes that two kinds of fictional genre are often at the basis of all national and cultural myth making - the timeless

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[56] Michael Booth, ,English Melodrama, 1965, Herbert Jenkins Ltd, London, p 121.
[57] Brian McDonnell, 'Images of Aotearoa: Rural and Urban Settings in NZ Film', Alternative Cinema, Spring/Summer, 1984/85, Vol 12 Nos 3/4, pp 5-7.
[58] Barbara Cairns and Helen Martin, Shadows on the Wall, 1994, p 12.
[59] Brian McDonnell, 'Images of Aotearoa : Rural and Urban Settings in NZ Film' Alternative Cinema, 1984/85, pp 5-7.

romance and the historical romance. Maoriland is portrayed as a land outside time, a lost world, in to which the tourist may step briefly and tantalisingly. The tourist thermal areas around Rotorua are a favourite location for this.[60] Alison Mclean exploits this terrain in ***Crush***. The kitsch motels and tea-rooms in ***Crush*** are set against the more contemporary architecture of Rotorua's tourist industry: the small and parochial juxtaposed against an international industry combine to suggest a milieu of contradictions. "The film opens with a shot of a bubbling mud pool reminding us of Mclean's early work on the film ***Strata***, but also introducing that curious city where geological oddity mixes with a touristy, souvenir version of Maori culture. A sign portentously reads 'Hell's Gate'."[61] Through Mclean's camera the landscape of ***Crush*** becomes timeless - containing an inherent spirituality, and "suggesting a veneer of civilisation in imminent danger of cracking apart."[62] Blyth notes this too: Maoriland hisses and bubbles, and its geography is profoundly unstable. The concern with things Maori signals the traditional and spiritual values which the pakeha has lost. There is a sense that we are two alienated cultures: European New Zealanders alienated from the traditions of Victorian England (or their Scottish, Irish or other specific heritage) and the Maori forced into a position of alienation by the confiscation of land and non-recognition of language, cultural beliefs and social systems.

As Ross Gibson notes in his chapter on *Formative Landscapes* in Scott Murray's ***Australian Cinema*** (1994) **,** the landscape can be viewed as a ubiquitous character or dominant mythology (leitmotiv).[63] Some of the preoccupation with the land in New Zealand film can be linked to colonisation. The obsession in many New Zealand films is 'possession'- of land and of people. The acquiring of land became an overriding preoccupation, and it was the promise of high quality land in a climate which permitted year round pasture

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[60] This paragraph taken from Martin Blyth, 'The Romance of Maoriland: Ethnography and Tourism in NZ Films', East-West Film Journal, Vol 4, No 2, June 1990, pp 90-107. Blyth is a New Zealander resident in Los Angeles. He has a PhD in Film and Television from UCLA and is currently working in international marketing at Walt Disney studions (p 107).

[61] Brian McDonnell, North and South, March 1993, p 129.

[62] Sight and Sound Reviews, March 1993, Vol 3, issue 4, p 44.

[63] Ross Gibson, cited in Scott Murray's Australian Cinema 1994, Chpt 2 'Formative Landscapes', p 45.

growth, and the associated wealth from wool, meat and later dairy products, (as well as the shortage of labour) that attracted immigrants to Aotearoa.[64] This is reflected in two contemporary films which deal with diverse aspects of colonisation. In Jane Campion's ***The Piano*** (1994), Stewart's (Sam Neill) focus is the acquisition of land, as he greedily accepts Baine's (Harvey Keital) offer of prime land in exchange for the piano. This is paralleled in ***Desperate Remedies*** (1994) when Lawrence (Kevin Smith) is coerced into deception with the promise of land. (During the exposition of the narrative, at the wharf, there is a sandwich board which reads "Cheap land - natives no problem.") Perry indicates that, New Zealand "continues to remain crucially reliant upon agriculture, forestry and fishing for the great bulk of those export receipts upon which [our] economic well-being depends." [65]

The landscape and the weather in New Zealand film acquires the quality of an obsessive nightmare. The burden of rain, mud and penetrating damp of the West Coast of both islands which is exploited in ***The Piano*** (1994), compared with the desolate, blasted, barren expanse of the Central Plateau or Central Otago landscape as in ***Vigil*** (1984). The landscape can be hostile and malevolent whether the vistas are claustrophobic or vast. The dense and barely penetrable bush is also significant in creating this quality . Robert Sklar in a 1971 ***Landfall*** article on New Zealand film maker Rudall Hayward, observed that the dominant visual planes of Hayward's films are horizontal, conveying a sense of land. Sklar believes it is a "familiar land, a benign and even beloved land, to be lived with, in contrast to the Western's horizontal planes depicting a scenic, but also awesome land , to be seized or traversed."[66] However, it would appear that, instead of the horizontal planes evident in Hayward's films, many New Zealand films operate within the bounds of tight, vertical planes which produce a claustrophobic, inhospitable chaos.

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[64] David Novitz and Bill Willmott (eds), Culture and Identity in New Zealand, 1989, p 26.
[65] Nick Perry, The Dominion of Signs, 1994, p 41.
[66] Robert Sklar, Landfall article 'Rudall Hayward NZ Filmmaker', 1971, Vol 1 pps 147-154.

ENUNCIATING THE UNEASE - JUNG'S SHADOW SIDE AND NEW ZEALAND FILM

> ***It's not like Australia, there's no predators, no venomous spiders or snakes***
> ***New Zealand's this totally benign paradise...***
> ***And it's like what I said to Colin: there's this obsession to uncover the germ of evil***
> ***- search for the snake...***
> ***That's the New Zealand psyche - looking for serpents...***
> ***There's there's this streak of perversity...***
> **(Christina to Lane, in *Crush* (1992), moments before the car crash)**

Jung's symbolic theories centre on the psyche - the spirit or soul. According to Jung, the psyche has three levels: the consciousness, which is the only part of the mind directly known by the individual (this includes extroversion, and the interior, subjective world of introversion); the personal unconsciousness and the collective unconsciousness. The psyche, consisting of the 'wholeness' of personality with which individuals are born, and composed of numerous diversified but interacting systems and levels, is relevant to a discussion of New Zealand film because it enables consideration of both the individual (personal unconsciousness) and the social ideological constructs which operate through generations (the collective unconsciousness). Utilisation of Jung's concepts of the personal and collective unconsciousness to explore New Zealand film assists in defining and enunciating the 'darkness' evident in our film culture.

The reservoir of latent and primordial images that Jung terms the collective unconscious is significant to the development of a nation's psyche. These first, original or earliest images can combine into a theory of 'Lamarekian'. This rather unpopular notion posits that an experience learned by one generation or

a sequence of generations can be inherited by succeeding generations.[67] For example, the explanation of the emotion fear: fear of snakes or fear of the dark learned by one generation, can be handed on to the next generation.[68] The more experiences we have, the greater the chances that the latent images will become manifest. This theory has links with Jung's collective unconscious which contains the contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less culturally universal and specific. Armytage notes in his survey of future societies titled ***Yesterday's Tomorrow's*** (1968), that "since man [sic] began to extricate himself [sic] from being engulfed by his environment he has been developing a symbolic language, which has become known as myth, to account for the mysterious forces around him."[69] Such a comment harkens to Jung's concept of the collective unconscious and is reinforced when Armytage cites Aldolf E Jensen who notes "these ... explanatory and propitiatory myths contain memories of experiences undergone that are for ever evoked by the imagination of the sharman, and his[sic] modern equivalents."[70] The incest taboo, an almost universal phenomenon in human communities, is an example of the operation of the collective unconsciousness. Incest has featured as a thematic element in many New Zealand films such as ***The Scarecrow*** (Sam Pillsbury, 1982), ***Constance*** (Bruce Morrison, 1983), ***Heart of the Stag*** (Michael Firth, 1983), ***Trespasses*** (Peter Sharp, 1983). Coney notes that there is also the suggestion of incest in Roger Donaldson's ***Smash Palace*** (1981).[71] While in the 1994 film ***Once Were Warriors*** (dir: Lee Tamahori) domestic violence and incest, the cause of the tragedy, are to the fore (as Mayer notes, "Post screening discussions, and media analysis, inevitably focused on the film's depiction of domestic violence and also the futile pub existence of the 'real-life' Jake Hekes."[72]) the violation of Grace (Mamaengaroa Kerr-Bell), the most innocent of Beth's (Rena Owen) children, by 'Uncle' Bully, again presents incest as a principle element. In contrast to

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[67] Anthony Stevens, A Natural History of the Self, Routledge, 1982, Great Britain, p14/18.
[68] ibid
[69] Armytage WHG in Yesterday's Tomorrow's: A historical survey of furture societies, 1968, p 1.
[70] ibid
[71] Sandra Coney notes that the film "ads carried the by-line: "The only lady I'm interested in happens to be seven years old" a tastelessly salacious slogan in the light of our increasing knowledge of the extent of father/daughter incest." Broadsheet Review article, April 1982, p 45.

the novel by Alan Duff, which leaves the identification of the rapist vague, even allowing suspicion to rest on Jake, the film clearly identifies and punishes the villain.[73] Discussion of this film by Mirsha O'Donnell, in her ***Metro Magazine*** article, raises some relevant points. While O'Donnell is correct in noting that the ambiguity and surrealism found in our growing national film identity is not as evident in ***Once Were Warriors*** as it is in other films, she claims that this lack within the film was a "conscious decision as the representation of a harsh reality works to provide an accessible message which speaks to all members of society."[74] This "harsh reality" does not necessarily speak to *all* members of society. In fact, a harsh reality can be just as alienating as the ambiguous and the surreal. While O'Donnell's article disputes it, the ending of ***Once Were Warriors*** is not as black and white as her argument posits. To some degree, the audience 'feels' for Jake (Temuera Morrison) at the end of the film when he has lost everything and is left alone and disconsolate. The denouement exposes Jake as villain, and in punishing him, places him as victim.

Brutal childhoods and dysfunctional families underpin many New Zealand films. ***Jack Be Nimble*** (Garth Maxwell, 1993) was, according to the director, inspired by a brutal childhood incident. Garth Maxwell "... was told of an incident where a young child was whipped with barbed wire."[75]

The narrative focuses on a brother (Jack - Alexis Arquette) and his sister, Dora, (Sarah Smuts-Kennedy) who are separated from their family and each other. This is a dark tale of the 'primordial child' able to wreak havoc and control events - an unpredictable and vengeful force. "Thematically it deals with many of our deepest human emotions. ***Jack Be Nimble*** confronts issues of the

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[72] Geoff Mayer, , Metro Film, Television and Video Multimedia magazine, No 101, 1995, 'Going Home: Once Were Warriors', pp 3-6.

[73] Brian McDonnell, Metro Film, Television and Video Multimedia magazine, No 101, 1995, 'Once Were Warriors: Controversial Novel Becomes Blockbuster Film', pp 7-9

[74] Mirsha O'Donnell, Metro Film, Television and Video Multimedia magazine, No 101, 1995, 'Once Were Warriors'.

[75] David Gapes, 'Expressions of Freedom' – David Gapes talks to Garth Maxwell, On Film, November 1993, p 9.

beast and violence in humanity; how there is a world where fear, not love is the most powerful emotion at work."[76]

Jung has called the contents of the collective unconscious, archetypes (such as birth, death, magic, hero). "The archetype is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear."[77] The archetype as Jung conceived it, "is a pre condition and co existent of life itself, its manifestations not only reach upwards to the spiritual heights of religion, art and metaphysics, but also down into the dark realms of organic and inorganic matter."[78]

The persona or conformity archetype is our 'outward' face. Our 'inward' face consists of the anima (contrasexual female side of the male psyche) and the animus (male side of the female psyche).[79] Other well know expressions of archetypes are myth and fairytale. These are forms which have been handed down through long periods of time and are inherently linked with the past. The sense of magic, myth and scary fairytale utilised in Alison Maclean's ***Crush*** are juxtaposed against pain and malevolence and set amid a landscape which can be both breathtaking and unmerciful. A landscape so mystically coloured that the red of Lane's (Marcia Gay Harden) lipstick or red jacket or dress is framed perfectly by the steamy Rotorua geyserlands and natural greens of the landscape. Red is the predominant colour in ***Crush*** - signifying strength, boldness, sexuality, violence, power and assertiveness. In ***Crush,*** red is often juxtaposed against green. The red car 'crushed' in the green paddock and Lane's red clothes set against the greens of the native bushland. (These colours are opposites on the 'colour wheel', thus are very powerful when juxtaposed.) The drizzle-shrouded scape which cloaks ***Crush*** provides a mythological or primordial backdrop for the archetypal anti-hero - Lane. In

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[76] OnFilm, May 1993, p 10, 'Not a Love Story'.
[77] This discussion is taken from C G Jung - Four Archetypes, 1972, pp 4/5.
[78] Stevens Anthony, A Natural History of the Self, 1982, p 29.
[79] Well known terms referred used by Jung, referred to here in Mary Ann Mattoon, Jungian Psychology in Perspective, 1981, p 21.

Crush, the awareness of archetypal beauty and beast are toyed with. While it would be tempting to consider Lane and Christina (Donna Rees) in terms of a binary good/bad, victim/aggressor, blonde/dark opposition, Mclean moves beyond this to a suggestion that both the beauty and the beast resides within each of the women. Power shifts between each of them, and at different times within the narrative, each woman is posited as victim and alternatively as aggressor (Angela -to Lane's charm and sophistication; Christina to Lane's driving/speeding, Lane to Christina and Angela's revenge). The ***King Kong*** (RKO, 1933) poster in the background of Mclean's short film ***Kitchen Sink*** (1989) reinforces the horror genre and also alludes to archetypal notions of beauty and the beast (and the associated significance of the fairytale and mythology).

The notion of duality is significant in terms of the construction of the personality. Jung acknowledges that there are various components which combine to form the personal unconscious. Inherent in the notion of archetype and persona is the 'shadow side'. When the shadow is stringently repressed by society or when inadequate outlets are provided for it, disaster often ensues. "The animal in us only becomes more beastlike when it is repressed".[80] The shadow side often appears as a shady character of dubious integrity. Maxwell notes that Jack and Dora in ***Jack Be Nimble*** could be two halves of the one personality. Duality is again borne out in David Blythe's ***Angel Mine*** (1979). This intriguingly dark satire of seventies suburbia relies on Bunelian type, drug induced fantasy sequences to warp the conservativeness of seventies New Zealand. Fraser McDonald, Carrington Hospital Superintendent, supported Blythe's perspective's saying "Blythe wasn't a pervert and was in fact dealing with stuff they were confronted with all the time, the great suburban dream gone wrong."[81] The straight, but dissatisfied couple in ***Angel Mine***, have dark, leather-clad, punk, alter egos to which they fall victim.

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[80] Carl Jung, Civilization in Transition. Vol 10, 1918, p 22.
[81] Greg Bennett, Pavement Magazine Issue 6, August/September, 1994, pp 16/17.

It is here that I want to pick up the quote from Dermody and Jacka used earlier regarding the turning inwards upon ourselves to the "visionary realms within ..." and consider two New Zealand films ***An Angel at my Table*** (Jane Campion, 1990) and ***Heavenly Creatures*** (Peter Jackson, 1994) in which the central characters turn inwards to enriched imaginative interior worlds.

Myth can act as partial truth, a distortion of reality or perception. Ideological myths have been shaped by fickle and uncertain aspects of human life. Often such aspects are labelled 'social problems'. Such myths are fuelled by fear, repression and lack of knowledge. Many preconceived notions about mental illness are still firmly entrenched in contemporary society. Jane Campion's ***An Angel at my Table*** evocatively conveys the essence of Janet Frame's astounding, brave and indeed gifted existence. This film exposes the mythological nature of mental illness and the harsh reality. The psychiatric hospital, as well as events surrounding Janet's committal, highlight a mechanism of social control. Janet's 'illness' presents itself, according to the medical profession, as schizophrenia - an inherent evil which literally must be 'cut' out to allow Janet a 'normal' life. Such blame reinforces the victim's marginality in terms of social status, leaving little or no feeling of belonging in society, or sense of location. Several motifs in this film emphasise Janet's isolation: the mirror shots question identity; preoccupation with teeth suggest fear and powerlessness; boxes and suitcases indicate illness and health (as well as entrapment); and the road is a premonition of her own later alienation and isolation."[82] Victims (Janet is portrayed as a victim in the screenplay) become alienated and lost. As Patrick Evans notes in ***Illusions***, Campion's capacity to convince and seduce the viewer lies in the way she picks out detail which humanises. "This is at its most potent when she is dealing with the question of Frame's mental illness. The question is of course central to our understanding of the writer and how she works and also her conception of herself. It is somewhere in here that the story of Janet Frame expands, opens out and begins to take on some of those attributes of public mythology...".[83]

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[82] Barbara Cairns and Helen Martin, Shadows on the Wall, 1994, p 200/201.
[83] Patrick Evans, Illusions, 'Filming Fiction', No 15 1990, p 17.

The requirement to 'fit in' and conform to a society which places value and status on physicality and practicality, manifests itself in Janet's timid, twitching facial expressions; uncertain, hesitant gestures; dull understated, drab-coloured clothing. Yet, "despite her lack of material possessions, Janet's life is enriched by her imagination. She and her sisters inhabit a fairytale world of magic and delight, emphasised in the bedroom scene in which she reads to her sisters from Poppy's 'special' book, and the scene where they join hands and wander in a fairy trail through the woods at night."[84] Often the strongest feature is Janet's halo of red hair which others are constantly trying to change so that it 'fits in' with what is expected. This harkens to the 'tall poppie' syndrome often associated with New Zealand Society (also addressed in the 1984 film ***Sylvia*** by Michael Firth).

While it is tempting to consider ***Heavenly Creatures*** (Peter Jackson, 1994) in terms of insanity, mental illness, and hysteria, Jackson's standpoint was totally subjective and avoids consideration of narrative events at this level. As Watson notes, "Inasmuch as Pauline Hulme claimed insanity for the murder of her mother it is also tempting to base a review around a psychoanalytic framework. However, most of the reviewers noted that Jackson's standpoint was subjective. He constructed the film so that viewers could get into the girls' minds; could experience their feelings and share their fantasies."[85] This story of obsession and alienation that arise from the family milieu shocked the moral, conservative New Zealanders in the 1950's, and continues to intrigue us today. Children murdering parents is perhaps more common today[86], but as Bernard McDonald suggests in the ***Pavement*** review of this film, the story of Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme fascinates us because it is a "titillating part of our generally lack lustre history."[87] The gruesome nature of the murder of Pauline's mother, Honora Reiper in 1954 (Parker and Hulme murdered Reiper

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[84] Barbara Cairns and Helen Martin, Shadows on the Wall, 1994, p 209.

[85] Chris Watson, 'If Michel Foucault had seen Peter Jackson's Heavenly Creatures', in the NZ Journal of Media Studies, vol 1, no 2, 1994 pp 14-27.

[86] For example, the 1980 shotgun slayings by Erik and Lyle Menendez of their parents. A Los Angeles jury recommended on 19 May 1996 a penalty of life imprisonment for the brothers rather than the death penalty. Final sentencing is set for 2 July 1996. New Plymouth Evening Standard, 20 April, 1996.

[87] Bernard McDonald, Pavement Magazine, Issue 7 October/November 1994.

by pulverising her head with a brick slung in a stocking), caught the attention of the highly conservative city of Christchurch and the nation. Interest escalated when Parker and Hulme were diagnosed as 'homosexual paranoiacs' in an age when many people didn't even know what that meant, and after being found sane and guilty of murder were sentenced to five years in separate prisons.[88]

The use of newsreel footage and male voice over at the opening is both nostalgic and reassuring offering a marked counter-point to the cut to the two blood splattered girls as they tear screaming from the bushes after killing mother. This journey into fantasy and fantasy fulfilment is compelling - even if we know the story prior to viewing. The fact that Parker and Hulme are still alive (Juliet Hulme is living under the name of Anne Perry in Scotland and is, ironically, the author of murder mysteries, such as ***A Sudden Fearful Death***; Pauline Parker is reputedly living in Auckland) gives the film a heightened marketability.

The obsessive bond which existed between Parker and Hulme is engaging. Anne Perry (Juliet Hulme) has said of the film "The murder was a matter of honour ... it wasn't a great 'I can't live without you' business that these idiot movie makers are making out of it."[89] But her comment is disputed by the film's co-writer Fran Walsh: "If you don't have a great passion, why commit a murder? She did it because Pauline was more important to her than anyone else. This comment shows she's desperate to protect her public image."[90] As MacDonald asks, why indeed commit a murder? Everyone, I imagine, has thoughts of killing somebody, and perhaps its one obsessional factor that makes us snap. Although, McDonald quips "it's not the makings of a natural-born killer"!.[91] Hulme/Perry believes "that Pauline would have committed suicide had her mother succeeded in separating them".[92] While at the time of the court-case the two women were 'demonised' in the press, Jackson's film does not

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[88] ibid
[89] New Idea, 14/3/95, pp 12/13, 'An Unheavenly Lie'.
[90] ibid
[91] Bernard McDonald, Pavement Review of ***Heavenly Creatures***, issue 7, October/November 1994.
[92] New Idea, 14/3/95, 'An Unheavenly Lie'.

perpetuate the image of them as demons or monsters. In fact, the narrative is portrayed with a balance of compassion and condemnation. Yet the title encompasses a subtle juxtaposition of images: 'creatures' does suggest the monstrous or dark connotations usually associated with horror; while the word 'heavenly' has a resonance located in the fantasy world literalised by computer techniques. The camera assists this sense of altered reality with swirling, giddy 360 degree rotations supported by screaming or uncontrolled laughter which adds a hypnotic, if not vertiginous, aspect. A sense that the viewer is being sucked into a dream world which sits precariously on top a world which is crumbling into nightmare. The significance of this dream world is ambiguous, but it is clearly a 'better', idyllic, more secure place - a heavenly escape for the heavenly creatures? Regardless of the brutality of the murder, audiences are encouraged to identify with Parker and Hulme. As McDonnell suggests, this is perhaps the "hardest pill for an audience to swallow". He asks, "should we be moved by two premeditated murderers with sociopathic leanings?"[93] The ambivalence here forces a questioning of our own 'dark' desires.

