TRAVELLING LIGHT -  
WITH A CASE FOR DISCOVERY:

the making of the film

SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE.

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the making of the film
**SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE.**

has neither in whole nor part been submitted for a higher degree in any other institution.
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ABSTRACT:

This paper examines the background, development and production of the film *SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE* and explains the general decisions made throughout the creation of the film.

It proposes the idea that visuals, combined in an abstract narrative with music/sound - can create a language outside that generally accepted in real-time film (generally) and animation (specifically) to create a communicating “mythopoetic” film-style from combined, selected elements, of both genres.

Some of the issues presented and examined are:

1. How relevant background experiences and influences directed my image-making in the production of the film.

2. The experimental use of symbols and metaphor for an “evocative” narrative in both visuals and sound and the use of these within the film.

3. The relevance of the theme of journey (as described in the synopsis) to viewers of the film.

4. The part played by “Chance”, as an accepted phenomenon, in shaping the direction of the film.

5. Production considerations, other than those of image and sound, to enhance audience perception and understanding of the film.

6. “Understanding”, as a physical as well as an intellectual phenomenon.
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TITLE:

Travelling Light with a Case for Discovery

A written connection to the ten-minute experimental animated film, SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE completed Sydney, 1996.

Definition: "Ambiguity: a double meaning which is either deliberate or caused by inexactness of expression."
*Macquarie dictionary.

(Please note that all ambiguity, as in the title of this thesis, is intentional, in both the project itself and the previous title.)
PREFACE

Since our beginnings in times of chaos and fear, we depart, seeking.....

“As an Arab woman I’ve been given a life sentence. Having chosen the path of freedom I am now cast out, a migrant woman in exile. No one will accept my true identity as a woman. I am condemned to roam the world in search of where I belong.’

Sakinna Boukhedenna 1

This thesis has its origins in a place that, although I have never visited it in a physical sense, I carry in memory - Jung’s idea of genetic coding. You, as reader, need to accept the importance to me of Jungian philosophy and my acknowledgment of synchronous phenomenon which enable me to work with the intangible, knowing, in a physical sense, that there are forces beyond those generally accepted. These are validated by my experience. I accept this phenomenon as effective in shaping the direction of my work.

This title - TRAVELLING LIGHT WITH A CASE FOR DISCOVERY is intentionally ambivalent. The image of a traveller with an empty case departing on a journey, is as valid as that other possible implied interpretation, that when moving light (as a noun), is utilised together with a given statement of facts, new discoveries are possible.

In reference to the following writing which addresses the making of my short film SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE, both metaphors apply.

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1 Alec Hargraves in WRITING ACROSS WORLDS, (p 99)
CHAPTER 1: The Background

Language, normally considered the major method of human communication, comes in other forms beside that of spoken or written words. Visual language, or, visual grammar, assails us daily. Metaphors skip across bill-boards, and of course TV screens, in all styles of story-telling from slick commercials to movie reruns.

“Setting the scene” is a common idiomatic phrase and a metaphor linked to the art of performance. The action of constructing a background to enhance the interpretation of the actions of actors, or characters, is not only relevant to the performing arts. As a metaphor, the phrase can be interpreted generally as something that has to happen, or be set up, before a certain desired result can be achieved.

In film, for instance, in a scene showing a character’s car, we learn from the size, make and colour of the car, something about it’s driver. There is an implied connection to an assumed audience interpretation, by the film-maker. Also in the making of moving image, the particular selection of certain exaggerated light effects or camera perspectives can visually emphasise soft or dramatic qualities when film-making, thereby “projecting” a specific point of view and/or atmosphere to the viewer.

Directing body-language is also an important means by which reaction, mood and feeling can be read, within a scripted story, whether in acting for film, theatre, opera or musical. Facial expression was exaggerated to become a “language” seen as a source of powerful communication in the silent film. The facial expressions of the famous Charlie Chaplin, whose twitching features epitomised voiceless communication in the early days of European film-making was one example of this. ²

In our everyday lives, we unconsciously scan the faces of people we meet, reading the language of personal feeling expressed beyond their spoken words. It is something we notice, or see, an awareness, honed, perhaps from the first visual connection to a human after birth.

² See illustration.
On scanning the faces in Picasso's *GUERNICA* the exaggerated angles and displaced features become part of the artist's personal language of expression. The sharpness of angles distort *realness* in a physical sense. Viewed by thousands of visitors at the Museum de Prado in Madrid, the abstract mural was made, and is generally read, as a statement against war.³

Most spoken /written language - unless specifically exact - is open to interpretation by the receiver to a lesser or greater degree depending on:

- **a.** The tone of voice used and the degree and type of emotional emphasis accompanying delivery of the words.
- **b.** The receiver's cultural background and influences when hearing the words.
- **c.** The receiver's openness to the stimuli of the "message" (i.e: recent or past personal experiences can affect the receiver's ability to interpret or accept the message in the way it was originally intended).

In the same way, visual-language, like most spoken language, can never be guaranteed an exact interpretation by an audience - whether that audience be of one person or a million.

Yet there are certain visual and musical metaphors (i.e violin strings as a signifier for human voices), that transcend these barriers and unless stymied by the last two factors **b** and **c** of the above paragraph, can communicate powerfully across international barriers of individual spoken and written language. These are universal metaphors that engender a bond and emotional connection that defies colour, race or creed. They are metaphors that suggest certain past common experiences and "truths", although I am wary of using that word because of the many degrees of distortion and general misuse and what seems to be a confusion in understanding as to one meaning. By interpretation, "truth" simply-*IS*.

³ See illustration.
Footnote 3. Picasso's *GUERNICA*, from *VARIETIES OF VISUAL EXPERIENCE* by Edmund Burke Feldman.
However, the Arts are not an exact science. Perhaps there are as many truths as there are individuals.

One over-riding truth seems to be that people react to the stimulation of their emotional feelings. Although the degree of stimulation needed to affect reaction in people will vary, certain visual and musical metaphors seem to be received and “read” in a universal way, evoke common emotional reactions in the individual and connect the audience (or certain members of it) to a shared sense of psychic or spiritual history. This is the essence of myths, a truth related to an inner connection that presupposes spiritual connections and human bonds.

“The myth is a drama which begins as an historical event and takes on its special character as a way of orienting people to reality. The myth, or story carries the values of the society: by the myth the individual finds his sense of identity...The myth unites the antinomies of life: conscious and unconscious, historical and present, individual and social. These are formed into a narration which is passed down from age to age. Whereas imperical language refers to objective facts, myth refers to the quintessence of human experience, the meaning and significance of human life. The whole person speaks to us, not just to our brain.”

This deep affecting communication, that reaches beyond words, is one of the reasons for my undertaking of film making and the drive behind development, production and completion of the film SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE. Another reason is my interest in light and how it represents for me (and for individuals from many cultures) both a metaphor for life itself - and a desired state of supreme consciousness.

4 Rollo May, 1991 THE CRY FOR MYTH, Dell Publishing. p 26
From the beginning, primordial subconscious connections were made by reading the effects caused by the behaviour of natural light and shadow. This has played an intrinsic part in the creative expression of most cultures. We are all familiar with the importance of light to the Egyptians and the evidence of this in their culture.\(^5\)

In the present day we harness light in photographic, laser, and hologram technology With such influence and importance in our daily lives the meaning of light has become almost synonymous with consciousness itself.\(^6\) Words and phrases describing light and its related effects and connotations are a major part of our daily vocabulary. We take light for granted, yet it’s absence is hard to imagine. Can an image even exist in a visual sense, without light? The action of light falling on an image makes it visible to the eye. Can an image in a visual sense be conjured up without an original source of light to first make the image known?

The concerns with light as a metaphor have grown in importance to me, but not only as a source of image-creation as in photography, reprographics and projection. Rich contrasts of colour and texture become powerfully enhanced when captured through the processes of light technology. The flat image taped to the metal bed of the animation camera just prior to filming, transfers to a luminescent, mesmerising vision when finally projected onto a large screen in a dark, cavernous cinema. Martin Scorsese, in his television series *CENTURY OF CINEMA* speaks of painting with light in reference to American film-maker Anthony Mann’s stunningly evocative use of shadow and light. Mann’s films are charged with visual drama and light. Light is about seeing and sight.

“The painter’s medium, the filmmaker’s medium, is less paint or film than it is sight. Indeed, at their most rigorous, both painter and filmmaker practice a phenomenology of vision.”\(^7\)

\(^6\) Since completing *SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE*, I have made a book of text and images on the nature of light called *DRAWN TO THE LIGHT*.
\(^7\) V Sobchack 1992 *THE ADDRESS OF THE EYE*, p. 9
"The rapid fire of 24 frames of light-images per second fool the eye into accepting the life-like movement created by the many subtle in-betweentings."  

Film is probably the only universal art-form and certainly the most challenging, especially when words or spoken dialogue take no part in it’s narrative. But music and sound, the other international “language” defying cultural barriers, can contribute strongly to the communicative power of the “moving image”. When employed to assist in the advancing of visual narrative, it can simultaneously develop and complete the poetic nature of a film. Derek Jarman, in his film BLUE appeared to juxtapose... “different kinds of voice...noises and sounds (together with) the ominous abstraction of the saturated blue screen...a cacophony of sounds...supplanted the pandemonium of images”  

And like powerful poetry in both legend and language, once experienced within a film, sound design too can profoundly affect our perception, our understanding and our awareness.

Like many others, including Derek Jarman, I am an artist working across a variety of mediums which include photography, painting, combined-media and writing. After working in a number of mediums including photography it was only natural to be drawn to film as well.  

I had been fascinated by the medium, as a young child growing up in a quiet country environment, eagerly anticipating the weekly screenings from the outside world. But between then and now, two dimensional art practice sufficed. My personal circumstances negated film-making as a practical choice.  

In 1991, three years after my arrival in Sydney, I was accepted in

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8 Walter Murch 1992 IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.
9 Roger Wollen 1996 DEREK JARMAN A PORTRAIT p 73
10 “One of Jarman’s motives for turning to film in 1979 had been (a recognition of) the stronger communicative power of film, and at least sometimes (he) believed in its greater relevance altogether.” Roger Wollen, 1996 DEREK JARMAN: A PORTRAIT
11 These films were projected through large double doors from the back of a van by the local film enthusiast and local service-station proprietor, Herby Teddy.
an animation course at The School of Design, Randwick TAFE. Animation was not what I had aspired to, but as a design-tutor at that Institute, it offered a convenient way to enter the world of film-making - albeit via a side door.

By two weeks I was ready to leave - dismayed to learn how labour intensive the process was. Stop-motion film meant that 24 single frames had to be photographed in camera for every second of screen viewing. This meant that many images might be needed to show the action of movement. I desired a faster more immediate response to my vision. Realising this, my return to painting seemed a very attractive alternative to the labour-intensive medium of animation.

By this stage, I was involved in an animated cutout exercise requiring my tenacious persistence in using a clockwork Bolex camera in my studio during the weekend as I filmed the required few seconds of film. It was processed and returned from the lab for class screenings the following week.

Sitting in the darkened room the film samples flickering before my eyes. These images, of disparate horses which I had carefully designed to animate beneath the camera lens a week before, glided across their columned background accompanied by perfectly formed shadows. I fell instantly under the spell of time and motion. The experience transformed me. It was drawn to my attention that the appearance of the moving shadow showed that my lighting had been incorrectly placed. Apparently traditional animation required a flat-lit surface achieved by light falling at 45° to the surface of the image. But if I was going to make films, shadows, with all their dramatic implication, would be part of these. For where there are shadows there is also that - without which nothing can be seen - and no film can be made - the phenomenon of light.

Two years of application and tenacity resulted in the completion of my first film MESSANGER (1993) a seven minute work shot on 16mm and finished in 35 mm. In spite of it's humble beginnings
in the TAFE course, it was distributed by Ronin films (Australia). subsequently screening, in Australia, with WITTGENSTEIN, the last film to be made by British Artist/ Film-maker Derek Jarman before his death of AIDS in 1994.12

In MESSENGER, many of the techniques including "laser-montage" (a phrase I use to describe the process of animation image-making with laser copying methods, collaged and recopied) and intentions (to use an allegorical approach to the story-telling) became expanded in SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE. The making of MESSENGER followed a two-dimensional show in 1989 at the Charlotte H Gallery in Auckland, NZ, entitled LEGENDS.

The LEGENDS works, completed in Sydney and taken to New Zealand, were drawings in pastel and chalks on Canson paper featuring dramatic scenes of animals and other totems, in conjunction with Greek/Roman classic icons. They were surrounded by hand-written phrases which evolved as I'd worked on each one. These large images, framed behind glass, emerged from black backgrounds, reminiscent of ciba-chrome photographic-prints, as shown in the previous exhibition, FELLING THE CITADEL. I was familiar with this medium from my involvement with photography13 There was something compelling in an image that emerged from blackness.

"In the black coal fire lives the spirit of storytelling. Flickering blue and scarlet flames. It was around the fire at night that men and women told their stories in the pitchy black."14

This expression of an image is even more dramatic in film where

12 Jarman had been drawn to the philosopher Wittgenstein, some years before he was commissioned to do this work which had at its core "the urge to communicate". Derek Jarman: A Portrait pp 73 - 75. See illustration: following copy of Advertisement Sydney Morning Herald.

13 FELLING THE CITADEL resulted from an almost three day vigil (while taking over 700 photographs) through public protest, demonstrators arrest, and yet again, the eventual and untimely demolition of a landmark building by the city council of Auckland. Although well utilised as a performance space at the time, the resulting vacant space remains to this day, another car park.

Footnote 12. Photocopy of the advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald, April to June 1994 for Derek Jarman’s film, WITTGENSTEIN, showing THE MESSENGER as the supporting film.
light contrasts with total darkness, producing a luminescence in
projected colour unseen in other mediums. I recalled the nearest
thing in painting that compared, those ancient hand-painted
manuscripts of the Middle Ages which I had viewed previously in
the Vatican in Rome, Italy. The passages of gold leaf and lapis blue
glowed with light beyond any book I had seen. 15

I was also aware of a growing unease regarding the commodifying
of "Art", questioning the relevance of two-dimensional work shown
within a rarefied gallery space to a very small minority of the
general public. The gap between rich and poor was widening and
"art" was usually bought by the rich, yet advancements in
technology meant the arrival of a new age of moving images and
mass communication. It seeded in me a curiosity...a wish...a desire...

At first it’s not possible to to describe anything
beyond a wish or a desire.

That’s how it begins, making a film, generally
creating something.

You have a wish.