SUMMARY

Do we need a cinema that makes us squirm? That communicates violence and cruelty? Perhaps, though, via this catharsis, the fear that the 'shadow side' might one day rule our personality and national psyche is transported into a controllable medium which reflects and surreally refracts the manifest behaviours associated with the shadow: rebellion, repression, alienation ... It could be argued that the alienation in New Zealand film has slowly been shifting from the 'man alone' syndrome of the late seventies and early eighties, to a more pronounced turning inwards. If then, the focus of the nineties is on psychodrama - what will the twenty first century hold? As Sam Neill notes, "If national cinema is a reflection of ourselves then ours is a troubled society indeed."[94]

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[93] Bernard McDonald, Pavement, issue 7, October/November 1994.
[94] Sam Neil, ***The Cinema of Unease***, The British Film Institute, 1995.

Many of the filmic aspects of 'darkness' or 'unease' discussed in this chapter are transported to the publicity material for these films. It takes no more than a quick flick through the poster material for New Zealand film to identify several major elements which connote 'darkness' or 'unease'. The following is a brief summary of aspects of 'darkness' evident in New Zealand film posters:

- **Hostile landscapes**:

Several New Zealand film posters allude to the 'bleakness', malevolent or menacing nature of the landscape. ***Vigil*** presents a child-alone in a vast and desolate landscape. The ***Quiet Earth*** presents a man-alone in a vast, desert-like (and deserted) landscape. Both the man (Bruno Lawrence) in ***The Quiet Earth*** and the child, Toss (Fiona Kay), in ***Vigil*** hold a weapon (a machine gun and a wooden spear respectively; although Toss' 'spear' could also represent a religious symbol or sign of authority) suggesting a feeling of threat and immanent defence.

The film poster for ***An Angel at my Table*** also presents a child-alone, this time completely defenceless, standing at the front of a long straight road. This road is an iconic symbol common to many New Zealand films and connotes or signifies a journey which is to be undertaken. Sam Neill in the ***Cinema of Unease*** notes that " The road has served as the central image in New Zealand film not just because people in our films are usually on some journey or others escaping somewhere or moving on, but it also seems ... that this lonely road through this indifferent landscape, this isolated space, is the story or cinema itself." Neill notes that "in our formative years the sort of films we aspired to were not those or Godard or Bergman, but films like ***Easy Rider*** and ***Two Lane Black Top*** - unabashed 'B' movies in which the central image is of the road, with its promise of freedom and anarchy".[95]

The film poster of ***An Angel at my Table*** has a harshness to the colour, almost a glare which is common on a bright sunny day. The greens and oranges are

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[95] Sam Neil, ***The Cinema of Unease***, The British Film Institute, 1995.

startlingly bright. This brightness, combined with the vast backdrop of the landscape produces a sense of overwhelming unease and precariousness. A feeling that something awful is going to happen.

The traditional country landscape does not feature in the ***Once Were Warriors*** film poster, however the opening shot deserves a mention here. The camera initially shows a slice of idyllic, sun-drenched central Otago landscape, this shot pulls back to reveal that this is only an illusion - a picture on a billboard over a concrete motorway. The cliché of the New Zealand landscape is cleverly invoked to highlight the juxtaposition between the idealised view or mythology of New Zealand and contemporary 'reality'. The harsh urbanscape of the film does, however, present a hostile and malevolent environment.

- **Repression versus Liberation**

While the landscape does not feature in the film poster for ***The Piano***, the clothes worn by Ada and Flora reflect the sense of entrapment produced by the landscape in the film (eg. Ada caught in the supplejack forest). The bonnets and layers of Victorian clothing trap, conceal and restrain in a similar manner to the enclosed and claustrophobic West Coast landscape of the film. Costume again features in the film poster for ***Desperate Remedies.*** Here costume signifies a more celebratory sexuality especially in terms of the flowing colour (the sensual red associated with Dorothea compared with the black and drab costume of ***The Piano***).

- **The monster, the animal or the 'Other':**

In terms of psychoanalysis the 'Other' connotes threat, anxiety and negativity. The 'Other' is a catalyst for the critical analysis of everything that 'normality' represents. Closely linked to the concept of repression is this notion of 'Otherness' - "that which bourgeois ideology cannot recognise or accept but must deal with (as suggested by Barthes in Mythologies) in one of two ways: either by rejecting and it possibly annihilating it, or by rendering it sage and

assimilating, converting it as far as possible into a replica of itself."[96] The notion of the 'Other' is a significant component of filmic narrative. Robert Heilman has called this 'Otherness' 'heterophobia'. Heilman believes that "the need to identify evil with other people is strong" [97] and he notes that John Paul Sartre addresses this sense of 'Otherness' in No Exit (1944) "when in much quoted words, he defines 'hell' as 'other people'."[98] There is also the tendency to disavow evil as being 'foreign'. What is hated in the self or in the culture is often repressed, or projected outwards in a process of disavowal.

An open mouthed scream is superimposed behind the wedding party in ***Mauri***, and a monster with teeth bared is superimposed behind the couple in the poster for ***Braindead***. (There is an intertextual reference here to Eduard Munch's ***The Scream.***) A similar image of menacing head shot is also found in the posters for ***The Scarecrow***[99] and ***Jack Be Nimble***.

The 'Other' is signified by the tattooed face in ***Utu*** and ***Once Were Warriors***. The notion of the 'Other' is also evident in ***Other Halves*** where a wire fence separates the Pacific Island boy from the rest of the image ('Otherness' is also suggested in title). Again, the 'Other' is signified in the text of the poster for ***Skin Deep*** "In their town she was an outsider."

These images have a 'nightmarish' or dream-quality to them. Jungian psychology holds that knowledge of the self is accessible through dream.[100] Selfhood or self-realisation can occur through dream. Jung's concept of the

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[96] Robin Wood, 'The Return of the Repressed' in American Nightmare, 1979, p 9.
[97] Robert Heilman, The Iceman, the Arsonist and the Troubled Agent, 1973, p 30.
[98] Ibid
[99] The notion of film posters being indicative of target audiences is addressed by Brian McDonnell with reference to ***The Scarecrow***. In his doctoral research ***The Translation of New Zealand Fiction into Film*** (1986) McDonnell notes that the contrasts between the two posters used to market this film were distinct. He says that the first poster, aimed at 30+ age-group, was "very stark (black and white, with the only trace of colour being a bright drop of red blood) and violent. Its central image was a large photograph of Daphne Moran having her throat cut, the knife blade dominating the composition." Whereas the second poster was entirely more wholesome and more appealing to the secondary-school age-group....it was coloured in warm, golden hues"; the children, painted by New Zealand artist Peter Siddell, were wholesome and idealised and set against a golden field. The children appeared in daylight, not the darkness of the first poster. Brian McDonnell, 'The Translation of New Zealand Fiction into Film', Thesis – Doctor of Philosophy in English, University of Auckland, (1986), pp 208-211.
[100] Calvin S Hall and Vernon J Nordby, A Primer of Jungian Psychology, 1973, p 52.

psyche, and associated notions of duality and Beauty and the Beast, is toyed with in ***Jack Be Nimble*** and ***Crush***. Significant to this is also the notion of the Beast in terms of mythology.

- **Archetypes:**

Jung has outlined a number of common archetypes such as birth, rebirth, death, power, magic, the hero, the child, the trickster God, the demon, the wise old man, the earth mother, the giant and so on. Jung also described many natural objects as archetypal. For example, trees, the sun, the moon, wind, rivers, fire and animals. Many man-made objects, according to Jung, also have archetypal qualities, such as rings and weapons.[101]

As Anthony Stevens notes, the etymology of the word 'archetype' is instructive:

> ***"The first element 'arche' signifies 'beginning, origin, course, primal source principle'. but it also signified 'position of a leader, supreme rule and government' (in other words a kind of 'dominant'): the second element 'type' means 'blow and what is produced by a blow, the imprint of a coin ... form, image, prototype, model, order and norm', ... in the figurative, modern sense, 'pattern underlying form, primordial form' (the form, for example, 'underlying' a number of similar human, animal or vegetable specimens.)*** (Jacobi, 1959)[102]

Archetypes that are clearly evident in New Zealand Film posters are the Femme Fatale or 'demon woman' in ***Crush*** (Lane represents dangerous sexuality and passion, and is associated with the colour red). The Femme Fatale is also evident in ***Desperate Remedies*** (Dorothea again represents power and dangerous sexuality and, as with Lane, is associated with the colour red). Another common archetype in New Zealand film is the Child archetype. Children travel from innocence to knowledge in what Jung calls a psychic

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[101] Ibid, pp 41/42.
[102] Anthony Stevens, Archetype : A natural History of the Self, 1982, p 47.

rebirth. Such journeys are made by the characters in ***Vigil***, ***The Navigator***, ***Smash Palace***, ***An Angel at my Table***, ***The Scarecrow*** and ***Heavenly Creatures*** (where innocence is lost with ghastly, murderous consequences).

The shadow archetype, 'beast', 'Other' or 'shadow-side' features in ***Once Were Warriors*** (the tattooed face of Nig on the poster represents 'Otherness' and Uncle Bully is presented as a 'trickster' archetype in the film). In ***Jack be Nimble,*** Jack's supernatural or nefarious side is representative of elements which exist in the 'shadow'. Jung has noted that "in order for a person to become an integral member of the community, it is necessary to tame his animal spirits contained within the shadow."[103]

The 'Madonna' or 'heroine' archetype is a strong feature of both Beth and Grace in ***Once Were Warriors***. A combination of the victim/heroine archetype in is explored in ***Mr Wrong*** and the Warrior/hero archetype is clearly evident in ***One Were Warriors*** and ***Utu.*** The warrior/hero archetype (a universally admired ideal of courage) could be linked to police/military in New Zealand film and film posters. Yet this archetype is often held up for ridicule within the narrative (***Good-bye Pork Pie***) or shown in a less than positive light (***Sleeping Dogs***). The 'man-alone' is a strong archetype in New Zealand film, and clearly presented in the ***Quiet Earth*** and ***Bad Blood.*** Such films also allude to notions of the 'traveller' or 'wanderer' archetype and as such have links to the way in which New Zealand was colonised.

- **Violence:**

As mentioned, weapons are a common archetype. This archetype is clearly evident in New Zealand's film posters. Firearms feature in the publicity posters for ***Sleeping Dogs***, ***The Quiet Earth***, ***Smash Palace***, ***Bad Taste***, ***Utu***, ***Dangerous Orphans***, ***Heart of the Stag***, ***Te Rua***. A variety of other weapons also feature, for example: the film poster for ***The Scarecrow*** shows a knife; the poster for the film ***Kingpin*** has the image of a baton and the very early poster

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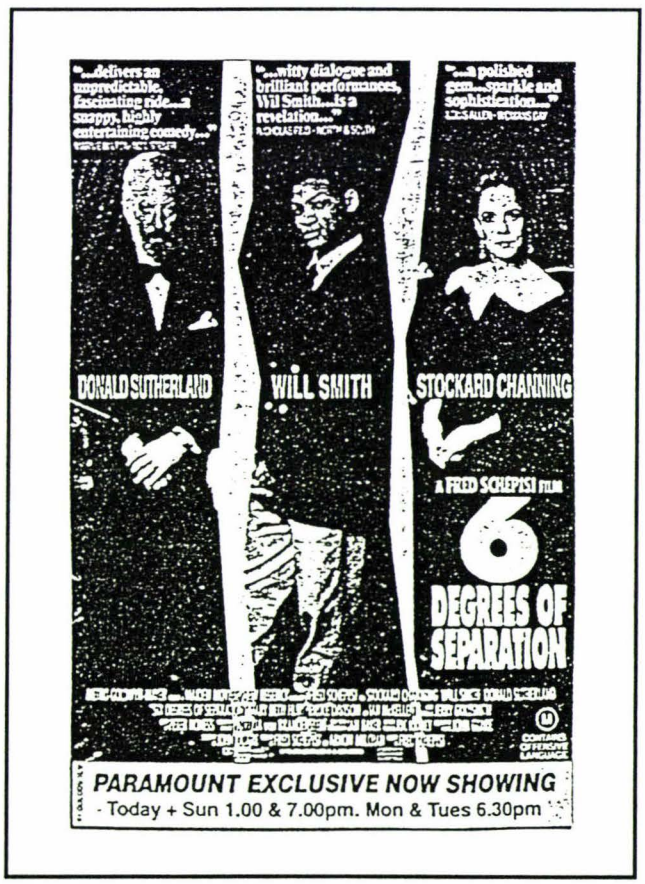
[103] Ibid, p 48.

for the Rudall Hayward's film ***Rewi's Last Stand*** uses the canon as a weapon. War, soldiers and the police feature in posters for ***The Last Tattoo***, ***Bread and Roses***, ***Absent Without Leave*** and ***Sleeping Dogs***.

- **Divisions/Spits/Rips/Tears:**

A compositional element evident in New Zealand film posters which connotes a sense of 'unease' is the use of division, splits, rips or tears in the poster design. Posters that feature tears or rips are ***Vigil***, ***Once Were Warriors*** and a variation of the ***Heavenly Creatures*** poster. This connotes a sense of deterioration, corrosion or gnawing away. This convention is commonly used in the posters advertising the classical Hollywood film. The example below, for the 1995 Fred Schepisi film ***6 Degrees of Separation***, was advertised in the Wellington ***Dominion***, Saturday 7 October 1995, p 46.



Posters which are composed by the placement of separate or divided images, or panels, (often alluding to film reel) are one of the two ***Desperate Remedies*** posters, ***The Footstep Man***, ***Once Were Warriors*** and ***Heavenly Creatures***. A variation of this occurs in the poster for ***Sleeping Dogs***. The outline of a hand (which contains the image of police) is placed on a black background.

An example of a division by the compositional placement of a vector is evident in the poster for ***Other Halves*** where there is a 'knife-like' vector separating the boy and the woman (this vector, combined with the wire fence already mentioned, relegates the Pacific Island boy to the position of 'Other' or 'Outsider')

CHAPTER FOUR

POSTER ANALYSIS

Tao's working of things is vague and obscure
Obscure! Oh Vague!
In it are images.
Vague! Oh obscure!
In it are things profound! Oh dark indeed!
In it is seed.
Its seed is very truth.
In it is trustworthiness
From the earliest Beginnings until today.
Its name is not lacking
By which to fathom the Beginning of all things.
How do I know it is the Beginning of all things?
Through it![1]

INTRODUCTION

These analyses represent a detailed inspection of particular posters chosen randomly from contemporary New Zealand film. The posters are largely from recent New Zealand films, covering 1984-1994. The posters are discussed with reference to whether or not aspects of the 'darkness' in New Zealand film is evident and identifies the manner in which this 'unease' is manifest in the publicity material for these films.

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[1] Lao-Tzu, Tao Ching, Chapter 21, cited in The Collected Works of C G Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler (eds),, 1959, p 290.

The analyses utilise the techniques of semiotics and thus contain the principal devices involved in conveying the meanings associated with each poster. Each analysis encompasses both the surface textual, and deeper elements involved in the poster image with particular attention given to the social and cultural forces which operate to influence the construction of meaning.

The major semiotic mechanisms employed in these analyses are denotative and connotative readings, symbolism, the mythic (both in terms of Barthes' levels of signification and Jung's collective unconsciousness and archetypes) and compositional elements.

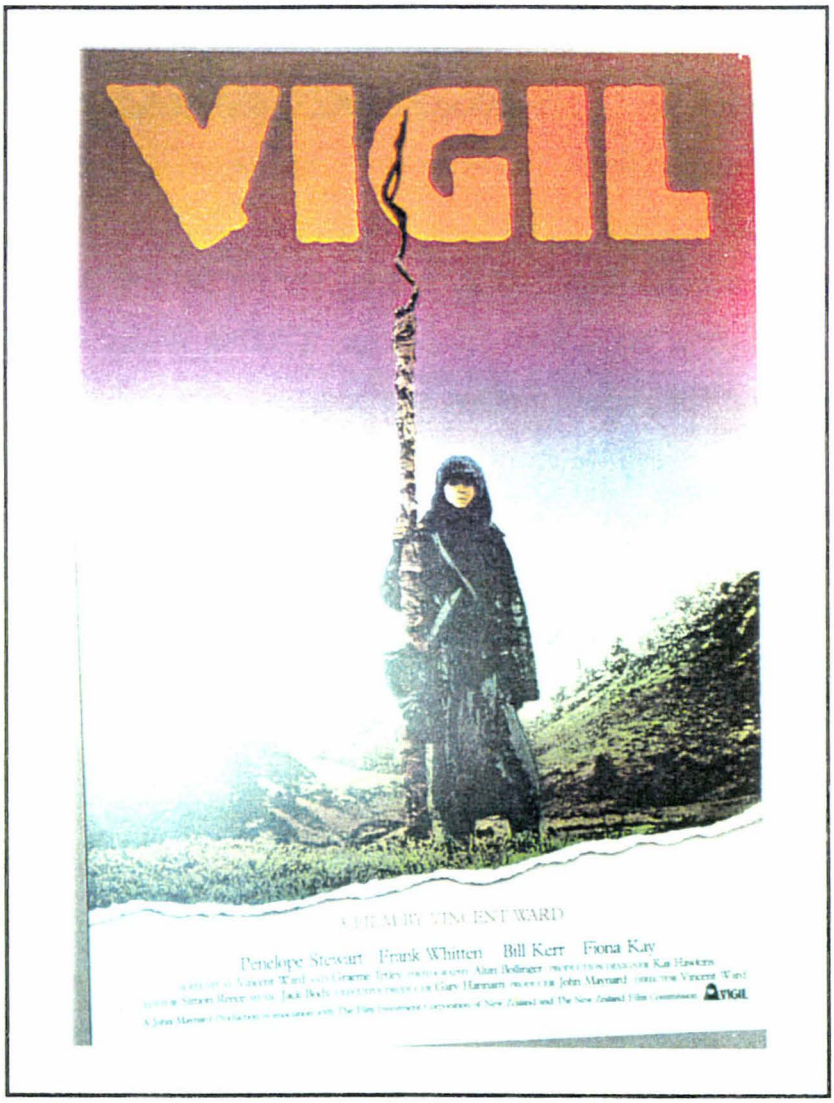
This discussion is organised under subject headings pertaining to particular aspects of 'darkness' as outlined in the conclusion to chapter three. The analyses utilise these headings for a detailed exploration of several posters from each subject category.

Each poster is be considered in terms of how it reflects aspects of the 'darkness' or 'unease' associated with the film it represents. Points will refer to both elements in the posters plus aspects of the filmic narratives, and will be linked to issues raised in chapter three. The conclusion to this chapter will consider, in general terms, how the 'unease' evident in New Zealand film is reflected in the publicity posters for these films.

HOSTILE LANDSCAPES: OUTER LANDSCAPES VS INNER WORLDS

VIGIL (Director: Vincent Ward, 1984)

As mentioned by Dermody and Jacka in chapter three, the New Zealand environment is frequently employed as a metaphor reflecting the inner lives of characters. Helen Martin consolidates this observation by noting in reference to Vincent Ward's ***Vigil*** that:



> ***There's a dark-side to the New Zealand psyche that many of our writers have drawn on. Perhaps it has something to do with isolation. Maybe its a result of the way the country was broken in. John Mulgan saw it. Keri Hulme and Janet Frame see it. The most explicit enunciation of it is probably in the stories of Ronald Hugh Morrison. And while Vincent Ward's characters keep it veiled the potential for violence is always there, just under below the surface. See it in existential terms if you like. Or dig around in Jung and think about archetypes.***[2]

The film poster for ***Vigil*** evokes a landscape that can be harsh and menacing yet beautiful, and underscores the potential for violence which Martin notes in the quotation above. The title ***Vigil*** signals this potential violence as it indicates a sense of purposeful watch or guarding. This is reinforced by the posture of Toss. She is keenly alert to, or heedful of, danger. Toss looks like a warrior: she is almost medieval in appearance. A balaclava hides most of her face, yet leaves her eyes clear, emphasizing her stare or gaze. Her gaze is forward, towards the viewer implying a defiant challenge associated with the warrior, as well as an air of expectancy (associated with the definition of a 'vigil'). Toss is the central image in the poster. She holds a wooden staff as a symbol of authority or a weapon. The smallness of the child is emphasized by the size of the staff suggesting both defense and vulnerability. The staff links Toss with the title acting as a vector which draws the eye upwards to the word ***Vigil***.