You wish that something might exist and you work on
it until it does. You want to give something to the
world, something truer, more beautiful, more
painstaking, more serviceable or simply something
other than what already exists. (Wim Wenders) 16

Writing was something I undertook as a child, even sending
handwritten exercise books, complete with illustrations, to
publishers. Much later in 1989, after the first of my later work had
been published, I noticed how the flow of my books in many ways
resembled that of film, where the “action” or “movement” within my
illustrations, was designed to subtly direct the reader’s eye towards
the next page, or return it to pause on a specific area within the
composition of a double page spread.

15 In painting, the combining of all primary colours results in a muddy brown, whereas in film the
combining of all colours of the spectrum of light results in pure white (light)

16 Wim Wenders THE LOGIC OF IMAGES p.51.
The desire to communicate my ideas and visuals and my stories burnt uncompromisingly inside me. More than a need to reach a wider audience I liked the way film can totally engulf, surprise, reward and inspire, the film-maker as well as the spectator. Visual Art, combined with writing was a good background from which to move into film.

I had been impressed by the dark work of the European animators, the Brothers Quay, Jan Svankmajer and the Canadian, Caroline Leaf. But a number of real-time film-makers came also from a Fine Arts background. David Lynch is quoted:

"I feel lucky I came in (to film) through painting. It was a very gradual way into film. Without knowing a lot of things, I didn't equate what I was doing with any films I saw before. I saw it as an extension of painting and one thing led to another".17

Among other such film-makers are Jane Campion, Derek Jarman, Wim Wenders and Peter Greenaway.

The final factors influencing my decision towards film as a medium was the deep sense of isolation which often overwhelmed me into periods of depression at the completion of each two-dimensional exhibition.

These were not experiences I cared to repeat. In film-making, the production time is always shared with others who give their skills and their friendship to each other and the project - camera-people, assistants, editors, and of course the sound artist.

The language of music has always been in me. To synchronise it with image, offers yet another challenge. Together with time and space, there is music and sound. Painting with light and sound....

“the picture and the sound make the magic.....
Each thing is critical to the whole.”

In all it's complexity, film presented an ultimate challenge. To deny that was to deny the very element that has confirmed for me the relevance of intuition and desire and - the personal messages of dream - Jungian awareness.

18 David Lynch wants his films to be seen as "...syntheses of sound, light, visuals, architecture, poetry and drama." Jane Cornwell Madness in His Method (Article) Good Weekend Mag Mar 15/92 pp 26 - 32.

19 "The interpretation of dreams and symbols demands intelligence, It cannot be turned into a mechanical system and then crammed into unimaginative brains." Carl Jung 1964 MAN AND HIS SYMBOLS  Picador  p.81
CHAPTER 2: Story - The Journey

Whether we listen...or read...or catch suddenly the shining meaning of a... fairytale: it will be always the one, shape shifting yet marvelously constant story that we find, together with a challenging persistent suggestion of more remaining than will ever be known or told.” Joseph Campbell

Story, or Narrative, encompasses every action and word. Story is our code of existence. We begin our story from the point of conception, but even then we are part of two other people's story and their story is part of others and so on. We are partaking in a greater story - our individual days of experience - miniature episodes of what seems to be an endless series of personal and social history.

German film-maker, Wim Wenders first rejected stories, thinking of them as lies, concerned that they even showed coherence where there was none. He relented on realising that we have a need for stories and that any sequence of images we see, provokes a sense of story.

Stories come in many forms and shapes dealing with any possible situation. Yet there are a limited number of basic themes. One of the most relevant is that of journey.

"A journey is an adventure in space and time. Adventure, space and time - all three are involved. Stories and journeys have them in common. A journey is always accompanied by curiosity about the unknown; it creates expectations and intensity of perception: you see things on the road that you never would at home." (Wim Wenders)

Most of the epic stories familiar to us deal with this sense of journey, whether as subjective travel, i.e: Ridley Scott’s road movie, 

THELMA AND LOUISE, where two female protagonists undertake

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20 THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES. Fontana London 1993
21 THE LOGIC OF IMAGES pp 58. - 59.
a journey by car across America. Or objectively, as in Roman Polansky's, *THE TENANT*, the story of an inner journey to madness of a man driven there by the system in which he lives.

Journey - as Joseph Campbell - reiterates, is a situation we as human beings strongly relate to. Although there is a linear suggestion to this theme, it allows for many diversions or lateral adventures in the process.

Journey suggests progress, a moving onwards, and can suppose a point of departure and a point of arrival. From a long history of upheaval and suffering, European culture has produced cinema with this intrinsic quality, that sense of open-ended conclusion. But the sealed hermetic solutions presented by many American commercial films, denies the opportunity of onward movement, often concluding with an artificial "happy" resolution. Does this represent a complacent culture? Complacency never achieves, or inspires. On the contrary, the condition of the restless soul seeking the edge of life, regardless of the discomfort that lies there, is what challenges and thereby strengthens the human spirit.

In a visual medium such as film, story takes on a complex role. Visual metaphors suggest rather than define other possible meanings. There is great power in the ambiguous story for it allows the recipient to identify from a place of personal awareness. It does not dictate a format or situation. It allows the viewer's involvement at a more primitive, instinctive level.

In exploring this realisation, in my first film *MESSENGER*, the theme of journey dealt with the challenge of change. It used a mythic white-winged horse as the metaphor for change itself and for resistance - a giant green dog.22 The story was set in a timeless space with a futuristic city in which a giant chessboard offered a place to play out the action of the two opponents. MESSENGER represented the dilemmas in decision-making and risk-taking.

In *SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE*, the story evolved over a

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22 The choice of colours in this film was made to heighten the "readability" of the story. The green dog stood for Control and Avarice - green seemed to represent this and the blue of the horse suggested a spiritual dimension. See Illustrated example

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Footnote 22. The Dog, as the animal overlord, and the horse as the challenge of change, in the first film, *MESSENGER.*
considerable length of time. The key image came with the completion of an acrylic painting in 1991, of a woman dressed in a bizarre bridal costume. She stares defiantly from beyond the edge of a table set with a plate - which holds a piece of pie, beside a classic-shaped glass jug of clear water. Alone in a dark deserted landscape, she sits before a distant, smoking volcano. Unseen behind her, to her right, a red dingo-like creature advances towards her. Her right hand grips - raised up between the observer and herself - a strong, sharp knife. I named her *THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE* 23

Several weeks later I began a session of voice recording in my studio. Throughout my life I had spent chapters of time involved in the making of song or music. Sometimes it was the sound of a melody or theme only, at many other times it involved the writing of lyrics. But I had become disinterested in literal verse and had been recording the sea and sounds of insects, as well as free-form chants as they came to me.

Using a low-budget recorder I began "Voice-jamming", the word I use to describe free expression of the voice, letting it soar or wander, on it's own journey, being undisciplined, unfettered, defiant of both notation or conductor.

It visited and returned from some amazing places - falling into rhythms from places as diverse as Africa, Polynesia, Arabia South Africa, Asia and Ireland, and motivated by the simple beats of kitchen tools against table-top or jars which set various paces, for the voice to follow.

Luckily there was enough presence of mind during this six to seven hour flight of discovery, to record some of the themes that were "brought back". But on reflection, it came to me that the themes were the actual songs of the woman in the painting - the chants of the Immigrant Bride.

So, I had a story - or a theme and with it the image of a confronting woman and the often haunting chants that seemed to belong to her

23 See illustration of this painting (Acrylic on canvas)
Footnote 23. The key work, an acrylic painting on canvas (92 x 92) cm entitled *THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE* (1991). This image lead to the eventual undertaking of the short film, *SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE*. 
spirit. Story, picture and sound - the basis for a film.\textsuperscript{24}

I thought of myself as a painter of space engaged on a quest for time. It never occurred to me that this search should be called “storytelling”……
My stories all began from pictures...”(Wim Wenders)\textsuperscript{25}

The theme of an Immigrant's story was a satisfying one... and appropriate, as I had so recently arrived in Australia. One of the attractions of Sydney, for me was the mix of ethnic people living there, who, with their arrival, introduced intriguing aspects of their culture - philosophies and attitudes that opened up another way of "seeing" and behaving. Their presence added a "colour "and vitality to what I understood had been predominately an anglo-saxon society.

In the novel \textit{SILVER CITY}, by Sarah Dowse the character of Nina, the Polish immigrant, missed the familiar Romanesque Churches and Baroque Halls of Europe, experiencing the place "like one big camp. The men here, the women there". On her arrival she saw Australians as incomplete and their culture unfulfilling “...... Even the people, what they had seen of them, seemed raw... not started, not finished ...... both the natural and the cultural landscape were alienating...". Elsewhere in the same book it is strongly implied that Australians have no time for educated people. \textsuperscript{26}

The people I met had often faced and overcome painful obstacles to settle in this land, some having no English, no work and no family. As a recent arrival, although English-speaking, I identified with having no work, or ready access to family or friends. As a woman in what seemed an even more dominantly male-oriented culture, than the one I had left, I often felt alienated and alone.

\textsuperscript{24} Malcolm Budd, in \textit{VALUES OF ART} p 136, on the capacity of music to embody emotion - "Schopenhauer's theory interpret's music as being a direct interpretation or copy of the innermost essence of the world, 'the will'...and it represents this iconic correspondence between music and emotional experience as explaining music's deep appeal as an art."

\textsuperscript{25} The Logic of Images p 51

\textsuperscript{26} Roy Jones- Migration to Australia in Fiction and Film from \textit{WRITING ACROSS WORLDS}, pp 253 - 257.
Immigration which is undertaken for many reasons including displacement and exile, is the most personally affecting phenomenon in our world today.27

“Ethnic immigrants (especially) may suddenly find themselves the outsiders, stereotyped and therefore confined as 'other' from which it is difficult to escape. Families are often broken up in the process and economic situations often change radically. "Immigrants may live in a number of worlds" and there often exists the need to recreate structure of their former lives, no matter that such structures may now be inappropriate. There is often an accompanying sense of ambivalence or uncertainty...

At any point in our lives we can think of ourselves as relating to a number of identities - in gender terms ...in terms of a stage in the life-course in terms of age and family status, in terms of economic identity...in terms of linguistic, religious and other cultural identities and in terms of ethnic identity..'28

In current literature the complexities of a generation moving as exiles and desiring to retain their own culture while still wishing to assimilate in their new land is often examined.

"In migration, above all topics, the levels of ambivalence, of plurality of shifting identities and interpretations are perhaps greater than in many other aspects of life. The relationships between people and their contextual societies and places are intimate ones which are transformed by movement. Adjustment processes may never be fully completed: indeed since we all continually refine our self

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7 In the forty years since WW 2, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees is alarmed at the statistics presented in 1993 - 19 million refugees around the world and a further 20 million displaced from their homes. The figure of 30,000 asylum seekers in Western Europe in the 70's has exploded to over 700,000 in the 1993. Alain Louyat The New World Disorder (Article) Oct. 1993 Good Weekend magazine.

3 Paul White WRITING ACROSS WORLDS p.2.
identities through-out our life-course it may be more truthful to say that migration intervenes in that process of renegotiation as a lasting force, rather than a single event".29

Also from the same source, Roy Jones has this say on Migration to Australia.

"The influx of more or less willing "New Australian" from a variety of political, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, provided a significant pool of foreign outsiders, leaving one home and aspiring, in varying degrees to create a new one and to become Australian "insiders". The sheer size of this population movement also obliged both the Australian-born and the personal or familial rite of passage for a large proportion of the society ..."30

Immigration became a metaphor to describe the psychological and philosophical journey (that of the spirit ) beyond the physical act of merely moving to another place. People have migrated since the beginning of time, across valleys, rivers, continents oceans. They leave behind untenable situations and push towards a place where life can begin again - a "fresh start". They are driven by the desire to survive, in the many senses of the word, the emotional and spiritual sense as well as that of the physical. They cut themselves from their accumulated material possessions and often arrive with nothing, but hope. Despite the increasing numbers of displaced people in the world, all individuals are immigrants, metaphorically speaking, on the move in different ways - leaving behind situations too difficult to face, relationships too hard to stay in, inculcated belief systems that have now become redundant. The immigrant often steps forward into a state of overwhelming change.

29 Paul White WRITING ACROSS WORLDS p 15
30 Paul White WRITING ACROSS WORLDS (Roy Jones) p.249.
"The act of migration often relates to the calling into question of ... aspects of identity that make up the individual's personality and psychological self-image...However, the words 'migration' and 'change' can almost be regarded as synonyms in this context - why migrate if such a movement does not result in change, or does not accommodate an identity change that has already occurred?" 31

My film needed to encompass these other aspects of immigration, all within ten minutes of film-time, the accepted length of this particular work. 32 I wanted it to be relevant, not only to those who leave their homelands, but also to those who stay behind, embarking perhaps on inner journeys.

Although I was comfortable with language and writing, this project was still not a place for words. I wanted to explore the strength of visuals and sound together. There had to be an abstract quality, that would communicate both the sense of journey and that of seeking, allowing the viewer to enter, as if in their own dream, into an involvement beyond superficial engagement.

"Immigrant Bride" was the term used earlier this century to describe women of marriageable age who were "imported" into countries where (because of a predominance of men) sufficient numbers of suitable partners were unavailable. This practise in a commercial sense, continues today. Systems exist whereby men can acquire a "mail-order" bride, usually of Asian descent.

However, I saw the Immigrant Bride as a genderless metaphor for that naive, unsuspecting side of our nature that inspires us to rise to a challenge, or adventure, the part of us that acknowledges the potential of dreams, finding ways to make them real. That part that recognises the potential in an idea inspiring the action to make it happen.

31 Paul White WRITING ACROSS WORLDS p 2.
32 Considerations of screening possibilities and budget usually place constraints on the length of an (animated) film.
The use of a visually literal bridal character in the film, seemed too obvious to evoke the depth of symbolism that mattered. Eventually the object of a veil alone, floating free, became appropriate. Apart from the familiarity of a bridal veil, as headgear in most societies, the veil as a religious symbol became the potent signifier I needed.

In the ancient temples of Solomon, the temple - veil - large hangings of finely hand-woven cloth, formed the break between the area of public worship and that of the temple-priests. The veil signified a barrier between the material world and the spiritual world. Through it, worshippers could glimpse things that represented a spiritual world, that the priests and the writings of their faith described beyond the physical one. Although the veil divided the material and spiritual worlds (through the elements of earth water air and fire, that it also represented) it also signified the point of departure from the world of the material and temporal, to the world of the spiritual and timeless. It also signified the place where the temporal and the timeless worlds met.\(^{33}\)

Concern for the spiritual world within a society generally recedes in importance with the rise of materialism. However with the continual evolving of human awareness, reactions to any extreme system whether political, social or cultural, will inevitably appear. Examples of recent figures for the ratio of acquisitions to services have reversed completely in the 150 years since such records were kept in Australia. In 1840, 70/30 was the ratio of goods to services. Now in 1997 the same ratio favours services. It seems that those people of the present generation with the spending power, think less now of acquiring material objects but are prepared to spend more on experiences.