The notion of a 'vigil' also has religious connotations in terms of ritual and ceremony. Ward has acknoweldged that he consciously permeated the film text with religious images. Toss's staff could be interpreted as a religious totem. The poster is tinged with purple - traditionally the colour of the cleric. While the influence of Ward's Catholic/Jewish background cannot be assumed, there is no question that he deals with big 'cosmic' issues such as guilt, innocence, betrayal, death, and religion. Toss highlights this with her comments:

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[2] Helen Martin, 'Vincent's Vigil', Alternative Cinema, Spring/Summer, Vol 12, Nos 3/4, 1984/85, p 15.

"God doesn't care does he?
(Does the sky care, do the hills care?)
God doesn't care, I don't care either.
If he doesn't care I don't care about him.
Here's one in the eye of God. One in your ear. One up the nose.
Beans to God. Beans up your bum!"

The word 'vigil' also connotes the guarding against desire and the animal instincts which desire exposes. Perhpas Toss is guarding against the union between her mother and Ethan. The link here with Catholicism is in terms of guilt, mortal sin and the search for grace.

The hazy background and heavy, two toned blood red sky both at once evoke a sense of claustrophobia (it is a very weighty sky which has a resonance with the notion of expectancy - a storm perhaps or some other natural or supernatural calamity?) while the sense of the hills and mountains sloping and stretching back into the distance, disappearing into the background of the image, produce an overpowering and daunting feeling of expanse and vastness. The haziness of the background is juxtaposed against the dark edge to the grass, producing a surreal crispness. This background, combined with the rip or tear along the base of the image, connotes a sense of precariousness - as if Toss's foundations are going to tear or crumble or in some way fall apart.

This hostile, uncontrollable environment (the actual film location was a mountainous, Mt Messenger farm in Taranaki) is the backdrop for Toss's journey into womanhood. A journey which Ward cloaks in symbolism (blood, hunter, hawk and rituals associated with death) and mythicism. The sense of the physical landscape as a major element is summed up by Roger Driver as : "a harsh, twisted, treacherous, alien place. The hills and mist enclose our vision within drab, murky margins ensuring the feeling of being held helpless in an implacable, impersonal, hostile environment."[3] Isolation, claustrophobia

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[3] Roger Driver, 'Predation and Protection: Phallocentricity in Vigil', Sites, No 15, Spring 1987, pp 91.

and paranoia is achieved by elemental forces. The location is very isolated, the people lonely. The snow emphasises this sense of coldness and alienation. There is the sense that the pakeha is alien to the landscape. The notion of the landscape being hostile and unwelcoming is a very Pakeha notion. Driver also notes this, indicating that "The farm is imposed onto this landscape rather than a part of it; an out-moded outpost of pioneering people ... it offers little physical protection, and only enhances the psychic vulnerability of this misplaced family."[4]

Ward's vision for this physical, geographical and cultural isolation stems from the imagination. He has noted that he "was not a lonely child, but an alone child"[5] and that the world he lived in was partly based in reality, partly the creation of his imagination. It is this interior life which interests Ward. He is fascinated by the way his characters perceive things. It is through Toss' dream world that we are able to explore her state of mind.[6]

Childhood and sense of 'aloneness' tied to childhood is a common theme in New Zealand writing. Another more recent New Zealand film again deals with this theme. Jane Campion's ***An Angel at My Table*** (1990) deals with a lonely inner or psychic journey which is mirrored by a hostile and turbulent outer or physical life. While, in the film narrative, Campion does not utilise the landscape to the same degree as Ward does in ***Vigil***, the film poster for ***An Angel at My Table*** clearly reflects the desolation and vulnerability of Janet Frame.

The strongest element of the film poster is the image of the child. The child Janet is alone (although perhaps not lonely due to her vibrant inner world) and vulnerable. While the landscape is not overly harsh or threatening (its mountain slopes are gentle rather than the towering mountains of ***Vigil***) its emptiness stresses the sense of isolation and desolation. The landscape is

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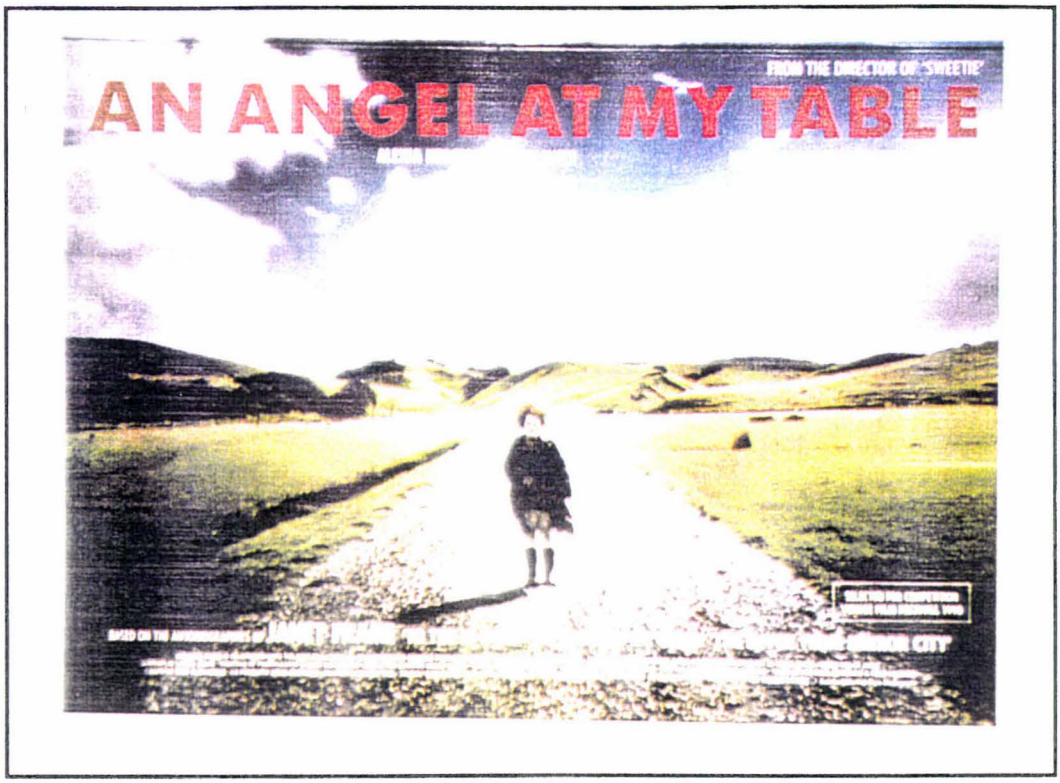
[4] ibid
[5] Vincent Ward, Alison Carter, Geoff Cahpple and Louis Nowra, Edge of the Earth: Stories from the Antipodes, 1990, p 91.
[6] Kalediscope documentary on Ward, 1989.



uninhabited (compared to the very full inner world and imagination). The child in the image is immobile, she almost appears uncertain. She comes forward to the camera and looks at life; then turns and runs away from it. A tension is evident in her posture and stance, and expression. This is a hesitancy, yet also a determination. She does not appear to fit comfortably in this environment and 'sticks out'. The child Frame is standing on a road. The road is a metaphor for life. Sam Neil has noted in ***The Cinema of Unease*** that the road is an iconic symbol often employed in New Zealand film signalling a journey or passage, in this case, through childhood, adolescence to adulthood. A journey which Frame undertakes in isolation and in opposition to cultural forces (for example, psychiatry).

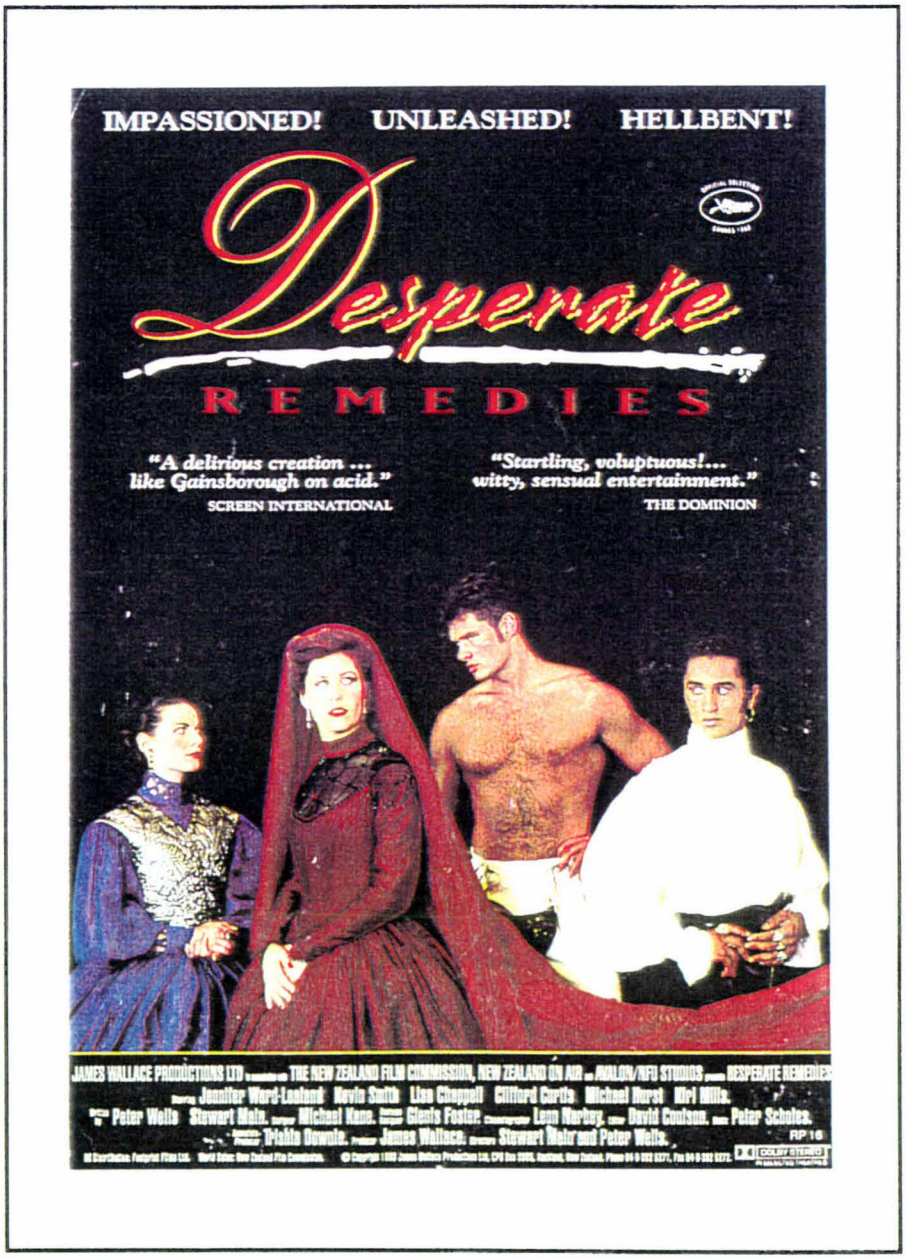
The symmetry in the poster image is precise. The road stretches out from the bottom corners of the rectangle to form a triangle. The apex of the triangle is formed by Frame's head. The road sides which form the triangle act as vectors leading the eye to Janet's head and hair - the punctum of the image. Janet's

signature halo of red is a strong element in both the film poster and the film. The landscape is both breathtaking and unmerciful and is so intensely coloured that Janet's curly red hair is framed perfectly by the hues of green and orange and blue. While the landscape is not overtly harsh the colouring of the image has a harshness to it. There is a glare from the sun bursting through the cloud layer that illuminates Janet and makes the viewer almost squint as on a sunny day. The sun shines down on Frame, from a cloud break in a turbulent blue/gray sky, and spills onto the back of the road. This turbulent and unpredictable sky suggests a sense of threat and uncertainty. The clouds create shadows producing dark edges to the image and there is the same dark edge to the grass as in ***Vigil.*** Janet is dressed for the onslaught - she wears gumboots and raincoat.

The unpredictability of the weather feature in both ***Vigil*** and here in the film poster for ***An Angel at My Table***. Farming depends on rain and sunshine which creates an interesting dichotomy because too much rain causes floods and too much sunshine brings drought. The climates have a dark and fickle element. In ***Vigil*** the trees grow horizontal, tortured from the assault of the wind. Both Toss and Janet wear gumboots. A shot of Toss in gumboots and ballet tutu has a resonance with Flora wearing angle wings and petticoat and prancing in the mud in ***The Piano***.

THE GOTHIC: REPRESSION VERSUS LIBERATION

DESPERATE REMEDIES (Director: Stewart Mains and Peter Wells, 1993)



The film poster for ***Desperate Remedies*** depicts two men and two women in the lower half of the picture. These people are standing, but arranged on different levels, so their head heights are varied. The picture is cropped at knee level. Each woman has her hands clasped together, each man has his

hands at waist level, resting on hips. They are dressed extravagantly in Victorian costume with accessories of jewellery and scarves. The top half of the picture displays three evocative descriptions across the top, under which is the title of the film. The title words are in red. The word 'Desperate' is in lower case and features a excessively stylised 'D' with the rest of the word flowing on. The word is highlighted by gold edging. In contrast to this, the word 'Remedies' is smaller in size; is in Roman capitals; and lacks the splash of gold. The title words are separated by a uneven line of white. Floating under the title, two thirds of the way down the poster, are two comments from ***Screen International*** and ***The Dominion***. The graphics and photograph are set on a solid black background. Against this solid black background the white's of the characters' eyes (and shirt and cumberbund) are highlighted. This draws the viewer's attention to the 'gaze'.

While film maker Peter Wells describes his and Stewart Mains' film as a "subversive melodrama", stating that it is subversive in various ways - particularly sexually, romantically, historically, and visually[7], this film clearly has a foot in the Gothic. This is evident in the film poster.

> ***The epithet 'Gothic' is used to describe not the art of any single school or country but all the manifestations of a spirit which permeated the works of art produced in many parts of Western Europe from the end of the 12th century on. Largely conditioned by developments in the domain of architecture and by the social evolution of the period, these works took various forms: stained glass windows, illuminated books, frescos, tapestry and painting.***[8]

The trend of fuller, richer expression of human emotion is evident in the way the characters are composed in the poster.[9] Dorothea is central. To her right

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[7] Philip Mathews, 'Hope, Opium and Subversion', The Capital Times, Vol 19, No 8, 1993, p 3.
[8] Dupont and Gnudi, Gothic Painting, 1979, Intoduction/Acknowedgements.
[9] Steve Neal in his article 'Melodrama and Tears' (1986) suggests that, in terms of subject matter, melodrama tends to deal with desire. "It is a genre marked by what Peter Brooks has called 'grandiose emotional states'. Melodrama involves extremes of polarised emotion (love, hate, joy, despair and so on)." Neale explains that these extremes are marked by the vicissitudes of desire. Screen Vol 29, No 3, 1988, p 12.

is Ann; to her left are Lawrence and Fraser. Dorothea has her body turned towards Ann, yet her head looks to her left - in the direction of, but not focusing on, Lawrence and Fraser. The placement of the hands of Ann, Lawrence and Fraser point towards Dorothea. Her veil sweeps from the right side of the frame, past Fraser and Lawrence, thus drawing the viewer's eye to Dorothea's head and eyes. Dorothea's eyes form the punctum[10] of the poster. Lawrence's profile also directs the viewer to Dorothea's eyes. The most significant emotive element in this photograph is the use of what Laura Mulvey has called the 'gaze' or the 'male gaze'. This form of 'looking' signals conflicts in relationships such as envy, which is evident in the gaze cast between Lawrence and Ann. Fundamental to the 'look' is desire and associated scopophilic pleasure.

Laura Mulvey's radical article ***Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*** is now an inherent, if not challenged, component of feminist film theory. Her thesis sparked a debate which has continued to polarise thinking since its publication. Mulvey's critique of the patriarchal system of representation suggests that filmic pleasure is founded on the image of the woman and is based on the notion that division between active looking and passive 'looked-at-ness' is always determined in terms of masculinity and femininity. "Masculinity confers the power of the gaze and control over narrative events, which femininity inevitably consigns the woman to a position as object of desire."[11] Essentially, Mulvey uses the psychoanalytic notions of desire to examine visual pleasure in Hollywood cinema. Mulvey argues that this pleasure is based on voyeuristic and fetishistic forms of looking. "Because of the way these looks are structured, the spectator necessarily identifies with the male protagonist in the narrative and thus with his objectification of the female figure via the male gaze."[12] The position of the spectator in the filmic narrative is posited as masculine.

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[10] The punctum is that part of an image that punctuates meaning for the viewer.
[11] Flitterman-Lewis Sandy, To Desire Differently - Feminism and the French Cinema, 1990, p 5.
[12] Gamman and Marshment, The Female Gaze - Women as Viewers of Popular Culture, 1988, p 116.

Several elements of Mulvey's thesis have caused unease and has prompted the adequacy of the psychoanalytic theory to be questioned. Mulvey's position privileges gender as the only category which structures perspective's and largely ignores other power relations such as class or race (both of which apply to this film poster, as does the 'gay' gaze. The homosexual subtext is central to this film and the film poster refers overtly to it). Can we assume that audiences identify on the basis of gender rather than on the basis of other categories that contribute to the construction of our identities?[13]

In fact, Mulvey returns to the contentions of her first thesis (specifically the question 'is the male gaze always male?') in her article ***Afterthoughts of Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*** (1981) inspired by the film ***Duel in the Sun*** (1946, Director: King Vidor). In this Mulvey "concludes that film does provide or construct a place for the female spectator; but that it is an awkward or difficult one: she is sort of transvestite, forced to assume another role in order to 'read' the image. This rethinking of the male gaze offers a more mobile position for the female spectator by turning to Freud's theories of the difference in the attainment of so-called mature heterosexual femininity.[14]

The 'gaze', loaded with innuendo, is pervasive in ***Desperate Remedies*** and it saturates the text. This gaze offers a reversal on Mulvey's thesis, as Dorothea controls the gaze. In the poster, Dorothea's gaze is superior, the controlling one. The look between Lawrence and Ann is ambiguous. They appear to be gazing behind Dorothea in rivalry for her affections. Alternatively they could be gazing directly at Dorothea. I tend to favour the first description. Fraser directly challenges Dorothea with his gaze.

It could be argued that much of the film and the film poster is constructed for the homosexual gaze. The gay theme manipulates the traditional discourse of romantic love to create a subversive statement in the context of heterosexual

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[13] Ibid, p 7.
[14] Mulvey, 1981: 12-15 cited in Stacy, Star Gazing - Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship, 1994, p 28.

homogeneity. Central to the discourse of romantic love is heterosexuality - the permanent union of a man and a woman. ***Desperate Remedies*** subverts the romantic tradition with its finale of boy meets girl but boy does not get girl. Associated with this homosexual gaze is a lust for the male body and envy for the accoutrements of femininity.

The 'obviousness' of the gaze in this film poster is a major characteristic of the melodramatic stereotype and highlights the 'techniques of the surface'. The look or the gaze is an 'external' that captures a range of underlying psychological and social attitudes. The opposition here is between the spoken words and the unspoken thoughts.[15] Tensions and undercurrents expressed by this detail give rise to hidden depths. Shots in ***Desperate Remedies*** frequently are close-ups or the face and eyes, shrouded by scarves, cloth or curtains. (This is clear in the film poster). Dorothea holds the controlling gaze which in many cases is directed at Lawrence or Ann - the objects of her desire. Her motives in choosing Lawrence reflect the preoccupation with the gaze. She says "Tis your eyes - they are hungry and ambitious." These sequences are often held in tableau.[16] The power relations of the gaze are clearly identifiable in the publicity poster for this film. Dorothea holds power - indicated by her stance, gaze and placement in the shot. In fact, the composition of the poster is an example of tableau.

According to Dupont and Gnudi, the prevalent colours of the Gothic age were vivid reds, blues, whites, blacks and golds.[17] "The colour forms part of the

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[15] Christopher Prendergast, Balzac: Fiction and Melodrama, 1987, p 117.

[16] The notion of tableau is particularly relevant to the 'text of muteness' where melodrama has recourse to non verbal means - words are not adequate. Tableau is a way of freezing drama at a high ethical or dramatic point and can also be achieved through light and shade. The formal technique serves to heighten emotional investment. As Elsaesser notes: "the tableau provides the audience with the opportunity to see meanings represented, emotions and moral states rendered in clear visible signs." Cited in Mayer, NZ Journal of Media Studies, Vol 1, NO 1, 1994, p 13.

The dramatic tableau has a strong association with act endings in melodrama and it is tempting to identify it entirely with this function (New York Literary Forum, 1980, p 58). In fact the tableau is used in this way in the New Zealand soap Shortland Street. "In a recent episode of Shortland Street every scene, except one, closed with a non verbal close up of either a thoughtful, confused, surprised or angry face. Each shot was held for at least four seconds thus allowing the viewer to interject into the drama." Mayer, 'The Tableau and the Empty Look: Shortland Street', The New Zealand Journal of Media Studies, Vol 1, No 1, 1994, p 14.

[17] Dupont and Gnudi, Gothic Painting, 1979, p 12.

edifice, one might even say it is the edifice itself, just as it is a gorgeous sublimation of everyday human activity at its best; passionate, active, idealistic."[18] In ***Desperate Remedies*** the Gothic aspects are conveyed in several major motifs. In particular the use of colour and costume. Set and costume designers Michael Kane and Glenis Foster say "theme colours were used for individual characters and to make symbolic distinctions between, for example, rich and poor. Dorothea Brook is clothed in lavish red, while Lawrence wears more drab, understated colours. Costume colours were closely linked with set colours in all scenes to provide thematic continuity. Fabric textures were used, too, to reflect the various personality profiles of the characters."[19] Dorothea Brook is initially fetishistically costumed in lavish red signifying assertiveness, control, authority, passion and sexual power. Red also signifies blood and alludes to the red rose - a symbol of love and passion. However, the rose often contains a thorn - a dark side to passion. The association of the colour of red with Dorothea signifies her passion and her status as object of desire. This use of red, both in the film and in the film poster, is somewhat over -used - she wears a red dress and scarf, has painted red lips and nails and has red hair. But, as such, she provides not only a contrast to her bleak surrounding on the wharf, but is also a formidable presence. This presence, and the use of an almost medieval iconography, is carefully constructed in the film poster. The bodices of the dresses are intricate, beaded and opulent, both necklines of Dorothea's and Ann's dresses have a festishistic quality - they are high criss-crossed necklines, signifying repressed sexuality. The jewellery, again, connotes wealth and excess. Significantly, rings and earrings are worn by both the women and Fraser. While, on a denotative level, Fraser's jewellery signifies wealth, it also connotes an overt manifestation of a deeper sexual excessiveness and sexual ambiguity. It is significant that Lawrence is shirtless. While it clearly marks his immigrant status, especially when held in comparison to Fraser's elaborate dress, Lawrence's semi-nakedness hints at the film's eroticness and male nudity, and signals the operation of a 'gay' subtext which is central to the

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[18] Ibid

[19] Philip Mathews, 'Hope, Opium and Subversion', The Capital Times, Vol 19, No 8, 1993, p 3.

sexual rivalry which occurs within the narrative. Lawrence is constructed for the homosexual gaze. He is hypermasculine (not feminised). His body is more acceptable to the male gaze than is Fraser's. However, such undress could also connote Lawrence's openness/naiveté in a society which thrives on manipulation and subterfuge.

An example from the film where costume and set design support narrativity occurs when Dorothea's assistant Ann meets Lawrence in a park. They walk through slatted trellis bird-cages (signifying Lawrence's entrapment) which cast black and white shadows and produce a strobe effect. Ann's black and white striped dress and parasol match the shadows thrown by the trellis which gives the impression of walking through a maze. This maze image supports the mental duelling that Anne and Lawrence are involved in (as Ann "tries the passageways of Lawrence's mind"). The artificiality and flood of colour in this film up to this point is contrasted with this scene which indicates the depth that is seen in black and white films, "that layering of intensity and use of shadows".[20] The whips and corsetry of Rose and Fraser, signify the fetishictic accessories of gay sexuality, as well as adding to the sense of Gothic eroticism and the preoccupation with candles and candelabra provide a surreal sheen. Mirror imagery, an important Gothic motif, is also central here (Fraser says to Dorothea "appearances are so important"). Verdi's music ***The Voice of Destiny*** is also a major motif throughout: the excessive expression of emotion allowed via opera supports the Gothic/melodramatic aesthetic.

The background of the poster is a solid black - almost velvet-like in its denseness and sheen. This, again, connotes a lavishness which, when taken with the splash of gold edging of the word 'Desperate' with its ornate font, suggests an extreme extravagance, opulence and wealth. The use of velvet-like black and gold also suggest a sensuality which is almost tactile. This is supported by the words impassioned, unleashed, hell-bent.

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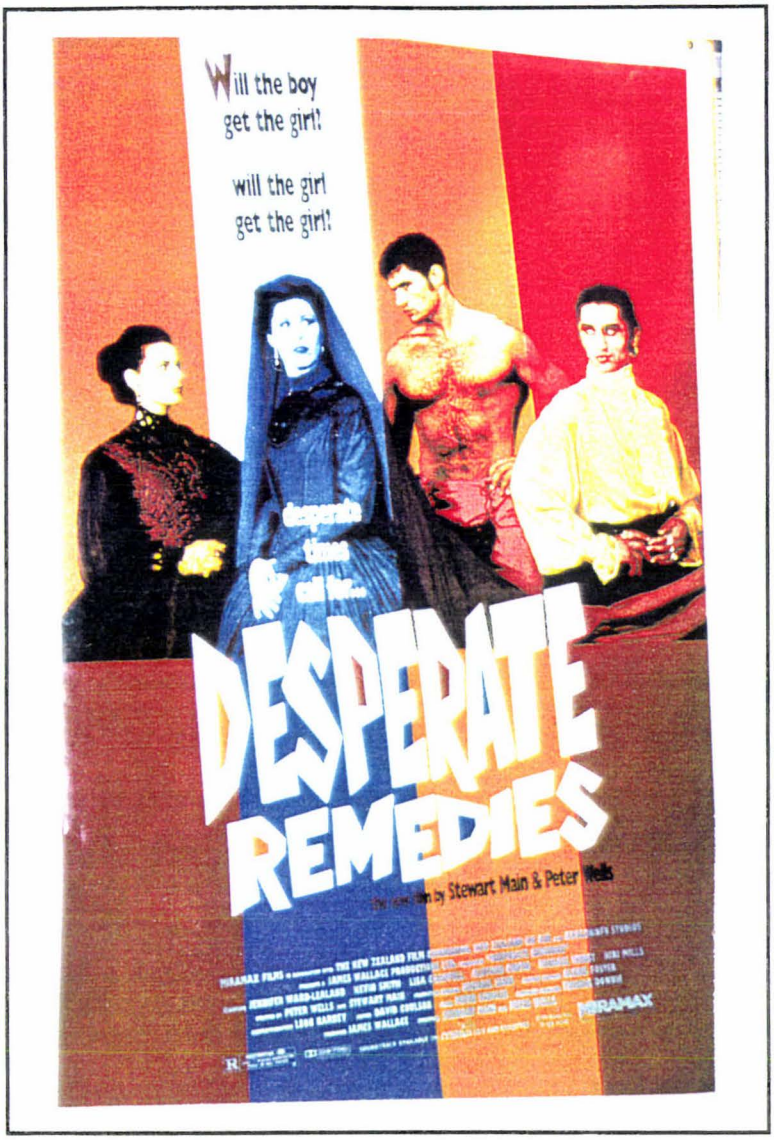
[20] Howard Warner, 'Wonderland in a Wharf Shed', OnFilm, May 1993, p 14.



In this second film poster, the four figures of Ann, Dorothea, Lawrence and Fraser are composed against a background of orange, blue, white and red stripes. Interestingly in this poster the colours associated with Ann (blue) and Dorothea (red) are juxtaposed.[21] However, due to the composition of the characters, Dorothea remains dominant. The 'riddle-like' text of this poster "Will the boy get the girl? Will the girl get the girl?" is markedly tamer than the description on the first poster discussed. ('Impassioned, Unleashed, Hell-bent') Perhaps to attract a broader, more generic audience. The text, and the more

[21] The artistic style here has a resonance with the work of Saul Bass. This poster reflects the style of Saul Bass' poster for Sorcese's film ***Anatomy of Murder***.

retrained use of colour, subvert the obvious lust and sensuality associated with the first poster.

The composition of the poster illustrates an awareness of perspective. Each form is carefully defined in terms of space so that they acquire a symbolic value. The balance composition, in conjunction with the 'gaze', produces dramatic tension, highlighting the relationships between the four characters. The characters are stereotyped by costume, position and expression.

Operating on the second level of signification, the thematic elements of the film and film poster is significant. "The setting for the subversion is the fictious nineteenth-century colonial town of Hope where Dorothea (Jennifer Ward-Leyland) lives with her assistant Ann (Lisa Chappell) and worries about her opium-addicted sister Rose (Kiri Mills). Dorothea tries to get Rose away from opium and the sinister Fraser (Cliffe Curtis) by hiring the handsome immigrant Lawrence (Kevin Smith) to seduce Rose ..." [22] The township of 'Hope', according to the film makers, is more like a psychological set than a realistic place. While Wells wanted a release from "the confines of naturalistic cinema which has been New Zealand tradition, especially in portraying our colonial past"[23], the township provides the same claustrophobic, muddy, bleak, grey, wet landscape as the native bush and climes of the West Coast. Yet having an 'urban' setting enables a fascination with the underworld, and its potential for violence, to be explored. Mains and Wells' view of colonial New Zealand as a bleak urban environment is at odds with the popular conception of rural mythology and mateship, usually associated with colonial New Zealand. The scenes of urban decay, poverty and lack of hygiene suggest an aids metaphor. This allegory is validated when viewed in conjunction with Peter Wells and Stewart Main's documentary style film ***A Death in the Family*** and Wells' ***Little Queenie***.[24] 'Hope' in its claustrophobic, bleak, 'hell'-like surrounds, is comparable with the Parisian slum-lands of Balzac's ***Les Mytères du Paris*** or

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[22] Philip Mathews, 'Hope, Opium and Subversion', The Capital Times, Vol 19, No 8, 1993, p 3.
[23] From the Capital Times and OnFilm articles footnoted at 20 and 22.
[24] C. Krasniansky, 1996.

La Cousine Bette. Peter Brooks notes in ***The Mark of The Beast: Prostitution, Melodrama and Narrative***, [25] "the melodramatic imagination working on the world encounters the need to open up its underworld ... here sexuality, money and deviance converge to form a powerful potential for story".[26] The repressed and distorted sexuality of ***La Cousine Bette*** is perhaps more pertinent to ***Desperate Remedies*** in that "the consequences that ensue from a radical dislocation of sexuality from human feeling and moral responsibility, the collapse of organised life that results ... the central dilemma posed by the tensions between desire and order is not simply resolved by ignoring or repressing desire, but rather involves a delicate balancing of gratification and repression".[27] Repression vs liberation.

While ***Desperate Remedies*** does not commit itself to a set place, the township of Hope is clearly in New Zealand. The two male protagonists - Lawrence and Fraser - are Maori, although no concessions are made to cultural specificity save for the greenstone earring worn by Fraser in the film. Interestingly, instead of the greenstone earring worn in the narrative, in the publicity poster, Fraser wears a silver 'pirate' type earring. It could be argued that these two characters are representative of the good/bad binary in the one personality. Fraser is manipulative, deviant, sly, self indulgent, while Lawrence is altogether a more 'moral' character. Yet such a good/bad dichotomy is flawed as Lawrence is highly self aware. Characters are reduced to stereotypes - the villainous Fraser, the manipulative boyfriend Poyser, the semi-hero Lawrence.

Contemporary New Zealand melodrama is more manipulative than the traditional or classical, in that it works counter to the perpetuation of symbolic sexual division. Dorothea owns her own business (a drapery store). In fact, the inspiration for ***Desperate Remedies*** lay in the 'strong women' films of the forties. Dorothea could be a nineties Barbara Stanwyk.[28] The femme fatale archetype central to film noir presents women as strong, manipulative and

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[25] New York Literary Forum - Melodrama, 1980, p 125.
[26] Ibid, p 138.
[27] Ibid, p 100.
[28] Philip Mathews, 'Hope, Opium and Subversion', The Capital Times, /Vol 19, No 8, 1993, p 3.

sexual. Dorothea's path deviates from true Victorian morality as she is not punished for her assertiveness, control and strength. Dorothea in the poster is portrayed as both matriarch/controller and femme fatale in that she is the object of the desiring gaze. The film also has film noir tendencies in that it uses low key lighting and dramatic effects, possible due to time and budget constraints. ***Desperate Remedies*** was filmed entirely in an Auckland warehouse which explains much of the film's theatrical feel, use of little open movement and prevalence of night shots. Indeed, it is a film which deals with interiors. The black background of the poster signals this preoccupation with the dark. Outdoor shots are shot indoors (in the warehouse), predominance of night shots and constained or stylised movement provide metaphors for internal or hidden thoughts and passions.

Inherent in the poster is the presentation of an alternative, or dark side of both male and female sexuality. Fraser feminised by jewellery and his ruffled blouse. Both men wear makeup which alludes to the very theatrical element/stage (and tableau) element in the film.

THE PIANO (Director: Jane Campion, 1993)

Jane Campion's ***The Piano*** "exemplifies the unique spin on Gothic stratagems, inflected with the surreal peculiarities of 'down-under' nature.[29] Here, as with ***Desperate Remedies***, I wish to illustrate the significance of costume and the gaze as it relates to repression and liberation.

Both ***The Piano*** and ***Desperate Remedies*** have a literary melodramatic antecedent: the Gothic novel (such as ***Wuthering Heights*** and ***Tess of the d'Urbervilles***). The Gothic novel is similar to melodrama in that justice is denied for the bulk of the narrative then articulated. While melodrama tends to end optimistically, with the ethical universe reinforced, the Gothic can end pessimistically. Melodrama, unlike the Gothic novel, continued to flourish

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[29] Harvey Greenberg, Film Quarterly Review of ***The Piano***, Vol 43, No 3, 1994, p 48.

because of its ability to satisfy the need for the reassurance of a moral universe. As with ***Desperate Remedies***, ***The Piano*** utilises costume and the gaze to underscore central thematic concerns.

The importance of Ada and her relationship with her daughter Flora is signalled in the film poster for this film. Ada and Flora are the main figures in the film poster and they are shown in mid-close-up. They form a mother/child icon, yet they could also be sisters. This is paradigmatically significant in that the opportunity to utilise the landscape as a selling point for this film has been

avoided. The face and the upper body of both Ada and Flora inform the left side and base of the poster. Flora, in the poster, illustrates the use of paradigmatic imagery[30] as she is a smaller replica of Ada in terms of costume, bonnet, expression - a twin/mirror image. The costumes worn by Ada and Flora are dark, with large bonnets which tie under the chin. These costumes signify repression, muteness, a dark shadow yet also maternal protection. There is also the suggestion that Ada and Flora a co-conspirators. The colours are dark and the setting appears windswept (Flora's hair which peeks from her bonnet is caught by the wind). Both Ada's and Flora's eyes focus on something outside of the frame. The background of the poster in the upper right quadrant appears to be a horizon - pink tinged (suggesting dusk) and cloudy. The black costumes and black background meld. Ada's body is turned slightly inwards to Flora. Flora is enveloped by the gown suggesting protection. The title font is classic and very bold.

The dominant element in the film poster is the contrast of strong oppositions, especially the dynamic contrast of light and shade. Several of the strong oppositional contrasts signified in the film poster are carried and explored in the film.

The contrast of muteness versus speech is connoted in the poster by Ada's pursed lips. (The majority of women viewed in other film posters have parted lips, not tightly pursed lips like Ada). Ada in ***The Piano*** is not so much unable to speak, as unwilling, suggesting aggressive manipulation and control rather than passivity. Ada's mutism began at six, and is attributed to her 'will' and is, as Ada narrates through internal monologue, what her father has called "a dark talent and the day I decide to stop breathing will be my last." McDonnell, in his article ***Picking Out Tunes: A Close Reading of The Piano***, asks "Is her mutism a reaction to Victorian patriarchy, the sort of hysterical conversion of psychic distress Freud found in his similarly classed women patients of the

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[30] As discussed in Chapter Two, paradigmatic meaning is where a sign's meaning is defined in opposition to others in its paradigm or grouping. Whereas syntagmatic meaning is a product of the relation with others in the syntagm, thus involves identifying the relationship of a sign to other signs in terms of how they combine in a sequence.

time?"[31] This perception of Ada is reiterated by Stella Bruzzi in ***Bodyscape*** "she is, in her refusal to speak, representative of what the medical profession branded a 'hysterical' woman; catatonia, anorexia, chronic fatigue and other forms of self imposed sensory deprivation were common place among dissatisfied and desperate Victorian wives."[32] Via the mute text, Campion discovers other forms of enunciation which ruptures the narrative exposing and, to a degree, redressing ideological concerns. Interestingly, Campion utilises a language that traditionally has articulated the restrictions placed on women - Victorian costume.

Both ***The Piano*** and ***Desperate Remedies*** are set in an age where costume, gender and morality are paramount. In the film poster, individuality is surpressed by the dark, bulky clothing which conceals and restrains. This is further accentuated by the bonnets with the bows tied under the chin. Although, the bonnets have a light coloured inner lining which accentuates Ada's and Flora's facial features and eyes - which are Ada's expressive tools. There is a strong circular motif to the film poster. The hats, the eyes the 'o' of the word 'piano'. The bonnets frame the head; accentuate the eyes and signal the historical period. The circle motif is what Jung calls a mandela and the circle signifies a return to the centre. The mandala motif, also called the magic circle, is often drawn around something that has to be prevented from escaping or protected against hostile influences. Attention is directed to the centre. Jung says that "it is a symbol which is one of the most important motifs in the objectification of unconscious images. It is a means of protecting the centre of the personality from being drawn out and from being influenced from the outside".[33]

Victorianism is synonymous with the oppression of female sexuality. Clothing was, essentially, another patriarchal law of repression. Bruzzi has noted this in

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[31] Brian McDonnell, 'Picking Out Tunes: A Close Reading of The Piano', NZ Journal of Media Studies, Vol 1 No 1, 1994, p 3.

[32] Stella Bruzzi, 'Bodyscape', Sight and Sound, Vol 3, Issue 10, 1993, p 8. The notion of hysteria that McDonnell and Bruzzi raise is interesting when aligned with the melodramatic concept of the 'hysterical text', where the form of a film cannot contain its ideology.

[33] C G Jung, Analytical Psychology: Its Theory and Practice: the Travistock Lectures, 1968, pp 200-201.

her article: "Campion's innovation in ***The Piano*** is to discover a language which articulates a radical opposition to the restrictions imposed on nineteenth century women through the very means by which those restrictions are usually manifested - clothes. Throughout the film clothes function as agents to liberate rather than constrain."[34] Clothes provide shelter to Ada and Flora on the beach; Ada's restrictive dress frustrates and repels Stewart's attempt at rape; and ultimately, when Ada traps her foot in the coiled rope and is dragged under the sea with her piano, while her clothes appear to drag her down, she disentangles herself and slips out of her shoe and thus out of the rope. "She has, as her voice-over says, 'chosen life'. Her clothes, as elsewhere, work for her." [35]

Ada's mutism gives voice to another language. That of gesture. Her fingers are more prominent and fluent than they would be if she spoke. While ***The Piano's*** narrative progression is by the interior monologue of a character who will not speak, much is indicated by gesture and 'the look' (as mentioned). This 'look' is accentuated in the film poster by the lighter coloured inner lining of the bonnet) As Barbara Quart notes in ***Cineaste*** "this mute woman makes herself heard very loudly from her first communication about the boat, delivered with a ferocity and authority no one could mistake."[36] Ada's muteness is not a sign of lack of assertiveness. Indeed, "She is a postfeminist woman in the that her strengths are givens, without Campion feeling any need to build in explicit feminist issues and struggles."[37] The significance of gesture and necessity of Ada to communicate via alternative means (the piano) is highlighted when Stewart symbolically castrates Ada by chopping off her finger in an attempted to control, repress or 'silence' her. This forms another of the film's oppositions - Ada's finger of flesh and bone is replaced with a harder metal attachment.

Perhaps most significant to the film, Ada's muteness facilitates a stripping down of primal passions. Looking becomes an erotic mode; desire becomes another

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[34] Stella Bruzzi, 'Bodyscape', Sight and Sound Vol 3, Issue 10, 1993, p 8.
[35] Ibid p 7.
[36] Barbara Quart, Cineaste Review of ***The Piano***, Vol xx, No 3, 1994, p 55.
[37] Ibid.

form of enunciation and voyeurism becomes central (Stewart voyeruistically spying on Ada and Baines). Clothing is significant here too. Here the oppositions of dark clothing against white translucent skin, evident in the film poster, is significant. As Bruzzi notes "the Victorians were obsessed with hiding anything that could be deemed suggestive of sex or nakedness." [38] Yet, Ada's unclothing by Baines is the catalyst to Ada's sensual awakening. Thus, while Ada's clothing is a signifier of restriction, it also represents the potentiality of sexual expressiveness. For example, the hole in Ada's stocking becomes the sensual object of Baines' attention. The blackness of the stocking is a marked contrast to the whiteness of the skin. The way Campion plays with the notions of half light, half dark and light and shade connotes a dichotomy between liberation and repression.