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\(^{33}\) "...the temple veil can become a metaphor for the nature of spirit in the world. The veil separates the material world from the spiritual while also proclaiming the material presence of God and the possibility of revelation." * Quote. Margaret Barker, 1997 Tape available from Jill Carter-Hansen from a talk given at the NSW Gallery on SPIRIT OF PLACE. (* references from the book of Enoch and ancient Jewish writings).
With a changing attitude of this kind...

"A return of the carnivale in a historical perspective occurs....it's not just a frivolity; it expresses itself in art and ideas....a return to expressions of value in artistic form ...a generation of great creativity, new ideas, new social patterns, new aesthetic patterns," (Dr. Joanne Finkelstein) And "Young people will begin to challenge the science/rational/technological basis of the 20th century and there will be a re-emergence of spiritualism, a search for something more."  

The theme of search for a spiritual dimension to the Australian psyche pervades other recent Australian literature. Apart from Paul White, Les Murray, Tony Kelly and Veronica Brady - David Stacey deals with the background leading up to this change within Australian society and culture in his book *EDGE OF SACRED* (published in 1995). He believes there is an increasing hunger for the value that the acceptance of spirituality can bring to "make-whole" the national psyche.

"We are at the edge of a new experience of the sacred...Because the descent of spirit has been accelerated here by so many regional factors...what will arise from this archetypal fusion may well be awesome and spectacular..." (Quoting Max Charlesworth)

“I have a feeling in my bones that there is a possibility of a creative religious explosion occurring early in the next millennium with the ancient land of Australia at the centre of it, and that the Holy Spirit may come home at last to *Terra Australis* “

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35 David Tacey, 1995 *THE EDGE OF SACRED*, p 204.
In researching for the film, I was struck by the similarities of an image of an ox from the *BOOK OF KELLS* to the aboriginal "x-ray" paintings of animals. Artists of both images seemed concerned with the interior domain as opposed to the outer structure of each animal. There appeared to be a visual connection between these images that I saw as a spiritual link between two distant cultures, distant as in chronological time as well as in geographical distance. I applied that link in the second-to-last scene where a slow metamorphosis transforms an Australian icon back into that of an early Christian one - to suggest a powerful connection between the hidden and the obvious - something perceived as spiritual which is common to both images.

I decided that the film would close with the veil lifting towards the audience, hopefully moving them (emotionally) to a form of their own spiritual awareness.

Like skeleton-bones glowing in darkness, the story lay spread before me. There was nothing left to do but begin to make images, in the knowledge that the finer details would flesh it out. Sound and music, would become it's breath of life.

It was a complex journey that I had begun.

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*36 See following illustration.*

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Footnote 36. Comparisons can be seen between the winged ox from the *BOOK OF KELLS* on the left, and the Aboriginal - influenced drawing of a kangaroo, which was used in the film.
METHODS AND TECHNOLOGIES

"My stories all begin from pictures."\textsuperscript{37}

In film language, pre-production began in February 1995, production began in April and was completed on October of the same year. The post production finished in January 1996.

To outline the idea, a storyboard was constructed as the framework for the film.\textsuperscript{38} But there were a number of storyboards sketched and adjustments were made as the project developed. Even a month before the completion of filming, changes were still being made.

Prior to the pre-production stage, I began a series of textured, acrylic paintings forming the first solid images. These varied from small works on canvas-covered hardboard (30 x 40 cm) to two large landscape paintings (120 x 340 cm). The story called for rich textured imagery, besides which, I wanted to paint again.\textsuperscript{39} The two large works were on canvas, one becoming an Egyptian-like landscape and the other an open, broad Australian, desert-painting. The rest were predominately of creatures that I saw as participants taking part of the story.\textsuperscript{40}

The Egyptian work seemed to suggest a place to start the film, or at least appear near it's beginning. Originally, it was intended to be superseded by two major scenes, one of a largely Rennaissance-style cityscape: the sort of place that a mythic fairy tale could emerge from.\textsuperscript{41} However although filmed, this scene was edited out to tighten the story. Instead, the spectator "arrived" in the Egyptian scene via a corridor - through an encounter with a mirror.

\textsuperscript{37} Wim Wenders 1991 \textit{THE LOGIC OF IMAGES} p 51 (Many of my stories have been suggested by drawings that were momentarily inspired - one offs - not part of a designated series)

\textsuperscript{38} This was very sketchy and rapidly done - a thumbnail "plan" to go by. See Illustration.

\textsuperscript{39} Painting with it's textured physical properties often beckons seductively. No technologically processed work has been able to snuff this out. See Illustrations.

\textsuperscript{40} These were Australian creatures to which I wanted to impart a feel of "magic" See Illustration

\textsuperscript{41} See illustration
Footnote 38. Part of the final story-board, showing the signs to indicate dissolves, fade-outs and cuts, between scenes.

The crowing rooster refers, not only to the dawning of a new day - and thereby new opportunities - but also to the acts of betrayal. (The rooster crowed three times as Judas betrayed Christ in the garden of Gethsemeni.) Following this scene in the film, we move through a desolate forest and hear the baying of dogs... The greatest danger may be in our our betrayal to ourselves.
Footnote 39 (a). Laser-copy from a photograph of the painting of desert space, used in the film.
Footnote 39 (c). Laser copy from a photograph of the painting showing part of the Egyptian scene used in the film
Footnote 40. This image illustrates the richness of colour as well as the style of art-work of the Australian animals utilised. In this case - a Cassowary.
NOTE

The following page(s) missing from original.
Footnote 41. This was the background for a scene which although shot, was not included in the final edit. In this scene, a snake uncoiled and slid out of the bottom of the frame. A white winged horse, one used in, and a connection to, the previous film *The Messenger*, flew across the street between the buildings.
and a slowly opening doorway. This corridor set-up seemed to solve the problem for a scene that conveyed the audience back in time, both historically and psychologically. As a introduction to this scene the film begins with a "sweeping" movement across a ridge and over a red futuristic city up to a lighted window in an immense green building. (Scene three)

Colour is important in this film. I wanted it to glow like the hand-written manuscripts that I had seen in the Vatican in Rome. The richness of colour, lapis blue and gold, mysterious greens and fire-hot reds, was a prime visual metaphor to support the surrealism of the story.\(^2\)

The use of Laser copying technology with its colour-intensifying functions, made this possible. Photographs and slides taken of the original 14 paintings: sufficiently manipulated and distorted by Canon laser technology, allowed me to complete most of the images required for the entire film. The way I worked was similar to the layered processes of Adobe Photoshop - a long hand version, but I felt the "laser-montage" process offered a more satisfying exploratory method. I did not want the project to become just a series of smooth, technically-generated effects, neither did I have the budget for super-sophisticated equipment.