As outlined in the analysis of ***Desperate Remedies***, inherently linked with voyeurism and desire is the significance the 'gaze'. As Harvey Greenberg, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine notes "Ada's disruptive sexuality must be neutralised by transforming her into a docile fetish, marrying her off, or killing her. Ada's two suitors attempt to 'objectify' her by all these measures (Stewart stops just short of murder). Yet Campion has her turn the tables and makes Stewart and Baines helplessly enthralled objects of her gaze, her desire.[39] Ada, without voice, is seen as castrated and therefore threatening. Mulvey's thesis combined Freud's theory of scopophilia and castration with the theory of the mirror stage in the work of Jacques Lacan. The castration theory is interesting - yet its parameters cannot be pushed too far. "...the image of the woman on screen, while erotic, constantly threatens to reveal the fact of castration through the exposure of her own lack of penis. The representation of a woman as signifier of castration thus induces in the spectator's unconscious the mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism (scopophilia and disavowal) as a defence against that threat."[40] Thus the

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[38] Stella Bruzzi, Body Scape, Sight and Sound, Vol 3, Issue 10, 1993, p 9.
[39] Harvey Greenberg, Film Quaterly Review of ***The Piano***, 1994, p 48.
[40] Constance Penly, Feminism and Film Theory, 1988, p 6.

finger chopping sequence is significant terms of both castration and submission.

The notion of the 'Other' is a crucial, although less obvious, subtext in both the film and film poster for ***The Piano***. In many ways Ada is presented as the 'Other'. In the film poster Ada and Flora are huddled into the left of the frame, they appear uncomfortable and out of place - they look like 'outsiders'. Ada is a stranger in a strange land. A woman who cannot speak in a male dominated society. She, like the Maori, is a recipient of Stewart's "repellent paternalism."[41] Women who do not speak, who have not voice, are important in feminist criticism. Victorian women were often only heard indirectly. "In order to express themselves, women were constrained to invent male pseudonyms, to 'ghost' music and art for husbands and brothers ... their voices were often heard only indirectly: they fabricated unruly, angry alter egos, such as Charlotte Bronte's 'mad woman in the attic." [42] Yet, while Ada and Flora are placed as outsiders, they are glancing outside the frame of the poster. This is a disapproving look. There is fear in their eyes (indicated by strong whites achieved through enhancement). This suggests that Ada and Flora are looking at the 'Other' (perhaps Stewart?)

While it is not evident in the film poster, in terms of the 'other' Stewart represents the arrogance and ignorance of what Greenberg calls the 'colonising consciousness' towards the Maori culture. "Stewart is horrified when he sees Flora and her Maori friends in semi-masturbatory play. What he takes for licentiousness betokens the Maori absence of Victorian childhood repression."[43] While McDonnell notes than an extreme view has held that the Maori in the film "are portrayed as deplorable racist caricatures, demeaning two-dimensional portraits constructing the Maoris as simple-minded buffoons used only for light relief and mocked like the lacks in 'coon' type material from

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[41] Brian McDonnell, 'Picking Out Tunes: A Close Reading of ***The Piano***', NZ Journal of Media Studies, Vol 1, No 1, 1994, p7.
[42] Stella Bruzzi, 'Body Scape', Sight and Sound, 3/10, p 7.
[43] Harvey Greenberg, Film Quaterly Review of ***The Piano***, 1994, p 49.

the United States earlier this century."[44] However, the consensus view is that Campion's sympathies are aligned with the Maori people in the film; that she treats them with respect and that, "overall in comparison with Pakeha characters they emerge favourably ... The film endorses the Maoris' open bawdiness which is shown as far healthier than the sexual repression, hypocrisy and puritanical self loathing of the township's Victorian whites." [45]

[44] Brian McDonnell, 'Picking Out Tunes: A Close Reading of ***The Piano***' NZ Journal of Media Studies, Vol 1, No 1, 1994, p 7.
[45] Ibid.

THE 'OTHER'

ONCE WERE WARRIORS (Director: Lee Tamahori, 1994)

> ***"Naming (ie. self/Other relations) is deeply embedded in all genres, from fantasy to political economy, travel writing to history, ethnography to literary theory."*** [46]

As outlined by O'Barr in the literature review, representation of 'outsiders' provide paradigms for relations between members of the viewing audience and those defined outside it. "These paradigms constitute an ideological guide for relations between the self and others, between us and them."[47] Notions of 'Otherness' are inherent in advertising (as discussed in O'Barr's treatise - travel photography and advertising).[48] However, significant to New Zealand is the notion that 'Otherness' is tied to national mythology. As Martin Blythe outlines in his text ***Naming the Other: Images of the Maori in New Zealand Film and Television*** (1994), national mythology has always contained an inherent dualism. A dualism, linked to colonisation, which has arisen from a fracture line between the British Empire and Maoriland.[49] Linked to this dualism are notions of Pakeha (namely middle-class Pakeha male) progress(ion), repression, oppression and atavism.[50] The importance of how we name ourselves reflects cultural and geographical concerns.[51]

> ***In New Zealand the names Maori and Pakeha are used to denote the two main ethnic groups: its indigenous Polynesian people the Maori, who make up around 12 percent of the population, and its white, mostly British derived people, the Pakeha, who make up around 85 percent. While Maori probably***

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46 Martin Blythe, Naming the Other: Images of Maori in New Zealand film and Television, 1994, p 4.
47 William O'Barr, Culture and the Ad: Exploring Otherness in the World of Advertising, 1994, p 2.
48 Blythe later refers to the link between tourism and ethnography with regard to the transfer for exotic trophies, totems and ledgends from Maori custody ... "Not only did these trophies provide excellent devices for attracting tourists ... to New Zealand they also provided a reservoir of images on which to build the burgeoning postcard industry and early tourism film. The Maori were, from the beginning, a key part of that package." Naming the Other : Images of Maori in New Zealand Film and Television, 1994, p 4.
49 Ibid, p 279.
50 Ibid, p 192.
51 Ibid, p 4.

> ***once meant "normal', ie., "us", Pakeha is the Maori work which probably once meant "stranger", ie. "them". White New Zealanders have inherited an 'Other's' word them.***[52]

Yet as Blythe indicates, "there is no inherent difference between the principles behind the names discussed above ... New Zealand/Aotearoa, Maori/Pakeha, the language of Imperialism, colonialism and nationalism: they are all part of the geography of the imagination. As many anthropologists have argued, the classifications are basically still "tribal" at heart."[53]

As commentators have noted, and outlined in Chapter Three with regard to national identity, the search for a national mythology has focused on, for the Pakeha at least, aspects of the physicality of the pioneer and war mythology, construction of 'Godzone', nuclear free issues, the outdoors, sport and agricultural production. Yet Blythe, while acknowledging this construction of national identity, notes that the treaty of Waitangi remains the most powerful symbol as far as the national mythology is concerned.[54] The conflicting notions of 'Other' combined with the search for national identity led to what Blythe calls the 'double bind of power' which arises when Maori and Pakeha are told they are New Zealanders together. "On the one hand Maori are declared to be New Zealanders by virtue of the Treaty. On the other hand "New Zealand" is defined along British (Pakeha) lines ("You are Maori, you are different and we don't necessarily want what you represent)."[55] Blythe indicates that what occurs is an oscillation between annexation (assertion of nationalism) and exclusion (denial of biculturalism).[56]

The concerns of the 'double bind' are central to anyone who addresses cultural issues in New Zealand. Concepts of 'Otherness' contain a complexity not easily addressed in a discussion such as this treatise which is limited by space

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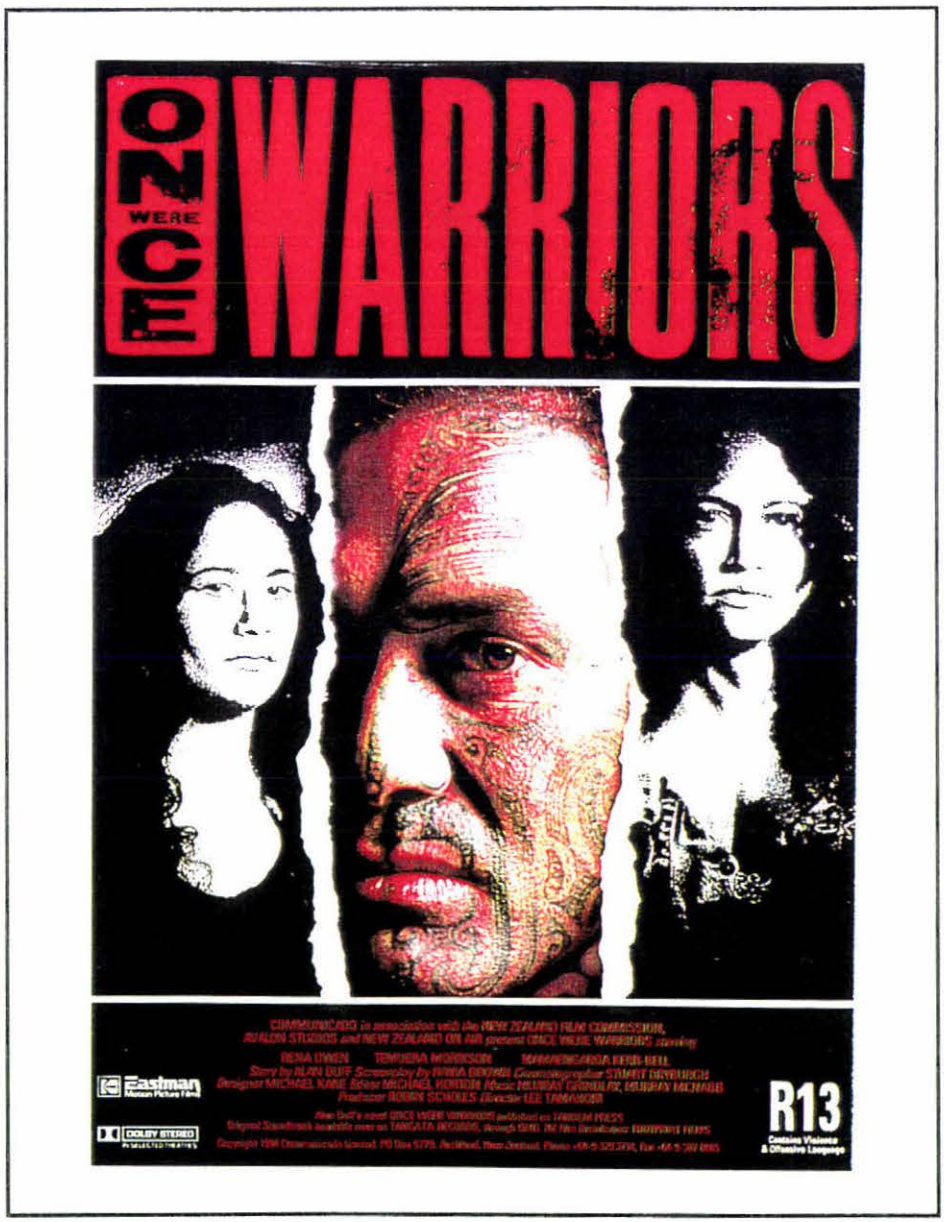
[52] Ibid, p 3-4.
[53] Ibid, p 4-5.
[54] Ibid, p 6.
[55] Ibid, p 8.
[56] Ibid.

and time. However, consideration of this dualism is a significant component of New Zealand culture and an inherent aspect of our artwork.

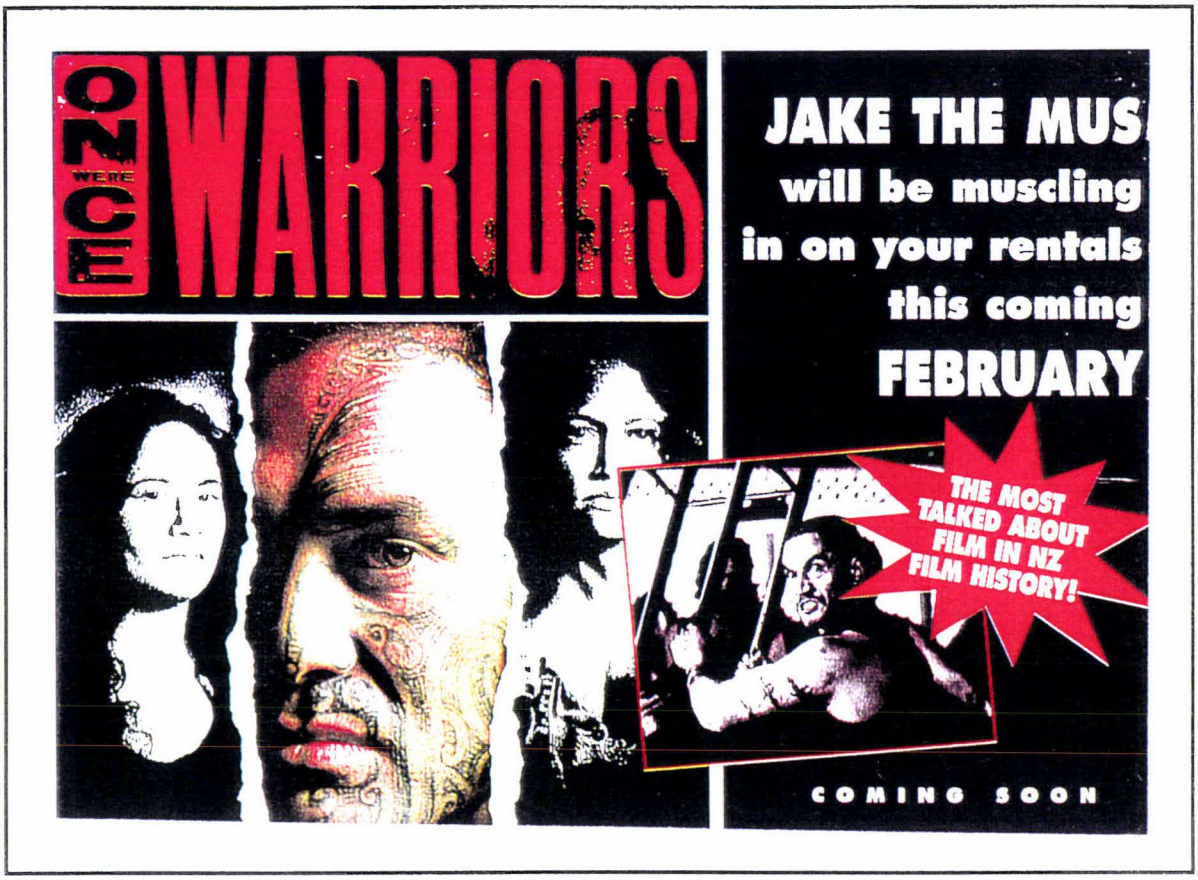
There are two New Zealand film posters that highlight the notion of cultural 'Otherness'. Both the posters for ***Once Were Warriors*** and ***Utu*** (1983, Director: Geoff Murphy) utilise the facial tattoo or moko to connote 'difference'.



The film poster for ***Once Were Warriors*** again utilises the vertical three panel composition. These panels are separated by rips or tears which are jagged

and uneven. Each panel holds a character from the film. Panel one contains a grainy black and white mid close-up chest and head shot of Grace (Mamaengaroa Kerr-Bell). Around the top of Grace's head there is a lighter area, which connotes a halo or innocence. The centre panel holds a colour, extreme close-up of the left side of Nig's (Julian Arapheni) tattooed face. The right side of his face (eye and corner of his mouth) are obscured by shadow. Only half on Nig's face is tattooed. It is significant that it is the tattooed profile which is displayed in the poster. This has connotations of Jung's shadow side and duality of personality or could also signal the two worlds in which Nig must operate - Maori culture and associated notions of the Warrior, tradition and mateship of belonging to a group, and the European world. The significance of this is highlighted by this panel being in colour whereas the panels on either side are in black and white. This use of contrasty or 'chiaroscuro' lighting indicates that the narrative message plays upon viewers archetypal fears of the dark with connotations of unease. The third panel contains a shot of Beth (Rena Owen) - Nig and Grace's mother. Beth is shot in a similar way to Grace - a grainy black and white mid close-up or head and chest. This provides balance in the panels as well as linking the two women on a symbolic level. All three characters are looking directly at the camera, and the viewer of the poster. There is a sense of accusation in their gaze.

It is significant that Jake does not appear in the film poster. Largely due (I suspect) to a desire to limit the association between Jake and Temuera Morrison's role of Doctor Ropata on Shortland Street. However, Jake does appear in the poster which advertised the video of this film. A picture of an aggressive Jake has been placed on the original poster with the words "Jake the Mus".



In fact the film poster for ***Once Were Warriors*** stands in total isolation from the film. The poster can be interpreted in total isolation from the characters in the film in terms of the social and cultural frame and fragmented relationships connoted by the tearing or panel composition.

Above the three panels sits the title of the film. The title is divided by the vertical and then horizontal placement of words but on first glance presents a sold brick-like presence. The word 'Once' is black housed in a red block. This word is vertical and split in between the ON and the CE. The word 'Warriors' stretches out from this vertical margin. The written text anchors the image with the colour red at the top and base of the poster. The words are not as solidly depicted as they first appear. The N and the E of the word Once are patchy , not block colour, and while the word 'Warriors' begins with a solid red W, as the letters progress a deterioration in the red colouring occurs, connoting a wearing away. The deteriorating nature of the paint in the word connotes the

declining nature of the warrior in the title. The title design has a resonance with graffiti painted on an urban wall and the 'chipped out' nature of the words has a resonance with bullet holes found in the title of the American film ***Warriors***.

The colour red is utilised in a number of New Zealand film posters to, on the surface, connote strength. However, on a deeper level the use of the colour red in Maori culture is the colour of the warrior. Red is the colour of blood, therefore it represents both life and death. Naficy and Gabriel in their exploration of ***Otherness and the Media: the ethnography of the imagined and the imaged*** (1993) note that:

> ***Nearly all cultures attribute a greater potency to red ... it is analysed as having a great wealth of modulations because it can be widely varied between cold and warm, dull and clear, light and dark, without destroying its character of redness. From demonic, sinister red-orange on black, to sweet angelic pink, red can express all intermediate degrees between the infernal and the sublime. Thus whether red radiates luminous warmth or not depends on its contextual placement in relation to other colours. On white it looks dark, while on black it glows; with yellow it can be intensified to fiery strength.***[57]

Red is the sacred colour of Maori culture. According to Terrence Barrow in his text ***Maori Art of New Zealand*** (1978), red pigment or feathers suggest chiefly prestige or mana as well as a relation to the gods or ancestral spirits.[58] The three colours of oceanic art are red, black and white. All three are most commonly found in painted decoration and these are the three colours used in the film poster for ***Once Were Warriors***. In the context of the film poster red signifies emotional arousal and passion and in terms of graphic art convention red on a black background produces a strong, attention-grabbing effect.

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[57] Hamid Naficy and Teshome Gabriel, Otherness and the Media: The Ethnography of the Imagined and the Imaged, 1993, p 194.

[58] Terrence Barrow, Maori Art of New Zealand, 1978, p 78

The cluttered and blackened urbanscape of ***Once Were Warriors*** is bathed in a harsh red/orange light. (This light is reminiscent of the tint or haze used to colour shots in American urban films, especially films set in Los Angeles). This harshness of the urban is contrasted markedly to the old communal lands of Maori New Zealand and signifies the disassociation from the rural. This contrast between the urban and the country is highlighted in the opening shot of the film. This shot clearly signals the film's social conscience at work. As outlined by McDonnell:

> ***... the very opening shot of the film in which we see a beautiful South Island landscape of snowy mountains and bucolic country pastures. This scenery is typical of many New Zealand films of the past forty years, but one from which the camera in Once Were Warriors immediately cranes away to reveal an infernal motorway abutting into urban decay. The idyllic, pretty landscape ;is revealed now as just the glossy content of an advertising hoarding promoting a multinational corporation ... Once Were Warriors begins its ideological work of stripping away the mythologising veneer of pre existing New Zealand films..***[59]

Tied with this juxtaposition of country life being aligned with goodness and urban life associated with harshness is the suggestion that rejecting the country means a spiritual loss. Yet cultural strength is portrayed and celebrated in several ways in the film. For example, the tiaha, Grace as matriarch and keeper of tradition, and the notion of the warrior and facial tattoos (as well as the complicated codes of hair and clothes which are as important to the characters development as their dialogue and action).[60] It is the use of tattoos that I wish to concentrate on in this discussion. The tattoo signify cultural strength and male codes of behaviour that are closely linked to tradition.

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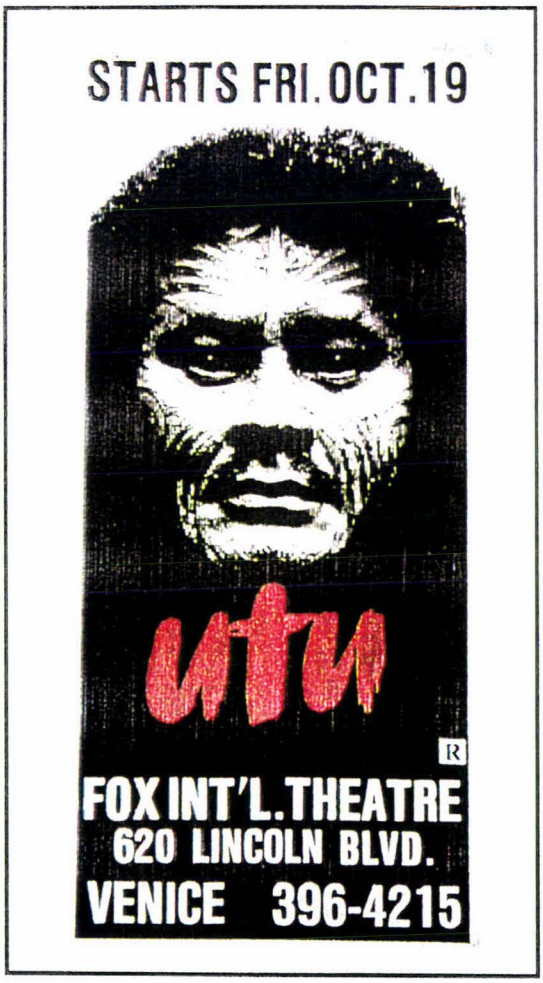
[59] Brian McDonnell, 'Once Were Warriors: Film, Novel, Ideology', New Zealand Journal of Media Studies, Vol 1, No 2, 1994, p 11.

[60] On Film, No 53, May 1995.

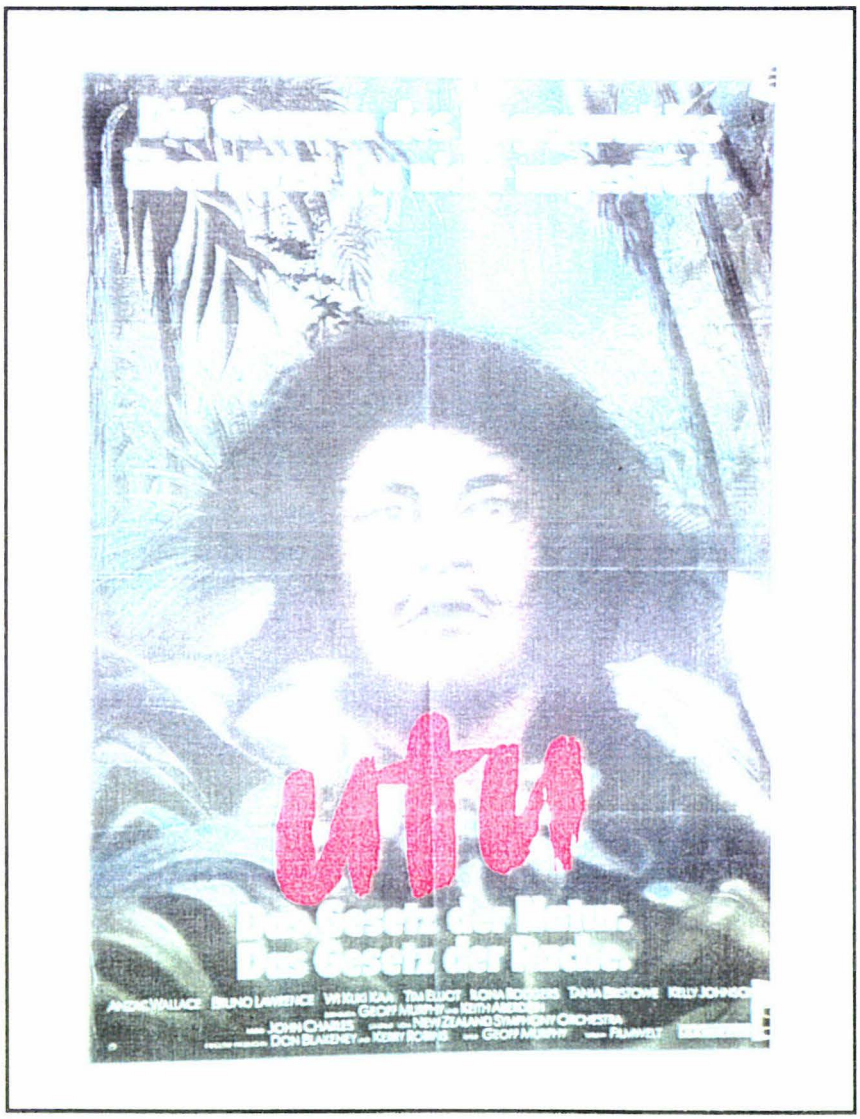
The tattoo is also a device to connote 'Otherness'. The facial tattoo or moko is associated with rank and tattoo artists were considered as highly tapu people because blood, the most tapu of all substances, was shed from the most sacred part of the body - the head.[61] The tattoo follows a classical pattern of curved lines radiating out from a point between the eyes and from nostril to chin with curvilinear cheek spirals and koru motifs on forehead and outer cheeks. This is the design used on Nig. The ritual of tattoo has been linked to a rite of puberty to mark the transition to adulthood.

[61] Terrence Barrow, An Illustrated Guide to Maori Art, 1984, p 80

The film poster for ***Utu*** strongly signifies the significance of the pioneer mythology and colonisation for the Maori. The poster utilises an iconography which can be associated with the pioneer mythology of the American West. Three shot guns are placed in a triangular or tripod formation which frame the head, face and shoulders of Te Wheke producing an image of entrapment. His long black hair has a resonance with North American Indian, again linking the poster with the colonisation of the American West. Flames lick the edges of the guns suggesting volatility. At the apex of the guns explodes the word 'Utu'. The Maori warrior Te Wheke wears a red shirt. To the right of the title is an image of a 'cowboy' - a man in a hat on a horse. On the lower left of the title sits an image of a lizard encased in red flame. This icon also appears carved on the elaborate wooden handle of the shotgun on the left.



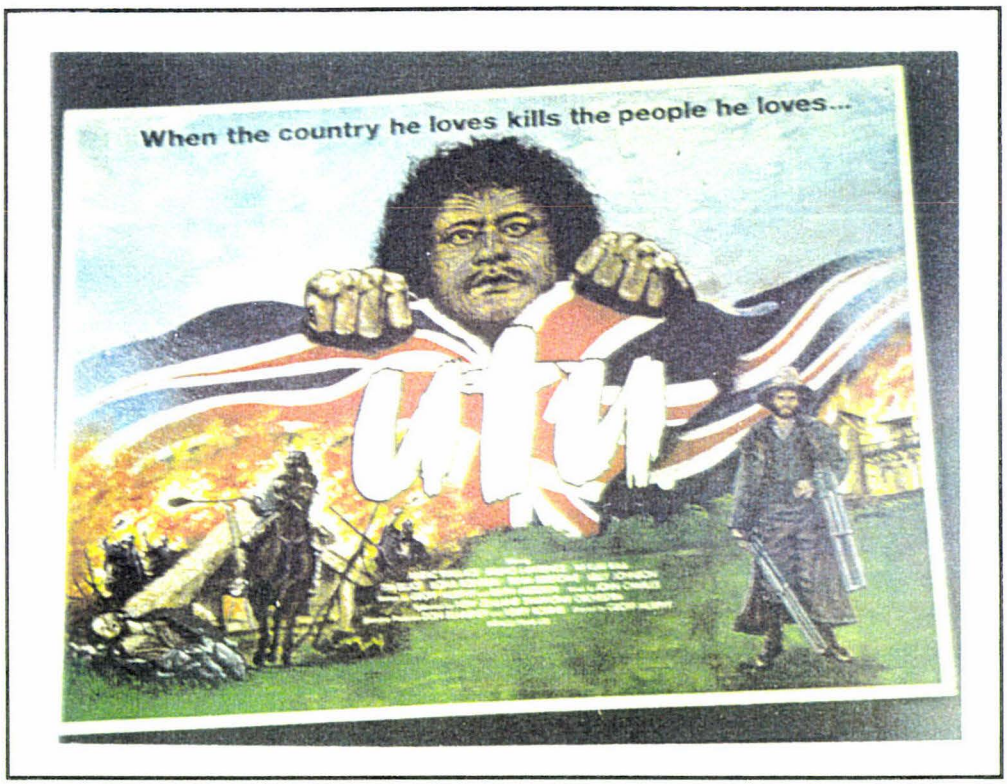
It is interesting to note that Te Wheke's facial tattoo features more prominently in the posters used internationally for audiences in Venice (USA) and Germany, both of which depict Te Wheke as a noble savage.



In the imperial age there were at least five figures commonly used to represent Maori: the noble savage, the ignoble savage, the comic savage and the dying savage. Blythe indicates that the noble savage was not yet corrupted by westerners and these characters were located in a fairytale-like story set against visual imagery of forest leaves and sparkling lakes. These images are

aligned with racial and sexual purity and linked to upper class idealism.[62] Thus have a resonance with European knowledge of the work of Rousseau and painting such as those of Gaugin. Notions of the noble savage can also be applied to ***Once Were Warriors*** as Mayer notes this film "returns to the old myth of the noble savage and ignores the reality of the present whereby Maori must take advantage of education and prepare for the twenty-first century.[63]

Pioneer mythology is again stressed in another ***Utu*** poster for New Zealand audiences.



This second poster depicts Te Wheke tearing the Union Jack in two. The title 'Utu' in this poster sits in the middle of the image and the T is placed in the centre of the rip in the flag. Te Wheke's chin rests on the top of this letter. The T acts as a vector drawing the eye to Te Wheke's tattooed face. Guns are again a strong element in this poster. In the right of the image a man defiantly

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[62] Martin Blythe, Naming the Other : Images of Maori in New Zealand Film and Television, 1994, pp 24-33.

[63] Geoff Mayer, 'Going Home', Metro Film, Television and Video multi media magazine, No 101,

hold two shotguns both in a posture of protection and assault. In the left of the poster there is a man on horseback torching a Maori Pa. These images clearly indicate the motivation behind the film narrative, and are summed up in the title ***Utu.*** Blythe indicates that reviewers have gone to great lengths to find a suitable translation for this Maori word and concept:

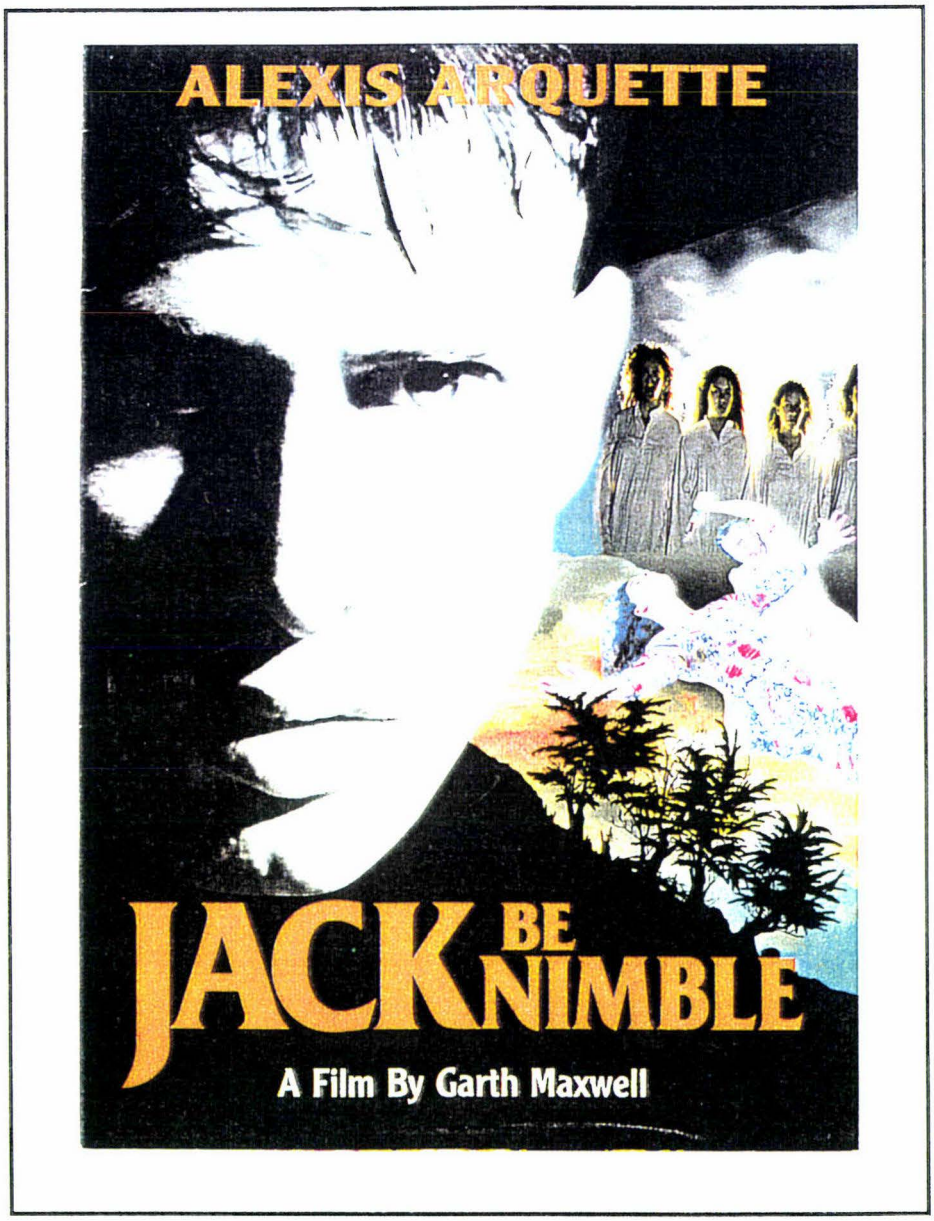
> ***In a publicity release for the film Geoff Murphy has translated 'Utu' variously as 'reciprocation', 'balance', 'revenge', 'compensation', 'payment', to which reviewers have added 'retribution', 'atonement', 'honour', and 'justice'. The blizzard of terminology is as potent a symptom of present-day intercultural ambiguities as the concept itself.***[64]

[64] Martin Blythe, Naming the Other: Images of Maori in New Zealand Film and Televison, 1994, p 235.

THE 'BEAST'

***JACK BE NIMBLE* (Director: Garth Maxwell, 1993)**

Closely linked to notions of 'Otherness' is the manifestation of the 'beast' or monster archetype as mentioned with reference to Jake Heke in the analysis of the film poster for the film ***Once Were Warriors***[65]. This archetype is also identifiable in the film poster and film ***Jack Be Nimble***.



[65] As noted in ' Warriors Opens in New York, Then Throughout the USA', On Film, No 53, May 1995, pp10/11, The Voice critic said that "Temuera Morrison as Jake is an engagingly terrifying monster and when he's not hurting people he's strangley chivalrous and impulsive ...Jake's violence is complicated like any monsters should be, and Morrison even manages the perverse trick of getting the audience to root for him at times - no small feat with the memory of Beth's abused flesh in one's mind."

The film poster for ***Jack Be Nimble*** is a montage of images which approximate a dream-like horror sequence. Jack's (Alexis Arquette) head and face dominate the left and centre of the poster. The left side of his face is in shadow; his left eye is obscured by this shadow. The right side of his face is sharply lit with white light. This contrast between the dark and light splits Jack's face down the fracture line of his nose and lips. This use of contrasty lighting clearly delineates the two quadrants of his face, reflecting the duality of good and evil. A shaft of triangular light from the right of the frame holds three images. The tip or apex of the triangle falls just below Jack's eye on the left side of the picture.

This triangle holds three images. Each images represents an aspect of darkness, evil or the supernatural. The moon and clouds which hover over the four girl witches (Jack's foster sisters) throw a back light over the girls which illuminates their long, dark, tangled hair suggesting witch-like, supernatural or spiritual connotations. This is supported by their Victorian type nightgowns which are undone at the collar reinforcing a sense of unruliness or wantonness. Their gaze is focused on Jack. Directly below the group of child-witches is an image of a man holding a knife poised above his head, intent on plunging it into Dora's (Jack's sister, played by Sarah Smuts-Kennedy) throat. Dora is falling backwards with her arms outstretched and fingers reaching out. This position suggests a submissiveness which connotes aspects of sacrifice. There is blood on the knife; on the man's white clothing and on Dora's right hand. It is not clear whether the blood has come from Dora, although it appears not. However, two spots on her floral dress imitate blood spots. By being superimposed on the two images, this scene bridges the scene above it of the four girls with the scene below of an dusk orange sky and four scrubby black trees. The sunset renders the tree's black and sets them against a turbulent orange/bluey dusk sky. There is a nice symmetry between the four trees and the four child-witches. The trees are on a hillside which slopes down into the right side of the poster frame. This sloping hillside gives the illusion of

also forming Jack's right shoulder causing Jack to merge with the landscape. This slope also forms the bottom vector of the triangle. The side vectors of the triangle guide the viewer's eye to Jack's face. The top vector actually intersects Jack's right eye. The bottom vector touches the corner of Jack's mouth and passes under the tip of his nose. The point of these vectors meet on the left side of Jack's face (the side in shadow). While the points of the vectors would traditionally signal the punctum of the image, it would appear in this poster that the punctum is Jack's right eye. This is signalled by the eye being intersected by the top triangular vector; the use of light and dark contrasty lighting around the eye ball; and the intensity of his stare. Paradigmatically, the choice of the colour orange rather than red for the text suggests a subtle distancing from the horror genre per se.

Jack Be Nimble in poster and film presents a world in which the individual seems to have little autonomy or control over events. ***Jack Be Nimble*** in many ways reflects tonal elements evident in the work of Hollywood director Val Lewton, who is admired for his conscious manipulation of the boundaries of the very ritualised horror genre. Lewton, by alternating the calm, everyday sensibility with sequences of suspense, suggestion and ascending terror, turns the genre 'on its ear'. As Telotte suggests in his book ***Dreams of Darkness - Fantasy and the films of Val Lewton*** (1985), "...the Lewton films all treat a common human problem, our desire to understand and explain a world that is consistently mystifying or frightening".[66] Just as in Lewton's ***Seventh Victim*** and ***Cat People***, ***Jack Be Nimble*** explores certain transcendent, nameless or unutterable fears that always haunt the human psyche, especially a fear of meaninglessness. Telotte notes that films such as these evoke "... the disparity between what we know and what we long to know in order to examine that 'experience of the limits' which according to Tzetan Todorov, is the hallmark of fantasy."[67]

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[66] Telotte, Dreams of Darkness- Fantasy in the films of Val Lewton, 1985, p 113.
[67] Ibid, pp 77-78.

Jack Be Nimble deals with many of our deepest fears and emotions by confronting issues of the beast and violence in humanity. It presents a world where fear is the most powerful emotion. The pervasive nightmare atmosphere and ominous, ubiquitous darkness in the film text, and signified in the film poster by the nightime setting, the moon and the nightdresses of the child witches, carries a heavy thematic and mythological narrative weight. The link between mythology and the psychic has been widely noted.[68]

The film, inspired by a brutal childhood incident,[69] has many links to Jung's psychology of the child archetype. Yet this tale is a dark retelling of Jung's theory. A tale of the dark archetypal child. The child god is usually an abandoned or orphaned child. Jack and Dora are abandoned when their mother has a nervous breakdown. Abandonment of the child, and associated danger and fear, is a necessary component of the child evolving towards independence. Jung believed that the child is the potential future, an anticipation of future developments, and that to pave the way for a future change of collective personality the child must detach itself from its origins. Therefore abandonment is a necessary precondition of the child archetype reaching maturity or independence. "The child archetype is a picture of certain forgotten things in our childhood ... the child motif represents the preconscious childhood aspects of the collective psyche."[70] Significantly Jung notes that the child motif represents not only something that existed in the distant past, but also something that exists now.[71]

Jack Be Nimble is a cautionary tale of dysfunctional family life. The father is the child's enemy, the mother shares the children's solitude and abandonment (both aspects of Jung's child archetype). The film presents a childhood of trauma and obsession. In fact the title of the film has a resonance with the

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[68] C G Jung, The Collected Works: The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (eds: Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler), 1959, p 6.

[69] Director Garth Maxwell was told of an incident where a young child was whipped with barbed wire. See David Gapes, 'Expressions of Freedom', David Gapes talks to Garth Maxwell, On Film, November 1993, p 9.

[70] C G Jung and C Kerenyi, Essays on a Science of Mythology, 1963, p 80.

[71] Ibid, p 81.

childhood nursery rhyme: " Jack be Nimble Jack be quick, Jack jumped over the candle stick". While Jung's child archetype is endowed with special powers, as manifest in both Jack and Dora, the two must combine to represent a healthy psyche. Without this duality survival for Jack and Dora is difficult. In a sense Jack represents the shadow side of this dual personality.

HEAVENLY CREATURES (Director: Peter Jackson, 1994)

The use of the term 'creatures' in the film title also connotes a sense of 'Otherness' and the 'beast'. The word 'creatures' suggests a monstrous and dark subtext usually associated with the horror genre.