In many cases, sections of the photocopies became exaggerated in size to become the material for other backgrounds and objects in other scenes. Changes in colour-modes allowed for a reverse colour image to be developed within a series forming an animation set and by filming these reversed images at certain calculated points within the "choreography" of a scene, dramatic lightning, and explosive impressions were created. The shimmering sea, in the scene where water-travel commences and behind the following scenes of the figure-head came about by a complicated sequence, using this technique.\(^3\)

Additional art-work in painting or pastel was added to the photocopied images before filming, and the resulting backgrounds were, in addition to this, often also collaged in many scenes.

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\(^2\) D Jarman, 1994, writes observations on these colours in CHROMA p 10.

\(^3\) This scene was also done by carefully masking the figurehead and shooting it as a double pass.
Footnote 43. In this scene of a ship’s figurehead moving across the sea, the backgrounds dissolved into a series of changes, signifying the passage of time, while the foreground figure remained constant in movement and image.
A photograph (taken overlooking a grave site in Auckland) was used in whole and part to imply a more recent era of war and chaos. Again the insinuation of timelessness. I photographed boats and models of boats in museums to gather a range of vessels that I saw would have been used to carry people over wide tracts of sea.

I photographed figureheads, but later rejected these and created a more abstract profile. In a scene where newly come-upon creatures scuttle across the sands, I collaged together photographs of a red leather jacket, laser-copied from a magazine. The unifying process of laser copying melds the images together, almost "Pop-art" in effect because of the intensity of colour.

The film stock used was Kodak 7248 - 16 mm gauge and the scenes were photographed using a Nielson Hordell animation camera that was bolted to both the floor and the wall to avoid any possibility of vibration.

The scene of discovering the small bird, was shot in "real-time" - the only scene that was. To convey a sense of running and stumbling across the ground, Russell Tagg, the camera-man used an 16 mm movie camera. I collaged together a number of background graphics, creating an illusion of a rough ground in perspective, and secured it to the floor. Russell then stood astride with the camera held above this background, the lens varying in distance to the paper as he filmed. I timed him as he moved to a prearranged choreography that included holding still on the final object, a paper bird apparently lying dead upon the "ground."

Many of the "character-objects" including crow fish, eagle, emus, snakes, kangaroo, forest, ships, figurehead, boats, planetary bodies and of course the veil, were cutouts, that worked almost as two-

44 See illustration.
Footnote 44. In this scene - the discovery of a fallen white bird, Russell Tagg, the camera-person, filmed using real-time techniques, manually moving the camera over a large background. Photo-copying has (unfortunately) diminished the tonal values within the "body" of the bird, which was made from layers of tissue paper.
dimensional puppets. Monsters and gargoyles (signifiers of overpowering fears) had separate wings and heads that could be readily moved for animation.\textsuperscript{45}

Cutout animation is created by rearranging the position of loose pieces ...under the camera. Each change of animation is pieced together at the time of shooting, it is infinitely variable and open to spontaneous decisions, unlike drawn animation where the movement is fixed beforehand within the sequence of drawings ... The collage style is perfectly suited to surrealistic images, where strange visual combinations are allied to dramatic incongruities in scale and style.\textsuperscript{46}

To avoid any air currents spoiling the flowing movement of the animation, it was often necessary to use minute pieces of blu-tac under the cutouts as they were manipulated. This also allowed new points of movement to be charted clearly in my head from each existing position.

Although laborious in execution, an hour of animation, for say a five second scene, often passed "timelessly". I am perpetually within the present while absorbed in sensing the distance/time ratio for each particular character or object. Although sometimes we made a dummy run, using a video line-editing system, in all of the veil scenes no prior charting or dry-runs were undertaken. To animate smoothly and effectively, I become intensely involved, identifying with the "character" of the object that to be animated.

Designing is a very important part of animation. It affects every part of the film-making process, from the obvious graphic decisions to the management of space and movement.\textsuperscript{47} One of the first major design decisions concerned the most appropriate ratio for the film when it would be to eventually screened. A normal 35 mm frame size is 1:1.33 ratio, but a wider format "surrounds" the

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{45} See Illustration
\textsuperscript{46} D Johnson 1987 \textit{ANIMATION GAMES} pp 32 - 40.
\textsuperscript{47} Peter Von Arx 1963 \textit{FILM DESIGN}. Film - Animation especially is usually designed using charts to "plan" not only the actual movement of the cut-outs or sequences of cells, but to synchronise the different camera movements both sideways and back and forth, with the position of the camera lens as it closes in or pulls back on a scene.
\end{footnotesize}
Footnote 45. Photocopies of some of the gargoyle “creatures” that signified the presence of over-powering fears. Some of these were hinged with black cotton, to aid in their articulation. They were largely inspired by the gargoyles, architectural features seen on European buildings (especially churches), of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.
audience a little more when projected correctly. Unfortunately, for every screening of an art-film in cinema, there will be many more made in video, as these are easier to handle for previews. VHS is such a convenient medium in small venues where large cinema screens are just not available. However, there are many differences between tape and film.

Primarily, *SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE* was to be a film—not a video. The intention I have is for the *SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE* to be screened in cinemas. (Discussed later.) I still instinctively shiver each time I know the film is being seen on VHS, even at projection quality, because colour shades are often exaggerated and fine detail, i.e. the lace of the veil, “drops out” due to the heightened contrast of video.

A super 16 stop-motion camera would have made composition for a 1:1.66 format much easier to achieve but hiring a super 16 would again have exploded the budget. However, the ordinary 16 mm camera was already installed. To overcome this problem in formatting and to save “losing” the tops and bottoms of the image, each scene had to be composed through the view-finder with the more elongated 1:1.66 ratio in mind. A number of field-size masks cut from black and white card were helpful in establishing the basic composition of each scene and ensured there was no loss of essential iconography in the filming process. When the 35 mm film was finally printed from the master cut, a laboratory film-masking process brought the original 16 mm format into the desired proportion. Unfortunately with VHS copies, their proportion means that a considerable area of the video screen shows solid black at top and bottom to compensate for the extra width of image. (I understand that a wider version of the present video screen is currently being produced and will eventually overcome this problem).

Movements of the camera-bed, which can be adjusted in minute increments to move both backwards, forwards and sideways,

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48 Field size is the term used to describe a specific subscribed ratio-area of filmed image which will finally translate to the appropriate screen proportion. The smaller the number of field size, the closer the lens is to the image. Masks are like small mounts that show the composition of the art-work.
meant that artwork could be photographed in such a way to result in
an image which moves across from the left to the right hand side of
the screen. This gives the viewer of the finished film a sense of an
ongoing travel. If the movement changes direction 180°, this gives a
sense of returning. Every scene advances these techniques to a
greater or lesser degree. By using this method I hoped to suggest the
idea of ongoing journey.

In filming, we made as many effects as we could, in the camera. This
is less costly than paying for optical effects at the lab at
a later date. Straight cuts from one scene to another were of course
the simplest way of working, but many scenes required more subtle
dissolves, fade-ups (from dark to light) and fade-downs
(from light to dark). A generous amount of unexposed black or in the
case of a fade-up, exposed clear film was allowed - as "leader"
included at the beginning and close of each scene shoot. The
allowance of this extra film gives more flexibility for the editing
process. This had to be calculated within the required footage.
Theoretically, 100 feet of film will produce 2.5 minutes of animated
film, but the process of film-making is a fickle one and test scenes
were often shot first before undertaking the final ones SONGS OF
THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE took 11 rolls of film.