The film poster for ***Heavenly Creatures*** is representative of a number of New Zealand film posters in that it is composed of three separate divisions. Variations of this technique are also used by posters for ***Once Were Warriors***, ***The Footstep Man*** and ***Desperate Remedies.***

The central panel of the ***Heavenly Creatures*** film poster utilise 'Ben-day' dots to build up the pictorial image. This has a resonance with the popular culture of comics and, more recently, with the television or computer screens. The only panel in this film poster to contain imagery is the middle one. At the top of this panel is a head shot of Pauline Parker (Melanie Lynskie). Her profile and gaze is to the right of the frame. Her chin rests on the top of Juilet Hulme's (Kate Winslett) head. Juliet's profile and gaze faces left. Pauline's dark hair fills the far left side of the panel. Her eyes are accentuated by shading. Juliet's hair, which is parted on the right, flows down the centre of the panel; framing her face; drawing the viewer's eye down to her parted lips. Her lips and eyebrows are accentuated by being darker in colour. There is less shadow on her face as compared with Pauline. Her hair flows down into a circle of light at the base of the panel which contains an image of Pauline, Pauline's mother, Honora, and Juliet. They are walking along a tree-edged path. The colour at the top of the panel is a dark, inky blue/black. Paradigmatically, the colour red (usually associated with the horror genre) was avoided in favour of blue tones. The coldness of this colour is significant as are the connotations of dream, fantasy and nightmare. The strength of the colour diminishes down the panel, till, at the bottom, it is a lighter, icy blue. White light highlights the circle with the image of the three women. Across the base the title intersects the circle. The title juxtaposes the colour variation in the panel. The words are darker a the base and lighter towards the top. Under the title is the emotive description "*The true story of the crime that shocked the nation.*" The left and right panels display comments from Costa Botes (***Dominion***), Russell Baille (***Sunday Star Times***), Nicholas Reid (***North and South***), and Harvey Clark (***NZ Herald***). The left panel also displays the words 'Innocence, Imagination, Obsession'.

As discussed in chapter Two, Jackson has constructed this film so that viewers could get into the girls' minds-eye and the film poster, too, operates as a window to the girls' minds, souls, and obsessions. The title of the film suggests a subtle juxtaposition of images. The word 'Creatures' conjures up monstrous or dark connotations usually associated with horror, while the word 'Heavenly' has a resonance located in the fantasy world. This dream world is ambiguous in its presentation, but it is clearly a better, more idyllic, secure place - a heavenly escape for the heavenly creatures. The film poster does not hint at this brightly coloured fantasy world. Rather, it presents a more nightmarish quality with the blue/black colouring. The descending colour (black/solid to icy blue) in the middle panel supports the notion of a world crumbling - that the dream world sits precariously on top of a world which is crumbling into nightmare. Yet the use of panels in the composition of the image also contain, constrict and entrap, almost providing a claustrophobic premonition of the girls' fate.

Head shots are common in posters and utilised here to symbolically link the two girls. The closeness between the two girls in the poster reflects their intimate friendship and the contrast between the dark and light hair is emphasised by shading and light to suggest a good/evil binary almost connoting notions of beauty and the beast. The image of girlish beauty is juxtaposed against the perception of the word 'creatures' in the title. Their gaze is to the edge of the frame. It almost appears that they are looking off into the distance; to the future; or into their own fantasy world.

A strong element in the film and in the film poster is the use of voyeurism. The peephole shaped circle of light at bottom of the centre panel, anticipates the climatic scene in the film of Pauline, Juliet and Pauline's mother's walk along a path in the bush (and Honora's subsequent murder). This peephole provides a window to Pauline's and Juliet's soul; a premonition of the crime; and a preview of their fantasy as well as alluding to the fantasy world which they create. The film itself makes much of this in providing a secret and unseen

view of the inside of the girls' creative fantasy world thus allowing the audience a certain voyeuristic scopohilic pleasure.

The use of awards, like medals or wreaths on film posters , as applied here and in posters for ***The Piano*** and ***Crush,*** is significant. The use of these awards are used to connote an achievement of some sort, the gaining of recognition or acclaim, and as such, these images signify 'worthiness'. In the film poster for ***Heavenly Creatures*** the use of the wreathed award is linked to bourgeois concepts of a heavenly culture and holds connotations of cultural capital and value or merit.

ARCHETYPES

> ***"I came from a culture that was a small town entertaining itself ... I tell stories to illustrate that I am part of a generation of women who in a sense had to be their own role models."*** [72]

This analysis will look at the film poster for Gaylene Preston's ***Mr Wrong*** (1985) plus reference to Alison Mclean's ***Crush*** (1993). The body of this analysis will be dominated by an investigation of the predominant themes and characters to explore the use of archetypes, specifically the 'woman' as 'Other', and national mythology in New Zealand film posters.

MR WRONG (Director: Gaylene Preston, 1985)

In 1978 Gaylene Preston was the first woman to independently make a film in New Zealand. The film ***All the Way Up There*** was theatrically released in New Zealand as a cinema short. Preston asserts that she does make films from a feminist premise. "A feminist - sure! Don't talk about post feminism; I think it's a load of bloody bull-shit. We certainly haven't finished feminism yet."[73] Film culture in New Zealand has been enhanced and strengthened by the creative input of women. Preston's attitude to the position and experiences of women help form and shape her thematic style. Women in the films of Gaylene Preston are strong, decisive, determined and, at times, manipulative. Indeed, Preston's own incisive direction is reflected in the action of her characters.

The most apparent feature of the film poster for the film ***Mr Wrong***, is the grainy black and white colour choice. The background of the poster is a solid black. The film title appears to be almost jammed up against the top of the picture by Heather Bolton's head. It is as if the movement associated with

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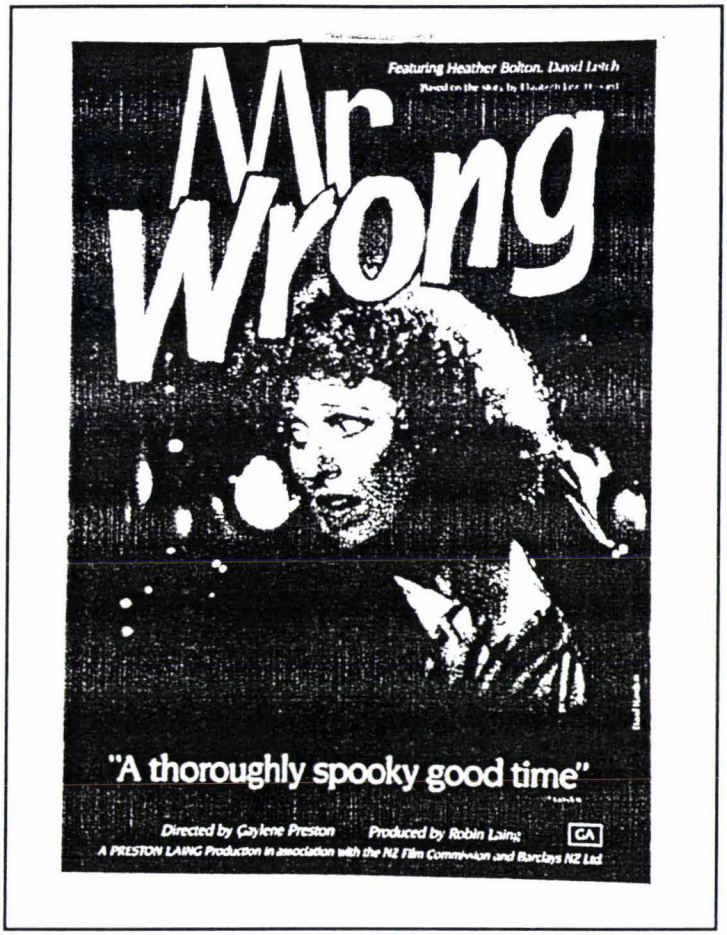
[72] Gaylene Preston, cited in Dennis and Bieringa, 'Reflecting Reality', Film in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1992, p 164.
[73] Gaylene Preston, Film News, September 1992, p 11.



Bolton's obvious terror has propelled the word 'Mr' to the top of the page and caused the word 'Wrong' to sit on an upward right-hand slant. The title words are in white with the word 'Mr' composed of straight sided letters. Whereas the word 'Wrong' is emphasised by a roughness; a shivering around the margins of its letters. Bolton's head and torso fill the middle right of the poster. Her face and body are turned to the right with her gaze to the left and behind her. There is a sense of movement to 'see' what is pursuing her - to 'see' the 'other' behind her. Her face is clearly lit which emphasises the graininess of the photography. This graininess resembles beads of perspiration. This combined with Bolton's widely open eyes, raised eyebrows, and parted lips, with the teeth visible, signify terror. Her hand is clutched to her chest - a gesture commonly associated with fright. The high colour in her cheeks suggested by slight shadowing, the forward position of her body and the open collar suggest rapid movement - a run. The light that falls from the right onto the back of Bolton's

head signifies vulnerability. There is the suggestion that she is a victim. The lower half of her body and the poster dissolve into blackness. The black/white contrast has a nightmare quality to it which supports the notion of horror. The caption at the bottom of the poster ("*a thoroughly spooky good time*") also underscores this theme. Interesting the way this caption links horror and fear with 'having a good time'. This alludes to the way the horror genre can be cathartic.[74]

The punctum of the poster is the very bright car headlight. Viewers are guided to this spot by Meg's eyes, her nose, lips and the profile of her face which are inclined in this direction. If we were unfamiliar with the film, the collection of lights behind and to the left of Bolton produce an ambiguous display. We assume by gestalt - making sense of what we see, and past experience that this is a car following Bolton. The sinister nature of the attack or chase is indicated by Meg's expression and suggested forward movement.

Preston's talent lies in her ability to light a scene to grasp its full emotional and visual value. In ***Mr Wrong*** the lighting of particular scenes reinforce the thriller genre and assist in creating suspense. Illumination and light/dark contrasts are cleverly used with action involving Meg and her car. This is clearly reflected in the film poster. The use of light/dark to highlight the relationship between Meg and her car is a strong thematic tool in the film.

The first time Meg drives home for the weekend is used by Preston to establish the para-normal spirituality of the car. Dusk is setting; it is raining; the windscreen wipers are sloshing in time to the music on the radio. An extreme close-up shot of Meg dissolves into a mid close-up shot through the windscreen. Meg is driving; her eyes close. The hypnotic rhythm of the rain and wipers continues. As the radio announcer says, "Its just a ride away with the music into a glorious weekend", there is a mid wide-shot of the road

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[74] Research as to why we enjoy being scared has been undertaken by Carol Clover, Men Women and Chainsaws : Gender in the Modern Horror Film, 1992, and James B Twichell, Dreadful Pleasures : an anatomy of modern Horror, 1985.

through the windscreen and a stationwagon zooms closely past Meg. Megs jerks her head up. The next shot is a wide view of a lay-by at the side of the hill road. The Jaguar pulls up and stops. We notice that the rain has ceased and dusk is drawing. The camera faces the front of the Jag; headlamps are switched off. Meg winds the window down, settles back and closes her eyes. There is a wide shot of the rear of the Jaguar. The fence alongside stands crookedly in the dusk and rattles. The camera focuses back on Meg in an extreme close-up. Meg is sleeping; shadow has fallen on her face; her eyes, top of her nose and forehead are lit. Droplets of perspiration are evident in the light. Meg's eyes flash open as she hears the sound of strenuous, laboured breathing. Zoom out as Meg spins round to the front and winds the window up as the sounds continue. She switches on the interior lights, looks behind again, turns back to front and peers around. The noises have ceased with the light. When she switches off the interior lights, the noises resume. She again switches on the interior car lights and drives urgently away.

The use of light/dark in this way signals the good/evil elements and suggest that unpleasant things exist in the darkness - the unknown. When Meg switches the interior car lights on (ie. exists in the known or the safe), the noises or fear diminish. When the lights are off, the dark and noises resume and represent the unknown. This, in a sense, symbolises Meg's step towards becoming an autonomous and independent person - shifting to the city and being an independent person on her own. While it is far safer for Meg to exist in the known, the light, Meg's determination to overcome the darkness; triumph over the possessed car; and strive towards independence, is strong. The switching off of the car headlights is also emphasised by Preston. As the headlights fade into blackness a certain doom is heralded. This sense is consolidated by the restless, eerie rattling of the fence and the dusk rolling in which, combined, underscore Meg's isolation. In the extreme close-up of Meg sleeping, with half her face in light and half shadowed, the viewer is alerted to a presence or approaching action. Suspense is created.

Clearly evident in the film and film poster is Preston's emphasis on hands and faces. In the film, as Meg drives her car to the antique shop after purchasing it from the car yard, the camera focuses on Meg's hands in a close-up of Meg changing gears. The close-up shots of hands and faces are interesting. Hands and faces are very personal and individual and often reflect certain emotions - hands by their gestures and faces by expression.

A striking thematic tone evident in ***Mr Wrong*** is urban loneliness - almost a melancholy involved in everyday urban survival. The universality of alienation and the search for independence are highlighted in ***Mr Wrong*** at the times of dusk and dawn. These are the times that Meg is most aware of her vulnerability. The film poster clearly indicates this vulnerability by the expression of fear on Meg's face; the fact that she is placed in isolation (she is alone) consolidated by the night setting. Preston uses these times to light moods as well as locations and reinforce themes. This sense of the 'woman alone' is a significant element in Preston's films (and is beginning to feature in many contemporary New Zealand film made by women. For example, ***Crush*** and ***The Piano.***)

The films of Gaylene Preston address the 'woman alone' by reflecting upon practices distinctive to women, commenting on relationships between men and women and exposing societal and ideological injustices. The struggle towards equality, independence, and the changing of traditional gender roles is strongly emphasised in Preston's ***Bread and Roses*** (1993). The traditional family and associated milieu of the 1940's and on, presented in this film contain a variety of mechanisms which support the subordination of women. ***Bread and Roses*** speaks directly about the experiences of women and addresses the female audience with a special voice. While traditional practices associated with women are succinctly depicted in this film, such entrenched gender classifications are juxtaposed against non-traditional roles.

The attitude of respectability is also connected to marriage. Finding a man/husband is a central concern for the nurses in ***Bread and Roses***. The marriage theme is central to another of Preston's works titled ***Married*** (1992). She says in an interview with Jonathan Dennis, "I can remember being sat down and told when I was about ten: 'You don't need to do anything; you will get married and when you get married you have to go where your husband goes. He will work and have places to go and you will follow him'."[75] Marnie Wilton says in a review of this film that it "... acts as a kind of antidote to the pervasive mythology still existing in our society which tells women that marriage is some kind of fairy tale existence..."[76] Similar thematic concerns are also presented in ***Mr Wrong***: specifically the pressure society places on young women to find 'Mr Right'. This expectation has escalated into a formidable 'Cinderella' fantasy.

As discussed, the film poster for ***Mr Wrong*** depicts a sense of fear or terror on Meg's face and in her stance. She is being pursued. ***Mr Wrong*** shows that women have been conditioned by society to accept fear as part of our everyday psychological structure. Preston uses the text of ***Mr Wrong*** to undermine societies conditioning of women to accept fear, and in doing so, dramatically alters the traditional thriller genre of victimised women/predatory man. The films presents options, actions and attitudes which women can adopt in today's society. As Preston says, "You can't expect me, as a person who abhors sexism and sexual harassment, to make a traditional thriller in which the woman is a helpless victim, a sexual distraction for the hero or a passive motivator of the hero's action."[77] Meg is not portrayed as a victim, nor is she a stereotypical heroine. It is refreshing to see women on screen who are realistically sized and shaped. The media doesn't need to take into account women who do not fit the perfect image.[78] ***Mr Wrong*** is revolutionary in that it addresses the fears which women have to confront on a daily basis: walking

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[75] Gaylene Preston, cited in Dennis and Bieringa, 'Reflecting Reality', Film in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1992, p 164.
[76] Marnie Wilton, Review of ***Married***, Broadsheet, Summer, No 196, 1992/3, p 58.
[77] OnFilm, No 3, 1984, p 8.
[78] OnFilm, No 5, 1985, p 3.

alone at night, being home alone at night, and associated issues of independence. "It also highlights the ludicrousness of the search for the man of your dreams." As Bolton acknowledges, "If you're a nice girl you are pressured into finding Mr Right and Living happily ever after. It's part of the fantasy that women go along with ... we are conditioned to be fearful, passive and, in the main, dependent on a man."[79] Preston's films, unlike many which see the woman getting victimised by theme and script, portray women joining forces, finding strength and fighting back on their own terms. Yet the film poster works against this reading. Meg is presented as victim. She is stereotyped.

Jane Sayle supports this reading of ***Mr Wrong*** in an article called ***Innocence and Evil***.[80] Sayle believes that ***Mr Wrong*** "Embodies many of the inconsistencies and problems that women encounter when they look at supposedly positive, women-created images of themselves and men. It does not confront any more that the most glib and frustration layers of women's sensibilities."[81] In particular, the placatory nature of women's language documented in the film. Meg apologises because she does not like the man who has no name, and apologises to Bruce when he tries to sexually assault her. Sayle points out further subtleties which indicate attitudes to women. In buying a Jaguar, Meg has tried to elevate herself above her male counterparts. Both Meg's father and boss make her "park it 'round the back". An interesting comment, perhaps too cliched and with obvious Freudian analysis of car design, is when Meg's friend Edith says of the men's reaction to the car, "Its penis envy and men don't like women having a bigger one than them."

Unfortunately Meg, as depicted by the film poster, is not an entirely positive archetype. As Sayle notes, it is impossible for the spectator to identify comfortably with Meg. "She is singled out from anonymity - a mumsy, big-breasted icon, representing on some deeper level the sort of woman we all

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[79] Ibid
[80] Jane Sayle, 'Innocence and Evil', Illusions, No 12, November 1989, pp 22-24.
[81] Ibid

don't want to be." [82] In fact, Preston's portrayal verges on the stereotypical. "Meg is the country cousin come to town; the flat mother wearing ageless and shapeless clothes, without obvious sexuality. She is exploited by her cousin Val - portrayed as a brisk, well-groomed career girl, and Sam the sexpot/model girl flatmate."[83]

***CRUSH* (Director: Alison Mclean, 1993)**

While it would be dangerous to assume that the themes and archetypes in New Zealand cinema fully present national characteristics, the representation of national myth and ideology in the work of Alison Maclean cannot be underestimated. Maclean graduated from the Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland University, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in 1982. Before becoming interested in film, she was involved in performance art (***Repast***, 1980) and photography (***Self Defence*** series exhibited in 1981). ***Talkback*** and ***Kitchen Sink*** received the New Zealand Film and Television Best Short Film Awards in 1988 and 1989 respectively. Maclean's most recent film, ***Crush*** (1993), was awarded Best Female Actor (Caitlin Bossley), and Best Female Supporting Role (Donogh Rees).

The prominent use of 'Ben-day' dots in the construction of the image in one of the film posters for this film, distorts the background and the image to produce a carefully composed surrealty. The harshness in colour choice - purple background and yellow suggests a jaundiced view - a view that all is not well and a sense of unease is conveyed. Lane's head appears to be resting on the her left hand, which is under her chin. The right hand has the fingers extended. The fingers clasp a cigarette. The composition of the image similar to that of a portrait photograph and has a resonance with some of Robert Mapplethorpe's portraits. It is carefully composed, objective and almost clinical.

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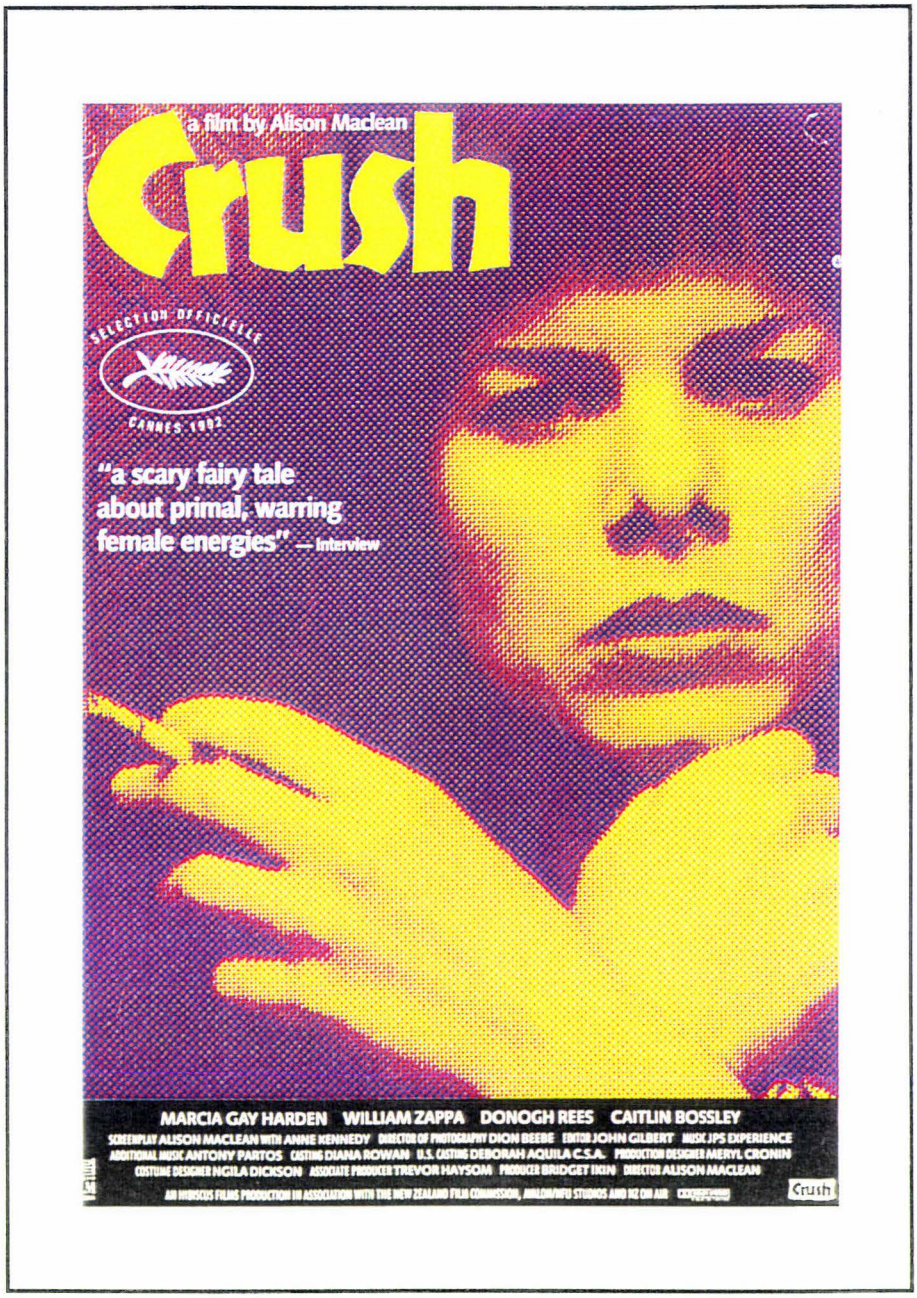
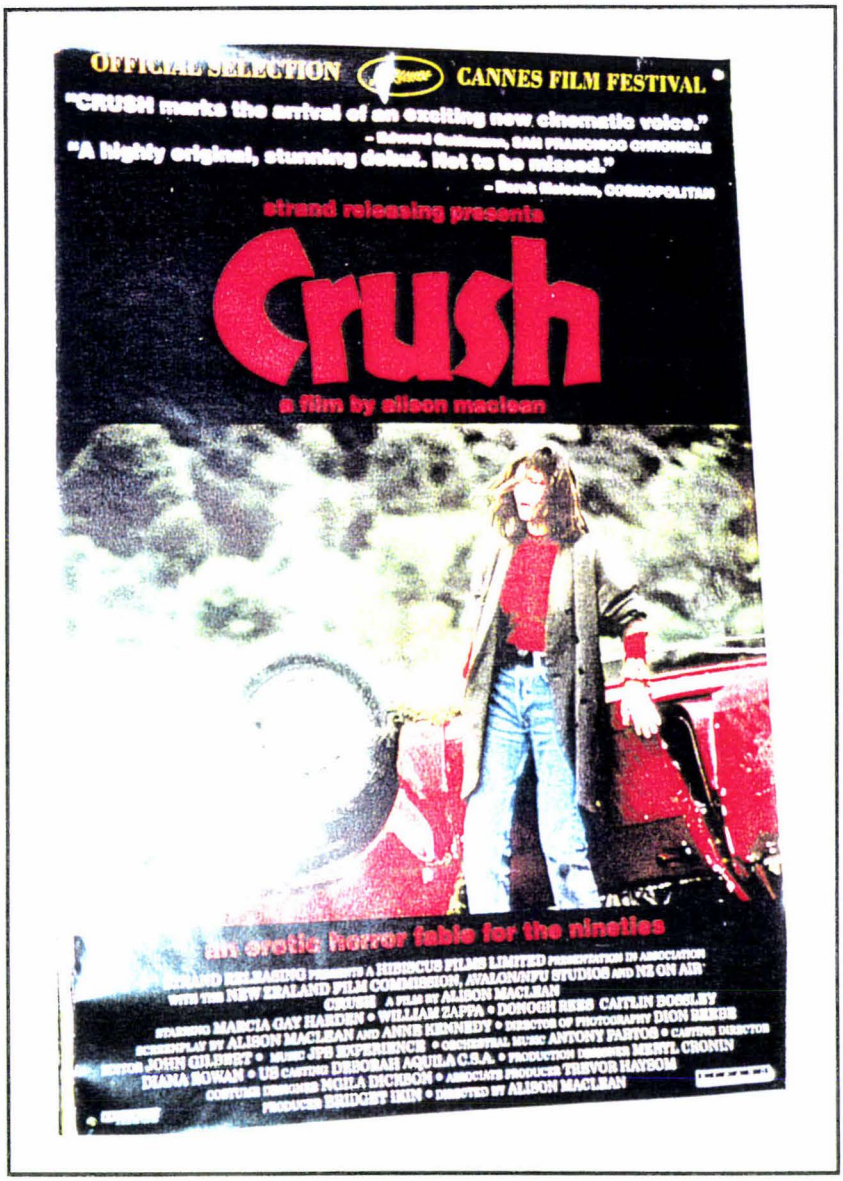
[82] Ibid, p 23.
[83] Ibid



The 'Ben-day' dots and purple/yellow colour combine to create the illusion of static interference related to the reception of television transmissions. Lane appears as a ghostly image trapped in a screen (computer or television). It is as if the image itself is precarious and that it could fade of alter at any time.

This image is markedly different to the other poster used to advertised this film. The second poster is far more conventional in that it portrays some of the film narrative. In the centre of the poster is a photograph of Lane standing with her



back and hands against the crushed car which lies upside down in a paddock. This image is cropped at the top and bottom by back backgrounds which hold the title and credit information. The predominant colour in the poster is red. Lane wear's a red jersey and red lipstick. The car is red and is set against the green background of native bush and grassland. The use of red and green are strong visual motifs through out the film. The title and description of the film is also in red. The sense of magic, myth and scary fairytale in ***Crush*** are juxtaposed against harshness, pain and malevolence and set amid a landscape which can be both breathtaking and unmerciful. A landscape so mystically

coloured that the red of Lane's lipstick or red jacket or dress is framed perfectly by the steamy Rotorua geyserlands and natural greens of the landscape. Red is the predominant colour in ***Crush***. Red signifies strength, boldness, sexuality, passion, violence, power and assertiveness. In ***Crush*** we often see red set against green. The red car 'crushed' in the green paddock, and Lane's red clothes against green native bush. The drizzle-shrouded scape which cloaks ***Crush*** provides a mythological-type backdrop for ***Crush's*** archetypal anti-hero Lane.

Through Maclean's camera the landscape of ***Crush*** becomes timeless - containing an inherent spiritually; and "suggesting a veneer of civilisation in imminent danger of cracking apart."[84] Ann Kaplan has stated: "Film critics have followed Althusser for whom ideology is a series of representations and images reflecting the conception of reality that any society live by."[85] Ideological myths are the myths by which society operates. Popular culture, such as film, has the ability to shroud reality in symbol. Film provides a valuable source for discovering ideological undercurrents in New Zealand society. The films of Alison Maclean are indispensable in the analysis of women's place in Aotearoa. The films are representative of the wider sphere of contemporary New Zealand films - films which are beginning to explore and comment on women's love, conflict, and role in society. The films comment on, and work against, the hidden patriarchal agenda which maintains sex-role classifications and 'popular' misconceptions.

Image in film has an important sociological and ideological function, and is particularly relevant when considering New Zealand film from a feminist perspective. As Kaplan suggests in the introduction to her book ***Women and Film*** (1983), image can be viewed from both a sociological and semiotic position. These two positions reflect two main approaches to feminist criticism. "First the sociological method refers to a study of people in society, film critics here use the terminology of sex roles; the semiological method refers to a

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[84] Sight and Sound Review of ***Crush***, March 1993, Vol 3, Issue 4, p 44.
[85] Ann Kaplan, Women and Film, 1983, p 12.

science of signs, critics here use the terminology of linguistics, discussing film as signifying systems in which women function as a sign."[86] Here the properties of shot are significant. In ***Crush*** the 'over-the-shoulder' shot and close-up are exploited to provide chilling glimpses of emotion. The shot near the end of the film, of Christina embracing Lane, provides a disturbing view of Christina's face over Lane's shoulder. Lane's exposed back emphasises her vulnerability and, with the power of Christina's stare, her demise. The power of the gaze also figures strikingly in the close-up shots, particularly where Lane casts her razor-sharp gaze at Colin or Angela. This is especially effective when Lane and Angela are fighting over Christina's green notebook.

Undoubtedly the most striking and powerful aspect of Maclean's work is the visual and tactile nature of her films. Built around the opposition of characters. Interesting intertexual reference to ***Taunt*** in ***Crush***: the title of Colin's book is the same as Maclean's first short film ***Taunt***. Structurally, Maclean's films are well crafted. ***Crush*** both opens and closes with a cataclysmic and violent event: the car crash and Lane's fall.

Maclean, in her interpretations, experiments with feminist intervention into culture by constructing alternatives for women which centre on new forms of gender-based types and strong female characters. Lane is a survivor- she survives the car crash. Her strength and control are signified as paramount to the film by her being the only character to feature in the film poster. Interestingly, we see in ***Crush*** the passive role filled by Colin. Three incidents highlight Lane's power over Colin. When Lane and Colin first meet at the breakfast table, their hands touch as they both reach for the teapot. Colin pulls away as if burned. Secondly, as Colin is working at the trout hatchery, he is haunted by the picture of Lance eating a tamarillo. Close-ups of Lane's lips covered in the red flesh and juice of the fruit strengthen the power of the vision. And thirdly, the most menacing to the scenes, the kiss between Colin and Lane

[86] Ibid, p 15.

that takes place with a pair of open scissors in Lane's hand. Each scene has an implicit sexuality, violence and power that become bewitching.

While Lane is portrayed as being 'in charge' or holding narrative power, this power is tenuous: she is constantly in threat of losing control and sliding into chaos. "In visual terms this involves losing control of the viewpoint or what film theorist call the male gaze".[87] From this concern with the place of 'woman' in the narrative springs an awareness of the politics of gender. Entrenched notions of male and female archetypes are destabilised, and the way gender is constructed is analysed.

Interestingly, women in mainstream horror are usually placed as the 'Other' and associated with what Kristeva terms the 'abject' (whatever is repulsive and rejected by society). Yet in ***Kitchen Sink,*** it is the man/creature who is placed as the 'Other' and linked with the abject (slime, ooze, blood). While he experiences some power, it is fleeting and he is returned to the realm of 'Otherness' at the close. The woman in this piece retains the power. Miro Bilbrough sees the film as a drama of individualisation. The woman brings forth that which her consciousness has rejected - in Jungian terms, a male self living in the shadows. This prompts the question then: is the monster/man her child or is it her 'anima', her 'male-side' - an embodiment of her own masculinity?[88] The King Kong poster in the background of the kitchen in ***Kitchen Sink*** reinforces the horror genre and alludes to archetypal notions of Beauty and the Beast (and associated significance of the fairytale/mythological).

In ***Crush***, the awareness of archetypal beauty and the beast are toyed with. While it would be tempting to consider Lane and Christina in terms of a melodramatic binary good/bad, victim/aggressor, blonde/dark opposition, Maclean moves beyond this to a suggestion that both beauty and the beast

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[87] Roger Horrocks, cited in Clark and Curnow, Pleasures and Dangers: Artists of the Nineties, 1991, p 55.

[88] Miro Bilbrough, 'Kitchen Sink: An Unchastening Tale' in G Burke and I Wedde (eds) Now See Hear, 1990, p 47. Cited here by Stuart Mackenzie in Pleasures and Dangers: Artists of the Nineties, 1991, p 59.

resides within each of the women. Power shifts between each of them, and at different times within the narrative, each woman is posited as victim (Angela to Lane's charm and sophistication, Christina to Lane's driving/speeding, Lane to Christina's and Angela's revenge). So it is interesting that in the two posters that were used to publicise this film Lane is presented as both victim and aggressor. In the more conventional poster, Lane's jeans are dirty around the knees; her hair is tousled and she is pale and has a shocked expression; suggesting that in some way she has been involved in the car crash. This image suggests that Lane is a victim compared with the other poster in which she is presented more as the erotic woman, the femme fatale (cigarette) or the aggressor.

The title, 'Crush', is interesting: the car is crushed in the paddock; Angela's crush on Lane; and New Zealand's fascination (crush) with America. "... the film can almost be read as an allegory of New Zealand's relationship with the United States ... New Zealand is constantly borrowing from American culture, but at some time there is a complete rejection of it in the rather self-conscious nationalism. The attitude is that we are better than the nasty, corrupt and evil States. Yet we can't help being fascinated by the country."[89]

Perhaps we have believed that feminism is destined to always show women in a positive light. But recently, as Heather Worth's ***Broadsheet*** article, *'Taking Potshots at the Girls'* describes, "There has been a real facing up to the fact the women are capable of violence."[90] ***Crush*** does just this. It is a film which sows the strength and violence women are capable of. Many women I have spoken to found it disturbing to see women in these positions. Emotions ranged from an uneasiness to total dislike of all three of the women characters in ***Crush***, and yet all whom I spoke to expressed some feeling of empowerment or, at least, acknowledgment, that women can inhabit such roles.

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[89] Alison Maclean, cited by Francke in Sight and Sound Review of Crush, Apr 1993, Vol 3, Issue 4, p 19.
[90] Heather Worth, 'Taking Potshots at the Girls', Broadsheet, Winter, No 198, 1993, pp 39-40.

CONCLUSION

Probably the most characteristic feature of communication is its diversity. Film and image are powerful mechanisms which, particularly through the use of language, theme and image, capture and comment upon individual and collective social behaviour. June King McFee supports this by noting: "In contemporary society, non-verbal visual symbols are used to transmit ideas; express qualities, feelings, and emotions; note varied rank, status and social roles; and to persuade changes in behaviour and decision making."[1]

The sense of 'unease' evident in New Zealand film is manifest in the publicity posters for these films. This 'darkness' is more overtly discernible in the films of the late nineteen-seventies and nineteen-eighties probably due to New Zealand, at that time, having a young film industry that was, to a large degree, feeling its way but also linked to social events occurring within New Zealand and internationally. As my thesis substantiates, Claudia Bell's relatively recent work ***Inventing New Zealand: everyday myths of Pakeha identity*** (1996), highlights that the 1980s and 1990s have been "an often difficult time of self-examination for both Pakeha and Maori New Zealanders."[2] While New Zealand mythology has focussed on our 'egalitarian' society; pioneer history, and rural values, Bell acknowledges that much of this Kiwi mythology has been invented. She notes that early invention focussed on idyllic visions of New Zealand;[3] notions of community 'one-ness' , and national pride. However, much of our history works counter to these myths in that, even though New Zealand is a nation of immigrants,

> ***New Zealand's history has included resistance to newcomers, for instance the resistance to Chinese miners and merchants in the 1860s***

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[1] June King McFee, Chpt 8 'Visual Communication', in Raymond V Wiman and Wesley C Meierhenry (eds) Educational Media : Theory into Practice (1969), p 195.
[2] Claudia Bell, ***Inventing New Zealand: everyday myths of Pakeha identity***, 1996, p 1.
[3] Ibid, p 4.

> ***and more recently the 1990s 'Asian Invasion', which is seen as a problem by residents of some city suburbs.***[4]

This 'founding' myth of national pride, centred on egalitarianism, is highlighted by the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. "Internationally this has given New Zealand the image of a place of good race relations, a peaceful country."[5] Bell sardonically notes, "The bloody land wars between Maori and European that took place after the Treaty signing are seldom mentioned in recitations of history."[6]

The 'unease' associated with this form of cultural myth-making reverberates in today's society. An awareness of this 'unease' began to occur in the late 1970s and is highlighted by, as Bell notes, two very popular books: ***The Half-Gallon Quarter-Acre Pavlova Paradise*** (1972) by Austin Mitchell and ***The Passionless People*** (1976) by Gordon MacLauchlan.[7] These have been followed by Jock Phillips' ***A Man's Country: the image of the Pakeha male*** (1987) and Bill Willmott and David Novitz ***Culture and Identity in New Zealand*** (1989). Such texts challenge the ideology which establishes cultural and social myths. More recently there has been an acknowledgement that the media plays a role in the construction and perpetuation of cultural myths. This is addressed by Bell and also by Nick Perry in ***The Dominion of Signs*** (1994) and Martin Blythe's ***Naming the Other: images of Maori in New Zealand film and television*** (1994).

The notion of 'unease' linked to cultural myth-making, is evident in New Zealand's films and is transported to the publicity posters for these films. The gaining of skills and knowledge in the film-making process was sometimes at odds with creative and artistic aims which often resulted in an overt and identifiable rupture or discordance in terms of 'unease'. (This is especially evident thematically, such as the 'man-alone', alienation, repression and

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[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid, p 9.
[6] Ibid
[7] Ibid, p 24.

violence) and easily identifiable in the film posters for these films (for example, the depiction of weapons.) While financial constraints were, and still are, a major factor in film-making in the nineteen-nineties, technology has developed and artistic narrative desire has evolved to produce films which, rather than focussing solely on external conflict, turn more inwards and look towards the inner, or hidden, turmoil of characters. As Garth Maxwell (director of ***Jack Be Nimble***) says:

> ***Your interior life gets an opportunity to express itself in what you're writing, and you're working things out as well, trying to articulate all the intangibles of how you love and live, which makes it a very personal exercise and a way into other people's hearts when they see the film.*** [8]

A 'turning inwards', which almost boarders on 'psychodrama' has developed. Thus a concern with the hidden subtext of film (and film posters) has become paramount. A subtext often cloaked in symbol, ritual, gesture, costume and nuance.

The publicity material for New Zealand film in the nineteen-nineties utilises, to a large degree, symbolic means to communicate the 'unease' evident in the films they promote. The landscape becomes a metaphor for the inner world and is used to signal a precariousness and the potential for violence. This landscape is often portrayed as malevolent, hostile and oppressive, and is used to signify a world on the verge of crumbling. Repression versus liberation is signified in costume, gesture, stance and in the 'gaze'. Traditional methods of narrative communication are de-emphasised in favour of other forms of enunciation which rupture the narrative, exposing ideological concerns and 'dark' connotations.

The most evident forms of alternative methods of enunciation in contemporary New Zealand film posters are the use of costume and the 'gaze' to underscore,

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[8] David Gapes, 'Expressions of Freedom', David Gapes talks to Garth Maxwell, OnFilm, November 1993, p 9.

in particular, aspects of repression and liberation as illustrated in the discussion of ***Desperate Remedies*** and ***The Piano***.

The use of the 'Other' (or outsider) is a significant element in New Zealand film and is clearly reflected in the film posters. The ***Once Were Warriors*** film poster, as well as the poster for ***Utu***, use the facial tattoo associated with Maori culture to connote this 'Otherness'. Dark archetypal characters are also to the fore. The 'Beast' archetype is manipulated and toyed with in a number of New Zealand films, and clearly represented in ***Once Were Warriors*** and ***Jack Be Nimble***. The film and poster for Peter Jackson's ***Heavenly Creatures*** subtly juxtapose the image of "creatures" (with its connotations of monsters and 'the Beast') against both the girlish beauty of Parker and Hulme and ideal of a "Heavenly" existence.

Also, in terms of the composition of the posters, this 'unease' is evident. As McFee notes, "Design is the grammar of the visual world." [9] This 'unease' is made manifest by the use of divisions, splits, rips and tears. The rip or tear along the bottom of the imagery in the film poster for ***Vigil*** signifies the precariousness of Toss' world. The use of panels in the ***Heavenly Creatures*** poster connotes a sense of entrapment and claustrophobia, anticipating the girls' sentence and signalling a world that is 'closing in' on them.

Ultimately, the posters discussed in this research are tools to promote or "sell" the films they advertise to a particular audience. As a medium, the poster has several 'attention-grabbing' factors. While their size attracts attention, as well as giving scope for creativity and inclusion of more information, and they can be positioned to be seen by a wide variety of people, it is a poster's imagery and colour, combined with written text, which are of most importance. The impact of the image cannot be under-estimated. As Marshall McLuhan has asserted: the television generation of today "have become more involved in order to complete the unfinished communication patterns of television and

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[9] June King McFee, Chpt 8, 'Visual Communication', in Raynond V Wiman and Wesley C Meiernenry (eds), Educational Media : Theory into Practice (1969), p 196.

other common visual forms. Thus, he contended, the communication of this 'cool' generation are likely to be far more non-verbal (image) than verbal (word) sensitive than those from the pre television years." [10]

Colour is an important non-verbal component of imagery and can be used to attract, highlight and signify thematic or tonal elements. Many of the posters discussed in this research utilise the colour red both as a strong graphic (red against black in the ***Once Were Warriors*** poster and red against green in ***Crush***) and to connote an underlying subtext. Red is the colour of the Warrior (***Once Were Warriors***), and also signals strength, passion, aggression, sexuality and, often, danger (Dorothea is lavishly dressed in red in ***Desperate Remedies*** and ***Crush***'s Lane is linked to the colour red).[11]

The poster is now an accepted part of our popular culture and, as such, cannot be under-estimated as an art-form or in the transmission of (hidden) messages. This research has demonstrated that there is an 'unease' evident in New Zealand film and in the posters for these films. The question which now arises is "does this phenomenon occur in films and posters from other countries, and, if so, how is it made manifest?....."

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[10] C H Sandage, Vernon Fryburger and Kim Rotzoll, Advertising Theory and Practice 1983, ed 11, p 234.

[11] Interestingly the film poster for ***Jack Be Nimble*** paradigmatically chooses the colour orange instead of red to subtly distance it from the horror genre per se.

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