There were a number of scenes where the layering effects were
achieved in camera with several "passes." Basically, this means that
one scene is filmed at half the aperture opening: e.g f.11 instead of
f.8, and then the film rewound to a previously specified point. The
new scene, or objects, are then filmed over the already exposed
previous film, so that on processing, the result is a layered
translucent effect achieved at the same ultimate exposure as the rest
of the film. It is a nerve-racking process, because accuracy in
charting and timing are usually critical factors if these scenes are to
work. This technique was applied where the veil flies free from the
skulls and gargoyles in an explosive burst from the burning fish. It
was also used in the others - including that of the falling people, the
globe with flying-fish, figurehead against changing seas 49 (to imply
the passing of time) and the transition of creatures in the "trance",
scenes, towards the last third of the film.

49 See Illustration.
Footnote 49. In this scene, migratory flyng fish arc across the screen as the world, in the form of a navigational globe, turns in the background. The globe was set up in a cardboard support upon the glass of a CLC laser-copier, and turned a fraction at each "pass" of light, to provide a sequence (cycle) of images for filming.
It is more effective to have strong contrasts in tone between the background and the foreground objects, as a dark image refilmed against a dark background will be barely visible in the final film. This happened in the first of the "trance" scene creatures - an emu - which for this reason had visually almost disappeared when we saw the rushes at the ATLAB laboratory screening room. Fortunately, being the first one at the beginning of a series of four in the one scene, I decided to omit it from the film, by a simple cut. But if it had not been at one or the other end of that particular scene, it would have meant laborious re-shooting, because all the dissolves were done in the camera in sequence. This takes considerable planning and time to undertake and complete. A cut would have spoilt a smooth flow of the image transitions. Just one mistake could ruin the entire scene, an especially daunting prospect on a second pass because of the subsequent loss of both "passes".

The most complicated cut-out animation scenes to shoot were those of the bucking sea-tossed boat. With Russell on Camera and me animating, we shared a total of ten moves for every two frames of filming. And it takes 24 separate frames to make up one second of finished viewing time. However, Russell altered the focus and aperture variations and adjusted the forward, backward and sideways movements of the camera bed, while I manipulated four lines of cut-out waves, plus the boat. This 5 second scene was split into two when edited.\(^{50}\) It sat either side of an under-water scene - of feeding fish and rocking skulls.

There were other techniques designed to achieve mysterious images, all of them innovative and surprisingly effective. The revolving globe was simply a clear plastic inflatable "balloon", filmed from a series of photocopies which were made in regular increments of change against a black cloth. To achieve a moon seen through water, a glass dish containing water, was moved beneath the lens, positioned above the artwork of a moon as we filmed.

\(^{50}\) See Illustration
Footnote 50. This scene of the small boat tossing in huge seas, took ten separate movements for every two frames, or 120 movements for each second of viewing time. Hand-moving the images instinctively, avoided the automated look, which could have resulted from filming a repeat cycle of images.
Although these techniques may seem unsophisticated, they were challenging to discover and fun to develop. The hands-on approach can be a very satisfying one.  

MUSIC AND SOUND

"What gets me is how sequences can be built in time, so it's like a big piece of music."...sound is vital to (David) Lynch, whose work roars, whispers, drones and clamours. "

During the production period of seven months, I met regularly with the Musician, Robert Moss. Robert and his partner, Suzie Connolly (a singer) refined a simple veil theme of five descending notes - the first and last held for double the beat of the other three. Changing in tone from major to minor and back to the major key again, the simple repeated scale formed a soulful, wistful phrase that related well to the flight of the veil. Susie is a soprano, with a lightness to her voice that implied an ethereal presence. I could clearly imagine the veil floating across oceans and landscape accompanied by the haunting music. Since my previously described experimental "voice-jamming " session, there had been other "primitive" recording sessions. From these I had edited a short tape of the most suitable chants for Robert to consider for inclusion with his own ideas and other necessary sound effects.

"The most innovative early sound films,...were the animated cartoons ...which (because they) were not compelled to photograph the real world, escaped the tyrannies of sound recording that enslaved the directors of theatrical features....pure fantasy,

51 The traditions of painting lead to a sensibility that is comfortable with the manipulation of physical materials. These processes often involve the entire body - adding to a sense of involvement and participation in results that differs from that which relates to sophisticated technical image making.

which is free from all natural laws, from all human and spatial realities - also granted it's creator the same freedom in playing with sound.\textsuperscript{53}

Prior to production, on a trip to New Zealand, I had searched for the sounds of a Maori-blown conch shell. My search led me to the music department of Auckland University where a small selection of Maori chants, including the mournful sound of a blown conch - shell were recorded onto a tape by Hilary Pound.\textsuperscript{54} This sound accompanied the sea in the scenes of the figurehead, dipping and lifting...dipping and lifting....And my voice chants found their place interwoven with the Egyptian themes and within the scenes of the rising moon, whirling planets and the returning veil.

Robert, working with recent sound technology, had stored a vast repertoire of sounds in computer files. During a number of sessions, we altered pitches, tones and frequencies of many of the sounds that were part of the film’s musical structure. We needed sounds of breaking glass, the cry of a crow, screaming human voices, an opening door, a heartbeat, gun shots, a rooster crowing, baying hounds, wind, water of various kinds, seagulls, insects, snake-rattles, a tasmanian-tiger growl (Robert got the real thing from an early recording), human choirs, sounds for gargoyles and sounds for a snuffling Kangaroo. Amongst all this wove the music, eclectic, soulful, played on cellos, piano, keyboard, and didgeridoo and skilfully arranged and mixed by Robert using his classical music background.

Although most animated films are made to match sound or a music score, Robert matched his music/sound to the final edited visuals. During the post-production phase, the music ran out of synch. with the film, at 25 frames per second instead of the required 24. It was possible to rectify this by redoing the sound and "stretching" it to the desired 24 frames per second. I am assured that this degree of stretch makes little difference to the quality of the sound.

\textsuperscript{53} G Mast 1971 \textit{A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MOVIES}, pp 235-236.

\textsuperscript{54} (Every time that I hear the sounds of ships leaving their harbours to depart with their cargoes over the oceans, I am reminded of the conch shell. Even a toghorn has something of the same melancholic sound as those giant shells used on the wooden rafts that carried the immigrants of Polynesia, hundreds of years ago.)


"Whereas the American Film came into the world as an amusing novelty, the Soviet film was created explicitly as teacher, not as clown,..."The foundation of film-art is editing," wrote Pudovkin...Soviet innovators concentrated on the effects of joining... shots together."\textsuperscript{55}

Through experimental cutting with the limited stock available, Russian film-makers developed three major cuts which generated quite different audience response. Some of these were described as: \textit{intellectual} cuts, those that dealt with metaphorical, or associational imagery in film. Others were more technically described as contrast cuts and parallel cuts. These cuts can also have an \textit{emotional} impact. Other \textit{emotional} cuts are the rhythmical cut, the tonal cut, and the form cut.

"Significantly, a cut which is intended to have an intellectual effect - from pencil to sword - may also serve as a form cut, as part of a tonal sequence, as part of the film's increasing rhythm and as a shift in the film's narrative structure all at the same time. A single cut can function on all three levels of narrative, intellectual, emotional - at once. In fact the Soviet directors discovered that most cuts must function on all three levels at once.

To this discovery they gave the name "montage."\textsuperscript{56}

Sam Petty was the editor with clear narrative skills who worked on \textit{SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE}. As director, I too, worked with him. Unlike a feature film, where there may be twelve shots of one scene from which only one would be edited into the film, animation procedures mean that there is one specific scene, that

\textsuperscript{55} G Mast 1997 \textit{A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MOVIES},
\textsuperscript{56} G Mast 1977 \textit{A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MOVIES}.
are usually made concurrently when designing and filming each scene. However there were still a significant number of decisions needed to be made, each one increasing the effectiveness of the intellectual, emotional and narrative elements within the film.

As there is little written and no aural narrative in SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE, it was very important for the editing to support narrative expression, a sense of sequence from the montaged images. This, together with concerns for maintaining emotional impact from the film, (by the viewer) meant that I was eager to check every possibility for refinement. It was important to reinforce the viewer’s dreamlike experience.

"Comparison of films and dreams, is interesting, ... but .... we still know so little about the mechanics of dreams that the observation comes to a stop once it has been made.....there may be part of our waking reality where we actually do experience something like cuts, and where daylight images are somehow brought in closer more discontinuous juxtaposition than might otherwise seem to be the case."  

In the dream/trance sequence, where the gargoyles transform quietly into their Australian-animal counterparts, the editing was already done in camera, as a series of dissolves. However, the last dissolve slips into blackness and nothingness, just a black screen in a dark cinema - a void of respite - before the "eye" (implied by the appearance of a light landscape revealed gradually from behind black eye-lids) opens. This scene is about awakening after a period of self-deception and finally acknowledging the "uniqueness" offered by this new place, now clearly seen for the first time - a place untainted by past ghosts.

57 Currie states that the early montagist film theorists disagreed with the move by film-makers to emulate realism. They reasoned that "... film’s mechanistic commitment to reality has to be compensated for by visual styles that give us visual experiences unlike our visual experiences of the real world." There have been other arguments suggesting likeness and realism in film. "are suspect or even incoherent." G Currie 1995. IMAGE AND MIND. pp 20.- 21

58 W Murch 1992 IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE
In several places, scenes longer than needed were cut around another scene for a maximum effect, or edited out altogether if they no longer worked to "drive" the story or the emotional content when finally viewed in conjunction with the others. In some cases they were made shorter to increase the sense of rhythm and impact.

The credits and titles were edited on to either end of the body of the film as the final act of the editing process. It was now that the film was taken back to the lab where the detailed job of neg-matching was undertaken prior to the blow-up of the 16mm print to a 35 mm master print, complete with sound.
CHAPTER 3: Understanding from a Physical Perspective.

“What... (audiences) finally remember is not the editing, not the camera-work, not the performances, not even the story - it's how they felt.”59

The audience attention becomes set on the screen space before them. Light from the projector strikes its reflective surface and images begin to appear. Usually, these are the titles, and credits, sometimes the first introductory images of the narrative begin the film. At this beginning, the first consideration, as the cinema lights dim, eliminating every visual thing, is the darkness. The audience sits in this darkness, looking up towards the source of light - the reflections of the projection light from the screen.

Depending on the proportional ratios of the film and therefore the illuminated screen size, the audience’s sense of involvement is diminished or enhanced. Seating, or one’s proximity to the screen is another factor to viewing. Some people prefer to sit at the rear of the cinema. Others prefer the front seats, where a more encompassing experience is likely. The slope of the cinema floor allows for unrestricted vision by the patrons. It is usually only when a viewer’s attention wanders that they become aware of the people between them and the screen. Generally, they are “caught up” in the moving images before them.

Despite the definition of film as a series of still images that move, I equate the experience of film to that of seeing. In everyday life the continuous visuals we experience through sight are continually interrupted by blinking and yet that blink, comparable to the black areas between each framed image in film, does not break the continuity or at least our awareness of it. As in life, in film the audience experiences continuous movement, reacting physically to what appears on the screen. If the image shows the rushing view for instance, from a big dipper at Coney Island, or a bird’s-eye view of a free-fall towards earth, there is a verbal response, an intake of breath from the audience as they feel a physical

59 W Murch 1992 In THE BLINK OF AN EYE p 22

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disorientation.

In a similar way, the body’s processes of both fear and grief can be activated in a profound way by the content of the story within the film, or by their identification with a character within the film. This is not just an objective reaction, but a subjective reactivation of memory, where an incident in a film will bring tears to the eyes of a viewer for instance. But (as explained in chapter one) this emotion will not necessarily be of the same intensity for all of the audience. Individuals are not known quantities from which a specific amount of emotion can be extracted by showing them specific images. Each individual’s reaction will differ in intensity and emotion. People may actually leave the film, to prevent a sense of “discomfort”, or distance themselves from their own personal connection, thereby deflecting its intensity. Certain films allow us a way to return to deeper feelings within ourselves, helping us to acknowledge those things which are unresolved, or intrinsic for our self awareness as human beings.

In the first chapter I specified some of the ways a language either of words or within pictorial form, can be interpreted or misinterpreted, depending on certain given personal situations and experiences. The real-time feature film, by virtue of it’s story-line, editing forms, depiction of dimensions, perspective, light, shadow, colour texture and movement - in which we identify with characters in a plausible world, appears to become acceptable as “real” (often termed “transparent” in film theory). We can also accept degrees of this “transparency” when animation depicts a human character e.g. the character of Homer in THE SIMPSONS.

Although animated films often bestow human characteristics on creatures, or conversely, animal characteristics upon human characters, apart from the graphic nature of the visuals, the dimensions of the plot or story line largely direct the audience reaction. Animation in Australia is often perceived as an “entertainment”, a film version of visual a one-line joke.60

My intention as an artist/film-maker using the medium is not

60 Dennis Tupicoff’s DARRA DOGS and Lee Whitmore’s ON A FULL MOON are examples of more recent “serious” narration in Australia.
towards entertainment as is generally expected in animation. What I was striving to do in *SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE* allows for an understanding beyond that of traditional narrative.

This sense of “experience” allows for an understanding beyond that obtained from related (or written) information. A woman can (for example) be informed by story-telling from many sources about the process of child-birth, but understanding is acquired through the physical experience itself. As previously stated, when experiencing certain images in film, emotional reactions trigger off various physical response and changes occur in breathing and heart-rate. The direct physical experience is unfiltered by dialogue or commentary. There are no words to mitigate the direct physical impact of image and sound.

*SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE* breaks the normally accepted perimeters of animation. It is a film to experience rather than merely observe. Contrary to most films which a viewer would anticipate watching only once, *SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE* for many, appears to gain significance for them with each additional viewing. Some viewers may need time for the imagery to work to awaken subliminal connections within them.

“As story telling evolves, as new narratives piggyback on the communicative breakthroughs of their predecessors and as new and more complex narrative intentions become common knowledge in the community …these inferences will become more complex with the most inventive tellers always operating on the thin boundary between surprising the audience and having the audience completely miss the point.”

In *SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE* I have taken a subject of

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feature-film proportions expressing it within a ten minute film, using experimental animation/film techniques. This experimental direction can be seen in the image generating processes, the graphic processes, the use of animals within the narration as mythic creatures (not characters), sound and music design (evoking a sense of dream, drama and inner journey), combined animation with real-time camera techniques, non traditional lighting and visual effects. The mythopoetic nature of this film is also an unusual one for the animation genre. It is aimed to confront the audience with their own journey at a number of levels.

SONGS OF THE IMMIGRANT BRIDE, with elements of technique and content, combining film, animation and the "visual arts", is a mythopoetic film, extending the barriers of visual story-telling.

FINIS.
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